

**THE TRANSITION OF NURSING GRADUATES WITH FOREIGN
BACKGROUND INTO FINNISH WORKING CULTURE**

A Qualitative Research

LAB UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED
SCIENCES LTD
Bachelor's Degree in Nursing
Spring 2020
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ABSTRACT

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| Authors: Adobo, Marvic Almazan, Vanessa Laulajainen, Daryll-Joyce | Type of publication: Bachelor's Thesis | Published: Spring 2020 |
| | Number of pages 48 | |
| Title of publication: The Transition of Nursing Graduates with Foreign Background in Lahti University to Finnish Working Culture | | |
| Name of Degree Bachelor's Degree in Nursing | | |
| <p>Abstract</p> <p>The healthcare field especially in nursing has seen a spike in demand over the years. International migration of nurses has always been a way of people to find a job and improve their economic condition. (Zolot, 2019.) However, the global flow of health workers leads to other problems such as adapting to a new language, environment and culture. The purpose of this study is to describe the transition of foreign background nurses from Lamk University of Applied Sciences and to find out their experiences into Finnish working environment. The aim of this study is to find out how the foreign nurses working in Finland were adapting to the Finnish working culture through the provision of information and how they succeed in dealing with the challenges at the Finnish working environment. The study identified the promoting factors and challenges that they begin facing during their transition into Finnish working Culture as well as how they find solutions to cope with the situation.</p> <p>A qualitative research method was used by the authors to conduct this study. The method included in-depth interviews with chosen participants. The participants' experiences were documented and later analyzed using inductive content analysis, gathering dominant patterns in the data that addressed the research questions. The study implied that the experiences were challenging at the beginning. Nevertheless, it was a good and enjoyable experience. Integration, language and communication, socio-cultural challenges and adjustment, mentorship Language and communication were identified as the major problem for the challenges faced by foreign nurse in Finland.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the possible solutions that were further indicated in the study will be a helpful tool for nurses of non-Finnish descent as they venture and pursue their nursing career in Finland.</p> | | |
| Keywords: Transition, Foreign Nurses, Culture, Language | | |

Tiivistelmä

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| Authors: Adobo, Marvic Almazan, Vanessa Laulajainen, Daryll-Joyce | Julkaisun Tyyppi: AMK opinnäytetyö Sivumäärä: 48 | Julkaistu: Kevät 2020 |
| Julkaisun Otsikko: Ulkomaalaistaustaisten valmistuvien sairaanhoitajien siirtyminen Lahden ammattikorkeakoulusta suomalaiseen työkuulttuuriin | | |
| Sairaanhoitaja | | |
| Tiivistelmä <p>Terveystenhoitoalalla, erityisesti sairaanhoidossa on työvoiman tarve lisääntynyt viime vuosina. Kansainvälinen hoitajien muuttoliike on aina ollut tapa löytää työpaikkaa ja parantaa heidän taloudellista tilannettaan. (Zolot, 2019.) Kuitenkin tämä maailmanlaajuinen hoitajien liikkuvuus johdattaa toisiin ongelmiin, kuten uuden kielen, ympäristön ja kulttuurin omaksumiseen. Tutkimuksessa kuvataan Lahden ammattikorkeakoulussa sairaanhoitoa opiskelevien ulkomaalaistaustaisten opiskelijoiden siirtymävaihetta työelämään ja kerrotaan heidän kokemuksiaan suomalaisessa työympäristössä. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on selvittää, kuinka ulkomaalaiset hoitajat ovat työntekijöinä Suomessa sopeutuneet kulttuuriin ja kuinka he ovat selvinneet haasteista suomalaisessa yhteiskunnassa. Tutkimus tunnisti edistäviä tekijöitä ja haasteita, joita he kohtasivat siirtyessään suomalaiseen työkuulttuuriin sekä ratkaisuja haasteista selviämiseen.</p> <p>Laadullisen tutkimuksen menetelmiä käytettiin tämän tutkimuksen tekemiseen. Menetelmiin sisältyi valittujen tutkimukseen osallistujien perusteelliset haastattelut. Haastateltujen henkilöiden kokemukset kirjattiin ja analysoitiin käyttäen induktiivista sisällönanalyysia, keräämällä hallitsevia malleja vastauksista. Tutkimus osoitti, että heillä oli alussa haasteellista työskennellä Suomessa.</p> <p>Siitä huolimatta se oli hyvä ja mielenkiintoinen kokemus. Integraatio, kieli, kommunikaatio, sosiaalikuulttuuriset haasteet. Kieli ja kommunikaatio havaittiin haastavimmaksi asiaksi ulkomaalaisten hoitajien keskuudessa Suomessa.</p> <p>Toivottavasti tutkimuksessa osoitetut mahdolliset ratkaisut haasteisiin ovat hyödyllinen työkalu ei-suomalaista alkuperää oleville hoitajille, kun he uskaltavat tavoittelemaan hoitajan uraansa Suomessa.</p> | | |
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1 INTRODUCTION

Nursing is one of the most noble professions among Finns. Professional nurses work responsibly according to evidence-based practice. In Finland, nurses work independently in caring for patients, and in performing medical treatment according to physicians' instructions as part of comprehensive patient care. (Finnish Nurses Association, 2014.)

As of 2014, the number of immigrants in Finland is only 4.5% of the total number of populations. Most of the immigrants come from their neighbouring countries such as Russia, Estonia and Sweden. Some 17,700 persons with foreign background work in health and social services. The immigrant workers are expected to double in the coming years. (Tehy, 2019.) Currently, there are 81,500 nurses in Finland, 1,190 is from non-Finnish descent nurses currently employed (Finnish Nurses Association, 2014).

Finland has been facing a crisis in the field of nursing due to factors that includes working condition and salary. As reported by YLE news in 2019, current government policy of increasing nurse to patient ratio may worsen the crisis, more nurses will be needed in the future to alleviate the nursing shortage.

The authors, being immigrants themselves, have been interested on what are the usual challenges experienced by other immigrants especially in nursing field as well as how they cope to the said challenges. The authors have also been inclined to learn the different methods and ways to integrate in working life in Finnish healthcare workplace.

Qualitative research was chosen by the authors and will use semi-structured interview during data gathering. Ethical considerations will be observed during the interview.

The aim of this thesis is to find out how the foreign nurses working in Finland were adapting into Finnish working culture through provision of information gathered from nurses who were currently working in one of the Finnish healthcare facilities.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Globalization and Nursing Profession

The term globalization and internationalization are becoming two different concepts worldwide. Both concepts have proven to raise challenges in both normative and analytical ways in nursing profession. Globalization is defined as a world system that is different from the national system whereas internationalization is the relationship of countries, however, the nations' policy is still important. Additionally, it is also described as the unification of the different dimensions of a country such as economic, social, technological, cultural, and political aspect. In sociology, globalization also refers to the thought process rather than a situation since it mainly affects the social atmosphere. (Ergin & Akin 2017; Herdman 2004.)

According to Ergin & Akin (2017), globalization has certain effects on nursing when the transnational integration and expansion of economic, social, political and cultural values happened. The age of globalization has already witnessed the growth of global health problems. These problems demand that nurses obtain a global view on health and can set an appropriate solution. The effect of globalization on health systems brings about migration of the global health workforce in developing countries (low income) with unreasonable economic, social and environmental conditions to migrate to other countries where better working conditions and better wages are offered (Ergin & Akin 2017, 607-612).

International migration has always been a trend, it is a way of people to try and find their greener pasture or at least an economic opportunity (Zolot 2019). Better salary, education, employment opportunities, and facilities are some of the main reasons for migration, people tends to migrate from their original country to other countries in pursuit of the said reasons. World Health Organization has formed a policy regarding migration of nurses, the policy was initially established in five countries, namely Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, Australia and United States. The policy was formed to address the migrants that includes improvement of working condition, multi-lateral

agreements, and compensations. In 2010, developed countries had an increase of up to 60% migration rate from foreign born healthcare professionals. There are 20.7 million nurses and midwives all around the world, however, shortage of the said professionals is estimated to be 9 million mostly needed in Africa and Eastern Mediterranean. (Zolot 2019, Buchan & Sochalski 2004.) The global flow of health workers leads to other problems such as adapting to a new language, environment and culture (Ergin et al 2017, 610).

2.2 Nursing in Europe

The European Regulation directives ensures the freedom of European citizens mobility within EU countries. This includes the freedom to work as long as they pass the qualification process on their destination country (Freedom of movement for workers within the Union Regulation Number 492/2011).

Based on the report from 2016, there are 184 thousand healthcare professionals, between the age of 20-64, living in European member state other than their home country, 40% of these number are nurses. Health professionals particularly nurses have been mobile for many decades. Some factors may include continuous search for professional attainment, career advancement, opportunities for continuing education, and a better working atmosphere such as advanced equipment and a lighter workload. (Tersch, Tugran, Rossi & Bradley 2018.) Financial gains are also significant in terms of higher remuneration, better retirement benefits as well as health insurance. The two main destination countries are Germany and United Kingdom. Other destination countries are Italy, Austria, France and Spain. Between 2011-2016, there was a steady growth of healthcare workers who migrated within EU. Citizens from Romania, Poland and Italy are the most common professionals who migrated to other country. Recognition rates of doctors and nurses were between 70%-100%, at average, nurses had higher recognition rates than doctors. (Tersch, Tugran, Rossi & Bradley 2018, Dussault, Fronteira & Cabral 2009, 12-17.)

2.3 Nursing in Finland

One of the issues in healthcare industry is shortage of nurses, particularly in hospitals, this problem has been around for 20-30 years now. Difficulties with staffing creates significant problem especially when it interferes with patients' access to needed care. (Schumacher 2011, 362.)

Finland is continuously classified as an ageing country which means that vast number of retirements will take place in the future, to address this emerging problem, employment of new nurses as well as work-related immigration is implemented (Kilpeläinen 2010). To fight this labor shortage in the long term, the government turns to searching for workforce from abroad. Most of the immigrants came from their neighbouring countries such as Russia, Estonia and Sweden. Some 17,700 persons with foreign background work in health and social services. The immigrant workers are expected to double in the coming years. (Tehy 2019.) Currently, there are 81,500 nurses in Finland, 1,190 is from non-Finnish descent nurses currently employed (Finnish Nurses Association 2014).

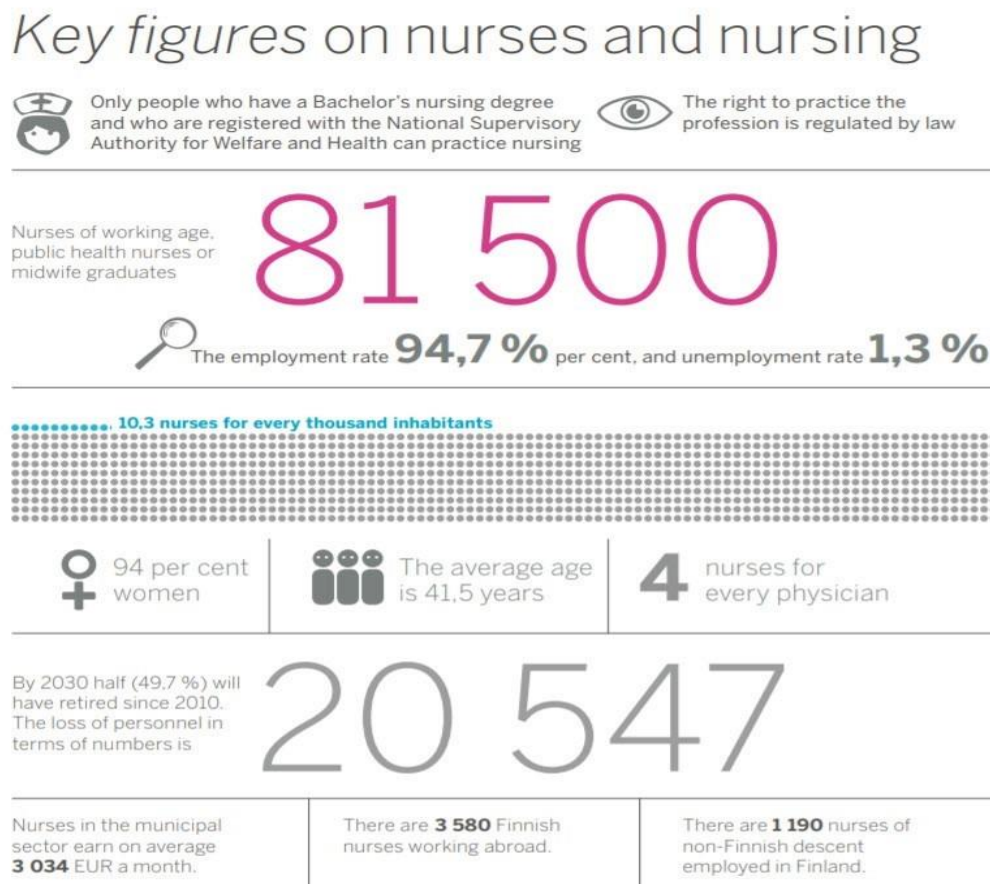
Finland has been facing a crisis in the field of nursing due to working conditions and lower salary. In addition, the crisis is expected to exacerbate due to the government's plan to increase ratio of nursing staff to 0.7% which means that there should be 7 nurses on duty in every 10 patients. As a result, the Finland will be needing 4,000 more registered nurses and practical nurses in the future. (YLE News 2019.)

Nursing jobs in Finland is regulated by National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira). Nurses completing the studies in Finland requires 210 credits in the qualification. Valvira grants the right to practice as a licensed professional and authorizes the use of the title. (Finnish Nurses Association 2019.) Nurses from around Europe can practice their profession after registering with Valvira, the documents must be translated to either Finnish, Swedish or in English. Nurses from outside EU/EEA

needs to have the diplomas approved by a higher educational institution before Valvira can approve the documents. Knowledge in Finnish language is particularly important when working in Finland. Most of the nurses in Finland graduated from the University of Applied Sciences which are tasked with the responsibilities of ensuring that graduates are competent and qualified enough for their role, the education takes three and a half years. After registering with Valvira, the nurses who are approved are listed in the Central Register of Health Care professionals. (Valvira 2013.)

Nursing training in Finland is based on the European Union’s Directive 2005/36/EC, amended by Directive 2013/55/EU. The requirements are similar to those of elsewhere in the European Union and other collaborating European countries. (Finnish Nurses Association 2019.)

Figure 1.1 shows the current number of nurses in Finland.



Source: OECD, STATISTICS FINLAND, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

2.4 Integration

Integration is the process of successfully joining or mixing with a different group of people regardless of their belief, racial, religious or ethnic background. It is also described as a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of member states, additionally, it includes the promotion of fundamental rights, non-discrimination and equal opportunities for all as the key integration issues in the EU level. (Asylum and Migration Glossary, European Migration Network.) The purpose of integration is to overcome segregation in which people are classified based on their background and not as a whole. In psychology, integration also refers to a person's social traits and tendencies in order to adapt to a new environment which ultimately works in a harmonious way. (The American Heritage 2002.) Integration, in relation to nursing science and practice, is also defined as the interaction between person and environment in which a new life experiences can be formed and used in daily living activities that affects the overall balance in life (Whittemore 2005).

Immigrant cultural integration comprises of a two-way process in order to successfully adapt. The immigrant and the host country need mutual interaction in order to build a secure and meaningful relation in the community. Challenges faced by the immigrants usually consists of difficulty identifying their cultural heritage and beliefs while simultaneously adapting to a new environment. The attitude of the members of the host country towards the immigrants are one of the factors on how integration can be successful. (Jeannotte, 2008)

In 2017, there are 31, 797 persons that moved to Finland from all over the world (Official Statistics of Finland 2019). To respond to the growing number of immigrants over the years, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy has developed an act that will help the immigrants to integrate in the society. Section 1 of the act stipulates that the purpose of the act is to support and promote the immigrant to integrate in an easier manner and also to play an active role in the society by providing them information about the Finnish society, labour market, and different services that

promotes integration, it also aims to abolish discrimination and provide positive interaction between the members of society regardless of their gender, race or religion. The scope of the act covers all person that immigrates to Finland who have a valid Residence permit. (Act on Promotion of Immigrant Integration 1386/2010, 1 & 2 §.)

It is a general understanding that care integration plays an integral role in both patient care and the institution. The increase in number of patients over the recent years in different health care settings including, tertiary hospitals, clinics, and home cares has proven to be a challenge in healthcare. Nurses have a substantial and primordial role to play in such integration process, they are expected to provide timely, cost effective, high-quality care without the unnecessary duplication of service across the care continuum in achieving a common goal. (The Advisory Board Company 2015.)

2.5 Culture

Culture, in society's point of view is being pass on through socialization. It is sharing of beliefs, rules of behaviours and lifestyle practices that holds individual together under one specification as a group making them suitable to the group's systematic way of living. It is also defined as being able to adapt in an ever-changing environment. (Andrews & Boyle 2012)

Distinct cultures have accepted values and norms that rule how people communicate and behave towards each other. Society is governed by norm in which people are either rewarded or punished depending on the fact that they follow or depart from the established norms. In other words, culture deduces pattern wherein people take roles and responsibilities related to family, social interaction and working environment. (Holland, 2018)

These governed norms will be transmitted then to the next generation through arts, rituals, symbols and language. Culture can be considered as an inherited 'lens'

through which the individual perceives the society and learns to adapt and live in it. (Helman, 2007.)

Culture is a patterned behavioural response that develop over time as a result of imprinting the mind through social and religious structures and intellectual manifestations. It is also a result of acquired mechanisms that may have innate influences but are primarily affected by internal and external environmental stimuli. (Giger, 2017.)

2.5.1 Cultural Competence

Cultural competence has been deemed as a wide term and different authors have tried to define it in their own perspectives. The term cultural competence was described as a set of behaviour, attitude and policies that harmonizes amongst different people which enables them to work effectively in different cultural situations, it is also described as the person's ability to interact, work and develop meaningful relationships with various cultural backgrounds. (De Guzman, Durden, Taylor, Guzman, Potthoff 2016; Cross, Dennis & Isaacs 1989, 13).

Cultural competence is also viewed as a process by which an individual becomes thoroughly aware of cultural differences to have a grasp on knowledge about diverse cultural group which can lead to precise provision of care based on human basic needs (Leinger, 1989). Additionally, by acknowledging and regularly using diverse culture patterns and values in an appropriate way within people with different cultural background, a virtue of cultural competence can be improved (Leinger 1991, 49-50). Furthermore, she argued that cultural competence is a part of transcultural nursing care and consists of 4 parts namely: cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and cultural encounters (Leinger 1995, 27-29). Another author defined cultural competence as understanding of other cultural beliefs and behaviours and effective communication while performing cultural assessment, developing social skills

and behaviour around diversity, and learning to advocate for others (De Guzman et al. 2016; Kim-Godwin, Clark, & Brown 2001, 918–925).

According to Papadopoulos, Tilki, and Taylor Model, there are four components in developing one's cultural competence, those components are: Cultural awareness, Cultural Knowledge, Cultural Sensitivity, and Cultural Competence (Papadopoulos 2006, 8-21). Cultural awareness is defined as a process by which an individual conducts self-assessment of his/her own belief, values, stereotypes and biases, and actively knowing its' impact when interacting with people from different cultural background. Cultural knowledge is described by having the knowledge about similarities and differences and how it affects other people's values and practices. Active interaction with people from diverse background will improve ones' cultural knowledge. Cultural sensitivity, on the other hand, is explained as a process by which a healthcare provider considers each individual as a different people with unique needs, she also explained that cultural sensitivity requires acceptance, trust, respect and facilitation. Lastly, as a conclusion, it is viewed that cultural competence is the consolidation and implementation of practical and caring skills, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural sensitivity and added the definition of cultural competence as the ability to identify and abstain from any discriminatory acts. (Papadopoulos 2006, 8-21.)

2.5.1 Cultural Diversity

Cultural Diversity is defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as difference in different aspects such as beliefs, morals, laws, customs, and habits acquired by an individual from a society in which he/she came from. It is also viewed as when the differences in race, ethnicity, age, ability, language, gender, and religion are being represented in the community. (Amadeo, 2019.) A culturally diverse workplace can be beneficial to the company as people from different background has different views and perspectives which can be used positively towards a specific scenario. Stereotyping is one of the problems that can

disrupt the positive flow of diversity, communication and behaviour by the minority is being threatened as a result of prejudice set by some members of the society. (Amadeo, 2019.)

According to Degazon & Mancha cited by (Muronda,2015), having culturally diverse staff in a facility have two main benefits: First, it will increase the likelihood that patients with different background can receive culturally efficient care. In addition, it may contribute to formulation of new policies which aims to improve the health of the vulnerable minority.

3 PURPOSE, AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to describe the transition of foreign background nurses from Lahti University of Applied Sciences and to find out their experiences into Finnish working environment. To qualitatively determine the reality concerning the integration of foreign nurses in the working life in Finland.

The aim of this study is to find out how the foreign nurses working in Finland were adapting to the Finnish working culture through the provision of information and how they succeed in dealing with the challenges at the Finnish working environment.

The study can be used to assist foreign nurses identify challenges and to guide them to adapt in Finnish working environment to ensure quality and effective care.

Demographic profile of foreign nurses will be assessed to identify significant result related by age, gender, civil status and nationality. Furthermore, such as years of stay and working place in Finland will be considered as an assessment which will be needed to determine transition factors.

To explore different challenges and methods to adapt in Finnish workforce in healthcare, the following research questions has been formulated:

1. What are the promoting factors that affect the transition into working environment in Finland?
2. What are the challenges faced during the transition into working life in Finland?
3. What could be the possible solutions to the challenges?

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative study was used in this research. Qualitative research is defined as collecting, analysing and interpreting the data of the participant's insights and perception into the real-life situations. Qualitative research allows for elaborateness and depth of issues. (Singh, 2013.) Qualitative research is primarily associated with words, language and experiences, underlying reasons, opinions rather than measurements, statistics and numerical figures (Family Health International 2019).

The authors utilized a qualitative descriptive design. The goal of qualitative descriptive studies is a comprehensive summarization of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals. It is an approach that is very useful when researchers want to know regarding events, who were involved, what was involved, and where did things take place. (Lambert et al 2012, 255-256.)

The authors chose qualitative research on this study because they believe it is a helpful tool for future nurses to obtain a proper guidance when they work and integrate in Finnish healthcare environment in the future. By using this method of research, it can provide full picture of answers and reasons through observing and interviewing. It focuses on subjective issues, which means based on personal feelings or opinions. (Crossman, 2020.) In this manner, interviewing with the more experienced nurses is beneficiary to the authors. They can obtain and learn new experience as well as skills from them.

4.2 Interview as Data Collecting Method

Dudovskiy (2019) defines data collection as “a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes”.

Qualitative data collection methods are exploratory in nature and are mainly concerned with gaining insights and understanding on underlying reasons and motivations (Dudovskiy, 2019).

The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews which consists of several key questions (see appendix 1) that help define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to reflect in order to proceed an idea in more detail. This interview technique is mostly used in healthcare, as it gives participants a guidance on what to discuss about. Furthermore, this allows for the discovery of information that is significant to participants but may not have previously been reflected by the researchers. Many researchers find this method helpful. (Gill et al 2008, 192.)

In semi-structured interviews, researchers prepare a set of same questions to be answered by all participants. At the same time, additional questions might be asked during interviews to clarify and or further expand certain issues. (Dudovskiy, 2019.)

According to Virginia tech University Libraries (2018), Interview research is designed to collect a richer source of information from the participants. Interview guides the participants to express feelings and preferences, show attitudes and behaviour, state the knowledge and opinions. It further helps the participants explain, better understand and explore views on the specific matter.

Interview is the most effective mode of data collection in qualitative research. Face-to-face communication and free feedback may happen. Interview is conducted using a questionnaire that contains different types of open-ended questions enabling the participants to express freely regarding the study, so that in-depth information will be collected. (Jaideep, 2019.)

The interview setting will take place at participant's convenience. Taking notes is an option during an interview. Taking notes allows the researcher to identify and flag important issues. The notes serve as an immediate source of reflection for the researcher to better analyse the participant's point of view. Reviewing the notes helps the researcher easily identify contradictory statements, to follow up a new research question. An audio recording can be made to ensure the accuracy of the data. The author can ask for clarification to fully comprehend the participant's view. (Roller 2017.)

The authors conducted interviews with a total of seven participants. Most of them have been living in Finland for more than five years and have more than two years of working experience in the field of nursing. The age of the participants ranges between 26 – 28 years old, all of them have excellent English language proficiency and satisfactory Finnish language proficiency. Most of the interviewee studied nursing in Finland for the first time without any nursing background in their home country while some of them already had a degree in nursing with two to three years of working experience in their home country, and studied nursing in Finland to get accreditation to work as a nurse.

The language used in this study is in English because the participants speak English and the entire study will be presented in English. Due to the current global pandemic, in which the Uusimaa Region of Finland and neighbouring cities within it have been significantly affected, the participants opted to proceed with the interview thru video call while staying in their own home.

The interviews were based on the three main questions. Each interview took approximately from thirty to forty-five minutes. At the start of the interview, the author reiterated the contents of the consent form and made sure that the participant understood everything by agreeing to proceed with the interview. The authors also introduced themselves and discussed the purpose of the interview. Data from the interview were written at the same time the interviewee answers the questions. The authors clarified the data by asking the interviewee to repeat the answer or by re-phrasing. The authors utilized the nature of qualitative research by using open ended questions and asking the interviewee to elaborate the answers. Written data were subjected to further analysis to ensure accuracy. Part of the quotes presented were rewritten into a correct written form to improve readability and to protect confidentiality .

Given that the first participant got the list of questions answered according to the themes and author's expectations. But in case the participant has missed some of the important issues or has not mentioned something, the authors can simplify the question or give a few examples of it. Participants have the right not to answer if they feel uncomfortable answering to the question, they may leave the question unanswered. Unanswered questions can be filled during the next interviews.

4.3 Participants of the Study

The research group in this study are registered nurses graduated from Lahti University of Applied Sciences/ Lahden Ammattikorkeakoulu (LAMK) with a few years clinical experience in Finland. A total of seven participants were interviewed by the authors.

4.4 Data Analysis

To analyse the data, the researchers used inductive content analysis method. Inductive content analysis is used to develop theory and identify key theme by studying

the data or verbal material provided by the participant. The themes arise from the raw data through repeated examination and comparison. Through this method the authors created a knowledge and improved the understanding of the theme. Inductive content analysis is usually a time-consuming technique, it requires repeated review and in-depth reading of the raw data. (Hall, 2019.)

The main focus of the data analysis concentrates on information mainly relating to the research question of this study. Data will be analysed by reading thoroughly through to find necessary information. The main analysis process is shown in Table 1.

| TRANSCRIPTION | OPEN CODING | SUB CATEGORIES | DESCRIPTION & CONCEPTS (CATEGORY HEADINGS) |
|--|--|---|--|
| "we can forward our requests regarding schedules" "ready to help" "good atmosphere" "fair salary, additional benefits are available" "fair treatment" "each of us feel valued" | Flexible work schedule Colleague /Good working environment Work incentives Job satisfaction and recognition | Integration Adaptability | Journey to new beginnings |
| "unclear understanding of words" "Different dialects make it even more challenging" "personal space matters" "some colleagues do not have interest of explaining the topic" "some patients request for a local nurse to take care of them" | Inadequate Finnish language skills Difficulty of pronouncing the Finnish word Cultural differences Feeling of isolation and loneliness Lack of trust | Language Communication Socio-Cultural Challenges | Facing challenges |
| "my family is my main support system" "diverse population in Helsinki compared to other provinces" "taking YKI exam, attending finnish language courses" "good orientation at work" | Family and community support Multicultural awareness Complementary studies Mentorship & support from work | Social adjustment Ways to cope or possible solutions | Coping with Uncertainty |

Table 1: Summary of the results gathered from the interviews

In the first phase, data were transcribed based on the nurses' preliminary themes about the transition of nurses in Finnish healthcare setting. Excerpts were added as evidence that supports the themes.

The second phase is the open coding, transcribed data from the previous phase were classified and identified, a code was formulated to sort the acquired data. The words were decontextualized to help the authors to form the codes that was necessary to reveal the connection of the data. This process reveals 14 important codes that will be used by the author to process the next phase.

In the third phase, subcategories were formulated. The authors sorted the codes into different subcategories and ultimately formulating the final subcategories which is related to the research questions. The subcategories shown in the table were given emphasis as those subcategories showed the most relevance and provided beneficial contribution to the study topic. The procedure were done repeatedly and eventually placing each code group into different subgroup consisting of different topics. From 14 codes derived from the previous phase, six subcategories were formulated.

The last phase is the main category, description and context were developed from data synthesization. Three main categories were formulated from the six subcategories in the previous phase. After reconceptualization, the whole data were reviewed to ensure that the main category still carries the original context from the interview. The synthesis of data is known as the crucial part of the data analysis because it is where "the story" from the participants is distilled, summarized, and told with respect to the interview participant and to the readers (Sutton & Austin 2015).

5 FINDINGS

Based from the facts gathered and the data analysis performed by the authors, three main categories were formulated, namely: **Journey to new beginnings, Facing challenges, and Coping with uncertainty.**

5.1 Journey to new beginnings

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, integration is defined as the act of integrating. It is either incorporation in the society or organization of individuals from different groups or race or the coordination of a mental process to form an effective and working environment.

“I don’t have any difficulties in integration at workplace. Our manager creates a working environment that is positive, safe, inclusive and open. Each of us is feel valued. If we have concerns about work, we can forward it to the manager to take an action immediately”.

Making a good relationship with coworkers will aid the transition to the new role fast. Building relationships also give a sense of belonging to the group and help feel comfortable in the workplace. (Dzierzanowski, 2018.)

Advantages for employers and employees happen when the employer allows employees to work flexible schedules. With flexible work schedules, employees are set to experience a good number of benefits like the flexibility to meet family needs, personal obligations, and life responsibilities conveniently. Flexible work schedules allow employees to work manageably, actively and enjoyably. Employees get an increased feeling of personal control over schedule and work environment. By allowing employees to determine their own schedule and work environment, they tend to have a decisive mindset which can be good for the employees. (Heathfield, 2019.)

“I learned from Finnish culture especially from my workmates on how to be more precise and accurate, that is why integrating with them is not an issue”.

“In my workplace, we do our own schedules. The head nurse will approve the schedule based on the rule that there should be enough number of nurses per shift”.

A work environment has an impact to the balance of personal life and psychological stress. The working environment is a fundamental source of an unbalanced lifestyle. The satisfaction rate of employees and working hours show a significant relationship regarding absenteeism, turnover, and the company's efficiency and excellence. (Wanger 2017.)

Most of the past research have focused on working hours and the effects of overworking. These works have concluded that these two factors cause dissatisfaction. If the person is overworked, he or she is not only under physically burn-out but also mentally unstable. (Rønsen, Kitterød & Hege 2010.)

Nurses communicate with many different professionals throughout workday. Communication is an important part of the job. As a nurse, they interact daily with the other healthcare team. They are the front line of assessing patients. Communicating with them the results of the assessments are vital to patient safety. (Dunham, 2018.)

“My boss and co-workers are all nice. They are always ready to help until now that I am more than 2 years working here. I can always ask them if I don't understand something”.

“In my opinion, we have a good working environment. Sometimes, we eat in a restaurant together. We also have inside jokes in our unit. I think it helps to provide an environment conducive for working”.

Good working environment demands a creation of a range of priorities and goals that requires thoughtful reflection and development strategies to bring out greater interest at work (Clayton, 2004).

The table shown below is developed by corporate psychotherapist Will Schutz. Schutz defined several familiar development areas for the 'human element' related to strategies such as building self-esteem, enabling empowerment, exploring opportunity, developing accountability, use of performance feedback, teamwork, decision making, handling conflicts and telling the truth.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Building self-esteem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling people to value themselves, to know their potential and to learn from setbacks • Enabling people to understand and build their strengths • Assisting people to find challenges • Rewarding and reinforcing successes • Supporting, debriefing and rebuilding after setbacks |
| Enabling empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment facilitates growth • Caveats on empowerment need to be overt rather than covert |
| Creation of opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining expectations when necessary • Sponsoring person to others who have potential to provide opportunity |
| Developing accountability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocating appropriate responsibility • Where appropriate, participating in ensuring accountability • Utilizing graduated responsibility • Ensuring people has appropriate opportunities to review his preparedness and effectiveness |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Providing performance feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive feedback related to performance is a systematic way to review accomplishments and create new challenges • Requires construction of a trusting relationship • Feedback needs to be ongoing • Feedback skills need continuous development |
| Working in teams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of challenging, appropriate, independent teams • Accessing mechanisms to gauge person's performance in team • Provides significant opportunity for contribution to a community, exchange of skills and behaviors • A forum for leadership growth • Opportunity to test beliefs and values |
| Telling the truth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People need to hear the truth tactfully but consistently • Perception needs to be grounded in truth through feedback, development of sound strategy, agreement to appropriate outcome |
| Making decisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates analysis of objective data plus the emotional dimension in relationship with others and with objects in the environment • Can be founded on hypothetical questions • Decision- making can incorporate aspects of professional skills |
| Handling conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through assembling an appropriate mix of skills, political acumen and a pragmatic sense of the virtues of constructive conflict management, significant influence can be achieved both in relation to accomplishing objectives and managing the passage of everyday life • Presentation of an appropriate role model in relation to conflict assessment and management |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a sounding board to pre-empt destructive conflict • Providing a resource base of successful conflict management strategies based on personal experience • Possessing enough distance from the conflict situations to be able to provide constructive input • Willingness to articulate concerns related to person's agenda where appropriate |
|--|---|

Source: Clayton, D., 2004. *Leadershift: The Work-life Balance Program*

Work incentive is a great tool for employee satisfaction that may lead to better integration in workplace. One of the reasons is because employees will feel more valued and it can be fulfilling. Employees who were rewarded shows more interest and motivation while doing daily tasks at work. (Corcione, 2019.)

“I have the luxury to live in a bigger apartment and cheaper rent. Thanks to the discount I got from HUS”. “There are also discounts from gym places, so I am able to go to gym and stay physically fit despite the stress from working”.

“To de-stress, I always eat out. I usually eat in restaurants that are affiliated to HUS so I can get a discount”.

Monetary and non-monetary incentives is likely to increase work productivity and potentially profits. It also said to support business values and somehow improve teamwork and morale as well as attract top employee talents. Having work incentive also increases employee morale thus performing better in a workplace. (Corcione, 2019.)

Job satisfaction is the physical and emotional response to a present job. Feelings of happiness, frustration or commitment are being experience by an individual in relation

to his/her work. Work environment is the primary source of satisfaction. However, some factors affect the satisfaction of an employee, for example, the benefits, the team relationship, and many others. The job satisfaction is also related to efficiency at work. If the employee is not satisfied at work for various reasons, there is a higher possibility that they will look for a better workplace. An employee who is happy and motivated at work shows better productivity and gives higher satisfaction to their customers. (Sajid Ali Khan, 2017.)

“My head nurse is pretty good. She treats everyone equally and she listens to our complaints”.

“I am lucky because I found a workplace where they value my suggestions, this helps me to boost my confidence”.

Employee recognition has been demonstrated to positively relate to employee engagement. It has been viewed as mind set where workers feel vigorous and absorbed in their work. (Day, Kelloway & Hurrell, 2014.)

5.2 Facing Challenges

Most common conflicts especially in healthcare facilities came from communication may it be verbal or nonverbal (Andrews 2016). Importance of effective communication can be observed thru good patient outcome and positive work environment (Shen, Yu, Bolstad, Covelli, Torpey & Colosimo 2012; Miguel, Rogan, Kilstoff & Brown 2006). Communication also plays an important role in a culturally sensitive care (Crawford & Candlin 2013).

Nurses should be more vigilant when judging or making decisions about methods of communication with staff members and patients as well. Communication thru phone is proven to be more challenging to people with different language and accent that can cause problems or disagreements. (Andrews 2016.)

Difference in language and communication barriers may result in an undesirable quality of care that can be seen in patient satisfaction and staff complaints. Communication barrier can also be a reason to undermine the nurses' potential to practice and provide care as a member of healthcare team or even the chance to gain opportunities to further their professional career. (Shen et al. 2012.)

“Sometimes when I talk to someone, I need to check the words in google before speaking or writing to make sure that they understand me”.

Healthcare jobs in Finland demands Finnish language at least in satisfactory skills both in oral and written. The better Finnish language skills, the better chances to get a job. Finnish language is rich in diphthongs and long words, that are sometimes difficult to pronounce. If words are mistakenly pronounced, it could be understood in different way. It is certain that most of the foreigners find it challenging to learn Finnish language easily considering this is not their mother tongue. Learning Finnish language is a long way process and considered to be as one of the difficult languages in the world.

“I find it hard to understand especially when they talk fast and use different regional dialect, I just ask them to repeat what they said and talk in local dialect in which I understand better”.

“I told them that they should not be hesitated to correct my Finnish grammar; I am happy that they correct my grammar. In this way I learn more”.

“If they speak fast, I can't understand them. So sometimes, I ask them to speak much slower and clearer. If I don't understand what they are saying, I ask them to show me what they mean so that I learn and know it the second time around”.

According to Psychology Today, feelings of loneliness and isolation affect in all ages and types of people. Suffering a loneliness is a kind of suffering from physical pain. Loneliness can increase the fight-or-flight response, the physiological reaction a

person has when facing a threat. Feelings of isolation can have a serious effect on one's mental and physical health, such as decrease quality of life (can lead to low functional capacity), compromise immunity, increases the production of stress hormones and is harmful to sleep. (Johnson, Breines, Dembling & Didonato, 2020.)

Lis (2020) from Psychology today stated, human beings are social creatures, and social isolation is considered cruelty in most circumstances. Studies on both monkeys and humans have shown this can have a damaging impact on someone's psychology. There are risks and benefits to everything. A person can compare the risks of depression and anxiety, which will result from self-imposed isolation.

Finland has four seasons in a year. In each season people have different feeling and emotions, such as, in summertime people are active, happy and excited; and in wintertime people look passive, melancholic. According to Strategic Psychology (2020), due to the season change especially in the winter, which is a cold and snowy time, people tend to look unenergetic. This factor may also affect the one's mood towards other people and their job. There is a feeling of isolation or social withdrawal which they tend to distant themselves from others. (Strategic Psychology, 2020.) Some nurse thought that this factor is the reason why she manifests this mood change, she also thought she had a winter depression. Another thing that cause them to feel isolated and lonely is the lack of confidence to converse longer with co-workers. One nurse said during her first year of work, she tried to distant herself from co-workers during breaktime who will interrogate her in Finnish. She thought Finnish people are unapproachable and not easy to go with. She might misunderstand her Finnish language in different way.

"I notice that every winter I feel like I am exhausted. I sometimes feel I am during winter depression. This will go in time. After that I feel alive. Whenever I feel lonely, I get in touch with my friends".

"During my first year at work is crucial. I sometimes distant myself because I am hesitant to communicate with them because of my language skills and they seem unapproachable. But in the long run I got more confidence, we

started talking each other without hesitation and I can converse in Finnish well”.

“I felt that I was being left out in a conversation because I can’t understand some words that they are saying. They don’t have interest to explain their words or topics”.

Lack of trust occurs at working place. There is a lack of trust between frontline team members demonstrated by a lack of faith, confidence and belief in others. Some nurse had said that they sometimes a bit offended by his coworkers' and patient's attitude. Not always but if there are skills involve e.g. medicine distribution, wound dressing. It is one of the challenges that foreign nurses are facing, to manage this kind of skeptical attitude.

“I always feel like my co-workers does not trust me when I give medicines to the patients, they checked the medicines that I should give to the patients”.

“Even now, with my co-workers and some patient don’t trust me as a nurse”.

“I was on a morning shift together with a Finnish practical nurse. The moment I was finished helping the elderly with his morning routines. My co-worker starts asking if I threw the garbage. I answered yes, yet she still went inside the patient’s room and check if I have really thrown the garbage.”

The uniqueness of every individual can be seen by the existence of cultural differences. The trend of continually growing international migration is causing cultural disparity between the international nurses and local nurses. The issue of caregiver and care recipient in the context of multiculturalism also proves to be a challenge. Contrary to the common knowledge that treating all the patient with respect can prevent cultural problems, cultural awareness and knowledge in different cultural customs is the most useful way to avoid misunderstandings thus promote better care and work environment. Everyday routines with regards to culture that are usually overlooked are eye contact, touch, modesty, personal space, health-beliefs, and verbal and nonverbal communications (Ferwerda 2016; Rozzano 2000; Galantti 2000).

“I was used to being surrounded with a lot of people, now all the people wanted to have some form of personal space. I feel like they are annoyed whenever I get too close (physically) to them”.

Moreover, touch, as one of the differences in behavioural norms was surprisingly common cause of misunderstanding. Show of affection by touching hands or back tapping or hugging is normal in some culture whereas it is not usually practiced in Finland. In some cases, some staff members with different cultural background may send inaccurately perceived message by use of touching. (Andrews 2016.)

“In my home country, we used to be affectionate and use hugging when expressing happiness or sympathy while here in Finland, I don’t think I can do that”.

5.3 Coping with uncertainty

Social adjustment is an attempt made by an individual to engage into the standards, values and desires of a society in order to be accepted. It is often referred as a psychological method. It involves dealing with new standards and values. In the scientific language used in psychology, getting along with the members of society as best as one can is termed as adjustment. It also involves participating in challenging and worthwhile activities that provides gratification where strength and skills are applied. It is defined as a fulfilling state characterized by vigour (high level of energy), dedication (shows commitment to the task and enthusiasm), and absorption (unaffected by distractions and immersed in the activity). (Day, Kelloway & Hurrell, 2014.)

“I socialize and interact with co-workers most especially those who have lots of experiences. Through this, I was able to develop my interpersonal and communication skills and gained knowledge regarding their culture and values. Thus, fulfilling my goal to adapt to the atmosphere.”

Moving to a new country is challenging yet exciting. There is a lot to learn and adjust most especially when it comes to social and cultural conditions. These contributes to the enjoyment of a new environment. Social adjustment is the effort for individual to cope with the standards, needs of the society, values to integrate with the existing scenarios. This adjustment varies on every individual and it is greatly affected by previous international experience such as language skills, socio-cultural connection with the host culture, level of cultural interaction and support system the foreign nurse gets in order to adjust to the new environment. In addition, these factors are self-support strategies with transition. Some foreign nurses adapt faster and integrate smoothly while others have difficulty to cope with adjustment. Foreign students are provided with support throughout their academic journey. Many universities have formed Committee comprising of teaching staff and students to facilitate foreign student's socio-cultural adjustments. (Tsegay, Zegegerish & Ashraf, 2018.)

“With the help of my colleagues and friends, I was able to understand more of the Finnish culture. I also read articles and books about Finland. One significant thing about them is they value personal space. Funny things like one seat apart in public transportation and standing one meter apart under the waiting shed.”

“During my leisure time, I call my family and friends overseas. Family is my main support system for overcoming the challenges I came across when I moved to Finland. I also make the most out of my rest day by going outside and exploring new cities, meeting new friends.”

According to the findings, supportive mentoring has been a gateway to the learning in the clinical area. The mentor's attitude towards foreign nurses like being friendly, understanding and helpful greatly affects when it comes to adjusting in Finnish working culture.

“My mentors during orientation at work have taken an effort to guide me during my shift. They reinforce my clinical skills and provided some

additional theoretical knowledge. They also give professional feedback for improvement and for the good patient care”.

One of the advantages of having a mentor at a new job is that they can help adapt to the workplace culture more quickly. Employees who are involved in a mentorship program are more acquainted with the workplace routines, policies, and expectations than those who do not participate. This is an important factor in helping new employees to feel more a part of the organization. The mentor can give advice and guidance to the employee to develop the full potential in the workplace. (Together, 2019.)

“Each of us employees have trainings, either voluntarily or compulsory. In my situation I prefer to go to trainings, it develops more my skills and knowledge”.

The Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS) is a national expert unit specialized in studying the goals, practices and policies of language education. The focus of research includes language testing, the development of language proficiency in different contexts and communities of practice, and language education policy. (Center for Applied Language Studies, 2020.)

For foreign nurse, one of the qualifications to become a nurse in Finland, is to have a level of satisfactory or higher in all subject areas in Finnish language (Valvira, 2020). The examinations and certificates are conducted by Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) is responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications and national certificates of language proficiency. They also provide services to the different education sector, citizens and visitors. The national language of proficiency, or a YKI certificate, is a certificate of language proficiency for adults that allows them to prove the language skills in an officially recognized way. YKI examinations evaluate skills in common language in practical situations, meaning that they require no knowledge of specialty language or specific industry jargon. (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020.)

“It was struggling for me to apply for YKI test, because I have not practiced my Finnish language that well. I was not confident to take it. What I did was, I applied Finnish language course, which I paid by myself, to develop my language skills”.

“My employer encouraged me to take the YKI test for evaluation as well as to renew my contract. It was a struggle for me. Finnish lessons helped me a lot to pass the examination. On the other hand, I viewed this matter not only an examination but also a key for improvement”.

The importance of being culturally competent is needed now more than ever as there are evidences of movements worldwide. The quality of healthcare should not be disrupted because of cultural differences. (Kaihlainen, Hietapakka & Heponiemi 2019.) According to the reports gathered from the interview, nurses in Helsinki region are more tolerant to foreign nurses compared to nurses in other provinces in Finland. It is based on the interviewee's previous and current experiences in the country.

“I worked in two provinces in Finland before settling here in Helsinki. I can say that my workmates in Helsinki is more tolerant with foreigners like me. I think it is because in Helsinki, there are a lot of foreigners both roaming around and in workplaces, and they kind of get used to hanging around with people from different nationality unlike in other provinces where there are just a small population of foreigners”.

Additionally, a new study conducted by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) highlighted the importance of cross-cultural empathy. Workplace with nurses who are empathetic, patient, and sensitive towards workmates with diverse cultural background has reported lesser stress levels and work problems. It also boosts the general wellbeing of native and foreign nurses alike. (Wesolowska, Hietapakka, Elovainio, Aalto, Kaihlainen & Heponiemi 2018.)

6 DISCUSSION

Conducting a study on how foreign nurses have professionally adapted into the Finnish healthcare work environment showed interesting findings that this study will not only serve as detailed information to the readers but will also serve as a guideline to any other researchers that will be interested in a similar study. Most of the findings that came out from this study have corresponded to previous studies done on how foreign nurses adapt into their work environment, this agrees with the previous studies by Calenda, Pitkänen & Sippola (2019). In general, the results showed that the foreign nurse were adapting well into the Finnish work environment. However, they faced some challenges in adapting into the work environment as well.

A study conducted by Calenda et al. (2019) concluded that insufficient language skill is the main barrier in smooth transition into Finnish workforce particularly in professional and social aspects. Aside from misunderstandings from lack of Finnish knowledge, difference in conception in treating the patient is also an obstacle to integration, culture and work attitude also proves to be a challenging factor to integration.

Most of the interviewed nurses in this study expressed that they were happy and satisfied with their work in Finland but challenging at the same time. Integrating at Finnish work environment is not that difficult for them. Culture shock was inevitable during their few years living and working in Finland such as food, lifestyle, work norms, racial difference and differences in communication and socialization towards Finnish people. However, their main concerns were insufficient language skills, which is also considered as the main challenge at work. They can interact and communicate with the patients and their workmates, but they felt sometimes that they must work out with the grammar. In other words, they felt inadequate because of language barrier. They thought that they had to work harder with Finnish language skills. Learning Finnish language turned out to be a key obstacle in working and living in Finland (Calenda et

al 2019). Nonetheless they mentioned minor factor such as lack of trust at work. They expressed that they felt this kind of experience as degrading and felt inadequate in their abilities. But this issue is then resolved after such events, they do not want problems arise at work. Some are grateful that their workplace arranged for them a mentorship and continuous trainings. Mentors are a big help to the less experienced nurses and continuous trainings can develop the nurses' clinical skills.

Similar findings have been revealed from this study. The study identifies the challenges that the foreign nurses who were just a full-time student; the challenges that they have encountered during studying and working with few knowledges about the Finnish culture most especially the language and how they were able to make a solution on it, how they have succeeded the challenges. Additionally, it also identifies the challenges of foreign nurses transition to a Finnish working environment such as nurses who were already a registered nurse in their host country and must undergo again as a student due to the lack of recognition of prior learning and professional experience; However, promoting factors were also highlighted during the transition phase, how it affects/helps in their working life in Finland. The questions we aimed to answer through this study relate to the promoting factors, challenges and possible solutions that foreign nurses face at the Finnish working place. For those nurses who studied their nursing degree in Finland; they said it came easy for them to work since they had already learnt some of the procedures the Finnish health care system during their practical placements from their home country. As to nurses who does not have a nursing background from their home country, it was somehow challenging for them to integrate clinical placement in Finland during their student years.

In Finland, nursing is one of such degrees. It is also one of a high demand job in the country, not only because it is always needed, but specially lately with the current situation happening with elderly homes and the recent pandemic. Nowadays, most nursing degrees are conducted in Finnish, so a satisfactory level of Finnish language skills are required. But even if the degree can be taken in English, Finnish is still required to be able to work. Passing the language is one of the challenges that they

experienced. Most of them consider it as their main issue in studying and working in Finland. Even up to these days, they are still struggling with the language. All the participants in one way or another, talked about language and how it is affecting them.

Due to the crisis in the field of nursing, e.g. shortages of nurses, in many parts of the world especially in Finland. To fill the shortages, Finland is educating more foreign nursing students to be able to integrate in Finnish healthcare working culture. Non-Finnish descent nurses who are working as a practical nurses and/or assistant nurse have the right to study a higher nursing education to become a competent nurse in Finland. (YLE News 2019.)

As aforementioned, the purpose of the study was to describe the transition of foreign background nurses from Lahti University of Applied Sciences and to find out their experiences into Finnish working environment. Lastly, to qualitatively determine the reality concerning the integration of foreign nurses in the working life in Finland. The aim of this thesis is to find out how the foreign nurses working in Finland were adapting to the Finnish working culture through the provision of information and how they succeed in dealing with the challenges at the Finnish working environment.

6.1 Ethical Consideration

The ethical consideration in the process of collecting data emphasize truthfulness, accuracy or reliability, careful execution of appropriate data analysis and collection. Ethical consideration is the most significant parts of the research. Transparency in reporting is also relevant. The researcher will collect and manage data in a way that does not compromise the confidentiality of subjects. Data fraud and misleading data should be avoided. (Cooper, 2016.)

Informed consent is a key principle of research ethics. It is important that the participants understood the research benefits and possible risks involved. Authors provided informed consent that were given to the participants, so that the participants can have the basis of the research. Participants were made aware of all the information that could affect their decision to participate. Participating was voluntary, not compulsory. Participants have the right to discontinue from the research at any phase if they intended to do so, or if they feel that their rights and privacy have been invaded. In formulating the questionnaire and interview, the use of any insulting, offensive and discriminatory language needs to be avoided. (Dudovskiy, 2011.)

Authors trust that their colleagues have accumulated data carefully, have used appropriate analytic techniques and have reported their results accurately, and have treated the work of other researchers with respect (Cooper 2016). Anonymity and confidentiality are also hot topics in ethical responsibility in research (Farrimond, 2013). The authors maintained the principle of beneficence and concern for welfare of the participants and took consideration about the potential consequences of revealing participants' identities.

6.2 Limitation

In this section, limitations were mentioned. There were limited resources about the integration of immigrant nurses thus making it a challenge to authors to find a relevant one. To counter this, the terms were broadened, and different keywords were used in order to have enough relevant articles to be used in the study. This is a bachelor level thesis, the resources allotted for this effort, and the time constraint influences the depth and scope of this effort.

7 RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

The authors recommend an in-depth study of the integration of nurses with foreign background in specific countries, like Finland. Taken together, we recommend that added research that investigates understanding the perceptions of nurses with foreign background and their education needs is warranted.

In this study, seven foreign born nurses were interviewed. The objective of this study is to investigate the different challenges faced by foreign born nurses as well as the positive implications of integration to their general wellbeing. This study also explored different possible solutions to the challenges.

The study showed that job satisfaction, work incentives, good working atmosphere and recognitions are essential factors in order to integrate smoothly in a workplace. The said factors have been proven by the experiences shared by the interviewee. This gives an insight that co-operation between the head of the unit and the employees plays an important role to help the foreign-born nurses to adjust in the work environment.

Additionally, some challenges or barriers have been identified that hinders the integration process. The most prominent challenge amongst all the interviewee was the language barrier. Language, being the most crucial part in communication needs to be addressed to prevent misunderstandings from co-workers and the patients. Cultural differences, lack of trust and feeling of isolation has also emerged from the interview.

Lastly, possible solutions were mentioned in this study. The nursing program in Finland has included Finnish language during the three-and-a-half-year course. Unfortunately, this does not seem enough to help the foreign nurses to integrate well

in the workplace. Additional language courses have been taken by the nurses to strengthen their proficiency in language. To address the cultural difference, information on cultural awareness, nationwide, should be empowered by the workplace and the government. Individual adjustments from local and foreign nurses is encouraged to avoid conflict.

Even though the findings correlate with the previous study conducted in Finland and abroad, it is still not enough to conclusively say that the mentioned factors are the only challenges experienced by the nurses and possible solutions. An extensive qualitative research with emphasis on the common barrier to integration of foreign borne nurses is recommended in order to deepen the knowledge of the public audience regarding this matter.

The authors of this study hope that the results can be beneficial to the local and foreign-born nurses, managers, patients and researchers alike.

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APPENDIX 1

Background information

Name: Nurse 1

Gender:

Years of experience (Finland):

Previous experience in Nursing (own country, if any):

Theme #1: Promoting factors that affect the transition into working environment in Finland

- Thoughts/feelings on positive/smooth transition
- How it is significant in Finnish working environment
- In your own perspective, what are the ways to promote good working environment
- How would you describe the pace of your life over the past (insert number) months that you are working?
- What are aspects of nature that you enjoy in relation to getting things into perspective?

Theme #2: Challenges faced during the transition into working life in Finland

- Challenges encountered
- Why it was considered a challenge

Theme #3: Possible Solutions

- How are the challenges being manage?
- Ways to lighten up the challenging crisis
- What creative pursuits do you enjoy outside of work?
- For which future events can you see a need to prepare yourself for personally at this time?

APPENDIX 2

Consent form

Dear Participant,

We invite you to participate in our research study entitled “The transition of nursing graduates with foreign background into Finnish working culture”. The authors are currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing at LAB Ammattikorkeakoulu in Lahti, Finland, and we are in the process of writing our bachelor’s thesis. The purpose of the research is to describe the transition of foreign background nurses and to find out their experiences into Finnish working environment.

Upon signing this consent form, the participant understood and agreed that:

- *Participation in this thesis project is completely voluntary.*
- *Should the participant wish to withdraw, he/she is free to do so without any consequences of any kind.*
- *There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life.*
- *The responses will remain confidential and anonymous.*
- *Data from this interview will be destroyed after the completion of our thesis.*
- *No one other than the authors will know your individual answers to this questionnaire.*
- *Participation involves being interviewed by researchers. The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview.*
- *An audio recording can be made to ensure the accuracy of the data.*
- *The participant has read and understand the explanation provided by the interviewer.*

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavour.

Sincerely yours,

Marvic Paul Adobo, Vanessa Almazan & Daryll-Joyce Laulajainen

Participant’s signature

Place and Date