

Creating Healthy Work Environments VIRTUAL 2021

Advocating for the Workforce: A Focus on Filipino American Nurses' Pursuit of Graduate Education

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Purpose:

Filipino American nurses have been helping fill the nursing shortage gaps in the United States since the 1970's. Over the past fifty years, they have represented a remarkable share of the United States nursing workforce. However, despite their contributions to the nursing profession, they are not well represented in advanced practice, faculty, and executive leadership positions in both health care systems and in higher education. These leadership roles typically require further education and obtaining a graduate degree. Most Filipino American nurses have an undergraduate baccalaureate degree as their highest nursing degree making the next step in the career advancement ladder a much wider reach. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors affecting graduate degree pursuit for baccalaureate-prepared Filipino American nurses working in the United States.

Methods:

A snowball purposeful sampling strategy was utilized to recruit participants that met the inclusion criteria: self-identify as Filipino or of Filipino heritage, currently employed in the nursing field in the United States, born and raised in the United States or the Philippines, have a baccalaureate degree in nursing as the highest completed degree, have completed a baccalaureate degree in nursing in the United States or the Philippines.

Ricoeur's hermeneutical phenomenology was utilized as an interpretive approach in analyzing the qualitative data. The theoretical underpinnings of career construction theory served as the conceptual framework to make sense and meaning of the rich stories that the participants shared about their educational aspirations and professional lives.

Results:

This study provides an in-depth examination into intergenerational perspectives of 33 bachelor's-prepared Filipino American nurses working in 14 different states in the U.S. The push and pull of family responsibilities and the influence of culture were the main factors that affected the pursuit of a graduate degree. The participants' career construction was deeply influenced by the Filipino American cultural values they espoused: "*pakikipagkapwa*," the sharing of one's self with one's fellow being and "*utang na loob*," a deep commitment to debt reciprocity, towards family.

Conclusion:

The decision to pursue an advanced nursing degree depend upon the nurse's determination that the return on investment of a graduate degree outweigh the sum of all their responsibilities and obligations towards their nuclear family in the United States and the extended family and community they left behind in the Philippines. Findings from this research can provide better understanding of the cultural and geopolitical influences on the career construction of Filipino American nurses and help the Filipino American nursing community and professional nursing organizations, higher education, and healthcare systems in developing strategic plans to support the Filipino American nursing workforce overcome professional barriers and to facilitate robust pathways for those who intend to advance their educational goals and professional nursing careers.

Title:

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Keywords:

Filipino American nurses, Filipino nurses and Nursing workforce

Abstract Summary:

This study provides an examination into intergenerational perspectives of 33 Filipino American nurses from 14 states. The decision to pursue an advanced nursing degree depended upon the individual's determination that the return on investment of a graduate degree outweighing the sum of all their familial responsibilities and obligations.

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