

Methodology

Project Design

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. The results will serve as a tool for PWIs to gain information on barriers and experiences racial-ethnic minority SRNAs face. Survey results will provide information on how PWIs can address barriers that racial-ethnic minority SRNAs face and improve DEI.

Following approval from the project stakeholders and the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the survey will be sent to all nurse anesthesia program directors via email to forward to their students. The survey questions will be guided by the literature review. The goal of this survey is to ensure that participants interpret the questions the same way and respond accurately to collect reliable and valid evidence (Rickards et al., 2012). Open and closed questions will be used. Closed questions will allow for uniformity of responses (Leggette, 2017). Open questions will allow us to “reveal the experience as it is when it is lived through” (Madjar & Walton, 1999, p.8).

Goals and Objectives

This project aims to survey the educational experiences of racial-ethnic minority graduate students attending PWIs and search for the best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion and how they can be applied to address systemic inequalities in graduate educational programs. The experiences of racial-ethnic minority students and the current evidence-based literature on best practices in DEI will be presented to the nurse anesthesia program faculty in the PWI.

Study Population

The targeted sample population will include racial-ethnic minority SRNAs who are currently attending a PWI. Inclusion criteria will encompass participants who are both native and non-native to the United States, and who identify as racial-ethnic minorities. Exclusion criteria include attendance at a historically Black college or university.

Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for this project are the director and assistant director of mid-sized public PWI in the Midwest. These stakeholders are attempting to improve diversity in the nurse anesthesia program and improve experiences of racial-ethnic minority SRNAs. Racial-ethnic minority SRNAs are also stakeholders as they may benefit from the changes made as a result of this project.

Sampling Frames and Techniques

The participants will be obtained using volunteer sampling techniques. Volunteer samples are used when researchers seek participants with the desired experiences who meet the study inclusion criteria (Burns & Grove, 2011). Since the aim of this study is to explore the lived experience of ethnic-minority SRNAs, volunteer sampling is essential to ensure study needs are met. The surveys will be distributed to current nurse anesthesia program directors nationwide and the program directors will voluntarily distribute the surveys to SRNA who are enrolled in their programs. The survey contains twenty-seven total questions. Twenty-four questions are Likert-style questions, and three questions are open-ended. Three questions ask about demographics.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval

This project is a quality improvement project and will be submitted to IRB at a mid-sized public PWI in the Midwest. The survey distribution and subsequent presentation to the director

and assistant director of the nurse anesthesia program will occur after IRB approval. The survey responses will be anonymous and voluntary, so the risks to human subjects in this project will be minimal.

Data collection

Qualitative evidence or data is defined as narrative, reflective, or anecdotal information that requires judgement on the part of the researcher to interpret the data (Meadows-Oliver, 2019, p.189). The researcher should avoid leading questions, but also allow the participant to explore, answer, and relate their feelings (Seidman, 2006). The general question guiding this research study is “What are the educational experiences of racial-ethnic minority graduate students attending predominantly white institution?”. Qualitative data will be collected through Likert-style survey and open-ended questions. Data collected from the study will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and by identifying recurring ideas or topics that represent different, but related aspects of the phenomenon (Meadows-Oliver, 2019, p.207).

Trustworthiness and authenticity

Trustworthiness of qualitative research includes four criteria, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Meadows-Oliver, 2019, p.209). Meadows-Oliver (2019), defines the four criteria as follows: credibility is “accuracy and validity assured through documentation of researcher actions, opinions, and biases.” Transferability is “providing information sufficient for clinicians to determine whether the study findings are meaningful to other people in similar situations.” Dependability is “ensuring study findings are consistent and repeatable.” And confirmability is “confidence that study findings reflect participants’ perspectives versus researcher perceptions.” This project aims to ensure trustworthiness by authentically interpreting and presenting data provided by the project participants.

Evaluation Analysis Plan

The goal of the quality improvement project is to highlight the experiences of nonwhite SRNAs in nurse anesthesia programs within PWIs. We want to determine what common challenges and obstacles these students face in the didactic and clinical components of the program. Survey questions are intended to obtain information and allow the student to share their experiences through completion of Likert-style items and narrative responses. Data from the surveys will be organized into themes using primary and secondary data comparison. We will compare the findings of the data collected with the findings of the literature review and discuss the differences between them. After categorizing the data into themes, we will present the information obtained to stakeholders to aid in creating a plan to address disparities in the experiences of nonwhite nurse anesthesia students.