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Clinical Practice of Women's Health Nursing Lesson in Turkey of Analysis: An Example of University

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of this study was to conduct a “Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats”(SWOT) analysis in order to assess strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities clinical practice of women's health nursing lesson (CPWHN) is facing.

Method: Embedded single-case research design was used in this study conducted with methodology of qualitative research. Academicians and mentor nurse trainers who were teaching women's health nursing lesson were included in this study (n=13). Case analysis method was used to assess the data.

Finding: Strengths of CPWHN included the university being located in the capital of Turkey and certain application hospitals offering case variety. Its weaknesses included failure to provide individualized education due to high quotas for nursing students, lack of interest in CPWHN among male students due to gender stereotypes. Opportunities of CPWHN included national and international exchange programs for both students and academicians in addition to developments in innovative health practices; whereas the threats it was facing included opening nursing programs at universities with insufficient academicians and high quotas for nursing students due to high demand in nursing work force.

Conclusions: Improving weaknesses and turning threats into opportunities for CPWHN would be beneficial in improving quality of nursing care after graduation.

Keywords: *practice, university, analysis, women's health, nursing.*

Introduction

Clinical practice is an important part of nursing education. Clinical practice education helps students develop teamwork and communication, critical thinking, and decision-making skills in addition to developing psychomotor skills, all in order to help them find out their professional identities.^{1,2} Effectiveness of clinical practice education is affected by various factors such as national health policies, physical environment of the hospital, educators, clinician midwives-nurses, other health professionals and students.³ Students feel satisfied of their clinical education when they are accepted and supported by their clinician colleagues. At the same time, they develop professional relationships; they start seeing themselves a part of a team, and increases their motivation and willingness to learn.⁴ In a study, nursing

students stated that university-hospital cooperation strengthens their theoretical knowledge (%60.9) and increase their professional adaptation (%22.2) and professional development (%15.6).⁵In addition, a study on identifying the difficulties nursing students face in learning environments found that the difficulties faced were ineffective communication, wrong treatment, feeling unready, lack of theoretical knowledge, insufficient practical skills, and emotional responses.⁶ In this regard, cooperation between students, academicians and health professionals is required to solve these issues in clinical practice.⁷

The aim of this study was to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a CPWHN in a public university in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. At the same time, the aim of the study was also to conduct

a self-assessment in order to formulate improvement strategies for CPWHN.

Material and Method

Research Type: Embedded single-case research design was used in this study conducted with methodology of qualitative research. In the case analysis was carried out by SWOT analysis. Researcher regulates the data, separates them into analysis units and synthesizes qualitative data analysis. Additionally, it is a process in which qualitative data analysis styles are revealed, important variables are explored, and which information is decided to be reflected on report.^{8,9}

Case analysis study is a comprehensive scientific research method investigating current cases in real life statuses.^{9,10} Being one of the methods used in case analysis studies, SWOT analysis is developed as a method to obtain information to provide the ideal use of resources and capabilities of various systems and structures in their environments.^{11,12} SWOT is a simple framework that helps us assess the organization's or situation's current performance (strengths and weaknesses) and the organization's future (opportunities and threats) by taking into consideration the factors that exist in the external environment. This method has been used previously in the research in order to analyze nursing in Europe and Turkey.^{13,14,15}

Participants: Academicians (n=6) and mentor nurse trainers (n=7) who were working in Division of Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing of Nursing Department of a State University located in Ankara and teaching women's health nursing (WHN) lesson were included in this study (n_{total}=13).

Data Collection: The Study Constructed Interview Form (S-CIF) were used in this study. Form consists of four sections. What are "strengths", "weaknesses", "opportunities" and "threats" of CPWHN lesson?

The participants were informed about the purpose of the study before the data collection and their verbal consents were obtained. The data of the interview were collected under presidency of a mentor on January 13, 2018. The themes involved in semi-structured interview form were verbally presented by the researchers and the data were recorded by providing a consensus with the group.

Data Analysis: The case analysis method was used

to assess the data. In the present study, the data were collected over four themes of SWOT analysis specified previously and arranged according to the themes were formed by directly quoting, the results were identified by being supported with quotations, the identified results were commented and put into report form.

Findings

Four main themes were determined at the end of the case analysis.

In the first main theme is "strengths of CPWHN", subthemes are "the university, clinical trainers and student" and "the clinical practice areas" in the study. The participants listed the strengths of the university, clinical trainers and student as "*The university being located in the capital of Turkey*", "*The university being in the quality and accreditation process*", "*The university being part of national and international exchange programs for both students and academicians*", "*Curriculum being compatible with the European Union Directive*", "*WHN theoretical lesson being culturally sensitive and based on case presentations*", "*Access to a professional skills laboratory*", "*Standard patient care guide and check-list being included in the WHN lesson*", "*Having a high rate of clinical interaction among nursing master's and doctorate students and undergraduate students*", "*General health insurance for all students prior to clinical practice*", "*Vaccination of students against certain diseases prior to clinical practice*", "*All nursing students having occupational health and safety certificates*", "*Assigning mentor nurses to clinical practice*", "*Introducing clinical forms and clinical assessment criteria to students prior to clinical practice*", "*Reinforcing clinical practices with articles, cases and seminar presentations*", "*Weekly evaluation and feedback for students' care plans*", "*Evaluating satisfaction outcomes on end-of-term clinical application and formulating improvement strategies*". In addition, the participants presented opinion about the clinical practice areas as "*Providing orientation training to students in clinical practice hospitals*", "*For certain clinical practice hospitals: variety of cases, evidence based care standards, innovative health services, culture alert care services*", "*Cooperation between the university and hospital in terms of organizing in-service training, seminars, lessons and similar scientific activities*", "*Students being allowed to attend to scientific activities held at hospitals*", "*Communication channel between health professionals and students due*

to certain mentor nurses also being hospital employees”, “Growing feeling of belonging among students due to students-only changing rooms and lunch in certain hospitals”.

In the second main theme is “weaknesses of CPWHN”, subthemes are “the university, clinical trainers and student” and “the clinical practice areas” in the study. The participants listed the weaknesses about the university, clinical trainers and student as “High quota of students for nursing”, “Failure to individualize laboratory practices training due to high number of students”, “Difficulty in finding mentor nurses in the field of women’s health”, “Orientation problems due to inability to work with the same mentor nurse each semester”, “Lack of equality of opportunity in education due to the fact that it is not possible to offer each clinical practice in every tertiary women’s health hospital”, “Male students having difficulties in adapting to WHN lesson and be assertive due to gender stereotypes”, “Patients being reluctant to receiving care from male students”, “Failure of some healthcare professionals to provide equality of opportunity to male students in women’s health practices”. In addition, the participants presented opinion about the other weaknesses of the clinical practice areas as “Burnout syndrome in the profession of nursing reflecting poorly on professionalism”, “Nurses/midwives in certain hospitals resisting change in certain hospitals”, “Professional role models being insufficient in certain hospitals”, “Sub-standard examples in terms of evidence based practices in certain hospitals”, “Lack of communication between doctors, nurses, and students”, “Misalignment between practice in clinical environment and theoretical lesson content”, “Students not allowed being active during practice due to legal reasons”, “Students being expected to perform duties that are not their responsibility”, “Clinics being crowded in terms of student nurses”, “Lack or comprehensive and standardized orientation training for students in hospitals”, “Lack of standardization in terms of duties expected of students and inconsistencies among hospitals”, “Insufficient national standard care protocols regarding women’s health practices”.

In the third main theme is “opportunities of CPWHN”. The participants listed the opportunities of CPWHN as “Higher chance for students to see more women’s health cases due to national pronatalist population policies”, “Women’s health policies promoting fulfilling mother and infant-friendly hospital criteria”, “Brain drain due to globalization”, “Growth in health tourism”,

“National and international guidelines on WHN”, “Increase in multi-disciplinary studies”, “Increase in evidence based studies”, “Easy access to information thanks to advances in information technologies”, “National and international exchange programs for both students and academicians”, “Frequent scientific activities”, “Advances in innovative health practices”, “Increase in specialty among nurses”.

In the fourth main theme is “Threats of CPWHN”. The participants listed the threats of CPWHN as, “Increase in healthcare needs and health expenses due to an aging population”, “Opening of new nursing programs at universities with insufficient number of academicians”, “Faculty members preferring private universities”, “Failure to employ nurses based on their specialties”, “Increase in student quotas due to high demand in nursing workforce”, “Increase in malpractice cases”, “Increase in mobbing cases”.

Discussion

World Health Organization suggests that nursing education should be in accordance with ethical principles, based on evidence and teamwork, provide systematic and holistic care, improve health, and teach life-long learning and effective communication skills.¹⁶ In the scope of European Union (EU) Directive is suggested that nursing education should provide a minimum three year full time education that includes 4600 hours of theoretical and clinical education based on 10 years of education. This directive also emphasizes that clinical education is an integral part of nursing education and should be organized in a manner that allows students to gain sufficient clinical experience.¹⁷ On its way to entering the EU, our country has standardized nursing education based on this EU directive. In our study, our curriculum being compatible with the EU directive has been identified as a strength. In addition, “teaching the theoretical WHN lesson in a culturally sensitive manner”, “access to a professional skills laboratory”, “standard patient care guide and check-list being included in the WHN course”, “reinforcing clinical practices with articles, cases and seminar presentations” were listed as strengths. These strengths support us in achieving our goal of having students gain sufficient clinical experience as stated in the EU directive.

According to international standards, the ratio between academicians and students is one academician per 10-20 students.^{18,19} In our country, the number of

students in nursing undergraduate programs was 38.112 while the number of academicians was 574 in 2013, which indicates that there are on average 66.4 students per academician.²⁰ The number of students who were not admitted to undergraduate and graduate nursing programs due to lack of academicians, application environment, and lack of funds in 2013 was 78.089.²¹ This fact points out to the quantitative deficiency of academicians at nursing undergraduate programs in our country. Yet, it is crucial to provide education at special learning environments and under tutelage of academicians in order to enable nursing education to promote knowledge, skills and behavior.²² In this study, student-to-academician ratio being too high and having high quotas for nursing students were identified as weaknesses. Our strength is working with mentor nurse trainer in the scope of CPWHN. This ensures 10 students per academician at the clinic. In addition, this provides a communication channel between health professionals and students, as certain mentor nurses are also hospital employees.

CPWHN education should ensure that students develop critical thinking, analysis, communication, and problem solving and management skills.²³ WHN students are expected to develop various complex skills in a short period of time.²⁴ However, students are having trouble applying theoretical skill they have learned in class to clinical practices.²⁵⁻²⁷ Thus, integration of theoretical education and clinical education is important. Women's health hospitals having limited quotas for students is a problem, as there are six universities in the same city as our university which offer nursing education. WHN lessons at our university includes five different hospitals. Only two of these hospitals were tertiary hospitals specialized in women's health. In our study, "offering case variety, evidence based care standards, innovative care services, providing culturally alert care services" were identified as strengths of these hospitals. Therefore, establishing nursing student quotas based on clinical fields of application, which is carried out by the Council of Higher Education in our country, is thought to be important.

Conclusion

Improving weaknesses and turning threats into opportunities for CPWHN would be beneficial in improving quality of nursing care after graduation. At the same time, it would reflect positively on women's health indicators such as mother-infant mortality rates,

morbidity, and contraceptive use in our country.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Sources of Funding: This research received no funding from any agency.

Ethical Aspects: The permit was received from the concerned institution to do the research. Before the data were collected in the research, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and written approvals of the participants were received.

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