

## The Preceptorship Experience and Clinical Competence of Final Year Nursing Students

**Authors :** Susan Ka Yee Chow

**Abstract :** Effective clinical preceptorship is affecting students' competence and fostering their growth in applying theoretical knowledge and skills in clinical settings. Any difference between the expected and actual learning experience will reduce nursing students' interest in clinical practices and having a negative consequence with their clinical performance. This cross-sectional study is an attempt to compare the differences between preferred and actual preceptorship experience of final year nursing students, and to examine the relationship between the actual preceptorship experience and perceived clinical competence of the students in a tertiary institution. Participants of the study were final year bachelor nursing students of a self-financing tertiary institution in Hong Kong. The instruments used to measure the effectiveness of clinical preceptorship was developed by the participating institution. The scale consisted of five items in a 5-point likert scale. The questions including goals development, critical thinking, learning objectives, asking questions and providing feedback to students. The "Clinical Competence Questionnaire" by Liou & Cheng (2014) was used to examine students' perceived clinical competences. The scale consisted of 47 items categorized into four domains, namely nursing professional behaviours; skill competence: general performance; skill competence: core nursing skills and skill competence: advanced nursing skills. There were 193 questionnaires returned with a response rate of 89%. The paired t-test was used to compare the differences between preferred and actual preceptorship experiences of students. The results showed significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) for the five questions. The mean for the preferred scores is higher than the actual scores resulting statistically significance. The maximum mean difference was accepted goal and the highest mean different was giving feedback. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the relationship. The results showed moderate correlations between nursing professional behaviours with asking questions and providing feedback. Providing useful feedback to students is having moderate correlations with all domains of the Clinical Competence Questionnaire ( $r = 0.269 - 0.345$ ). It is concluded that nursing students do not have a positive perception of the clinical preceptorship. Their perceptions are significantly different from their expected preceptorship. If students were given more opportunities to ask questions in a pedagogical atmosphere, their perceived clinical competence and learning outcomes could be improved as a result.

**Keywords :** clinical preceptor, clinical competence, clinical practicum, nursing students

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