

Introduction

Faced with today's ever-changing information technology and knowledge economy, many professionals, including nursing staff, have been asked to equip themselves with a high degree of flexibility and adaptability when executing their professional judgments. Nursing professional judgment is not only a demonstration of nursing care quality but also a critical factor affecting the patients' present and future quality of life. To be able to make professional judgment, it is essential to acquire critical thinking ability and cultivate the dispositions of using such ability proactively (*Yeh&Chen, 2005*). Also, the need for critical thinking in nursing has been accentuated in response to the rapidly changing health care environment. Nurses must think critically to provide effective care whilst coping with the expansion in role associated with the complexities of current health care systems (*Simpson&Courtney, 2010*).

Critical thinking is the process of examining, underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating arguments, imagining and exploring alternatives, and developing a reflective criticism for the purpose of reaching a conclusion that can be justified. Critical thinking is not the same thing as criticism, though it does call for inquiring attitudes, knowledge about evidence and analysis, and skills to combine them (*Sullivan & Decker, 2009*).

In addition, critical thinking in nursing is an essential component of professional accountability and quality nursing care (*Miller & Stoeckel,*

2011). Nurses use critical thinking for several purposes, including applying professional and technical knowledge and skills in caring for clients. In these applications, critical thinking is the best guarantee that nurses will have successful outcome (*Roussel et al., 2006*).

Critical thinkers in nursing exhibit these habits of mind: confidence, contextual perspectives, creativity, flexibility, inquisitiveness, intellectual integrity, intuition, open-mindedness, perseverance, and reflection. Critical thinkers in nursing practice the cognitive skills of analyzing, applying standards, discriminating, information seeking, logical reasoning, predicting, and transforming knowledge (*Miller & Stoeckel, 2011*). Students don't become critical thinkers overnight, critical thinking is an interactive process that demands participation on the part of teacher and student (*Hooks, 2010*).

Hence, critical thinking for nursing students cannot be produced without integrating theory into clinical practice. Successfully to integrate classroom theory into clinical practice protracted gaps between theoretical learning and clinical practice shouldn't be existed (*Petrini, 2001*). Nursing curricula (especially at the graduate level) should serve to free nursing students' minds and help them use their knowledge of higher-quality patient care and positive societal effects. Critical thinking can assist with insight into the societal conditions generating a patient's illness (*Youngblood & Beitz, 2001*).

Developing critical thinkers is central to the mission of all educational institutions. By ensuring that students learn to think critically and fair-

mindedly, we ensure that students not only master essential subject matter, but become effective citizens, capable of reasoning ethically and acting in the public good. To successfully teach critical thinking, it must be moved into curriculum content, structure, and sequence at all grade levels (*Paul & Elder, 2005*).

Moreover, knowledge and understanding of students' critical thinking dispositions and skills are important to nursing students. Nursing students should be enabled to be critical thinker through the acquisition of specialized skills in critical thinking. So, the present study concerned with investigating the relationship between dispositions and skills of critical thinking among second year nursing students.