



Problem Statement

Migration trends amongst nurses have proliferated in recent years and the hiring of Foreign Educated Nurses (FENs) is identified as a practical and realistic solution to tackle the nursing shortage.

Recruitment and retention of FENs in Malta has been a continuous problem throughout the years and although some measures have been put in place to address this problem, some of them still leave the country after a few years.

Current estimates show that 8.5% of the total number of nurses working within the public sector are now foreign (Bugeja, Farrugia, and Grech, 2019).

As nurses migrate to a new country, they often come across personal and professional challenges. Key literature identifies regulatory barriers, communication problems, racism, discrimination, differences in scope of practice, and skill underutilization as the most commonly cited challenges encountered (Kingma, 2008).

These elements often lead to stress, and the adaptation period may interfere with the acculturation process with possible negative effects on patient outcomes.

General Research Approach

The research focuses on a phenomenon still under-explored within the Maltese context. A predominantly inductive approach using purely qualitative methods was adopted.

The main aim of the research was to understand the subjective human experience of Indian nurses as they arrive, work, and live in Malta.

I wished to hear their personal opinions, thoughts, and conceptions from their viewpoint. Through my interpretations, I could contribute to giving them a voice.

Research Questions:

- 1) What are the experiences of Indian (Malayalee) nurses in Malta, as they seek to achieve cultural competence and become acculturated into Maltese society?
- 2) What do Indian (Malayalee) nurses perceive as barriers to settlement and acculturation, following migration to Malta?
- 3) How do Indian (Malayalee) nurses overcome the challenges encountered in acculturating and delivering culturally competent nursing care in Malta?

Research Objectives

- To examine Indian (Malayalee) nurses' subjective interpretations of their experiences as they work and become accustomed to healthcare practices in Maltese care homes for the elderly.
- To explore Indian (Malayalee) nurses' understanding of the delivery of nursing care in Malta.
- To gain insight into what strategies Indian (Malayalee) nurses use to adapt and cope with possible challenges faced in delivering culturally competent nursing care.
- To develop an explanatory theory on how Indian (Malayalee) nurses manage settling and acculturating into Maltese society.

Research Methodology

Individual semi-structured interviews with 25 participants (July - December 2021). Online (Microsoft Teams) due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Data analysis in line with Gioia Methodology - *An inductive logic approach to interpretive grounded theory* (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013).

A key characteristic is the transition from First-Order Categories (informant-centric) to Second-Order Themes (researcher-centric) and Theoretical Aggregate Dimensions are shown in the form of a Data Structure [Fig.1].

Research Ethics Approval from the Committee for Health (University of Bath) / Ethics Committee at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology.

Findings and Recommendations

As FENs take up employment in Malta, they undergo a similar process of adaptation and acculturation. Their journey is influenced by a number of inter-related factors which all contribute to the difficulties perceived by the participants.

From the stories, a six-dimensional model [Fig. 2] was developed.

Recommendations:

- Less Bureaucratic Systems (Work and residency permits)
- Training (Maltese Language and Intercultural Competence)
- Workplace Orientation /Mentoring or Preceptorship
- Introduction of Cultural Mediators

Key Figures

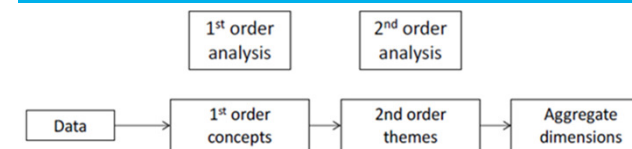


Figure 1: Flow of Data Analysis

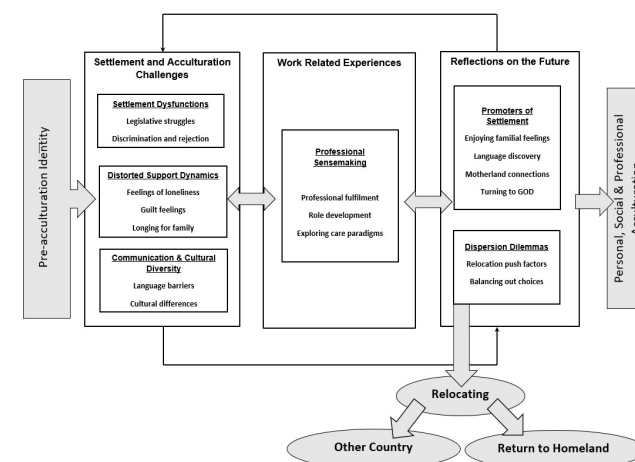


Figure 2: Model for Personal, Social, and Professional Acculturation of Indian Nurses in Malta

References

- Bugeja, A., Farrugia, B. and Grech, K., 2019. Development of health services in Malta: past, present and future. *Public health in Malta 1999-2019*, pp.10-14.
- Gioia, D., Corley, K. and Hamilton, A., 2013. Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), pp.15-31.
- Kingma, M., 2008. Nurses on the move: diversity and the work environment. *Contemporary nurse*, 28(1-2), pp.198-206.

Access the full study at University of Bath Research Portal



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