

Effective Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum as Perceived by Students

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Abstract

Background: Nursing education concentrate on the transmission of nursing knowledge and assisting nursing students to acquire the necessary skills and attitudes associated with nursing practice. The quality of undergraduate nursing education is essential to producing graduates that are safe and effective practitioners, relevant to the broader contexts of care. **Aim:** the present study aimed to investigate the point of views of nurse student about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum. **Design:** A cross-sectional design was used in carrying out this study. **Setting:** This study was conducted at the faculty of nursing, which affiliated to Ain Shams University, 324 nurses students from the four different academic grades included in the study. **Tool of data collection:** A tool consisted of two parts: socio-demographic characteristics and opinionative sheet aims at investigating elements of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum. **Results:** There is a significant correlation between department, age and level of opinion on "Teacher / Instructor". There is a significant correlation between academic year and level of opinion on "Objectives of the Curriculum", "Teacher / Instructor", "Evaluation Process" and Total opinion in nursing curriculum. There is a significant correlation between gender and level of opinion on "Objectives of the Curriculum", "Content of the Curriculum", "Clinical Setting", "Clinical Instructors", "Teaching Methodology", "Students / Teacher Interaction", and Total opinion in nursing curriculum. The element with the highest percent of high agreement is "Clinical Instructors" while the element with the highest percent of low agreement is "Content of the Curriculum". There is statistically significance correlation between all the elements of nursing curriculum. **Conclusion:** All the elements of nursing curriculum are statistically relation with the total opinion score which means that all the components are important. **Recommendations:** Reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum from the teachers' point of view and students' complaints should be taken into consideration to improve quality of learning process.

Keywords: Nursing Curriculum, Undergraduate Nursing Students.

Introduction:

Nursing education concentrate on the transmission of nursing knowledge and assisting nursing students to acquire the necessary skills and attitudes associated with nursing practice. Nursing education encompasses the three domains of learning, the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (Awad, 2009). The quality of undergraduate nursing education is essential to producing graduates that are safe and effective practitioners, relevant to the broader contexts of care (Ralph, 2015).

It's important for faculty to develop a curriculum structure that will support the type of program desired and the outcomes that are envisioned the traditional approach to designing curricula offers structured courses in specific sequence. This approach identifies

what the students are to learn, when the learning should be. The knowledge of nursing and other support content, nursing skills, critical learning experiences and evaluation methods for assessing learning outcomes are emphasized (Sudha, 2013). Developing a framework of best practices for promoting critical thinking in nursing education can assist nurse educators with integrating critical thinking strategies into nursing curricula. Promoting student competence in critical thinking skills is essential for nurse educators (Burrell, 2014).

Active learning strategies have been used to help students achieve desired nursing competency, In previous study aims to evaluate the effect of an active learning program on competency of students, the findings suggest that an active learning strategy is useful for

helping undergraduate students to gain competency (*Shin , 2015*).

Faculty faces the demand of preparing nursing students for the constantly changing health care environment. Effective use of online, classroom, and clinical conferencing opportunities helps to enhance nursing students' clinical reasoning capabilities needed for practice. The growth of technology creates an avenue for faculty to develop engaging learning opportunities (*Shellenbarger and Robb2015*).

Nursing students considered adult learners and they are different from one another in many things as age, gander, motivations, intelligence, learning styles, personality, and expectations, but they have one thing in common i.e. they are all voluntary participant. Self-directed learning focuses on the process by which adults take control of them on learning, how they set their own learning goals, locate appropriate resources, decide on which learning methods to use and evaluate their progress (*Awad, 2009*).

Significance of the study:

Nursing education has a great importance in all countries of the world because it has a clear role in the formation of efficient nurses and because it provides all the reasons for upgrading the profession of nursing and its employees. As the nursing curriculum is the cornerstone of the educational process because it is a mean to form and evaluate the behavior of graduates and employees in the profession and is also a tool to achieve the objectives of the educational process; The researcher tried to link the nursing curriculum with several factors she believes that they are strongly related to the curriculum and affect it and that is through her work in nursing schools. As the goal of nursing education is to graduate qualified nurses, the researcher was keen to know the views of students through a study to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the nursing curriculum from the point of view of students.

Aim of the Study:

This Study aims at investigating the point of views of nurse student about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum.

The research question was:

What are the nursing students' opinions about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculums?

Subjects and Methods:

The methodology of this study was portrayed under four main designs as follows:

- I. Technical design.
- II. Operational design.
- III. Administrative design.
- IV. Statistical design.

I. Technical Design:

The technical design of this study includes research design, setting of the study, subjects and tools of data collection.

Research design:

A cross-sectional design was used in carrying out this study.

Setting:

This Study was conducted at faculty of nursing, which affiliated to Ain Shams University, and got the accreditation from the national authority to ensure the quality of accreditation twice, in 2011 and the second time in 2017. The faculty includes seven scientific departments namely; Medical Surgical Nursing 1 and 2, Pediatric health, Maternity and gynecology, Psychiatric and Mental health, Community health, and Nursing Administration departments.

Subjects:

Sample criteria: All nursing students from first to fourth year of academic year (academic year 2016 – 2017) in the faculty of nursing during the time of the study were eligible to be included in the sample,

Sample size: (30%) selected randomly from each grade, about 324 out of 1080 nursing students were included in the study.

Sample technique: Simple random sampling technique was used to recruit the

students from the four different academic grades.

Tools of data collection:

Data in this study was collected by using a tool developed by (*Awad, 2009*) and modified by the researcher, it consisted of two parts:

Part I: socio-demographic characteristics; included personal information such as (age, gender, study year, department).

Part II: opinionative sheet aims at investigating elements of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum and it includes (65 statements) under (8) dimensions about:

- **Dimension A** (objectives of the curriculum): includes 6 items
- **Dimension B** (contents of the curriculum): includes 14 items
- **Dimension C** (clinical setting): includes 9 items
- **Dimension D** (teacher / instructor competencies): includes 10 items
- **Dimension E** (the clinical instructors): includes 5 items
- **Dimension F** (teaching methodology): includes 6 items
- **Dimension G** (students / teacher interaction and communications): includes 4 items
- **Dimension H** (evaluation process "exams, grading and assignment"): includes 11 items

Scoring system:

The study subject's responses were measured on two points Agree (1) to disagree (0). The scores of the items were summed up and the total scores were divided by the number of items in each dimension, giving a mean score for the part. The scores were converted into percent score. The response of nurse student was considered to be high agreement upon the items if the table score obtained was 60% or higher (corresponding to agree), and low if the total scores were less than 60% (corresponding to disagree).

II. Operational design:

The operational design for this study involved three stages, namely; preparatory phase, pilot study and fieldwork.

Preparatory phase:

This phase started with review of the literature related to the effective curriculum, materials in text books and scientific journals were used to develop the data collection tools.

Validation of the data collection tool was done by jury consists of five experts in nursing fields, they examined the face and content validity of the tool through assessing its clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and accuracy, modifications in the form of rephrasing some items were done based on their comments and recommendations.

Testing reliability of modified tool was done by Cronbach alpha test, the result was (0.97) it means internal consistency of the tool was compatible.

Pilot study:

A pilot study was conducted on (33) students representing 10% of the main study sample. It was aimed to determine the feasibility of the study tools to estimate the time needed for filling the forms and to test the feasibility, practicability of the tool and clarity of the language of the questionnaire. It helped in identifying potential obstacles and problems that may be encountered during the period of data collection. The time ranged between 20-25 minutes. The students in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample.

Field work:

After obtaining all official permission to conduct the study from the faculty dean, the researcher was met the head of every nursing department to determine the suitable time for collecting data from the study participants, the data were collected from the four academic years .

The researcher interviewed participants in groups to explain the aim of the study and invite them to participate. Those who give consent was gave the data collection forms and instructed to filling them out. They will return the filled forms anonymously. The researcher was available for any

clarification and checked each sheet after filling for its completion.

Data collection phase was carried out during March 2017 and April 2017. The researcher visited the faculty three days per week, from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm sometimes extended to 4.00 Pm and distributed the tools to the study subjects and asked them to fill it, the researcher was available all the time of data collection for any clarification, the time needed by each student to fill the sheet ranged from 20-25 minutes .

The data collection did not take the same time in all department because these department content from seven department. In each week the researcher collected from 8 to 10 questionnaire sheets from the study subjects. The questionnaire sheets were completed by nursing students then collected and reviewed by the researcher to check each filling questionnaire and ensuring its completeness.

III. Administrative design:

An official letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted from the dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, to the head of each department to facilitate the researcher mission. This letter included the aim of the study to obtain the approval to conduct the study and seek the support. The researcher explained the aim of the study and the implications of the expected results.

Ethical considerations:

The study protocol was approved by ethical committee in Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University, and approval was taken from every head of department in the faculty. In addition, each participant was informed about their rights to refuse or withdraw from the study without excuse at any time. The study maneuvers not entail any harmful effect on participants.

IV. Statistical design:

Data entry and statistical analysis were done by using SPSS (0.16) statistical software package and Microsoft Office Excel for data handling and graphical presentation. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form

of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables. Means and standard deviation and range for quantitative variables. Qualitative variable was compared using (chi square "X). The correlation between variables scores was analyzed by Matrix correlation. Statistical significance was considered at p-value <0.05 and highly significant at p-value <0.01. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability of the tool through its internal consistency.

Result:

Table (1): shows that (74.4%) of study subjects were females. Above the quarter of study subjects was (26.9%) from second year and the same from third year followed by (24.7%) from first year and finally (21.6%) from fourth year. Above the fifty (51.5%) of study subjects was from medical surgical. The highest percent of the study subjects (51.9%) was in the age category 17-<21.

Table (2): reports that: There is a significant relation between opinion of nurse students in nursing curriculum and gender for all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of females was higher for all dimensions of opinion.

Table (3): states that: There is a significant relation between the total opinion of nurse students in nursing curriculum and academic year for nearly all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of fourth year was the highest for all dimensions of opinion followed by opinion of third year then opinion of first year and finally the least opinion score was for second year.

Table (4): reveals that: There is a significant relation between opinion of nurse students in nursing curriculum and department for all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of community health was the highest for all dimensions of opinion followed by opinion of Psychiatry then opinion of obstetric then opinion of pediatric and finally the least opinion score was for medical surgical.

Table (5): shows that: There is a significant relation between opinion of nurse

students in nursing curriculum and age for nearly all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of age category 22-<24 was the highest for all dimensions of opinion followed by age 17-<21.

Table (6): presents that: There is a significant correlation between department, age and level of opinion on "**Teacher / Instructor**". There is a significant correlation between academic year and level of opinion on "**Objectives of the Curriculum**", "**Teacher / Instructor**", "**Evaluation Process**" and Total opinion in nursing curriculum. There is a significant correlation between gender and level of opinion on "**Objectives of the Curriculum**", "**Content of the Curriculum**", "**Clinical Setting**", "**Clinical Instructors**",

"**Teaching Methodology**", "**Students / Teacher Interaction**", and Total opinion in nursing curriculum.

Table (7): shows that: The element with the highest percent of high agreement is "**Clinical Instructors**" with (75.9%) while the element with the highest percent of low agreement is "**Content of the Curriculum**" with (14.8%).

Table (8): clears that: All the elements of nursing curriculum are statically relation with the total opinion score which means that all the components are important.

Table (1): Socio-demographic characteristics of study subjects (N=324)

Variable	Values	No.	%
Gender	Male	83	25.6
	Female	241	74.4
Academic year	First	80	24.7
	Second	87	26.9
	Third	87	26.9
	Fourth	70	21.6
Department	Medical surgical	167	51.5
	Pediatric	43	13.3
	Obstetric	44	13.6
	Psychiatry / NG Administration	33	10.2
	Community health / NG Administration	37	11.4
Age(years)	17-<21	168	51.9
	22-24	156	48.1

Table (2): Relation between opinion of nurse students about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum and gender

Nursing Curriculum	Male		Female		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Objectives of The Curriculum	1.43	0.56	1.64	0.44	3.57	.0001*
Content of The Curriculum	1.36	0.53	1.57	0.44	3.40	.001*
Clinical Setting	1.41	0.51	1.59	0.45	3.06	.002*
Teacher / Instructor	1.44	0.54	1.56	0.45	2.03	.043*
The Clinical Instructors	1.47	0.58	1.66	0.47	3.04	.003*
Teaching Methodology	1.36	0.56	1.57	0.50	3.12	.002*
Students /Teacher Interaction and Communications	1.41	0.64	1.61	0.51	2.81	.005*
Evaluation Process	1.44	0.54	1.59	0.46	2.44	.015*
Total opinion score (0=disagree, 1=neutral, 2=agree)	1.41	0.47	1.59	0.40	3.38	.001*

* Statistically significant at p<0.05

Table (3): Relation between opinion of nurse students about the criteria of effective undergraduate in nursing curriculum and academic year.

Nursing Curriculum	First		Second		Third		Fourth		F-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Objectives of The Curriculum	1.55	0.49	1.48	0.55	1.60	0.46	1.75	0.36	4.524	.004*
Content of The Curriculum	1.48	0.47	1.38	0.52	1.56	0.44	1.67	0.41	5.664	.001*
Clinical Setting	1.45	0.43	1.50	0.50	1.54	0.50	1.69	0.41	3.595	.014*
Teacher / Instructor	1.43	0.47	1.43	0.51	1.55	0.48	1.74	0.37	7.486	.0001*
The Clinical Instructors	1.58	0.53	1.51	0.54	1.61	0.50	1.78	0.40	3.888	.009*
Teaching Methodology	1.43	0.54	1.44	0.57	1.55	0.51	1.66	0.45	3.335	.020*
Students / Teacher Interaction and Communications	1.51	0.56	1.49	0.60	1.55	0.52	1.70	0.51	2.231	.084
Evaluation Process	1.51	0.47	1.44	0.53	1.55	0.51	1.75	0.37	5.894	.001*
Total opinion score (0=disagree, 1=neutral, 2=agree)	1.48	0.40	1.45	0.46	1.56	0.43	1.72	0.35	6.277	.0001*

* Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ **Table (4):** Relation between opinion of nurse students about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum and department.

Nursing Curriculum	Medical Surgical		Pediatic		Obstetric		Psychiatry		Community Health		F-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Objectives of The Curriculum	1.52	0.52	1.50	0.49	1.69	0.41	1.73	0.33	1.77	0.39	3.432	.005*
Content of The Curriculum	1.43	0.50	1.48	0.43	1.63	0.45	1.62	0.41	1.72	0.42	4.025	.001*
Clinical Setting	1.48	0.47	1.48	0.45	1.60	0.53	1.64	0.41	1.74	0.42	2.624	.024*
Teacher / Instructor	1.43	0.49	1.46	0.53	1.64	0.41	1.70	0.36	1.78	0.39	5.309	.0001*
The Clinical Instructors	1.55	0.54	1.54	0.51	1.68	0.48	1.75	0.46	1.81	0.34	2.723	.020*
Teaching Methodology	1.44	0.56	1.47	0.52	1.63	0.48	1.59	0.41	1.73	0.48	2.725	.020*
Students / Teacher Interaction and Communications	1.50	0.58	1.41	0.53	1.68	0.48	1.67	0.52	1.73	0.50	2.494	.031*
Evaluation Process	1.48	0.50	1.48	0.50	1.62	0.52	1.72	0.36	1.78	0.38	3.983	.002*
Total opinion score (0=disagree, 1=neutral, 2=agree)	1.47	0.43	1.48	0.43	1.64	0.42	1.67	0.31	1.75	0.38	4.607	.0001*

* Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Table (5): Relation between opinion of nurse students about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum and age.

Nursing Curriculum	17-<21		22-24		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Objectives of The Curriculum	1.51	0.51	1.67	0.43	2.23	.007*
Content of The Curriculum	1.43	0.50	1.60	0.43	2.38	.004*
Clinical Setting	1.48	0.46	1.61	0.47	1.93	.026*
Teacher / Instructor	1.43	0.49	1.63	0.44	2.80	.0001*
The Clinical Instructors	1.54	0.54	1.69	0.45	1.94	.024*
Teaching Methodology	1.45	0.55	1.58	0.49	1.77	.045*
Students / Teacher Interaction and Communications	1.49	0.58	1.62	0.51	1.61	.077
Evaluation Process	1.48	0.50	1.63	0.47	2.04	.016*
Total opinion score (0=disagree, 1=neutral, 2=agree)	1.47	0.43	1.62	0.40	2.51	.002*

* Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ **Table (6):** Correlation between Levels of nurse students' opinion about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum and Socio-demographic characteristics of study sample

Variables	Gender		Academic year		Department		Age (years)	
	Chi-square	p-value	Chi-square	p-value	Chi-square	p-value	Chi-square	p-value
Objectives of The Curriculum	8.1	0.01*	12.4	0.05*	17.3	0.6	5.9	0.2
Content of The Curriculum	14.3	0.001*	10	0.1	11.2	0.3	6.5	0.1
Clinical Setting	8.1	0.01*	7.4	0.2	10.6	0.3	1.3	0.8
Teacher / Instructor	1.2	0.5	16.9	0.01*	21.2	0.02*	12.1	0.01*
The Clinical Instructors	6.6	0.03*	8.2	0.2	9.9	0.4	3.4	0.4
Teaching Methodology	12.2	0.002*	8.3	0.2	13.1	0.2	2.7	0.5
Students / Teacher Interaction	7.2	0.02*	6.8	0.3	10.7	0.3	3.9	0.4
Evaluation Process	3.1	0.2	13.6	0.03*	16.2	0.09	4.5	0.3
Total opinion in Nursing Curriculum	13.5	0.001*	14.2	0.02*	17.2	0.07	3	0.5

* Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ **Table (7):** Levels of nurse students' opinion about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum.

Elements	Low (<50%)		Moderate (50%-70%)		High (>70%)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Objectives of The Curriculum	37	11.4	62	19.1	225	69.4	324	100
Content of The Curriculum	48	14.8	72	22.2	204	63.0	324	100
Clinical Setting	41	12.7	67	20.7	216	66.7	324	100
Teacher / Instructor	37	11.4	70	21.6	217	67.0	324	100
The Clinical Instructors	31	9.6	47	14.5	246	75.9	324	100
Teaching Methodology	46	14.2	76	23.5	202	62.3	324	100
Students / Teacher Interaction	40	12.3	65	20.1	219	67.6	324	100
Evaluation Process	35	10.8	76	23.5	213	65.7	324	100
Total opinion in Nursing Curriculum	39	12.0	70	21.6	215	66.4	324	100

Table (8): Linear regression analysis for the elements of nursing curriculum : total opinion score

Nursing Curriculum	Coefficient	t-value	p-value
Objectives of The Curriculum	0.68	22.8	0.0001*
Content of The Curriculum	0.79	35.2	0.0001*
Clinical Setting	0.79	33.8	0.0001*
Teacher / Instructor	0.76	30.3	0.0001*
The Clinical Instructors	0.67	24.8	0.0001*
Teaching Methodology	0.7	32.4	0.0001*
Students / Teacher Interaction and Communications	0.61	24.4	0.0001*
Evaluation Process	0.77	36.4	0.0001*

* Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Discussion:

Nurses comprise the largest group of health care professionals across the globe. Nursing is a complex and difficult profession that requires well-developed knowledge and practical. Nurses play an important role in designing the health care system. In view of this, the health care industry needs nurses who have the necessary qualifications to succeed and perform professionally in the workplace *Abedini S., Bin sihes, Takhti H. K. and Abedini, (2011)*.

Curriculum is the heart of every educational institute and every nursing program. The curriculum sets the goals, outcomes, standards, philosophy, and content that each nursing student will learn. High quality nursing curriculum plays an important role in preparing effective nurses for the current and future health care delivery system. A particularly crucial component of nursing curriculum focuses on clinical education *Awad, (2009)*. Regarding the function of nursing, students believed there is considerable report writing about which affected their nursing care. The students' perceptions of the contents of the subjects of nursing related only in part to professional function, both at the beginning and the end of their nursing education *Awad, (2009)*.

The aim of this study was aimed at investigating the point of views of nurse student about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum.

Socio-demographic characteristics of study sample (Table 1)

The age of the studied subjects covered a wide span ranging from seventeen to almost twenty-four, i.e. from the start to near the end of Academic year also all departments included in the study. This for covering the opinions of various student nurses and various studied curriculum and ensuring a heterogeneous group that would be the best chance of providing rich data. Also, *Mohudi, (2013)* reported that, in study about, an analysis of college-based nursing students' performance in biological nursing science in the United Kingdom the mean age of students is 30 years. These high means are partly due to nurses studying a diploma first before enrolling at a university for a degree in nursing

About nurses' Gender, most of the students were female. In this respect *Awad, (2009)* reported that in the study about, Quality of Nursing Courses as Perceived by Students Relationship with Their Academic Achievement in Palestine College of Nursing, the study findings the demographic characteristics of the students, revealed that the gender distribution approximately had the same percent. The Palestine College of Nursing accepts each year students of both genders, who have general secondary school education.

The current study findings revealed that the total agreement on the dimension of "objectives of the curriculum" is most of the sample, there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. In this respect *Heidari and Norouzadeh, (2015)* who believed that tasks and objectives are presented at the beginning of clinical education. However, there were low ratings to educational objectives and staff expectations of students; it means a challenge or an obstacle in these items.

Similarly, in *Khadivzadeh, (2004)* who reported that, most of the students considered the clinical education objectives as clear and consistent with the content of clinical education. In contrast to our findings, *Taghinejad, Mehri, (2008)*: who stated that, in study about, Barriers to Clinical Education. Journal of Kerman Nursing and Midwifery School nursing students have considered the lack of clear job description and inappropriateness clinical education with objectives as the major problems in clinical education

The present study has also assessed nurse student's point of view about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum regarding contents of the curriculum. The result revealed that the total agreement on the dimension of "content of the curriculum" is most of the sample; there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. *Ide et al., (2014)* confirmed that, in study about Evaluation of the implementation of the integrated curriculum in the nursing undergraduate program, above fifty of undergraduate student considered the content as Very Adequate, 18% identified it as Fully Adequate; 9% said it was Adequate, and only 1% reported it to be Partially Adequate.

Regarding to the present study, the total agreement of undergraduate student's nurse on the dimension of "clinical setting" most of the sample showed that there is no statically significant difference between agreements of the four study years. It may be due to Effective clinical teaching is crucial for the learning of nursing students in the clinical settings. It helps in preparing students for the work they will have to do as practicing nurses.

Queirós and Costa, (2005) stated, in study about, Undergraduate nursing students' difficulties during clinical training: the perception of the main causes not being aware of differences between actual and expected behavior in the clinical setting creates conflicts in nursing students. Nursing students receive instructions that are different from what they have been taught in the classroom. Students feel anxious and this anxiety affects their performance. Nursing students clearly identified that the initial clinical experience was very stressful for them

In the same line with this, *Messas et al., (2015)* clarified that, in study about, the educational environment of the undergraduate nursing course from the student perspective, the climate of learning in practical teaching situations, called clinical learning in the study, is essential for the professional development of students. This requires continuous and ongoing communication between the students, teachers, and health professionals involved in the process.

The present study has also demonstrated that the total agreement on the dimension of "teacher / instructor" there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. The finding is in agreement with *Awad, (2009)* who reported that in study about, Quality of Nursing Courses as Perceived by Students Relationship with Their Academic Achievement in Palestine College of Nursing, The students perceived their instructors as having good personal and professional characteristics as dealing with students with respect, giving feedback, motivating them, being available most of the times answering their questions, giving instructions, create a positive and comfortable learning environment, correlating theory with practice in clinical settings and show good role model.

In this same respect *Mohudi, (2013)* mentioned that in study about, an analysis of college-based nursing students' performance in biological nursing science, a clear majority of students felt that support had been offered by lecturers. Most students rated lecturer support as "very good" to "excellent. These students often seek more support from their lecturers to help them catch-up and learn the content missed. These insights help to illuminate the findings of this study in that not only do the nursing students seek lecturer support but that they also appreciate the quality of support provided.

The present study results demonstrated high agreement on the dimension of "clinical instructors" there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. It may be related to improper clinical instructor preparation is seen as a major problem to effective clinical teaching. In this regard *EL Banan and Elsharkawy, (2017)* indicated that, in study about,

Undergraduate Nursing Students' and Clinical Instructors' Perceptions of the Characteristics of an Effective Clinical Instructor at the Faculty of Nursing, Cairo University, characteristics of an effective clinical instructors highly perceived by undergraduate nursing students.

In consistent with findings *Niederriter, Eyth and Thoman, (2107)* support the study result, in study about, Nursing Students' Perceptions on Characteristics of an Effective Clinical Instructor, discovered supportive behaviors by the clinical instructors were rated high among these undergraduate nursing students. Also, *Heidari and Norouzadeh, (2015)* showed that, the study about nursing students' perspectives on clinical education, nursing students scored the clinical instructors' behaviors above average. In contrast, *Tavakoli, Karimi, Tayefi and Hussaini, (2009)* confirmed that, in study about, Determine the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor in the view of the student of nursing, determining the characteristics of an effective clinical instructor revealed that the students had given lower scores to interaction by the instructor.

Nurse student's point of view about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum regarding to the dimension of "teaching methodology" has also shown the total agreement, about above the half of the sample showed that there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. It may be related to Nursing teachers are being encouraged to use teaching methods which enables the students to be more responsible for their learning.

In congruence with the current study finding, *Awad, (2009)* mentioned that Generally, teaching methodology have been perceived by students as having the least quality level score of the dimensions of all nursing courses. This could be because most of teachers using a limited strategies and methods of teaching, as they depended on lectures, and power points presentations only. Other teaching methods like role play, group discussions, problem solving, simulations, self-learning...etc. were not used because of the unavailability of facilities, both manpower and materials. *Ali, (2008)* contradicted

the studied result in study about Students perception of the various teaching methods used in the primary health care course, the teaching methods for the PHC course need to be reviewed in the light of the present study.

The present study has also assessed Nurse student's point of view about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculum regarding to the dimension of "students / teacher interaction and communications" most of the sample pointed that there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. In the sample, fourth year had the highest agreement and second year the least.

In this regard *de Oliveira and Braga, (2016)* mentioned that, in study about the development of communication skills and the teacher's performance in the nursing student's perspective, Students identify and value the importance of their teachers' performance in the development and acquisition of communication skills. Additionally, students who experience active teaching-learning methodologies acknowledge the teacher as essential to provide opportunities for students to express their knowledge and though.

The present study has also demonstrated that the total agreement on the dimension of "evaluation process" about half of the sample showed that there is no significant difference between agreements of the four study years. In the sample, fourth year had the highest agreement and second year the least. Therefore *Awad, (2009)* confirmed that there is satisfactory courses evaluation process, fair evaluation, comprehensive exams and covered most of the course topics.

The present study has also assessed relation between opinion in nursing curriculum and gender. It demonstrated that there is a significant relation between opinion in nursing curriculum and gender for all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of females was higher for all dimensions of opinion (table11). The same line, *Yekta, (1996)* confirmed that, in study about, Curriculum evaluation of nursing education in Iran. The difference among the mean score of gender groups of the students on their opinions in

evaluating the nursing courses of the curriculum was statistically significant. On the other hand, **Awad, (2009)** revealed that there is no statistical significance difference between gender and all curriculum domains.

As for Relation between opinion in nursing curriculum and academic year, the present study revealed there is a significant relation between opinion in nursing curriculum and academic year for nearly all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of fourth year was the highest for all dimensions of opinion followed by opinion of third year then opinion of first year and finally the least opinion score was for second year. The results of the study done in Pakistan by **Ali, (2008)** suggest that, in study about, Admission criteria and subsequent academic performance of general nursing diploma students age was important only in the last year of study in a nursing programme.

The current study findings also indicated that there is a significant relation between opinion in nursing curriculum and department for all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of community health was the highest for all dimensions of opinion followed by opinion of Psychiatry then opinion of obstetric then opinion of pediatric and finally the least opinion score was for medical surgical. This may be because the first two courses were taught for students at the fourth level, where the students have higher expectations, maturity, more experience, and more knowledge and can assess and evaluate matters better than lower levels.

In congruence with this present study finding, **Awad, (2009)** reported the study findings revealed that the students perceived the whole nursing courses as having average quality level. While there is, some differences of scores. among nursing courses, the “nursing management course, and community health nursing course” were of the first two ranks and having high quality level, Mental health and psychiatric nursing course, fundamentals of nursing course, adult health nursing; pediatric nursing, and maternity nursing were of next ranking respectively.

There is a significant relation between opinion in nursing curriculum and age for nearly

all dimensions of opinion. Opinion of age category 22-<24 was the highest for all dimensions of opinion followed by age 17-<21 .it may be due to age category 22-<24had more the academic experience. **Ramos et al., (2015)** reported that in study about satisfaction with academic experience among undergraduate nursing students, younger students also had more satisfaction with the curriculum they might idealize the university environment and have positive expectations about professional training and personal development, as well as expectations of new friendships.

In total, all the components of nursing curriculum are strongly directly correlated with each other. "Teaching methods" and "evaluation and exams" had the highest correlation. in agreement with **Yaket, (1996)** who reported that to determine any relationship among the components of the curriculum, Pearson's Product-moment was measured. None of the correlation coefficients as indicates were statistically significant. All the components of nursing curriculum are significantly affecting the total opinion score which means that all the components are important.

In congruence with the current study finding, **Abedini S.,Bin sihes, Takhti H. K.and Abedini, (2011)** Curriculum is the heart of every educational institute and every nursing program. The curriculum sets the goals, outcomes, standards, philosophy, and content that each nursing student will learn. High quality nursing curriculum plays an important role in preparing effective nurses for the current and future health care delivery system. A particularly crucial component of nursing curriculum focuses on clinical education. Also, study explored the perceived relevance of curriculum content in preparing graduate nurses for practice

The present study has also assessed Levels of opinion in nursing curriculum, the highest score of the nursing courses in total was for "Content" and the lowest score was for "Evaluation" **Abedini S.,Bin sihes, Takhti H. K.and Abedini, (2011)**supported study result in study about, Assessing Nursing Curriculum: Graduate Nurse Viewpoints, among the courses, the lowest score was for "Evaluation" and the highest score was for

"Content". It could be concluded that the most controversial component of the nursing curriculum was the "Evaluation" one.

In total concerning Correlation between Levels of opinion in nursing curriculum and Socio-demographic characteristics of study sample there is a significant correlation between department, age and level of opinion on Teacher / Instructor. There is a significant correlation between academic year and level of opinion on Objectives of the Curriculum, Teacher / Instructor, Evaluation Process and Total opinion in nursing curriculum. There is a significant correlation between gender and level of opinion on Objectives of the Curriculum, Content of the Curriculum, Clinical Setting, Clinical Instructors, Teaching Methodology, Students / Teacher Interaction, and Total opinion in nursing curriculum.

This issue has been underscored by *Ramos et al., (2015)* reported that concerning the degree of satisfaction with the academic experience of the studied sample, and considering the frequency scale of 1 to 5, undergraduate nursing students were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with, the course. Similar findings were reported by *Awad, (2009)* who reported that there is a significant positive relationship between students' academic year. This relationship was found between students' academic year and the following dimensions such as explaining objectives of the course at the beginning of the course, the contents of the course, teacher characteristics, students/teacher interaction, course evaluation, teacher competencies, and teaching methodology and students' achievement.

Conclusion:

In the light of the current study findings it can be concluded that:

- There was statistically significant correlation between the total opinion of studied subjects and the components of nursing curriculum that mean all items of nursing curriculum were important, and the studied subjects' opinion was influenced by certain of their characteristics as gender, grade, departments and age. Years of experience, attendance training courses in quality, and sharing in

quality programs had a significant impact on the total nurses' awareness.

- Also, the study results concluded that Opinion of fourth year was the highest agreement for all dimensions of nursing curriculum, and the Opinion of community health was the highest agreement for all dimensions.
- In addition, that all the elements of nursing curriculum are strongly directly correlated with each other, and statistically significant relation with the total opinion score which means that all the components are important.
- Hence the study results answered the study question (What are the nursing students' opinions about the criteria of effective undergraduate nursing curriculums?).

Recommendations:

In the light of study findings, it is recommended that:

- Review and evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum from the teachers' point of view .
- Conducting an orientation program for newly students.
- Making comfortable seats and good ventilation in lecture halls to enhance the quality of learning.
- Students' complaints should be taken into consideration to improve quality of learning process.

Suggested researches:

- Assess the problems facing undergraduate nursing students during clinical training from their point of view.
- Challenges of nursing education and its effects on nursing students' engagement.
- Further researches are needed to develop proper teaching strategies, such as using e-learning widely.

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