

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

SPARK

Doctor of Nursing Practice Projects

School of Nursing

Spring 5-25-2023

Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Education: Understanding the Perspective of Racial-Ethnic Minority Nurse Anesthesia Students

Lorette osun

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Jeannette Ineza

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://spark.siu.edu/dnpprojects>



Part of the [Medical Education Commons](#), and the [Nursing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

osun, Lorette and Ineza, Jeannette, "Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Education: Understanding the Perspective of Racial-Ethnic Minority Nurse Anesthesia Students" (2023). *Doctor of Nursing Practice Projects*. 276.

<https://spark.siu.edu/dnpprojects/276>

This DNP Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Nursing at SPARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Nursing Practice Projects by an authorized administrator of SPARK. For more information, please contact magrase@siue.edu.

Introduction of the Problem

Racial-ethnic minority Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNA) face institutional racism and discriminatory processes affecting recruitment, admission, and retention (Gardner, 2005). Racial-ethnic minorities often face challenges in their training that are different from the challenges faced by White SRNAS (Ackerman-Barger & Hummel, 2015). These students often describe an absence of acknowledgment that their experiences may be different from White students, a lack of cultural awareness from faculty and peers, and a lack of support resources on campus (Ackerman-Barger & Hummel, 2015).

Literature Review

The literature review focused on qualitative studies on educational experiences of racial-ethnic minority students, minority mentorship programs, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The findings were summarized into eight themes: cultural differences, financial barriers, faculty awareness, peer awareness, preceptor awareness, mentorship, coping strategies, and diversity, equity, and inclusion. Due to a lack of data on SRNAs, the literature review was expanded to include racial-ethnic minority students from other health studies programs.

Creating a culturally diverse education curriculum and an environment that is welcoming and accepting would help students of color to thrive (Iheduru-Anderson et al., 2020). The implementation of a Eurocentric culture often places racial-ethnic minority students at a disadvantage (Hassouneh, 2008). Racial-ethnic minority students with different cultures and linguistic backgrounds often experience difficulties in class and during clinical practice where a Eurocentric culture is applied (Hassouneh, 2008).

First-generation racial-ethnic minority college students are at a higher disadvantage because they may be the primary support for their families (Kilburn et al., 2019). Retention rates

for these students increase when additional financial support and mentorship opportunities are provided (Ortega et al., 2020). Racial-ethnic minority students reported that having nonwhite faculty was invaluable and contributed to their academic success (Brooms & Davis, 2017). They also reported that having a faculty mentor who is a racial-ethnic minority provided a sense of belonging and contributed to their social maturation and development (Brooms & Davis, 2017). The students reported that peer relationships and support played a significant role in their academic success (Harper, 2006). However, they faced isolation both in class and clinical as their peers and faculty had low expectations and were surprised by their academic ability. As a result, they withdrew from class activities and social interactions (Ackerman-Barger et al., 2020).

Creating a diverse and inclusive environment leads to numerous benefits. This leads to instructors, students, and administrators recognizing the importance of diversity in all aspects of education (Huerta et al., 2017). As a result, student academic success increases, and institutions become more inclusive in the recruitment of diverse learners and faculty (Huerta et al., 2017).

Project Methods

This quality improvement project is non-experimental and incorporates a nationwide survey of Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNAs) to capture the experiences of racial-ethnic minority SRNAs and their perspectives as current students at PWIs. Following approval from the project stakeholders and the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the survey was sent to all nurse anesthesia program directors via email to forward to their students. Open and closed-ended questions were used. Closed-ended questions allowed for uniformity of responses (Leggette, 2017). Open-ended questions allowed us to “reveal the experience as it is when it is lived through” (Madjar & Walton, 1999, p.8).

Evaluation

Three hundred and seventy-one first, second, and third year SRNAs participated in the survey. Of the 371 participant responses, 130 racial-ethnic minority students completed 100% of the survey, 101 racial-ethnic minority students did not complete the survey, and 140 students self-identified as Caucasian. Data was collected from participants who self-identified as racial-ethnic minority students and completed the full survey (n=130). A total of 241 participants were excluded from the statistical analysis. Five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions were utilized to gain understanding of the student's perceptions of diversity equity and inclusion in classrooms and clinical sites.

When asked whether they felt isolated during their education experience, about half (47%) of respondents reported a feeling of isolation in their didactic course, while most respondents (61%) reported feeling isolated in the clinical site. Furthermore, 61% of the students somewhat or strongly agreed that they felt like preceptors judged their skills or intelligence based on their ethnicity. Data obtained from the open-ended items was categorized into nine themes. The themes included: Isolation, proving, faculty awareness, preceptor awareness, peer awareness, and racism, mentorship, culture and nursing education, and DEI.

Impact on Practice

One way to address health disparities in the United States is by increasing healthcare access (Carter & McMillian-Bohler, 2020). Hispanic and Black communities are four times more likely to experience healthcare provider shortages regardless of their income (Cary et al., 2020). Racial-ethnic minority healthcare providers are more likely to work in underserved communities, urban or rural (Kilburn et al., 2019). A racially diverse nursing workforce would help to address the lack of access to healthcare for underserved populations (Gardner, 2005).

Conclusion

Data obtained from this project suggest that racial-ethnic minority students encounter more challenges in their clinical portion compared to the didactic, and students from culturally diverse backgrounds were more likely to thrive and succeed in programs that include diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies in their curriculum. The results of this project demonstrate the complexity of successful completion of nurse anesthesia education and the barriers these students must overcome.

Author Contact Information

Jeannette Ineza RN, BSN, NA-DNP student

SIUE email address – jineza@siue.edu

Personal email address – uwineza2001@gmail.com

Lorette Osun RN, BSN, NA-DNP student

SIUE email address – losun@siue.edu

Personal email address – Lorette.Osun@gmail.com