I Want to be a Nurse but...When Career and Culture Collide: An Ethnonursing Study Discovering and Describing the Factors, Experiences, and Motivation to Become a Nurse in Ecuador Within Cultural Context

Research Questions

1. What are the influencing factors to become a nurse in Ecuador? 2. What are the motivating factors that influence the decision to become a nurse? What are the experiences that influence choice of nursing as a career?

Domain of Inquiry

The domain of inquiry for this ethnonursing study is the motivation to become a nurse in Ecuador.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this qualitative ethnonursing study was to discover and understand the motivation, experiences, and influencing factors to become a nurse in Ecuador. The phenomena of interest are the nurses and student nurses and how they chose to become nurses in context of their own culture. Discovering these motivations will enable nurse educators to recruit and retain nurses and nursing students.

Of national and international significance, the global nursing shortage concerning worldwide (World Health Organization. 2006). Internationally, priorities have been identified by WHO in the areas of recruitment and retention of nurses. The statistics are very worrisome for the nursing profession as 30%-60% of new nursing graduates report an intention to leave the profession after only one year in practice or less (Aiken at al., 2001). This statistic is even more troubling as the nursing shortage is projected to rise over the next decades. While this shortage has been well documented in North America, developing countries are even more effected by this crisis because of the lack of nurses in general.

The significance of this study is to discover and understand the motivation, experiences, and influencing factors to become a nurse in Ecuador so that these findings may be disseminated in Ecuador and in other countries who are seeking to understand why student chose nursing as a career choice and how to retain them in the profession. The current literature regarding nursing as a career choice or any factors related to becoming nurse in Ecuador have not been studied. An ethnonursing study looked at the role
of the nurse in rural Ecuador (Moss, 2010) but not at the factors related to becoming a nurse. Moss (2010) reports that within the rural Ecuadorian culture becoming a nurse is discouraged as nurses are seen to be uncaring, uneducated, and unprofessional. This finding is in stark contrast to nursing being regarded as a noble and well-regarded career path in North America and in other areas of the world (Gregg & Magilvy 2001, Mackintosh, 2006).

Research Design and Procedures

A qualitative ethnonursing method developed by Leininger was utilized to guide this study.

Instrument

The semi-structured interview guide was used to guide the inquiry to gain information and collect data from the informants regarding their motivation, experiences, and influencing factors to become a nurse in Ecuador.

Sample Selection and Size

Twenty three informants were interviewed by the researcher to identify categories, patterns, and themes related to the phenomena of interest until saturation is reached. The data was collected from interviews, field notes, and observation.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using the Four Phases of Ethnonursing Qualitative Data Analysis. Collected data was analyzed to uncover categories, patterns, and themes regarding the motivation to become a nurse and the findings disseminated for educational recruitment and retention.

Implications

The proposed research study will benefit the nursing education programs in Ecuador as they work to increase the enrollment and retention of nursing students in their baccalaureate programs. The results potentially could be generalized to nursing schools in North America but specifically a replication study at the University of South Carolina Upstate could potentially allow greater depth of understanding of the motivations of our current and future students.