THE USE OF THE SCALE SVQCLI FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE CLINICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE DEGREE COURSE IN NURSERY

Florian Spada[1], Emanuela Prendi[1], Caterina Gruosso [2], Enzo Ruberti[3], Gennaro Rocco[4], Andrea Giacalone [5]

¹*Department of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Physiotherapy, Catholic University "Our Lady of Good Counsel", Albania*

² *Lector of the Faculty of Physiotherapy, Catholic University "Our Lady of Good Counsel", Albania*

³*PhD.s. " Sapienza" University, Italy*

⁴*Department of Biomedical Sciences, President of Physiotherapy Degree Course, Catholic University "Our Lady of GoodCounsel", Albania*

⁵ *Department of Medicine, Faculty of Physiotherapy, Catholic University "Our Lady of Good Counsel", Albania*

Abstract :

Introduction:*The objective of this study is to establish the validity and reliability of the "SVQCLI" Nursing Course's Quality Assessment Scale, in order to investigate and measure the quality of the nursing degree course on a sample of Italian students, with a descriptive-correlational research project.* ***Methods****: The SVQCLI scale was used, consisting of 65 items within 7 sub-scales. The examined sample includes 63 students answering these questions on a Likert-based scale.* ***Results****: For the construct validity of the SVQCLI scale, an analysis of the main components was performed using the criterion according to which only factors with a self-value greater than 1 are extracted. This revealed that the factorial structure consists of 7 dimensions, not 10 as in Vellone's studies. Concerning reliability of the SVQCLI scale, the internal consistency was tested with the Cronbach alpha, which gave a satisfactory result on all 7 factors as they all far exceeded 0.70.* ***Conclusion:*** *The SVQCLI scale seems to provide an effective way for beginning the quality assessment of both the clinical learning environment and the degree course itself, through the student's reading key.*

Keyword: *quality, nursing, scale, degree course, student, Vellone*

Abbreviations: *SVQCLI = Scala di Valutazione della Qualità del Corso di Laurea in Infermieristica*

I.   INTRODUCTION

The quality of the learning environment is an important factor influencing the experience of nursing students. This feature is mainly determined by the establishment of a good social climate during all training processes, with the opportunity of harmonizing cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills.

The quality assessment should include the classification of the student's perceptions about all factors influencing their learning, since it has been discovered that students perceptions in learning environments affect learning outcomes; nevertheless, a comprehensive and effective tool to be used in the Albanian context has not yet been disclosed, at least for evaluating the clinical learning environment and the quality of the degree program itself.

The objective of this study is the experimentation of a valid tool for understanding how trainee nurses perceive the social climate of their clinical training environment, and the trial of a reliable and valid tool for measuring the quality of the Degree Course in Nursing, through a quantitative method. Referring to such instrument, the following dimensions were measured: quality of teachers and administrative services, support services, quality of training, organization and evaluation of teaching, interests and objectives, identity and belonging.

II.   MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted using the "SVQCLI" Quality Assessment Scale for Nursing Degree Courses [1]. The 65-item questionnaire was administered in the period between June and July 2016, to a sample of 63 students enrolled in Nursing Degree courses. The questionnaire was administered within the classroom, after an explanation of the study's purposes. Furthermore, all students were reassured that the questionnaires were anonymous, a member of the students group distributed the questionnaires and collected the completed ones in a package. TABLE1 shows the data for students which partook in the study.

TABLE 1. GENERAL SAMPLE DATA

Variable	N (%)
Universities involved:	
"Our Lady of Good Counsel" University of Tirana	63 (99)
Year of study	
I year	23 (37)
II year	28 (44)
III year	12 (19)

The quantitative experimentation phase was carried out using the "SVQCLI" Nursing Degree Courses Quality Assessment Scale [1], with permission from the author. On such scale, a pretest was issued consisting in the administration of the questionnaire; some respondents were chosen from an ad-hoc audience formed by Nursing Degree course students, which were asked to critically assess the questionnaire; from questions formulation to their understanding, to answering modalities.

The SVQCLI consists of 65 entries within 7 sub-scales. The students answer these questions, which are formulated on a Likert-type 4-point scale, going from "definitely agreeing" (4) all the way to "definitely disagreeing" (1). The average time for questionnaires completion was 15 to 50 minutes, in accordance with the indications given by the author in the administration procedure [1]. Didactic directors and teachers were not present at the time of completion of the device from the students.

The software used for data analysis is the Social Package Statistics System, version 17.0. ITA. The data analysis procedures determining the device's accuracy include calculations for its internal coherence, as well as that of all individual subscales. Furthermore, the stability of sub-scale results over time was also indicated. The procedures' validity assessment included the sub-scales results differences assessment, based on students levels within the Nursing program, as well as the sub-scales content's confirming factorial analysis.

III.   RESULTS

In order to investigate the SVQCLI's construct validity, a Main Components Analysis was performed. The research hypothesis is that the dimensional structure suggested by this analysis substantially verifies the one emerged in the author's work [1].

Prior to the analysis's execution, it was assessed whether the assumptions for factor analysis executions were fulfilled. Therefore, a sample size measurement was carried out in order to verify its adaptation: the KMO (Keizer Meyer Olkin) index was 0.959, so the sample size is sufficiently high.

The Bartlett Sphericity test was significant (p - value < 0.001), therefore the null hypothesis, according to which the items' correlation matrix can be assimilated to an Identity matrix, is not confirmed; specifically, the inter-item correlations are sufficiently strong to proceed with factor analysis.
The Main Components Analysis (ACP) was the extraction method used; rotation is orthogonal, promax with Kaiser normalization.

Using the criterion according to which only factors with a self-value greater than 1 are extracted, the factorial structure consists of 7 dimensions, not 10 as in Vellone's studies (2007). Overall, these 7 factors explain 51.8% of total items variability, with a clear preponderance of the first factor. Indeed, the first main component alone explains most of the total variance; contributions from other main components are significantly lower.

In fact, the first factor paves the way for 32.4% of variability, while from the second to the seventh factor, numbers range from 4.8% up to 2.1%. Concerning dimensions obtained through Vellone's studies [1], 20 items saturate on the first factor of our study: 7, 25, 23, 49, 52, 47, 46, 53, 42, 50, 48, 51, 39, 54, 41, 45, 40, 44, 43, 65. Therefore, considering the semantic content of these items, the first factor of our study shall be named: quality of teachers. For the second factor of our study, 10 items are saturated: 16, 14, 17, 21, 8, 15,12,13,9,22. Thus, considering the semantic content of these items, the second factor of our study shall be named: support services. For the third factor of our study 10 items saturate: 55, 57, 60, 58, 27, 56, 10, 59,61, 26. Therefore, considering the semantic content of these items, the third factor of our study shall be named: internship quality. For the fourth factor of our study, 15 items saturate: 6, 1, 34, 36, 35, 2, 3, 30, 31, 32, 38, 33, 4, 11, 37. Therefore, considering the semantic content of these items, the fourth factor of our study shall be named: teaching organization and evaluation.

On the fifth factor of our study, 4 items saturate: 28, 24, 29, 5. Thus, considering the semantic content of these items, the fifth factor of our study shall be named: interests and objectives. On the sixth factor of our study, 3 items saturate: 19, 20, 18. Therefore, considering the semantic content of these items, the sixth factor of our study shall be named: quality of administrative services. On the seventh factor of our study, 3 items saturate: 63, 64, 62. Therefore, considering the semantic content of these items, the seventh factor of our study shall be named identity and belonging. Concerning SVQCLI reliability, internal consistency was checked with Cronbach's alpha, and stability with test-retest.

The Cronbach alpha gave a satisfactory result on all 7 factors, since they all far exceeded 0.70. Moreover, the alpha coefficient of the whole scale gave a value of 0.96, while the coefficients of each single subscale did not exceed 0.94. Regarding SVQCLI validity, its contents have been tested (both with expert advice and by directly asking students to evaluate each individual item).

One could outline a quality model for the Nursing degree course, with dimensions identified by factorial analysis, yet other studies are needed in order to evaluate the type of relationship between these dimensions. Factorial analysis has revealed training quality domains which are not quite similar to those reported in international literature. [2-4]

This emphasizes the impact of cultural diversities, as well as the need of developing specific measurement tools. More studies are needed in order to further refine the developed tool. Indeed, the Quality of the Nursing Degree Course could also be conceptualized differently and, consequently, the items could also be different from those selected. Quality of training is a broad and multidimensional concept: expanding the research group to training quality experts for other disciplines would definitely have helped in improving the work.

The SVQCLI scale is a multidimensional tool which, with relatively few items, investigates the various domains of basic nursing education quality. More studies are needed in order to better try to delineate these domains with qualitative and quantitative methodologies, eventually also creating specific scales.

In fact, sub-scales identified by factorial analysis make it clear that the quality of nursing education is a complex phenomenon which takes many variables into account: quality of teachers and administrative services, support services, quality of training, organization and evaluation of teaching, interests and objectives, identity and belonging. This study mainly involved students from Central and Southern Italy and from different universities, so it would be needed to also test such scale in other training centers in Northern Italy.

IV.   CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the SVQCLI analyses support both reliability and validity of use of the tool. The SVQCLI scale seems to provide an effective way for beginning the quality assessment of both the clinical learning environment and the degree course itself, through the student's reading key.

The indication of additional alerts for further review should improve both the instrument's reliability and validity. Moreover, SVQCLI data can be used as information for the evaluation of teachers and learning outcomes, namely for decision-making processes on actions to be taken in order to improve the entire degree program, as well as to monitor its effects, both in terms of learning quality and for the didactic outcomes of the students themselves.

The scale developed in this study could have significant potential in first-level nursing education, as well as also being used to compare quality within various Universities and stimulating competition between them, helping into orientation for training choices, professional's recruitment and training processes surveillance. Ultimately, the goal of using such tools is to conduct resolutions and behaviours from both teaching and institutional staffs, in order to provide the best possible learning environment for the largest number of nursing students.

Research has shown that students' perceptions of the learning environment give rise to a consistent divergence in learning outcomes. The wide variety of clinical training contexts used to put learning experiences into practice can provide different environments qualities for nursing students. The devising platform of a path which sees the acquisition of multiple skills (technical, relational/communicative, intellectual), within a three-year experience, combined with the studying path proposal as a catalytic experience for changing role and acquiring skills, is a narrative device if considered an analysis of one's ongoing professional history, divided into stages corresponding to an equal number of specific areas related to the evolution of the professional Self: self-perception at the beginning of the academic path; self-perception at the end of the three years; introspection on the contribution that the University experience has represented for the personal and professional maturation process.

The proposal's core lies within enhancement of the subject as a resource par excellence, one that is so rich in depth and innovation as to act as an incentive to the creation of learning communities, through the establishment of practices communities. The training centre, depending on how it presents itself, how organized it is and how it carries out its activity, assumes a relevant role in guiding the student's professional socialization path. All these considerations made so far lead me to the conclusion, without however closing the door on an ongoing flow, that recognition and development of the training experience represent a significant opportunity for satisfaction, roles and, last but not least,

for the student, the main actor and protagonist of the entire path. The teaching and supporting functions should be able to interact positively, according to the virtuous circularity model, if they aspire to achieve joint results.

REFERENCES

[1] Vellone, E., Bellini, G., Fabriani, L., Fellone, C., Passeretti, F. (2007). Sviluppo di uno strumento per misurare la qualità del corso di laurea in infermieristica. Assistenza infermieristica e ricerca, 26, 1, 14-23.

[2] Ansari, W. IS. Student nurse satisfaction levels with their courses: Part II. Effects of academic variables. Nurse EducationToday (2002), 22, 171-180

[3] Baykal, U., Sokmen, S., Korkmaz, S., & Akgun, E. Determining student satisfaction in a nursing college. Nurse Education Today (2005), 25, 255-262.

[4] Chou, S.M. Evaluating the service quality of undergraduate nursing education in Taiwan – using quality function deployment. Nurse Education Today (2004), 24, 310-318.