

Title:

The Perspectives of African-Born Nurses on Their Educational Experiences in the United States

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Session Title:

International Student Nursing Education

Slot:

C 11: Sunday, 29 October 2017: 10:45 AM-11:30 AM

Scheduled Time:

10:45 AM

Keywords:

African-born nurses, Baccalaureate nursing education and RN-to-BSN program

References:

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Abstract Summary:

This study presents the views of African-born nurses on challenges to completing their baccalaureate program in nursing in the US, the success factors that helped them succeed and recommendations for improving the experience for future students.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
The learner will be able to identify challenges encountered by African-born nurses during their undergraduate nursing education in the United States	1. Personal challenges 2. Social and socio-economic challenges 3. Institutional challenges
The learner will be able to describe factors that enabled African nurses to succeed in the program	1. Curriculum-related factors 2. Instructor factors 3. Personal factors
The learners will be able to discuss the recommendations for improving the experiences of foreign born students in the baccalaureate programs in order to make it attainable for all, irrespective of their countries of origin.	General recommendations

Abstract Text:

Purpose: To examine the experiences of African-born nurses during their RN-to-BSN program in the United States.

Objectives: At the end of this presentation, the learner will be able to:

1. Identify challenges encountered by African-born nurses during their undergraduate nursing education in the United States
2. Describe factors that enabled them to succeed in the program
3. Discuss the recommendations for improving the experiences of foreign born students in the baccalaureate programs in order to make it attainable for all, irrespective of their countries of origin.

Keywords: Baccalaureate nursing education, African-born nurses, RN-to-BSN program

Background: The demographic trend in the US indicates that migration and globalization are powerful forces with significant implications for education and healthcare. The swift demographic changes call for strategies to increase and support racial and ethnic minorities in nursing (Beacham, Askew & Williams, 2009). The American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN] (2014) notes that diversity and equality of opportunities are core values of all educational systems and qualified applicants should represent the cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, gender, and social diversity of the broader population. The Institute of Medicine [IOM] (2010) recommends that the proportion of nurses with baccalaureate degree be increased from 50 to 80 percent by 2020.

African-born nurses constitute a significant proportion of the nursing workforce. However, the environment of four year institutions could be intimidating and often times overwhelming for foreign-born students particularly those from resource-poor Sub-Saharan African countries who also encounter English language difficulties. Due to unique challenges related to financial, language, and socio-cultural adjustments, the majority of African-born nurses go through every available nursing pathway before arriving at the Bachelors in Nursing (BSN) programs. Several studies have examined different aspects of minority nurse experiences such as the recruitment and retention of diverse nursing workforce (Condon et al., 2013; Olinger, 2011), educational and professional experiences of ethnic minority nurses particularly African Americans in the US (Baker, 2010; Shelton, 2012), and the experiences of African nursing students and nurses who practice in the United Kingdom's National Health Service [NHS] (De, 2010; Alexis, Vydellingum, & Robbin, 2007). However, research studies on the educational experiences of African-born nurses particularly in the RN-BSN programs in the United States are lacking. This study fills this gap.

Method: For this qualitative descriptive study, face-to-face and phone interviews were used to obtain the views of 25 African-born nurses on their educational experiences during their RN-to-BSN program. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the data

Findings: The key findings of this study reveal several personal, social and institutional factors that present as barriers that made their experiences extremely difficult; and factors that helped them complete the program successfully. Recommendations for improvement are also outlined.

Challenges encountered by participants include:

- Language and accents
- Discrimination and disrespect based on cultural background
- Financial difficulties
- Communication and academic writing
- Work-family-life balance
- Lack of social support and role models
- Difficulty adjusting to the digital age

Success factors include:

- Self-determination
- Supportive, flexible professors and advisers
- Targeted writing center and library support for scholarly writing support
- Class sizes and class schedule
- Online/hybrid classes
- Study groups

Recommendations for improving their experiences include:

- Inclusive policies - extending open hands and mind to all

- African-born mentors and support groups
- Leniency with foreign-born students in terms of expectations
- More hybrid courses and more available electives
- Resources to support minorities in writing and research

Conclusion/policy recommendations: Although there are differences across African countries in terms of socio-economic and educational background and attainment, African immigrants have higher levels of English proficiency overall compared to all foreign born in the US. This means that they are often ready to participate in the labor force upon arrival including being part of the nursing workforce. It is critical that higher institutions and schools of nursing ensure that there are appropriate resources, programs and policies in place to support students who come from minority and marginalized backgrounds. African-born nursing students are resilient, hardworking, respectful and dedicated. They will be effective members of our ailing nursing workforce that is in dire need of diversity.