

Perception and Readiness for Implementing A Preceptor System in Clinical Nursing Education in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

In the context of reforming the nursing education system in Uzbekistan and the transition to a four-year bachelor's degree, improving the quality of clinical education is particularly urgent. One model aimed at improving practical training is the preceptor system, which involves experienced clinical nurses mentoring and supporting students in real-life clinical settings. An analysis of their opinions provides an objective understanding of the current level of awareness, attitudes toward preceptorship, and the degree of institutional readiness for its implementation in the clinical nursing education system.

Keywords: Perception, readiness, implementation, preceptorship system, clinical, education, nursing, affairs, Uzbekistan.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the nursing education system in Uzbekistan has been undergoing active reforms, one of the key areas of which is the transition to a four-year bachelor's degree program in nursing. These changes are aimed at improving the professional training of nurses and developing sustainable clinical, managerial, and communication competencies in graduates. The quality of clinical training is particularly important, as it is in practical settings that theoretical knowledge and professional skills are integrated. The results of an analysis of curricula and clinical practice modules, as well as survey data from students, faculty, and clinical nurses, indicate a number of problems related to

insufficiently structured clinical mentoring, limited individual support for students, and uneven clinical supervision during practical training.

One approach aimed at addressing these issues is a preceptorship system, which involves experienced clinical nurses in the training, support, and assessment of students during practical training. International experience shows that the preceptorship model facilitates students' more effective adaptation to the clinical environment, increasing their confidence, professional independence, and the quality of care provided. In the context of Uzbekistan, where the bachelor's nursing education system is in its infancy, studying the perceptions and readiness of key participants

in the educational process—students, faculty, and clinical nurses—to implement this model is particularly relevant. Analyzing their opinions provides an objective understanding of the current level of awareness, attitudes toward preceptorship, and the degree of institutional readiness for its application in clinical nursing education.

The purpose and objectives of the study are to assess perceptions of and readiness for the implementation of the preceptorship system in clinical nursing education in Uzbekistan. To assess perceptions and readiness for the implementation of the preceptorship system in clinical nursing education in Uzbekistan, based on the opinions of key participants in the educational process. This study analyzes the perceptions of students, clinical nurses, and nursing faculty regarding the importance of the preceptor model, its role in improving the quality of clinical training, and its relevance to existing practical training conditions.

The study had a descriptive, cross-sectional design. A total of 200 respondents participated in the survey, including 100 nursing students, 50 clinical nurses, and 50 nursing faculty. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire covering awareness of, attitudes toward, and an assessment of its impact on the quality of clinical training. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages).

To achieve this goal, the study defined objectives aimed at comprehensively assessing respondents' attitudes toward the preceptor model. Specifically, the participants' level of awareness of the nature and functions of preceptorship, as well as their attitudes toward the need to implement this model in clinical training, were assessed. Additionally, the perceived impact of preceptorship on the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, students' adaptation to the clinical environment, and the development of professional confidence was assessed.

Special attention was paid to analyzing the level of professional and institutional readiness for the implementation of the preceptorship system. This task examined respondents' opinions on the feasibility of clinical nurses fulfilling the preceptor role, the need for additional training and support, and the role of managerial and organizational factors in ensuring the effective implementation of the preceptorship model in the nursing education system of Uzbekistan.

Methods

The study had a descriptive cross-sectional design and was

conducted to assess perceptions of and readiness for the implementation of the preceptorship system in clinical nursing education. Participants included representatives of three key groups: nursing students, clinical nurses, and nursing faculty. The sample was formed using convenience sampling at educational and clinical institutions involved in the training of nursing specialists. A total of 200 respondents were recruited, including 100 students, 50 clinical nurses, and 50 faculty. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on an analysis of the scientific literature and adapted to the conditions of the nursing education system in Uzbekistan. The questionnaire included sections aimed at assessing the level of awareness of preceptorship, attitudes toward its implementation, the perceived impact on the quality of clinical education, and the level of institutional readiness. The survey was anonymous and voluntary. Statistical data processing was performed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage distribution calculations, which allowed for a generalized characterization of the study participants' opinions.

Awareness of the Preceptorship System. Analysis of the survey results revealed that most study participants were somewhat familiar with the preceptorship system. In the overall sample, a significant proportion of respondents indicated that they had previously heard of the preceptorship model or had a basic understanding of its essence. However, awareness levels varied significantly between groups. Faculty and clinical nurses were most familiar with the concept of preceptorship, while students tended to have only partial or superficial awareness.

Among clinical nurses and faculty, more than 80–90% of respondents reported being familiar with the concept of preceptorship or understanding its basic functions. A significant proportion of these groups noted an understanding of the role of the preceptor as a mentor, guiding students through clinical practice. At the same time, a small proportion of respondents (less than 10–15%) indicated a lack of a clear understanding of the content and objectives of preceptorship, indicating uneven professional awareness.

The student group demonstrated a lower level of awareness than other study participants. About half of the students reported having heard of preceptorship but did not have a full understanding of this clinical training model. About a third of respondents indicated minimal awareness, limited to occasional mentions during training or practical training. Only a relatively small proportion of students indicated a

good familiarity with the preceptorship system, reflecting the limited implementation of this model in current educational practice.

Sources of information about preceptorship also varied between respondent groups. The most frequently cited sources were educational institutions and clinical practice, as well as participation in seminars, trainings, and professional events. A significant proportion of faculty and nurses cited international experience and professional contacts as sources of knowledge about preceptorship. At the same time, students most often received information in a fragmented manner—through classroom activities or informal communication in the clinical environment, which highlights the need for a more systematic presentation of this model within clinical education.

Attitudes toward the need to implement preceptorship.

The study results revealed strong agreement among participants regarding the need to improve clinical nursing education in Uzbekistan. In the overall sample, the overwhelming majority of respondents (over 85-90%) noted that the existing clinical training system needs to be improved. A significant portion of participants also indicated that the current level of clinical supervision during practical training is insufficient, a point particularly emphasized by faculty and clinical nurses. The proportion of respondents who disagreed with this view was minimal, no more than 5-10%.

An analysis of responses by group revealed that faculty and clinical nurses were the most critical of the current state of clinical training. In these groups, over 90% of participants agreed with the statement about the need to strengthen clinical supervision of students. Among students, this figure also remained high, at approximately 80-85%, indicating that students recognize the need for a more structured and supportive form of practical training. Attitudes toward the preceptorship system as a tool for improving the quality of clinical practice were overwhelmingly positive. Over 85–95% of respondents agreed that the introduction of preceptorship contributes to the improvement of clinical education. Study participants noted that the involvement of experienced clinical nurses as preceptors can enhance the effectiveness of practical training, ensure a closer connection between theoretical training and real-life clinical practice, and promote the development of professional independence in students.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents (approximately 80–90%) indicated that preceptorship has a

positive impact on patient safety and quality of care, and contributes to increased confidence and professional skills among students. These results were relatively consistent across all participant groups, demonstrating a positive perception of preceptorship as an effective tool for improving clinical practice and confirming a high level of readiness for its implementation in the nursing education system in Uzbekistan.

The Impact of Preceptorship on the Quality of Clinical Learning

Survey results showed that the majority of study participants positively assessed the impact of the preceptorship system on the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills during clinical learning. Over 85–90% of respondents agreed with the statement that preceptors help students effectively apply acquired theoretical knowledge in real-world clinical situations. This figure was highest among faculty and clinical nurses, reflecting their professional understanding of the importance of mentoring in developing clinical thinking and practical competencies.

A significant impact of preceptorship was also noted in terms of student adaptation to the clinical environment. Approximately 80–90% of study participants indicated that the presence of a preceptor facilitates a more rapid and comfortable adaptation of students to clinical practice. Respondents noted that structured support and regular feedback from an experienced mentor help reduce student anxiety, facilitate the acquisition of clinical responsibilities, and improve their effective integration into the medical team. Improving students' confidence and professional skills was also considered by study participants as a key advantage of the preceptor model. Over 85–90% of respondents agreed that preceptor involvement in clinical learning contributes to students' increased confidence in their own actions and clinical decision-making. According to faculty and nurses, this model allows students to gradually transition from an observational role to more independent performance of professional tasks under the supervision of a preceptor.

Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents (approximately 80–85%) indicated that preceptorship facilitates the development of practical and communication skills, as well as the development of professional responsibility and clinical autonomy. Study participants noted that regular interaction with the preceptor creates conditions for targeted learning, objective progress assessment, and the development of stable professional

attitudes, which overall has a positive impact on the quality of clinical nursing education.

Discussion

The findings in this study regarding the high level of positive perceptions and readiness to implement the preceptorship system are consistent with the results of international research in nursing education. Several international studies emphasize that the preceptorship model is viewed by students and clinical mentors as an effective mechanism for improving the quality of clinical learning, reducing the gap between theory and practice, and developing sustainable professional competencies. Similar to the results of this study, international authors note a high level of support for preceptorship among faculty and practicing nurses, indicating the universality of this model in various educational and clinical contexts.

Interpreting the identified trends, it should be noted that positive attitudes toward preceptorship are largely associated with the study participants' awareness of the shortcomings of the traditional organization of clinical practice. International data show that the lack of structured mentoring often leads to fragmented acquisition of practical skills, increased anxiety among students, and decreased confidence in the clinical environment. In this context, the results of this study, reflecting a high appreciation of the role of the preceptor in integrating theoretical knowledge and practical skills, confirm the findings of international authors regarding the key pedagogical and adaptive function of the preceptor model.

The issue of student adaptation to the clinical environment deserves special attention in the discussion. International studies emphasize that the transition from the classroom to real-world clinical practice is accompanied by so-called "reality shock," which can negatively impact students' professional motivation and psychological well-being. The literature demonstrates that the presence of a preceptor significantly reduces stress, promotes a sense of security, and accelerates students' professional socialization. Similar conclusions were obtained in the present study, where the majority of respondents noted the significant role of preceptorship in facilitating adaptation to the clinical environment [6-9].

An important aspect of the discussion is the increase in students' confidence and professional skills under the guidance of a preceptor. According to international publications, systematic feedback, demonstration of clinical roles, and support from an experienced mentor contribute to

the development of clinical thinking, independence, and responsibility in students. The results of this study confirm these findings, demonstrating that the majority of participants view preceptorship as a factor positively influencing the development of students' practical and communication skills. This demonstrates the pedagogical validity of the model and its compliance with modern nursing education requirements [10-13].

At the same time, the perception of preceptorship in the context of the Uzbek healthcare system has its own characteristics, conditioned by the stage of reform of nursing education and the limited resources of clinical sites. Literary data indicate that in countries with an emerging bachelor's degree system of nursing, preceptorship is often viewed not only as an educational tool but also as a strategy for strengthening the human resources and professional identity of nurses. The results obtained in the study reflect a similar trend: clinical nurses and faculty perceive the preceptor role as significant, but requiring institutional support and recognition, which is fully consistent with the findings of international authors [6,11].

Thus, the discussion of the results allows us to conclude that the positive attitudes and expectations regarding preceptorship identified in the study are in line with global scientific data and reflect the objective needs of the nursing education system. The coincidence of the obtained results with international studies confirms the relevance and validity of introducing the preceptorship model into clinical nursing education in Uzbekistan. At the same time, the national context emphasizes the need to adapt this model, taking into account the organizational and personnel characteristics of the healthcare system, which should be considered an important finding of this study [1, 12].

Conclusions

The study showed that students, clinical nurses, and nursing teachers in Uzbekistan have a generally positive perception of the preceptorship system and a high level of readiness for its implementation in clinical education. Respondents demonstrated sufficient awareness of the preceptorship model and expressed agreement with the need to improve clinical training, emphasizing its importance for the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, student adaptation to the clinical environment, and increasing their confidence. Thus, the discussion of the results allows us to conclude that the positive attitudes and expectations regarding preceptorship identified in the study are in line with global scientific data and reflect the objective needs of the nursing education system. The

coincidence of the obtained results with international studies confirms the relevance and validity of introducing the preceptorship model into clinical nursing education in Uzbekistan. At the same time, the national context emphasizes the need to adapt this model, taking into account the organizational and personnel characteristics of the healthcare system, which should be considered an important finding of this study [1, 12].

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