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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Indonesian Nursing Profession in the Era of Global Competition

Bahtiar¹, Baharuddin², Erlina Y. Kongkoli³, Sainuddin⁴, Muhammad Saleh⁵, Heru Santoso Wahito Nugroho^{6(CA)}

¹Nursing Department, Poltekkes Kemenkes Makassar, Indonesia; bahtiarpoltekkes@gmail.com

²Nursing Department, Poltekkes Kemenkes Makassar, Indonesia; baharuddinfrans@yahoo.co.id

³Nursing Department, Poltekkes Kemenkes Makassar, Indonesia

⁴Dental Health Department, Poltekkes Kemenkes Makassar, Indonesia

⁵Dental Health Department, Poltekkes Kemenkes Makassar, Indonesia; saleh@poltekkes-mks.ac.id

^{6(CA)}Health Department, Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya, Indonesia; heruswn@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, the development of the nursing profession shows a positive trend, which is marked by increased professionalism and specialization in this professional field. Until now, nursing education continues to develop, with various programs from diplomas to doctorates offered by educational institutions throughout the country. Now, it has been possible for foreign medical personnel to practice in Indonesia. This is expected to enrich the transfer of knowledge and technology in the health sector, as well as meet the need for specialist medical personnel which is still lacking in several regions in Indonesia. In dealing with the results of a SWOT analysis, there are some steps namely: 1) optimizing strength (focus on developing nursing competencies, including advanced training and relevant resources; and encourages collaboration between nurses and other healthcare teams to maximize knowledge and adaptation to clinical situations); 2) overcoming weaknesses (efforts to increase access to resources, including facilities and training; and encourage the government and related institutions to increase the ratio of nurses to the population); 3) take advantage of opportunities (building networks with international health institutions to expand nursing practice; and keep up with trends in demand for high-quality healthcare and strengthen evidence-based practices); 4) dealing with threats (establish emergency response plans to address public health risks, including pandemics; participate in global initiatives to face competition and strengthen the position of Indonesian nurses). As conclusion, the nursing profession in Indonesia must be able to face changes in the global era adaptively in order to minimize the impact of weaknesses and threats and increase potential strengths and opportunities to maintain and improve the existence of the profession in Indonesia in an era of competition.

Keywords: nursing profession; global competition; strengths; weaknesses; opportunities; threats

A GLANCE AT THE NURSING PROFESSION IN INDONESIA

The nursing profession is a form of professional service that is integral to health services, provided according to nursing knowledge and tips which include biological, psychological, social and spiritual aspects. Nursing services are aimed at individuals, families and communities, both healthy and sick, in order to achieve optimal health. In Indonesia, nurse competency standards are prepared by the *Persatuan Perawatan Nasional Indonesia (PPNI)* / Indonesian National Nurses Association, which includes core competencies, competency components, and a list of nursing action skills, which aims to improve the quality of nursing services that are quality and affordable to the public. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 38 of 2014, nursing involves the activity of providing care to individuals, families, groups or communities, whether sick or healthy, as well as developing nursing care plans, in collaboration with doctors, therapists, patients, and the patient's family. as well as other teams, to focus on disease treatment and improving the client's quality of life. Nursing professional education in Indonesia refers to the principles of professionalism in the nursing discipline which refers to this law, with the minimum education level being bachelor-professional or KKNI Level 7 (S1-Ners), and various types of specialist education that are integrated with master's education at KKNI Level 8.^(1,2)

The nursing profession in Indonesia began during the Dutch colonial period. At that time, native nurses commonly called "velpleger" assisted by "zieken oppaser" were tasked with caring for sick people at the Binnen Hospital which was founded in Jakarta in 1799. Furthermore, from 1816 to 1942 there was significant development marked by the construction of houses, hospitals and nursing schools, such as PGI Cikini Hospital

and ST Carolus Hospital in Jakarta, as well as ST Hospital. Boromeus in Bandung. During the Japanese colonial period, namely from 1942 to 1945, the nursing profession experienced a decline due to the Japanese government's lack of attention to the nursing profession. It was only after Indonesia became independent that the health sector was developed properly, including the establishment of the Nurse Teacher School in 1952 and the Ministry of Health's Nursing Academy in Jakarta in 1962. In 1985, at the University of Indonesia the Nursing Science Study Program (PSIK) was established which marked the revival of the profession. nursing in Indonesia. Since that time, there has been an increase in the number of higher education in nursing, professional teaching staff, and even the birth of nursing legislation. The Faculty of Nursing at the University of Indonesia is a pioneer in the development of nursing education in Indonesia, by organizing new and specialized study programs. Until now, the nursing profession in Indonesia continues to improve, with the increasing number of higher education institutions in nursing and professional teaching staff at the level of doctors and professors, as well as the birth of nursing laws that support the development of this profession.⁽¹⁾

In Indonesia, the development of the nursing profession shows a positive trend, which is marked by increased professionalism and specialization in this professional field. Until now, nursing education continues to develop, with various programs from diplomas to doctorates offered by educational institutions throughout the country. This reflects the nursing profession's commitment to improving the quality of health services. Apart from that, nurses in Indonesia are now increasingly recognized as health workers whose existence is important, especially after contributing significantly during the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Governments and society are increasingly aware of the vital role the nursing profession plays in the health system.^(1,3)

CHALLENGES OF THE NURSING PROFESSION IN INDONESIA

Currently, the nursing profession in Indonesia is still facing various complex challenges, especially in overcoming the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the biggest challenges is the increasing need for higher professional competence amidst the knowledge gap that exists among nurses. Nurses must master a variety of new competencies to respond effectively to pandemic situations, which demand in-depth knowledge of care procedures, especially COVID-19.^(1,4-6)

Apart from that, nurses in Indonesia also face challenges in accessing adequate education and training. The government must be encouraged to open wider access to professional education, including various specialist nursing education, in order to strengthen the capacity of nurses to provide quality health services. Another challenge that is no less important is the need to implement strict safety practices to protect nurses from exposure to COVID-19 and other diseases, as well as the challenge of inadequate facilities, including limited availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and limited nursing staff in several areas.⁽⁷⁾

Strong leadership in the nursing sector is also a current challenge, where the representation of nursing leadership at higher levels is still considered lacking. Nurses must have a more significant role in making health policies and supporting health promotion and education, which is very much needed to improve the level of public health.⁽⁸⁾

On the other hand, even though the nursing profession faces serious challenges, there are still many human resources who choose to remain dedicated to this profession. This shows the depth of commitment and love for a job that requires empathy, patience and good communication skills. The nursing profession is not only related to mastering health sciences and technology, but also about learning to empathize and provide compassion to those in need.⁽⁹⁾

Facing these challenges, nurses in Indonesia continue to strive to improve the quality of their education and skills, and adapt to the ever-increasing demands of the profession. They play an important role in the development of society and the treatment of a widening range of health problems, along with advances in science and technology. Thus, the nursing profession in Indonesia continues to strive to accelerate the professionalization process and align itself with international nursing standards.^(1,10)

SOLUTIONS TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF THE NURSING PROFESSION

The role of technology in overcoming the challenges of the nursing profession in Indonesia is very significant. With the advent of the digital era, technologies such as telemedicine, electronic medical records, artificial intelligence (AI), and mobile health applications have revolutionized the way nurses provide healthcare services. This technology really helps nurses to manage patient data more efficiently, makes it possible to monitor patient conditions remotely, and even provide nursing services via telemedicine. However, challenges such as a lack of digital literacy among nurses must be addressed to maximize the potential of this technology.⁽¹⁰⁻¹⁴⁾

Education and training are key in increasing nurses' digital literacy. The government and educational institutions should collaborate harmoniously to provide relevant training on needed health technologies. This will really help nurses in adopting new technology and improving the quality of health services. Apart from that, nurses

can also be actively involved in developing and testing the latest health technology, which opens up wider and more varied career opportunities in the future.⁽¹⁵⁻¹⁷⁾

In the regulatory context, Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health is the legal basis for the use of health technology and strengthening the health information system. However, there are still aspects that need further attention, such as the integration of health technology into the national health information system and nurses' digital literacy.⁽¹⁸⁾

The nursing revolution brought about by technology in the current era not only creates challenges but also opportunities. Nurses who master advanced technology will be valuable assets in the future. Therefore, nursing education must adapt quickly to prepare nurses who are ready to face the digital era. Educational institutions must adapt their curricula to suit technological developments, and provide an ideal learning environment for aspiring nurses to develop their technological skills.⁽¹⁹⁾

Technology can also help overcome issues of well-being and appreciation for nurses. With technology, nurses can work more efficiently, reduce their workload, and improve their quality of life. This in turn can improve nurses' motivation and well-being, as well as the quality of care provided to patients.⁽²⁰⁾

However, the high cost of technology training and the resistance of some nurses who are reluctant to adapt to change are challenges in themselves. To overcome this, financial support and mentoring programs are needed that can help nurses develop their technology skills. Regular seminars and workshops are also important to increase nurses' awareness and interest in technological innovation.⁽²¹⁾

Thus, technology has an important role in overcoming the challenges of the nursing profession in Indonesia. With the right approach, technology can be the best partner in improving the quality of health services and preparing nurses for a brighter and more sustainable future.⁽¹¹⁾

GLOBAL COMPETITION IN THE NURSING PROFESSION

Since the passing of the latest Republic of Indonesia Health Law, it has been possible for foreign medical personnel to practice in Indonesia. Predictions about the entry of foreign nurses into Indonesia have become a hot topic. According to this law, only specialist and subspecialist medical personnel, as well as health personnel with certain competencies who have passed a competency evaluation can practice in Indonesia. This is expected to enrich the transfer of knowledge and technology in the health sector, as well as meet the need for specialist medical personnel which is still lacking in several regions in Indonesia.⁽²²⁾

It should be carefully noted that the presence of foreign nurses can have an impact on Indonesian nurses, both positively and negatively. Positively, Indonesian nurses can get the opportunity to learn from the practices and knowledge of foreign nurses, which can ultimately improve the standard of health services in Indonesia. Apart from that, healthy competition can encourage Indonesian nurses to improve their quality and competence in order to remain relevant and competitive in the job market. The Indonesian nursing professional organization has stated that the quality of Indonesian nurses is of international standard, which shows that Indonesian nurses have the ability and readiness to compete at the global level.⁽²³⁾

However, concerns have also emerged regarding the potential for replacing local workers with foreign workers, which could affect job opportunities for Indonesian nurses. Therefore, the government and related institutions should first ensure that this policy will not harm local nurses, by giving priority to Indonesian health workers. This policy must also be balanced with efforts to improve the quality of education and training for Indonesian nurses, so that they can compete not only in the local market but also in the global market, considering the predicted surplus of nurses in Indonesia in 2025.⁽²⁴⁾

Thus, the entry of foreign nurses into Indonesia must be managed wisely. It must be ensured that this policy brings benefits to the Indonesian health system and does not reduce opportunities for Indonesian nurses to develop and contribute to health services in their own country. A balance between recruiting foreign workers and developing local workers will be key to ensuring that Indonesia can utilize global expertise while maintaining and improving the quality of its health workforce.⁽²⁵⁾

The potential for foreign nurses to enter Indonesia is closely related to globalization policies and the needs of a dynamic health workforce market. Indonesia, with a surplus of nurses, has a great opportunity to export health workers to countries in need, as well as receive foreign nurses in the context of exchanging expertise and improving the quality of health services. The strategy to face this competition involves increasing the competency of Indonesian nurses through continuous education and training, adapting the nursing education curriculum to international standards, as well as increasing foreign language skills which are key in global communication. In addition, it is also important to strengthen regulations regarding the work practices of foreign nurses in Indonesia, ensuring they meet established standards, and facilitating their integration into the national health system. In this way, Indonesia can not only maintain high standards of health services but also contribute actively to the global health workforce market.⁽²⁵⁾

At the policy level, the Indonesian government has responded by emphasizing three migration cycles: pre-migration, migration, and post-migration, which includes the preparation, placement, and reintegration of Indonesian nurses working abroad. This reflects Indonesia's commitment to ensuring that its nurses are not only

professionally prepared but also legally and socially protected when working abroad. In the context of global competition, Indonesian nurses must be empowered to compete fairly and ethically, while ensuring that they remain an integral part of the Indonesian health system.⁽²⁶⁾

To support this strategy, collaboration between educational institutions, nursing associations, and government is essential. This includes the development of internationally recognized certification and accreditation programs, which will enable Indonesian nurses to work legally and professionally in various countries. Additionally, increasing access to educational resources, such as language proficiency simulations and prometric exams, will help Indonesian nurses meet the standards required by destination countries.⁽²⁷⁾

With a comprehensive and coordinated approach, Indonesia can harness the potential of its nurses to strengthen the national health system and contribute to global health workforce needs, while ensuring that foreign nurses who come to Indonesia can integrate and improve the quality of health services within the country. This will create a win-win environment for local and foreign nurses, as well as the patients they serve.

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is a strategic tool that can help in understanding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by nurses in Indonesia in the national and international context. The strengths of Indonesian nurses include high dedication, extensive medical knowledge, and good adaptability to various clinical situations. However, there are weaknesses such as limited access to resources and training, as well as a low ratio of nurses to the population requiring care. Opportunities available to Indonesian nurses include increasing demand for high-quality healthcare services and the potential to expand nursing practice into international markets. Meanwhile, the threats faced include intense global competition and public health risks such as pandemics which can place significant demands on resources and manpower.

In dealing with the results of a SWOT analysis as above, it is necessary to consider strategies that can maximize strengths, mitigate weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and overcome threats. Here are some steps we can take:

- 1) Optimizing strength:
 - a) Focus on developing nursing competencies, including advanced training and relevant resources.
 - b) Encourages collaboration between nurses and other healthcare teams to maximize knowledge and adaptation to clinical situations.
- 2) Overcoming weaknesses:
 - a) Efforts to increase access to resources, including facilities and training.
 - b) Encourage the government and related institutions to increase the ratio of nurses to the population.
- 3) Take advantage of opportunities:
 - a) Building networks with international health institutions to expand nursing practice.
 - b) Keep up with trends in demand for high-quality healthcare and strengthen evidence-based practices.
- 4) Dealing with threats:
 - a) Establish emergency response plans to address public health risks, including pandemics.
 - b) Participate in global initiatives to face competition and strengthen the position of Indonesian nurses.

CONCLUSION

Based on the perspective above, it can be concluded that the nursing profession in Indonesia must be able to face changes in the global era adaptively in order to minimize the impact of weaknesses and threats and increase potential strengths and opportunities to maintain and improve the existence of the profession in Indonesia in an era of competition.

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