Effects of students’ incivility on nurse educators in a South African school of nursing

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Faculty Disclosure

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Goals and Objectives

Session Goal:
• The purpose of this presentation is to present the actual or perceived effects of students’ incivility on the lives of nurse educators in a South African School of nursing.

Session Objectives:
• Objectives #1: The learner will be able gain insight into the phenomenon of incivility as experienced by nurse educators.
• Objective #2: The learner will be able to understand the actual and perceived effects of students’ incivility on nurse educators’ lives.
Introduction

• Nursing education attracts nurses inspired to share their knowledge and skills of the profession (Luparell, 2007).

• However as the phenomenon of incivility is becoming more common in society, nursing academia is also affected (Sprunk, LaSala & Wilson, 2014).

• As resourceful academics withdraw from education as a result of uncivil behavior of students’ (Luparell, 2007).
Introduction

• Student incivility towards educators, is “rude or disruptive behavior that negatively impacts faculty levels of well-being, sense of self-worth, and commitment to teaching” (Clark, 2013).

• Nursing is a profession (White, 2011), starting with education in the classroom and clinical setting (Rosenkoetter & Milstead, 2010) that prepares students’ to become professional nurses.

• The responsibility accompanied with preparing students’ entering the profession of nursing is not an easy process.
Introduction

• As the “gatekeepers” for the profession may experience threats as students’ frustrations in a professional nursing program may transpire into uncivil behavior (Gazza, 2009).

• Researchers like DalPrezzo and Jett (2010) are also of the opinion that students’ incivility is a common cause of hurt for nursing faculty.

• Nursing students’ also express disappointment at educators behavior, they perceived a lack of care in nursing education which affect their professional identity development as a result of faculty incivility (Del Prato, 2013).
Problem statement

• In South Africa, although there are awareness and discussions among nurse educators on incidents and experiences with nursing students’ classroom incivility, the influence that students’ incivility may have on the personal and professional lives of nurse educators have not been reported in literature.

• While it is acknowledged that acts of incivility exist in nursing schools, very little is known about the possible effects of the phenomenon of nursing students’ classroom incivility in South African nursing schools.
Research question

• From their own experience with nursing students’, what are the actual or perceived effects of students’ incivility on the personal and professional lives of nurse educators at a South African school of nursing?
Methodology

Design
• A qualitative, descriptive design using a phenomenological approach was used in the study.

Population and setting
• The research setting was a nursing school in South Africa, offering undergraduate and postgraduate nurse training.
• The study population consisted of nurse educators’ teaching undergraduate nursing students’, employed in the nursing school on a full-time basis.
Sampling and data collection process

- A purposive sample of 11 nurse educators provided the data in individual face-to-face, audio-recorded interviews until data saturation was reached.

- These were nurse educators that had experienced the effects that students’ incivility had on their lives.

- Thematic data analysis was applied (Streubert & Carpenter, 2007).

- Ethics procedures were followed in obtaining permission and recruiting participants.
Findings

• Through the participants’ descriptions it became evident that they did experience incivility in the particular nursing school which were believed to impact on their personal and professional lives.

• Participants cited examples of disruptions, fraud and aggression influenced by academic, psycho-pathological and social factors.

Three themes were extracted for effects of students’ incivility:

• Physical effects
• Emotional effects
• Work related effects
Theme 1: Physical effects

Sub-theme 1.1: Tiredness and lack of energy

- From participants' descriptions, sub-theme tiredness and lack of energy emerged. Increase in tiredness and decrease in energy levels experienced by participants were described in the following manner:

‘But it is, it does tire one, it makes you feel emotionally drained and you feel that there is almost nothing that you can do until you see there is a change and some people are complying and it’s like you got to talk yourself into [laughter] coming back to work again, you know. To doing what you are passionate about.’ (Participant 1)
Sub-theme 2.1: Emotional disturbances

- Mostly emotional disturbances was reported through patterns of feeling frustrated, worried, demotivated, disrespected, demoralised and powerless.
- This implies the emotions that participants described as affecting their normal functioning.
- Extreme frustration and lack of motivation were expressed by participants due to continuous confrontations with uncivil students’ and their perception of lack of support in the nursing school.

‘I feel very frustrated because you report it to management and they do nothing about it. It’s always the lecturers that have been doing something and the students they do not hide that they do not want to be in the classroom. They say to you just tell us what is in the test and the exams they are plain rude [silence]. So it’s really very frustrating.’ (Participant 6)
Theme 2: Emotional effects

- Participants expressed fear, ‘worry’ that uncivil behavior of students’ might transpire into the clinical setting in the following manner:

  ‘That person must care for somebody who is vulnerable one day and one is just very worried about the students that’s allowed to go through without going through the same checks and balances that their colleagues go through. Why is it that some people are allowed to do, do things that others not allowed to do? So there’s an unfair...... I think there are two sets of rules.’

  (Participant 1)
Theme 2: Emotional effects

• Participants also felt disrespected, demoralised and powerless by their students’ behavior and shared empathy with other students who witnessed and experienced acts of incivility.

‘I was in class and then the other year students came in and they came, you know making noises and saying no classes. That day I just took my bag and I left and I told the students please for your own sake rather remain seated I will leave. So I left and it didn’t feel good, because it was as if the lecturer was in class, but there were no respect for the lecturer.’ (Participant 3)

‘What I am so despondent if I take myself I feel so powerless you know against these incivilities as you call it. It feels as if your hands are tied and what can you do, you know you know.’ (Participant 7)
Theme 3: Work related effect

- Acts of incivility have also been identified to be affecting educators in the direct teaching environment in the sense that it reduced the active teaching time; disturbing and interfering with the teaching process.

- This was also perceived to be affecting the concentration of the educator and educators’ did not know how to respond to students behaviour effectively.

- The analysis identified lack of job satisfaction and disturbances and interferences as sub – themes.
Theme 3: Work related effect

Sub-theme 3.1: Lack of job satisfaction

• Feelings of low job satisfaction as a pattern was identified. This was accompanied by participants questioning the quality of education that they offered to students, under extreme noise with large group sizes. The teaching method applied was the lecture. One participant reflected on the training program by wondering if the curriculum underpinned the core values of nursing strong enough in this nursing school.

‘It’s like you cannot stop thinking about it or you have a slightly heavy feeling and when you investigate that you wonder, but am I in the right place should I make a move you know, but as I say that is really isolated, but it makes you question whether you are in the right place. Of course when you question something like that it does affect your personal life because you, that’s when you question it and it’s not something like okay I’ll stop thinking about.’ (Participant 5)
Theme 3: Work related effect

Sub-theme 3.2: Disturbances and interferences to the teaching process

- This relating to time wastage and to be affecting the educator’s concentration. Challenges were also expressed by participants on how to respond appropriately to students’ during these disturbances and they viewed their conduct towards students to be unprofessional at times.

‘Okay but it’s always an interruption, it waste time then you sort of got to pick up the tread of teaching and it causes stress, but I won’t say it cause more stress then what working in a ward will cause or managing a ward will cause. So I don’t regard it as a very significant work stressor. It is a stressor but not an over the top stressor.’ (Participant 4)

‘I was, I was my response was that of being I was very upset and I won’t say I was aggressive but I was very what’s the word I am looking for now [silence] I can’t get to the word to describe what I was feeling that day. It was anger and anger.’ (Participant 2).
Recommendations

• Developing measures to reduce or eliminate incivility among nursing students’, perhaps through implementation of policies in the nursing school.

• Providing emotional support for nurse educators who deal with incidents of uncivil behavior.

• Establish structures where nurse educators’ can share their experiences of uncivil encounters with students’ in the classroom setting and what worked and what did not work in dealing with such behavior.
Limitations and Conclusion

Limitations

• The findings on effects of students’ incivility on the lives of nurse educators only related to nurse educators perspectives from one nursing school in South Africa with a small sample size.

• Therefore findings may not be generalised to similar institutions in this country, further exploration of incivility in South Africa is needed to be able to form any generalisations on the phenomenon.

Conclusion

• Students’ uncivil behavior hold implications for the education and training of nurses as well as implications for nurse educators personal and professional lives.
References

Thank you