

CONCEPT ANALYSIS

Acculturation in Immigrant Nurses: a Concept Analysis Study Using Walker and Avant's Approach

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Introduction

Purpose: The importance of culture for ensuring safe and high-quality nursing care cannot be overstated. However, despite the increase in nurse migration, the concept of acculturation in nursing has not been well defined. This study aimed to elucidate the concept of acculturation in immigrant nurses.

Design: The defining attributes of the concept were established using Walker and Avant's 8-step method. This article is due to the dissertation of the PhD degree course approved and defended at the Faculty of Nursing, Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences. In this study, the researcher started collecting data after receiving the Code of Ethics (IR.BMSU.REC.1401.114) from the Iran National Committee for Ethics in Biomedical Research. The researcher provided the participants with contact information and was always ready to answer their research queries.

Methods: Without any time constraints, a search was conducted on databases including Scopus, Pub Med, Web of Science, SID, Magiran, Irandoc, and Oxford Medical Dictionary using the keywords 'acculturation' and 'immigrant nurses'. A total of 18 articles were analyzed based on the inclusion criteria.

Results: Immigrant nurses experience acculturation through two main attributes. One-way acculturation involves the impact of social values, norms, customs, and habits on the nurses. Two-way acculturation refers to the cultural exchange between the nurse and the new environment.

Conclusion: According to the study, immigrant nurses experience acculturation as being impacted by various aspects such as beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and habits.

Keywords: *Acculturation, concept analysis, immigrants, nurses*

Health Care Workers' Risks

Acculturation is commonly associated with political domination or growth and refers to the alterations in beliefs or customary habits when one group's cultural system replaces another (Ward, 2020). Nursing is a health profession with the distinct purpose of delivering topnotch care, therapy, recovery, and wellness facilities to preserve and to enhance the

community's well-being (Arcêncio, 2018). Despite policymakers' efforts, the crucial profession is in danger and will encounter significant obstacles (Silva & Machado, 2019). Nursing faces a significant obstacle in the form of nurse migration, a worldwide issue recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO). This phenomenon greatly impacts the

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healthcare systems of the countries affected (Nair, 2020). Immigration of nurses poses challenges for both origin and host countries, including shortage of manpower and cultural obstacles. Immigrant nurses also encounter cultural difficulties when adapting to a new work environment (Habermann & Stagge, 2010). Foreign nurses must adhere to their host country's cultural norms and values. When they emigrate, they will encounter a new culture and must adapt to it through acculturation (Cayaban & Bumalay, 2021). The nursing field constantly evolves, demanding qualified professionals to deliver culturally appropriate care. Cultural competence is essential for effective nursing practice (Tang et al., 2019). Therefore, it is essential to comprehend acculturation in immigrant nurses and create approaches for its enhancement.

After examining the research literature, it was discovered that previous studies in nursing culture have focused on certain aspects of nurses' acculturation, but there is a lack of comprehensive research on the acculturation of immigrant nurses in all its dimensions (Buscemi, 2011; Ea et al., 2008; Liou et al., 2013). Walker and Avant's method was used in this study to define "nursing acculturation," its attributes, and its relation to similar concepts. This can help clarify the concept of nursing acculturation, develop measurement tools, and empower the nursing workforce.

Methods

In 2023, this study using Walker and Avant's approach was conducted to clarify the concept of acculturation in immigrant nurses in Iran. The study aimed to examine the dimensions and attributes of acculturation as a professional nursing requirement. This method is based on Wilson's eleven-step model, allowing for a systematic examination of independent step concepts (Walker, 2013). Walker Avant simplifies Wilson's classic method, clarifying the concept and enabling bedside application (Thoun, 2022).

The approach involves concept analysis to enhance comprehension. It entails selecting a concept, establishing the analysis's objective, identifying all its uses, determining its defining attributes, identifying various cases, including model, borderline, related, contrary, invented, and illegitimate ones, identifying antecedents and consequences, and defining empirical referents (Squires et al., 2019).

Initially, migrant nurses' acculturation was pursued by conducting an unlimited internet search using dependable databases like Scopus, Pub Med, Web of Science, SID, Magiran, Irandoc, and Oxford Medical Dictionary with the keywords "acculturation and immigrant nurses." The retrieved articles and references were saved in the author, year, and title format to avoid redundancy. In addition, the reference lists of the evaluated and indexed articles on immigrant nurses' acculturation were manually reviewed.

The articles selected for analysis must meet certain criteria, such as their relevance to the concept of acculturation of immigrant nurses (defining or describing acculturation in nursing and its relationship to outcomes), being written in Farsi or English, and having an available abstract. The study only includes theoretical or experimental articles and excludes anonymous articles, editorial letters, book reviews, and commentaries.

The search plan yielded 1045 articles, from which 853 were removed after initial review. Another 105 articles were excluded after reviewing their titles and 63 more after reviewing their abstracts, either because they needed to meet the inclusion criteria or were duplicates. Two researchers reviewed the titles of 24 articles to determine inclusion and exclusion criteria. The manual search of reference lists yielded only a few new articles. In total, 18 articles met the inclusion criteria and were fully reviewed using Walker and Avant's method. These sources helped determine related words.

Findings

Selection of the concept: Acculturation is crucial in all medical fields, particularly nursing. It impacts the ability of professional nurses to deliver safe and high-quality care. Thus, immigrant nurses must adjust to the cultural norms of their host country, while nursing managers must consistently assess cultural factors to maintain care standards.

The rise in nurse migration worldwide has highlighted the need to address the acculturation of immigrant nurses. To tackle this issue, scales have been developed to evaluate and to improve acculturation. However, as acculturation is an abstract concept that cannot be directly measured with quantitative data, it poses a challenge for nursing managers, clinical nurses, and researchers. Therefore, exploring and analyzing this concept can aid in recognizing, evaluating, and promoting acculturation in all nursing levels and situations.

Determine the aims or purposes of analysis: This study explored the attributes of acculturation in nursing and its practical application at the patient's bedside using Walker and Avant's approach.

Identify Uses of the Concept: Acculturation refers to adapting to the customs and ethics of social life while also describing the changes that occur in a group's culture when they come into contact with another group (Berry, 2019). Acculturation happens when people from different cultures have ongoing interactions. This interaction causes changes in the culture of one or both groups. The term is often used to describe a weaker group adopting the culture of a stronger group or when a weaker group is immersed in the culture of a stronger group (Kunst et al., 2021).

According to An et al., foreign nurses' acculturation in the US is a multifaceted and intricate process involving assimilation of the host country's cultural norms and practices. Those who acculturate successfully adopt the individualistic values of American culture and become more assertive in their professional environment (An et al., 2016). According to Goh and Lopez, improved social support from co-workers, doctors, and supervisors can make the acculturation process easier for immigrant nurses. Furthermore, these nurses' language and communication abilities play a crucial role in their acculturation process (Goh & Lopez, 2016). Emerson et al. found a positive correlation between acculturation and job satisfaction among Filipino nurses who shared a similar cultural level to that of the United States. Age, length of stay in the US, acculturation, and job satisfaction were highly correlated factors (Ea et al., 2008). Another study that was conducted to facilitate the acculturation of immigrant nurses pointed out that the successful acculturation of foreign nurses into the host culture leads to job satisfaction, better performance, and a decent life. It has also been reported that foreign-educated nurses who are satisfied with their work and personal lives stay in their current jobs longer and have better patient outcomes (Ea, 2007). Hener et al., in the study of the relationship between acculturation and depression among immigrant student nurses, state that this change may be explained by adaptation to the educational setting, mastering the host society's language, and social anchorage (Hener et al., 1997). Liou et al., about acculturation among Asian nurses working in the US health care system, claim that Asian nurses used and preferred to use both their mother language and English, identified themselves as Oriental or Asian and culturally, viewed themselves as very or mostly Asian. Participants scored high on collectivism and commitment. Collectivism was significantly correlated with commitment but did not mediate acculturation factors and commitment. The understanding of cultural values by the managers of medical systems significantly increases the work commitment of migrant nurses (Liou et al., 2013).

Determine the Defining Attributes: By summarizing the findings of the above-mentioned refined studies, the defining attributes of acculturation in immigrant nurses are classified into two attributes:

- A. One-way acculturation occurs when a nurse is placed in a new society and culture surrounded by cultural phenomena such as social values, norms, ideals, customs, and habits. As nurses learn these attributes gradually, they cannot contribute anything back to society, resulting in one-way acculturation.
- B. Two-way acculturation occurs when an immigrant nurse assimilates cultural attributes of the destination society that, in turn, shape their personality. Over time, both the nurse and society exchange cultural elements. This exchange is also evident in cross-cultural interactions between countries

during commercial or social exchanges, leading to cultural changes and influences.

Identify Model Case

The model case is an example of the use of the concept that shows all the attributes of the definition of the concept. The model can be an actual example from real life, found in the literature, or constructed by the researcher to help understand the concept (Morgan & Yoder, 2012). This study describes a model case for the concept of acculturation in immigrant nurses.

Ms. D is an Iranian nurse working in a hospital's psychiatric unit in Qatar. She started her shift with energy. After entering the unit, she sincerely greeted her colleagues, actively participated in shift delivery, and communicated with patients and colleagues. She was responsible for the care of 5 patients diagnosed with major depression. After handing over the shift, she entered room 1 with her colleagues; she respected all the patients with greetings, introduced herself to them, and informed them that she would be their nurse today. She encouraged patients to let her know if they needed anything by ringing the bell. She examined all her patients, identified their problems and needs, and provided comprehensive care for each patient. During the examination, she noticed one of the patients crying. She tried to get close to her and sympathize with her. Due to her language and communication skills, she could communicate with the patient. She realized that the patient had missed her mother. She immediately called the patient's mother and announced the patient's homesickness. The patient's mother visited her an hour later and calmed the patient down. This case represents an ideal example of "acculturation" and includes many defining attributes of immigrant nurse acculturation.

Identify Additional Cases: Walker and Avant claim that it is difficult to define the defining attributes that are the most famous attributes of the concept under study because they can overlap with some related concepts. For this reason, to help the researcher judge the characteristic attributes, it is suggested to examine the cases that are not the same as the intended concept and are similar or contrary to it. These cases include Borderline, Contrary, and Related cases (Kellogg, 2021).

Borderline case: Some cases contain most of the attributes of the definition of the considered concept, but not all of them. The borderline case is an example similar to the model cases, but due to the absence of some attributes of the concept, it can be distinguished from it (Kellogg, 2021). In the example below, a borderline case for the concept of acculturation is presented.

Mr. R. is an Iranian nurse working in the oncology unit of a hospital in the Netherlands. This is the first year of his experience in the Netherlands. After entering the unit, he greeted his colleagues and actively participated in shift delivery. He was

responsible for the care of 3 patients diagnosed with leukemia. He introduced himself to the patients and informed them he would be their nurse today. He encouraged patients to let him know if they needed anything by ringing the bell. After an hour, one of the patients rang the bell. The nurse went to the patient's room and observed that the patient needed help to get down from the bed. The nurse helped the patient to get off the bed. The patient asked the nurse to talk to him a little, but due to the nurse's lack of command of the language, the nurse had a problem communicating with him. The introduced case is a borderline model of acculturation of nurses because it does not show all the attributes of acculturation, including attributes related to mastering the language and communicating with patients.

Contrary case: This is a case where there are no defining attributes. The Contrary case can be expressed as something that needs to be recognized as the main concept (Kellogg, 2021). Therefore, the following item cannot show acculturation because it lacks defining attributes.

Ms. Z. is an Iranian nurse working in the urology unit of a hospital in Turkey. After entering the department, she does not communicate with colleagues. She did not actively participate in the delivery of the shift and did not communicate with the patients. She was responsible for the care of 6 patients. After handing over the shift, she went to the nurse's room and talked on the phone there. She spoke on the phone in his native language, regardless of the patient's needs. One of her patients was interested in talking to her, but she refused to speak with the patient. The presented model has no attributes, and it is easy to understand that it is not an example of nursing acculturation.

Related Case: Some cases are related to the studied concept but do not include all the attributes of the definition. They are similar to the subject of study and somehow related to the main concept (Kellogg, 2021).

Ms. M is an Iranian nurse who immigrated to Canada. In one of her shifts, she is a nurse for a 55-year-old man who is hospitalized in the internal unit with a possible diabetic foot amputation. The patient's leg is numb and bruised. The doctor plans to operate on him but declares the risk of recovery after the operation to be 50%. When obtaining informed consent from the patient's family, they warn Ms. M about the operation. They say that losing a limb means losing an independent life in their culture. The nurse tells them that this procedure is therapeutic work that, if not done, may lead to more risks for the patient and cultural issues, and in this case, should not endanger the patient's health. She explains that if they want the patient not to undergo surgery, they must give personal consent and discharge the patient. The presented case has no attributes of the concept of acculturation in nursing. Still, it may be mistaken for acculturation because it emphasizes the impact of culture and cultural transfer.

Identify antecedents and consequences: Identifying the antecedents and consequences of each concept can help us understand the social contexts in which the concept is used and define its attributes. Antecedents include events before the concept (MacLellan et al., 2015).

Researchers have stated various items as the antecedents of nursing acculturation.

It should be noted that the context of acculturation is initially formed from identification with the original culture and must be well established in its original culture so that this acculturation process can happen well in another culture. In other words, a person must have appropriate and sufficient performance and participation in the culture of his/her origin so that the main cultural identity characteristic occurs (Seráfica, 2011). Also, the context of acculturation can be in a person's desire to change or to modify his/her cultural identity and main ways of practicing (Hajro et al., 2019).

Consequences are events or results that may occur after the concept or as a result of the concept (Abdolrahimi et al., 2017). The consequences of nursing acculturation affect nurses, patients, and healthcare organizations (Pérez, 2015). In general, the consequences of acculturation in nurses can be improved performance, ability to communicate appropriately, provide qualitative care, reduced tension in the nursing work environment, economic progress, improved income, and change in lifestyle (Al-Omari & Pallikkathayil, 2008; Baker, 2011; Seráfica, 2011).

Define Empirical Referents: The last step of concept analysis of acculturation in immigrant nurses is identifying empirical referents for defining attributes. The empirical referents show how the concept is measured and to what extent the definition can be useful in measuring and validating the concept. Walker and Avant consider empirical referents as recognizable attributes of the concept whose appearance is a sign of the existence of the concept itself, and the purpose of their definition is to facilitate the measurement and identification of the concept and to help produce research measurements (Toews et al., 2021).

Based on the literature review, acculturation measures are used to discern the effect of acculturation perceptions of cultural processes, kinship, nationality, and perceived health beliefs (Pérez, 2015). There were no specialized measurements that measured the acculturation of immigrant nurses. However, in the studies related to the acculturation of immigrant nurses, one of the most used measurements of acculturation was A short acculturation scale. This self-administered 12-item questionnaire was used to measure three dimensions of acculturation: (i) language use and preference at work, at home, and with friends (5 items; $\alpha = 0.78$); (ii) language use and preference in media (TV and radio) programs (3 items; $\alpha = 0.81$);

and (iii) preferred ethnicity for social relations (4 items; $\alpha = 0.71$). Each item is scored from 1 to 5; the lowest possible score is 12, and the highest is 60. Lower scores indicate less acculturation and higher scores indicate more acculturation (Cruz et al., 2000). However, to accurately measure acculturation in immigrant nurses, it is necessary to research the design and psychometrics of specific measurements for this issue.

Discussion

In this study, the concept of acculturation in immigrant nurses was analyzed based on Walker and Avant's approach. Since the purpose of concept analysis is to examine the structure and function of a concept, it seems that the name of the thing referred to as that concept should be clearly defined, and its use in the theory should be clearly explained so that whoever sees its concept and definition in the theory can understand exactly what is explained or predicted (Walker, 2013).

As a sacred profession, nursing has a history of providing valuable services to society in difficult conditions of disability and illness, which automatically induces a sense of service and commitment in this profession. Nursing expects to provide qualitative care to patients of any culture, language, and race, but in practice, there are various conditions in addition to professional commitment that affect nursing performance (Lin et al., 2019). Since acculturation is essential for the nursing profession, after defining the concept of acculturation and its attributes, standards must be created and observed in practice and the evaluation of acculturation. Also, the acculturation of all immigrant nurses in health and clinical settings should be evaluated to provide safe services, protect patients, and maintain the reputation of nurses (Ea, 2007).

Based on the review of existing studies, the concept of acculturation in nursing was investigated, and its defining attributes were determined. The dimensions and critical attributes of nursing acculturation used in various studies include two main types of acculturation in immigrant nurses. One-way acculturation shows that immigrant nurses are influenced by various issues such as social values, norms, ideals, customs, habits, etc. Two-way acculturation represents the cultural exchange between the nurse and the new culture in which he/she is placed. In this way, in addition to being influenced by the culture of that society, the immigrant nurse can also influence that culture. In the same direction, Serafica, in her research about acculturation in Filipino immigrant nurses, states that accurate assessment, measurement, and exploration of acculturation of Filipinos in the United States can help improve the overall health care of this population (Serafica, 2011), which is consistent with the findings of the present study.

Therefore, the present study and other similar studies can be used as a basis for building valid and reliable measurements and conducting control trials related to increasing the acculturation of

immigrant nurses. This can ultimately make acculturation in nursing more objective and promote this concept.

Strengths and limitations of the study

The high demand for nurses worldwide has led to different societies attracting nurses from other countries to make up for their shortage of nursing staff. Immigrating for a better life is also a reason for nurses to move. However, the phenomenon of acculturation is an essential factor in this process, yet studies have yet to be conducted to define it. On the other hand, this study is a concept analysis, so generalizability is impossible. As a result, further studies are necessary to apply it to all immigrant nurses

Conclusion

This study found that immigrant nurses' acculturation involves being influenced by various aspects of beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, habits, and more. Understanding this concept can help objectively assess and improve the acculturation of nursing in immigrant nurses, leading to better training, stronger skills, more accurate measurement, and ultimately, higher-quality and safer nursing care.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Authors' contributions:

H M conceived the idea and research questions, assisted with analyses, interpreted the results, and wrote the results section. M R helped to conceive the research questions, searched databases, conducted the analyses, and prepared the first complete draft of the manuscript. M S M helped to conceive the research questions, assisted with analyses, aided in the interpretation of the results, and contributed to the writing of the manuscript. F F aided in searching databases and helped to edit the manuscript. All authors approved the final article.

