

COMPLETION REPORT

A Comparative Study of The Lived Experiences of Indonesian Caregivers
in Japan and The Returnees in Indonesia

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Background

Based on the effective implementation of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Indonesia and Japan the mobility of caregivers from Indonesia to Japan has started since 2008. From Indonesian perspective, this is the first time for the country to send out nurses to work as caregivers under a bilateral agreement. However, the notion of 'caregiver' is often associated with domestic work without professional training which invites debates on the issue of nurse deskilling. The latest data from the National Board for the Placement and Protection (BNP2TKI) in 2014 showed that 167 Indonesian nurses worked as qualified caregivers in Japan. In addition, 295 caregivers have returned home due to some circumstances. Despite the original intention of the EPA that foreign caregivers are expected to pass the examination in order to continue working in Japan, the high proportion of Indonesian caregivers returning to Indonesia challenges the underlying assumption and the sustainability of the EPA.

Aim

This phenomenological study aims to focus on the reasons for settling in Japan and the reasons for returning to Indonesia by interviewing two groups of Indonesian caregivers under EPA, migrant caregivers who were settled in Japan and returnees who went back to Indonesia. For both groups, the life courses that encompass professional experiences and family conditions have been examined and compared.

Methods

Using a phenomenology of practice study design and Van Manen's principles of data analysis, narratives from the guided interviews with 15 returnees and 18 migrant caregivers. We recruited participants using a snowball technique for returnees and a purposive sample of migrant caregivers. The use of semi-structured individual interviews was undertaken in collecting the data. The interview took between 30-60 minutes. The interview transcripts were analyzed using a content thematic approach by QSR NVivo 10 software.

Findings

The reasons for settling in Japan include inspiration of Japan, economic motive, and experiences that could be gained, while the reasons for returning encompass family, and other circumstances or compelled return for instance contract termination. The importance of family connection in return migration is reflected by Indonesian returnees. They came back for non-economic reasons such as getting married, looking after a sick relative, raising their children, and other reasons

related to their family life cycle. Five key themes were identified from the lived experiences of the migrant caregivers: (i) fulfilling a dream; (ii) different expectations; (iii) cultural differences; (iv) difficult journey; and (v) supporting mechanism. On the other hand, four key themes were identified for Indonesian returnees: (i) readiness to return; (ii) difficult journey; (iii) resource mobilization; and (iv) overcoming barriers.

Conclusions

The stories of the migrant nurses and returnees in this study reveal that we should look at the migration cycle comprehensively. The reasons for settling and returning show different challenges linked to the cycle of migration and challenge us to consider brain circulation or brain gain program for the benefit of Japan and Indonesia. The current study found that deskilling issue has become a concern for both groups. Although they were previously trained as nurses, after working in Japan for several years as caregivers, they obviously lost their nursing skills and confidence as nurses. Therefore, returnees need to brush up their nursing skills given the condition that they want to work in clinical setting. Interestingly, Indonesian caregivers received support from stake holders involved in this movement, and they could bring back positive resources as they returned home. The role of Civil Society Organization is undeniable in upgrading the capacity of migrant caregivers. Interestingly returnees voiced gaining positive characteristics such as being disciplined, punctual, friendly, hardworking, and being honest after having the working experience in Japan.

Recommendations

Sustainability of this program must be addressed based on cooperative approach under the framework of Indonesia-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. Brain gain proposal by reorienting returnees to jobs which align with their expertise in geriatric nursing should be considered. Partnership with private sectors with the aid from Japanese Government side for seeking a non-standard approach or innovative idea to utilizing returnees' capacity in Indonesia should be taken into account. Developing supportive nursing human resources policy in Indonesia by acknowledging their professional experiences acquired abroad need to be considered.

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Date: 17-18 March 2016

Name of Conference: International Conference: Policy and Practice for Migrant Care Workers in Asia

Title of presentation : The Views of Care Worker Returnees from Japan: Evaluation of Return to Practice

Presenter: Ferry Efendi

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

An article will be submitted to international nursing journal and will let the foundation know the latest update.

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)