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## REVIEW ARTICLE

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### **Nurse Preceptor Experience in Preceptorship Program: A Systematic Literature Review of Qualitative Studies**

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#### **Abstract**

This systematic review described the experiences of the nurse preceptor in the preceptorship program in health care services. Three data bases such as EBSCO, Science Direct, and Scopus were included to extract the relevant articles. Qualitative, peer-reviewed, original studies published in English from 2013 until 2017 and exploring preceptor experiences of the preceptorship program were involved. The manuscripts were selected by screening titles, abstracts and full papers and the quality of the studies was measured. Data were analysed using content analysis. Ten studies were chosen for the review. Nurse preceptor experiences were divided into four main categories: experiences related to the preparation; experiences related to the preceptee; experiences preceptor role during the program; and experiences related to work environment. The findings confirmed that the nurse preceptor has a great impact on quality of nursing services to the new graduate nurses, but many challenges face during the program.

**Keywords:** Nurses preceptor, preceptor experience, preceptorship.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Preceptorship has been acknowledged as a strategy to develop competencies in nurses. The particular focus is on newly graduated nurses and nursing students in terms of knowledge, practical skills, confidence, clinical judgment, professional socialization and the smooth transition from novice to expert nurse (1–5).

In preceptorship, nursing student or newly graduated nurses are paired with a clinical nurse in the clinical practice setting. This relationship is short-term where the preceptee and the preceptors are seldom involved in the choice of who they are paired with. Nurse preceptors are utilized worldwide as their supervision is a fundamental part of nursing students undergoing the rigorous clinical practicum (6). Preceptors guide students to assess clinical competency, integrate theory into practice, teach clinical skills, and enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills (7); in addition, preceptors are seen as role models and pivotal in shaping students' nursing identity in clinical settings.

The preceptor is a clinical nurse whose duty is to guide nursing students or new nurses to learn to apply the theory and knowledge they have (8). An educational course is recommended to ensure adequate preparation for the preceptor role, and it is usually conducted by individual healthcare institutions (9).

The study done by Kim et al. (2014) reported that interactions with preceptors correlated positively with an increased perception of students towards competence in organisation, collaboration, delegation, initiating nursing care, communication, self-evaluation and seeking new knowledge (8). Students meet many challenges in the dynamic clinical environment and experience anxiety in clinical assessment. Researchers advocated that role modelling and adequate support by the preceptors could nurture students in developing essential resilience traits and enhance their confidence in problem-solving in the ever-changing clinical situations (10).

The new nurses can benefit from a supported and structured preceptorship during their transition to a professional nurse (1,11). Preceptorship is the process of formalising relationships between experienced nurses and new nurses, designed to assist new nurses to adapt to and successfully perform essential occupation duties (12). Preceptorship is based on the assumption that a positive one-to-one relation between an experienced and new nurse would recover new nurses training before undertaking with patients in a clinical setting (13).

A successful preceptorship program can facilitate the adaptation of new graduate nurses to the workforce (14). However, the role of preceptorship has been mentioned to in the literature as 'challenging and stressful' (15), and preceptors often find it challenging to balance their caring and teaching roles without compromising one another. General, studies that have focused on the experiences of preceptors are rare, and the reachable research has mainly addressed the experiences of preceptors working with nursing students (6,15).

A broader perspective is needed to gain a deeper understanding of how nurses' preceptor has experiences in program orientation to develop the orientation based on nurse preceptors' needs. As far as we know, there was few of systematic literature review

of qualitative studies concerning nurses' preceptor experiences of orientation. Therefore, this review aimed to describe the nurse's preceptor experiences.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Search strategy

This systematic review was conducted according to guidelines from the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (16) and Joanna Briggs Institute User guide (17). Three databases such as Ebsco, Science Direct, and Scopus were extract to find the relevant articles. The inclusion criteria of selecting data were qualitative, peer-reviewed, original studies published in English from 2013 until 2017 and exploring preceptor experiences of the preceptorship program. Sreening of paper based on titles, abstracts and full texts.

Search strategies, terms and limitations (Table 1) were selected with the aid of an information specialist. A total of 315 studies were found from the different electronic databases used as follows: EBSCO (n=113), Science Direct (n=95), Scopus (n=107). 98 duplication articles were removed after screening (16).

Table 1. Search strategy, terms and limitations.

Databases	Search term
Ebsco	"preceptor*" AND preceptorship* AND nurs* AND experienc* OR feeling*
Science Direct	"preceptor*" AND preceptorship* AND nurs* AND experienc* "preceptor*" AND preceptorship* AND orientat* OR mentor* AND
Scopus	experienc* OR feel*

### 2.2 Study selection

315 studies were included in a third-step study selection processes. Two researchers extracted the articles based on title, abstract, and appropriately full text, and removed 399 articles. Disagreement between researchers regarding eligibility was resolved through discussion. Using a PICOs format such as P=participants, I=phenomena of interest, Co=context and S=types of studies (Table 2), the researcher selected the suitable articles

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study selection.

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Participants: nurses preceptor	Participants: students, new graduate nurses
The phenomenon of interest: the experiences of preceptor	The aspect of interest: Study does not handle experiences of orientation at all, Nurses' results of experiences in orientation have not been described separately from the other participants' results
Context: all nursing contexts	
Type of study: qualitative research, peer-reviewed, original research, published in English.	Type of study: a quantitative study, not original research, published in other languages than in English.

### 2.3 Quality appraisal

To ascertain the quality of the studies chosen for the review and to increase the reliability of the review, a critical assessment was conducted for the studies (n=15) selected based on full texts by two researchers (HK, BT) (16). For assessing the quality of studies, the Joanna Briggs Institute's (JBI) Qualitative Assessment and Review Instrument (QARI) with ten criteria was used. To be selected for this review, original studies had to fulfil at least five assessment criteria. Quality was quantified by calculating scores of either 0 or 1 point per rule. The quality of the studies varied from two to ten. Based on the quality appraisal, ten studies were included in this review. Quality scores of the studies chosen to the review are presented in Table 3.

### 2.4 Data extraction and analysis

Processing of the research material started with the retrieval of the data (16). The data extraction followed by Higgins and Green's (2011) and the Centre for Review and Dissemination's (2009) instructions. Using a content analysis method such as inductive or deductive to analyze the data in systematically based on the purpose of this study. Following the research question, defining of unit analysis was conducted to find either key theme. Lastly, data were coded and group by first researcher (HK) and verified by second researcher (BT)

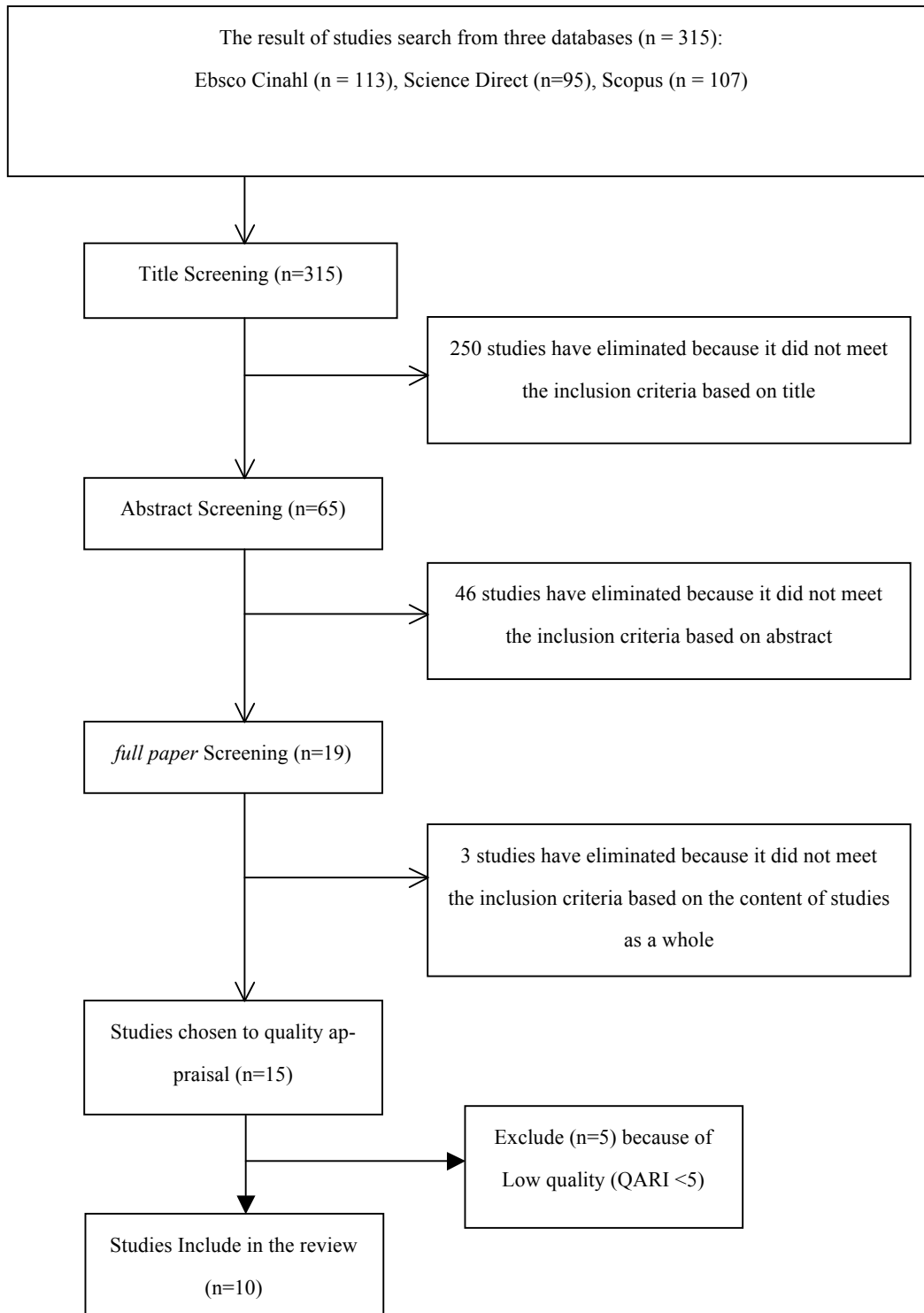


Figure 1. Study selection process of the original studies adapted from CRD (2009).

### **3. Results**

#### ***3.1 Description of studies***

Of the 10 selected studies in this systematic review, two studies were conducted in the UK (11,17), two studies were Canada (18,19), one study enrolled in Singapore (20), Iran (3), Sweden (4), USA (21), and Ireland (22).

#### ***3.2 Experiences related to the preparation***

Some studies mention this theme that preceptor requires development in performing its role as a preceptor and as a Nurse. Workload, support system, time, and educational programmes for preceptors influenced their development and self-confidence (20). Furthermore, Inconsistencies in preceptor preparation, lack of appropriate guidelines for teaching and learning, Lack of time or preparing to transition to the role (21). Educational development of preceptors that there were existing measurement tools for the outcomes of preceptorship (11).

#### ***3.3 Experiences related to the preceptee***

Understanding the needs and issues of newly qualified staff (17). The basis for learning is a caring student–preceptor relationship; 2) teaching in a safe and supportive learning environment (4). Students Mirroring Instructors is a natural outcome of the model and indicates how nursing students mirror the attitudes of their instructors as a result of demonstrations, expectations and support (18). Minimal guidance was found to impact students' learning negatively (22).

#### ***3.4 Experiences preceptor role during the program***

Preceptorship was the constitutive pattern that unified the themes. The preceptorship process is challenging and stressful. Preceptors endure several functions simultaneously. Thus, their workload should be adequately composed in order, not to a concession with one another and evade burnout. The preceptors need a well supported, and their contribution is duly recognised. Situation clear objectives and realistic expectations, and having clear rules and guidelines in place should help advance a preceptorship program that is more expected to bring about positive results for both preceptors and new nurses (23). During the process, preceptorship is a challenging and stressful role (3).

Impact on their knowledge, Impact on their teaching/staff development role, Impact on their emotional support skills (17). Being challenged, being affirmed, and being on an academic journey. Relational conflict carry on to be a reality in nursing practice, owing to which a collective exertion must be made by nurse preceptor, practising nurses, and nursing students to effect change and create a more cohesive

culture (19).

### ***3.5 Experiences related to work environment.***

Lack of staff support, lack of continued administrative support, and lack of gratitude (3,20). Managerial support framework to support the preceptorship, recognition, and status of the role of preceptors, Protected time for preceptor and preceptee (11).

## **4. Discussion**

A systematic literature review was conducted to reach the aim of this review, which was to describe nurse preceptor experiences in nursing practice. Four main categories, Experiences related to the preparation; Experiences related to the preceptee; Experiences preceptor role during the program; and Experiences related to work environment; were created to explain this phenomenon as a nurses preceptor portrayed it in those ten studies selected to this review.

A preceptor also has a transition period when deciding or mandated into a preceptor (24), where a preceptor who in his daily life provides services to patients must play a dual role as a teacher from preparation to implementation as a preceptor (8,9). Another thing that was faced was the responsibility that was carried out in improving the ability of the new nurse clinic effectively. The Preceptor also carries out the mandate as an integral part in ensuring the quality of services that will be provided to patients by exercising strict control over new nurses.

The preceptor also needs support and careful preparation in preparing to carry out its role as a preceptor. The lack of staff is a significant problem that is often faced by hospitals (25). The preceptors need to develop themselves to be more professional and experienced to take on the role as a preceptor (26). Hospital management must be committed to remembering the impact of the services provided by preceptees on patients affecting the quality of long-term nursing.

Preceptorship can be improved experience related to the preceptee simultaneously. It gives clinical practice the opportunity to ensure competence development in an authentic clinical setting (23). The importance of the preceptor to have easy access to the facilities to quickly adjust knowledge or actions to the preceptee (27). Preceptorship was practised in clinical practice as in similar studies facilitated the learning of the preceptee to resemble an authentic clinical situation (28). Preceptorship was necessary for nursing education was not something new, but to ensure a good relationship required that both the preceptee and the preceptor strengthened their relationship by having both a professional and personal contact (17). The relationship must be balanced; in the case of unbalancing it could have consequences for the relationship and thereby the learning opportunities.

Preceptors are also supportive of students by creating a safe environment (29), di-

versifying their knowledge, giving feedback and fostering their confidence (27). Nursing students mirror the attitudes and behaviours of their instructors as a result of viewing them as role models and the demonstrations, expectations and support that instructors provide. Instructors were supportive role models for students by fostering their confidence, helping them to enhance their knowledge, providing feedback and creating a secure environment (8).

In the preceptorship program implementation process, the preceptor must get support from the Hospital. This is an essential component that must be considered. Support in the preceptorship program is needed as a stakeholder role, including educational, administrative and managerial support. The educational support that is required is an orientation to the program, development of continuing education for preceptors (30). The administrative and managerial support that can be done by the hospital is by providing media in the form of guidelines, SPO, documentation systems, and preceptorship program facilities.

Support in the form of workshops on preceptorship and educational development is needed to ensure the commitment and success of the preceptorship program (31). In addition, according to (32), states that support from clinical institutions is continuous recognition and feedback. Having educational support helps the preceptor to feel positive about the program's teachings and goals (25). It will increase the preceptor's commitment and experience to carry out its role as a preceptor.

During this qualitative research process, it was noted that ten studies were needed to leave out from the review because of their low scores in quality assessment. Most of the studies had shortcomings in the methodological parts of the report. That was for a large part, a pity because some studies that would otherwise have been good to select for this review were missed. In the future, authors should pay attention to the quality of their studies more carefully.

## **5. Conclusion**

A lot of studies have been done to support preceptors. This systematic literature review of preceptors' experiences related to the preceptorship program highlighted that the preceptorship programmes and the preceptee have a significant impact on the preceptor role. These results join together and emphasise the positive and negative aspects that preceptors relate to the current preceptorship programs and thereby provide avail to the development of the preceptorship programs. The findings establish that the nurse preceptor has a high impact to determine the quality of nursing services to the new graduate nurses, but many challenges face during the program.