
Experience of Carrying Out Military Nursing Planning Competencies During Assignment: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

Introduction: *Military nurses play a vital role in pre-deployment logistics planning to ensure effective crisis response, efficient use of resources, and high-quality patient care. Proper logistics planning is essential for maintaining operational readiness, particularly during natural disasters and aeromedical evacuations. This study explores the experiences of military nurses in performing pre-deployment logistics planning, highlighting their roles, challenges, and contributions to mission success.*

Methodology: *This study used a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. Seven military nurses who had been deployed to three different locations participated as informants. Data was collected through in-depth interviews using interview guides and field notes. The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore participants lived experiences.*

Results: *Seven military nurses participated in this study; six held a diploma-level nursing education and one held a professional nursing degree. Data analysis identified three main themes: financial planning, resource availability, and budget analysis.*

Conclusion: *Effective planning by military nurses involves financial management, resource monitoring, and budget analysis. These elements enable military nurses to perform their duties effectively in response to various crisis situations.*

Keywords: *Competence, Military Nurses, budget analysis, planning, logistics.*

INTRODUCTION

Military nurses require pre-deployment logistics planning to ensure an effective response during a crisis, optimize resource management, and improve patient care. Proper logistics planning is critical because it directly impacts operational readiness and efficiency in a range

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of scenarios, including natural disasters and aeromedical evacuations. Logistics planning encompasses multiple components, such as medical equipment procurement, transportation arrangements, and personnel scheduling. Good logistics planning not only helps military nurses perform their duties effectively but also ensures patients receive prompt and appropriate care (Leiva-Miranda et al., 2023). In emergency situations, every second counts therefore, nurses must be prepared with all necessary resources, including medications, medical devices, and team support. Additionally, it is essential to train the entire medical team in effective logistics procedures. With a clear understanding of equipment and resource management, healthcare teams can work more efficiently and respond more effectively to emergencies (Lee et al., 2024).

Good coordination among team members plays a vital role in ensuring that all aspects of logistics run smoothly. Regular evaluation of logistics plans is necessary to identify areas requiring improvement. Through continuous evaluation and careful planning, military nurses can enhance their readiness to face challenges in the field. Effective planning also enables military nurses to anticipate potential operational needs, thereby ensuring the delivery of prompt and effective patient care (Atalla et al., 2024). In addition, nurses must work closely with other medical teams and stakeholders to ensure that all aspects of logistics run smoothly. Effective communication and coordination among teams are essential to prevent errors and ensure a timely response. Military nurses play a role not only in providing direct patient care but also in ensuring that all resources are available and ready when needed. Effective logistics planning promotes better coordination among nursing teams, thereby improving the overall quality of care in military healthcare settings (Javan Biparva et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Military nurses play a vital role in maintaining the health and well-being of soldiers and civilians during deployments in both peacetime and conflict situations. In this context, planning competence is a crucial skill that military nurses must possess (Ma et al., 2023). Effective planning not only ensures that healthcare services meet the needs of soldiers but also contributes to the overall success of military missions (Ma et al., 2022). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of planning processes and the required competencies is essential for military nurses to perform this role effectively. Planning in the context of military health involves a systematic process aimed at identifying health needs, formulating goals, and developing strategies to achieve those goals. This process includes organizing available resources, setting priorities, and designing appropriate interventions to ensure the health and well-being of soldiers (Swiger et al., 2023).

In a military environment, where conditions are often uncertain, effective planning is essential to ensure that health services are delivered efficiently and effectively. To carry out effective planning, military nurses must possess several core competencies that encompass various aspects. Clinical knowledge is fundamental, as nurses need to understand health conditions commonly encountered in military settings, including traumatic injuries, infectious diseases, and mental health disorders. This understanding enables nurses to develop appropriate and relevant plans based on existing health needs. In addition, managerial skills are crucial in the planning process, as military nurses are required to coordinate resources, manage personnel, and ensure the efficient use of available assets. Nurses must be able to manage resources, including personnel, equipment, and medications, to ensure that all aspects of the plan can be implemented effectively. These competencies include the ability to organize teams, provide leadership, and coordinate with various stakeholders in the military environment. Additionally, communication skills are equally important, as they enable nurses to convey critical information clearly, collaborate efficiently with multidisciplinary teams, and respond promptly to changing operational needs. Nurses must communicate effectively with other healthcare team members, soldiers, and stakeholders to ensure that the plan is understood and implemented correctly. Clear and open communication helps prevent errors and ensures that all parties are aligned and working toward the same objectives. Fourth, analytical skills are a crucial component of planning competency. Nurses must be able to analyze health data to identify trends, emerging problems, and urgent needs. Through thorough analysis, they can develop evidence-based plans that are appropriate and responsive to the conditions at hand. The military nursing planning process typically involves several key steps.

The first step is a health assessment, in which nurses evaluate the health status of the population to be served. This includes collecting data on physical and mental health, as well as social and environmental factors that may impact well-being. An accurate assessment provides the foundation for all subsequent planning activities. After completing the assessment, the next step in the nursing process is the identification of needs. Based on the assessment findings, the nurse must determine the most urgent and significant health concerns. For example, if a high infection rate is identified among soldiers, the nurse may need to develop a plan to increase vaccination coverage or provide health education focused on disease prevention. Prioritizing these needs is essential to ensure that limited resources are used effectively and efficiently. Once priorities are identified, the nurse should establish clear goals.

These goals should follow the SMART criteria: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. Setting SMART goals helps guide nursing actions and makes it easier to evaluate outcomes. For instance, increasing the percentage of soldiers who receive flu vaccinations from 60% to 80% within six months is an example of a well-defined SMART goal. After setting the goals, the next step is to develop appropriate strategies and interventions to achieve them. These strategies may include organizing health education sessions, conduct vaccination campaigns, or improve access to healthcare services. When planning interventions, nurses must consider the environmental context and potential challenges that may affect implementation.

The final step is implementation, where the planned strategies and interventions are put into action to address the identified health needs. Implementation involves carrying out the plan that has been carefully prepared, with effective coordination among all involved parties. Nurses

must ensure that every component of the plan is executed properly and that each team member clearly understands their roles and responsibilities. Strong collaboration and communication are essential during this phase to ensure that the established goals are achieved.

Following implementation, evaluation and adjustment are critical steps in the planning process. Nurses must assess the effectiveness of the interventions to determine whether the desired outcomes have been met. If the goals are not fully achieved, appropriate modifications should be made to improve results. Evaluation can be conducted through various methods, such as data collection, surveys, and interviews with soldiers and other healthcare team members. Continuous evaluation and timely adjustments help ensure that care remains effective, relevant, and responsive to identified needs. Although planning is a crucial component of nursing practice, military nurses often face significant challenges in carrying out this responsibility.

One major challenge is the limitation of resources. In situations such as war or natural disasters, essential resources including medications, medical equipment, and healthcare personnel may be severely restricted (Ostapenko, 2023). In such circumstances, nurses must demonstrate creativity and strong problem-solving skills to manage available resources effectively and ensure the continuity of healthcare services. Another significant challenge is the rapidly changing environment. Conditions in the field can shift unexpectedly, requiring nurses to adapt quickly and modify plans as needed (Franklin et al., 2013). For example, if an infectious disease outbreak occurs within the assigned area, nurses must promptly develop and implement an appropriate response plan. The ability to think critically, adapt to evolving situations, and make timely decisions is essential in these contexts. Additionally, military nurses must be prepared to manage complex and multifaceted health conditions (Wu Jiawei et al., 2025). Soldiers in military settings may experience physical injuries, psychological trauma, and infectious diseases simultaneously. Nurses are therefore required to provide holistic care and develop comprehensive plans that address physical, psychological, and public health needs (Jain et al., 2024). This complexity further highlights the importance of strong planning, coordination, and clinical competence in military nursing practice.

To enhance planning competency, military nurses must actively engage in continuing education and ongoing professional training. Such training should encompass both clinical and managerial competencies to ensure comprehensive skill development (Kiriaki et al., 2020; Kovačić Popović, 2023). Strengthening these areas enables nurses to effectively assess needs, allocate resources, and coordinate healthcare services in complex military environments. Tactical training is equally essential, as it helps nurses understand how healthcare services integrate with overall military operations (Richards et al., 2020). For example, training in medical evacuation procedures, triage systems, and emergency response protocols is highly relevant in military settings, where rapid and coordinated action is often required. These competencies support timely decision-making and effective intervention during critical situations.

Education in military health policy also plays a vital role in strengthening planning capacity (Fabri, 2022). A thorough understanding of military healthcare regulations and standards enables nurses to design and implement plans that align with established policies and operational guidelines.

Furthermore, leadership development is crucial. Military nurses must be prepared to lead healthcare teams in high-pressure and unpredictable environments (Armon et al., 2024).

Strong leadership skills enhance team coordination, communication, and resilience, ultimately improving the effectiveness of healthcare planning and delivery in military contexts.

Military nurses' planning competency is a critical component in ensuring that healthcare services effectively meet the needs of both soldiers and civilians, particularly in high-pressure and stressful environments. Strong clinical knowledge, sound managerial skills, and the ability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions enable military nurses to design and implement effective health interventions.

A systematic planning process beginning with assessment and continuing through goal setting, strategy development, implementation, and evaluation supports the achievement of desired health outcomes. This structured approach ensures that care delivery remains organized, goal-oriented, and responsive to identified needs.

Although military nurses face numerous challenges in planning, including limited resources and dynamic operational environments, these obstacles can be addressed through continuous education, training, and competency development. By strengthening their professional capabilities, military nurses can make a significant contribution to safeguarding the health and well-being of soldiers and the broader community across diverse and demanding situations.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of military nurses. The phenomenological method was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' perspectives regarding planning competency in military nursing practice.

The study involved seven participants who were military nurses with experience in more than two previous assignments. Participants were selected to ensure they had sufficient professional exposure to diverse military healthcare settings.

Data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which focuses on exploring how individuals make sense of their experiences. This approach allowed the researcher to interpret the meanings participants attributed to their professional roles and planning practices.

Data collection instruments included a semi-structured interview guide and observation sheets (field notes). Individual interviews were conducted with each participant and lasted approximately 30–45 minutes. Field notes were used to document non-verbal cues and contextual information to enrich data interpretation.

This study received ethical approval under number 148/EC/KEP/2024 from the Health Research Ethics Committee of RSPAL Ramelan, Surabaya, ensuring that all research procedures adhered to established ethical standards.

RESULTS

Table 1.1 : Characteristics of Informants

Informant code	Age	Gender	Marital status	Address	Number of children	Last education	Placement history
P1	26	F	Marry	Surabaya	2	D3	3
P2	25	W	Not married yet	Surabaya	0	D3	3
P3	51	F	Marry	Surabaya	2	S1 Ners	3
P4	48	F	Marry	Mojokerto	4	D3	3
P5	50	F	Marry	Surabaya	5	D3	3
P6	32	F	Marry	Sidoarjo	2	D3	3
P7	31	W	Not married yet	Surabaya	0	D3	3

Based on Table 1.1, most informants were between 26 and 35 years old. The majority were female. Two of the female informants were single and had no children. Among those who were married, the number of children ranged from two to five. Most informants resided in Surabaya. Regarding educational background, almost all participants held a Diploma III (D3) in Nursing, while one informant had completed a Bachelor of Nursing degree (S1 Ners). In terms of professional experience, all informants had undergone three duty transfers, indicating substantial exposure to different military assignments.

The experiences of military nurses in carrying out their duties were explored through in-depth interviews, observations, and a review of relevant documents related to military nursing assignments. These methods enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' professional experiences and planning competencies.

In-depth interviews were conducted with all seven participants. Each interview lasted approximately 35–45 minutes, in accordance with the agreement established at the beginning of the session.

The data analysis generated nine themes, using Van Manen's (1990) thematic analysis approach. The analysis process began with transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews into verbatim transcripts. The researcher then read the transcripts repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences.

Through careful and detailed reading, the researcher sought to identify the essence and underlying meanings within each statement. Significant or essential statements related to the phenomenon under study were highlighted. The researcher also examined the text to capture the overall meaning and ensure a holistic interpretation of participants lived experiences.

Participants' statements were interpreted using two approaches: textual and contextual interpretation. Textual interpretation involved identifying the meaning of the language used by

participants, while contextual interpretation considered the background and circumstances underlying each statement.

The results of this interpretative process were expressed in the form of key words derived from participants' narratives. These key words were grouped based on similarities in meaning and organized into categories. The categories were then further developed into sub-themes, which subsequently formed broader themes.

A total of six themes were identified in this study, including financial planning, resource availability, and budget analysis, among others. These themes reflect the core aspects of military nurses' planning competency as experienced and described by the participants.

Financial planning is a systematic process that involves evaluating the current financial situation, setting clear financial goals, and developing strategies to achieve them. The first step is to gather detailed information about income, expenses, assets, and liabilities, which allows for the preparation of financial statements that provide an accurate overview of the individual's or organization's financial condition.

Next, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) financial goals are established, which may be short-term, medium-term, or long-term. Strategies and practical steps are then designed to achieve these goals, including budgeting, investing, and debt management. Effective financial planning enables individuals to manage resources wisely, reduce financial risks, and work toward long-term financial security.

The following transcript excerpt illustrates how participants described the role and practice of financial planning in their work:

Financial Planning

Financial planning is illustrated in the following participant statement:

"We communicate with the authorities to adjust budget allocations and ensure that we can meet urgent needs and maintain availability of resources." (P6)

Availability of Resources

The second theme, availability of resources, is reflected in the participants' approach to monitoring and managing supplies during assignments:

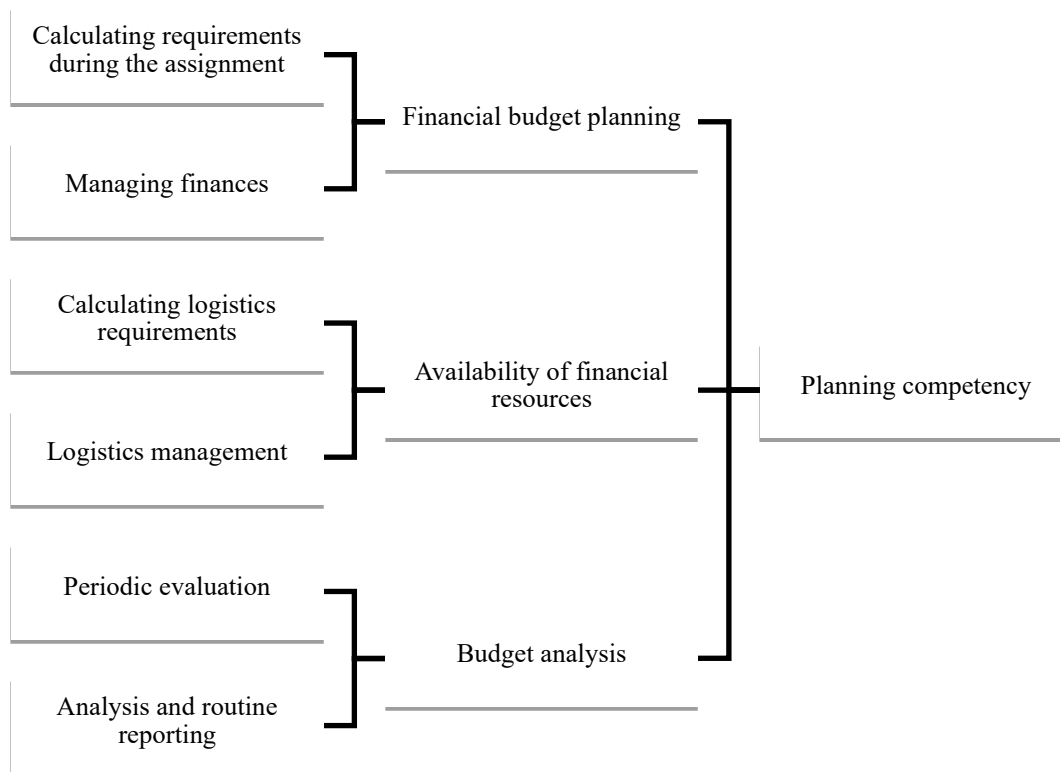
"We always monitor and calculate availability and needs during the assignment. If we feel there is something lacking, we will re-budget." (P5)

Budget Analysis

The third theme, budget analysis, emphasizes maximizing the use of available funds to meet operational needs. One participant explained:

"We conduct regular evaluations on budget usage and plan expenditures for future logistics needs so that all resources are utilized optimally." (P7)

These excerpts demonstrate how military nurses actively engage in financial planning, ensure resource availability, and conduct careful budget analysis to support effective health service delivery in their assignments.



DISCUSSION

1. Financial Planning

The 2020–2024 military health service plan emphasizes strengthening military healthcare facilities, enhancing the competence of TNI health personnel, developing a military health information system, and promoting cross-sector coordination to support national defense readiness and operational duties. This program aims to ensure comprehensive promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services for soldiers, Ministry of Defense civil servants, and their families (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

In addition, service modernization is being implemented through the digitization of health data and the enhancement of medical infrastructure, which aims to improve the efficiency and readiness of military health operations (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). Within this context, financial planning and logistical competence among military nurses are critical for optimizing the use of medical resources and ensuring effective healthcare delivery for both military personnel and the broader community.

Military nurses must possess strong financial management skills to navigate budget constraints and resource limitations effectively (Knighten & Waxman, 2023). Training in healthcare economics and financial management equips nurses with the ability to prepare budgets, assess financial health, and advocate for necessary resources (DAHER, 2023). Research highlights the importance of formal financial management training for nurses, enabling them to manage the complex financial aspects of healthcare effectively (Bayram et al., 2022).

Incorporating principles of efficiency and resource management into nursing education can enhance strategic decision-making and financial stewardship among nurse managers (Reis da Silva, 2024). Prior to deployment, military nurses receive dedicated financial management training to improve operational efficiency during assignments. Upon completing this training,

nurses are expected to manage budgets effectively, make informed expenditure decisions, and accurately record and report financial transactions.

These competencies ensure that available resources are used optimally, supporting the success of missions in the field. Furthermore, financial management training prepares military nurses to respond effectively to unexpected challenges, maintaining continuity and quality of healthcare services even under resource-limited conditions.

Financial planning for military nurses involves understanding healthcare economics, managing the supply chain, and making informed decisions regarding resource allocation. Competence in financial management is essential for nursing professionals, as it directly influences the quality of care provided and contributes to the sustainability of healthcare services (Bayram et al., 2022).

2. Availability of Resources

Effective logistics management is essential for the delivery of healthcare services, particularly in military settings. Utilizing multiple decision-making and engineering criteria allows military healthcare leaders to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and logistics, addressing the complexity of military healthcare while balancing multiple objectives and uncertainties (DAHER, 2023).

Medical supply management in the military requires efficient supply chain practices adapted from the commercial sector to ensure that essential medical supplies are available when needed. The timely availability of resources is critical for both patient care and operational readiness. Military nurses play a central role in this process, engaging in systematic planning and control of resources such as medications, vaccines, and other medical equipment.

Techniques such as ABC (Always, Better, Control) and VED (Vital, Essential, Desirable) analysis are used to optimize resource allocation, preventing losses due to overstocking or shortages. Additionally, the implementation of real-time inventory management systems, such as Evin, enhances data accuracy, improves inventory control, and ensures the consistent availability of critical resources (Rajalakshmi & Priyanga, 2024).

Military nurses apply these principles by using system-based applications that are integrated with centralized databases, allowing real-time inventory monitoring. These applications provide nurses with up-to-date information on the availability of medical supplies, enabling them to respond quickly to emerging needs. Real-time monitoring helps ensure that all necessary equipment and medications are available when required, reducing the risk of shortages in the field.

The system also enhances communication between nurses and central command, supporting faster and more informed decision-making during emergency situations. The integration of logistics and financial planning is essential for optimizing healthcare services, particularly in military contexts, where effective resource allocation can directly impact operational readiness and mission success (Özdoğan & Mulgan, 2024).

3. Budget Analysis

Military nurses can leverage financial management competencies to enhance budget efficiency. For example, the FitRadeOff method increased budget efficiency by approximately 15% in the Brazilian Navy (Santos et al., 2023). Budget analysis is primarily achieved through auditing and reporting processes, which serve as essential tools for assessing both the quality of nursing care and the effectiveness of financial management (da Silva & Boller, 2023). Routine audits help identify areas for improvement, promote adherence to protocols, and reduce errors and waste factors that are particularly critical in military healthcare settings (Ferreira et al., 2024).

Effective military logistics, including cost accounting, ensures that budget constraints do not compromise the quality of care. Advanced methodologies, such as activity-based costing, allow for precise tracking of costs associated with nursing services, supporting informed decision-making and better budget management. Nurse leaders play a pivotal role in optimizing human resources through strategic planning and deployment, maintaining operational readiness and efficiency. Using systems theory and mathematical optimization, nurse leaders can align staffing with budget requirements, improving both service delivery and financial performance.

Reporting mechanisms provide feedback on audits, enabling continuous improvement. Implementing audit and feedback systems has been shown to enhance nursing practice by aligning it with organizational goals. Feedback that emphasizes teamwork and relational aspects of care is particularly effective in engaging nurses and improving performance (Dufour, 2023).

Overall, competencies in budget and logistics analysis among military nurses are strengthened through regular auditing and reporting. These practices not only ensure financial accountability but also enhance the quality of care. Integrating systematic audit processes allows for ongoing evaluation of nursing practice, which is essential in military settings where resources are often limited.

CONCLUSION

Planning in military nursing encompasses financial management, resource monitoring, and budget analysis, enabling nurses to respond effectively to crises. Comprehensive planning also involves ongoing training and skill development, ensuring that military nurses are prepared to face the challenges that arise in emergency situations. Coordination with team members and relevant stakeholders is essential to guarantee that all resources are utilized efficiently. By implementing clear strategies and maintaining effective communication, military nurses can provide optimal care, remain responsive to patient needs, and uphold operational readiness during critical situations.

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