

Warmly Received but Still Adjusting: Filipino EPA Nurses in Japan

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Abstract

This study reflects on the experiences of six Filipino nurses deployed to Japan under the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) and their employers.

It first presents the narratives of the interviewees on preparations for the NBE. All of the six Filipino nurses acknowledge and appreciate the support of the hospital. It also presents the thoughtful strategies and extraordinary efforts of the hospital staff to help the Filipino nurses. The following section is a discussion of their experiences after the NBE. The narratives reveal that both the Filipino nurses and their coworkers are puzzled as they face new challenges when the EPA nurses became licentiates. The narratives also reveal that Filipino EPA nurses cannot have a clear career path even after passing the NBE. This article also conveys the voices of Filipino nurses how JPEPA program for nurses could be improved.

These narratives are reflected vis-à-vis theories on second-language acquisition, scope of nursing, and migration policy. The article concludes by proposing that Japanese language training be continued even after passing the NBE, that qualified Filipino nurse candidates' stay in Japan be extended for a few more years even after failing the NBEs, that retaking of the NBE by those who have returned to the Philippines be facilitated, and that measures for brain circulation and brain gain be crafted.

Keywords: EPA, Filipino nurse migration, language barrier, career path

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