



Continuing Midwifery Education: Midwifery Encouragements of Continuing Professional Education in Profession Stage in Indonesia: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

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BACKGROUND: High maternal and child morbidity and problems related to maternal and child health requires increasing the professionalism of the midwife profession through continuing education. The main competencies of midwives as service providers, educators, community leaders, managers, and decision-makers are carried out to provide midwifery services.

AIM: The purpose of this study was to determine the motivation of midwives in continuing education at the professional level.

METHODS: This research is qualitative research with a theoretical basis. Collecting data through focus group discussion and followed by in-depth interviews with nine midwives who are continuing their professional education four midwives education and professional organization. Analysis of the data used using fixed comparison analysis.

RESULTS: The results of the qualitative analysis produced two themes, namely: internal encouragement with the sub-themes of midwives' understanding of the body of knowledge of professional education, academic progress, self-development, professional recognition; and external encouragement with the sub-themes of career paths, policies, workplace, and professional organization.

CONCLUSION: There are internal and external incentives that affect midwives who have worked to continue their education to a higher level.

Introduction

One of the indicators to measure the success of development in the health sector is the maternal mortality rate and infant mortality rate. Based on the results of 2012 Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey, maternal mortality was 359/100,000 live births and infant mortality was 32/1000 live births [1]. Indonesia as a country that still needs time to improve its health status and quality of health services is closely related to the level of education and human resources. Midwifery education at the professional level is currently an attraction for midwifery because it is something that is just booming in midwifery education [2].

Midwifery education regulations in Indonesia state that several criteria for midwives based on qualifications include; education academics, vocational education, and education profession. Law No. 4 of 2019 concerning midwifery, one of which contains the current regulation of midwifery education. The Midwife

profession program as referred to in Article 7 of Law no. 4 of 2019 concerning midwifery is an advanced program that is inseparable from the undergraduate program and the four midwifery Diploma program where graduates of professional education are called professional midwives. The establishment of the Midwife Professional Study Program with main competencies as a care provider, educator, community leader, manager, and decision-maker is carried out as an effort to provide midwifery services. Midwifery graduate students participate in preparing themselves with reliable life skills. Midwifery professional education is education that prepares graduates to master the required competencies as professional expert midwives, work independently, be able to develop themselves, and be ethical [3].

Continuing education is an effort to improve the technical capabilities, human relations, and morals of midwives following the needs of work/services and standards that have been determined by the council through formal and non-formal education. In 2010, midwives were required to have implemented services by

international midwifery practice standards and a minimum education base of Diploma III midwifery. The mission of this professional education is to develop continuous education in the form of a system; forming midwifery education units at the central, regional, and branch levels, forming a continuing education implementation team, and collaborating with related parties [4].

The pattern of midwifery education is expected to be consistent with the philosophy of midwifery care to equip graduates to become independent practitioners who can work based on the philosophy of midwifery care [5]. The purpose of this study was to explore in-depth the motivation of midwives in continuing education at the professional level.

Methods

Design and setting

This study uses a descriptive qualitative grounded theory study. This study aims to explore in-depth information about the motivation of midwives in continuing education at the professional level. This research was conducted at a government-owned midwifery institution in the midwifery profession study program. The professional study program is the continuing education of midwives after completing undergraduate education. The students vary from fresh graduates, already working either from the hospital or from the community health centers.

Participant

The technique of determining the informants used purposive sampling with sampling criteria, namely midwives who understand the regulation of midwifery education, influential people in midwifery education, and midwifery education actors at the professional level. The number of informants is 13 which include nine registered midwives and continuing their professional education in midwives, one head of the midwife professional organization, one head of health services, and two managers of midwife professional education.

Ethical considerations

This research has obtained permission from the ethics committee with No.405/KEP-UNISA/XII/2018 and obtained research permission from the research location. Informed Consent from the informants has been obtained and the principle of anonymity, Confidentially, justice researchers apply in the preparation of this research.

Data collection

Data collection was carried out in 2019 starting with a Focus Group Discussion with 9 midwives who continued their study of the midwife profession, followed by in-depth interviews with the head of the midwife professional organization, the head of midwifery services at the district level, and the manager of midwife professional education. There is an informed consent document from the participants. Supporting instruments used include guidelines: interviews, writing instruments, and recording devices.

Data analysis

All data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were transcribed using a verbatim system. The data that have been collected are analyzed qualitatively with constant comparisons by developing, comparing, and contrasting with findings from various theories and criteria that are ongoing. If the data obtained from the informant after being analyzed is deemed unsatisfactory, the researcher continues the interview and stops after the data is considered saturated.

Results

Two key themes were found on the motivation of midwives working in continuing education at the level of the midwife profession, which consisted of internal motivation consisting of 4 categories: Understanding of the body of knowledge of the midwife profession, academic progress, self-development, and recognition of professionalism. The second theme is external motivation which consists of five categories consisting of career paths, policies, workplaces, professional organizations, and health services (Figure 1).

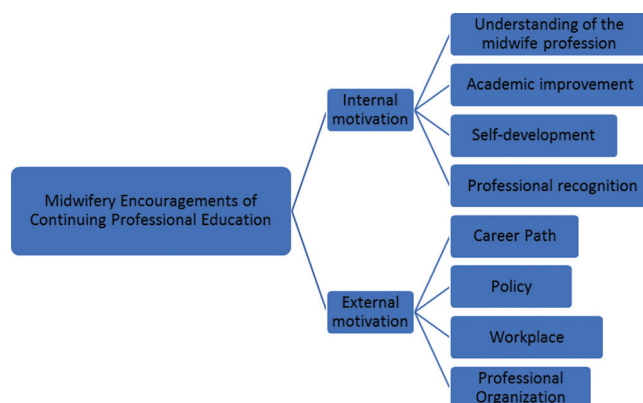


Figure 1: Motivation of midwives working in continuing education at the level of the midwife profession

Internal motivation

Understanding of the midwife profession

Many midwives who have worked do not understand the body of knowledge of midwifery professional education. It is because the professional education of midwives is still new in Indonesia, some of the reasons stated by the following informants:

"If I can be honest, I don't understand about midwifery professional education." (participant 3)

"In my opinion, midwifery professional education is further education level after completing a bachelor degree to fulfill several requirements for the autonomy of midwives to remain independent and provide services" (participant 9)

This statement is supported by professional organizations and midwifery education manager's contention as an informant

"Because midwifery professional education is a new educational program here, it's a bit confusing to understand that professional program is different from bachelor and diploma educational programs. It is hoped that professional education can strengthen midwives opinions in making decisions, providing care, developing services, and strengthening our profession" (participant 10)

Academic improvement

Higher education will improve academic abilities such as thinking skills, knowledge, and competence. This is expressed by several informants:

"I live in a remote area, so the health practices that are carried out are not updated, therefore I need to continue my study to get updates with the newest information in midwifery;" *"I need to continue my study so I can improve my knowledge toward midwifery update"* (participant 2,3)

"If I extend my study in professional education I can increase my knowledge and I can having a critical thinking toward midwifery cases" (participant 2)

This statement is also supported by supporting informants who claim that professional education can improve academic abilities:

"Professional education is important for increasing knowledge and skills"; *"We want to change the mindset of our midwifery students, giving them understanding that in professional school many things can be improved such as doing critical thinking"* (participant 11, 12)

Self-development

Several informants stated that the impetus for self-development is to increase the ability or skill as a

midwife by continuing the education to a higher level. This is expressed by several informants:

"If I continue my study I hope I can learn from the CI (clinical instructor) or from the lecturer who is qualified and have more skill and knowledge about midwifery" (participant 3)

"I'm expecting after I finish my professional program I can be more understanding of the theoretical concept of midwifery and be more skilled at giving maternal and neonatal care. In essence, I can upgrade myself better than when I'm at D3 and D4" (participant 5)

"I need to develop my knowledge and also my skill so I can provide better services in hospitals and become more professional as a midwife" (participant 4)

"As a health worker, I want to provide safe services that are following the evidence-based" (participant 2)

Professional recognition

The real form of professional recognition of midwives from others is by aligning the professional education of midwives with other professions of health workers. The desire to obtain professional recognition as expressed by several informants below:

"... In my opinion, when we're working at the hospital we can see nurses, pharmacists, doctors who have finished a professional education level. It means, if we do the same we can have the same education level just like them, no gap. Therefore we can be considered as qualified health workers in providing services" (participant 8)

"Midwives are slightly looked down upon by other professions, This is because there are still very few midwives who take professional education. So, to keep me in line, I took the professional education" (participant 9)

The desire to obtain professional recognition was also conveyed by informants from Midwifery Association (professional organizations) and institutions. According to the statement of the following supporting informants:

"... must be followed by all the midwives so they can have the same level of education as other professions" (participant 10)

"Even in some hospitals in the obstetric ward, It led by nurses. Because at this time the midwifery professional education level is still new, due to that reason midwife's position are eliminated by others, Therefore, with the midwifery professional education level, midwives can have an equal position with other health workers" (participant 12)

"...focused on the concepts of applicable theory and practice so that after graduate the midwife will be able to perform services skillfully and following the existing standards" (participant 11)

External Motivation

Career path

The desire to increase the career path for midwives who continue the professional education level is to be able to get promoted to a higher position, career advancement from the care service provider to a managerial midwife. The desire to occupy the position of team leader as conveyed by the informant below:

"I continue my studies due to my career advancement in the hospital. From my position as a member I was able to become a team leader; therefore, I continued my professional education to meet the educational qualification requirements as a team leader. (participant 1)

"From an implementing midwife to an expert midwife who is truly an expert and professional. Then also have more authority in service" (participant 3)

"So far the obstetric ward is led by nurses, So, I hope that after a professional-level education is held for midwives, the midwifery ward can be led by a midwife" (participant 4)

"To be able to change the level of the supervisor midwife to an expert midwife" (participant 9)

The urge to gain career advancement for midwives who continue their education at the professional level is one of the reasons for midwives decided to continue their education, as stated by supporting informants from the Health Officer and the following institution:

"...if we continue our education at the professional level, we can get an increase in the civil servant class at level applied bachelor when we retire" (IP 1)

"Midwives are like any other professions that have positions in community services and structural positions as well So that with this midwifery professional education, a midwife will get a career path like other professions" (IP 3)

"To be able to occupy important positions in hospitals, workers who have completed professional education are needed"(IP 4)

Policy

The rules in the midwifery bill state that midwives who continue their professional education can support the personnel sector in accreditation, besides that they can also meet the requirements to open an Independent Practice Midwife.

"Due to the launching of the midwifery bill, I am interested in continuing professional education because it is related to hospital operating permits which require professional education graduates" (participant 3)

"Midwifery professional education is needed to strengthen the autonomy of midwives in practice

following the regulation of the Minister of Health. so that in the future there will be no difference in the realm of service with other health professions" (participant 9)

"To facilitate the midwifery bill which states that midwives who wish to open an Independent Practice Midwife should complete their professional education level" (participant 13)

Workplace

The forms of encouragement from the leadership to its employees include: the hospital director supporting midwives to continue their education to the professional stage, recommendations from the personnel unit to the BKD to continue the education, an offer from the health office, and also support from the head of the community health center. All of the support will make it easier for midwives who are already working to continue their education.

"... continue your studies so that in the next 1 or 2 years this hospital has qualified health workers" (participant 3)

"The health department told me to continue my education and during the process, the health department was willing to help. And the involvement of the policy board allowed me to continue my education. So yes, I finally went to school" (participant 2)

"The important thing is that education must be linear according to the profession. Besides during the study they also don't neglect work, make the best possible time distribution. (quoting the message of the head of the health center)" (participant 9)

The support of a clinical instructor in making work schedules for those who have a study permit, coworkers who are willing to exchange work schedules when there is a class schedule, colleagues who help with assignments in the service to patients, revealed by the informants below:

"If I have an unexpected college schedule so I will ask my friends to exchange work schedules and they willingly do it for me" (participant 1)

"During my education, while working, I was assisted by other midwives, so I didn't have any difficulties while studying" (participant 9)

Professional organization

The professional organization, in this case, is The Indonesian Midwifery Association which plays a role in the further study of midwives at the professional level. Midwifery Association is a forum for midwives to make certain contributions in the midwife's decision to continue the profession.

"There is an appeal from Midwifery Association to continuing study at the level of professional education following existing rules" (participant 2)

"IBI urges and also hopes that all midwives who are the members of IBI Surakarta continue their education at the professional level" (participant 1)

"Midwifery Association socializes to midwives regarding continuing education levels and also encourages and motivates midwives, to increase knowledge and be able to follow evidence-based developments. so that when the midwifery bill is enacted, the midwives are ready to carry out the regulations" (participant 10)

Discussion

Internal prompting

Starting from the midwife's lack of understanding about professional education makes them curious and decided to continue their study at the professional levels. Findings from previous studies indicate that there is still a lack of understanding regarding the body of knowledge in midwifery professional education. There was a significant relationship (significant, p-value <0.05 and rho value 0.587) between midwives' perceptions of midwifery professional education and midwives' motivation to continue their education. The positive rho value indicates a positive relationship between perceptions of midwifery professional education and midwives' motivation in continuing education. The midwifery profession requires a comprehensive collaborative approach supported by a commitment to rules. Uniting professionals in a professional association will bring the professional status of the midwife profession [6].

The desire to continue a higher level of study will indirectly improve academic abilities. Multiple Criteria expressed by the midwife related to the desire for academic ability. These criteria include increasing critical thinking skills, competence, and knowledge. Midwives can be continuously implemented throughout the scope of midwifery practice. Although midwifery education can be considered the first step to implementing competence into practice [7]. It was revealed that internal motivation to continue education was an encouragement for academic progress. Formal education is part of the formation of professional identity including the development of professionalism, academic motivation is one of the internal factors in education [8].

One of the self-development efforts is carried out by continuing studies to the higher levels. The results of previous studies indicate that the motivation for midwives' self-development is to obtain evidence-based knowledge renewal, improvement, and development of knowledge and skills. One of the characteristics of midwives who are doing self-development is having a desire to do renewal which is a provision to provide optimal midwifery services and care. Professional organizations hope that in self-development for

professional midwives, they can improve midwifery care in maternal and child health services. In previous research, stated that self-development is an activity that increases self-awareness and identity, develops talents and potential, builds human resources and facilitates performance, improves the quality of life, and contributes to realizing dreams and ideals [9]. Another study in his research on nurses in England and Germany who had completed his master's studies showed that self-motivation includes seeking personal challenges, seeking an intellectual challenge, and the desire for self-development [10].

The midwife association expects that the midwife profession can gain recognition and a prepotent position professionally in the eyes of other health professional organizations Midwifery is a profession because it is based on education which has the aim of developing the profession following service needs, besides that midwives have educational standards to develop competence, adhere to the philosophy of midwifery as well as a professional code of ethics and legal aspects [9]. Another study conducted states that to become a professional requires a continuous and long period of experience and the ability to reflect on that experience by involving knowledge and technical skills [8]. A process to become a professional through experience has been obtained by students who carry out professional education who directly involved in midwifery services in the community for approximately 3 semesters. The transformation from a midwifery student to a professional midwife is a process of learning to know what a midwife should do and how to relate to patients or other health workers at work. Define professional identity as a person's perspective on himself for the characteristics or signs in a field or bearing a profession [11].

External prompting

One of the external impetuses that cause midwives to continue their professional education program is an increase in structural positions in the workplace. Some informants revealed that by continuing their professional education they got a position that can be functionally improved. Midwife association and educational institutions reveal that midwives who have completed professional education can occupy certain positions as head of sub-sections, and can increase positions in the staffing structure. States that career development is a condition that indicates an increase in the level of position and rank for an employee in an organization in the career path that has been determined in the organization [4]. Another study showed that most midwives said that continuing education would lead to a better career path in the future [12]. Based on career regulation path placement from the Minister of Health RI No. 40 of 2017 that the higher the career level will be followed by an increasing competence. The implementation of

the career path system makes it possible to improve their competencies by adding new competencies, to be able to move to a higher level it is required to achieve a certain specified competency [13].

Compliance with regulations on staffing in health service agencies and regulations on midwifery education is the reason for midwives to continue their professional education. The professional regulator generally through published standards for the preparation and practice of education and through the scope of practice, the framework of practice. So that it can determine how the expansion of sustainable education will be. The literature demonstrates the importance of credentials through a variety of mechanisms, including professional laws and regulations, licenses and certifications, training programs accreditation, practical experience, and certification [14].

In the research findings, several informants stated that the rules and regulations of midwifery education made midwives continue their midwifery professional education. Based on the regulations in the Midwifery Law No. 4 of 2019 in Chapter IV regarding midwifery practice, article 43 states that midwives who have completed professional education can carry out midwifery practice at the Midwifery Independent Practice and Midwifery Practice in Health Service Facilities [15].

This allows for uniform standards of practice and facilitates midwives' freedom to practice in their area. Only those authorized below relevant laws and regulations may use the conferred midwifery degree by the legislation. Midwives who hold more than one national midwifery credential will be authorized to practice as permitted by state law. The legislation establishes criteria, standards, and processes for initial midwifery licensure and/or license renewal and ongoing competency demonstration. The midwifery regulatory authority maintains a register of midwives and makes it publicly available. This includes various license statuses, such as temporary, temporary, conditional, suspended, and fully licensed [16].

Minister of Health Regulation No. 28 of 2017 is a mold for midwives in carrying out midwife autonomy to provide health services. Based on the rules in the midwifery law, it is stated that professional midwives can practice independently outside government and private health service facilities Midwifery in Law [15]. The midwifery profession requires a comprehensive collaborative approach supported by a commitment to rules. Uniting professionals in a professional association will bring the professional status of the midwife profession. Midwives can obtain recommendations in permitting further studies to the staffing agency from leaders in their workplace. The results of this study are supported by the theory which states that leadership can influence the motivation or competence of other individuals in a group [6].

Leadership is a method used by a person in influencing, directing, encouraging, and controlling his

subordinates to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively [17]. Other studies suggest that the ideal work environment offers the right approach to CPD (Continuing Professional Development) opportunities or follow-up studies implemented by supportive managers using available sources of opportunity, time, and funding [18]. Nurses who continue their education states that manager who share responsibilities with nurses participate in CPD approval if they comply with the rules and provide mutual benefits in services. Support from coworkers motivates them to continue their education [11].

Professional organizations carry out activities that are beneficial for their members to increase knowledge according to the development and demands of the community who need professional services. The mission of the midwife organization is to develop midwifery advanced education in the form of a system, to form midwifery education units at the central, provincial or regional, district, and branch levels, to form a continuing education implementation team, to establish networks and cooperation with related parties. Government regulations, health systems, regulatory agencies, and midwifery associations are critical to fully realize the potential of midwifery education [7].

Further education in midwives triggers competition among the midwifery profession to continue to improve its quality in providing services, to attract consumers [4]. The results of this study are supported by previous research on midwives in Tanzania which stated that continuing education is important to improve maternal and child health services and reproductive health. Midwives hope that continuing education can provide high-quality midwifery services [2].

Conclusion

Several things encourage midwives who have worked to continue to higher education levels. The impetus that arises from within the midwife is the desire for progress in understanding the profession and academic abilities that can make the midwife gain professional recognition. The involvement of other parties is suspected to be the driving force from outside the midwife in further studies such as increasing career paths, the existence of policies, and the involvement of professional organizations and workplaces which in turn will improve health services in the realm of midwives.

Limitation

The number of informants is limited to working who continue their education at a professional level at one of the universities in Central Java, Indonesia. The involvement of professional organizations and midwifery education institutions is still limited which

limits the generalizability of the results. This research expresses the views of registered midwives in continuing professional education, not involving many parties such as midwives who are fresh graduates, families, and other service users.

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