

From Clinic to Classroom: The Lived Experiences of Nurse Educators on Transition, Challenges, and Identity Formation in Higher Education Institutions in Cavite, Philippines

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Abstract

The global shortage of nursing faculty led to increased recruitment of experienced nurses in the clinical setting into academic roles in the academe. While this transition is essential for sustaining nursing education, it poses significant transition and challenges for the nurse. In the Philippine context, research that explores the lived experiences of nurse educators in transitioning from clinical to academia remains limited. This study explored the lived experiences of nurse educators in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Cavite, Philippines. The focus of the study was understanding the experiences of transition from clinical practice to academia, the challenges encountered during early faculty years, and the process of professional identity formation as a nurse educator. A qualitative research design was used and purposive sampling was done to determine the participants. Twenty-five nurse clinicians turned nurse educators from four higher education institutions offering Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs in the province of Cavite participated in the study. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. Thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and concepts across participants' narratives. The findings are in three overarching domains: transition experiences, early-career challenges, and professional identity construction. Participants described teaching as an extension of their clinical calling while also seeking work–life balance and sustainability. Early faculty years were marked by identity disruption, pedagogical insecurity, role overload, and emotional strain. However, mentorship, collegial support, adaptive coping strategies, and continued engagement with clinical values facilitated adjustment. Over time, participants developed a unified nurse-educator identity, redefining professional success through student outcomes, long-term impact, and personal fulfillment. The transition from clinic to classroom is a challenging and complex evolving process requiring institutional support and intentional faculty development. Structured mentorship, realistic workload policies, and identity-sensitive support mechanisms are recommended to promote nurse educator retention, well-being, and educational effectiveness within Philippine higher education institutions.

Keywords: Nursing Faculty, Professional Identity, Qualitative Research, Career Transition