



# The caring attributes of Filipino nurses working abroad utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Model

Alcaraz, Joyce T. 

Graduate School, Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas, Philippines

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## Abstract

The largest exporter of nurses around the world is the Philippines composing approximately 25% of all overseas nurses worldwide. Roughly 85% of hired Filipino nurses are employed and practicing in more than 50 countries globally. This study focused on exploring the caring attributes of Filipino Nurses working abroad utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Model to examine the impact of faculty staff or clinical educators on the caring attributes of Filipino nurses working outside the Philippines and how servant leadership was being manifested in their field of work. Numerous studies were conducted about Filipino Nurses' caring attributes and the role of academe. However, no study has yet been published with regard to the important role of the academe in leading and educating future nursing leaders utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Model. Through the one-on-one online interviews, data were collected from 16 Registered Nurses, in the Philippines and in their current country of employment, practicing in various units of the hospital currently working in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Canada, Australia, USA, Germany, and the United Kingdom, who graduated from different universities in the three (3) major island group in the Philippines, Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, and different years graduated. Data gathered were then transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Life-Changing Care by True Leaders Who Serve was derived from the study through the caring attributes influenced by Clinical Instructors, serving through mentoring, having a harmonious relationship in rendering care, and the desire to serve as a leader.

**Keywords:** caring attributes, Filipino nurse, CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Mode, servant-leadership

## **The caring attributes of Filipino nurses working abroad utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Model**

### **1. Introduction**

Caring is the bedrock of nursing while caring attribute is the fundamental component to give patients the best care possible. Based on the result of the 2020 Gallup Poll, the American Public has rated nurses, number 1 as the most admired, ethical, and trusted profession. Nurses held this spot for 19 years in a row (Reinhart, 2020). Filipinos fit the bill for nursing because they have American-standard education, are articulate in speaking English, and have the inherent character of Filipinos to be caring for the elderly and sick family members. In a multidialectal and multicultural country, Filipinos can adapt to new cultures and new languages as well. Filipinos are also known for being efficient at work and can work longer hours to save extra money to send back to their families (Caulin, 2018).

Several factors have influenced nurses' desire to pursue this profession, comprising of what captivated them initially to the profession and things that drive them to continue regardless of the day-to-day challenges and difficulties they encounter. Based on the official list of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) with regards to in-demand and priority college courses for A.Y. 2021-2022, Health Profession Education, where Nursing is registered, is still ranked at number six (PRC Board Admin, 2021). In one study, the most substantial factors to become a nurse and immigrating were the family network and external factors such as financial incentives. Based on participants' stories, they emphasized that they perceived being responsible for their families and that they are anticipating support for them. Financial and external motivations drive them to become a nurse. Being a nurse also made it easier for them to work abroad in case no work is available in the Philippines and be able to provide for their families financially even if it cost being away from them (Dahl, et al. 2021).

The professional competencies of nursing educators are directly significant to the development of students' values, skills, and attitudes, which promptly impact successful patient care. Imperative components of nursing educators include a caring attitude, displaying respect for their respective pupils, exhibiting empathy, and the use of caring communication abilities that influence the student learning environment (Henderson et al., 2020).

By employing the Theoretical Paradigm for CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Model, this research found how nurse educators can greatly affect the nurse caring attributes embodied with servant-leadership behavior. This also intended to provide proper motivation and encouragement to the future nurse aspirant who is less motivated and to inculcate a deeper view of what nursing is all about, for them to carry the "Nightingale's Lamp." A lamp with light signifies the wisdom which clears away the ignorance and knowledge that is considered a lasting wealth. It also represents enlightenment, experience, hope, love, comfort, and positivity, chasing off the doom and gloom that obscure everything (Maqbool, et. al., 2022). Nightingale's lamp corresponds with benevolence, authenticity, and compassion, all of which are caring qualities that are exceptionally remarkable in the nursing profession at present (Wilson, 2020).

#### *1.1 Objectives of the Study*

This study aimed to explore the caring attributes of the Filipino Nurses working abroad utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Model.

#### *1.2 Theoretical Framework*

The study is anchored on the theoretical support of the CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Model: Servant-Leader Formula and the Nursing Faculty's Transformative Leadership Behavior. The theory

“CASAGRA Transformative Leadership” is a psycho-spiritual model. It originated after the name of the investigator: Sr. CArolina S. AGRAvante. The model is a Three-Fold Transformation Leadership Concept folded into one, composed of these elements: Servant-Leader Spirituality; Self-Mastery expressed in a vibrant care complex; and Special Expertise level in the care area in which one operates. These three elements have been combined to create an identity of servant-leadership behavior for today’s professional nurse who is ready to face the obstacles and demands brought by the defining moment of the present society.

In the present era, when the gates of the foreign market have been reopened to Filipino nurses, migration has been possible, offering impressive earnings and compensations elusive of what hospitals can offer and provide. Because of this scenario, the nursing profession is in high demand, resulting in the need for nursing educators to focus on their fundamental responsibility of cultivating professional nurses who can respond to the technological, educational, and social transformation in Philippine society today. The expansion of nursing services for the global market is a challenge that the nursing academe of the Philippines is currently addressing. Above all, new nursing leaders are needed, leaders with a fresh concept who will bring a modern mentality to provide society as professional nurses. Nurses need qualified educators and effective managers who have a vision of the nursing of the future, whose fundamental standpoint is caring and support, who are qualified and capable, and who are committed to their rights in relation to the nursing profession. This model is substantial to institutions of higher education as it guides them in achieving their vision and mission as a chain of creative, qualified, and trusted mentors to achieve greatness and preeminence in domestic and international progress (de Leon, 2016).

## 2. Methods

**Research Design** - A phenomenological approach was used to explore the caring attributes of Filipino nurses working abroad. This study applied Creswell's transcendental phenomenological approach in which the researcher brackets him/herself by acknowledging his/her experience of the phenomenon under study. According to Creswell (2013), a phenomenological study characterizes the shared meaning of multiple individuals in relation to their lived experience of a concept or phenomenon, which is why this study used purposive sampling techniques and individual interviews to gain a deeper knowledge of the caring attributes of Filipino nurses working abroad.

**Respondents of the Study** - A total of 16 Registered Nurses, in the Philippines and in their current country of employment, comprising five (5) males and 11 females practicing in various units of the hospital currently working in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Canada, Australia, USA, Germany, and the United Kingdom, who graduated from different universities in the three (3) major island group in the Philippines, Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao, and different years graduated participated in the study.

- Expatriate Nurse 1 is a 26-35 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2009 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a staff nurse in Cardiology Department in the United Kingdom and has been an OFW for 7-9 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 2 is a 26-35 year-old male, married, who graduated in the year 2009 in the Luzon area. He is currently working as a staff nurse in Acute Medical Unit in the United Kingdom and has been an OFW for 7-9 years.
- On the other hand, Expatriate Nurse 3 is a 36-45 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2007 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a nurse supervisor in Emergency Department in the USA and has been an OFW for more than 14 years.
- Further, Expatriate Nurse 4 is a 36-45 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2005 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a Nurse Manager in the Operating Room Department in Australia and has been an OFW for more than 14 years.

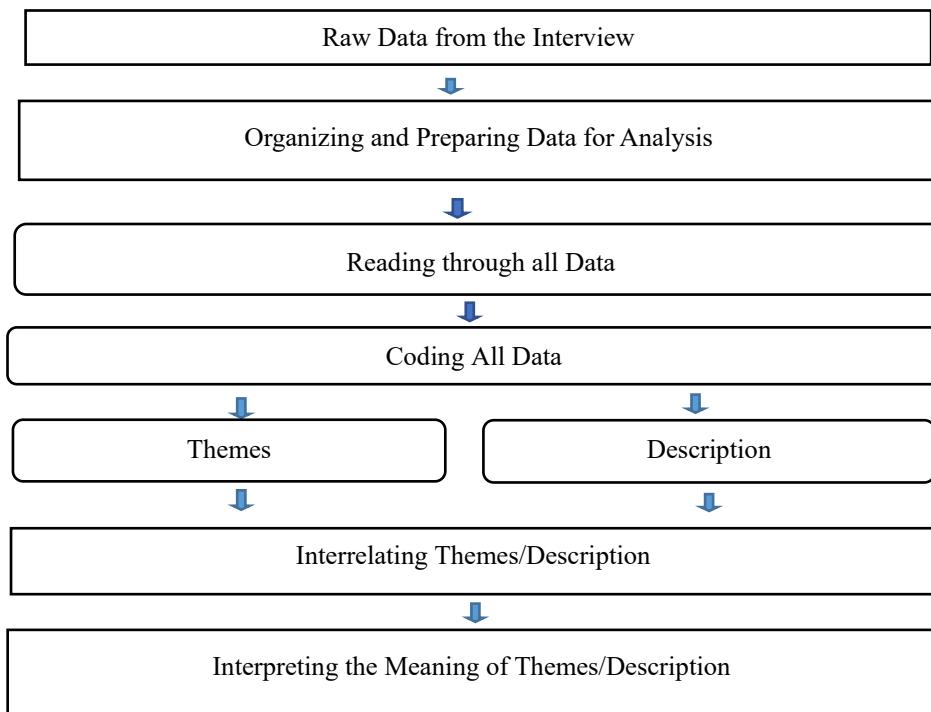
- Expatriate Nurse 5 is a 36-45 year-old male, single, who graduated in the year 2008 in the Mindanao area. He is currently working as a clinical supervisor in the Emergency Department in the USA and has been an OFW for 8 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 6 is a 36-45 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2005 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a charge nurse in the OB Ward in Canada and has been an OFW for more than 14 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 7 is a 26-35 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2010 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a staff nurse in the Emergency Department in Qatar and has been an OFW for 9 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 8 is a 26-35 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2009 in the Visayas area. She is currently working as a staff nurse in the Emergency Department in Saudi and has been an OFW for 9 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 9 is a 26-35 year-old male, married, who graduated in the year 2009 in the Visayas area. He is currently working as a team leader in the Cardiology Ward in the United Kingdom and has been an OFW for 8 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 10 is a 36-45 year-old male, married, who graduated in the year 2008 in the Luzon area. He is currently working as a staff nurse in the Emergency Department in Saudi and has been an OFW for 9 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 11 is a 46-55 year-old female, widowed, who graduated in the year 1994 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a school nurse in Saudi and has been an OFW for 13 years. E
- Expatriate Nurse 12 is a 46-55 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 1993 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a school nurse in Saudi and has been an OFW for 13 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 13 is a 46-55 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 1990 in the Visayas area. She is currently working as a staff nurse in OPD Area in Saudi and has been an OFW for 13 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 14 is a 26-35 year-old male, married, who graduated in the year 2010 in the Luzon area. He is currently working as a team leader in the Emergency Department in Saudi and has been an OFW for 9 years.
- Expatriate Nurse 15 is a 26-35 year-old female, single, who graduated in the year 2013 in the Mindanao area. She is currently working as a staff nurse in the Emergency Department in Saudi and has been an OFW for 7 years.
- Lastly, Expatriate Nurse 16 is a 26-35 year-old female, married, who graduated in the year 2008 in the Luzon area. She is currently working as a staff nurse in the Neurology Department in Germany and has been an OFW for 8 years.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - Data were collected through one-on-one interviews with the participants over a two-month time. Interviews were conducted through messenger calls and all interviews were conducted on occasions beneficial to the participants. Prior to each interview, participants were presented with a summary of CASAGRA transformation theory, and two or three main questions were given in advance to the participant.

**Data analysis** - Data were collected through one-on-one online interviews and analyzed using Creswell (2013) qualitative data analysis. The six steps that were identified by Creswell were followed during the process of data analysis. Hence, the themes identified were derived directly from the content of the data gathered from

the participant's responses during the interview. First, based on the interview, the data gathered were organized and prepared. The second step was reading and looking at all the data for complete understanding. Third, the coding of data was done by organizing and categorizing, and then labeling the categories with a term. The fourth step was done by utilizing the coding process to come up with themes and descriptions. In the fifth step, the themes and descriptions were interrelated and presented in a qualitative narrative. The sixth and last step was the interpretation of the findings or the result and the lessons gained about the caring attributes of Filipino Nurses working abroad utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Model.

### Creswell Data Analysis Process



**Ethical Consideration** - Approval to participate in the study was done through phone calls. After approval, consent was sent through email and messenger to every participant. To secure confidentiality and keep the integrity of participants' private data, the recorded information and documents were kept in a secure location when not in use so that no permitted individual could access the gathered data. The written consent form attributed to the participant's personal information was stored away from the documented information, and the written data were placed in another secure spot to assure that the participant's information could not be linked with the documented and transcribed information in the event that an unauthorized individual came into possession of the recorded data or consent forms. The recorded data and written documentation will be eradicated after the publication of the study (World Medical Association, 2013). The participants were voluntarily engaged in answering the interview questions.

### 3. Results and discussions

#### Main Theme: Life-Changing Care by True Leaders Who Serve

The objective of this study was to explore the caring attributes of Filipino Nurses working abroad utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Model. To address this objective, participants were asked about the caring attributes that were influenced by their previous Clinical Instructors/Educators and how they manifest servant leadership in providing care now that they are working outside the Philippines. The main theme was identified based on the participant's responses as indicated in Table 1.

### Caring Attributes Influenced by Clinical Instructors

The participants discussed the caring attributes they possessed now as imparted to them by their previous Clinical Instructors or Educators. Witnessing how compassionate their instructors are toward their patients stayed in their minds and was able to apply it up until now. Instructors' previous experiences working abroad were also shared with them which lead them to have an open mind in working outside the country and caring for patients with different cultures. Community immersion also impacted on some of the participants which helps them in broadening their knowledge outside the hospital. Being selfless also came up as the participants share how their instructors lend a helping hand to their patients. For most of them, nursing was not their first choice, but the encouragement of their instructors motivated them, and was able to pursue a career in nursing. This result seems consistent with the study done in Iran, which proposed that clinical educators are the major component in attaining clinical outcomes for students. It suggests that their attributes such as teaching ability, behavior, and character affect their students' learning and that they will continue to apply in their careers. (Soroush et al, 2021). Moreover, this coincides with one study, according to the author, by sharing a caring compassionate relationship with students, nursing educators can greatly influence their students' academic achievements. In addition, perseverance to finish the study has been linked with a caring supportive nurse educator, and likewise, the wearing down of the students to graduate was somehow due to educators' inadequate pure support and commitment (Preston, 2021). Below are the direct statements of some participants:

*... The way she takes care of her patient in the ICU, that kind of compassionate care. It's a big impact on how they showed us the way they care for their patient or even the way they treat the patient's relatives, it stayed on my mind and carry it through that is why I was able to practice it up until now (Expat Nurse 11)*

*...He is very professional in our duty, and soft-spoken. The way he delivers the nursing care plan to be given to the patient. And even to us, his student, he really teaches us how to be good nurses, not only to document but quality care. (Expat Nurse 10)*

*... Experiencing other cultures and incorporating that culture into her nursing practice to be more open-minded about caring for other populations or cultures. (Expat Nurse 3)*

*... Because of that experience with her, that opened my eyes, that nursing is not just really confined to a hospital or just in a classroom, but extending it to the community. It broadens my perspective that I will just not take care of myself, or my patients here in the hospital, nursing includes caring for people around you even more in those far-flung areas. When she showed us this servant leadership, I was enlightened and I became aware. (Expat Nurse 4)*

*...Her dedication to her patient, and her willingness to always help people. The passion that she have to care for her patient, to continue her study, to persevere to reach her goal. She has always been my inspiration. (Expat Nurse 5)*

*...To be honest, I wanted to be a journalist or a sportscaster ...He encouraged us to finish our degree and he helped us on how to deal with patients in a nice manner. (Expat Nurse 14)*

### Serving through Mentoring

The participants stated that they can utilize their special expertise by mentoring the new staff in their respective departments. By sharing the knowledge that they have acquired, they were able to guide the new staff and impart to them the importance of certain management or care that will be given to the patient they will handle. Teaching by experience is also a significant contributor to mentoring newcomers. Mentors' vast skills that were attained through several years of working experience were being made use of in training their new colleagues. Empathy towards the new staff was also observed by the participants. By recognizing the current level of ability of the new staff, the participants are giving them time to absorb the new knowledge or ideas that

they are sharing. Slowly they are introducing to them the responsibilities, tasks, or management needed in their department, putting themselves in that kind of situation. Lastly, teaching by example was also discussed by the participants. They perceived that the things they want the newcomers to learn will be easily understood if they will be able to observe and witness that they are practicing what they are teaching. According to Saletnik (2018), "The mentor can be defined as an experienced individual who guides a novice member's transition to a new culture and the expectations of a new role." She emphasized that demonstrating skills and the ability to follow examples are essential attitudes of mentoring. She also discussed having empathy by having the skill to think of how it felt to be in a position where everything was new. Sharing the experiences that were learned by the mentor whether it is a success or failure has great significance to the mentee as it allows them to attempt to do different things and not be afraid of defeat or loss. In one study, it was described that mentoring the staff was driven to become efficient bedside healthcare workers. The mentors' behavior impacted their way on how to react and handle a conflict which helps them to boost their confidence, comfort, and competence with their clinical skills and abilities (Gazaway et.al, 2019). The participants made the following statements:

*... Especially in the triage area because I believe this is my forte, my expertise when it comes to triage. Triaging is the 1<sup>st</sup> line that is why I'm trying to impart to them. (Expat Nurse 14)*

*... It is awkward at first 'coz you are an alien in this country however it always boils down on, like your experience what really matters here, your knowledge on sharing this with your students is what really matters. (Expat Nurse 5)*

*... I'm doing preceptorship to nurses and incoming supervisors. I put myself into their position and think about the level of expertise they are in at that moment and gave them introductions to the much higher role they are about to encounter slowly and give them time to absorb it and not shock them with the things they should be doing. (Expat Nurse 3)*

*... I have to let them see what they have to need to know because you can't give what you don't have, so if you do not know what you are doing, you can't give the proper message. So you need to have the knowledge, I showed them that I do my studies, I do my research on the operations that we do so I know what to prepare when the operation is ongoing. I showed it myself first because if they don't see it they will think that I'm just pretending but I have to show it to them. We have this code: Teach One, See One, Do One, so I have to teach them, you have to see me and you have to do one. (Expat Nurse 4)*

### **Having Harmonious Relationship in Rendering Care**

As the interview continued, having a harmonious relationship within the team in rendering care also emerged. Most of the participants believe that being supportive of each other and having teamwork within the department is needed to attain an amicable work environment for everyone. Being responsible for the assigned task also came as the interview goes on. Participants stated that in their department they have assignments or tasks to be done during their shift, by completing them, it lessens the burden on their superiors or colleagues. To have a cordial workplace, participants also included that being professionally competent is needed. In a place where an unavoidable situation may happen at any time, being professional is essential. This finding provided evidence to support a study done in Brazil, it was discussed that, as the health team carries out its day-to-day task, a positive interpersonal relationship among its member is a tremendously important component considering that collaboration is essential to performing the required tasks and directly affects the good performance of the staff, which in turn has a great impact on the type of patient care. Furthermore, creating a balanced and coordinated work setting with a lower amount of disputes between members is one of the main contributors that cause individual and collective stress and suffering. It also mentioned the significance of having a positive interpersonal relationship among the team members of the department as it affects the welfare of the members and consolidates the team (Rocha et al., 2019). In a study posted in British Journal for Nursing, the author emphasized the significance of harmonious relationships in a workplace to the staff in terms of their welfare and

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output. As the nurse manager leads the team and the trust in their leader was gained by the staff, the study showed that having this kind of positive concept results in a more beneficial relationship with their colleagues having a better ambiance in their workplace. It also points out the correlation between harmonious relationships among the staff and organizational commitment and engagement. It shows a positive outcome in the healthcare framework that results in staff provision of extra help to the staff and patients, showing compassion, and being proactive inside and outside the work area. The author also added that due to this scenario, the staff tends to stay on the job for two (2) more years (Allen, 2020). The statements below were given by the participants:

*“...Doing my role and supporting my charge nurse and being a complaint about what I should do.” (Expat Nurse 10)*

*“... I’m helping my team leader by checking the assigned task or making sure that I have accomplished the assignments that will be assigned to me in a certain shift so that it will not be a burden for my team leader in the future.” (Expat Nurse 15)*

*“... To be professional regardless of what situation we are in.” (Expat Nurse 10)*

### **The Desire to Serve as a Leader**

Lastly, the desire to serve as a leader unfolded. As for the participants, having empathy towards their staff is a substantial characteristic that a leader should possess. As servant leaders, they strive for discernment to know and meet first the needs of their colleagues and empathize with them. The participants also claimed that the best way to be a leader is to lead by example. As they say, “walk the talk.” It is how they guide their staff through their behavior and actions rather than what they just say. Being compassionate was also mentioned. A kind of care that could change a leader from the throne to be of service to the team and encourage them to hone their abilities and talents. As a leader, showing humility is a trait that a true leader acquires. As an expatriate, being a supervisor leading a team of people who live in that country is challenging, as the participant verbalized. She then learned how to be assertive but at the same time show humility to her staff. These assertions reflect the views of Sherman (2019), according to her “Ultimately, the role of the nurse leader is to help their staff to be as productive and effective as they can be. A servant leadership approach can be a powerful antidote to help combat staff burnout, disengagement, and turnover.” “Servant leadership is caring leadership”, she added. In her article, it was discussed that empowering and uplifting one’s team through encouragement is a trademark of a true servant leader. As they go along with their task, trust was created because the team members feel that for certain, their leader is concerned about them and their welfare. Servant leadership acknowledges the uniqueness of the personality of each member, that each one of them has different needs, interests, desires, goals, strengths, and limitations. Servant leaders also consider the staff background, core values, beliefs, assumptions, and idiosyncratic behaviors. As trust is built between the team, it serves as a maneuver for the staff from self-serving to other-serving behavior that results in making a positive change in other people’s lives (Eva et al., 2019). Below statements were made by the participants:

*“...I tried my best to think about another person’s perspective of their roles and introduce them to things slowly by helping them absorb their environment more or their job description before they will be able to practice it better” (Expat Nurse 3).*

*“...I showed servant leadership by serving like I tried to live by example, I showed my colleagues that this is how you do the proper nursing care of this operation, I showed them that you have to make sure that you do your part in a proper way like what is expected of you in caring for this patient especially that they are not awake” (Expat Nurse 4).*

*“...If you do not really have the heart for this profession, you will never last working” (Expat Nurse 5).*

*“...I learned how to be more assertive and I learned how to be humble at the same time” (Expat*

#### **4. Conclusion and recommendations**

The aim of this study was to delve into the caring attributes of Filipino nurses who are currently working outside the Philippines utilizing the CASAGRA Transformative Leadership Model. The foregoing chapters explored how the faculty staff or clinical educators impacted the caring attributes of the nurses that were applied as they work in other countries giving care to different nationalities and how servant leadership was being manifested in their field of work. The research questions were examined through a qualitative phenomenological method in a form of one-on-one online interviews. The utilization of one-on-one interviews provided a deeper understanding of the first-hand encounters and practices of Filipino nurses working abroad so that the pros and cons could be addressed openly and honestly, making the interpretation and analysis of the results even more substantial. In accordance with the study proposition, a review of the literature was provided. Lastly, the results collected were interpreted and justified as to why they were relevant to the study, and comparisons were made with other studies previously conducted. In correlation with the CASAGRA Transformative Model, wherein, the servant leadership of the nurse educator or faculty staff and their willingness to share their acquired knowledge through experiences can explain and predict the continuous formation of nursing leadership behavior. This study highlighted the effects of teaching no matter how many years passed by still has an important role in every student in their future endeavor. The knowledge and behavior that was inculcated in them during their college years will manifest as they care for their patients and help them be a servant leader not only to the patients but to everyone surrounding them.

This study revealed the significance of the faculty staff or clinical educators on the caring attributes of the Filipino nurses working abroad and how they demonstrate servant leadership in their current workplace. Thus, the following recommendations are hereby presented. For academic discipline, the concept of servant leadership may be applied by being fervent about their craft and profession. The eagerness and enthusiasm to share their acquired skills and experiences with their respective students are one of the many ways. In addition, upgrading their knowledge by attending workshops and seminars regarding current directions in nursing and the application of evidence-based practices through patient simulation. The focal point of the academe when it comes to leadership in nursing should be the one that can confront the principle of the rapidly-changing world. Nursing educators may revisit their fundamental responsibility of cultivating and developing future nursing leaders who are aware of technological, educational, and social changes. Professional nurses may be aware of their special expertise. Mentoring and preceptorship programs and activities are both beneficial to the mentor and mentee. Newly hired nurses should be educated through hands-on experience and evidenced-based practice along with the demonstration of personal values and character needed in the specific unit. Hospital authorities and stakeholders may motivate nursing staff when it comes to a harmonious relationship inside and outside the working area through the establishment of an organization that will focus directly on promoting teamwork. Future studies may also include the patient as a collaborative partner in exploring the caring attributes of nurses.

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