

The Perspectives of Chinese American Nurses on Becoming Nurse Faculty

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Introduction

Ethnic minorities continue to experience health disparities in the United States.¹ Based on consistent research evidence, the National Academies of Medicine endorse a diverse healthcare workforce that mirrors the population they serve as a critical strategy to achieve health equality.² Multiple nursing leadership boards support the hiring of more minority nurse educators to promote academic success for minority students based on robust research findings;³ however, the lack of diversity in nurse faculty remains an ongoing issue both nationally⁴ and in Washington State.⁵ The Washington Center for Nursing (WCN), an organization dedicated to building a diverse, highly-qualified nursing workforce,⁶ found that faculty diversity (18%) lagged behind student diversity (25%) in Washington in 2017.⁵ In response, the WCN established a Diversity Committee in 2017, and one of its overarching goals is to promote the recruitment and retention of minority nurse faculty in Washington.⁶ The committee recognized that to achieve this goal, they needed to assess minority nurses' perspectives on becoming nurse educators. With Chinese Americans as the fastest-growing ethnic minority population in the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area⁷ and this Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) student's connection with the Pacific-Northwest Chinese Nurses Association, the Diversity Committee requested that this student conduct an assessment project on Chinese American nurses. The purpose of this DNP project was to examine the facilitators and barriers for Chinese American nurses to become nurse faculty. The outcome of this project will guide WCN's strategies to recruit more Chinese American nurse faculty in Washington.

Objectives

1. To identify factors that influence Chinese American registered nurses' decisions to become nurse educators
2. To examine Chinese American nurse educators' decision to pursue academia and their perception of supports and barriers

Background

For the past decade, minority groups have drastically increased to make up 30% of the Washington State population. In contrast, the percentage of minority nurses has risen to make up only 14.5% of the profession.^{7,8} When considering individual ethnic/racial groups, Asians currently make up 8.8% of the Washington general population and 8% of the Washington nursing workforce.⁸ There is a lack of state-level data on Asian nurse educators. However, given that nationally, only 2% of all nurse educators identified as Asian,⁹ Asian nurse educators are likely to be underrepresented in the nursing faculty of Washington State. Considering the fast growth of Chinese Americans in the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area,⁷ there is pressure to recruit and retain more Chinese American faculty to meet the nursing demand of a fast-growing community.

Minority nurses play a crucial role in advancing minority health by delivering culturally sensitive care, overcoming language barriers, and engaging in disparity research.¹⁰⁻¹² Minority faculty are valuable assets to the education sector and the healthcare industry because they help improve retention and completion rates among minority students.^{13,14} It is imperative to understand minority nurse faculty's career perceptions before institutions begin to engage in the recruitment and retention of prospective faculty. A focused literature review revealed essential attributes of a workplace that were attractive to minority nurse faculty candidates included a welcoming academic culture, the presence of a role model and mentor, and rewarding

experience.^{15,16} Common reasons that discouraged minority nurses to teach included inadequate recruitment efforts, educational debt, and less-than-doctoral degree attainment.¹⁷ This literature review also identified a lack of prior studies on Asian American and Chinese American nurse faculty's career perceptions. This project aims to address this gap of knowledge.

Summary of Implementation Process

Model

The Ottawa model was selected to guide this DNP project owing to its heavy emphasis on the examination of support and barriers and categories to assess.¹⁸ Given the scope of this project, it was a partial implementation of the Assessment Phase, focusing on “potential adopters” and “practice environment.” The “potential adopters” for this project were Chinese American registered nurses. The assessment of the “practice environment” focused on evaluating the Chinese American nursing faculty's perception of the nursing academic environment in Washington State.

Survey Development

The University of Washington (UW) Catalyst WebQ survey tool was utilized to create an anonymous survey (see Appendix A), guided by the Ottawa Model¹⁸ and the Salvucci et al.¹⁵ survey study on nurse faculty diversity. All respondents were asked demographic questions and a screening question about whether they were currently nurse educators. Nurses who were not educators were directed to the “potential adopter” question set to learn about Chinese American registered nurses' awareness, attitudes, resources, and knowledge of, as well as concerns about becoming nurse educators. This question set included eight questions, including seven 5-point Likert scale questions and one open-ended question. Nurse educators were directed to the “practice environment” question set to understand the important supports and barriers that had influenced their career decisions and perceptions of the academic culture, structure, level of support, and inclusion, as well as pay and benefits. This question set included 18 questions, including 16 questions rated on a 5-point Likert scale and two open-ended questions. The survey design was approved by the WCN Diversity Committee and the UW DNP Final Project Supervisory Committee.

Survey Delivery

The original survey dissemination plan was to reach the target population by accessing the demographic database of the Washington Department of Health Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission. However, the database did not narrow down ethnic subgroups at the level of “Chinese” or “Chinese American.” Subsequently, this project proceeded with an alternative plan to distribute the survey through the Pacific-Northwest Chinese Nurses Association (PCNA), a local non-profit organization, via its social media accounts. PCNA's Facebook page has approximately 40 followers; the survey link was made public on this page. WeChat is a social media platform and messenger application that is used predominately by Chinese speakers. PCNA has an exclusive chatroom with over 200 Washington Chinese American RNs. The use of WeChat involved posting a link in this chatroom. Guided by Kayam et al.'s¹⁹ recommendation on the use of social media for survey distribution, this project utilized weekly announcements to promote participant engagement. No paid ads were used. All RN respondents were recruited from Wechat and Facebook. Since there were only few nurse faculty responding to the survey, this student requested two nurse faculty members on Wechat to reach

out to their Chinese American nurse faculty colleagues via the snowball sampling method. The survey was open for 12 days. The survey responses were analyzed and summarized using descriptive statistics for quantitative questions. Qualitative data analysis, including coding responses and categorizing common themes, was used for open-ended questions.²⁰

Outcomes and Deliverables

Both objectives were met. Forty Chinese American registered nurses and three nurse faculty members completed the survey (Appendix B). All respondents were female, and the majority (68%) of them were 18-40 years of age. Over half (56%) of the group held a bachelor's degree in nursing as their highest degree. In terms of work experience, nearly half (46%) of the individuals had less than five years of paid nursing clinical experience in the U.S. or overseas. The majority (93%) of the respondents reported having less than five years of teaching experience in nursing education (Appendix B, Table 1). The option for "no teaching experience" was not provided on the survey.

Forty out of the 43 surveyed individuals were not nurse educators. According to the Ottawa model,¹⁸ they were the "potential adopters" of a teaching role. For *Objective 1*, identifying factors that influence Chinese American registered nurses' decisions to become nurse educators, 80% (n=32) of RNs agreed that faculty diversity should match with student diversity. Ninety percent (n=36) of the RNs felt that increasing the diversity of nurse faculty can increase the diversity of the nursing study body. Forty-eight percent (n=19) of RNs reported knowing the resources that are available to them should they decide to become a nurse educator. Overall, 38% (n=15) of RNs planned on becoming a nurse educator within the next ten years (Appendix B, Table 2).

To assess Chinese American RNs' "concerns" toward academia, they were asked to rate the level of significance on 22 factors related to the culture, structure, and financial considerations of academia. Factors were ranked according to the means (Appendix B, Figure 1). The range of means was from 3.45 to 4.63 on a 5-point Likert scale. The top five most important factor for their decision to teach were "working at an institution that promotes ethnic/racial diversity and inclusion" (n=38, mean=4.63), "passion for nursing knowledge and/or practice" (n=40, mean=4.60), "work-life balance" (n=40, mean=4.60), level of English proficiency needed" (n=40, mean=4.45), and "clinical practice requirement" (n=40, mean=4.40). Factors pertaining to financial considerations such as "pay and benefits" (n=40, mean=4.25) and "job security" (n=40, mean=4.28) were ranked in the middle of the spectrum. "Visa sponsorship" (n=40, mean=3.45) was the least significant factor.

Eleven participants provided write-in responses to share their opinions on being a Chinese American nurse educator. Qualitative data analysis revealed several common themes, including "diversity," "role model," "communication," "resource," and "confidence" (Table 3). In particular, having an Asian American nurse educator as a role model was found to be a significant influencer on four out of the 11 RN respondents. "Having a role model" was a factor not evaluated in the aforementioned survey questions. The qualitative data analysis, therefore, supplemented the quantitative data in building a deeper understanding of the group. For instance, one RN said: "I had an Asian professor who served as my mentor during my time at the university. She had a profound impact on my self-esteem and professional trajectory." Another RN stated: "one of my good friends who graduated as a psych NP [nurse practitioner] last year had become a university clinical instructor. She inspired me to consider becoming a nurse educator in the future."

For *Objective 2*, examining Chinese American nurse educators' decision to pursue academia and their perception of supports and barriers, three nurse educators responded to the survey (Appendix B, Table 4). All three indicated there was a need to hire more Asian American and Chinese American nurse educators. They reported having adequate mentorship and support to become nurse educators, and their institutions had offered mentorship and resources to support their roles in academia. None felt that a non-English speaker's accent influenced hiring decisions at their institutions. One person reported active recruitment effort of minority faculty by her institution. Two people reported minority nurse faculty generally felt comfortable working at their institutions. None of the three respondents felt a sense of isolation within their departments. One person sensed a lack of appreciation for the contribution that she made at work. All of them agreed that the salary for nurse educators had not kept up with the nursing salaries in the clinical practice setting. All felt satisfied with their job and were able to envision themselves remaining in academia for the next ten years.

Facilitators and Barriers

One challenge to the survey was the concurrent heated debate related to the coronavirus outbreak in the online chatroom on social media. The announcement and survey reminders posted by this student had to compete with a very active online discussion on this epidemic. This student attempted to recruit more nurse educators by using the snowball sampling method. Unfortunately, the student was not able to reach more than three nurse educators in time before the student finished the project.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

This project captured a mutual sense of agreement shared among the Chinese American nurse respondents for needing more Asian American nurse educators in Washington. The survey also showed the interest level to teach within the RN group, with just over one-third of the "potential adopters" planning to teach within the next ten years. Nevertheless, under half (48%) of the group indicated they knew where to get resources to become nurse educators. Thus, the WCN is recommended to reach out to the local Chinese American nursing community to introduce its mission and available services. The WCN is recommended to dedicate resources to provide Chinese American RNs with information on how to become nurse educators. Given the importance of role models, as discovered from this project, the WCN is also recommended to facilitate mentorship between Chinese American nurse educators and RNs who are interested in teaching. The WCN can also work with local ethnic minority nurses associations/groups to reach and recruit attendees for its annual workshop, "So You Want to Be a Professor."

A prior national survey study¹⁵ showed a welcoming academic culture and the presence of a role model and mentor were essential attributes of workplaces that would be attractive to potential minority nurse faculty candidates. This DNP project demonstrated consistent findings from the participating Chinese American RNs and educators. It is important to note that due to the low number of Chinese American nurse educator respondents, no conclusive claims could be drawn about the "practice environment" (i.e. academic environment in Washington State) from the limited data. The WCN is recommended to investigate further on Chinese American (and other Asian American) nurse educators' career perceptions in future projects to better understand their decisions to teach and to develop faculty recruitment recommendation. This knowledge is fundamental to developing strategies to attract and hire more Chinese (and Asian) American nurse educators.

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Appendix A: Survey

Introduction

Purpose

You are invited to participate in a survey of Chinese or Chinese American registered nurses and nurse faculty. This survey is supported by the Washington Center for Nursing (WCN), a non-profit leadership organization that is committed to promoting recruitment and retention of racial/ethnic minority nurse faculty in Washington.

Considering the fast growth of Chinese Americans in the Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan area, WCN is interested in developing strategies to recruit and retain more Chinese American faculty to meet the nursing demand of a fast-growing community. The purpose of this survey is to understand facilitators and barriers for Chinese American nurses to become nurse faculty. The results will guide WCN's strategies development.

Procedure

This online survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation is anonymous and confidential. Please answer the questions as openly and honestly as possible. You can ask questions about this survey or inquire about the final analysis of this project in confidence by contacting the Washington Center for Nursing at info@wcnursing.org.

1. What is your age (years)?
 - 18-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51-60
 - 61+
2. What is your gender identity? _____
3. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed? *If currently enrolled in a degree program, check the highest degree received.*
 - Associate degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Professional doctoral degree (e.g., DNP, DrPH, EdD)
 - Ph.D. degree or equivalent (e.g., Doctor of Science)
 - BOTH a Professional doctoral degree (e.g., DNP, DrPH, EdD) and a Ph.D. degree or equivalent (e.g., Doctor of Science)

4. How many total years of paid nursing clinical experience do you have in the U.S. and overseas? *This includes part-time, full-time, certified nurse assistant, nurse technician, RN, APRN, and etc.*
- less than 5 years
 - 5-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - more than 20 years
5. How many total years of paid teaching experience in nursing (including part-time and full-time) do you have in the U.S. and overseas?
- less than 5 years
 - 5-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - more than 20 years

Survey branching question

6. Please check the option that best describes your current employment:
- I am a registered nurse, currently NOT employed in any educational institution as a nurse educator. (go to Q7)
 - I am currently a nurse educator at an educational institution in Washington. (Skip to Q13)

Survey for RN

The following questions examine the supports and barriers for Chinese American nurses to become nurse faculty.

Please choose the following option that best describes your agreement to the statement:

7. The demographics of the nursing faculty need to reflect the demographics of the nursing student body.
- strongly agree
 - agree
 - neutral
 - disagree
 - strongly disagree

8. Increasing the diversity of nurse faculty can increase the diversity of the nursing student body.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

9. I know the resources that are available to me should I decide to become a nurse educator.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

10. I plan on becoming a nurse educator (full-time or part-time) at an educational institution within the next 10 years.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

11. How important are the following factors when you consider becoming a nurse faculty?

- teaching is rewarding
- the teacher-student relationship
- leadership opportunities
- research opportunities
- the structure of the academic setting
- passion for nursing knowledge and/or practice
- work-life balance
- longer breaks for holiday
- pay and benefits
- nursing faculty position is a respectable occupation
- job security

- giving back to the community
- visa sponsorship
- mentorship available from peer faculty
- working at an institution that promotes ethnic/racial diversity and inclusion
- level of English proficiency needed
- the amount of work required to secure grant/funding
- teaching experience requirement
- clinical practice requirement
- graduate degree requirement
- mental stress as a teacher
- maintaining balance between teaching and research contributions

- 1=The Least Important
- 2=Not Important
- 3=Fair
- 4=Important
- 5=Very Important

12. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Is there anything else you would like to share about becoming a Chinese American nurse educator? _____

Survey for Faculty

The following questions evaluate the Chinese American nursing faculty's perception of the nursing academic environment.

Please choose the following option that best describes your agreement to the statement:

13. The demographics of the nursing faculty need to reflect the demographics of the nursing student body.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

14. Increasing the diversity of nurse faculty can increase the diversity of the nursing student body.

- strongly agree
- agree

- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

15. There is a need to hire more Asian American nurse faculty.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

16. There is a need to hire more Chinese American nurse faculty.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

17. I had the mentorship and resources that I needed to become a nurse educator.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

18. My institution offers mentorship and resources to support my role in academia.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

19. A non-native English speaker's accent does not influence the decision of hiring at my institution.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

20. We actively recruit nursing faculty from underrepresented minority groups at my institution.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

21. Underrepresented minority nursing faculty are generally comfortable working at my institution.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

22. I feel a sense of isolation within my nursing program, department, or school/college.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

23. In general, I sense a lack of appreciation of the contributions that I make at work.

- strongly agree
- agree

- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

24. Salary for nurse educators has not kept up with nursing salaries in the clinical practice setting.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

25. I am satisfied with my current career as a nurse educator.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

26. I can envision myself remaining in academia for the next 10 years.

- strongly agree (Skip to Q28)
 - agree (Skip to Q28)
 - neutral (Skip to Q28)
 - disagree (To Q27)
 - strongly disagree (To Q27)
- No response (skip to Q28)

27. What will be your next career move and why? _____

28. How important are the following factors when you consider becoming a nurse faculty?

- teaching is rewarding
- the teacher-student relationship
- leadership opportunities
- research opportunities
- the structure of the academic setting
- passion for nursing knowledge and/or practice

- work-life balance
- longer breaks for holiday
- pay and benefits
- nursing faculty position is a respectable occupation
- job security
- giving back to the community
- visa sponsorship
- mentorship available from peer faculty
- working at an institution that promotes ethnic/racial diversity and inclusion
- level of English proficiency needed
- the amount of work required to secure grant/funding
- teaching experience requirement
- clinical practice requirement
- graduate degree requirement
- mental stress as a teacher
- maintaining balance between teaching and research contributions

- 1=The Least Important
- 2=Not Important
- 3=Fair
- 4=Important
- 5=Very Important

29. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey! Is there anything else you would like to share about being a Chinese American nurse educator?

Appendix B Survey results

Table 1
Background of Survey Respondents (N=43)

Variables	n	Percentage
Gender		
Female	43	100
Age		
18-30 years	13	30
31-40 years	16	38
41-50 years	10	23
51-60 years	4	9
61+ years	0	0
Highest Education		
Associate's degree	4	9
Bachelor's degree	24	56
Master's degree	8	19
Ph.D. degree	3	9
Professional doctoral degree	4	7
Current Employment		
Clinical practice	40	93
Nursing education	3	7
Years of Nursing Clinical Experience		
Less than 5 years	20	46
5-10 years	12	28
11-20 years	8	19
more than 20 years	3	7
Years of Nursing Teaching Experience		
Less than 5 years	40	93
5-10 years	2	5
11-20 years	0	0
More than 20 years	1	2

Table 2. Chinese American registered nurses' agreement to the following statements (N=40)

Statement	Strongly agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly Disagree n (%)	Mean (SD)
The demographics of the nursing faculty need to reflect the demographics of the nursing student body (n=40).	21 (52%)	11 (28%)	5 (12%)	2 (5%)	1 (3%)	1.77 (1.03)
Increasing the diversity of nurse faculty can increase the diversity of the nursing student body (n=40).	32 (80%)	4 (10%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)	1.35 (0.83)
I know the resources that are available to me should I decide to become a nurse educator (n=40).	9 (23%)	10 (25%)	13 (32%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	2.55 (1.15)
I plan on becoming a nurse educator in the next 10 years (n=40).	9 (23%)	6 (15%)	13 (32%)	6 (15%)	6 (15%)	2.85 (1.35)

Figure 1. Significance of Factors Affecting Chinese American RNs to Become a Nurse Faculty (N=40)

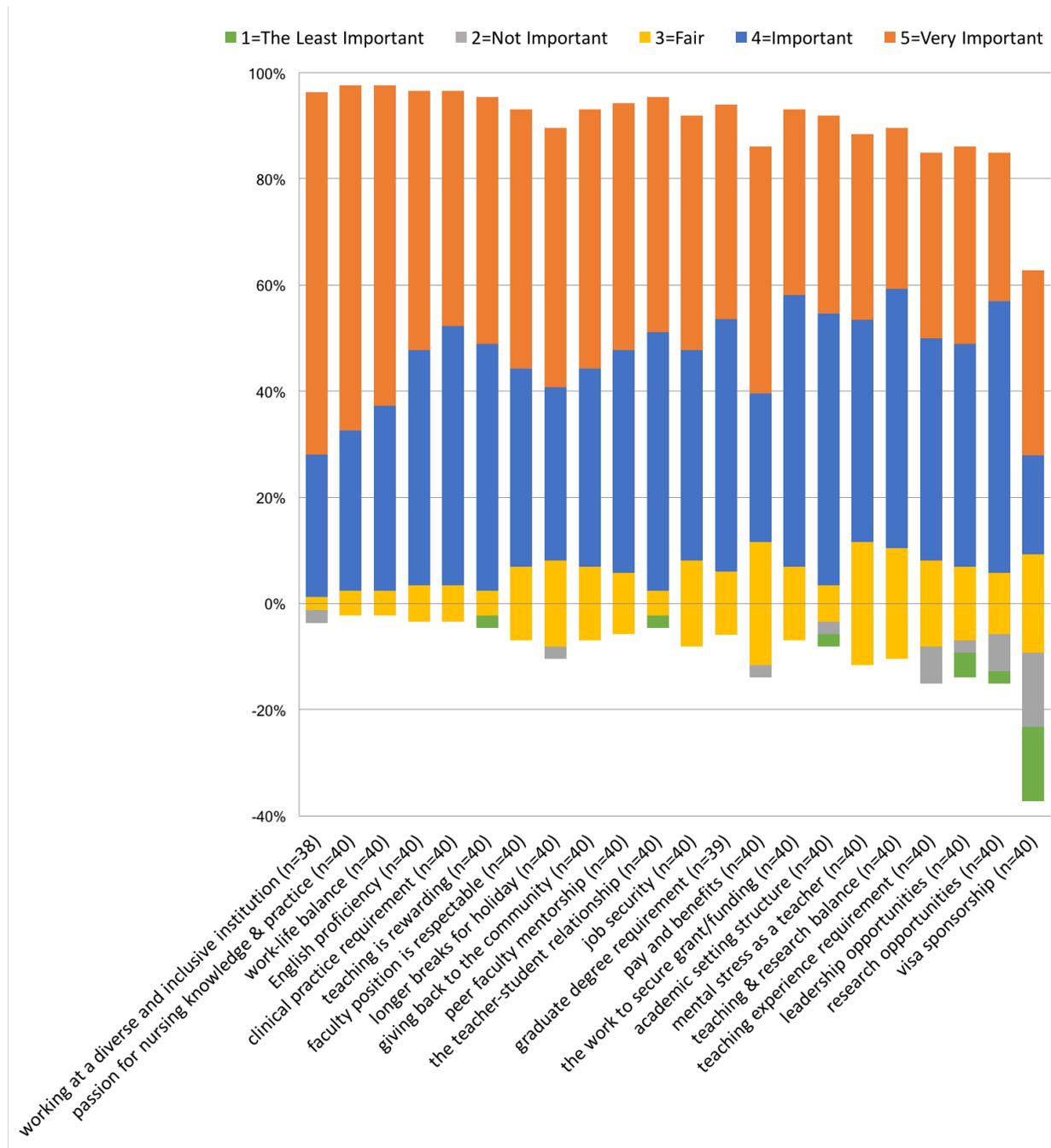


Table 3. Analysis of qualitative data (N=11)

Theme Category	Lower-level coding	Quote Examples
Diversity	Workforce diversity, faculty diversity, preceptor diversity	Generally speaking, Asian faculty is over-represented in academia, but not in nursing.
		I rarely met a ESL instructor in nursing school. I think this experience as a nursing student definitely discouraged me from wanting to become one.
		I hope nurse faculty can be diverse to meet the needs of a diverse nursing workforce.
Role model	role model; inspired to teach; mentorship	I had an Asian professor who served as my mentor during my time at the university. She had a profound impact on my self-esteem and professional trajectory.
		One of my good friends who graduated as a psych NP last year had become a university clinical instructor. She inspired me to consider becoming a nurse educator in the future.
Confidence	assertiveness; respect by students	Being assertive is important for our Chinese educators to practice.
Communication	communication; language proficiency	Language/English proficiency matters, however, communication outweighs language.
Resource	resource; training; benefit of teaching	I hope for more mentorship and training to adequately prepare new nurse educators to teach effectively.
		Maybe more accessible resources about how to become a nursing educator. Need more examples about the advantages of becoming a nursing educator.

Table 4. Chinese American nurse faculty's agreement to the following statements (N=3)

Statement	Strongly agree (n)	Agree (n)	Neutral (n)	Disagree (n)	Strongly Disagree (n)
The demographics of the nursing faculty need to reflect the demographics of the nursing student body.	2	0	1	0	0
Increasing the diversity of nurse faculty can increase the diversity of the nursing student body.	2	1	0	0	0
There is a need to hire more Asian American nurse faculty.	2	0	1	0	0
There is a need to hire more Chinese American nurse faculty.	1	2	0	0	0
I had the mentorship and resources that I needed to become a nurse educator.	2	1	0	0	0
My institution offers mentorship and resources to support my role in academia.	2	1	0	0	0
A non-native English speaker's accent does not influence the decision of hiring at my institution.	0	2	1	0	0
We actively recruit nursing faculty from underrepresented minority groups at my institution.	0	1	2	0	0
Underrepresented minority nursing faculty are generally comfortable working at my institution.	1	1	1	0	0
I feel a sense of isolation within my nursing program, department, or school/college.	0	0	1	1	1
In general, I sense a lack of appreciation of the contributions that I make at work.	1	0	0	1	1
Salary for nurse educators has not kept up with nursing salaries in the clinical practice setting.	0	3	0	0	0
I am satisfied with my current career as a nurse educator.	1	2	0	0	0
I can envision myself remaining in academia for the next 10 years.	2	1	0	0	0