

# Perceived Level of Preparation for Nursing Internship

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## Abstract

**Background:** Internship programs have increased in number and popularity in the past decade. It was designed to assist in the transition period of nursing graduates and providing the necessary specialized training to work in various specialty. Nursing programs assure the basics of a comprehensive knowledge that support novice students to get ready to practice in different workplace.

**Purpose:** The study aimed to identify perceived level of preparation for nursing internship.

**Method:** A descriptive exploratory research design was employed with the sample of 121 nurse interns and Clinical preparation requirements Electronic survey utilized for data collection.

**Result:** Majority of the respondents gave their highest percentage for educational preparation requirements with Teaching & Information Giving, Psychomotor Skills and Communications Skills (79.70%, 78.82% and 76.92% respectively). Also, regarding nursing process the results revealed that the respondents indicated their highest percentage with evaluation and intervention steps (76.03 and 75.7% respectively)

**Conclusion:** The respondents perceived that all educational preparation requirement described in the current study were essential/very important for their preparation for practice during internship training and for developing their clinical competencies.

**Keywords:** *Clinical Experience; Educational Preparation; Nurse; Internship.*

## Introduction

Internship programs have increased in number and popularity in the past decade. It was designed to assist in the transition period of nursing graduates and providing the necessary specialized training to work in various specialty. Nursing programs assure the basics of a comprehensive knowledge that support novice students to get ready to practice in different workplace.<sup>1</sup>

Nursing education aims to guide nursing students into becoming beginner nursing practitioners. During

the training period, these beginner practitioners are expected to changeover into a clinical work environment promptly, and are adept at providing safe care for patients requiring complex care.<sup>2</sup> Since nursing is a blended profession on application of theory and practice as its core foundation, the quality of nursing education is dependent upon the quality of clinical experience provided to nursing students in the clinical setting.<sup>3,4</sup>

Intern period is well known as “a short-lived experience of practical work in a specific field which serves as a future career path of students which they receive through training and acquire indispensable job experience of their chosen field of interest”.<sup>5,6</sup> Internships can deepen students’ problem-solving skills, ameliorate their commitment to their selected professional advancement which eventually promote suitable opportune to learn and secure the necessary empirical experience thus enhancing employment

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qualifications, professional specialization, time optimization, self-reliance, ability to communicate and professional etiquette towards work.<sup>7-10</sup>

Effective training programs must be those in which teaching and learning activities are provided to help the novice nursing graduates generate the transition from the trainee to the advanced beginner who can demonstrate a satisfactory level of performance and deal with real situations.<sup>11</sup> A study conducted by Abdel-Kader et.al. (2012) to investigate nursing interns' viewpoint regarding their clinical appointment readiness qualification, showed that nursing process steps as well as psychomotor performance are recognized as very influential prerequisite in preparing for clinical duty assignment.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, Aldeeb et. al., (2016) and Althiga et.al. (2017) studies concluded that clinical instruction and involvement should take incremental steps to achieve clinical practice standard to foster client's welfare and health professional training for nurses.<sup>13,14</sup> Moreover, the study carried-out by Gaundan et. al. (2018) indicated that participants need the support and guidance of their unit managers, colleagues and the nursing management in general during their transition phase as they face the constant change, progress and complexity in nursing.<sup>15</sup> In addition, a study performed by Keshk et.al. (2018) showed the importance of enacting the educational program of internship for nursing students on the benefits of applying the nursing process. This helps them improve both their professional and personal attributes such as acquiring advanced skills, critical thinking, communication, leadership and management skills.<sup>2</sup>

In Saudi Arabia/King Faisal University/College of Applied Medical Science, 3rd and first semester of 4<sup>th</sup> year nursing students are exposed to client assignment and hospital duties. During the hospital experience's there is the availability of clinical instructor who provides guidance and assistance as compared to internship. The hospital experiences from that one and half years possesses limited earning of confident-skills, it can be a year for completing all necessary college requirements. By the time of internship, it just like a continuation of hospital experiences from that college days, wherein nursing interns are under the supervision of a nurse-preceptor, they get monitored most of the time by them.

**Significance of the Study:** The internship program at College of Applied Medical Science in King Faisal

University provides the needed skills to comply with the respective clinical organization's goals and mission. This study will help the nursing interns measure their level of preparation in the internship program. For College of Applied Medical Science, this study contributes to the improvement of nursing internship program by reducing the disparities in theory and clinical practice.

**Purpose of the study:** The study aimed to identify perceived level of preparation for nursing internship.

**Research Question:** what is perceived level of preparation among nursing internship.

## Method

**Research Design:** A descriptive exploratory research design was used in this study.

**Subjects:** The study subjects included all nurse interns (n = 121) who were enrolled within the Academic Year 2019-2020.

**Setting:** The study was conducted at the King Faisal University (College of Applied medical Sciences, nursing department) among Internship of Nursing affiliated in all Tertiary hospital, Primary Health Center and Special Hospitals affiliated in Ministry of Health of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Interns also are affiliated in private hospital in Al Ahsa and Dharan, Khobar like Al Ahsa Hospital, Almoosa Hospital and John Hopkins Aramco Hospital.

**Tool for Data Collection:** 4 Likert scale (1 = not important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = important, and 4 = essential) clinical preparation requirements questionnaire was developed by researchers after reviewed related literature and used in the present study.<sup>12,16-17</sup> It includes 51 items to assess the requirements of clinical preparation. It is subdivided into two parts; Part I contains demographic data such as: age, academic achievement, marital status, number of children; Part II includes 5 subscales namely, Teaching and Information Giving (4 items), Use of Resources (4 items), Psychomotor Skills (13 items), Steps in Nursing Process (27 items), and Communication Skills (3 Items).

**Procedures:** An official permission was obtained to conduct this study from the College Dean of College of Applied Medical Sciences and Department Head of Nursing in King Faisal University. The content was assessed for validity of the tool by three juries in the related fields. Cronbach's alpha used to ensure the

reliability of the tool; its value was 0.92. Electronic survey was used for data collection. Email and contact number of the study participants was provided through coordination with the Internship committee Coordinator. A survey link was sent for the participants with an attached consent form, as they agree with the conditions then respondents fill-up and sent a feedback immediately. The data was collected from April 15 to June 3, 2020.

**Ethical Consideration:** The deanship of scientific research at King Faisal University provide ethical approval to conduct this study (grant No. 186206). Also, the consent for participation was included in the survey. In addition, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents and their responses were assured.

**Statistical Analysis:** For analysis of data, IBM SPSS statistics for windows, version 24.0 was utilized. Frequency, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to measure correlations of variables. Level of significance calculated at P value of  $\leq 0.05$ .

### Results

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of the study subjects according to their general characteristics.

Mostly of the participants are 23 years old (mean and standard deviation are  $23.55 \pm 3.45$ ) not yet married (73%) and without children (97%). Respondents mostly reside in the urban area (78.50%) and academically achievers during the nursing preparation, categorized as excellent and very good students (34.70% and 36.40%, respectively).

**Table 1: Distribution of the study sample according to their general characteristics.**

General Characteristic	N	%
Age	Mean $\pm$ SD	
	23.53 $\pm$ 3.45	
<b>Place Of Residence</b>		
Rural	26	21.50
Urban	95	78.50
<b>Married</b>		
No	73	60.30
Yes	48	39.70
<b>With Children</b>		
No	97	80.20
Yes	24	19.80
<b>Academic Achievement</b>		
Excellent	42	34.70
Very Good	44	36.40
Good	27	22.30
Pass	8	6.60

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of educational preparation requirement for nursing internship by the study sample. N= 121**

Educational Preparation Requirements	%	Minimum Mean	Maximum Mean	Mean	SD
Nursing Process	75.83%	2.41	44.48	30.25	9.49
Use of Resources	73.72%	2.15	60.15	35.75	3.74
Psychomotor Skills	78.82%	2	57.92	41.92	3.79
Teaching & Information Giving	79.70%	1.25	53.75	33	3.69
Communication Skills	76.92%	2.5	51.75	33.37	3.3

Table 2 presents that the highest percentage (79.70%) reported by the participants with Teaching & Information Giving (sample item includes define terminology used to describe diagnosis, symptoms, and complications and able to interpret findings on the client). Also, this table shows that 78.82% of the respondents perceived Psychomotor Skills as essential for their internship (sample item includes blood drawing and vein puncture). Moreover, concerning Communications Skills it

was noticed that 76.92% of the respondents view it as essential requirement for internship (sample item includes Seek assistance when necessary). Additionally, 73.72% of the respondents considered that Use of Resources essential educational requirement (sample items are Utilize knowledge from all nursing courses in providing nursing care and utilize the nursing care plan in the client's record).

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics regarding steps in nursing process requirement by the study sample. N= 121**

Step in Nursing Process	%	Minimum Mean	Maximum Mean	Mean	SD
Assessment	74.27	3.96	46.8	30.64	12.47
Planning	74.38	3.2	45.6	30,25	12.30
Intervention	75.7	2.6	47.2	30.25	8.77
Evaluation	76.03	2.5	47.5	30.25	4.40

Table 3 Shows that regarding nursing process steps the respondents indicated their highest percentage (76.03) with evaluation (sample item includes Initiate evaluation of nursing care with others and Evaluate results of nursing care). Furthermore, regarding intervention steps it was noticed that 75.7% of the students perceived it as essential requirement (sample

item like Identify the rationale for prescription of the medications). In addition, it was clear that planning step was perceived as educational requirement by 74.38 % of the participants. In relation to assessment step it was founded that 74.27% of the respondents perceived it positively as educational requirement for internship.

**Table 4: Pearson Correlation (r) of Preparation requirement for nurse internship by the study participants. N=1**

Preparation requirement	Nursing Process	Use of Resources	Psychomotor Skills	Teaching & Information Giving	Communication Skills
Nursing Process					
Use of Resources	.805**				
Psychomotor Skills	.734**	.751**			
Teaching & Information Giving	.728**	.713**	.820**		
Communication Skills	.814**	.686**	.724**	.857**	

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows Pearson Correlation (r) of Preparation requirement for nurse internship by the study participants. It was observed that significant positive relationship at the 0.01 level was existed among all preparation requirement of nurse internship. Concerning nursing process requirement, it was clear that significant positive relationship existed with Use of Resources, Psychomotor Skills, Teaching & Information Giving, and Communication Skills ( $r=.805$ ,  $.734$ ,  $.728$ , and  $.814$  respectively). Also, it was founded that significant positive relationship occurred between Use of Resources and psychomotor Skills, Teaching & Information Giving, and Communication Skills ( $r=.751$ ,  $.713$ , and  $.686$  respectively). Furthermore, it was noticed that significant positive relationship was between Psychomotor Skills and both Teaching & Information Giving, and Communication Skills

( $r=.820$ ,  $.724$  respectively). In addition, significant positive relationship was existed between Teaching & Information Giving, and Communication Skills ( $r=.857$ ).

## Discussion

Clinical practices must enable and support nursing students during the transition period, which begins as senior professional in their intern year to be independent and competent registered nurse.<sup>14</sup> The current study aimed to identify nursing student perception of educational requirement for nursing internship. Findings of present study revealed that Teaching & Information Giving were perceived as the primary essential requirement for internship practice. This finding consistent with Halse et.al. (2014) who stated that Health teaching has been viewed as an important aspect of nursing care for many years. To empower student nurse to health teaching, they

required to be aware about content areas and topics of health education programs and the teaching role of the nurse. Health teaching has a positive impact on a patient's health situation. Consequently, it is very important to emphasize on the role of health teaching during nursing education.<sup>17</sup>

Also, the study results revealed that psychomotor skills were perceived positively by the respondents and viewed as essential requirement for internship practice. This finding agrees with the results of the studies conducted by Ulrich et.al. (2010). They provide convincing evidence that both new graduate nurses and their organizations benefit from the application of a planned internship that comprises classroom instruction, directed opportunities to improve nursing psychomotor skills, support, engagement of stakeholders, and professional supervision.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, findings of this study showed that communication skills perceived as essential requirement for internship. This results in the same line with Curtis et.al (2013), Seada and Yousef (2012), Thomas (2010) studies.<sup>19-21</sup> They stated that It is essential to introduce or strengthen the usage of a professional communication skills to reduce errors and improvement of communication technique among health care providers. Also, McCaffrey et.al (2010) commented that collaborative work and communication between health care team members is essential to care of patients and job satisfaction for nurses.<sup>22</sup> Also, communication is one of the characteristics measured to identify whether healthcare settings demonstrate excellence in nursing and patient care. This result was also consistent with Blevins (2018). He stated that without effective socialization, new nurses may get discouraged, impacting their productivity and engagement in patient care.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, the present study responses founded that nursing process steps perceived as essential requirement for nursing interns specifically evaluation and intervention steps. This finding agrees with AL-Fattah (2019) who mentioned that the nursing process givenurses the responsibility of developing the nursing care plan based on the client needs and nursing diagnosis. Nursing care plan must be comprising different aspects of client needs as physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cultural. In addition, all nursing intervention actions that implemented by the nurse should be evaluated to identify whether the goal for patient wellness have been achieved.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, the current study founded that positive correlation was existed between nursing process, communication skills, and resources usage. This result supported by Aboshaiqah et.al (2018) and Joseph (2017) and who mentioned that planning nursing care allows for clear communication among healthcare members regarding patient's condition, which in turn it improves patient's care consistency and promote the possibility of safe results for patient. Moreover, he stated that the key difficulties for utilization of the nursing process such as shortage of materials, scarcity of resources, shortage of time, lack of human power and motivation. Formal internship with measured outcomes must be the norm for all new graduate nurses. Additionally, the Internship is a moment of acquisition and improvement of knowledge and skills essential to professional practice.<sup>25-27</sup>

#### **Recommendation for practice and future research:**

- Address health education in Nursing curriculum for better preparation of future nurses to Teach and encourage patients/family members about the patient's needs and preventive health measures.
- Seek methods to better prepare nurse intern to utilize therapeutic communication with patients, family members, and health care team members.
- Provide nurse intern with adequate pre-clinical preparation on how could they could effectively use nursing process, identify and appropriate use of available resources in the community in developing a plan of care for a patient and his family.
- Future research could be enhanced by replication the study with large sample to get more reliable and general findings.

**Limitations:** The generalizability of our findings is limited by a relatively small sample size.

#### **Conclusion**

Collectively, the respondents perceived that all educational preparation requirement described in the current study were essential/very important for their preparation for practice during internship training and for developing their clinical competencies. Also, Internship is an important learning-teaching strategy and careful attention must be given for the preparation of nursing students in the clinical experience to empower students and newly registered nurses in their professional nursing practice. Internship educational preparation should focus

on the following considerations: Teaching & Information Giving, Psychomotor Skills, Communication Skills, Nursing Process, and Use of Resources.

**Conflicts of Interest Disclosure:** There is no conflict of interest in the current study for all authors.

**Funding Source:** This study funded by The Deanship of Scientific Research at King Faisal University.

**Acknowledgment:** The authors acknowledge the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Faisal University for the financial support under Nasher Track (Grant No.186206).

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