

NURSE EDUCATOR COMPETENCIES IN DEVELOPING MERDEKA BELAJAR KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) POLICY

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Introduction

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) has been integrated into the Indonesian higher education system since 2020. While nursing study programs are not mandated to participate in MBKM activities, they are still required to meet the key performance indicators outlined by the Ministry of Education and Culture through the MBKM program. To ensure that students receive valuable learning experiences in line with outcome-based curricula, nurse educators must possess additional competencies in designing learning experiences and coordinating collaborations with various stakeholders. This will equip nursing graduates to meet the demands of the modern era and compete globally, while also addressing the needs of society. Currently, the required competencies for nurse educators and the specific roles and responsibilities necessary to fulfill the MBKM policy have not been clearly defined. This article aims to elucidate the core competencies of nursing lecturers and the implementation of the expected roles and responsibilities essential for the successful execution of the MBKM program.

Discussion

The future of healthcare is anticipated to encounter a variety of challenges. The growing societal consciousness regarding the utilization of healthcare resources and information for optimizing health functions is expected to diminish the necessity for hospitalization in the future (Regis College, 2022). The enhancement of telecommunication infrastructure supports this trend by enabling healthcare professionals to deliver care and guidance through telecommunication instructions. Furthermore, the availability of apps such as Halo Doc and other healthcare service-based applications in Indonesia reduces the community's reliance on direct hospital visits. These developments indicate that healthcare services have evolved into a dynamic system in tandem with advancements in scientific knowledge, societal progress, and technological innovations (Booth et al., 2016).

Nursing education is not merely a component of healthcare service dynamics; it is fundamentally the cornerstone that shapes the application of nursing practices to ensure they meet established standards. In Indonesia, nursing education encompasses diploma, professional, master's, and doctoral programs. Diplomas and professional education are essential in preparing practical nurses who have direct roles and interactions with users or patients. The presence of nurse educators is not just important but rather crucial in assisting future nurses to cater to clients' needs and play a pivotal role in shaping the future of nursing practices. Nursing education in Indonesia falls under the Ministry of Education and Culture, which oversees programs like *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) that higher education institutions are required to implement.

The implementation of MBKM is designed not only to equip graduates with both hard skills and soft skills to enable them to compete globally but also to foster a comprehensive educational experience. The program offers a wide array of teaching and learning activities, including student exchange programs, internships/work placements, teaching assistance in educational units, research projects, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and thematic community service. These activities, which are credit-rated ranging from 20-40 credits (Harna & Sukarno, 2021), are intended to provide a diverse and comprehensive learning experience. While participation in the MBKM program is not mandatory for the nursing program, it also aims to contribute to the achievement of institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and support students who wish to actively engage in gaining academic experiences beyond their specific programs. This situation presents a new challenge for the development of nurse educators' competencies to become ideal figures who possess not only academic competencies but also competencies tailored to the needs of their students.

In an academic setting, a nurse educator must demonstrate competencies in teaching, research, clinical practice, management, communication, and ethics (Mikkonen, 2018). Internationally, there are eight competencies for nurse educators, including mastery of adult learning theory and principles, curriculum development and implementation, nursing practice, evidence-based research and application, communication, collaboration and partnership, ethical and legal principles, monitoring evaluation, as well as management, leadership, and advocacy (Satoh et al., 2020). These eight competencies of nurse educators are expected to assist nursing students in acquiring nursing care knowledge and skills, attitudes, and values in clinical situations, as well as critical thinking skills and communication and interpersonal relationship skills (Immonen, 2019). Given the educational policy situation in Indonesian higher education with the MBKM program, a formulation of nurse educator competencies is needed to guide nursing faculty in their roles. These competencies (Figure 1.1) are an elaboration of the eight core competencies of nurse educators adapted to the application conditions of the MBKM program in nursing studies in Indonesia.



Figure 1.1 Nurse Educators' Competence in the MBKM Program

Mastering the Theory and Principles of Adult Learning

In the role of a health professional, nurse educators are well-placed to identify the competencies that are relevant to their students. Nursing students, as adult learners, bring a wealth of experience and are capable of determining the topics they need to learn. The competencies necessary for nurse educators to effectively teach adult learners include understanding the theories and principles that underlie curriculum design and the application of adult learning principles; demonstrating comprehension of the foundational theoretical and contextual aspects of education for healthcare professionals and adult learning; analyzing the learning domain and its application in various academic contexts; and possessing knowledge of curriculum development, including theories, principles, and educational models. These competencies can be put into practice through various learning activities, such as tailoring learning outcomes to cognitive, psychomotor, and affective aspects. Cognitive aspects involve focusing on the theory, principles, and philosophy of adult learning, taking into account learning through pedagogical, andragogical, and geragogy approaches. Affective development centers on fostering reflective competence, demonstrating enthusiasm for learning, nurturing positive relationships with students, and employing outcome-based curricula. Development of the domain aspect involves utilizing all learning resources during theoretical and practical sessions (WHO, 2016).

Curriculum and Implementation

The development of a robust nursing curriculum is essential for addressing the healthcare needs of the community. A solid curriculum, based on sound theoretical models and practices, is crucial for nurse educators to effectively organize, implement, monitor, and adjust educational programs. This involves considering context-based nursing practices and healthcare trends, implementing innovative teaching strategies, and facilitating diverse learning methods to promote student engagement and achieve desired learning outcomes. Furthermore, the implementation of teaching and learning activities should align with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework, emphasizing student-centered learning and a combination of theoretical and practical approaches, including problem-based and case-based learning, discussions, group work, and experiential learning. To cater to diverse learning needs, utilizing audio-visual materials and e-learning tools is essential. Additionally, off-campus learning activities can provide students with alternative learning experiences. Evaluation tools should be designed to align with students' learning needs and recognize their outcomes within the credit unit system.

Nursing Practice

Clinical learning experiences play a vital role in the education of nursing students as they work to acquire a diverse set of skills and knowledge. The implementation of a competency-based curriculum, which aligns with the Indonesian Qualification Framework, is instrumental in helping nursing students develop their intellectual capabilities and specific skills throughout their academic journey. It is essential for nurse educators to possess both quality and experience in the field to effectively guide students in achieving the expected competencies. During clinical teaching, nurse educators should exhibit expertise in nursing, a professional attitude in teaching, and strong nursing skills, including the provision of appropriate nursing care (Atienza, 2010).

These attributes can be nurtured through the mastery of competencies such as: maintaining up-to-date knowledge and skills in practical application based on sound evidence, continually improving skills through the latest patient care training, and developing various teaching methods in the practical field to foster creativity and innovation in healthcare education (WHO, 2016). These competencies are reflected in various actions during the learning process through the integration of MBKM activities: utilizing evidence-based practice in providing patient care and serving as role models for students, sharing knowledge in diverse forums beyond academia, organizing internships, service learning, or student research activities in practice settings, providing safe practice environments that align with the desired learning outcomes, and considering the legal and ethical aspects of nursing when providing care to clients.

Research and Evidence

Nursing education research serves the purpose of providing solutions to problems, explaining various phenomena, and developing theories tailored to nursing intervention (Sana, 2010). As a result, nurse educators are expected to possess certain competencies. These include the ability to seek answers and solutions through scientific research and critical discoveries, as well as applying research findings to address challenges. Furthermore, nurse educators are tasked with fostering the development of scholarly nurses through research-based activities and a culture of sharing through reflective discussions. Encouraging students to write and publish (WHO, 2016) is also a key aspect. The MBKM activities that can be utilized to apply research and evidence competencies include creating an environment where students are encouraged to question situations that may prompt scientific inquiry, conducting research with students, introducing scientific research as a method for seeking the latest facts, utilizing various resources to find valid and scientific data, and motivating students to engage in reflective activities to write findings based on scientific data and publications recognized as credits in specific course subjects.

Communication, Collaboration, and Partnership

A growing trend in health workforce education is multi-professional education. In 1998, the WHO published a document titled "Learning to Work Together for Health," directing health education providers to pay attention to this trend. The reason for addressing this trend is that no healthcare service is solely provided by one health professional; several health professions share similar lessons in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Additionally, various factors contribute to enhancing comprehensive healthcare services, necessitating collaboration and teamwork among health professionals (Abarquez, 2010). Based on these reasons, nurse educators, as the catalysts of collaboration, need to master communication, collaboration, and partnership competencies to effectively impart them to their students through the following components: Nurse educators demonstrate effective communication that supports teamwork collaboration and enhances partnerships between healthcare professionals and clinical practice; Demonstrating intercultural and interdisciplinary competencies in developing curriculum, designing learning experiences, and nursing practices; Facilitating broader inter-institutional teamwork to develop regional, national, and international relations. These competencies are reflected in the following actions during the learning process by integrating MBKM activities: Developing learning concepts of communication, collaboration, and partnership among nurses and other healthcare professionals; Developing collaborations with various parties to find the right learning platform for students to practice intercultural and interdisciplinary communication; and

Enhancing learning beyond institutions through programs such as Community Service, Adopted Village Program, Domestic and International Student Exchange (Harna & Sukarno, 2021).

Ethical/legal principles and Professionalism

Nurse educators must recognize the significance of maintaining professional conduct in their interactions with patients. Demonstrating professionalism and adhering to ethical and legal standards are crucial qualities that should be cultivated to define the healthcare professionals. This conduct serves as an example for nursing students, particularly in fostering relationships between healthcare providers, patients, and families. Nursing students will be inspired and motivated by their nurse educators' dedication and commitment to teaching (Atienza, 2010). As a result, they will be more inclined to listen and follow guidance from their nurse educators, feeling that they are being instructed with positivity and respect for human values. The following competencies are expected of nurse educators to embody professional conduct, principles, and uphold ethical and legal standards: Nurse Educators demonstrate professionalism by integrating legal, ethical, and professional aspects as the cornerstone for nursing education, policy-making, procedures, and decision-making; and Ensuring that students adhere to ethical and legal standards during practical learning. Maintaining professional records by possessing licenses, portfolios, and certifications related to expertise and teaching competence. These competencies are manifested in teaching and learning activities by: Teaching concepts related to ethical, legal, and professional aspects in nursing. Demonstrating ethical behavior, respecting human dignity, responsibility, and academic honesty; and Applying the nursing code of ethics in practical learning settings and actively engaging in self-improvement based on expertise competencies and contributing to academic discussions during campus or practitioner teaching activities (WHO, 2016).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation in nursing education is a crucial process that assesses the success of educational phenomena or products obtained through a systematic, formal, scientific, and organized interpretation of learning process data. When considering student achievement, it's important to go beyond just grades and take into account knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The validity and reliability of assessment instruments are also essential to consistently observe students' abilities based on feelings, beliefs, and actions. Therefore, the competence of nurse educators in monitoring and evaluation activities is vital (Abarquez, 2010). Nurse educators should be proficient in using various variations and strategies to monitor and evaluate learning programs, curriculum, and student achievements. These competencies are reflected in teaching and learning activities through diverse forms of assessment, including case exams, essay writing, seminar presentations, case studies, projects, OSCE implementation, and attitude assessments. Additionally, assessment should involve student self-evaluation and feedback for curriculum program improvements, recognition set appropriateness for workload, and evaluation of the micro curriculum for each learning outcome.

Management, Leadership, and Advocacy

As a nurse educator, fulfilling tasks, roles, and responsibilities without losing direction requires careful planning and good time management (Fajutagana, 2010). Planning is an essential component of performing management functions as a nurse educator. Nurse educators in Indonesia have the responsibility not only to teach but also to conduct research and community service, known as Tridharma. In addition to fulfilling Tridharma, nurse educators are also responsible for serving as unit or institutional leaders, coordinating MBKM activities, and undertaking other organizational roles beyond institutional responsibilities. Strong competencies in leadership and management are essential for nurse educators to succeed in their roles. These competencies include demonstrating management system skills, leadership in creating and maintaining programs in academic activities, shaping the future of educational institutions, identifying positive changes, managing change processes in personal and managerial environments, and instilling values of respect, professionalism, and caring to foster a conducive work environment for all parties. Realizing these competencies involves developing management and leadership concepts in teaching and learning activities, using communication skills to create a work environment sensitive to change, and creating off-campus teaching activities that facilitate interdisciplinary, intercultural, dynamic collaboration, and technology-aware learning environments (WHO, 2016).

Conclusion

The integration of the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) program into Indonesia's higher education system necessitates that nurse educators acquire a wide range of competencies to design and implement effective learning experiences. These competencies encompass adult learning principles, curriculum development, clinical practice, research, communication, ethics, and leadership. By mastering these areas, nurse educators can equip nursing students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to meet modern healthcare challenges, compete on a global scale, and address societal needs. The clear definition and implementation of these competencies are essential for the successful execution of the MBKM program, ultimately contributing to the advancement of nursing education and practice in Indonesia.

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