



SIMULATION AS A TEACHING STRATEGY FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: PERCEPTION OF NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to identify the perception of nursing students about simulation as a teaching strategy for conflict management. **Methods:** this is a qualitative, descriptive research, carried out in a virtual environment with 20 students of the Nursing Course. Data collection took place from November to December 2022, using a personal characterization questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. For data organization and analysis, thematic analysis was adopted. **Results:** the simulations allowed nursing students to rescue and clarify the theoretical contents. Conflict situations that occur in the professionals' daily lives were portrayed and it was demonstrated that this strategy can contribute to conflict management in future situations. However, due to the realism of the scenes, they verbalized that anxiety, stress and nervousness were present. **Final considerations:** simulation was pointed out as a facilitating strategy for teaching conflict management, since they were able to apply the theoretical contents in practice, recognize similar situations in the fields of practice, and acquire self-confidence to deal with similar situations in the future and practice self-knowledge.

Keywords: Nursing Students. Teaching. Conflict Resolution. Simulation Training.

INTRODUCTION

Teamwork in the context of health is undoubtedly relevant for comprehensive care, however, its achievement is complex, given interprofessional inequalities and divergent opinions about care⁽¹⁾. Thus, in health institutions and particularly in hospitals, the complexity of work, combined with the multidisciplinary nature, with interdependence of activities, contribute to the scenario being vulnerable to the occurrence of conflicts⁽²⁾.

These conflicts are inevitable in organizational environments and, although they are often associated with negative consequences, if properly managed, they can also have positive repercussions⁽³⁻⁴⁾, which include updating knowledge, innovation, self-analysis, behavioral change and job satisfaction^(3,5-6).

On the other hand, when poorly managed, conflicts can weaken interpersonal relationships and lead to job dissatisfaction, staff turnover and also impair the quality of care^(6,7).

Conflict management is referred to as one of the competencies of nurses. However, in practice, difficulties are observed⁽⁸⁾, which are related to the fact that there is no single strategy for its management⁽⁶⁾, inexperience and lack of professional training⁽⁹⁾.

Thus, the development of the managerial competencies of nurses should be stimulated from the undergraduate course and, therefore, simulation is one of the strategies pointed out in the literature^(10,11). This is because, based on the established learning objectives, the simulation aims to reproduce experiences in an interactive way to bring the participant closer to a situation that can commonly be

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experienced in a real scenario⁽¹²⁾.

By enabling the experience and performance of the students in a controlled scenario prior to the real, this strategy can provide the approximation with the exercise of actions and decisions by the nurses and, thus, contribute to the future professional acquiring the ability to manage conflicts in different dimensions in the work environment⁽¹⁰⁾.

In nursing, simulation has been used in different contexts, mainly for the management of clinical situations and skills training, which are more widely pointed out in the literature⁽¹³⁾. From the perspective of conflict management, studies on simulation scenario validation⁽¹⁴⁾ and on the creation of simulated conflict scenes by nursing students corroborate the potential of the strategy⁽¹⁰⁾.

It is considered that apprehending the perception of nursing students about simulation for the teaching of conflict management can contribute to the resignification of the teaching of the theme, extrapolating the theoretical aspects and, indirectly, reverberate in the professional qualification and in the preparation of the future nurse to deal with such situations, inherent to the organizational environments⁽¹⁰⁾.

In view of the above, it is questioned what is the perception of nursing students about simulation as a teaching strategy in this specific theme. Thus, the study aimed to identify the perception of nursing students about simulation as a teaching strategy for conflict management.

METHODS

Qualitative, descriptive and exploratory study that presents simulation as a teaching strategy for conflict management for nursing students as its object. The Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ) was used to provide greater rigor in the description of the study⁽¹⁵⁾.

Thus, data collection took place in November and December 2022, with students from the Nursing Course of a public, federal university located in the southern region of Minas Gerais.

Inclusion criteria were: age equal to or

greater than 18 years; be a student of the Nursing Course of the university of the study scenario and have participated in the simulated practice of the subject of Nursing Administration III on conflict management in the months of August or September 2022. Students with suspended enrollment at the time of data collection were not included.

It is clarified that the simulation strategy integrates the mandatory practical activities of the subject Nursing Administration III, of the Nursing Course of the university where the study took place. It has been adopted as a strategy since 2021 and, since then, it occurs periodically for all students in the 7th semester. To this end, the teachers in charge built the simulated scenario by adopting the stages proposed by the Regional Nursing Council of São Paulo (COREN-SP): planning; learning objectives; structure and format of the simulation; description of scenario/realism; briefing; debriefing and evaluation⁽¹²⁾.

The theoretical contents on conflict management were made available via Whatsapp of the class, prior to the simulation. On the day of the simulation, the students, in pairs or trios, were randomly assigned the roles of trainee nurse and supervisor nurse and were instructed to intervene in the simulated scene, using conflict resolution strategies.

During the simulated practice, which took place in person in a university laboratory, the two professors represented two nursing technicians, who maintained a discussion because they requested vacations in coincident periods, providing opportunities for student performance in the face of the simulated conflict. With the completion of the simulation, the debriefing was carried out, addressing the application of theoretical content to the scene, as well as enabling students to express themselves.

Participants were invited to collaborate with the study through a group of the social network WhatsApp of the students of the Nursing Course of the university, of which the researchers were part. 40 students were able to participate in the study, but 20 of them did not accept due to the mismatch of schedules.

To those who expressed interest in collaborating with the study, the interview was

scheduled according to the participant's preference and a link was sent to access the Skype Platform, individually, in the e-mail informed by the participant. Thus, a single interview was conducted, using audiovisual recording and variable duration, with an estimated maximum time of one hour.

To guide the interview, an instrument was used, prepared by the researchers, consisting of a questionnaire for personal characterization, containing questions related to age, sex, marital status, place of residence, professional experience and approval in the subject to which the activity was linked.

The instrument also included a single guiding question: "Talk about simulation as a teaching strategy for conflict management", with the possibility of new questions as the speech progresses.

The clarity and comprehensibility of the guiding question were determined through a pilot test, in which the first two selected participants were interviewed. Given the lack of need to change the question, since no comprehension difficulties were identified, these interviews were included in the corpus of analysis.

At the beginning of the interview, in the virtual room, only the participant and the researchers were present, again explaining the research objectives and clarifying potential doubts. After the end of each interview, the researchers performed the full transcription and the content was made available for the validation of the study participant, if desired.

Data from the semi-structured interview were organized and analyzed according to the thematic analysis method⁽¹⁶⁾. To this end, six phases were contemplated: 1) familiarizing with the data, which consists of transcription and repeated readings, with signaling of initial ideas; 2) generating initial codes, in which systematic coding of the entire data set is carried out; 3) searching for themes, in which the codes are gathered into possible themes and sub-themes; 4) reviewing themes, which consists of a process of refinement, based on the coherence of the data within the themes, as well as on the distinction between the different

themes. At the end of this phase, a thematic map is expected; 5) defining and naming themes, which also provides for refinement, based on the essence of each theme; and 6) producing the report, an analytical narrative that demonstrates the themes in the data set⁽¹⁶⁾.

The criterion of data saturation was not adopted because it was not convergent with the assumptions of the thematic analysis⁽¹⁷⁾.

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CAAE number 63715922.9.0000.5142), respecting the principles and guidelines for research involving human beings. The invited students, who expressed their interest in participating in the study, received in their personal e-mail, a copy of the Informed Consent Form (ICF) and upon consent, the said term was returned signed, digitally to the researchers. Only after the signing of the ICF were the interviews scheduled and carried out. To ensure anonymity, participants were identified by an alphanumeric coding system, in which S refers to the student and the number signals the order in which the interview was conducted.

RESULTS

Of the 20 students who participated in the study, most were female (90%), aged between 22 and 26 years (100%), single (100%), living in the city where the study was conducted (85%), with no professional experience in the health area (65%). Despite not being a criterion to collaborate in the study, it is clarified that all were approved in the subject Nursing Administration III.

From the students' testimonies, a thematic map was elaborated (Figure 1), identifying a theme, entitled "Simulation as a facilitating strategy in the teaching-learning process of conflict management", which brings together the sub-themes "Simulation of conflict management and identification with the real scenario", "Simulation as an experience that will help improve self-confidence for conflict resolution" and "Self-knowledge when managing conflicts in a simulated strategy".

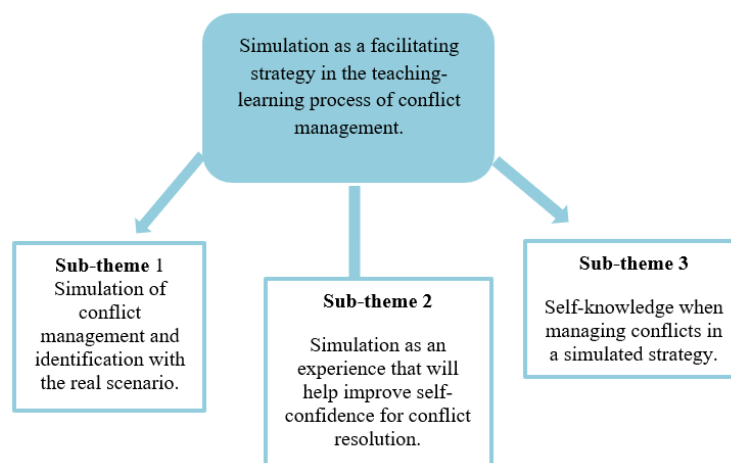


Figure 1. Thematic Map.

Thus, in the theme "Simulation as a facilitating strategy in the teaching-learning process of conflict management", the students reported that the simulation made it possible to rescue conflict resolution strategies, remember content worked in theory, better understand the subject and complement theoretical teaching.

[...] I think that the theoretical subject is a very abstract thing, [...] we see a lot of management theory, instrument, indicators and sometimes we don't see how this is implemented in practice [...] in a way that is realistic. Sometimes it focuses a lot on the field of reading, theory, abstraction [...] putting this within a scenario contributes to understanding [...] (S3).

[...] for me what was most striking is assertive communication, knowing how to speak and knowing if the other person is able to understand what is being said and, in addition, acting calmly in the face of situations [...] (S5).

[...] I learned that I must listen to people, understand the situation before taking any side, that I cannot weigh the scale more to one side than the other and be impartial [...] (S16).

[...] simulation enters as a practice to complement the theoretical part, before entering the internship field and the field of professional experience [...] After the simulation, he can realize what he did wrong, what he can improve [...] (S3).

The students' concern was to maintain the privacy of those involved and, as far as possible, satisfy both, in addition to leaving the scene environment to think better about solutions to the conflict and not being impelled

to issue immediate responses.

[...] we have to go to a reserved place, talk to the two people involved [...] try to find a consensus between the two or an agreement [...] we know that we have to evaluate both sides to see what is happening and not believe in one point of view [...] (S2).

[...] One of the strategies was also not to be impelled to immediate responses [...] another strategy was to leave the scene to think about this conflict better and then bring the answer to these people [...] (S12)

The students also addressed the importance of teacher feedback at the end of the simulations (debriefing), which contributed to learning.

[...] the good thing about all this is that at the end of the simulation the teachers were able to explain "look you could have done it in such a way, you could have done it otherwise" [...] you learn from the mistakes, because I remember the things I made, that I can improve [...] (S6).

[...] because they did this simulation, I remembered the final considerations, which were points that I needed to improve and points that I had got right [...] The feedback I received during the conclusion of the simulation was: I need to know both sides, but I need to take the time to think [...] (S7).

In the sub-theme, "Simulation of conflict management and identification with the real scenario", students reported that, although performed outside the real environment of professional practice, the simulations were able to portray conflict

situations that happen in reality. In addition, they were similar to the situations experienced later, in their environment of practice and internship, in which the nurse, as a leader, intervened.

[...] as much as we were not there in the Health Unit or in the hospital, we felt in that situation and it seemed that I had the same feelings as if I were really living it[...] (S9).

[...] today, entering the FHP [Family Health Program] internship, I experienced exactly a situation that they talked about. [...] and how the nurses had to deal with it. [...] (S7).

[...] simulations really brought up a reality that happens a lot, [...] I really felt inside a conflict [...] you could feel what it is to manage a conflict within a team [...] (S11)

[...] now I'm in the FHS [Family Health Strategy] internship and really those situations happen! [...] (S13)

In the second sub-theme, entitled "Simulation as an experience that will help improve self-confidence for conflict resolution", we found out that, according to the students, the simulation experience gave them greater preparation to deal with conflicts that may arise in the future.

[...] it's something for us to take to life! [...] I am sure that in the first conflict situation that I have to resolve, I will remember a lot about how my conduct was that day [...] (S10)

I would feel more prepared in my professional life to go through the conflict management situation, because I would already have in mind some strategies that were used. [...] I think it helped a lot, made professional practice really re-signify [...] (S12)

[...] it prepared me a lot, I was able to open my mind to several things that were not even possible before just with the theoretical content [...] in my work environment I will remember the simulation I had in college, and what I could do to solve that situation [...] even if it is not the same as the simulation I will be able to think of some strategies [...] (S5)

Finally, the third sub-theme, entitled "Self-knowledge when managing conflicts in a simulated strategy" portrays that, for students, participating in the simulation made it possible to know their emotions. Thus, anxiety,

nervousness, stress and fear in the face of realistic scenes were the most cited topics by the students, who reported the adoption of strategies to deal with the emotional aspects involved in the situation:

[...] you get nervous because you feel responsible for the situation, you know you have to solve it, but at the same time it seems that no one is respecting you, no one is listening to you [...] you are in a situation of not knowing what to do and you do not know how to stop it [...] you just want to leave [...] (S17)

[...] the atmosphere was really heavy [...] they acted very well, it was very cool and we were sometimes even nervous, stressed about the situation [...] (S2).

[...] I tried to focus on what was happening so as not to get lost and be able to have a way out at that moment [...] I took a deep breath, paid close attention to what was happening, what was the demand, to be able to reach a solution [...] (S10)

[...] I tried to keep calm thinking that it was a situation that I would experience when I am exercising my professional practice [...] thinking that it is a way to prepare for future conflicts, it was a way to not feel so nervous [...] (S11)

DISCUSSION

The present study identified a predominance of females in the students who were part of the nursing classes, which is in line with a research carried out with the objective of characterizing the nursing profession in Brazil, noting that the nursing workforce is mostly female⁽¹⁸⁾. Most did not have professional experience in the health area, which may be related to the fact that they are completing their first degree in a full-time course.

It was learned from the students' testimonies that simulation can be a facilitating strategy in the teaching-learning process on conflict management, allowing them to rescue the theory and apply resolution strategies in the presented scene. The strategies used by students for conflict management corroborate the results of a study that reports that, regardless of the type of conflict, communication and listening skills are necessary, as well as planning, negotiation, impartiality and support in technical knowledge

to lead the team to an assertive resolution⁽¹⁹⁾.

In this regard, simulation is an active methodology that has been used in health education, as it provides opportunities for students to develop skills and monitor their evolution in scenarios similar to the real ones⁽¹³⁾, enabling an increase in knowledge compared to those who had contact only with traditional education⁽²⁰⁾.

In this context, the participants emphasized the importance of debriefing, a stage of clarification and encouragement of critical thinking⁽¹²⁾. At this stage, participants can verbalize feelings, difficulties and potentialities in relation to their actions, as well as reflect on possible readjustments of conduct and clarify doubts, which contributes to the development of self-confidence⁽²¹⁾.

The similarity of the simulated scene with the real scenario was also addressed by the students, who considered it likely to happen in the reality of the nurses and even resembled the situations experienced later.

It is known that as soon as in the internship period, nursing students can experience situations of conflict between members of the health teams. Such conflict bring them closer to situations they may encounter in professional practice, given that intervention in the face of conflict situations in nursing and multiprofessional teams is often attributed to nurses, who end up facing challenges, mainly due to their own fear and insecurity⁽²²⁾. Thus, training to develop managerial skills is relevant and can use simulation as a promising strategy^(7,23).

However, the literature points out that the success of the simulation strategy depends greatly on the reliability of the scenarios, which will determine the connection of the students in the simulated environment, in order to get closer to the real world⁽²⁴⁾.

It was also learned that, for students, managing conflicts in a simulated scenario can provide them with greater self-confidence for future performance as mediating nurses in such situations. Thus, it is reiterated that simulation is able to work on learning in an integral way, contributing to the training of trained professionals, protagonists in their learning process and, consequently, in their professional

practice⁽¹³⁾.

In a study that aimed to describe the applicability of a simulation of incidents with multiple victims, only 50% of the participants said they were prepared to respond to the situation before the simulation and this perception was increased to 90% after this strategy, which reflects its effectiveness⁽²⁵⁾. Another study conducted in the context of pediatric nursing education also indicated that students felt more comfortable and prepared for the practice environment and to deal with children after the simulations⁽²⁶⁾.

Thus, through simulated scenes, students are inserted and prepared for real experiences, reducing the initial shock when dealing with such situations⁽²⁷⁾. However, studies involving simulation focus primarily on clinical scenarios, with few focusing on the managerial performance of nurses, although the simulated environments can contribute to the development of students' skills and attitudes in this specific context⁽²⁸⁾.

Study participants also reported that simulation contributed to the recognition of their emotions in the face of conflict. In this sense, a study on the stress of nursing students in clinical simulation identified reports of anxiety, nervousness and stress, which are mainly associated with their lack of competence and the bond with teachers and colleagues⁽²⁹⁾.

Anxiety and nervousness were also reported in a study that evaluated the training of skills by simulation in the development of skills of nursing students in a public university in southern Brazil. Both were attenuated during the simulated practice⁽³⁰⁾, which corroborates the results of this study, in which students, given the identification of such feelings, were able to undertake strategies to intervene in the simulated scene.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering the objective proposed for this study, to identify the perception of nursing students about simulation as a teaching strategy for conflict management, simulation was apprehended as a facilitating strategy, since the students mentioned the possibility of practical

application of theoretical contents on the subject, clarifying them and using their errors for new learning. They also reported that the strategy was similar to the situations experienced later in the fields of practice and that the simulation experience may contribute to dealing with similar situations in the future. In addition, they also referred to it as a strategy that provides self-knowledge, since it enabled the recognition of emotions and the elaboration of possibilities for the management of such feelings.

The research contributes to the literature on the subject and so that the strategy can be implemented in other educational institutions, with the objective of facilitating learning about conflict management and in the context of the managerial performance of nurses in other situations. It also points to simulation as a promising strategy for training nurses and other professionals in health services, given that conflicts are frequent situations in these scenarios.

Indirectly, also contributes to professional

practice, as students may become more prepared to deal with these situations, which ultimately reverberates in the professional qualification that influences the nursing care offered to the population.

The study presented as limitations, the interval of a period of approximately three months between the experience of the simulated practice and the data collection, which may have resulted in the forgetting of some information by the students. Also, it is pointed out that, in the Nursing Course, other simulated activities were carried out during the period in which the conflict management simulation occurred, which may have influenced the students' perception.

It is recommended to carry out other studies that can evaluate the contribution of simulation to the development of competencies for conflict management by nursing students, as well as to address other managerial competencies of nurses, given that the strategy is still mostly used in situations related to clinical care.

SIMULAÇÃO COMO ESTRATÉGIA DE ENSINO PARA GERENCIAMENTO DE CONFLITOS: PERCEPÇÃO DOS ACADÊMICOS DE ENFERMAGEM

RESUMO

Objetivo: identificar a percepção de estudantes de enfermagem sobre a simulação como estratégia de ensino para gerenciamento de conflitos. **Métodos:** trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, descritiva, realizada em ambiente virtual com 20 discentes do curso de enfermagem. A coleta de dados ocorreu de novembro a dezembro de 2022, utilizando um questionário de caracterização pessoal e entrevistas semiestruturadas. Para organização e análise dos dados, adotou-se a análise temática. **Resultados:** as simulações possibilitaram aos discentes de enfermagem resgatar e clarificar os conteúdos teóricos. Retratou-se que as situações de conflito acontecem no cotidiano dos profissionais e que esta estratégia poderá contribuir para o gerenciamento de conflitos em situações futuras. Contudo, devido ao realismo das cenas, verbalizaram que a ansiedade, o estresse e o nervosismo estiveram presentes. **Considerações finais:** a simulação foi apontada como uma estratégia facilitadora para o ensino de gerenciamento de conflitos, visto que conseguiram aplicar os conteúdos teóricos na prática, reconhecer situações semelhantes nos campos de prática, adquirir autoconfiança para lidarem com situações semelhantes no futuro e praticar o autoconhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Estudantes de Enfermagem. Ensino. Resolução de Conflitos. Treinamento por Simulação.

Simulación como estrategia de enseñanza para la gestión de conflictos: percepción de los académicos de enfermería

RESUMEN

Objetivo: identificar la percepción de los estudiantes de enfermería sobre la simulación como estrategia de enseñanza para la gestión de conflictos. **Métodos:** se trata de una investigación cualitativa, descriptiva, realizada en ambiente virtual con 20 discentes del curso de enfermería. La recolección de datos se realizó de noviembre a diciembre de 2022, utilizando un cuestionario de caracterización personal y entrevistas semiestruturadas. Para la organización y el análisis de los datos, se adoptó el análisis temático. **Resultados:** las simulaciones permitieron a los discentes de enfermería rescatar y aclarar los contenidos teóricos. Se relató que las situaciones de conflicto ocurren en la vida cotidiana de los profesionales y que esta estrategia podrá contribuir a la gestión de conflictos en situaciones futuras. Sin embargo, debido al realismo de las escenas, verbalizaron que la ansiedad, el estrés y el nerviosismo estaban presentes. **Consideraciones finales:** la simulación fue señalada como una

estratégia facilitadora para la enseñanza de gestión de conflictos, ya que lograron aplicar los contenidos teóricos en la práctica, reconocer situaciones similares en los campos de práctica, adquirir confianza en sí mismo para manejar situaciones similares en el futuro y practicar el autoconocimiento.

Palabras clave: Estudiantes de Enfermería. Enseñanza. Resolución de Conflictos. Entrenamiento por Simulación.

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