

Student Perspectives on Health Policy and Hospital Management Competencies in the Era of Healthcare Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Healthcare transformation in the digital era has increased the demand for healthcare managers who possess competencies in health policy and hospital management. Higher education institutions, particularly Hospital Administration programs, play an important role in preparing students to face the complexity of healthcare systems and organizational changes. This study aimed to analyze student perspectives on health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation. This research used a quantitative descriptive design involving undergraduate students of Hospital Administration programs. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online to assess students' perceptions regarding competencies in health policy, leadership, communication, healthcare quality management, ethics, and managerial functions. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequency distribution and percentage analysis. The results showed that most students had positive perceptions regarding the importance of health policy and hospital management competencies in supporting healthcare service transformation. Communication skills, leadership abilities, and healthcare quality management were identified as the most important competencies needed by future healthcare managers. In addition, students perceived that competency-based learning contributed positively to improving managerial readiness in healthcare settings. However, several respondents indicated the need for greater practical exposure and healthcare policy implementation experience during the learning process. The study concludes that Hospital Administration students generally demonstrate good awareness and understanding of health policy and hospital management competencies in the context of healthcare transformation. Strengthening competency-based curricula, leadership development, and practical learning experiences are necessary to improve student readiness as future healthcare managers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Healthcare systems worldwide are currently experiencing rapid transformation driven by digitalization, changes in disease patterns, increasing public expectations, and demands for high-quality healthcare services (1). Healthcare transformation requires healthcare organizations, particularly hospitals, to improve organizational effectiveness, leadership quality, strategic management, and evidence-based decision-making processes (2). In this context, hospital administrators are expected to possess competencies in health policy, hospital management, communication, leadership, and healthcare quality management to ensure sustainable healthcare services. Effective leadership and healthcare management competencies are recognized as key determinants of organizational performance, quality of care, and successful healthcare transformation. Strengthening these competencies enables healthcare organizations to adapt to complex system changes and improve service resilience (3) (4). Consequently, higher education institutions have an important responsibility in preparing future healthcare managers through competency-based learning approaches.

Hospital Administration students represent future healthcare managers who will be directly involved in healthcare planning, policy implementation, resource management, and quality improvement in healthcare facilities. However, several studies have shown that many healthcare graduates still face challenges in adapting managerial competencies to real healthcare settings. A study conducted by Yusuf et al. reported that healthcare management students in Indonesia demonstrated adequate theoretical understanding but lacked practical exposure to healthcare policy implementation and organizational management (5). Similarly, Davis and Lucie found that competency-based healthcare education still requires improvement in leadership development and practical learning integration (6). International studies also highlighted similar findings. Alharbi et al. stated that healthcare leadership and organizational competencies significantly influence healthcare transformation success and healthcare service quality (4). Furthermore, Sfantou et al. reported that leadership style and communication competency are strongly associated with patient safety and organizational performance in healthcare institutions (3).

The increasing complexity of healthcare systems indicates the importance of evaluating student readiness in facing healthcare transformation challenges. Previous research mostly focused on healthcare workforce competency and leadership among healthcare professionals, while limited studies specifically explored student perspectives regarding health policy and hospital management competencies, particularly in Indonesia. Understanding student perspectives is important because it reflects educational readiness and curriculum effectiveness in preparing future healthcare managers. In addition, the integration of health policy understanding, leadership competency, communication skills, and healthcare quality management into educational curricula remains inconsistent across healthcare management programs. This condition may affect graduates' readiness to adapt to healthcare transformation and organizational changes.

Several international studies conducted within the last five years have emphasized the importance of competency-based education in healthcare management programs. A study by Thomas et al. found that students exposed to experiential learning and healthcare policy simulation demonstrated better managerial readiness and decision-making ability (7). Another study by Nguyen et al. showed that competency-oriented healthcare management curricula positively improved leadership confidence and organizational understanding among healthcare administration students (8). In Bangladesh, Dafis et al. reported that communication skills, leadership, and healthcare quality management were among the most important competencies perceived by Hospital Administration students (6). However, empirical evidence regarding student perspectives on health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation remains limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian healthcare education.

Therefore, this study aimed to analyze student perspectives on health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation. This study proposes a competency-based evaluation approach focusing on student perceptions regarding leadership, communication, healthcare quality management, ethics, and health policy understanding. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on evaluating future healthcare manager readiness from the perspective of Hospital Administration students within the context of healthcare transformation in Indonesia. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of

competency-based healthcare management curricula and strengthen educational strategies in preparing future healthcare leaders capable of adapting to healthcare system transformation.

2. METHOD

This study used a quantitative descriptive design to analyze student perspectives on health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation. The research was conducted among 42 undergraduate students of the Hospital Administration program selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through an online questionnaire consisting of several competency domains, including health policy, hospital management, leadership, communication, healthcare quality management, ethics, and managerial functions. All questionnaire items used a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Prior to data collection, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure data accuracy and consistency (9). The research process was conducted systematically through literature review, instrument development, questionnaire distribution, data tabulation, and statistical analysis. Data were analyzed descriptively using frequency distribution and percentage analysis to describe respondent perceptions regarding healthcare management competencies. Ethical principles were applied by ensuring respondent confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the research process (10).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Respondent Characteristics (n=42)

A total of 42 respondents participated in this study, consisting of undergraduate students from the Hospital Administration program. All respondents had completed healthcare management-related courses and filled out the questionnaire completely. Respondents' perspectives were analyzed to identify their understanding and readiness regarding health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	15	35.7
Female	27	64.3

Based on Table 1, most respondents were female students (64.3%), while male students represented 35.7% of the total respondents. The majority of respondents were enrolled in semester 4 (42.9%), indicating that most participants had already received fundamental healthcare management learning materials. These findings suggest that respondents had sufficient academic exposure to provide perspectives regarding healthcare management competencies. Similar findings were reported by (6), who found that Hospital Administration students in middle academic semesters demonstrated better understanding of healthcare management concepts due to increased exposure to organizational and leadership subjects.

3.2. Student Perspectives on Health Policy and Hospital Management Competencies

The study findings showed that most respondents demonstrated positive perceptions regarding the importance of health policy and hospital management competencies in supporting healthcare transformation and healthcare service quality.

Table 2. Student Perspectives on Health Policy and Hospital Management Competencies

Statement	Dominant Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Health management understanding is important for students	Very important	35	83.3

Healthcare management improves service quality	Very influential	26	61.9
Management competencies support work readiness	Strongly agree	23	54.8
Healthcare management is relevant to hospital work needs	Agree	24	57.1
Students need healthcare management learning early	Strongly agree	25	59.5
Healthcare management supports systematic thinking	Strongly agree	21	50.0

Based on Table 2, the majority of respondents demonstrated positive perceptions regarding the importance of health policy and hospital management competencies in supporting healthcare transformation and improving healthcare service quality. A total of 83.3% of respondents stated that understanding healthcare management is very important for Hospital Administration students. This finding indicates that students are aware that managerial competencies are essential in supporting healthcare organizations, particularly hospitals, in facing increasingly complex healthcare challenges. In addition, 61.9% of respondents believed that healthcare management has a major influence on improving healthcare service quality. This result reflects students' understanding that effective management contributes to organizational performance, patient satisfaction, and healthcare quality improvement.

The findings also showed that more than half of respondents agreed that healthcare management competencies support professional readiness and are relevant to future work in healthcare institutions. Approximately 57.1% of respondents stated that healthcare management is closely related to hospital work needs, while 54.8% strongly agreed that management competencies are important for graduates. These findings suggest that students perceive healthcare management education as an important component in preparing future healthcare managers capable of making strategic decisions and adapting to healthcare transformation.

Furthermore, respondents considered healthcare management learning important in supporting systematic and structured thinking processes. About 59.5% of respondents strongly agreed that healthcare management should be learned early, while 50.0% stated that management learning supports systematic thinking. This indicates that management education not only improves theoretical understanding but also contributes to analytical and problem-solving abilities among students.

These findings are consistent with several previous studies conducted within the last five years. (8) reported that competency-based healthcare management education significantly improves leadership confidence, organizational understanding, and managerial readiness among healthcare administration students. Similarly, Thomas et al. found that healthcare management learning contributes positively to students' decision-making skills and professional preparedness in healthcare organizations (7). Sfantou et al. also emphasized that leadership, communication, and management competencies are closely associated with healthcare quality improvement and patient safety outcomes (3). In Bangladesh, Davis et al. reported that Hospital Administration students perceived leadership, communication, and healthcare quality management as important competencies required in healthcare organizations. These studies support the current findings that healthcare management competencies play an important role in preparing future healthcare managers in the era of healthcare transformation(11).

3.3. Student Readiness toward Healthcare Transformation

Student readiness regarding the implementation of management competencies in future healthcare settings was also analyzed in this study. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Student Readiness toward Healthcare Transformation Competencies

Statement	Dominant Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Interest in applying healthcare management concepts	Interested	24	57.1
Readiness to apply management competencies in future work	Ready	22	52.4
Understanding management functions in healthcare	Already understand	24	57.1
Basic healthcare management materials are easy to understand	Already understand	21	50.0
Management supports hospital decision-making	Agree	22	52.4
Healthcare management is an important competency for graduates	Strongly agree	23	54.8

Based on Table 3, most respondents demonstrated positive readiness toward the implementation of healthcare management competencies in future healthcare organizations. Approximately 57.1% of respondents expressed interest in applying healthcare management concepts in professional practice, while 52.4% stated that they were ready to implement management competencies in future work environments.

These findings indicate that competency-based healthcare management learning contributes positively to student confidence and adaptability in facing healthcare transformation challenges. Alharbi et al. stated that leadership competency and organizational adaptability are essential factors supporting healthcare transformation sustainability (4). Furthermore, Dafis et al. emphasized that practical learning experiences and healthcare policy exposure significantly influence healthcare management student readiness (11).

However, several respondents still demonstrated moderate understanding regarding management functions and practical healthcare policy implementation. This suggests that healthcare management curricula should strengthen experiential learning, leadership training, and practical healthcare policy exposure. Similar findings were reported by Bonica et al, who highlighted that practical management simulation and organizational learning experiences improve healthcare students' managerial competencies and professional confidence (12).

Overall, the findings indicate that Hospital Administration students have positive perceptions and readiness regarding health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation. Strengthening competency-based curricula, communication skills, leadership development, and practical learning exposure is essential to prepare future healthcare managers capable of adapting to healthcare system transformation.

4. CONCLUSION

This study showed that Hospital Administration students generally demonstrated positive perspectives toward health policy and hospital management competencies in the era of healthcare transformation. Most respondents considered healthcare management competencies important in improving healthcare service quality, supporting organizational performance, and preparing future healthcare managers. Communication skills, leadership, healthcare quality management, and understanding of health policy were identified as essential competencies needed in modern healthcare organizations.

The findings also indicated that competency-based healthcare management learning contributes positively to students' professional readiness, systematic thinking abilities, and adaptability in facing healthcare transformation challenges. However, several respondents still demonstrated moderate understanding regarding practical healthcare policy implementation and

managerial functions, indicating the need for stronger experiential learning and practical exposure within healthcare management education.

Therefore, educational institutions are encouraged to strengthen competency-based curricula, leadership development, communication training, and practical healthcare management experiences to improve student readiness as future healthcare managers capable of adapting to healthcare system transformation and organizational changes.

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