



HAPPINESS IN CLINICAL PRACTICE OF THAI NURSING STUDENTS : A CASE STUDY OF PRACHOMKLAO COLLEGE OF NURSING PHETCHABURI PROVINCE THAILAND

Pakamard Peetaragorn, Jintana Tongpeth, and Nongnaphat Rungnoei*

Nursing Lecturer, Registered nurse, senior professional level, Prachomkiao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi Province, Thailand

* e-mail nongrn1@gmail.com

Abstract

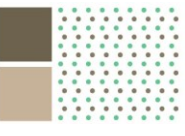
This qualitative research aimed to study the meaning, affected factors, and methods to promote happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomkiao College of Nursing Phetchaburi province. The sample group consisted of 52 second-, third-, and fourth-year nursing students who passed clinical practice and had high scores. The instrument was developed by the researchers and tested for content validity by experts. Data was gathered by guideline questions and interview. The focus group and tape record were used for the interview. Data was then analyzed by mapping and grouping words. The major findings were as follows.

1. The meaning of happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomkiao College of Nursing Phetchaburi province were the pride of nursing intervention results, learning, confidence in clinical practice, completion of required experience and freedom in thinking and working.
 2. The factors affecting the happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomkiao College of Nursing Phetchaburi province were the clinical instructors, feelings toward staff nurses, course designs, achievement of required goals, year of learning, relationship between friends, and clinical environment.
 3. The method was to promote the happiness in clinical learning of nursing students at Prachomkiao College of Nursing Phetchaburi province were self motivation, problem solving ability, positive thinking, clear work plan, advance preparation, and self adaptation.
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Keywords: happiness in clinical practice, nursing students

Introduction

Nursing is a profession requiring the science and art to care for the clients with good and poor health conditions in order to help them to live in happiness in physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects. (Solomon, 2000) Therefore, it is vital for health educational institutes and nursing learning process to produce quality nursing graduates with good knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward nursing professional. In this regard, the quality nursing graduates can be divided into two parts: theory and practice. The former emphasizes on content knowledge, principles, methods and attitudes toward nursing professional,(Tracy et al, 2009) while the latter for causes on translating the knowledge into the practice in real situations for self-learning.(Tracy et al. 2009).



Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province is under auspice of Praboromrajchanok Institute where Bachelor of Nursing Science program is provided in both theory and practice. Practice lie at hearth of learning in nursing professional which aims to develop and enhance professional experiences. During practice period, the nursing students must prepare their physical and mental readiness and adapt themselves to the staffs and new environment. If they cannot adapt well, they will have frustration, conflict, sorrow, worry, and stress resulting in the decrease of patient care effectiveness. Basically, the clinical practice is the cause of students' stress that affects the happiness in learning and decreases learning ability. In contrast, the happiness in learning will increase learning ability of learners. However most nursing students in the nursing colleges under auspice of Ministry of Public Health had low level of happiness. The factors affecting the happiness in learning consist of number of study year, attitudes toward nursing professional, preceptor characteristics, and clinical environment. In addition argue that the patient's recovery after receiving the nursing care is a situation that generates the happiness of nursing students (Noreen et al. 2002), following by getting advice, support, and understanding from their clinical instructors. Hence, for better learning quality, the educational institutes should take into account the factors affecting the happiness of nursing students in clinical learning.

Everyone needs happiness so children and adults need enjoyable learning environment (Cao et al. 2009). Therefore, nursing students' lack of happiness in learning will have the negative impacts such as decrease of caring, endurance, honesty, diligence, determination, self awareness, and loves toward human and environment (Tracy et al. 2009). The happiness or factors studied in this research is based on the conceptual framework or hypothesis of theories, articles, or academic papers. However, the happiness in nursing students' perspective may be similar or different from previous studies. The study of subject group may offer the solution to the real problem and promote the happiness of nursing students in order to produce quality nurses. The researchers are thus interested in studying the happiness in clinical learning of nursing students at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province because the happiness is the ultimate requirement of all nursing instructors. The conceptual framework of this research is based on National Education Committee Institute's concept of happiness in learning. Questions are emphasized in explanation, inference, and clarification in feeling or self performing. The principle of happiness in learning consists of 6 aspects. They are love and faith of students toward clinical instructors and courses, value and preference of useful learning, study in real and various situations, determination, self awareness, self acceptance, bravery, reasonable decision, physical and mental balances, and suitable role in professional. With respect to the interviews, the factors associated with the happiness in clinical learning are the number of study year, clinical instructors and preceptor characteristics, attitudes toward nursing professional, clinical environment (physical, mental and social environment), instructor clinical behaviors, nursing team and friendly atmosphere. Additionally, according to students are humans and have their own rights (Chin 2010). They should be proud of themselves and able to discover their abilities. Their instructors should also be genuine, treat them kindly and plan the interesting learning on the basis of the real situations.

This work was 1) to study the meaning of happiness in clinical learning of nursing students, 2) to describe the affected factors of happiness in clinical learning of nursing students in the real situations and 3) to describe the methods for generating the happiness in clinical learning of nursing students who got real situations



Methodology

This study was a qualitative research. The population consisted of 150 nursing students of Bachelor of Nursing Science program in academic year 2008 at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province. They were in the second-, third- and fourth year (11, 23 and 13 nursing students, respectively) and receive high scores of happiness in clinical learning (>80%). The instrument of this study was a group-interview questionnaire with 18 open-ended questions based on the research conceptual framework. Its content validity is tested by 3 experts. Then, the researchers gathered the data by conducting the focus group and the interview of a group of 4-5 nursing students in the same study year in less distracted environment. The tape record was produced during the interview session. The data analysis involved 2 steps. The first one was a basic analysis conducted after the interview by translating words and mapping the different or similar words. The second one was the whole analysis by grouping words according to the study items.

Results

The research findings revealed that:

1. Five aspects of the meaning of happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province:

1.1 Pride in completed activity or obtained result which consisted of the acceptance as a part of health team, compliment by clinical instructors, staff nurses, patients, and relatives, pride in completed activity, ability to perform nursing implementation, and patient's recovery.

1.2 Learning comprised new learning from staff nurses, clinical instructors, patients, and clinical situations, required clinical practicing, required learning, real performing nursing care, and more awareness.

1.3 Confidence in clinical practice.

1.4 Complete requirements

1.5 Freedom in thinking, making decision, and practicing.

2. Seven factors affecting the happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province:

2.1 Clinical instructor factors: understanding, relaxing, kindness, assistance, advocacy, acceptance, and time allocation.

2.2 Feelings toward clinical staffs

2.3 Course designs: preference and past experiences

2.4 Expected achievement: health team acceptance and completed requirements

2.5 Number of study years

2.6 Relationship toward friends: assistance and support from friends

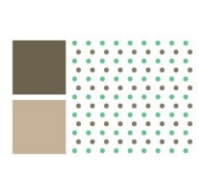
2.7 Clinical environment

3. Seven methods to generate the happiness in clinical practice:

3.1 Clear goal setting: determination to complete practice for graduation with no concern for grade

3.2 Enhancing self spirit: increasing self bravery, improving the effective work, gaining more happiness, calling to the parents, lovers and friends and supporting self spirit by identifying source of inner problems

3.3 Solving problems: ignoring every problem – the students should listen but do not response even though they are blamed. They should consult friends, clinical instructors, registered nurses when they face any problems during the clinical practice and solve them as



soon as possible. However, if they could not solve those problems, they should take other alternatives such as listening to the music and keeping away from the persons who created that problem

3.4 Positive thinking: ‘you can do anything’ idea, definite ended problems and criticisms from the clinical instructors because of their concern

3.5 Setting clear working process according to the theory.

3.6 Self preparation before the practice: gathering the relevant data and preparing for the problems.

3.7 Self adaptation to friends.

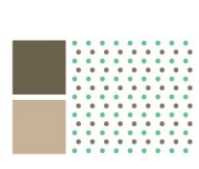
Conclusions

The research findings could be summarized and discussed based on the research objectives as follows:

1. The happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province refer to the pride in the completed activities or obtained results, learning, confidence in practice, completed requirements, freedom in thinking, making decision, and practicing. In this study, the happiness in clinical practice of nursing students was mostly related to the practiced and completed activities. According to the study of happy characteristics by Abir et al. (2008), the happiness is a needed response, real setting goal, and self acceptance and awareness. Also, argue that the patient’s recovery after receiving the nursing care is a situation that generates the happiness of nursing students so the clinical instructors should promote it for better learning (Noreen et al., 2002).

2. The factors affecting the happiness in clinical learning of nursing students at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province consisted of clinical instructors, feelings toward clinical staffs, course designs, achievement of the expected goals, number of study year, relationship toward the clinical friends and the clinical environment. Thus, it can be argued that the factors affecting the happiness in clinical learning of nursing students comprised the internal factors (inner selves) and external factors (the clinical instructors, clinical staffs, friends and environments). According to the study of Pantip et al. (2005), the friendship between learners and teachers in exchanging the experiences and attitudes would promote students’ happiness in learning.(Noreen et al. 2002) also claims that the related factors of happiness in clinical learning of nursing students consisted of number of study year, clinical instructor characteristics, and clinical environment. Moreover Solomon et al. (2000) argued that the average score of happiness in clinical learning after the use of preceptor system is higher than before practice at 0.05 level of statistical significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that promoting appropriate factors will increase the happiness in clinical learning of nursing students by sharing learning plan with them.

3. Methods to enhance happiness in clinical practice of nursing students at Prachomklao College of Nursing, Phetchaburi province are clear goal setting, self motivated spirit, problem solving, positive thinking, clear work system based on the theory, self preparation before practice, and self adaptation to friends. In this study, the method to enhance happiness in clinical practice of nursing students is to adjust their thinking and working method such as preparation before practice. According to the study of, the happiness of nursing students is related to the eager learning behavior or self-problem solving (Ross et al. 2005). It is also found that self motivated spirits and religious knowledge (meditation and positive thinking) are suitable for adjusting the way of life.



It is recommended that the appropriate learning experiences should be introduced with the selection of clinical placements for promoting the happiness of nursing students. Furthermore, the clinical instructors should take into account the difference of individual nursing students. They should motivate and adjust learning methods to enhance the happiness of learners and introduce the programs or religious activities to strengthen the learning concentration and to adjust their positive thinking. Moreover, the methods that promotes the happiness in clinical learning and enhances the happiness of nursing students should also be studied.

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