

**An Examination of How Overseas
Qualified Nurses and Australian Nurses
Work Together
in the Australian Context**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Health and
Medicine

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NSW Australia

2016

Statement of originality

The thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to the final version of my thesis being made available worldwide when deposited in the University's Digital Repository, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Margaret McMillan, Professor Vicki Parker, Associate Professor Sarah Jeong and Dr Terry Joyce for encouraging me to undertake this project and instructing me in the pursuit of academic excellence. I thank them for their guidance, tolerance, constructive criticism and stoicism. They have been instrumental in helping me achieve my biggest learning curve and I cannot thank them enough.

My sincere thanks go to those staff who participated in this research. I would like to thank you Catherine Norman, Director of Multicultural Health Service, Hunter New England Local Health District and Dr Janet Dunbabin for believing in me and encouraging me during my study.

To my family and friends who have offered me support, understanding, patience and humour, I am honoured by your presence in my life. I send you all my deepest appreciation.

Finally, my husband and children deserve a special mention. Without their support, love, and commitment, my life and this thesis would just be a dream. I also thank my parent-in-laws to support my family and me during my study.

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Abbreviations

AHPRA	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIN	Assistant in nursing
ANMAC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council
ANMC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
ANMF	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
ANs	Australian Nurses.
ACSQHS	Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Health Service
CDNM	Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery, Australia and New Zealand
CE	Code of Ethics
CEC	Clinical Excellence Commission
CNE	Clinical Nurse Educator
CPC	Code of Professional Conduct for Nurses in Australia
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIBP	Department of Immigration and Border Protection
DD cupboard	Dangerous drug cupboard.
EN	Enrolled Nurse
ESB	English Speaking Background
HETI	Health Education and Training Institute
HNELHD	Hunter New England Local Health District (HNE Health)
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
HSU	Health Service Union
ICN	International Council of Nurses
ICNM	International Centre on Nurse Migration
ICNCE	International Council of Nurses Code of Ethics
IIMS	Incident and Injury Management System
LHD	Local Health District
MHLO	Multicultural Health Liaison Officer
NAMO	Nursing and Midwifery Office, NSW
NESB	Non- English Speaking Background
NMBA	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
NMBANS	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's Nursing Standards for Nurses
NSQHS	National Safety and Quality Health Service
NSW NMA	New South Wales Nursing and Midwifery Association

PCP	Policy Compliance Procedure
RCON	Royal College of Nursing
RN	Registered nurse
OET	Occupational English Test
OQNs	Overseas Qualified Nurses
TTMRA	Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement

Glossary

Australian Nurse (AN): An AN is used to represent nurses who are born and were trained/educated in order to satisfy requirements for qualification in Australia.

Assistant In Nursing (AIN): An AIN works as a member of the nursing team, assisting nurses and supporting patients in their activities of daily living (NSW Ministry of Health, 2016). Most AIN positions require a Certificate III course, which generally runs over five months full-time or 11 months part-time study.

Enrolled Nurse (EN): An EN undertakes an 18 months or two year prescribed course to achieve a Diploma in Enrolled Nursing. They provide nursing care, working under the direction and supervision of a Registered Nurse. Enrolled Nurses perform basic care such as checking vital signs, and assisting with personal hygiene.

Endorsed Enrolled Nurse (EEN); an EEN is an Enrolled Nurse with an additional medication endorsement: The EEN may thus administer medications specified as within their scope of practice.

Local nurses RNs who are born and trained or qualified in their home countries.

Overseas Qualified Nurse (OQN): An OQN has obtained her/his first qualification as a RN in a country other than their present host country. The term OQN is used to represent terms in common usage such as the international nurses, internationally recruited nurses, overseas nurses, foreign nurses and migrant nurses.

Nurse: A term used to describe Registered Nurses

Registered Nurse (RN): An RN is a person with appropriate educational preparation after completing a three year pre nursing registration course and thus deemed competent for practice; The RN is either registered and licensed under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and thus under the requirements within the appropriate Nursing Act is able to practice nursing in Australia. Roles and functions may include but are not limited to administration, team leader or unit manager duties, medication administration, assessment and management of the client including the need for complex nursing care, specialised nursing care or involvement in research.

Symbols

..//.. Material edited from original interview transcripts

... Pause contained in the original interview transcripts

[square brackets] Researcher's comments, added to provide clarity or explanation

Synopsis

Increasingly, cultural diversity is a feature of the Australian nursing workforce due to globalisation and global movement of the workforce. Whilst much of this diversity has resulted from general migration over generations, a significant proportion results from nurses who migrate after qualifying as a nurse in another country. The participation of these nurses in the nursing workforce has the potential to enrich workforce culture and practice. However, cultural diversity in the workplace has also been reported as challenging for both incoming and receiving nurses; this calls for more research into the context, culture and experiences in multicultural workplaces.

This study examined how overseas qualified nurses (OQNs) and Australian nurses (ANs) work together in the Australian context. Specifically, it explored the experiences of OQNs and ANs working together in a Local Health District (LHD). Unlike previous studies, this study aimed to examine and give voice to both OQNs and ANs using Critical Social Theory as the theoretical framework and Interpretive Description as the methodological framework. The study enabled articulation of the nurses' perspectives of factors contributing to their experiences, explored the practices and underlying mindsets that both groups of nurses employed while working together, and identified strategies or resources that helped to overcome some of the difficulties they experience in their working environment. The experiences of these nurses were compared with the expectations for and intentions of RNs in Australia formally outlined by professional, organisational policies and regulations.

Findings suggest that the experiences of the participants were personally, professionally, organisationally and socio-culturally constructed. All nurses were committed to providing safe and quality nursing care to their patients and to a collaborative working relationship with each other. However, the extent to which they perceived they were 'working together' in a novel situation was questionable in that

they were not equipped to work with 'differences' and 'the unknown'. They reported having difficulty in building optimal working relationships due to experiences where exclusion, bullying, distrust, disrespect, racism and lack of organisational and supportive leadership were evident in their practice environment. Therefore, there was professional and cognitive dissonance, and power differentials in their working relationships. The study identified that facilitative influences for them to work together well included how well the nurses themselves managed any dissonance, power differential and differences through attempts at collegial engagement and high levels of civility as well as through strategic organisational support.

The study assists to build on knowledge of the topic and to guide the development of strategies to enhance cross-cultural experiences of both OQNs and ANs and provide suggestions for reciprocal benefits. Further, in addressing this area of ongoing concern in health care settings, the findings also inform workforce policy and future research and educational strategies related to OQNs and ANs in the workplace and for the Australian nursing profession.

Key words: Overseas qualified nurses, Australian nurses, cultural diversity, experience, cross-cultural working, acculturation