

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Concept of Nursing in the Philippines from the Perspective of Nurses in Region I

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Abstract

This research endeavored to explore the concept of nursing in the Philippines from the perspectives of Ilocano nurses to develop a nursing description based on the Filipino nurses' perceptions of nursing practice that will contribute to the richness of the concept of nursing in the Philippines.

The participants of the study included 16 practicing nurses in Region I (Ilocos Region) who were identified through purposive sampling based on the inclusion criteria. Using phenomenology research design, the researcher utilized in-depth semi-structured individual interviews to gather the data from 2015-2016. Collaizi's method was used in data analysis. Ethical clearance was granted by the SLU-REC with certification number 2014-013.

The findings of the study revealed four (4) major themes, which are: 1) *Mangtaraken* or Caring, 2) *Mangpasantak* or Nurturing, 3) *Mangipateg* or Valuing, and 4) *Mangsalimetmet* or Preserving. Ilocano nurses explicate the concept of nursing in the Philippines as *mangtaraken*, which is described as the art, science, and discipline of caring; *mangpasantak*, which is to nurture an individual; *mangipateg*, which pertains to valuing the individual, family, and community; and *mangsalimetmet*, which refers to the preservation of the profession, culture, and knowledge generation. The findings revealed that the meaning of nursing is culture-based which is deeply rooted in their traits as Ilocanos.

Keywords: *Concept of nursing, perspective of nurses, Ilocano nurses, Region I, Ilocos Region*

Introduction

The question "What is nursing and what is the function of the nurse?" is fundamental to anyone choosing to pursue the study and practice of nursing (Henderson 1995, as cited by Gordon et. al., 2010). The description of the concept of nursing varies. The question "What is nursing and what is the function of the nurse?" is fundamental to anyone choosing to pursue the study and practice of nursing (Henderson 1995, as cited by Gordon et. al., 2010). However, as this question appears to be simple, it has exercised the argumentative minds of many people throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Roper, 1994). The description of the concept of nursing varies from practicing nurses. The word concept as defined by Kaplan (1964, as cited by Walker & Avant, 2011, p. 59) pertains to the "mental image of a phenomenon, an idea, or a construct in the mind about a thing or an action." Concepts, as expressed by means of language, allow for the classification of human experience in a meaningful way. It

helps identify how experiences are similar or equivalent by categorizing all the things that are alike (Walker & Avant, 1995).

In her time, Henderson began to question the concept of nursing as ancillary to medicine (Henderson, 1991, as cited by Gordon et. al., 2010), which might be the reason for her to develop an interest in defining nursing. Nursing has been seen as subservient to medicine, and nurses were delayed in identifying and organizing professional knowledge (McEwen & Wills, 2007). Henderson (1991, as cited by Gordon et. al., 2010) stressed that nursing varies per country. Attempts to define the "nature of nursing" have been unsuccessful; thus, it remains an unanswered question.

In the Asian region, nursing is wide-ranging. Hisama (2000; 2001, as cited by Pang et al, 2004) and Shin (2001, as cited by Pang et al, 2004) observed some distinctive features of nursing theory

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development from an Asian perspective. Their observation was based on a survey, which revealed that Chinese nurses are more virtue-based, American nurses are more principle-based, and Japanese nurses are more care-based. In Turkey, the word 'nursing' is used to define concepts related to female roles like a sister, foster mother, and wet nurse. In addition, nurses are considered to be people who give injections and assistants who are bound to doctors (Karaback, et al, 2012).

In the Philippines, Sotejo and Jackson (1964) posited that there is a growing confusion on the true meaning of nursing. They believe that the question "What is nursing?" should be asked until nurses themselves can furnish a satisfactory answer (Sotejo and Jackson, 1964).

The lack of description on the concept of nursing in the Philippines or any definition of nursing that can be found in the Philippine literature perhaps is the reason why Filipino nurses embrace the idea of adopting definitions of nursing from Western literature, such as the American Nurses' Association and Henderson's work. These adopted nursing definitions are being taught to nursing students in nursing schools and is now widely recognized and accepted by professional nurses throughout the country.

There is a little attempt by Filipino nurses to develop a description of nursing based on the perspective of practicing nurses in the Philippines. With the lack of description of the concept of nursing in the Philippines, Filipino nurses need to describe nursing as it is practiced in the country. It will be a good start to look into how Ilocano nurses give meaning to the concept of nursing, considering their characteristics and traits and the richness of their culture and tradition that might have influenced their perspective. Exploring the perspectives or the meaning of nursing experiences from practicing nurses, particularly in the Ilocos Region, will bring wealth in the Philippine nursing literature. This action can provide Filipino nurses with the ability to recognize nursing as a unique and distinct profession practiced in the Philippines.

Philosophical Underpinning

The epistemological position of the researcher on interpretivism (Bryman, 1988; Holloway and Wheeler, 2010; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Willis, 2007, as cited by Ormston, et al, 2013) and constructionism (Blaikie, 2007; Crotty, 1998, as cited by Ormston, et al, 2013) accepts that knowledge is produced by exploring and understanding the social world of the people being studied, focusing on their meanings and interpretations. The researcher also constructed meanings and interpretations based on the participants; aimed to be transparent about his assumptions; and attempted to adopt a neutral position, if not

embrace subjectivity and become more personally engaged in the research. Although he believed that social reality cannot be captured or portrayed 'accurately' because there are different perceptions and understandings, the researcher aimed to 'represent' participants' meanings as faithfully as possible (Ormston, et al, 2013).

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to explore the concept of nursing in the Philippines from the perspective of practicing nurses in the Ilocos Region.

Methodology

Research Approach:

This study employed the interpretive phenomenology research method, which is a "special kind of phenomenological interpretation, designed to unveil otherwise concealed meanings in the phenomena" (Spiegelberg, 1975 as cited by Streubert & Carpenter, 2011, p. 81) of the concept of nursing from practicing nurses in the Ilocos Region, and to arrive at a description of their concept based on common understanding. To capture a wider concept of nursing in Region 1, 16 participants have been selected based on the following inclusion criteria: 1) were at least twenty-five (25) years old and employed as hospital nurses, rural health nurses, and nurse educators in nursing schools for at least three (3) years; 2) with varying positions/designations held and educational attainment; 3) 'Information-rich' nurses or practicing nurses who have a clear idea on the concept of nursing in the region and who can provide the greatest insight into the research question; and 4) came from the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and Pangasinan. Purposive sampling has been utilized to identify the participants.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher, as the data gathering instrument (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011), personally gathered the data by conducting semi-structured individual interviews with the participants who were qualified based on the criteria. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved.

Data Analysis

Colaizzi's phenomenological method was used as an approach to data analysis. First, the researcher listened to participants' verbal descriptions, then, read and re-read the verbatim transcriptions to familiarize himself with the data and began immersing them in the phenomenon being investigated (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). Second, significant statements that pertain directly to the phenomenon identified by the researcher were extracted. From

these, stories and patterns of experiences were identified; and, outcomes were predicted (Morse & Field, 1995). For the third step, meanings were formulated from the significant statements. The researcher has to immerse himself in the statements to extract meanings. In the fourth step, the formulated meanings were categorized into clusters of themes that were common to all participants. Then, referring these clusters to the original transcriptions for validation and confirming consistency between the investigator's emerging conclusions with the participants' original stories. For the fifth step, the findings were integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher employed a self-imposed discipline and structure to bridge the gaps between data collection, intuition, and description of concepts. The findings were validated by returning it to some participants and asking them how it compared with their experiences. Finally, any changes offered by the participants were incorporated into the final description of the essence of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978, as cited by Wojnar & Swanson, 2007).

Establishing Trustworthiness

In establishing the trustworthiness of the data, confidentiality, and maintaining the research's rigor included ascertaining authenticity, transparency, conformability, and transferability. Authenticity refers to confidence in the validity of the results. Trustworthiness is characterized as demonstrating that the results are true and can be replicated. Confirmability denotes a degree of neutrality or to what extent the findings of a study are influenced by the respondents and not by the researcher's prejudice, motives, or desire of transferability. (Denzin and Guba, 2013). To ensure the integrity of the study, participant verification was warranted. Member testing involved returning the identified findings to the members to see whether they accept the results (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010; Streubert & Carpen, 2011). Member checking was utilized to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the participants' words or actions. This added credibility to the research study.

Participants were invited to review a preliminary summary of findings to confirm whether the interpretations were fair representations of their perspectives. To improve confirmability of the results, a self-critical approach was used to preserve reflexivity during data collection and interpretation. The researcher's observations, interactions, and memories from personal views may affect data perception and analysis. To prevent this, the researcher kept a list of research operations such as reflexive journals, recordings, and review procedures. Reflexive journal was used to record the researcher's perceptions, behaviors, emotions and disagreements prior to communicating it with the participants and current papers. Audit trail was used to boost research reliability (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was granted by the SLU-REC with certification number 2014-013. The study participants were covered by receiving written informed consent. The informed consent contained the objective of the research project, expectations on the study participants, advantages, opportunities, benefits, risks, nature of the questions to be answered, the duration of the interview, and privacy and confidentiality. Involvement was purely voluntary and did not represent any appreciable risks to physical or psychological safety. In maintaining anonymity and confidentiality throughout the transcript and entire paper, the researcher utilized pseudonyms and for the participants' names and demographical data.

The basic ethical principles such as autonomy, equality, and fairness were followed in the conduct of the study. The interviewer must ensure subjects are not affected when posing concerns during interviews that do not include any classified information. Participants were sent details in advance that allowed them to know what sort of questions were posed during the interview. All participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point in the research, for whatever reason/s, without questions asked.

Findings and Discussion

The themes that emerged from the data are presented in the conceptual map (Fig. 1). With a rich historical background and culture, nurses in the Ilocos Region gave meaning to the concept of nursing in the Philippines from their perspectives on different aspects. The four (4) main themes which are '*Mangtaraken*', '*Mangpasantak*', '*Mangipateg*', and '*Mangsalimetmet*' (see Fig. 1.) described the concept of nursing in the Philippines from their perspectives. The nurses' meanings on the concept of nursing are linked to their characteristics, traits, values, and culture as Ilocanos. Furthermore, the bullets in the figure show the different categories that led to the themes.

A. *Mangtaraken* (Caring)

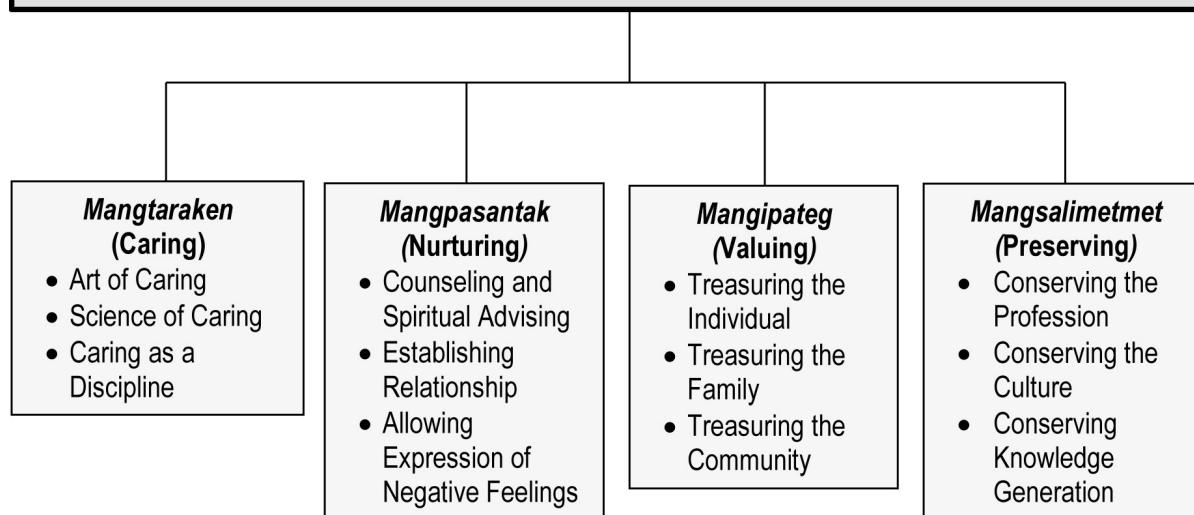
The Ilocano word '*Mangtaraken*' refers to the act of caring for the needs of an individual. It describes the quality of caring (the art of caring), the basis for providing care (the science of caring), and the foundation of caring (caring as a discipline).

Art of Caring

The art of caring refers to the unconditional and compassionate rendering of caring services to the individuals.

P3 said it with her own words, "*Nursing is the art of caring.*" In addition, P12 viewed it as a holistic approach by stating, "*Nursing is a holistic approach which caters to the well-being of an*

Fig. 1: The Concept of Nursing in the Philippines from the Perspective of Nurses in Region I



individual, families, and the community.”

For Ilocano nurses, holistic care is achieved when the nurse renders care to address all the needs of the patient. In holistic nursing, all aspects of patients and their effects on the treatment process are considered and the patients' thoughts, emotions, cultures, opinions, and attitudes are factored in as contributing to recovery, happiness, and satisfaction (Selimen & Andsoy, 2011, as cited by Zamanzadeh et al, 2015).

Science of Caring

Science of caring is the act of caring for a human being utilizing scientific knowledge. Ilocano nurses viewed that looking after the physiological needs of an individual entails beyond complex tasks of caring. It should be evidence-based. Nurses in the Ilocos Region believe that nursing is a science grounded on theories, which focus on rendering service to those in need.

P2 expressed, “For me, nursing is both science and art. Gamin science kasi ub-ubraen tayo ket base from science, theories, studies and researches. (It is considered science because what we do is based on science, theories, studies, and research.) P11 also stated, “Nursing means providing... evidence-based care to client and the significant others (SO) in various settings.”

Nurses in the Ilocos Region know that science of caring is grounded on evidence. Sigma Theta Tau (n.d. as cited by McEwen & Wills, 2007) defined evidence-based nursing as an “integration of the best evidence available, nursing expertise, and the values and preferences of the individuals, families, and communities who are served.” Although there are criticisms and concerns on the concept of evidence-based practice in nursing (McEwen & Wills, 2007), many view it still somewhat

sophisticated because many nursing practices are based on experiences, traditions, intuitions, common sense, and untested theories (Tod et al., 2004 as cited by McEwen & Wills, 2007),

Caring as A Discipline

The foundation of caring is rooted in nursing as a discipline and a profession. Since they consider nursing as a science and an art, Ilocano nurses also view nursing as a professional and academic discipline. According to P13:

“Nursing as a noun is referred to a professional or academic discipline wherein the main thrust of which is to provide care. Nursing is an academic discipline, so we have to emphasize caring that would define nursing, it would actually mean a highly specialized care that needs professional training in order to provide care that is opt to the patient's needs or congruent to the patient's needs.”

P12 also emphasized that “Nursing is not just a job, it is a profession with its own mission where services are offered, not sold.”

Until recently, nursing was viewed as an occupation rather than a profession. Nursing has had difficulty deeming as a profession because the services provided by nurses are being perceived as an extension of those offered by wives and mothers. However, nursing has a social mandate to provide health care for clients at different points in the health-illness continuum. There is a growing knowledge-base, authority over education, altruistic service, a code of ethics, and registration requirements for practice (Logan et al., 2004; Rutty, 1998; Schwirian, 1998; Smith 2000, as cited by McEwen & Wills, 2007). Thus, this sets nurses apart from what mothers and wives can offer.

Known as a caring community, Ilocano nurses were honed to be caring by nature. Their love and compassion emanate on their rendered quality care. For this reason, their dedication to service becomes more evident because of their long duration of nursing practice in Ilocandia despite the challenges faced and glamor of overseas employment.

Filipino nurses are acknowledged by the international community for being hardworking, compassionate, and dedicated professional workers. Like other Filipino nurses, Ilocano nurses are very passionate about their work. Although caregiving can be rendered by anyone, the caring role provided by nurses is tender, compassionate, and evidence-based.

In addition, Ilocanos value the importance of education. Hence, Ilocano nurses are driven with the desire to improve nursing as an academic discipline. Nowadays, many of them pursue advanced studies and involve themselves in seminars, workshops, and training. Engaging in these activities will broaden their knowledge of nursing theories and also create more knowledge that can be utilized to improve the nursing practice.

Caring was described as being part of an intricate interplay in the care context, which has impacted all the described conceptions of caring. Greater emphasis on the care context is warranted as this could mitigate the possibility that essential care is left unaddressed, thus, contributing to a better quality of care and safer patient care (Andersson, Willman, Sjostrom-Strand & Borglin, 2015).

B. Mangpasantak (Nurturing)

Ilocano nurses refer to nurturing as an act of fostering and supporting the individual, making him feel important and fulfilled.

Counseling and Spiritual Advising

Ilocano nurses render counseling and spiritual advising through active listening and giving support to the emotional and spiritual needs of an individual. These activities of the nurse help the patient achieve internal peace. For them, serving their profession is to serve other souls. P5 reflected:

"Kasla spiritual adviser... Kasi you cannot serve if you cannot serve other souls. Iti part pay ti role ti nurse ket to serve the soul pay kasi parte na amin ti healing dayta... haan lang nga physical. (Like a spiritual adviser... because you cannot serve if you cannot serve other souls. The role of the nurse includes serving the soul because that is part of healing, not only on physical.)"

However, when a patient expresses belief towards his or her own religious practices, Ilocano nurses listen and respect it. P4 expressed, *"No maminsan met ngamin ket haan tayo maikkat*

dagita nga pammati. Awan met dakes na no mamati tayo. Isu nga no isu ti kayat ti pasyente, respetaren tayo met latta." (Sometimes, we cannot eradicate those beliefs. There is nothing wrong in believing it. If that is what the patient wants, we have to respect it.)

This role of nurses that look into the spiritual needs of clients is considered as one of the most important roles that a nurse can play. According to P13:

"Actually, to tell you, I think that is one of the most important and I guess the most enjoyable activity that nurses do because most of the time, physical intervention is not really enough to provide care to our patient but just merely by listening to what the patient has to say would be a better type of care than the physical one because it touches the soul of an individual. You come to accept the individual who he/she is despite the differences between the two."

Counseling is the process of helping a client recognize and cope with stressful psychologic or social problems, develop improved interpersonal relationships, and promote personal growth. It involves providing emotional, intellectual, and psychological support. The nurse counsels primarily healthy individuals with normal adjustment difficulties and focuses on helping the person develop new attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, recognize the choices and develop a sense of control (Kozier et al., 2004).

Establishing Relationship

Establishing a relationship refers to the nurses' act of building a good and healthy rapport with the patient. Ilocano nurses know how to establish rapport and they need to establish rapport with their client. P13 stated:

"I guess the main component to facilitate nursing activities would be the nurse-patient interaction. Because in the nurse-patient interaction, the nurse has the opportunity to gain knowledge from the patient which would actually be the basis of the care he/she provides to the patient."

Allowing Expression of Negative Feelings

Ilocano nurses allows patient to express negative feelings to them so that patients can let go of their emotions and feel relieve afterward. Yet, as someone who listens, nurses are often blamed for mistakes, and sometimes play the role of being a shock absorber of people's negative feelings in the workplace. P7 revealed, *"Iyong gumagawa ka na, pero hindi pa rin nila naappreciate iyong trabaho mo. Kasi merong mga pasyente na like for those na makukulit na pasyente."* (You are doing your job but still they do not appreciate you. Because there are patients who are hard to get along with.)

Also, there are instances when a nurse is blamed for the lack of supply in the hospital, the late arrival of the physician, the unavailability of medicines in the pharmacy, the long process of finalizing hospital bills, and things that the patients suffer like drug reactions and others. Almost everything that happens around the health institution is being blamed to nurses when in fact it should be the responsibility of the hospital managers and administrators. P9 claimed:

"...ang alam mo ginagawa mo na ang lahat but then meron ka palang kasalanan or kulang... [since] ikaw iyong... direct na nagbibigay ng service sa pasyente, ikaw 'yong pinakamalapit na mablame kung ano man iyong kapalpak doon sa mga services na dapat na narereceive ng pasyente." (All you thought is that you are doing your best but for them you failed. Since you are the direct provider of care, you are the one being blamed for the poor services that patients receive.)

When working, the healthcare team functions like a well-oiled machine; however, when something goes wrong, the machine breaks down and the blame game begins. For an unknown reason, nurses usually get blamed for the majority of mistakes in healthcare, even when we are put in an unwinnable position (Felts, 2013).

Florence Nightingale was the first to publicly decry the sorry reputation of nurses — as in the quote — but nurses remain vastly underappreciated for the work they do (Smith, 2010). Nurses, who do the bulk of the patient care, are often left on the sidelines, and the credit for their work goes to the doctor. A fundamental lack of appreciation for the work of nurses contributes to the limited perception we have of these medical professionals (Wytiacz, 2013). Some studies found out that nurses do not feel they have enough authority and cannot work effectively due to apathetic superiors and a lack of support staff (Fischer, 2014) which could be attributed to the idea that nurses are underappreciated member of the health care team.

Like any other nurse, Ilocano nurses serve as counselors and spiritual advisers to patients with emotional and spiritual needs. This act of spiritual nurturing can help patients achieve peace of mind, spiritual growth, self-fulfillment, and trust in nurses. As predominantly Catholic Christians, Ilocanos believe in God who is all-knowing and all-powerful. However, some Ilocanos still have a strong belief toward superstitions. This is manifested as practicing *tako* and *santigwar* [the egg yolk is mixed in water and then chanted with an *orasyon* (spell)], where the healer can determine the cause of any discomfort (Relon, 2018) and *buyon* or divination. Nurses in the region still give respect to the beliefs of their clients even though these practices have no scientific basis.

Historically, Ilocanos are known to have established an affiliation with other people. Ilocanos have forged a relationship with

traders like the Chinese. The presence of different festivals in the Ilocos Region also shows that they have a good relationship with other people manifested by hospitality when they are visited during these activities.

Although nurses experience being a shock absorber of negative emotions from clients, their patience and endurance still manifest despite these encounters. The same traits can be seen in the daily lives of Ilocanos. Although misfortunes come into their way like typhoons destroying their crops, Ilocanos are resilient in moving on from these experiences. Since Ilocanos are known to endure difficult times, Ilocano nurses have adopted these traits. Ilocano nurses withstand these things because they believe that if they give up, no one will render care to their patients.

C. Mangipateg (Valuing)

Mangipateg or valuing pertains to the act of the nurse to cherish and treasure the value of a person. Ilocano nurses make efforts to help patients. This is a manifestation that they value the members of their family, loved ones, and the whole community.

Treasuring the Individual

Ilocanos are known as loving people because they value their loved ones. From their family members, relatives, friends, and neighbors, Ilocanos nurses have the trait to respect and value every individual.

To show that they value the individual, P13 shared:

"I firmly believe that nursing is actually the provision of compassionate, selfless caring and tireless service to all humanity. So, when we say selfless caring, we actually put the interest of others above our own personal interest. And when we say tireless service, that would mean whatever situation the nurses are called for, nurses are actually extend their helping hands to others regardless of the situation there is."

Also, as a way of valuing, the Ilocano nurses also assist the individual to become healthy and self-actualized. P12 voiced, *"To assist willing clients in becoming self-actualized individuals. Nursing wants everyone to be the best they can be in every aspect."* P10 added, *"Nursing assists an individual to be physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy for him or her to become a productive member of the family and the community"*.

Health promotion is motivated by the desire to increase a person's well-being and health potential (Pender, Murdaugh & Parsons, 2002, as cited by Taylor, Lillis & LeMone, 2005). Nurses promote health by maximizing the patient's strengths. Identifying and analyzing the patient's strengths are a component of preventing

illness, restoring health, and facilitating coping with disability or death (Taylor, Lillis & LeMone, 2005).

Treasuring the Family

Valuing the family is one of the traits seen among nurses in the Ilocos Region wherein they cherish and treasure the value of family and help them achieve optimum health. P3 stated:

"To render care [to the family] since family is the basic unit of the community, to treat them as one and to provide din ng care sa patients and impart knowledge of what is their needs regarding health. From what to know regarding their health, practices, or beliefs, culture regarding their health status."

Treasuring the Community

The goal of nursing in the local community for Ilocano nurses is to render nursing care and services indiscriminately. Regardless of the individual's age, gender, and status, the nurse is willing to perform her duties and responsibilities for the person. P13 said:

"When we say local community, the community wherein families that would interact with each other. And we know for a fact that in a local community, equality is never attained where there is the poor, there is the rich... disparity. So, I guess the goal of nursing to the local community is to provide indiscriminate care where I think everyone is able to adjust a proper care despite economic status, race, gender or etc."

When the nurse addresses the needs of the international community, there will be attainment of universal health care. P10 identified:

"The goal of nursing in the global community is to be an instrument in the attainment of universal health care. This means that people from around the world will have equal access for health care regardless of their race, culture, nationality or socio-economic status. Despite the diversities in the health care system, a nurse will always be capable of adapting and competently render nursing care to whatever part of the world she may be called for to serve."

In November 2013, the Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI), announced the creation of the Global Advisory Panel on the Future of Nursing (GAPFON) to establish a voice and vision for the future of nursing and midwifery that will advance global health. As healthcare demands predicate the need for enhanced and/or new models of global health, nurses, midwives, and our healthcare colleagues from all professions need to bring a clear voice and vision for the future of global health (Klopper & Hill, 2015).

This is why Ilocano nurses strive to empower the community. The nurse focuses on enabling both the leaders and the residents to achieve an empowered community. P6 acknowledged, *"In the local community, to empower citizens, especially the leaders of the community, to enable them to perform their job well and to promote health into the community."* P12 also emphasized, *"To empower local communities. Nursing wants every local community to be able to analyze their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and use this analysis for the betterment of all."*

Ilocano nurses value individuals, families, and communities. As part of valuing individuals, it is expected that Ilocano nurses provide voluntary services, which means that nursing care is rendered to all individuals regardless of their age, sex, religion, creed, or status. Part of this service is to aim towards promoting and restoring the health of individuals who suffer from illness, which leads to his or her restoration of wellness.

Helping someone without expecting anything in return is innate to Ilocanos. Being a *taga-aw-away* (one who lives in the rural areas), Ilocanos tend to offer help to their neighbors and friends. In times of scarcity, one can ask for a pinch of salt or a bowl of bagoong from his or her neighbor without paying any amount. Also, when a farmer gathers *bung-bunga* (collection of fruits) and *nat-nateng* (collection of vegetables) from his or her farmland, he or she often shares it with his neighbor and friends.

Also, Ilocanos are known to have deep ties with their family. Nurses help in the realization of building a healthy community by promoting health in their families. They are willing to extend help and support to individuals who want to make a positive change in their habits. By promoting change, nurses and individuals become partners in the realization of a healthy community.

Likewise, Ilocanos show that they value the community through making efforts in maintaining its cleanliness, peace, and the spirit of brotherhood. Many nurses perform outreach programs to far-flung communities as part of medical and dental missions by providing nursing care. There are also reported cases that nurses in the community travel long distances by foot, crossing rivers, and climbing up mountains to reach the locality where health services are much needed.

D. Mangsalimetmet (Preserving)

Preservation means that Ilocano nurses maintain and uplift the different things that uphold the dignity of their profession while also respecting patients' culture and promoting knowledge generation.

Conserving the Profession

Nursing continues to be rated as the most trusted profession concerning honesty and ethics in various fields. For the past 14

years, the public has voted nurses as the most honest and ethical profession in America. Eighty-five percent of Americans rated nurses' honesty and ethical standards as "Very High" or "High," tying their best ranking on the Gallup poll and 17 percentage points above any other profession (The American Nurse, 2016).

P7 recognized the importance of having honesty in the work. She narrated:

"So for me, there is really a need for empathy and you have the feeling of commitment to serve. And also, there should be honesty for yourself and for the patient because you should be honest of what you can feel or what you can do about the patient so that you can give the most care you want to serve to the patient. Because if you are not committed to your doings as a nurse, I think there is a gap on the type of care that you are giving. So sometimes it's what you can value in your profession, if you value your profession as if you are caring for the sick, so you have really a commitment and you are effective nurse."

Conserving the Culture

Preserving the culture means that the nurse renders nursing care while maintaining and respecting the culture of the client. Nurses in the Ilocos Region described that nursing has the goal to provide and maintain culturally-sensitive nursing care. P13 posited:

"I guess that the main goal of nursing is to provide culturally-sensitive care to individuals wherein we know for a fact that culture is different from one another and that some interventions are accepted by one culture but not by the other culture."

With the advent of transcultural nursing, nurses have developed a deeper knowledge of the importance of considering the person's culture in rendering care. Filipino nurses who are working in the different parts of the world show that nurses are capable of working in an environment with multi characteristics.

Providing culturally competent nursing care means that care is planned and implemented in a way that is sensitive to the needs of individuals, families, and groups from diverse cultural populations within society. The nurse who recognizes and respects cultural diversity has cultural sensitivity and provides nursing care that accepts the significance of cultural factors in health and illness (Taylor, Lillis and Lemone, 2005).

Conserving Knowledge Generation

The search for knowledge is also evident among Ilocano nurses. Ilocano nurses see the importance of engaging in nursing research, which will add knowledge to the profession.

P9 stated that, *"Ang contribution natin ay more of research para kung ano yung mai-co-contribute natin, alam natin na para sa ikabubuti ng tao.* (Our contribution is more on research which are beneficial to the people.) P11 also agreed that research gives basis to our practice in saying:

"I love the versatility and extensiveness of a nurse's role. She can assume the role of being a clinician, an educator, and a researcher in one day... To be able to determine if my practice and knowledge is based on evidence, I assume the role of a researcher."

The importance of research in nursing practice is undeniable. The scientific knowledge base for professional practice is developed through scholarly inquiry of literature and the actual conduct of research. The multidisciplinary nature of the nursing profession challenges nurses not only to be knowledgeable on the discipline of nursing but also on the status of research in the behavioral and physical sciences and other health care disciplines (Potter & Perry, 2002).

When it comes to culture, Ilocanos have a very rich cultural background which they preserve until today. They are proud of their dances, such as *kinnotan* or ant dance, and folk songs, such as *Pamulinawen*, a *badeng* or a song which expresses a longing for a loved one. In connection to nursing, nurses have retained the provision of culturally-based and culturally-sensitive nursing care although health care industry is leading towards modernization.

For the Ilocano nurses, nursing is a noble profession that provides a sense of self-fulfillment; thus, preserving it is intrinsic to them. They preserve and enhance culturally-sensitive nursing care making sure that the culture of the person being served is taken into consideration. At the same time, Ilocano nurses are expected to generate new knowledge for the nursing profession that will provide scientifically-grounded interventions and consequently result in better client health outcomes. Culture may be defined as a shared system of beliefs, values, and behavioral expectations that provide a social structure for daily living (Taylor, Lillis and Lemone, 2005).

Nurses in the Ilocos region have a varied range of perspectives on the concept of nursing in the Philippines. Although some of these concepts are influenced by Western literature, Ilocano nurses have provided viewpoints that are distinct from their perspectives. The concept of nursing in the Philippines from the perspective of Ilocano nurses can be interpreted as the act of caring (*Mangtaraken*) and nurturing (*Mangpasantak*) for the person wherein the nurse values (*Mangipateg*) individuals, families, and community while preserving (*Mangsalimetmet*) the nursing profession and the client's culture.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The concept of nursing from the perspective of Ilocano nurses is no different from the concept of nursing that can be found in the existing literature. Since nursing education in the Philippines is greatly influenced by the Americans through their books and other works, it influenced how Filipinos, particularly Ilocanos, view the concept of nursing. However, it is worthy to note that even before the introduction of formal nursing education in the Ilocos Region, Ilocanos already possessed socially-acceptable attributes such as caring, nurturing, valuing, and preserving. Eventually, these innate traits of Ilocanos were translated by Ilocano nurses into their professional practice.

The description of the concept of nursing is culture-based since it is linked to the Ilocano culture, beliefs, values, and traditions. Although the concept of nursing in the Philippines from the perspective of Ilocano nurses may reflect the perception of nurses in the country, it is worthy to note that nurses in this region have deeply embraced their profession leading them to give descriptions on the concept of nursing of their own. It can be realized that their interpretations are connected to their roots as Ilocanos.

Although the Ilocano's and the Americans' concepts of nursing are synonymous because of the influence of the Americans in the nursing education in the past, using Ilocano's vernacular language to describe nursing gives a unique blend on the context and concept of nursing locally.

It is also assumed that nurses from different regions can provide other descriptions of nursing based on their regional culture in the same way that Ilocano nurses have their own. The presence of Ilocano nurses' description of the concept of nursing may start the foundation of constructing and organizing a description of nursing in the Philippines that is based on the common or unanimous understanding of Filipino nurses in the country.

The findings of the study can be used as references and incorporated in course syllabi and classroom discussions to give nursing students insights on Ilocano nurses' definition of nursing. Furthermore, it can also be used as a basis to revisit and develop policies that will enhance the practice of nurses in accomplishing culturally sensitive tasks. Despite their experiences in the work place, nurses can use this as a basis on how they can render their professional care, with consideration to the cultural needs, to affected individuals. In terms of research, this study urges other regions to use this as a model and conduct it on their respective locale. Later on, these researches can be consolidated to develop a unified concept of nursing in the Philippines. Quantitative studies are also encouraged to supplement the findings. To promote the profession and image of nursing in the

Philippines, nurses are encouraged to participate in studies such as this.

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