Empowering Nurses of Minority in the Face of Incivility and Bullying: Through the Lens of Phenomenology

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Abstract
Up to 85% of nurses have reported exposure to incivility in the workplace (Hunt and Marini, 2012). The often-subtle nature of incivility toward nurses in a minority population may partially explain why it remains a problem. Healthcare organizations realize the need for civility to counter the high turnover rate, staff shortages, and low job satisfaction reported by nurses, but lack understanding of how nurses of a minority population perceive incivility and bullying. This study aimed to answer the research question how do nurses with minority representation experience incivility and bullying versus empowerment in the workplace? A descriptive phenomenological design used a purposeful sample of minority registered nurses to explore how they experience these phenomena in the workplace. Participants were recruited through electronic communications with leaders of national healthcare and nursing organizations, minority nurses’ associations, and word of mouth via social media in the United States. The Workplace Incivility Survey was used to identify minority nurses who have experienced incivility. Then, semi-structured interviews were collected to investigate nurses’ experiences in depth. Colaizzi’s Descriptive Phenomenological Method guided the data analysis. The themes identified in the analysis indicated that nurses representing the minority population have a range of unique experiences related to incivility, bullying, and empowerment. These experiences are influenced by implicit bias, microaggression, and systemic racism for minority nurses. Minority nurses also offered several ideas for empowerment, such as resources, tools, education, instilling confidence and power, providing mentors, and autonomy provided to nurses individually and for the organization, provide more diverse people in management positions, managerial accountability, consequences for bad behavior, anonymity reporting, and unification throughout the organization. Findings point toward future research for interventions and education in health care systems and schools of nursing.

Keywords: minority nurses, incivility, minorities in nursing, empowerment nursing, empowering nurses, minority nurses, bullying, phenomenology, and incivility.