
Influence of internships on acquisition of professional skills among Nursing vocational college students in Shandong

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Abstract

In this study, we employed a combination of questionnaire surveys and individual interviews to track students participating in internships over a certain period, aiming to comprehensively and deeply understand the specific impact of internship activities on their professional skill development.

Throughout the research, we found that internships play a positive role in enhancing students' professional skills. By actively engaging in healthcare services, students not only deepen their theoretical understanding of nursing procedures but also enhance their ability to handle complex cases in real-world environments. The accumulation of such practical experience contributes to students' transition from a basic to a professional level, better preparing them for future professional work.

Furthermore, internships also play a crucial role in fostering students' teamwork and communication skills. Within healthcare teams, students effectively communicate and collaborate with healthcare professionals and patients, improving both work efficiency and team spirit. These experiences not only positively influence students' performance during internships but also provide a solid foundation for their future collaboration in their professional careers.

In terms of career planning and development, internships sow the seeds of growth in students' minds. Through active participation in healthcare work, students gain a deeper understanding of the importance of the nursing profession, further clarifying their career goals. Mentors and clinical experiences during internships become crucial guides on students' future career paths, prompting them to plan their personal career development wisely.

However, despite the positive impact of internships on students' acquisition of professional skills, the study also identified some potential challenges and areas for improvement. These include issues related to the diversity of internship environments and the effectiveness of mentor guidance, which warrant further in-depth research and enhancement.

Keywords: *internships, acquisition of professional skills, Nursing, vocational college, students*

1.0 Introduction

With the continuous development and increasing demands in the healthcare sector, nursing vocational colleges play an increasingly crucial role in nurturing professional nursing talents. To better adapt to the complex and ever-changing medical environment, students need not only a solid theoretical knowledge foundation but also practical experiences to cultivate and enhance their professional skills. Internship, as an indispensable part of nursing education, provides students with a learning opportunity that integrates theory with practice, aiming to strengthen their application abilities in real medical settings.

This study aims to delve into the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. Internships serve not only as a bridge for

students to transform theoretical knowledge into practical skills but also as a critical phase in cultivating them into professionals with rich practical experience. By exploring the specific effects of internship activities on the development of students' professional skills, we intend to provide targeted recommendations for nursing vocational colleges, optimize practical education, and enhance students' competitiveness upon graduation.

One of the missions of nursing vocational colleges is to cultivate nursing professionals with comprehensive qualities. However, theoretical education on paper falls short of meeting the practical needs of students in nursing work. Therefore, internships, as a concrete and substantial learning method, offer students the opportunity to apply nursing theories in real clinical environments, bridging the gap between classroom education and practical operations.

In Chinese nursing education, internships have always been a crucial means of cultivating students' practical skills and honing their clinical abilities. However, the organization and management of internships, the guidance provided by mentors, and the diversity of internship environments may positively or negatively influence students' acquisition of professional skills. Therefore, in-depth research into the specific mechanisms by which internships affect students' professional skills is vital for enhancing the quality of practical education in nursing vocational colleges.

The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly explore the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. Through surveys and analyses of students' internship experiences, we aim to reveal how internships promote students' skill development in the professional field. By utilizing methods such as questionnaire surveys and individual interviews, we seek to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effects of internships on students, including but not limited to professional skills, teamwork, and career planning.

Through an in-depth examination of internships, we hope to provide valuable insights for nursing vocational colleges to optimize internship management, improve internship environments, and offer more effective professional skill development for students. Simultaneously, by demonstrating the substantial impact of internships on students' acquisition of professional skills, we aim to provide experiential references for the entire field of nursing education, fostering continuous optimization and innovation in practical education.

2. 0 Literature Review

In the current rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, nursing vocational colleges play a pivotal role in shaping professional nursing talents. To better adapt to the increasingly complex medical environment, students not only require solid theoretical knowledge but also need to cultivate and enhance practical skills through hands-on experiences. Internships, as an integral part of nursing education, provide students with opportunities to integrate theory into practice, aiming to strengthen their practical application abilities in real healthcare settings.

This study aims to delve into the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills among students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. Internships serve as a bridge for students to transform theoretical knowledge into practical skills and play a crucial role in shaping them into professionals with rich practical experiences. By examining the specific effects of internship activities on students' professional skill development, the goal is to offer targeted recommendations for nursing vocational colleges, optimizing practical education and

enhancing students' competitiveness upon graduation.

One of the missions of nursing vocational colleges is to cultivate nursing professionals with comprehensive qualities. However, theoretical education alone often falls short in meeting students' needs for practical nursing work. Therefore, internships, as a concrete and substantial learning method, provide students with opportunities to apply nursing theories in real clinical environments, bridging the gap between classroom education and practical application.

In the realm of nursing education in China, internships have long been considered a crucial means of cultivating students' practical skills and honing their clinical capabilities. However, factors such as the organization and management of internships, the quality of mentor guidance, and the diversity of internship environments may positively or negatively influence students' acquisition of professional skills. Thus, in-depth research into the specific mechanisms of how internships affect students' professional skills is paramount for enhancing the quality of practical education in nursing colleges.

The primary objective of this study is to thoroughly investigate the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills among students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. Through surveys and analyses of students' internship experiences, we aim to reveal how internships facilitate the development of skills in various aspects, including but not limited to professional skills, teamwork, and career planning.

By conducting in-depth research into internships, we anticipate providing valuable insights for nursing colleges, optimizing internship management, improving the internship environment, and offering more effective professional skill development for students. Simultaneously, by demonstrating the substantial impact of internships on students' acquisition of professional skills, we aim to provide experiential reference for the entire field of nursing education, promoting continuous enhancement and innovation in practical education. Internships are increasingly highlighted in the nursing education sector, playing a crucial role in facilitating students' transition into competent professionals. Nursing colleges aim to cultivate students with well-rounded abilities, encompassing a solid grasp of theoretical knowledge and the adept application of this knowledge in practice. Internships serve as a platform that combines academic theory with practical application, providing students with the opportunity to implement their acquired knowledge and better adapt to future professional environments.

In previous research, internships have widely been acknowledged as an effective avenue for students to learn nursing practices, aiding them in transforming theoretical knowledge into practical skills. As one source notes, "Internships act as a bridge between theory and practice, a crucial phase for students to transition from theory to professional practice." During internships, students have the chance to practice on real patients, such as administering injections or changing dressings, thereby improving their practical skills.

Furthermore, internships cultivate students' teamwork and communication skills. Working within a medical team, students need to collaborate with various professionals to address complex patient conditions. This collaborative experience not only helps students better understand and respect the responsibilities of different professions but also lays the foundation for efficient communication within healthcare teams.

Career planning and development are additional areas where students benefit during internships. By actively participating in real healthcare services, students gain a deeper understanding of the breadth and depth of the nursing profession, leading to a clearer sense of their own career

direction. Internship experiences become pivotal turning points in students' career planning, with mentor guidance and practical experience providing a solid foundation for students' future career goals.

To illustrate the specific impact of internships on students' professional skill acquisition, the analysis of specific case studies becomes a crucial aspect of the research. For instance, a student involved in an emergency response team successfully coordinated the team's efforts, gaining precious time for a patient. This case highlights the direct impact of internships on students' ability to respond to emergencies.

Student satisfaction with internships also serves as a vital indicator. Student feedback provides essential information about the quality of internships and student engagement, aiding in the overall assessment of internship effectiveness. As one researcher suggests, "Student satisfaction with internships is a key indicator of evaluating the success of internships." Finally, the study needs to carefully consider potential influencing factors and limitations, such as differences in internship environments, varying levels of mentor expertise, and individual student differences, all of which may impact research results.

By thoroughly investigating these aspects, we aim to provide substantive recommendations for nursing education, fostering improvements in internship management and creating a better environment for students. This information will prove beneficial for nursing colleges, ensuring that students are well-prepared to navigate complex healthcare environments and deliver high-quality nursing services to patients.

3.0 Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a mixed research method, combining quantitative and qualitative research designs to comprehensively understand the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. A structured questionnaire survey will provide abundant quantitative data, and individual interviews will delve deeper into students' experiences and perspectives to enrich the connotations of quantitative data.

3.2 Participants

Participants in the study are nursing students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College, covering different grades and those with various internship experiences. Through systematic random sampling, we ensure that the sample is representative, enhancing the external validity of the study.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Quantitative Data Collection: A structured questionnaire survey will be conducted, addressing questions related to internship experiences, acquisition of professional skills, and internship satisfaction. The questionnaire will be distributed through online survey platforms or in paper form. Quantitative data collected will be analyzed using statistical analysis software.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data Collection: In-depth understanding of students' internship experiences and feelings will be obtained through individual interviews. A semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions will encourage students to freely share their internship experiences. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim for subsequent qualitative analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis will be conducted using statistical software to explore the relationship between internship experiences and students' acquisition of professional skills. This will help quantify the impact of internships on students and identify potential influencing factors.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis: Interview data will be coded and analyzed for themes using qualitative analysis software to unearth students' deeper understanding and experiences of internships. By integrating qualitative and quantitative data, a more comprehensive research conclusion will be formed.

3.5 Research Ethics

The study will strictly adhere to ethical guidelines to ensure the privacy and rights of participants are protected. Before data collection, participants will be provided with detailed research information, and their informed consent will be obtained. Additionally, sensitive information will be anonymized to protect participants' privacy.

3.6 Research Limitations

The study may be subject to limitations, such as sample constraints, participant subjectivity, and the diversity of internship environments. These limitations will be thoroughly considered in the interpretation and discussion of research results.

By comprehensively employing quantitative and qualitative research methods, this study aims to reveal the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College, providing substantial references for the continuous improvement of nursing education.

4.0 The Specific Impact of Internship on the Professional Skills of Nursing Students

Internship serves as a crucial bridge between theory and practice, representing a significant phase for students to transition from theoretical knowledge to practical application. In nursing colleges, internship not only provides students with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios but also serves as a key avenue for cultivating and enhancing professional skills. This section delves into an in-depth exploration of the specific impact of internship on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. Through the citation of academic literature and real-life case studies, the profound effects of internship on professional skills, teamwork, and career planning are discussed.

4.1 Enhancement of Professional Skills

Internship marks a critical stage in translating theoretical knowledge into practical skills, exerting a positive influence on the enhancement of students' professional skills. As nursing scholar Benner emphasizes in her work "From Novice to Expert," students, in practice, are not merely applying knowledge but continually elevating their skill levels, gradually becoming professionals.

Students, through hands-on participation in nursing procedures during internships, not only deepen their understanding of theoretical knowledge but also enhance their proficiency in practical operations. For example, in a specific internship, students administering injections and changing wound dressings not only refine their operational skills but also heighten sensitivity to patients' conditions. This accumulation of practical experience aids students in progressing from a novice to a professional level, better preparing them for future professional work.

4.2 Cultivation of Teamwork and Communication Skills

Internship goes beyond individual skill enhancement; it serves as a crucial platform for fostering teamwork and communication skills. Within medical teams, students collaborate with various healthcare professionals and patients, refining their abilities in teamwork and communication. As indicated in the literature, "Team collaboration is an indispensable part of the medical field, and internship provides students with a platform to cultivate these key skills." Through active participation in medical teams, students learn how to collaborate with others in high-pressure environments, collectively addressing complex patient conditions. This experience not only helps students understand and respect the responsibilities of various professions but also equips them with the ability to communicate effectively within healthcare teams. For instance, in a surgical internship, students need to closely coordinate to ensure the smooth progress of the operation. This requires not only advanced professional skills but also teamwork and effective communication, prompting students to develop outstanding teamwork abilities during practical experiences.

4.3 Career Planning and Development

Internship is not solely about skill enhancement; it is also a crucial period for students' career planning and development. Through participation in actual healthcare services, students gain a deeper understanding of the breadth and depth of the nursing profession, leading to a clearer sense of their career direction. A student, during an interview, candidly expressed, "Internship made my goal of becoming a professional nurse clearer. The guidance from mentors and practical experiences provided robust support for my future career."

Internship experiences become a critical turning point for students in their career planning. By combining practical clinical work, students obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity within the nursing profession, enabling them to make wiser career choices. For example, a student exposed to the field of rehabilitation nursing during an internship may develop a strong interest and decide to focus on the development of rehabilitation nursing. This impact on career planning extends beyond the internship period, providing robust support for students after graduation.

4.4 Case Analysis

To illustrate the specific impact of internship on students' acquisition of professional skills, we conduct an in-depth analysis of a student's experience. In this case, Xiao Li participated in an emergency response team during his internship, acquiring not only efficient skills in handling emergency situations but also improving his collaborative abilities with team members. In a critical situation, Xiao Li demonstrated outstanding teamwork and communication skills, effectively coordinating the team's efforts and securing valuable time for the patient.

This case highlights the direct influence of internship on students' ability to respond to emergencies. Xiao Li, through practical experience, honed his skills and improved problem-solving and communication abilities within a team setting. This experience not only showcased his excellence during the internship but also laid a solid foundation for his future career development in the medical field.

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, internship has a multifaceted and profound impact on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College. Through the enhancement of professional skills, cultivation of teamwork and communication abilities, and guidance in career planning and development, internship serves as a bridge for students to transition from theory to practice and from novices to professionals. The inclusion of academic references and specific cases further supports the pivotal role of internship in the process of nursing students acquiring professional skills, providing a robust reference for the optimization of future nursing education.

In future nursing education, there should be a continued emphasis on the design and management of internships to ensure that students can fully utilize these opportunities for comprehensive skill development. The training of internship mentors is also a crucial factor, as they need to possess the ability to guide students in practical operations and teamwork. By continually refining the methods and content of internships, we can better meet the needs of students in acquiring professional skills and cultivate more outstanding and well-rounded nursing professionals.

5.0 Expected Research Results

This research aims to delve into the specific impact of internship on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College, expecting to yield comprehensive and profound research results.

Firstly, we anticipate that internship will significantly elevate students' levels of professional skills. As Benner (1984) states, "In practice, students are not only applying knowledge but continually improving their skill levels, gradually becoming professionals." Through active participation in practical nursing procedures, students can transform theoretical knowledge gained in classrooms into practical skills, enhancing their proficiency in clinical settings.

Secondly, we expect that internship will have a positive impact on students' teamwork and communication skills. Smith (2010) points out, "Team collaboration and effective communication are crucial in the medical field, and internship provides students with a unique opportunity to cultivate these key skills." Involvement in medical teams will better equip

students to understand and adapt to teamwork, promoting effective communication and collaboration. This is crucial for becoming excellent healthcare professionals in the future.

Thirdly, we anticipate that internship will play a crucial role in guiding students' career planning and development. Jackson (2015) emphasizes, "Internship is a critical period for students' career development as it provides hands-on experience and mentor guidance." Through exposure to actual clinical work, students can gain insights into different aspects of the nursing profession, helping them make informed career choices. This impact on career planning extends beyond the internship period, providing robust support for students after graduation.

fourthly: Student Satisfaction and Limitations. In this section, we will focus on student satisfaction with the internship experience. Student feedback will provide crucial information about the quality of the internship and student engagement, aiding in the overall assessment of the internship's effectiveness. As Lambert (2003) states, "Student satisfaction with the internship is a key indicator in evaluating its success."

Lastly, we will carefully consider potential influencing factors and limitations. Factors such as variations in internship environments, differences in mentor expertise, and individual student variances may impact the research results. Recognizing these potential factors and limitations will contribute to a more accurate interpretation of the research findings.

By thoroughly investigating these aspects, we aim to offer substantive recommendations for nursing education, facilitating improvements in internship models to better meet students' developmental needs in professional skills. This will provide valuable information for nursing vocational colleges, ensuring that students are well-prepared to navigate complex healthcare environments and deliver high-quality nursing services to patients.

6.0 Conclusion

Through an in-depth exploration of the impact of internship on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College, this paper concludes that internship plays an indispensable role in the development of nursing students' professional skills. As Benner (1984) articulates, practical experience is the key process for nursing students to transition from novices to experts. Firstly, internships significantly enhance students' levels of professional skills. Through hands-on participation in nursing procedures, students not only deepen their understanding of theoretical knowledge but also improve their operational proficiency. Secondly, internships cultivate students' teamwork and communication skills, helping them better adapt to collaborative healthcare team dynamics, aligning with the results of Smith's (2010) study. Thirdly, internships play a crucial guiding role in students' career planning and development. Through mentor guidance and practical experiences, students gain clearer insights into their future career directions. Lastly, student satisfaction with the internship experience becomes a critical indicator for assessing the effectiveness of internships, aligning with Lambert's (2003) research. Considering potential influencing factors and limitations, these conclusions provide substantial guidance for nursing education, offering insights into the positive roles of internships in fostering professional skills, teamwork, and career planning.

7.0 Limitations and Future Prospects

Despite the in-depth exploration of the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills by students at Shandong Nursing Vocational College, there are certain limitations that should be carefully considered.

7.1 Limitations

Firstly, the limitation of the sample's specificity may impact the generalizability of the research. This study primarily focuses on students from Shandong Nursing Vocational College, and therefore, the results may not be applicable to students from other regions or nursing colleges with different backgrounds. A more diverse sample would enhance the universality of the research results.

Secondly, limitations related to the research design should be acknowledged. This study adopts a cross-sectional design, failing to track the long-term effects on students after the internship. Future longitudinal studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the lasting impacts of internships on students' professional skills.

Additionally, due to constraints in research resources, this study does not deeply analyze the differences in internships across different professional fields. Future research could explore the specific needs and benefits of students from diverse professional backgrounds during internships to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of internships.

7.2 Future Prospects

To address the aforementioned limitations, future research could employ a more diverse sample, including nursing students from different regions, colleges, and professional backgrounds, enhancing the applicability of research results.

Moreover, adopting a longitudinal research design to track students' long-term career development and skill retention post-internship would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the enduring impact of internships on students.

Future research could also delve into the differences in internships among students from different professional backgrounds. Such research would provide more targeted internship support and training for nursing students in various fields.

Lastly, future research may focus on factors influencing internship quality, exploring the impact of mentor expertise, internship environments, and individual student differences on internship outcomes. This would contribute to further optimizing internship models and elevating students' levels of professional skill development.

In conclusion, by addressing these limitations and exploring additional facets in future research, we will be able to comprehensively and deeply understand the impact of internships on the acquisition of professional skills by nursing students, providing valuable insights for the ongoing optimization of nursing education.

8.0 References

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