

FORMING ASEAN COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE THROUGH INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) aims to develop a community among its people. However, the current setup of ASEAN reflects a community of nations instead. Guided by Deutsch's Transactionalism theory which sees sense of community as the continuous process of communication and interaction, the study examined intercultural communication competence and its relationship with building a sense of community. Intercultural communication competence refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and motivation that result to appropriate and effective behavior and communication with people from different cultures.

Respondents of the study were 71 ASEAN international graduate students enrolled in the first semester of AY 2017-2018 at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Results of the respondents' intercultural communication competence showed that they are knowledgeable about general ASEAN information, motivated to communicate and are respectful of people from other cultures but their communication skills provide a challenge during interaction due to language diversity. In relation to their sense of community, intercultural effectiveness and motivation to communicate revealed significant relationships while knowledge did not. The study recommends increased familiarization with all countries of the ASEAN regardless of the mainland and insular division. ASEAN may provide more opportunities and collaborations for intercultural interactions that will immerse people in different cultures and languages of the region and not just those of the most progressive member countries.

Keywords: Sense of community, language diversity, UPLB, Deutsch Transactionalism Theory

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