

A GLIMPSE ON THE LIVES OF SCHOOL NURSES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the College of Nursing - Graduate Programs

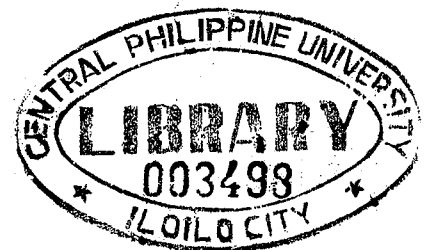
Central Philippine University

Jaro, Iloilo City

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Nursing



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April 2019

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ABSTRACT

School nurses today expand their role and go beyond the standard boundaries as they face new challenges. They help positively in the development of the students in promoting health and safety, in intervening with the existing and the potential problems, in providing services, and in collaborating with health officials. School nursing plays an important role in students' lifelong health and academic successes, but the role and functions of school nurses are often contentious and misconstrued. Therefore, there is a need to explore the lives of the school nurses; thus, the conduct of the study. This phenomenological study described the lived experiences of seven school nurses. They were chosen using purposeful sampling and saturation principles were applied all throughout to the point when no new data emerged. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Colaizzi's (1978) strategy of data analysis was employed. Ethical considerations for research with human subjects were observed. Informed consent from each participant was secured and pseudonyms were used. The four overarching themes emerged: (1) school nursing as both care and responsibility, (2) challenges to school nursing, (3) coping with the challenges of school nursing, and (4) achieving sense of commitment to service and accomplishment. This research has enhanced knowledge and understanding about experiences of school nurses. This would enable them to effectively implement the school health care programs. Furthermore, school nurses are suggested to conduct home visits, communicate to other health agencies (hospitals, clinics), and do follow up care to enhance continuum of care. The family and significant

others should be included in the recommendation to enhance their awareness and develop their moral and social support for the school nurses. The nursing and medical schools and allied professions should be provided with the results of this study to serve as basis for the improved school health services. Further, students must be encouraged to consult the school clinic and communicate their problems to the school nurses. The healthcare professionals must attend seminars and undergo training about school nursing to keep them abreast with the advances of the profession. The Department of Health should utilize the results of this study to conceptualize and formulate effective health programs intended for school nurses and should facilitate the education of the community on health promotion. The local government units should formulate programs and policies to improve the working conditions of the school nurses, further this would enhance the school nurses' job satisfaction and productivity at work. Future researchers can use the results of this study as basis for further studies on this area and make it the study as a benchmark for future research on school nursing, lived experiences of school nurses, and health promotion in school campuses. Also findings of this study add to the growing knowledge base on the lived experiences of school nurses and are relevant in the broader context of health practice, education, and research focused on the meanings of lived experiences of school nurses.