

Perceptions of midwifery students, mentors, and supervisors on the use of a paper-based and electronic workplace learning portfolio in Rwanda

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Background: Global disparities in quantity, distribution and skills of health workers worldwide pose a threat to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and deepens already existing global health inequities. Rwanda and other low-resource countries face a critical shortage of health professionals. VLIR/UOS funded a two year project (2018-2019) that aimed to increase capacity by improving the quality of midwifery clinical education. Portfolios are recognized as tools to scaffold workplace learning. Rwanda used a paper-based portfolio (PBP). During this project a competency based electronic portfolio (EP) was piloted in Rwanda.

Aim(s): This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of midwifery students, mentors and supervisors about the use of PBP and EP.

Methods: A qualitative descriptive design was carried out with 20 participants, including midwifery students, mentors, and supervisors. Using purposive sampling, participants were recruited from two selected

clinical teaching hospitals. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Six steps of thematic analysis were followed during the inductive analysis of collected data.

Results: Three themes emerged: 1) clinical learning and teaching, 2) barriers and 3) preference. First, participants perceived that PBP and EP enhanced students' self-directed learning, promoted student-centred teaching and improved monitoring and evaluation of students' performance. Second, the most important barriers included insufficient knowledge, limited resources (internet and devices), and heavy workload among mentors and supervisors. Finally, most participants preferred EP because it was more user friendly (easy to read and to navigate, easily accessible everywhere). PBP was perceived as expensive and time consuming.

Discussion: The findings highlighted the importance of a workplace learning portfolio (PBP/EP) in the promotion of clinical education. Participants preferred EP, but this study indicated that there is a need to respect the student-educator ratio and to equip the users with the required skills and resources in order to fully benefit from the use of a workplace learning portfolio.

Future perspectives: This project launched an International & Digital Midwifery Workplace Learning Network. Rwanda set the first step. We learnt that EP is a promising technology to strengthen the quality of clinical education. This Network aims to conduct research in Rwanda and other countries.

References: Mukamana D, Embo M, Tengera O, Muhayimana A, Murekezi J, De Grave H, Ndayisenga JP, Valcke M (2020). Perceptions of midwifery students, mentors, and supervisors on the use of clinical teaching portfolio in Rwanda. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*; 10 (10): pg 52. <https://doi.org/10.5430/jnep.v10n10p52>