

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Since the end of 2015, 10 countries had reached a historical milestone once they combined into one community named Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community". This collaboration aims to build a regional society providing possible services to all member nations' populations and at the same time promotes kinship while living harmoniously for the benefit of all. With the purpose to promote favorable understanding among countries in this region, maintaining peace, security and political stability, economic prosperity, social and cultural development and well-being on the basis on of equity and common benefit of the 10 member countries namely Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam.

For training development, cooperation promotion including interaction promotion between personnel and professionals in the region are considered significant opportunities for cooperation that ensure the ASEAN Community's goals of awareness for caring and wellbeing of the regional community are achievable. As a significant part of health service profession, nursing profession, one of the seven key services has been accelerated by ASEAN Community to combine together toward internationally top among the global quality service. In this regard, an agreement on ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ASEAN MRA) on Nursing Services was reached in principle that nurses who meet required qualifications are eligible to register or apply for nurse license to work in other ASEAN countries under law and regulations in those countries (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2014).

The ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services has been formed with the following objectives: (ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Nursing Services, 2008).

- To facilitate mobility of nursing professionals within ASEAN;
- To exchange information and expertise on standards and qualifications;
- To promote adoption of best practices on professional nursing services; and
- To provide opportunities for capacity building and training of nurses.

Therefore, nursing personnel development is necessary in ASEAN region.

Under current changes in the context of knowledge-based society prior to entering ASEAN Community, preparation to cope with international market competition, understanding ASEAN Community, particularly on economic, social and cultural aspect is crucial for further progress or survival of health and nursing organizations (Giri,K.et al., 2012; ASEAN – ANU Migration Research Team, 2005). Every nurse, especially nurse executives must try to understand and maintain currency through continued learning. It is important to equip them with the knowledge and skills so as foster and lead necessary change that will result in the realization of the goals established by the ASEAN Community. These Nurse executives will be well placed to drive change within their organizations and foster advancement of nursing within their nations.

Being fully aware the significance of nursing personnel development, the Nursing School of Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU) that employ distance education including technological instructional media via internet i.e. e-learning, webcast and web-board, a pilot online course was therefore organized with entitled of “Leadership Development and Change Management for Nurse Executives in ASEAN Countries”. To overcome obstacles such as geographic condition and time constraint, distance education (DE) mode thus was used in this study to train ASEAN’s nurses for practice.

The significantly strengthen characteristic of STOU distance learning is self- directed by the learners via printed materials or electronic media, and then students come to STOU campus for a face to face intensive seminar at the end of the course. The latter was incorporated into the curriculum to make studying at STOU by distance education more meaningful. Attendance at an intensive on- STOU campus seminar series of 3-5 days duration is compulsory. The seminar series assists participants consolidate knowledge, share professional experiences, skills and promotes ethical and moral decision making and leadership development. Participants build up relationships and develop networks among them. Therefore, LCM online course is developed and based on STOU approach. Furthermore, the online course will promote and support *Mode 1 “Cross Border Supply of*

ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)” that mentioned moving trade via internet (Chia & Plummer, 2015, pp.103-104) as well as the national policy of Medical hub.

According to the online course, O’Neil, Fisher & Newbold; and Mancuso, (2004; 2009) pointed out that DE can be totally online or partially online (blended learning) and can be synchronous (real time) or asynchronous (delayed). Furthermore, it was found that the Webs are providing access to rich information, encouraging meaningful interactions, and bringing people together as well (Wilson & Lowry, 2000; Siritarungsri & Suwanasamrit, 2011). Nursing personnel development by distance training, therefore, will allow anyone in the community to learn from distance education pedagogy based on connectivism in response to needs of each learner at a large number regardless of time and place. Learning theories are concerned with the actual process of learning, not with the value of what is being learned (Siemens, 2005). In a networked world, the very manner of information that we acquire is worth exploring. Siemens advances a theory of learning that is consistent with the needs of the twenty first century. He asserted that learning and work related activities are no longer separate. In many situations, they are the same. Therefore, based on Siemens theory, developing of the online course must be integrated theory into practice and utilized “knowledge sharing” forum through online as a strategy to connect people together.

Purposes of the Research

The purposes of this research and development study were:

1. To develop the online course that provided by STOU, school of Nursing entitled “Leadership Development and Change Management for Nurse Executives in ASEAN Countries”
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of online course “Leadership Development and Change Management for Nurse Executives in ASEAN Countries”

Research Questions

The research questions addressed for this study were:

1. What is the component of the online course?
2. How effective is the online course as perceived by learners, in terms of knowledge and skills, online interaction, satisfaction, strengths, weaknesses, and barriers of the study?

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined for this study:

Online course: The online course in this study based on STOU distance learning approach is the 4-month training program entitled “Leadership Development and Change Management for Nurse Executives in ASEAN Countries” (LCM Program). The online course includes two phases. *Phase 1* online interactive learning that includes ten modules delivered by a course management system through the Internet available at <https://www.stou.ac.th/lcm> the LCM website. *Phase 2* is a face-to-face intensive seminar taken place for 3 days 2 nights in the 4th week at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand. The key activities of the seminar were:

- 1) Enhancing knowledge and skills by attending special lectures from guest speakers.
- 2) Performing an exhibition and presentation of nursing administration and innovation by participants.
- 3) Building up relationship and networking among ASEAN nurses by Ice breaking activity.
- 4) New knowledge constructing by sub groups activities for best practice development on leadership and Change management for nurse executives.
- 5) Gaining more insight of Thai cultural and lifestyle by dinner cruise along the Chao Phaya River and Traditional welcome party.

The four components of the online course are included with input, process, output, and outcome as described below.

Input component: consisted of ten content modules (Module 1-10) developed by content experts (resource persons), LCM websites, and facilitators.

Process component: consisted of participants’ learning and interaction through the online course both online interaction and face-to-face intensive seminar. Communication tools, email address (aseanlcm2014@gmail.com) and LCM website were included in the course environment that allowed training participants and facilitators to interact with one another. Participants’ interaction with each module refers to the activities and assignments required to be done.

Output component: the enhancement of participants' knowledge and experiences as well as the satisfaction of the online training course.

Outcome component: the result of the course, Module is constructed by participants to incorporate the key learnings from all module learning into their practice. The learning outcomes were the development and implementation of an innovative work task or mini project that was a result of integrating knowledge in practice so as to promote staff development or work performance.

Knowledge and experiences: was a part of the output component which was an outcome of the learning process embedded in the 4-month online course entitled "Leadership Development and Change Management for Nurse Executives in ASEAN countries". "Knowledge and experiences" refers to learning achievement in understanding and applying the course content as perceived by participants in increasing their knowledge, skills and competent necessary for executive nurses to enhance the leadership and change management skills.

Online interaction: refers to participants' communication in the "Knowledge Sharing" forum. Participants were individually assigned to share their knowledge and experiences through "Knowledge Sharing" forum after finished learning each module. Upon gaining insight from each module, participants were expected to provide a reflection on the knowledge gained from each module covering 3 issues as follows.

- 1) Did you gain any knowledge, experience or not and how?
- 2) From Item 1, is there any similarity or difference from what you have previously learned or obtained?
- 3) Did you apply knowledge and experience from Item 1 to your assigned work under your responsibility and how?

After that participants can exchange their perspectives to others and facilitators.

Satisfaction of the online course: refers to participants' feeling and perceptions regarding their online learning knowledge and experiences.

Participants: refers to executive nurses who enrolled and were recruited to study in the 4 month training program entitled “Leadership Development and Change Management for Nurse Executives in ASEAN Countries” as of the following qualifications.

1. Serve as nurse executives (nurse administrators or nurse leaders) in 10 ASEAN countries, both nursing services and nursing education attached to public and private sector; for example Head Nurse, Head of Nursing Department, Dean, School of Nursing, etc.
2. Good English communications with ability to listen, read and write well, and have a good information technology knowledge, **or**
3. Recommendation letter from participant’s Chief or Director of their organization

Facilitators: refers to faculty course team or researchers’ team who serve as a coach and mentor for the participants. Facilitators play an important role in managing of an online learning, supporting effective learning environment and promoting dynamic online interaction during the study, as well as program evaluation.

Resource persons: refers to experts who produced each online module or provide presentations in the face-to-face intensive seminar, as well as faculty course team who produced Module 1 and facilitated the online training course.

Significance of the study

The online course is designed in order to promote leadership and change management skills for ASEAN executive nurses. The outputs and outcomes of the study will be directly beneficial for executive nurses who attended and completed the course. Although there is no examination in this study, the learning achievement can be evaluated from their assignments both “knowledge sharing” and “innovation work task or mini project”. The findings of this study will be useful for course designer and nurse educators who would like to develop more effective distance learning courses for professional development and career advancement. Online future course developers may gain information that may lead to restructuring courses in such a way as to increase social interaction as well as other professional competencies.