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**PERSPECTIVE**

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## **STRATEGIES FOR INDONESIAN NURSING TOWARD ASEAN COMMUNITY: A PERSPECTIVE FROM A NURSE**

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More than 40 years ago, ASEAN countries have developed collaboration in social, economic and diplomatic relations,<sup>1</sup> but today's collaboration has grown with the cooperation in political, economic and social under three pillars of the ASEAN community, namely ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).<sup>2</sup> In this regard, there are some professions are involved in ASEAN mutual recognition arrangements (MRA), which consist of medical doctor, dentist, surveyor, architect, accounting, engineer, and nurse.<sup>2</sup> It is expected through this arrangement, especially for nursing, can make ASEAN countries close together.<sup>3</sup> It is believed that ASEAN community can bring positive impacts, such as the impacts on the process of medical treatment,

characteristics of the services, products of health care services, organizational management, and marketing.

However, each country has its own approach to get directly involved in any sectors of MRA. But education seems to be the cutting element in this arrangement, and each country begins to have the collaboration, such as 1) to increase the awareness among people and young generation with the dissemination of information and knowledge of the ASEAN community; 2) to promote ASEAN identity in education; 3) to produce human resources in the education field; and 4) to make networking among universities in ASEAN.<sup>1</sup>

This collaboration has actually been implemented by the Indonesian government, especially in terms of networking between universities in

ASEAN. Specifically, nursing takes a part in this networking, such as students and faculties' exchange, double-degree program, etc. Thus, developing nursing collaboration among ASEAN countries is one step forward of bringing the good impact of ASEAN community to Indonesia, especially to adopt nursing best practice for Indonesian society.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, to prepare the readiness of Indonesian nurses for ASEAN community, governments are not just only to encourage and support nurses to work and study abroad, but also to be ready to accept foreign nurses to work and study in Indonesia. English is however playing a key role for basic communication in this collaboration. In addition, the competencies of nurses also need to be improved, consisting of skill, attitude, and knowledge, especially, the knowledge of transcultural nursing.

Dealing with culture is another challenge for nurses, which leads to certain behavior. Therefore, knowledge regarding culture diversity is needed, including beliefs, needs, values, and culture. It means each nurse needs to learn the culture of the destination country they plan to work or study. However, foreign nurses may find difficulties to work in Indonesia. Despite of having multicultural, they also need to take the licensure exam in Indonesian language, which is a double burden for them.<sup>4</sup>

In regard to culture, there are some ways to understand about transcultural nursing for the preparation of ASEAN community, namely: 1) surveying the basic knowledge of transcultural nursing, 2) providing information for nurses regarding cultural differences, 3) conducting training / seminar / workshop to explore the approaches for patients care from different cultures, 4) revising and integrating the diverse cultural component in nursing curriculums, 5) encouraging and

providing opportunity for nurses to visit and exchange their knowledge with other countries in ASEAN by educational visit, 6) creating a network to share knowledge, 7) using social media to improve knowledge, such as watching movies, meetings, reading books, and surfing the internet; and 8) accessing to the transcultural web for ASEAN.<sup>5</sup>

On the other side, another strategy for Indonesian government to get the benefits from ASEAN community is to utilize the tourism and the human resources of the country. Fulfilled with beautiful places, Indonesia actually has a great potential to become tourism destination, it is reasonably assumed that health or public health tourism is a great deal at this point. The concept of promoting wellbeing and preventive of disease in health tourism can be a new strategy to marketing and the local economy.<sup>6</sup> Nurses, as the first face of health care system of Indonesia, have a major role to implement this opportunity, for instance, may be community nurses are standby in the beach providing nursing service in terms of health spa and massage, or other activity like cycling in the middle of forest, and etc.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, there are some strategies can be implemented in ASEAN community, including enhancing educational collaboration, improving transcultural nursing ability and language proficiency, and utilizing the resources between Indonesian tourism and nurses as the assets.

#### Declaration of Conflicting Interest

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#### Authorship Contribution

This study is the original work of the corresponding author.

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