
Research on the Core Competency Model of “Tourism + Nursing” Compound Talents from the Perspective of Supply and Demand

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Abstract: With the rapid development of the tourism industry and the accelerating aging of society, the integration of tourism services and nursing care has become an important direction for industrial upgrading and talent demand transformation. The “tourism + nursing” integrated service model places higher and more comprehensive requirements on practitioners’ professional competence. From the perspective of supply–demand docking, this paper analyzes the mismatch between current talent cultivation and industry demand, and argues that the lack of a systematic core competency framework is a key constraint on the cultivation of composite talents. Based on industry demand characteristics and vocational education realities, this study constructs a core competency model for “tourism + nursing” composite talents, including professional ethics, interdisciplinary knowledge integration, practical service ability, and lifelong learning capacity. Corresponding implementation pathways are proposed to provide theoretical support and practical reference for vocational education reform and talent supply optimization.

Keywords: Tourism + nursing; Composite talents; Supply-demand docking; Core competency model; Vocational education

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1. Introduction

The transformation and upgrading of the tourism industry, together with the growing demand for health and elderly care services, has given rise to new integrated service forms such as wellness tourism, medical tourism, and elderly care tourism. Under this trend, traditional single-skilled tourism or nursing professionals are increasingly unable to meet the diversified and high-quality service demands of the market. Instead, the industry urgently needs composite talents who possess both tourism service awareness and nursing care capabilities.

In recent years, China has continuously promoted the reform of vocational education and emphasized the importance of aligning talent cultivation with industry demand. The Ministry of Education’s Supply and Demand Docking Employment Education Project further highlights the need to address structural mismatches between talent supply and labor market needs. However, in practice, talent cultivation in the fields of tourism and nursing is still largely segmented, resulting in insufficient interdisciplinary integration and weak adaptability to emerging service scenarios^[1].

Against this background, constructing a clear and operable core competency model for “tourism + nursing” composite talents from the perspective of supply-demand docking is of great significance. Such a model can not only clarify talent cultivation objectives but also provide a structural basis for curriculum reform, teaching design, and school-enterprise cooperation in vocational education.

2. Theoretical basis for the construction of core competencies

2.1. Supply-demand docking theory and talent cultivation

Supply-demand docking theory emphasizes the dynamic matching between talent cultivation systems and labor market needs. In vocational education, this theory requires that training objectives, curriculum content, and skill standards be closely aligned with industry demand. Applying this perspective to “tourism + nursing” talent cultivation helps identify competency gaps and guides the optimization of talent supply structures ^[2].

2.2. Characteristics of “tourism + nursing” composite talents

“Tourism + nursing” composite talents are characterized by interdisciplinary integration and scenario-based service capability. They are required not only to master basic tourism service skills but also to possess nursing knowledge, health management awareness, and communication skills suited to elderly or special needs groups. This hybrid nature determines that their core competencies must go beyond traditional single-discipline frameworks.

2.3. Core competency theory in vocational education

Core competency theory focuses on the essential, transferable, and sustainable abilities required for long-term professional development. In vocational education, core competencies serve as the foundation for curriculum design and teaching evaluation. Constructing a core competency model for “tourism + nursing” talents is therefore a prerequisite for improving training quality and employment adaptability.

3. Current supply-demand situation of “tourism + nursing” talents

3.1. Industry demand for integrated service talents

With the expansion of wellness tourism and elderly care tourism, enterprises increasingly demand professionals who can simultaneously provide service coordination, health assistance, and emotional support. This demand reflects a shift from task-oriented labor to holistic service provision, placing higher requirements on talent quality and versatility ^[3].

3.2. Existing problems in talent supply

At present, talent cultivation in tourism and nursing fields remains largely separated. Tourism majors focus on service management and reception skills, while nursing majors emphasize medical or care techniques, resulting in insufficient cross-disciplinary competence. Graduates often lack the ability to adapt quickly to integrated service scenarios.

3.3. Structural mismatch between education and industry

The lack of unified competency standards and integrated training programs leads to a mismatch between graduate abilities and enterprise expectations. This structural imbalance not only affects employment quality but also restricts the sustainable development of the “tourism + nursing” industry.

4. Core competency gaps in existing talent cultivation

4.1. Insufficient interdisciplinary knowledge integration

Current training programs in related fields often place a strong emphasis on either tourism-specific knowledge or nursing-related content, yet they significantly neglect the crucial integration of these two disciplines. This lack of cohesive interdisciplinary education means that graduates are left without a systematic and holistic understanding of service processes that effectively merge tourism experiences with health and care services. As a result, they are poorly equipped to design or manage services that require a seamless combination of hospitality, customer experience, and wellness support, which increasingly defines the modern service industry.

4.2. Weak practical and scenario-based abilities

Although some practical training is provided, it is frequently delivered in a fragmented manner and does not adequately simulate real-world integrated service environments. Students may develop proficiency in isolated technical or operational skills, but they often struggle to synthesize and apply these abilities comprehensively within complex, multi-faceted service scenarios. This gap limits their capacity to respond adaptively to dynamic customer needs, coordinate interdisciplinary teams, and ensure high-quality service delivery in settings that demand both tourism hospitality and health care competencies ^[4].

4.3. Limited capacity for career development and adaptation

Many graduates exhibit insufficient awareness of the importance of lifelong learning and lack structured professional development planning. This shortcoming makes it challenging for them to keep pace with rapid transformations within the industry, including evolving service models, emerging technologies, and shifting consumer expectations. Without a proactive approach to skill enhancement and career growth, these individuals face difficulties in adapting to new roles, advancing professionally, and contributing innovatively to the integration of tourism and health services over the long term.

5. Construction of a core competency model and implementation pathways

5.1. Core competency model for “tourism + nursing” composite talents

Based on a detailed supply-demand docking analysis, this research constructs a comprehensive core competency model that encompasses four essential dimensions: professional ethics and service awareness, interdisciplinary knowledge integration, practical service and coordination skills, and lifelong learning and adaptability. These interconnected dimensions together capture the core attributes and comprehensive capabilities necessary for integrated service professionals working at the intersection of tourism and nursing. The model not only reflects the dynamic requirements of the industry but also provides a structured framework for talent development and evaluation.

5.2. Curriculum and teaching reform oriented to core competencies

Vocational and higher education institutions should undertake a systematic redesign of their academic and training curricula, guided by the proposed competency model. This involves the strategic integration of both tourism-related and nursing-focused educational modules, with a strong emphasis on scenario-based teaching methodologies. Furthermore, project-based learning approaches and immersive simulation training should be widely adopted to help students cultivate holistic service capabilities, critical thinking, and the ability to perform effectively in real-world integrated service environments.

5.3. School-enterprise cooperation and evaluation mechanisms

Enhancing collaboration between educational institutions and industry enterprises is fundamental to achieving accurate

and efficient supply-demand alignment. Enterprises ought to actively engage in the process of formulating competency standards, participate in teaching quality evaluations, and provide oversight for student internships and practical training sessions. At the same time, it is imperative to establish diversified and multi-faceted evaluation mechanisms that can thoroughly and continuously assess students' progressive development of the core competencies throughout their educational journey.

6. Conclusion

From the perspective of supply-demand docking, the cultivation of "tourism + nursing" composite talents requires a clear and systematic core competency framework. By constructing a competency model oriented toward industry demand and implementing targeted educational reforms, vocational institutions can improve talent supply quality and enhance graduates' employment adaptability. Future research may further refine the model through empirical studies and explore its applicability in different regional and industrial contexts.

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