



*Research Paper*

**PERCEPTION OF NURSING STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTOR REGARDING  
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR AT  
PUBLIC SECTOR HOSPITAL**

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**Abstract**

Nursing profession is the backbone of health care system where nurses perform difficult jobs by using knowledge and skills in the provision of services to the healthy and sick population. Therefore, student nurses need rigorous training for learning skills at clinical setting along extensive knowledge for better quality care. One of the important factor that effect the nursing education quality is the effective learning at clinical setting. The effective and high quality education at clinical considered as the heart of nursing education professionally. Moreover, clinical environment is important factor that effects the learning of clinical nursing students and integral part of every education program. Clinical instructor helps the student nurses to make informed decision regarding quality care by the use of critical thinking skills. Cross sectional descriptive study design was used to collect data from nursing students and clinical instructors. A convenience sample of (110) nursing students and (15) clinical instructors who are working at the school of nursing, public sector hospital, nursing students from different academic levels of baccalaureate nursing programs at school of nursing, who had finished at least two clinical rotations with patient care in hospital and willing to participate in the study were recruited. Majority of the nursing student responses indicating strongly agree or agree statement towards the characteristics of effective clinical instructor for better learning of student nurses. Nursing students strongly agree (85.3%) with the characteristics of the clinical instructor that "Stimulates student interest in the subject". Likewise, Majority of the clinical instructor responses indicating strongly agree or agree statement towards the characteristics of effective clinical instructor for better learning of student nurses. The results of current study summarized that teaching ability of clinical instructor and their interpersonal relations were considered the most important and highly scored effective clinical instructor characteristic according to the opinions of clinical nursing students and teachers. Likewise, the present study findings concluded that competence,

evaluation and personality traits features of effective clinical instructors ranked as lower most important by the undergraduate student nurses and clinical instructors.

Key words: Perception, Characteristics, Effective, Clinical Instructor.

## INTRODUCTION

Nursing profession is the backbone of health care system where nurses perform difficult jobs by using knowledge and skills in the provision of services to the healthy and sick population. Therefore, student nurses need rigorous training for learning skills at clinical setting along extensive knowledge for better quality care. Nursing students need to learn basics of clinical and apply the theoretical knowledge in practical field to minimize the gap between theory and practice (Pollard, Ellis, Stringer, & Cockayne, 2007). One of the important factor that effect the nursing education quality is the effective learning at clinical setting. The effective and high quality education at clinical considered as the heart of nursing education professionally (Heshmati-Nabavi & Vanaki, 2010; Jouybari & Sanagoo, 2010).

Moreover, clinical environment is important factor that effects the learning of clinical nursing students and integral part of every education program. Clinical environment plays an important role in the provision of effective teaching for student nurses in clinical setting (Eta, Atanga, Atashili, & D'Cruz, 2011). The clinical teaching helps the nursing students by providing different skills related to their successful clinical practice and enhanced their learning by clinical demonstration of various nursing procedures on real patients. This will help the novel nurses to move into advanced learner stage and enable them to exhibit proficient clinical skills in real situations especially in critical care units (Irby, 2007).

Clinical learning is the process of acquisition of essential skills for the quality care provision to patients at clinical setting. It is an effective way of learning during which new student nurses equipped to achieve clinical competence in performing different practices (Buchel & Edwards, 2005; Lewin, 2007; Okoronkwo, Onyia-Pat, Agbo, Okpala, & Ndu, 2013). In all nursing colleges, pre service training sessions are essential for the application of theoretical knowledge into practice. At clinical setting the concept of preceptorship is not new and essential for application of theory into practice by novel nursing student. The role of preceptor is to guide the clinical students at every step to perform the clinical procedures with competency (Okoronkwo, Onyia-Pat, Agbo, Okpala, & Ndu, 2013). Clinical teaching is a collection of intended proficiencies to assist

student nurses to enhance knowledge, positive attitude and practicing skills by participating in the clinical work setting.

The effective and high quality education at clinical considered very important part of nursing education professionally. The base of nursing profession is the practice at clinical site therefore every educational institute make the clinical practice as the part of educational curriculum. Therefore, curriculum offers the opportunity to the nursing students to practice and become competent in clinical skills practically (Knox & Mogan, 1985).

Moreover, clinical instructor helps the student nurses to use various nursing frameworks for planning patient and family centered holistic care plans and use evidences provided by research to guide differences practices of nurses. Clinical instructor helps the student nurses to make informed decision regarding quality care by the use of critical thinking skills. At clinical setting the clinical instructor is essential for application of theory into practice by novel nursing student. The role of instructor at clinical is to guide the clinical students at every step to perform the clinical procedures with competency and aids the nursing student in transferring knowledge learned in the classroom to implementation at the bedside (Ali, 2012; Niederriter, Eyth, & Thoman, 2017; Steves, 2005).

Moreover, Clinical instructors help the student nurses to use various nursing frameworks for planning patient and family centered holistic care plans and use evidences provided by research to guide differences practices of nurses. Clinical instructors help the internship students to make informed decision regarding quality care by the use of critical thinking skills ((Banan & Elsharkawy, 2017; Pournamdar, 2015).

Meanwhile, clinical instructors help in the recognition of structure and services available at practice setting for better provision of patient care. Clinical instructors teach the internship students to work collaboratively with interdisciplinary teams to fulfill the health related needs of patients and families. Furthermore, role of clinical instructors is to assist the interns to develop psychomotor skills for the achievement of learning outcomes devised by their parent institutes (Lauber, Toth, Leary, Martin, & Killian, 2003). The nursing students acquire and integrate the ethical and legal professional values into nursing practices. All these practices by clinical instructor make a competent nurse practitioner with high morale, positive attitude, and leadership

qualities best for care provision according to international standards (Alahmadi, 2015). The main aim of clinical education is combine theory and practice at clinical environment and held nursing students to learn adequate skills, conducts and attitudes important for their entry in the professional practice (Alahmadi, 2015).

The clinical instructor enables the nursing students to use verbal and nonverbal clues for effective therapeutic communication with interdisciplinary teams and patients as well. At clinical placement, the important task is to maintain the record and documentation of essential nursing intervention and nursing care plans effectively for evidences at legal and professional level. Clinical instructors help the interns to perform physical assessment comprehensively for better diagnosis of patient health problem (Alavi & Abedi, 2007). Moreover, nursing students demonstrate nursing skills as required by their curriculum related to internship with the help of preceptor. The students became vigilant in assigning the work load and provision of holistic nursing care according to standard guidelines during internship period. They demonstrate the clinical competencies effectively with the help of clinical instructors (Eta, Atanga, Atashili, & D'Cruz, 2011). Effective clinical teaching is vital for the quality nursing practice. Furthermore, nursing students must vigilantly assess strong point and weaknesses from various standpoints to identify gap (Salmani & Amirian, 2006). It is compulsory to provide clinical training along with theoretical knowledge to make the students nurses professional accountable at clinical setting (Moscaritolo, 2009).

Nursing students at clinical acquire new practical skills and work according to nursing advance standards for betterment of the patients. The goal of education in nursing profession is to prepare competent nurses who utilize evidence base practices in clinical setting (Banan & Elsharkawy, 2017; Kelly, 2007). Therefore, clinical instructors must be effective to provide the best learning experiences in each clinical situation. The characteristics of effective instructor at clinical have direct affirmative effect on student nurse's performance. Investigation of different features of effective clinical instructor magnifies the vision of nursing institutions for better educational programs. Clinical instructor effectiveness has an impact on nursing students learning outcomes. The relationship between nursing students and instructors is important to increase the satisfaction and competence of nursing students learning process (Alavi & Abedi, 2007).

Educational plans of nursing schools based on the theory that teaching environment play an important role in preparing the competent nurses that utilize the theory into practice. Moreover, the role of effective clinical instructor is paramount in preparing evidence based nurses. So this study is to assess the perception of nursing students and instructor regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor.

**AIM OF THE STUDY:** The aim of this study to assess the perceptions of nursing students and instructor regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor at the school of nursing, public sector hospital.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To explore the perception of undergraduate nursing students towards the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor
- To assess the clinical instructors' perceptions of the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor.

### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

#### **Perception**

It is the way of thinking of undergraduate nursing students and clinical instructors towards the characteristics of effective clinical instructor. The study utilized the Nursing Clinical Teacher Effectiveness Inventory (NCTEI) developed by Knox and Mogan (1985) to measure participant's perception on 47 items. The responses of the participants were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1" strongly disagree and "5" strongly agree.

#### **Characteristics**

It is the features namely interpersonal relationship, personality traits, teaching ability, nursing competence and evaluation of clinical instructors as perceived by the nursing students and clinical instructor.

#### **Clinical Instructor**

A person who provides direct supervision and instruction to students in the clinical aspect of athletic training education

### **HYPOTHESIS**

#### **Null Hypothesis**

- There is no difference in the perception of undergraduate nursing students towards the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor

- There are no differences in clinical instructors' perceptions towards characteristics of an effective clinical instructor

### **Alternative Hypothesis**

- There is the difference in the perception of undergraduate nursing students towards the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor
- There is a differences in clinical instructors' perceptions of the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The effective and high quality education at clinical considered very important part of nursing education professionally. The base of nursing profession is the practice at clinical site therefore every educational institute make the clinical practice as the part of educational curriculum. Therefore, curriculum offers the opportunity to the nursing students to practice and become competent in clinical skills practically. The characteristics of effective instructor at clinical have direct affirmative effect on student nurses performance. Investigation of different features of effective clinical instructor magnifies the vision of nursing institutions for better educational programs. Clinical instructor effectiveness has an impact on nursing students learning outcomes. The relationship between nursing students and instructors is important to increase the satisfaction and competence of nursing students learning process. The base of nursing profession is the practice at clinical site therefore every educational institute make the clinical practice as the part of educational curriculum. Therefore, curriculum offers the opportunity to the nursing students to practice and become competent in clinical skills practically. Therefore, they contribute to knowledge in nursing education regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor and may assist programs in mentoring and training new clinical instructors.

### **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

**Study Design:** The study design was cross sectional descriptive in nature.

**Settings:** The study was carried out at the School of Nursing, the public sector hospital.

**Sample Size:** A convenience sample of (110) nursing students and (15) clinical instructors who are working at the school of nursing, public sector hospital, and who are willing to participate in the study; nursing students from different academic levels of baccalaureate nursing programs at school of nursing, who had finished at least two clinical rotations with patient care in hospital and willing to participate in the study

were recruited. The students in first academic level excluded because they don't have clinical training experience to identify characteristics of effective clinical instructor. Clinical instructors and students number represents the majority of clinical instructors working in the faculty and the majority of students in each level.

**Sampling Technique:** A convenience sample of nursing students and clinical instructors were used for data collection.

**Inclusion Criteria:**

- Nursing students and clinical instructors who are working at the school of nursing, public sector hospital, and who are willing to participate in the study
- Nursing students from different academic levels of baccalaureate nursing programs at school of nursing, who had finished at least two clinical rotations with patient care in hospital and willing to participate in the study were recruited.

**Exclusion Criteria:**

- The students in first academic level excluded because they don't have clinical training experience to identify characteristics of effective clinical instructor.
- Clinical instructors and students number who are not willing to participant in data collection.

**DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Firstly, clinical students and instructors were informed about the purpose and objective of the study. The researcher handed over the questionnaire with consent form to the clinical instructor and to the nursing students during their class time for the enhancement of response rate. Participants were informed about the voluntary participation, right of withdraw at any stage of data collection and their identity should have kept confidential. Study participants were asked to give consent if they were agreed to participant in this study. The conveniently selected students and instructors were invited to fill the questionnaire sheet comprising of 2 sections, demographics of study participant section and perception of nursing students and instructor regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor. This whole procedure takes maximum 20 minutes of the study participants.

**DATA COLLECTION TOOL**

This study used the Nursing Clinical Teacher Effectiveness Inventory (NCTEI) developed by Knox and Mogan (1985) to measure participant's perception on 47 items. The tool consisted on five subsets of clinical teacher characteristics.

- i) **Interpersonal relationship:** 11 items were used to assess the interpersonal relationship among students and instructors
- ii) **Personality traits:** 07 items were used to assess the personality traits in clinical teaching
- iii) **Teaching ability:** 17 items were used to assess the Teaching ability in clinical teaching. It includes instructional skills, creating a positive learning environment, and promoting learning
- iv) **Nursing competence:** 09 items were used to assess the Nursing competence in clinical teaching
- v) **Evaluation:** 07 items were used to assess the type and amount of feedback the student receives from the teacher in relation to clinical performances

The responses of study participants on each characteristic of effective clinical instructor measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1- strongly disagree and 5- strongly agree.

**Reliability of the tools:** The tool was tested for reliability with subset coefficients ranging from .82 to .89. Alpha coefficients also were obtained by Knox and Mogan (1987) of the sub-scales: Interpersonal relationships,  $\alpha = .86$ ; Personality traits,  $\alpha = .83$  Teaching abilities,  $\alpha = .89$ ; Nursing competence,  $\alpha = .84$  and Evaluation,  $\alpha = .82$

#### **DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE**

The aim of the present study is to assess the Perception of undergraduate nursing students and clinical instructors towards the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor. Participants were informed about the purpose of study and their identity should have kept confidential. The research should have examined the questionnaire for completeness of response and carefully assign code to each of the questionnaire. The data was entered to the computer and analyzed statistical package for social studies (SPSS), version 21.0. The questionnaire sheet comprising of 2 sections, demographics of study participant section, and perceptions of undergraduate nursing students and clinical instructors towards the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor and ranked according to the order of importance. The descriptive statistics for instance, frequencies, mean, percentages, and standard deviation for each item were calculated. For the correlation among each item for each section was calculated.

## RESULT

### Demographic Characteristics

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the undergraduate nursing students (n=110)

S. No	Variables	Frequency n	Percentage %
1	Gender		
	• Male	17	15
	• Female	93	85
2	Age		
	• <18	3	02
	• 18 – 20	82	75
	• ≥20	25	23
3	Academic Level		
	• Second	44	40
	• Third	34	31
	• Fourth	32	29

The purpose of this study to assess the perceptions of nursing students and clinical instructor regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor at public sector hospital. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristic of nursing students at undergraduate level participated for data collection in this study. It consisted on gender, age, and academic level of undergraduate nursing students. The results show that the majority of study respondents were female (n = 85) while male represent (n = 15) of the sample. Moreover, mostly participants (75%) belong to age brackets 18–20 years, whereas very low percentage 02% reported less than 18 years while remaining participants (23%) had more than 20 years. Data was collected from second year (40%), third year (31%) and fourth years (29%) undergraduate nursing students.

**Table 2.** Demographic characteristics of clinical instructors (N= 15).

S. No	Variables	Frequency n	Percentage %
1	Gender		
	• Male	6	40
	• Female	9	60
2	Age		
	• < 25	1	7
	• 25-30 Yrs.	1	7
	• 30 -34 Yrs.	7	46
	• ≥35	6	40
3	Experience		
	• <5	4	27
	• 5 -10	8	53
	• ≥10	3	20
4	Educational Level		
	• Baccalaureate degree	5	33
	• Nursing Diploma	4	27
	• Master degree	6	40

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristic of clinical instructor who teach at the undergraduate level and participated for data collection in this study. The personal characteristics of clinical instructors consisted on gender, age, experience and educational level. The results show that the majority of study respondents were female (n = 9) while male represent (n = 6) of the sample. Moreover, very low number of participants (7%) belong to age < 25 years and (7%) belong to age bracket 25-30 years, whereas majority of the study participants (46%) belong to the age brackets 30 -34 while remaining participants (40%) had more than 35 years of age. Most of the study participants 53% having experience between 5-10 Years. While other respondents (27%) had work experience less than 5 Years and remaining study participants (20%) had experience of greater than 10 years. Data was collected from clinical instructors having the qualification of baccalaureate degree, nursing diploma and master's degree (33%, 27% & 40% respectively).

**Table 3.** Perception of undergraduate nursing students regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor (N= 110)

S. No	Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
<b>Teaching Ability</b>						
1	Explains clearly	37.0	40.1	15.6	2.9	4.4
2	Emphasizes what is important	29.4	50.6	12.2	4.4	3.4
3	Stimulates student interest in the subject	45.0	40.3	10.6	1.5	2.6
4	Remains accessible to students	27.4	38.3	20.0	5.7	8.6
5	Demonstrates clinical procedures and techniques	41.8	48.1	6.6	1.4	2.1
6	Guides students' development of clinical skills	36.1	50.0	8.1	3.5	2.3
7	Provides specific practice opportunity	44.4	40.6	7.0	5.1	2.9
8	Offers special help when difficulties arise	47.1	39.3	3.5	4.5	5.6

9	Is well prepared for teaching	41.5	44.3	10.0	4.2	0
10	Enjoys teaching	40.7	42.1	5.7	5.0	6.4
11	Encourages active participation in discussion	31.1	48.6	12.9	0	7.4
12	Gears instruction to students level of readiness	28.1	53.3	17.1	1.5	0
13	Quickly grasps what students are asking or telling	33.4	54.3	8.4	2.9	0
14	Answers carefully and precisely questions raised by students	30.3	24.3	24.3	5.4	15.7
15	Questions students to elicit underlying reasoning	42.9	42.0	6.6	5.4	3.1
16	Helps students organize their thoughts about patient problems	37.4	47.6	7.1	4.5	3.4
17	Promotes student independence	34.3	40.0	8.6	1.4	15.7

**Nursing Competence**

18	Demonstrates clinical skill and judgment	30.1	37.1	15.1	5.4	12.3
19	Demonstrates communication skills	43.0	38.0	10.7	3.4	4.9
20	Reveals broad reading in his/her area of interest	42.7	32.9	10.0	7.1	7.3
21	Discusses current development in his/her field	32.1	30.0	25.6	7.4	4.9
22	Directs students to useful literature in nursing	40.0	45.7	2.9	10.0	1.4
23	Demonstrates a breadth of knowledge in nursing	45.5	40.8	4.9	3.7	5.1
24	Recognizes own limitations	37.1	45.7	14.3	2.9	0.0

25	Takes responsibility of own Actions	45.7	42.2	5.6	1.1	5.4
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26	Is a good role model	30.7	42.1	10.3	10.0	6.9
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**Evaluation**

27	Makes specific suggestions for improvement	31.1	48.6	12.9	0	7.4
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28	Provides frequent feedback on students' performance	28.1	53.3	17.1	1.5	0
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29	Identifies students' strengths and limitations objectively	34.3	53.9	5.5	2.3	4
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30	Observes students' performance frequently	40.3	44.3	4.3	5.4	5.7
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31	Communicates expectations of students	42.1	20.0	28.6	5.4	3.9
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32	Gives students positive reinforcement for good contributions, observations or performance	31.4	40.6	17.1	6.5	4.4
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33	Corrects students' mistakes without belittling them	44.3	40.0	4.7	3.4	7.6
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34	Does not criticize students in front of others	35.7	40.2	17.6	1.1	5.4
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**Interpersonal Relations**

35	Provides support and encouragement to students	40.1	47.1	5.4	5.3	2.1
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36	Is approachable	37.0	35.0	10.7	7.4	9.9
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37	Encourages a climate of mutual respect	42.7	32.9	10.0	7.1	7.3
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38	Listens attentively	32.1	30.0	25.6	7.4	4.9
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39	Shows a personal interest in students	40.0	25.7	12.9	20.0	1.4
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40	Demonstrates empathy	41.5	30.8	14.9	5.7	7.1
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**Personality Traits**

41	Demonstrates enthusiasm	41.6	45.9	2.4	3	7.1
42	Is a dynamic and energetic person	37.3	51.1	5.1	3.2	3.3
43	Self-confidence	33.4	54.3	8.4	2.9	0
44	Is self-critical	30.3	24.3	24.3	5.4	15.7
45	Is open-minded and non-judgmental	42.1	20.0	28.6	5.4	3.9
46	Has a good sense of humor	31.4	40.6	17.1	6.5	4.4
47	Appears organized	34.3	40.0	8.6	1.4	15.7

**Key:** 5= Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3= Neutral 2= Dis-agree 1= Strongly Disagree

Perception is the way of thinking of undergraduate nursing student's perceptions of nursing students regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor at public sector hospital. The responses of the nursing students were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale with 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral) 2 (dis disagree) and 1 (strongly disagree). The table 3 depicted the percentage of undergraduate nursing student's perceptions of nursing students regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor. Majority of the study participant's responses indicating strongly agree or agree statement towards the characteristics of effective clinical instructor for better learning of student nurses. Nursing students strongly agree (85.3%) with the characteristics of the clinical instructor that "Stimulates student interest in the subject". This characteristics of clinical instructor enables the nursing students to meet their learning objectives and learn the concepts with interest and critically think about meeting the objectives. Likewise, majority of the nurses (89.9%) showed positive response to the clinical instructor teaching ability as "Demonstrates clinical procedures and techniques" and 86.1 percent responses related to the statement of "Guides students' development of clinical skills'.

Furthermore, most of the student nurses are strongly agreeing that clinical instructors have the teaching ability to "Offers special help when difficulties arise" (86.4%), "Questions students to elicit underlying reasoning" (84.9%), "Helps students organize their thoughts about patient problems" (85%), and nursing competency in the form to "Demonstrates communication skills" (81%) and "Directs students to useful literature

in nursing” (85.7%), “Demonstrates a breadth of knowledge in nursing” (86.3%) and “Takes responsibility of own actions” (87.9%).

On the other hand, majority of the nursing students show positive perception towards the effective evaluation made by the clinical instructor in the form of statement likely “Identifies students’ strengths and limitations objectively” (90.2 %), “Observes students’ performance frequently (84.6 %)” and “Corrects students’ mistakes without belittling them” (84.3%). Additionally, nursing students strongly agree with the usefulness of the clinical instructor in developing the interpersonal relations with undergraduate nursing students by providing support and encouragement to students (87.2%). The nursing students perceived that the personality traits of effective clinical teacher are the demonstration of enthusiasm (87.5%) and is a dynamic and energetic person (88.4%) during teaching learning process. All these characteristics are the top important features of clinical instructors as perceived by undergraduate nursing students.

**Table 4.** Perception of clinical instructors regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor (N= 15)

S. No	Statement	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
<b>Teaching Ability</b>						
1	Explains clearly	37.0	40.1	15.6	2.9	4.4
2	Emphasizes what is important	29.4	50.6	12.2	4.4	3.4
3	Stimulates student interest in the subject	47.4	45.3	3.7	2.3	1.3
4	Remains accessible to students	42.0	30.3	15.6	6.5	5.6
5	Demonstrates clinical procedures and techniques	17.0	47.1	31.6	1.4	2.9
6	Guides students’ development of clinical skills	26.1	50.0	17.1	4.3	2.5
7	Provides specific practice opportunity	46.4	45.0	2.9	3.6	2.1
8	Offers special help when	33.1	38.1	13.5	5.7	9.6

	difficulties arise					
9	Is well prepared for teaching	41.5	44.3	10.0	4.2	0
10	Enjoys teaching	40.7	42.1	5.7	5.0	6.4
11	Encourages active participation in discussion	43.1	48.6	2.9	2.4	3
12	Gears instruction to students level of readiness	37.1	53.1	3.5	4.1	2.2
13	Quickly grasps what students are asking or telling	33.4	54.3	8.4	2.9	0
14	Answers carefully and precisely questions raised by students	45.3	47.3	1.4	3.3	2.7
15	Questions students to elicit underlying reasoning	42.1	20.0	28.6	5.4	3.9
16	Helps students organize their thoughts about patient problems	31.4	40.6	17.1	6.5	4.4
17	Promotes student independence	34.3	40.0	8.6	1.4	15.7

#### Nursing Competence

18	Demonstrates clinical skill and judgment	30.1	37.1	15.1	5.4	12.3
19	Demonstrates communication skills	37.0	35.0	10.7	7.4	9.9
20	Reveals broad reading in his/her area of interest	41.5	52.2	2.3	4	0
21	Discusses current development in his/her field	37.3	53.8	3.5	2.5	2.9
22	Directs students to useful literature in nursing	40.0	55.7	2.9	0	1.4
23	Demonstrates a breadth of knowledge in nursing	45.5	44.7	1.1	4.8	3.9

24	Recognizes own limitations	37.1	45.7	14.3	2.9	0.0
25	Takes responsibility of own actions	35.7	40.2	17.6	1.1	5.4
26	Is a good role model	45.7	45.1	5.3	0	3.9

**Evaluation**

27	Makes specific suggestions for improvement	31.1	48.6	12.9	0	7.4
28	Provides frequent feedback on students' performance	28.1	53.3	17.1	1.5	0
29	Identifies students' strengths and limitations objectively	33.4	54.3	8.4	2.9	0
30	Observes students' performance frequently	30.3	24.3	24.3	5.4	15.7
31	Communicates expectations of students	42.1	20.0	28.6	5.4	3.9
32	Gives students positive reinforcement for good contributions, observations or performance	31.4	50.6	7.1	6.5	4.4
33	Corrects students' mistakes without belittling them	34.3	40.0	8.6	1.4	15.7
34	Does not criticize students in front of others	35.7	40.2	17.6	1.1	5.4

**Interpersonal Relations**

35	Provides support and encouragement to students	30.1	37.1	15.1	5.4	12.3
36	Is approachable	37.0	35.0	10.7	7.4	9.9
37	Encourages a climate of mutual respect	48.7	47.9	0	2.1	1.3
38	Listens attentively	37.1	52.0	3.6	2.4	4.9
39	Shows a personal interest in	40.0	25.7	12.9	20.0	1.4

	students					
40	Demonstrates empathy	41.5	30.8	14.9	5.7	7.1
<b>Personality Traits</b>						
41	Demonstrates enthusiasm	31.1	48.6	12.9	0	7.4
42	Is a dynamic and energetic person	28.1	53.3	17.1	1.5	0
43	Self-confidence	36.9	54.4	5.3	2.4	1
44	Is self-critical	30.3	24.3	24.3	5.4	15.7
45	Is open-minded and non-judgmental	42.1	42.0	7.6	4.4	3.9
46	Has a good sense of humor	31.4	40.6	17.1	6.5	4.4
47	Appears organized	44.3	46.4	2.6	1.5	5.2

**Key:** 5= Strongly Agree 4=Agree 3= Neutral 2= Dis-agree 1= Strongly Disagree

The way of thinking of clinical instructors regarding effective characteristics of clinical instructor was depicted in Table.4. The highly perceived characteristics by clinical instructors as the top characteristics of an effective clinical instructor were as follows: Majority of the clinical instructor responses indicating strongly agree or agree statement towards the characteristics of effective clinical instructor for better learning of student nurses. Clinical instructors strongly agree (91.7%) with the characteristics of the clinical instructor that “Stimulates student interest in the subject matter”. This characteristics of clinical instructor enables the nursing students to meet their learning objectives and learn the concepts with interest and critically think about meeting the objectives. Likewise, majority of the instructors (91.1%) showed positive response to the clinical instructor teaching ability as “Provides specific practice opportunity” and 91.7 percent responses related to the statement of “Encourages active participation in discussion”. Furthermore, most of the clinical instructors are strongly agreeing that effective clinical instructors have the teaching ability to “Gears instruction to students’ level of readiness” (90.2%), “Answers carefully and precisely questions raised by students” (92.6%). Moreover, majority of the clinical instructors show positive perception towards the effective nursing competence demonstrated by the clinical instructor in the form of statement namely “Reveals broad reading in his/her area of interest” (93.7 %), “Discusses current development in his/her field (91.1 %)”, “Directs

students to useful literature in nursing” (95.7%), Demonstrates a breadth of knowledge in nursing (90.2%) and is a good role model (90.8%) for undergraduate nursing students.

On the other hand, majority of the clinical instructors show positive perception towards the effective evaluation made by the clinical instructor in the form of statement likely “Gives students positive reinforcement for good contributions, observations or performance” (80 %), Additionally, clinical instructors strongly agree with the usefulness of the clinical instructor in developing the interpersonal relations with undergraduate nursing students by Encourages a climate of mutual respect (96.6%) and Listens attentively to the nursing students (89.1).

The clinical instructors perceived that the personality traits of effective clinical teachers are the Self-confidence in front of students (91.3%), clinical instructors are open-minded and non-judgmental (84.1%) and Appears organized (90.6%) during teaching learning process. All these characteristics are the top important features of clinical instructors as perceived by clinical instructors.

## **DISCUSSION**

The aim of this study to assess the perceptions of nursing students and instructor regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor at the school of nursing, public sector hospital.

Nursing profession is the backbone of health care system, therefore, student nurses need rigorous training for learning skills at clinical setting. Nursing students need to learn basics of clinical and apply the theoretical knowledge in practical field to minimize the gap between theory and practice. One of the important factor that effect the nursing education quality is the effective learning at clinical setting. The effective and high quality education at clinical considered as the heart of nursing education professionally (Prabha et al., 2016).

The clinical teaching helps the nursing students by providing different skills related to their successful clinical practice and enhanced their learning by clinical demonstration of various nursing procedures on real patients. This will help the novel nurses to move into advanced learner stage and enable them to exhibit proficient clinical skills in real situations especially in critical care units (Rehan et al., 2007). There is only one main variable of the study which is perceptions of nursing students and instructor regarding the characteristics of effective clinical instructor. The perception is the way of thinking

of nursing students and clinical instructor towards the characteristics of effective clinical instructor. The finding of one previous study indicated that intelligent teacher must have grasped the capability to teach. This capability consists the services which are necessary for knowledge transmission and positive attitude of the teachers to guide the students in acquiring the knowledge and practicing the skills in a conducive environment (Wolf, 2004).

The results of our study depicted that undergraduate nursing students and clinical instructors perceived that teaching ability of clinical instructors at clinical setting was the foremost important characteristics of effective clinical teaching. The nursing students think that clinical instructors facilitate the clinical students at every step to perform the clinical procedures with competency. These findings are consistent with the results of a study conducted by Ali (2012). The findings of this study depicted that at clinical setting the clinical instructor teaching ability is essential for application of theory into practice by novel nursing student. The role of instructor at clinical is to guide the clinical students at every step to perform the clinical procedures with competency and aids the nursing student in transferring knowledge learned in the classroom to implementation at the bedside.

This is also supported by previous studies whose findings showed that teaching ability of clinical instructors was valued as the most important characteristic of effective teaching (Papp, 2003; Girija, et al.,2013). Furthermore, this was antagonist with the study findings that depicted teaching ability a lowest most characteristics of clinical instructor as told by nursing students and foremost important by teachers (Baker, 2012).

Moreover, with respect to interpersonal relationships of effective clinical instructor, the findings of our study showed that nursing students and clinical teachers perceived the clinical instructor interpersonal relationships second most valued teaching characteristic of clinical instructors. This finding is similar with findings of a prior study which depicted that interpersonal relations were the very important characteristics ranked by students and clinical instructors as well (Lee, W. Cholowski, K. & Williams, A. 2002). Several other studies supported the findings of the present study results by stating that interpersonal relations the very important and highly ranked clinical instructor characteristic at clinical setting (Pournamdar, 2015; Baker, 2012).

Additionally, the findings of current study indicated that clinical instructors nursing competence, evaluation and personality trait were perceived as lowest characteristics at clinical setting by undergraduate students and nursing instructors. These findings were consistent with the results given by Pournamdar, 2015 depicted that clinical instructors help the student nurses to use various nursing frameworks for planning patient and family centered holistic care plans and use evidences provided by research to guide differences practices of nurses.

Clinical instructors help the internship students to make informed decision regarding quality care by the use of critical thinking skills. This study results indicated the competency and evaluation features of clinical instructors as lowest one (Pournamdar, 2015). Likewise, in another study the results shown that evaluation and personality qualities were ranked as the lowest characteristics of clinical instructor perceived by nursing students and evaluation was regarded as the lowest features of clinical instructor (Phelps, 2009).

Moreover, clinical environment is important factor that effects the learning of clinical nursing students and integral part of every education program. Clinical environment plays an important role in the provision of effective teaching for student nurses in clinical setting (Eta, Atanga, Atashili, & D'Cruz, 2011). Brookfield, S. (2006) Likewise, the study of Brookfield indicated that students always consider the evaluation process more seriously than clinical instructors. The results of Brookfield study were antagonist with the findings of the current study that showed evaluation as the lowermost characteristic of clinical instructor.

Furthermore, the results of several previous studies indicated competence of nursing instructor at clinical was observed by instructors and nursing students as most important features (Johnson, 2002; Zane, 2004). The clinical instructor enables the nursing students to use verbal and nonverbal clues for effective therapeutic communication with interdisciplinary teams and patients as well. At clinical placement, the important task is to maintain the record and documentation of essential nursing intervention and nursing care plans effectively for evidences at legal and professional level.

Clinical instructors help the interns to groom their personality and perform physical assessment comprehensively for better diagnosis of patient health problem. The clinical instructor personality plays very important role in the teaching learning process.

Clinical instructors act as role model for undergraduate nursing students and inspires and motivate the students to study better. The findings of one previous study indicated that the teacher personality has strong and everlasting effect on the attitude of students (Indra, 2016). These mentioned findings were different with the findings of our study that shown personality of clinical instructor during clinical placement scored lowest one feature by nursing undergraduate students and clinical teachers. The results findings of current study explained that nursing students and clinical teachers' perception differed in the order of importance of the characteristics of effective clinical instructors.

### **CONCLUSION**

Student nurses need rigorous training for learning skills at clinical setting along extensive knowledge for better quality care. Nursing students need to learn basics of clinical and apply the theoretical knowledge in practical field to minimize the gap between theory and practice. One of the important factor that effect the nursing education quality is the effective learning at clinical setting. The effective and high quality education at clinical considered as the heart of nursing education professionally. The characteristics of effective clinical instructors is very important for the successful provision of quality care which help the students to become a competent clinical nurse. The results of current study summarized that teaching ability of clinical instructor and their interpersonal relations were considered the most important and highly scored effective clinical instructor characteristic according to the opinions of clinical nursing students and teachers. Likewise, the present study findings concluded that competence, evaluation and personality traits features of effective clinical instructors ranked as lower most important by the undergraduate student nurses and clinical instructors. All these findings give foundation to form a conducive environment of learning in which clinical instructor effectively teach the clinical students to bridge the gap of theory and practice

### **STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

- This study results may be utilized to enhance the clinical faculty awareness about the perception of student nurses regarding effective characteristics of clinical instructors.
- The findings of present study help the administration to organize seminars on the importance of clinical instructors in clinical setting for better quality care.

- This study suggests clinical instructor's evaluation on periodic basis and it is necessary to incorporate unused behaviors, into their practice

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Only quantitative methods were used for data collection so qualitative approach would be used to achieve the richness of data
- There is a small sample size and findings not generalizable so next study need to be conducted with a larger sample
- The characteristics of effective clinical instructors is just limited to undergraduate nursing students so further studies regarding the role of clinical instructors on patient outcomes would be required.

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