

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Seasoned Nurse Administrators Saga: In the Changing and Challenging Times

Theresa Linda C. Narreto-Painagan, MSN, RN<sup>1\*</sup> and Erlinda C. Palaganas, PhD, RN<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

This research endeavored to explore, describe and document the saga of experienced nurse administrators to come up with reflective learning in nursing leadership and management. A qualitative phenomenological approach was utilized, specifically descriptive and interpretative methods of Husserl and Heidegger.

Purposive sampling and referral were employed to select eight participants from the three fields of nursing administration (academe, hospital, and community) within Luzon, Philippines. An in-depth interview about the participants' experiences in nursing and nursing administration, together with a review of historical narratives and personal accounts were engaged to generate data. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and were analyzed following hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology.

An integrated analysis of literature showed parallel descriptions of participants' responses and the context of historical accounts and events in nursing in the Philippines. Four main themes have emerged in the saga of Seasoned Nurse Administrators (SNAs): 1) Nurse administrators' responses according to the need and context of nursing in their times; 2) Nursing foundations and training are geared towards the values of nursing as a service profession, 3) The pathways towards becoming a nurse administrator are marked with competence in the roles undertaken and living the passion for service; 4) SNAs facing challenges are towards the improvement of life conditions, excellence in their profession, and setting advocacies to elevate the nursing profession in the country in the 21st century.

A conceptual model was formulated in understanding the paths towards a seasoned nurse administrator.

**Keywords:** Nurse Administrators, Nursing Saga, Changes in nursing, Challenge in nursing, Reflective Learning, Interpretive Phenomenology, Nursing Management

## Introduction

### Background

Times and periods are powerful influences on one's existence. Søren Kierkegaard (1855) once said, "*Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards*". Chronicles and sagas are usually regarded as reconstructions of the past; it is a recount of significant lives and events throughout history with highlighted themes of heroism and loyalty (Concise Encyclopedia, 2014).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 2020 as the "International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife," meanwhile Nursing in the Philippines has attained a rich history and solid foundations within the century as a profession, in reference to Act No. 2493 that provided the registration of graduate nurses under

the Bureau of Health in 1919 from which the First True Nursing Law was promulgated (WHO Philippines, Nursing and Midwifery Data bank, 2013). Through time, the image of nurses and the meaning of nursing have evolved. While at present, nurses composed the largest group of health workers in the Philippines (DOH, 2013).

An account in the nursing history suggests that the years 1980's to 1990's were called the Era of Care Fragmentation (Paradigm Shift in Nursing Curriculum and administration, n.d.) This has become evident in the proliferation of nursing schools. The quality of nurses has waned over the years not only due to the exodus of experienced hands but more because of the low quality

<sup>1</sup> Central Mindanao University, Musuan, Maramag Bukidnon 8710

<sup>2</sup> University of the Philippines Baguio

\* Corresponding author email: tlcnarreto84@gmail.com

of nursing schools in the country measured by the proportion of nursing graduates who pass the Nursing Licensure Examination. Further, to maintain a standard in the health care system is a greater challenge to consider, as declared by Health Alliance for Democracy - HEAD (2006), "A health care system that cannot maintain its own health human resource is said not to be healthy at all." Notwithstanding the major change and deterioration of the health care system in the midst of a global transformation of nursing practice in the country, Filipino Nurses have maintained and sustained the top rank in supplementing nursing shortage globally for the last 50 years (Francisco, 2009).

Some view history as a cycle, for mostly considered, the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become, like centuries before, both the best and worst of times and current health care issues are complex. In recent years, healthcare transformation and changing roles for nursing, evidence by expanding health care industries and increasing corporatization of health care offers a change in the nature of a nurse manager's role, leading to focus in the domains of nursing science and business according to Salmond, SW and Echevarria, M (2017). The changes in time, generation, and development suggest the need for the preparation of patients as well as health care workers in the present millennium. Reflective practice is a means of self-examination that involves contemplating what happened in practice to improve or encourage professional growth (Lim, F. & Shi, T. 2013). The principle by Porter-O'Grady and Mallock (2002) that "moving into a new age means thinking about what needs to be left behind and reflecting on what should go with us as we move into an era with a different set of parameters" goes parallel to the queries of this research.

### Objectives

This inquest intends to understand and achieve learning from the saga of the Seasoned Nurse Administrators (SNAs) in their perspectives, thoughtful actions, and accomplishments in the history of the nursing profession. Specifically, it aimed to:

1. Explore the historical and current contexts of their time/s;
2. Understand the lived experiences of the SNAs.
3. Create a conceptual model for aspiring nurse administrators.

## METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study utilized the phenomenological approach focusing on the meaning, experience, and understanding of the lives of SNAs. Phenomenology allowed the researcher to interact with the SNAs and spent considerable time understanding their life events and stories. The central guiding questions were: "How is it to live as an SNA?" and "What is your view towards the nursing profession in light of their life situations or stories?" These existential questions were answered with a qualitative design, namely: descriptive and interpretive phenomenology that reveals the realities and context of their works and lives. The SNAs, after serving in various fields of nursing practice, share a common culture or set of beliefs making them represent a certain group in nursing in general and in nursing administration in particular. The roles and experiences of the SNAs are distinct where complex sets of outlooks, behaviors, practices, relationships, and networks can be shared in the realm of the nursing profession.

### Participants

The sample consisted of eight (8) nurses by profession and have experienced the challenging times of the nursing profession in the Philippines that includes issues and concerns both negative and positive on the image of a nurse and the current nursing situation, by requiring that the timing of their administrative reign was during 1990 to 2014. Nurse Administrators are defined in this study as working in the profession as department heads to the dean, and supervisors to chief nurses. The inclusion criteria for this study were: (1) All participants will have not less than an accumulative of 15 years of experience as a Nurse administrator in any field of nursing; (2) Currently working or retired; (3) Living within the Philippines; (4) May or may not have publications or personal accounts related to their experiences and views in the nursing profession.

Table 1. *Informants' Profile*

Informant's Code	Sex	Age	Years of Being a Professional Nurse	Highest Educational Attainment	Status of Service	Field of Administration
Abigail	F	60	40	Ph.D	Current	Community
Esther	F	54	34	Ph.D	Current	Academe
Miriam	F	61	48	Ed.D	Current	Hospital
Hannah	F	55	35	RN	Current	Community
Rebecca	F	50	27	MAN	Current	Community & Academe
Rachel	F	79	59	Ed.D	Retired	Hospital
Naomi	F	68	47	MAN	Current	Academe
Deborah	F	54	34	MN	Current	Academe & Hospital

### Data Collection Methods

Phenomenological steps were pursued in this study beginning with carefully chosen questions that were inspired by my involvement with a Manila-based international health organization which provided an opportunity to create and expand my network, making it possible to associate with various nursing leaders. Key informant interview was used primarily to trace the SNAs stories on their roots in nursing including their stories in exercising their roles as nurse administrators in the midst of prevailing conditions of the nursing profession. Interviews and in-depth conversations lasted for one to three hours at the office of the SNAs at their most convenient time. Several questions were rephrased and repeated throughout the interview. Data collection period spanned one (1) year in exploring the SNAs' perspectives.

### Data Analysis

In the progress to data analysis, hermeneutic interpretive phenomenology was employed based on Heideggerian philosophy which consists of three interrelated processes: the search for paradigm cases, thematic analysis, and analysis of exemplars. Paradigm cases are strong instances of concern or ways of being in the world (Benner, 1994). Thematic analysis is to compare and contrast similarities across cases and with the former; it can be enhanced by exemplars that illuminate aspects of the paradigm case or theme (Polit & Beck, 2006). Interviews were grouped into phases or paradigms as to the beginnings in nursing, the foundations undertaken as a nurse, the career pathways to a nurse administrator, and the challenges encountered as SNAs. The pieces of information that relate their perceptions of human agency, relationships, the timing of events, and events in time and place were placed side by side and were considered as main themes. Main themes were placed together for further analysis to discover the complex interrelations of the content drawn out from each element of the paradigm. Subthemes will also be made as to how the contents interrelate. Exemplars were chosen to represent the themes that were connected throughout the life course to tell the story of how the meanings changed over time within each period of their life.

### Ethical Consideration

The research manuscript has undergone a critic by the thesis advisory committee of Saint Louis University College of Nursing, Graduate Program, A research guide was carefully constructed together with written informed consent.

A letter was sent out to the potential participants explaining the study's objective, the data gathering process, and essential parts of the informed consent. The researcher ensured that the prospective participant has adequately understood the

information through a phone call confirmation. They were given the full opportunity to ask questions and considered their time and convenience for visits and interviews. The interview was conducted individually in a private quiet room in the respective office and homes, a voice recorder was readily available after they have consented to the process. Data transcribing was done privately and the environment during the data analysis was managed carefully. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were preserved by not revealing their names and identity in the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the study findings. The participants were referred to by their pseudonym names in the verbatim quotes. Data were shared with my adviser and co-author, with another qualitative researcher as an expert to reach an agreement of the interpretation without exposing the participants' details at any interim stage. The access of the thesis advisory committee of Saint Louis University to the data was explained to the participants and their consents regarding this matter were obtained.

### Establishing Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the participants (Streubert & Carpenter 2007). In this study, we engaged in prolonged and varied appointments during the data gathering. The interviewing process was also pre-tested and ensured that tools for data collection were rigorous. The collected materials were stored and managed properly and adequately. First, credibility, which refers to the closeness of interpretation to the true value from the participants, was achieved through prolonged engagement with data, use of extracts from respondent's verbatim accounts, verification of narratives through other sources such as documents, journals, and updates ensuring technical accuracy in recording, and transcribing interviews in data generation. Second, transferability was considered through purposive sampling considering the inclusion criteria of the SNAs and reaching for the saturation of data. Third, dependability ensured that the findings of the study are repeatable if the inquiry occurred within the same cohort of participants, coders, and context (Polit and Beck, 2014). This was observed in the study through rich descriptions of the data collection methods as a form of audit trail and sufficient details of contextual information. Fourth, consistency, referring to equal treatment for all participants, is ensured by a coherent format for all participants. Neutrality was demonstrated through external blind readings of texts and interpretation, debriefing with adviser and peers, verification of collected data to some of the participants, and the revisit of the field notes. Finally, reflexivity was considered by my personal experiences, encounters with other nurse administrators, and my learning in nursing administration concepts to the concerns and life stories shared by the participants in relating to the event in the nursing profession.

## Results and Discussions

Four main themes have emerged, namely: (1) Nurse administrators' responses according to the need and context of nursing in their times, (2) Nursing foundations and training are geared towards the values of nursing as a service profession, (3) the paths of becoming a nurse administrator are varied but marked with competence and passion, and (4) the main roles of the nurse administrators in facing challenges are towards the improvement of life conditions and setting advocacies to maintain and elevate the standard of the profession.

### Theme 1: SNAs respond according to the historical context of the Philippine nursing profession.

In the historical review of the nursing profession in the Philippines, the study showed parallel themes of the seasoned nurse administrators' experiences to the historical context of the profession, as such, brought relevance in the nursing profession and understanding the changes in nurse's image.

Nursing in the Philippines has attained a rich history and solid foundations within the century as a profession, in reference to Act No. 2493 that provided the registration of graduate nurses under the Bureau of Health in 1919 from which the First True Nursing Law was promulgated (WHO Philippines, Nursing and Midwifery Data bank, 2013). Through time, the image of nurses and the meaning of nursing have evolved. While at present, nurses composed the largest group of health workers in the Philippines; and the country has become known to be the number one producer of nurses to serve the globe (DOH, 2013).

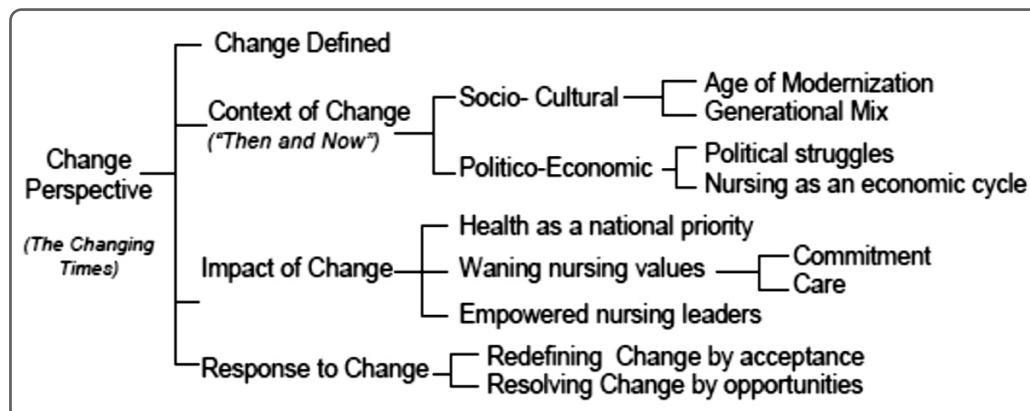
Throughout this timeline, it can be subdivided by four era periods, comprised of three distinct generational cohorts: Baby boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y (Millennials), of which nurse administrators and the composition of the nursing workforce at present make up a generational mix. In this regard, the

generational differences of the SNAs among the younger nurses affect the views and values of nursing from a service-driven profession to a profit-oriented service. This is supported by the statement of Zemke, et.al (2000) that certain thoughts, values, and behaviors are influenced by shared events. Generally, nurses' training and management, as well as health concept, through different generations progressed in response to the environmental demands and the influencing factors involved. The SNAs relate their experiences according to their time and tend to pass on their own learning to the current and next generations which can be seen as slow when comparing to the rapid and enormous turn of events in the current century. As one responded with this statement:

*The perspective of the present generation is blurred by all of these things: the reality shows, the telenovela . . . it is multi factors. We are then surrounded with what it seems to me as materialism and consumerism. Students right now are exposed to a whole lot of ideologies. We were never taught about the instant thing. Now, all they seem to know is 'When you want it, you have it.' There is very little of this delayed gratification. (Esther)*

Another historical account based on the SNAs stories is that nursing in the country moves in a cycle of the global demands for nurses (*represented in the graph, Annex A*). A cycle is characterized by the rise and fall of the number of individuals taking up nursing. While it is evident that there is a continuously increasing number of nurses through the years, a sudden upraised happened at the beginning of the 2000s and it was believed to be influenced by the global demand for nurses. It can also be observed that the quantitative representation of nurses follows a similar trend with the economic factor that could reflect the rise and fall of nurses' employability. As cited from literature, nurses in the country started to respond to the call to serve other countries at the start of the 1950's (WHO,2013).

Figure 1. Changes in different contexts as perceived by the SNAs.



*We have entered 2000, this is the generation who were born with technology, and nursing was caught in that firestorm. Sometime in 2005-2006..it's so tempting to get 20 sections, After the upswing, sometime in 2009 it sorted out and quieted down and the reality started to sink in... what was it? the glut! Suddenly, the graduates don't have jobs, US got into recession. Third, passing rates were horrible. Then there was a reduced in nursing. (Esther)*

*This had happened before...in the 70's there was the sudden rise of those taking up nursing because there were so many nurses needed abroad. We have 6 sections in the first year. The graduating class were 4 sections. Because of the overflow of graduates, they became sales lady at the drug stores or pharmacies, and everywhere. After that, a sudden fall in the enrollment.*

*It's the similar cycle. (Naomi)*

The image of the Filipino nurse has gained popularity in the global arena despite a compromised picture of quantity over quality.

*Overall, our population continues to rise and that goes side by side with the Filipinos propensity for bandwagon. When shawarma became popular, everybody went selling shawarma We always jump into the bandwagon, that's very typical Filipino, plus the huge population. (Esther)*

Despite all changes and turn of events, the current underdeveloped state of the Philippines has its roots in the colonial past and the later development of neocolonialism. This situation can be understood only within the context of the colonial experience and in the subsequent policies of the post-war Philippine Republic. The poverty of the people in the country can be attributed to factors such as foreign domination over economic, political, and social structures (Palaganas, 2003).

*Historically, it will reveal that the poverty level of the country has never been reduced. If you would try to look at it, in 1980s the call was decent work-life conditions, in 2011, it is still the same: Low wages, call for just wages! It is still people-self! The Alma Ata in 1978 – primary health care was the strategy; Today, 2011 Millennium Development Goals – eradication of poverty by half...We are still in the economy or production system that whoever has the capital; they are the ones that get rich, at the mercy of those who run the business...look who are the 10 richest Filipino are the biggest businessmen in the country. If I may, we are democratic in name but the system of government is ruling of the elite. Ganun pinapatakbo, (that is the way we are run/govern). (Hannah)*

*You will not see and feel the effects of all these in the individual level, but the individual will always lodge to what*

*is the national. But it has always been a cycle. But I guess this has been the worst cycle.*

The crisis besetting the Philippine society has reached a critical level marked by a glaring inequality between the privileged rich and the laboring masses. This crisis and inequality can be rooted in the flaws of an old-age social structure which is characterized by elite control of the resources of a backward and non-industrialized economy and the instrumentalities of the state and the exploitation and oppression of the majority of the Filipinos. The country reels under the dominance of foreign capitalists and has fallen to the lower rungs of competitive international economic order (Palaganas, 2003).

Strong concluding words from Brush, BL (2010) is still true to the fact that nursing in the Philippines is affected by the migratory patterns, local consequences, and global implications particularly the economic, social, and political factors that predicate nurse migration from developing to developed nations and the roles of local and global stakeholders in influencing migratory patterns and their consequences for nurses and the public in their care. The Philippines' nurse case study, as a historical "constant" in the phenomenon of nurse migration, illuminates the complex and shifting nature of nurses' global mobility and how local ideologies and economic conditions, aggressive international recruitment, and persistent shortages of nurses in developed nations converged to create the nurse pipeline that prevails to this date.

In the last fifteen (15) years, nursing in the Philippines was not exempted from the rapid effects of changes in society and culture. Technology can be the biggest environmental factor for change. Different perspectives of change and challenges in the image of nursing include losing values and questionable intent and commitment in choosing a service profession. Essentially, given the significant and widespread changes in the health care system, generational diversity, including workforce differences in attitudes, beliefs, work habits, and expectations, or the resulting differences in values have proven challenging for nursing leaders (LeDuc, K and Kotzer, A, 2009)

Nursing Directors Marquis, BL and Huston, CJ (2015, p.176) in the book Leadership Roles and Management Functions in Nursing, exemplified that many people attracted to nursing now find that their values and traditional expectations no longer fit as they once did. It is the leader's role to help their followers turn around and confront opportunities and challenges of the realities of emerging nursing practice; to create enthusiasm and passion for renewing the profession; to embrace the change of locus of control, which now belongs to the health care.

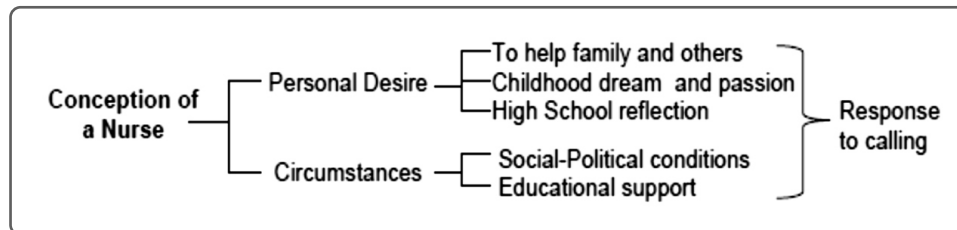
With the current trends, prospects, and the emerging worldview that emphasizes global health goals, the nursing administrative perspective needs to be defined towards the application of

technology in administrative and technical nursing practice. Decisions are geared to support database that will enhance the ability to evaluate changes in programs, personnel, policies, staffing, organization, and nursing culture.

## Theme 2: Nursing foundations are geared toward the values of nursing as a service profession

Two sub-themes emerged in the analysis: 1) Nursing is conceived from a choice or circumstances driven by serving others; 2) to become a nurse is grounded by the training of the mind and building of character;

Subtheme 1: Nursing is conceived from a choice or circumstances driven by serving others



There are several reasons and stories why we take up nursing. For some of the SNAs, it was a choice formed from the growing-up years. As some have put it:

*To take up nursing has been a childhood dream, when my father got sick in a remote island, and there was no one to look after him, I said to myself, one day I will be able to take care of my parents. (Miriam)*

*Being a survivor of the World war II, I was caught up in a helpless situation at grade 3, from that time on, I just wanted to help people. (Rachel)*

Others, came from a decision influenced by circumstances later after high school.

*I have not thought of being a nurse. It was a series of events that ended up in the school of nursing with the thought it was the easier path towards my inclination for service – the service component to the service orientation of our times. Yon ang panawagan na malakas nuon (that was the calling of our time) (Hannah)*

The early exposure of the SNA's to situations of people needing care became a springboard leading them to their calling. This particular outcome is supported by author psychologist, Brooks (2014) that certain vivid childhood memories, calling them 'indelible memories' can emerge to relevant adult events creating lasting impact.

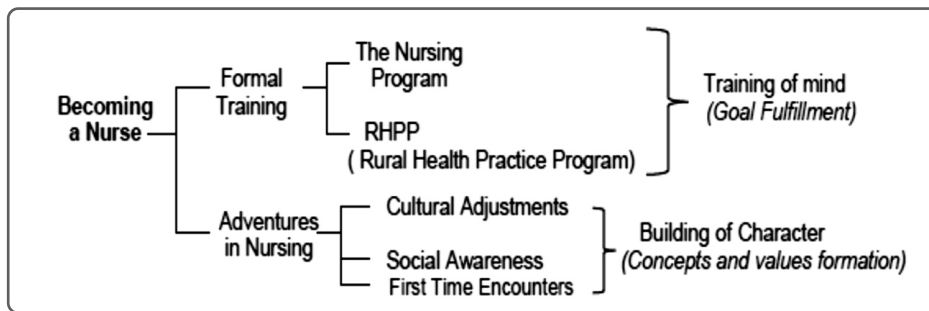
Professional nursing, as a vital component of any country's health system, is responsive to the needs of society. It is a dynamic, therapeutic, and interpersonal process that incorporates a holistic view of caring about people in various settings and conditions. (Venzon, L. & Venzon, R, 2010). The three fundamental measures that nursing education and curriculum want to develop for every nursing student are knowledge, skills, and attitude (KSA). The stories of the SNAs exemplified and emphasized the concept that nursing is character building. It is establishing the core values that we are dealing with humans. It captures all aspects of life and living, from birth to death, and anything in between that deals with the physical, emotional, mental, social, aspects of wellbeing.

*Nursing is an issue of the heart. If you do not have the heart to people, do you think you will be able to take care of people who are neither your family nor friends, not in any way related to you? those that you don't know and doesn't know you who are sick and in need, say a*

*debilitated patient who stinks, who is in pain and say all demeaning words to you...if you do not have this (pointing to the heart), you think you can take care of that person? – that is nursing (Abigail)*

In pursuit of a greater understanding, the focus of nursing leads to the foundational questions to consider that reside within the nature of the vulnerable human beings who are the focus and recipients of nursing care. These questions: What are their concerns? What matters to them? Would their concerns matter or should only knowledge of human parts and the pathological bases of disease direct nursing practice? In essence, a professional nurse is educationally prepared and highly skilled to expertly practice professional nursing, and to know human beings as persons who have hopes, dreams, and aspirations (Boykin and Schoenhofer, 2001), and to live meaningfully as healthy persons. The person who is nursed and valued from any other narrower foundation of knowledge is deeply disadvantaged (Locsin, RC & Purnell, MJ 2013)

*The composite experiences were the best things in Nursing would include those little things that the patient would be telling you. "Maraming Salamat" (Thank you very much); "buti nalang andito ka" (Im grateful you are here) those little things..you realize that "meron pala talagang value ang Nursing kaya cya tinawag na Nursing (there is really a value in Nursing that is why it is called Nursing)... because it is Nurturing. This made me see the difference in taking up Business administration. (Esther)*



Subtheme 2: to become a nurse is grounded by the training of the mind and building of character;

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) curriculum transitioned from competency-based and community-oriented to outcomes-based education. The program uses selected cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies in the nurturing process. Professional nurses are distinguished by an attitude of constant inquiry and by leadership ability in nursing practice. Within the context of health and development, the nursing curricula continues to involve the multi-sectoral groups in the promotion of health, prevention of illness, alleviation of suffering, restoration of health, and inculcation of the spiritual ideals utilizing the nursing process as the framework of practice. Nursing Education endeavors to develop globally competitive, competent, caring, confident and compassionate nurse who is conscientious of his/her ethico-moral and legal obligations. (Fernandez, PA 2010).

Knowledge is attained by the theoretical teachings the curriculum has provided, and the exposures to different cultures, settings, people, and experiences brought understanding about human ways of communicating and relating with others. For the SNAs, it is their varied exposure in the social circumstances that honed their leadership skills. Values were emphasized that one has to learn during the student nursing years. Values are referred to the essential favorable way of ideas regarded as desirable, useful, estimable, important, and truthful (ANA 2012), they are invisible as air but just as essential (Quallington, J 2012). A contrast to several literature present differences to the SNA's experiences: among younger nurses and students some nursing core values (ethical and professional) have decreased in importance, while other values centered on social relationships and personal well-being increased (Jimenez –Lopez, FR, et al (2014); the notion that experience is necessary to develop professional values was not supported (LeDuc, K & Kotzer AM, 2009). Significant differences across generational groups in terms of work ethics and relevance of practice can be attributed to generational gaps where baby boomers (to where SNAs belong) are defined mainly by their jobs and may even sacrifice personal interest until the job is complete while Gen Xers (Millenials) tend to be independent when working. (Moore, Everly, and Bauer, 2016).

*It's the attitude of the nurses now and those taking up nursing that have changed. But of course I may be in in a old thought of nursing, yon yong totoong nursing hindi yong mag aabroad ka! (That is true nursing, not that because you want to go abroad). They have a different attitude from the very start, if the reason why they entered nursing is they want to be a nurse, a real nurse in the very essence is to be a service provider. It's their values (Abigail).*

Another significant change in nursing at the present times as perceived by the SNAs is when it becomes a highly economic driven course which gave a new definition to the nursing profession but going farther away from the original concept of nursing as a service profession. There is a shift towards the intention of taking up nursing from alleviating the poor conditions of the marginalized to personal progress. The SNAs strong advocacies that whatever the intention of one taking up nursing is to teach students the core values and attitude to propel them to render the best service whenever they are called forth.

*Students should be train to have a mindset geared towards service, it may be the least that we can do kasi mahirap baguhin ang institution (It is difficult to change the mind set of the institution). If only, students are not discouraged in the involvement for policy making, and making it assertive. You do you don't ask! – the need to organized students and empower them with right principles. (Hannah)*

*I want nurses to assume a role of nurse even if they are not in a hospital able to teach mothers how to take care of their children. I hoped that the curriculum could've developed nurses for them to be more assertive in their rights to give direct contribution more to national health.. that's the heart of all these. Remind students to be more caring and want them to lead, come up with innovations, to assert themselves, more sensitive to the needs of the patients and come up with strategies, being resourceful in situations... (Esther)*

*I am hoping that our nurses become more critical in situational analysis and not indifferent with the environment. Hindi pwede ang basura ay problema ng basurero lamang. (It does not mean that the problem of garbage is the problem of the garbage disposals only. You may be a staff nurse or a community organizer, we are part of this, and we need to be involved. (Rebecca)*

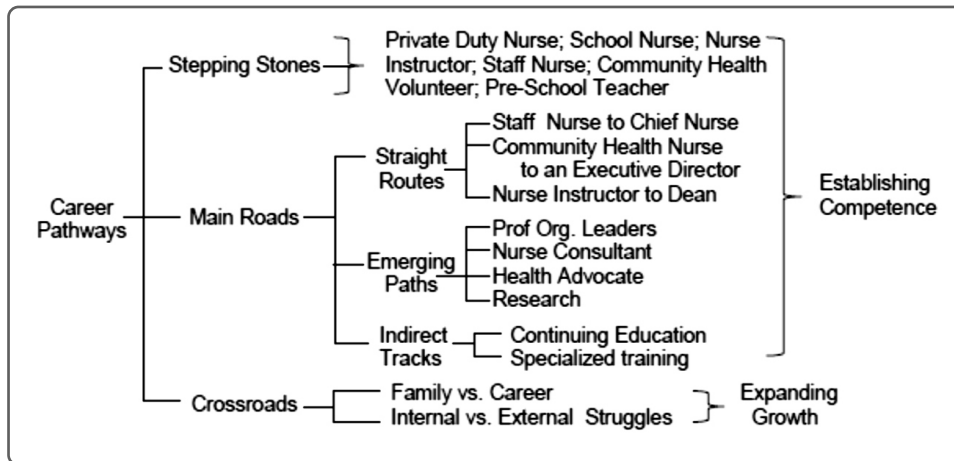
As the nursing program aims to prepare nurses for a wide range of settings that encompasses education, practice (institutional and community), and training, nurse leaders play a role to bridge the

gap in value orientation between education and practice to strengthen professional commitment and maintain the viability of the profession (LeDuc, K, et al 2009). Undergraduate education should be the basis of a career trajectory that provides the appropriate foundation for nurses to practice at registration, prepare them for ongoing continuing professional development and position them for the development of expert practice. This means building the capacity of the nursing workforce to provide high-quality care for a changing and dynamic health system (Strategic Framework for Role Expansion of Nurses and Midwives: Promoting Quality Patient Care, 2011)

More importantly, in the dynamic world of nursing education and practice, professional values of nursing students may be changed considerably by curricula but the unwavering values of the profession stay through time, as the SNA asserted:

*People will always be sick and well. You don't work when you are only sick... The world will always need nurses. And what is nice about nursing... it is not only a profession but the universality of the fact that we are people dealing with people. (Abigail)*

**Theme 3: Landmarks of a nurse administrator varied, marked with competence and passion**



Landmarks are important to note when planning towards professional progress. Maps and road signs are essential components to a career path. The stories of the SNAs uncovered the paths that we may or need to encounter in one way or the other, there are stepping stones, crossroads, straight routes, and emerging paths that one will come across.

The SNAs' sagas are filled with thrills coming to this point in their lives. During the interview, SNAs were asked about their ambitions of becoming nurse leaders and administrators, all of them could only reflect on how far they have been in their journeys but initially have not determined to be in the position

where they are now. To them, it was a blend of being the products of the world that revolves around them, the influences of others, the control of a higher being, and more importantly, the choice to take on the roles of being a nurse leader. The SNAs become the lead performers, key players, and trailblazers both in their personal and professional lives.

*There are things and interests that are not realized immediately, but that is part of the risk. For me, it's taking it more on the positive side. Definitely there are rough roads, it's not all good roads but you can always thread that path... you can never reach the other side if you will not take the path if that is the only way, and that should not be the reason that you will not stay on track) (Abigail)*

**3.1 Stepping Stones**

In the Philippines, there is a broad scope for nurses' roles and functions in the application of knowledge in society, in general. Thus, nurses have a potential scope of practice within boundaries such as legislation, experience, competence, competence, maintenance, and contextual factors.

*I worked short time, a little less than a year in private company that catered to abandoned children...that was my first exposure in nursing as an employment. (Deborah)*

*After I got my license, I was asked by the Nursing Director to work in the hospital. But the next two months, I was assigned to do school nursing and join the faculty and taught nursing for one year. I enjoyed teaching so much that it took me some time to decide whether I would leave teaching or choose the married life. (Abigail)*

*So I've been involved and volunteering with community health nursing. I was employed in a Non-Government Organization (NGO) and my job as a staff is to go to the rural areas teaching... so I need to shift my focus having trained from a hospital set up. (Rebecca)*

Laskowski-Jones (2010) asserted that one of the best aspects of the nursing profession is the variety of choices we have. When you think about it, nurses can work just about anywhere—hospitals, camps, industry, offices, cruise ships, schools, and the home—wherever people need the knowledge base that belongs uniquely to nurses. In more advanced countries, like America,



sub-specialization in targeted areas such as pediatrics, emergency care, women's health, geriatrics, rehabilitation, or oncology, to name a few, are well recognized as much as it has been established and practice. For those who desire an expanded scope of clinical practice or opportunities that come only with higher education, myriad programs and courses are suited to both our needs and our tastes. The possibilities seem endless. We only have to look for it.

*It was difficult to get a job then since BSN level 4 and level 5 graduated the same time, and hiring to the US was not high (1980). I was not included at the hospitals roster. In my frustration, I went into pre-school teaching for almost 2 years. When I came back to check my application at the hospital, I became a Private Duty Nurse (PDN), I was a volunteer at the start, at the same time they hired me as a staff nurse and stayed there for almost a year. I facilitated roles for nurses, more into directing than planning, that was my first taste of leadership. (Esther)*

In the reflection of the SNA's first employment stories as nurses, they took every opportunity that was offered to them even for a start means working in a small private institution, a family nurse or private duty nurse, or a community health volunteer. While for some, direct employment as staff nurses were offered to them, right after graduation.

Nurses are an integral part of the patient care team and our healthcare system. Today, nurses have multiple job functions, leading to opportunities for a rewarding career.

### 3.2 Main Roads

**3.2.1 Straight Routes.** One of the SNAs admittedly realized that Nursing in the Philippines has no clear career path. But during her times, she embarked on being a staff nurse as her starting point and found herself creating a path that one can maintain to excel and develop upon.

*"I am a focus person; I started in the operating room, I think 10 years or so. Then I became an ICU nurse, now being the director for nursing. My administration is leading my people to deliver the best they can in making a contribution to the system. (Miriam)*

*After graduation and passed the board, I went to the hospital and stayed there until I retired as chief nurse.... I entered 1956, so you subtract 56 from 2000 so that is 44 years in public service. (Rachel)*

*I have been involved with community health nursing from the start. I was employed at the NGO as a staff as a community health nurse. Then later on as I stayed with them, I rose from the ranks... From being a staff to a health*

*program desk coordinator then I became a medical desk coordinator, health program desk, administrative officer, then OIC to Executive Director (Rebecca)*

Straight routes follow the progress of rising from the ranks, gaining expertise through experience, service, and professional advancement mainly to qualify oneself.

**3.2.2. Emerging Paths.** These are opportunities taken at the right timing. Nursing primarily caters to all people across ages and the nursing profession and practice has been expanding to varied groups and communities.

*After 10 years of teaching as a faculty in Nursing, I left the school and took up a course in Child Development at another University, and became an assistant professor, I was a permanent tenured faculty under the Family life and child development program and I taught graduate courses and to children. I just loved it and enjoyed it, that 7 years was my most enjoyable time. And that is where my leadership was honed. (Esther)*

*Being in the NGO and the director for some time, I declined to be renewed for another term, I asked for a change of work. I want to try other things. The board had warned me that it would be different if you change environment. It was also an opportune time that a school opened for nurse instructors, so I applied in the academe. Then there again, I started to be as a faculty, then became the department head for clinical then for academic and now being the Dean. (Rebecca)*

**3.2.3 Indirect Tracks.** This can be illustrated by broken lines that may come from the main roads but did not follow the straight path neither the emerging paths, however, they have passed through one of those routes.

*From my dream of becoming a staff nurse I shifted to preferring to teach. Because I think I am more empowered that way, to make a change or maybe to make more impact to more lives of people than maybe 2-3 4 or 5 patients, at least that's how I felt. To become part in the training of students to become future leaders, that was the drive. (Deborah)*

### 3.3 Crossroads

Crossroads are points in time at which a decisive change in a situation occurs. It is considered a critical moment. Choices are for us to make as well as consequences are for us to take. These were the times where the SNAs are confronted with intersections or paths that were not congruent with each other. Crossroads are strategically situated which requires a decision to make. That is, if you want to get somewhere, you should decide not to stay where you are. There were several other paths that the SNAs have to

Table 2. *Crossroads Diagram*

Family	Career
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marrying vs. going to medical school</li> <li>- Marrying vs. building nursing career</li> <li>- Raise Family in country vs. migrating</li> <li>- Raising young family vs. career</li> <li>- Family functions vs. career commitment</li> <li>- "Caring for own children vs. caring for others"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home vs. abroad</li> <li>- Work vs. Scholarship</li> <li>- Clinical vs. Academe</li> <li>- Community based vs. academe</li> <li>- Nursing career path vs. venture other fields</li> <li>- Offered position vs. principles</li> </ul>
Internal Struggles (Self)	External Conflicts (Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People pressure vs. Own passions</li> <li>- Realities vs. Readiness</li> <li>- Commitment vs. competing interest</li> <li>- Personal vs. socio cultural values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Prerequisites to position</li> <li>- Adjustment to work environment</li> <li>- Variety of processes and guidelines</li> <li>- Policies vs. collective decision making</li> <li>- Heterogeneity of the team</li> </ul>

face, having passed the road once and for the first time had their abilities and personalities tested. During this time, four major paths intersect, career, family, self, and others.

The table below presents a summary of two intersecting values and areas that the SNAs have encountered.

### Establishing Competence

Consideration of and planning for enhancing nurses' competencies should occur from pre-registration, from novice to expert, and from generalist to specialist and advanced practice. Benner (1984) applies the Dreyfus Model of skill acquisition to nursing and states that a nurse will pass through five levels of proficiency: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. Each stage requires a timeline but different individuals may achieve it at varying times.

*I was the one who started the nursing department as well as the midwifery. And with the help of another dean in a University and nursing school, and with coworkers and mentors who convinced me to take MAN. I first insisted that I had Master s already, anya pay ngarud to kurang na ( what else do I need to have) ... but she foresee that sooner they will require the deans to be a MAN holder. So I have to sacrifice a lot and my time to go to Manila to take up MAN, because I have to qualify myself as a dean. (Naomi)*

### Expanding Growth

Personal growth is of paramount importance with professional development. The very essences of experiences are learnings and growth. Meanwhile, expanding professional progress is gaining competence and expertise. Expanding growth is towards solidifying character and integrity.

*My realization is I have limitations in terms of my leadership skills...it has to be learned. It takes a great deal of time. It was hard for me to commit to one thing that was the time, I always get children to take care, so I did not last in the organization I cannot do what others are doing. It is a shame on my part that my level of involvement is only 75% only while others give their 110%. (Hannah)*

Career paths were outlaid that one can choose to take to follow in becoming a nurse administrator. The SNAs have trodden the paths that those who care coming after them may take the footsteps of success that they have walked on. To have known the path that lies ahead of us can serve as a map to guide us along our journey. The different routes are options that we can consider. It is a powerful tool to be able to be directed towards the chosen career.

### **THEME 4: SNAs facing challenges are towards the improvement of life conditions, excellence in their profession, and setting advocacies to elevate the nursing profession in the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

A seasoned person is described as one who has been around for a considerable period, doing what they do and doing it well (throughout the seasons). To become one takes time and experience. The SNAs dedicated their years to learning and growing in leadership and nursing. Despite the struggles and conflicts that would confront our nursing leaders, they were able to surpass them because of the values they possessed and embracing the truth that attitude is the way to learning.

A challenge by its nature serves as a call to battle or special effort. It indicates difficulty or undertaking that is stimulating. Challenge was defined as well as confronted by the SNAs. Nursing issues were dealt with leadership skills, competence, and expertise as

evidenced by their accomplishments. Nursing is also seen to be a profession that delivers results through personal to collective fulfillment of dreams and goals, transcendence of character and personalities, and transformation of the condition of life. Moreover, it is an incessant battle cry of the SNAs for primary health care approach and to bring to an end the exploited services of professional nurses in the country. The greater challenge facing the Filipino nurse is being able to define the nurses' role in attaining a state of health for both individuals and the country.

### Assertions

Assertions are insights and responses gleaned from careful reflection about their personal and professional encounters. These had brought them to deeper levels, greater heights, and wider horizons about themselves both as a person and a seasoned nurse administrator. Their call for change in themselves to other individuals, the group, and the nation is based on the unwavering values of the profession that should never change through time.

*The people will always be sick and well. The world will always need nurses. And what is nice about nursing... it is not only a profession but the universality of the fact that we are people dealing with people. (Abigail)*

### Transcendence

To know what you want from the start, to develop and pursue your own convictions is one who displays courage. She operates out of integrity and is driven by principle, not politics. She is not threatened by group pressure or intimidated by public opinion. She is not swayed by the hope of personal gain nor led astray by her own desire for prominence and power. One who is sincere, content, service-driven, and God-fearing. Her rewards are determined through eternal perspectives as well as her fulfillment first in her family and towards others. She is a nurse.

### Transformation

Being fully convinced that the measure of time has a significant meaning over our existence; historical perspective plays an influential role in our present situation. The powerful factors of the society, culture, political environment, and economic saga are the ones that shape the conditions of our present time and the nursing profession. It is also my understanding that how much we understand our present events will bring meaning and significance to the people next to us. However, the changes and the challenges are rapid and enormous in the present century, the values and principles of human existence remain to be the central themes in discovering life meanings. It is not with a guaranteed formula that our future could take on the meanings and ideals that we perceive at present as our world can evolve in a different view of life, to the very least life has to go on and the seeking for

relevance to our very own existence holds the importance in the principle of living now.

*I felt very accomplished, from struggles to rewarding myself. There were things that I cannot do or buy before but its paying it all back now, it's worth it. (Rebecca)*

*Most of all, you see and feel the love of people that you are serving. You don't expect these things, but it happens because you are sincere, and these are my treasures, and I am taking these with me. (Abigail)*

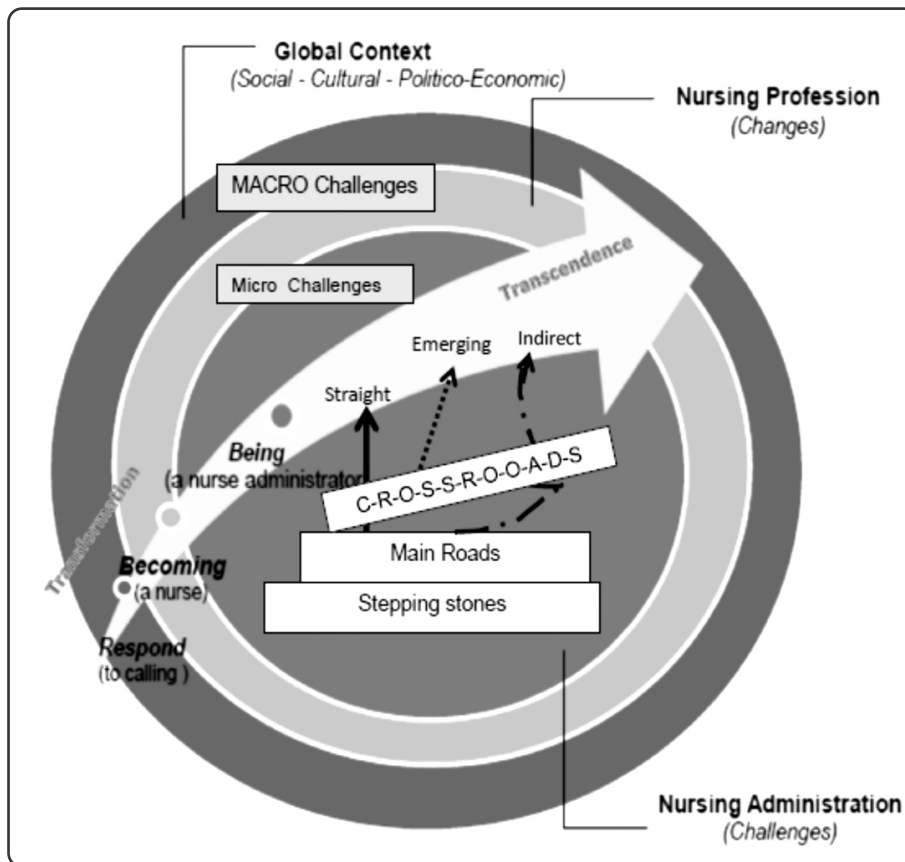
The SNAs function according to the call of their time. They stand in the gap of needs and crisis even as they strive to qualify themselves for relevance in the midst of change and transition. They continuously serve with passion and dedication to their calling. One of the greatest challenges is maintaining the quality of every Filipino nurse to be caring and competent be it locally or abroad. Their involvement in leadership, quality management, and empowerment are their legacies to the next generation of nurses.

This research had determined the roles of the nurse administrators and their responses to the needs of the profession. The century is marked with changes and highlights so as nursing practice and the image of nurses. Nevertheless, nursing in the Philippines and Filipino nurses continue to respond to the need of the present circumstances.

The significance of nursing education and training as requirements to a profession was necessary for understanding nursing as a human science and focused on the values to bring the original context of nursing as a service profession. The influencing factors such as the global trends, the national economic status, and political systems bring into the perspective that health stems not just from the treatment of disease but also from a variety of interrelated factors, including social, economic, political, environmental, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

### Conceptual Model

There are three spheres (*represented by the circles*) of which a nurse and one who eventually chose the path of a nurse administrator (*represented by the arrow*) need to traverse on. The sphere of the global context (purple) which is the widest is where the birth of nursing happens (conception) by responding to the call and context of the present time. Moving on to the second point of the arrow and the realm of the nursing profession (green) is the "becoming" of a nurse. Here, the involvement of formal training and adventures in nursing led to the training of the mind and building of character. From conception to becoming a nurse are marked towards transformation in the quality of lives for self, family, and others. A nurse can progress in her professional career path to a nurse administrator. Being in this sphere (red), there are three landmarks to which a nurse can



follow through towards the marks of a seasoned nurse administrator. Stepping stone is the first landmark before getting to the main road, while crossroads may be encountered all across the paths. A nurse can start to chart his/her path from the main road in three patterns – straight routes, emerging paths, and the indirect tracks, but all achieving the course towards transcendence— virtues, excellence, and commitment to the profession.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The saga of the SNAs exposed several pathways of becoming a nurse administrator, but the common ground is taking the step to meet the need of nursing leadership.

Four main themes have emerged in the saga of Seasoned Nurse Administrators (SNAs): 1) Nurse administrators' response according to the need and context of nursing in their times; 2) Nursing foundations and training are geared towards the values of nursing as a service profession, 3) The pathways towards becoming a nurse administrator are marked with competence in the roles undertaken and living the passion for service; 4) SNAs facing challenges are towards the improvement of life conditions, excellence in their profession, and setting advocacies to elevate the nursing profession in the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Nursing as a profession and discipline that was evident in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has impressively accomplished in building a body of nursing knowledge, enhanced by the experiences of our nurse leaders who had served and continuously been serving to meet the needs of humanity. In seeking relevance to the current nursing situation, one can take time to reflect on the perspectives of the SNAs as we navigate through the prevailing circumstances in the present fact of changing and challenging 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The advocacies and assertions of the SNAs will be used by the aspiring nurse leaders and the new generation nurses as a guide in determining their involvement in relevant nursing initiatives. By acknowledging well, the changes and transitions that were experienced, nurses and future nurse leaders are encouraged to lead change and not to lag in the progress of the profession. Nurses can play a vital role in advancing the paths of the nursing profession while keeping themselves grounded in the fundamentals

of nursing. The results of the study can be the starting point for further research in certain aspects of nursing leadership and management. A comparison of integrated researches may be considered on the perception of the young nurses towards the nursing leaders. It is hoped that the findings of this study gained from the insights shared by the SNAs in facing the challenges be passed on as learning insight to the nurses who respond and keep on responding to the call of the profession.

## References

- ANA American Nursing Association (1986) (2012) Declaration. Nursing culture. Retrieved from [http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMaarketplace?ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume112006/No2May06/tpc30\\_216074.html](http://nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMaarketplace?ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume112006/No2May06/tpc30_216074.html)
- Benner, P. (1994). *Interpretive Phenomenology (Embodiment, Caring and Ethics in Health and Illness)* In P. Benner (Ed.) California, USA: Sage Publication.
- Boykin, A. A & Schoenhofer, S. (1993) Nursing As Caring: A Model for Transforming Practice. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/14832578\\_Nursing\\_As\\_Caring\\_A\\_Model\\_for\\_Transforming\\_Practice](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/14832578_Nursing_As_Caring_A_Model_for_Transforming_Practice)

- Brooks, R (2014) The Impact of Teachers: A Story of Indelible Memories and Self-Esteem. Retrieved: Sept 2014 from <http://ldonline.org/article/6155/>
- Brush, BL (2010). The Potent Lever of Toil: Nursing Development and Exportation in the Postcolonial Philippines. *Am J Public Health*. 2010 September; 100(9): 1572–1581. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2920989/>
- Concise Encyclopedia (2014). In *Encyclopedia Britannica Company online*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam.com/dictionary/saga>
- Fernandez, P. A August 2010. Nursing Education in the Philippines. Slideshare. Retrieved 2014 from <http://www.slideshare.net/godly21/nursing-education-in-the-philippines>
- Francisco, RL.,(2009) Pragmatic and realistic preparation for successful global transition in the (USA) workplace. *Philippines Journal of Nursing*, 79 (10,3).
- HEAD – Health Alliance for Democracy (2006). The State of the Nations Health. Retrieved from Pulso ng bayan newspaper article.
- Jimenez-Lopez, F. R et.al (2014). Values in nursing students and professionals:An Exploratory comparative study. First Published December 8,2014.PubMed. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733014557135>
- Laskowski-Jones, L. (2010). Forging the future of Nursing.Editorial. *Nursing2014*. April 2011 Vol.41. Issues 4 p.6 Retrieved from: [http://journals.lww.com/nursing/Fulltext/2011/04000/Forging\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_nursing.1.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/nursing/Fulltext/2011/04000/Forging_the_future_of_nursing.1.aspx)
- LeDuc,K.& Kotzer,A.(2009) Bridging the gap: A comparison of the professional nursing values of students, new graduates, and Seasoned professionals. *Nursing education Perspectives*. Wolters Kluwer Health,Inc. by National League for Nursing, Inc.
- Lim, F. & Shi, T. (2013). Florence Nightingale: a pioneer of self-reflection. *Nursing May 2013 Vol. 43. Issue 5 pp 1-3*. Retrieved from [http://journals.lww.com/nursing/Fulltext/2012/05000/Florence\\_Nightingale\\_A\\_pioneer\\_of\\_self\\_reflection.1.aspx#P63](http://journals.lww.com/nursing/Fulltext/2012/05000/Florence_Nightingale_A_pioneer_of_self_reflection.1.aspx#P63)
- Locsin, RC & Purnell, MJ (2013). Professional nursing: scientific practice or simple care? *Star Science AHN-BC The Philippine Star* May 9, 2013. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/business/science-and-environment/2013/05/09/939881/professional-nursing-scientific-practice-or-simple-care>
- Marquis, BL and Huston, CJ (2015). *Leadership Roles and Management Functions in Nursing. Theory and Application*. (9<sup>th</sup> Ed) p.176. Wolters Kluwer Health | Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
- McPhail, KJ (2002). The nursing profession, personality types and leadership *Leadership in Health Services*. ISSN: 1366-0756 Retrieved from: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/13660750210415612/full/html?skipTracking=true>
- Moore, J., Everly, M., & Bauer, R. (2016). Multigenerational challenges: TeamBuilding for positive clinical workforce outcomes. *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 21(2), Manuscript 3. DOI: 10.3912/OJIN.Vol21No02Man03
- Palaganas, E. C. (2003). *Health Care Practice in Community*. Educational Publishing House.
- Paradigm Shift in Nursing Curriculum and administration (n.d.) Published by rinkai12 (2009). Retrieved January 15, 2010, from [http://www.scribd.com/doc/17282509/Paradigm-Shift-in-Nursing-Curriculum-and-Administration#force\\_seo](http://www.scribd.com/doc/17282509/Paradigm-Shift-in-Nursing-Curriculum-and-Administration#force_seo)
- Polit, D.F., & Beck, C.T. (2014). *Essentials of Nursing Research. Methods, Appraisal, and Utilization (6<sup>th</sup> Ed)*. Lippincott Williams and Wilkins. Philippine Ed.
- Porter-O'Grady and Mallock (2002). *Quantum Leadership*. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen
- Poorchangizi, B., et.al (2019). The importance of professional values from nursing students' perspective. Retrieved from <https://bmcnurs.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12912-019-0351-1>
- Quallington, J. (2012) Ethics, Values and the Role of the Nursing Student, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://docplayer.net/18958122-Ethics-values-and-the-role-of-the-nursing-student-nursing-2012-and-beyond.html>
- Streubert & Carpenter (2007). *Qualitative in nursing:advancing the humanistic imperative*.(4<sup>th</sup> Ed.).Philadelphia, USA: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.
- Salmond, SW and Echevarria, M (2017). Healthcare Transformation and Changing Roles for Nursing. *Orthop Nurs*. 2017 Jan; 36(1): 12–25. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5266427/>
- Venzon, L., & Venzon, R. (2010). *Professional Nursing in the Philippines*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Quezon City, Philippines: C&E Publishing Inc.
- World Health Organization (2013). *Nursing and Midwifery Data Bank. The Philippines*. Retrieved from: [http://www.wpro.who.int/hrh/about/nursing\\_midwifery/db\\_philippines\\_2013.pdf](http://www.wpro.who.int/hrh/about/nursing_midwifery/db_philippines_2013.pdf)
- World Health Organization. Year of the nurse and the midwife 2020. [www.who.int/news-room/campaigns/year-of-the-nurse-and-the-midwife-2020](http://www.who.int/news-room/campaigns/year-of-the-nurse-and-the-midwife-2020). Accessed February 27, 2020. <https://www.who.int/campaigns/annual-theme/year-of-the-nurse-and-the-midwife-2020>
- Zemke, R.; Raines,C; Filipczak,B. (2000) *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace*, New York: AMACOM. Retrieved from: [http://rct.umn.edu/docs/2\\_18\\_Gen\\_diff\\_workplace.pdf](http://rct.umn.edu/docs/2_18_Gen_diff_workplace.pdf)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



**Theresa Linda Narreto-Painagan** works as an assistant professor at Central Mindanao University College of Nursing, Bukidnon since 2016. As a dedicated nurse educator, she has been highly involved in research and extension works and became a member of the institution's ethics review committee. Her research interests include local biomedical herbs and health practices, people's health-seeking behaviors, and nursing leadership and management. For such, she has been the OIC Dean in their college from January to October 2020. Prior to her current employment, she has been an instructor in Easter College Inc., Baguio City for more than 2 years and has worked as a staff nurse in Pines City Doctors Hospital Baguio City in

turn to page 48