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Creating-happening opportunities at work: A phenomenological study of nurse to teacher career changers

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Abstract

A trend is happening where in nurses are choosing to trade their white uniform to a more practically-sound profession which is teaching. This qualitative study utilized phenomenological approach that aimed to investigate the experience of career changers. Three themes emerged: (1) ordeals of the nursing profession; (2) opportunities of the teaching profession; and (3) optimism of transferring professions. This study provides a description of the lived experiences of career changers or as nurses turning into teachers. It is suggested that career changes are those who felt the increasing number of nurses is way off compared to the existing employment for them yet they see teaching as an avenue for them to gain employment and experiences coupled with a strong sense of positivity that the transition made would increase job opportunities. Concerned agencies must be extensive with in terms of scope, thus involving varied contingency plans for such scenarios. The study could be comprehensive by combining with quantitative research methodology, extensive literature reviews and broader reach. To fully fathom career changers' experiences, an intensive interview with their family, their friends, and community members is recommended. Further studies and a more in-depth investigation of the lived experiences of career changers is recommended.

Keywords: Shifters, profession, practicality, patient caring, teaching

1. Introduction

There was a significant boom of nurse in the Philippines. This was brought upon by the idea that nurses are more in demand abroad especially those coming from the Philippines (Williams, 2017) ^[11]. Who can blame them? Nursing position abroad pay a heftier amount compared to their own country.

In the past, researches on Filipino nurses focused on work experiences abroad (Montayre *et al.*, 2018) ^[8], comparison of job satisfaction in the Philippines and outside of the country (Legaspi, 2019) ^[6], nurse's spirituality and how they provide spiritual care (Labrague *et al.*, 2016) ^[4], turnover rate of nurses in the middle east (Aljohani & Alomari, 2018) ^[1], transition experience of neophyte nurses from resource-scarce facilities (Labrague *et al.*, 2019) ^[5], dietary composition of nurses abroad (Espinosa & Hauge-Evans, 2019) ^[3], and professional problems of preparing Filipino nurses to be globally competitive (Ortiga, 2014) ^[9].

Recently, a new trend is happening where in nurses are choosing to trade their white uniform to a more practically-sound profession which is teaching.

With all the information given, it bounces back to the question, what was their initial reaction after realizing their current situation? Do they have contingency plan for such situation? Are they fully aware of the extent of their actions? Have they fully grasped the magnitude of their situation?

The questions presented motivated the researcher to delve again on the grounds of career changers during the pandemic where nurses are trying their luck as teachers closely again into the experiences of such individuals with respect to their knowledge of the situation by assessing their perceptions and grasp of the possible potential of their second careers or work, hence the conduct of this study.

2. Objectives

With its main objective of reexploring the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges of nurses shifting to the teaching profession, this study would like to answer the following questions;

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- a. What are experiences of the participants;
- b. What is their perception about changing careers; and
- c. What are their aspirations.

3. Methodology

a. Research Design

This qualitative study utilized phenomenological approach that aimed to investigate the experience of career changers - how it is be a neophyte for a new career track and a provider at the same time. A qualitative research study aimed to examine a phenomenon that impact on the lived reality of individuals or groups in a particular cultural or social context (Mills & Birks, 2014). A qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem (Creswell, 1998). The researcher builds a complex and holistic picture, analyze words, report detailed views of informants, and conduct the study in a natural setting. Phenomenology aimed to accurately describe the phenomenon without a pre-existing knowledge to a framework, but remaining truth to the facts (Groenewald, 2004). More so, using a qualitative research, the researcher would able to connect with their participants and to see the world from their viewpoints (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher found this method most suitable to the inquiry in order to provide a comprehensive analysis on the lived experiences of career changers.

b. Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study were identified using purposive sampling from the previous study. Using purposive sampling, the researcher can choose their participants that will be fit for the study (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience (Tongco, 2007). Eight (8) individuals participated in the study. Participants met the description of a career changer: 1) a person who is a teacher but was a nurse; 2) a resident of Samar Province; and 3) willing to participate in the study.

c. Data Collection

In gathering the appropriate data for the study, semi structured interview was used. Semi-structured interview is a type of interview that has become the most familiar strategy in collecting qualitative data (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that merges a predetermined set of open questions with the privilege for the researchers to explore particular responses further; used to understand how interventions work and how they could be enhanced. It also allows to asked follow-up question for clarification. The content of the interview guide was validated by two professionals who were expert in the field of Psychology. The researcher also provided an agreement that included obtaining informed consent, ensured confidentiality, time and place commitments, permission to record, delineating the ethical principles of research. As to data storing methods, the researcher used note taking and dialogic form interview to each deeper response of the respondents.

d. Data Analysis

The following steps represent Colaizzi process for phenomenological data analysis (Speziale, Streubert, &

Carpenter, 2010). (1) Each transcript should be read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content. (2) For each transcript, significant statements that pertain to the phenomenon under study should be extracted. These statements must be recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and line numbers. (3) Meaning should be formulated from these significant statements. (4) The formulated meanings should be sorted in categories, cluster of themes, and subthemes. (5) The findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study. (6) The fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described. (7) Finally, validation of the findings should be sought from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

e. Research Reflexivity

In the study, the researcher's approach is different in terms of other researchers' perspectives. As a person who knows the struggles of career changers and their aspiration, the researcher understands his stand that might lead to a different development and an equally valid understanding of the particular situation under study.

The study has a preconception with a tone of positivity of eventually creating meaning during the entire process. The position and the background of the researcher will affect the choices made in the investigation, from an angle, with the methods that best judged the sole purpose of the study, framing, coming up with themes and the overall conclusion of it. With the intent of sharing the results to the participants of the study. Furthermore, preconception is not equated in any form of bias unless the researcher fails to mention them (Malterud, 2012) ^[7].

f. Ethical Considerations

The study focused on the lived experiences of career changers of nurses transitioning as teachers, their self-regard and aspirations. Therefore, the ethical considerations cantered around the situations depicted solely from participants' experiences, interactions and actions observed. The issues of theoretical, theological, situational, critical and covenantal situational approach to research ethics were irrelevant to the overall study (Tisdale, 2004). If literal transcriptions and summary were used in the narratives.

4. Results and Discussion

Significant information on the current experience of career changers were generated on the premise of nurse to teacher transition. Current knowledge on employment situation of nurses, potential of exploring other lines of work and aspiration for career expansion were noted. The generated information can help in establishing not only springboard for subsequent research but also a platform for the career changers to be heard and show the cacophony of their experiences. From the data analyses, three themes emerged: (1) ordeals of the nursing profession; (2) opportunities of the teaching profession; and (3) optimism of transferring professions. The three themes that emerged suggested that career changes are those who felt the increasing number of nurses is way off compared to the existing employment for them yet they see teaching as an avenue for them to gain employment and experiences coupled with a strong sense of positivity that the transition made would increase job opportunities.

a. Ordeals of the Nursing Profession

The steady increase of demands for competent nurses does not suffice the number of nursing graduates produced. The promise of greener pastures abroad is halted with experienced nurses taking the spotlight leaving the scraps for neophyte nurses. It is not also a helpful situation where nurses are not being offered regular and paying positions in private and public hospitals. Some admitted that they even pay hospitals just to volunteer or was only given a nurse trainee profession.

The lack of opportunities for Filipino nurses are seen all throughout the country where contractual type of employment is still rampant (Boquet, 2017) ^[2]. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

1. After passing the board, the bigger question is landing a job, sometimes we volunteer to provide our services to hospitals but we are made to pay for it.
2. Hospitals are looking into volunteer nurses as a way of managing their crowded wards.
3. I remember paying thousands of pesos just to finish my degree and have my review, but upon landing a job, if you are lucky enough, we are only paid a fraction of what my parents paid for college.
4. I was happy receiving my license as a nurse, but a feeling of dread stops me at my tracks, there is not enough work opportunities especially for newly-graduate nurses.
5. I wish I could turn back time and choose my profession, I cannot even enjoy a holiday or the weekends for that matter.

b. Opportunities of the Teaching Profession

A new trend of changing professions happened in the nursing community. Most of them transferred to the teaching profession for a more practical and visible reason, good employment opportunities. All of the participants were smitten to the nature of the teaching profession. Some claimed that they were able to express themselves more and felt right at home to their second profession.

There is a constant increase of second coursers among nurses. This trend became a go-to trajectory for nurses feeling left out in their profession (Ortiga, 2014) ^[9]. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

1. It is in no way to demean the teaching profession, but this course is more practically productive than that of my previous profession.
2. I can get more in this profession, aside from a steady income, a more direct path of professional development.
3. I can still serve more people with this profession and engage with other activities aside from the usual routine in the hospital.
4. The teaching profession allowed me to work on my other passion which is research, coincidentally an integral part of teaching.

c. Optimism of Transferring Professions

There is always a time in life that change is inevitable. A change in profession is not the end but just a beginning for something more meaningful. Various reasons may be attached to it, but the bottom-line is, it is for the betterment of one's self. All of the participants felt a strong sense of positivity that somehow, someday, all will make sense and will be worthwhile.

Transferring professions is a normal phenomenon brought about by changing needs and personal perspectives (Teichler *et al.*, 2013) ^[10]. It is illustrated in the following participants' statements:

1. It will all make sense someday, I am at a place right now where my profession is not taking away my personal life.
2. I feel that teaching is just for me, I have never felt scared coming to work and that is more than enough for me.
3. I am happy to just got to work, teaching a regular paying job which eases my fear of unemployment.
4. Teaching is less stressful for me, as I can make things in advance and change as I go.
5. I feel more secured in the teaching profession, I still get to touch lives and be a part of their well-being.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Three themes emerged: (1) ordeals of the nursing profession; (2) opportunities of the teaching profession; and (3) optimism of transferring professions.

This study provides a description of the lived experiences of career changers or as nurses turning into teachers. It is suggested that career changes are those who felt the increasing number of nurses is way off compared to the existing employment for them yet they see teaching as an avenue for them to gain employment and experiences coupled with a strong sense of positivity that the transition made would increase job opportunities.

Concerned agencies must be extensive with in terms of scope, thus involving varied contingency plans for such scenarios. The study could be comprehensive by combining with quantitative research methodology, extensive literature reviews and broader reach. To fully fathom career changers' experiences, an intensive interview with their family, their friends, and community members is recommended. Further studies and a more in-depth investigation of the lived experiences of career changers is recommended.

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