

**A critical evaluation of multicultural
workforce and overcoming cultural
barriers: The experience of Filipino
nurses in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**


By

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Certification of Approval

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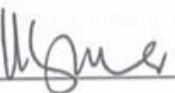
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Abstract

The main aim of this project was to critically analyse and evaluate how to overcome barriers to workplace multiculturalism. Achieving this aim was important for the purposes of providing a roadmap for contemporary organisations to use towards fostering higher levels of inclusion and diversity amongst their core teams of employees. The findings generated by the research study broadly signify that the main issues undermining workplace multiculturalism at the Jeddah City Hospital are communication siloes, agile decision making structures, culture shocks and age discrimination. Significantly, all of these issues were found to stem from a lack of effective communication and two-way dialogue between frontline nurses and care professionals and senior members of the HR and operations teams. The data results produced by this research project also further intimate that multiculturalism could be greatly improved within the organisation via: encouraging open door policies for diversity and inclusion issues, extending learning and orientation periods for new onboards to provide opportunities for enhanced levels of intra-team integration and togetherness, establishing an inclusion council to help new onboards with out-of-work life adjustment and offering coaching and mentoring programmes to new onboards to instil them with the unique skills and aptitudes needed to excel in their new work environment. The output of the research study highlights that the Jeddah City Hospital is also struggling with a negative organisational climate. This climate is at its most problematic in respect of making employees feel ashamed for making mistakes and/or needing to ask peers and colleagues for help to complete a particular task. It was noted by the study that this climate needs to change if the Jeddah City Hospital is to oversee increased levels of inclusion and diversity across the organisation. The methodology was ostensibly twofold: case study research and semi-structured interviews. The case study element involved analysing the experiences of Filipino nurses in a Jeddah City Hospital. Ten semi-structured interviews were carried out with frontline Filipino nurses and healthcare professionals currently working in the hospital to signpost the main cultural barriers being faced by this cohort in seamlessly integrating within the wider team and organisational setup. The main strength of the methodology used is that it helped to provide practical insights that could be of use in real-life situations faced by contemporary HR managers. By contrast, a possible limitation of the methodology is that there is no guarantee that the comments advanced by the interviewees constitute a fair and representative account of the current state of play within the hospital as regards

multiculturalism. One of the core implications of the work is identifying the need for increased levels of inclusion and diversity training at the case study organisation. A further critically important implication of the work completed is uncovering the vital role played by open and continuous conversation(s) in successfully breaking down barriers to workplace multiculturalism. Beyond some of the key implications noted immediately above, the output of the research study also potentially highlights that resolving out of work life adjustment issues is key to facilitating improved levels of in-work adjustment. This is a reflection of new onboards then approaching their new work environment with a more positive frame of mind.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Research Topic

The globalisation of labour markets as well as specific countries' reliance on the inflow of migrant workers have presented a range of additional HR issues for practising managers (ILOSTAT, 2021). On the one hand, accessing highly qualified talents on a truly global scale is a valuable opportunity for firms to reinforce talent pipelines. On the other hand, a multicultural workforce warrants entirely new approaches from HR managers to establish a sufficient level of cohesion and constructively handle any emergent conflict (Sparrow, Brewster and Chung, 2017). Contrary to the prevailing notion that a multicultural workforce enhances problem-solving and organisational innovation/creativity, there is a less popular, problematic aspect of uniting culturally different talents within the organisation (Machado, 2017). Both for individuals and the organisation, there is a high level of stress associated with establishing cross-cultural communication, and meanwhile organisational diversity is often celebrated, there are several risk factors inherent to culturally incompetent leadership and management practices (Prasad, 2017). While it is not the objective of this study to measure the performance implications of diverse work teams in quantitative terms, a mismanaged diverse talent base could actually detract from organisational performance and may culminate in a range of counterproductive conflicts in the organisation (Edgley, Sharma and Anderson-Gough, 2016). Therefore, successful cross-cultural management is one of the threshold criteria for all firms to excel in a genuinely global business environment.

Saudi Arabia, in particular, and the Middle East in general, have both been significant recipients of foreign labour inflow, mainly in industries with a chronic shortage of skilled talent (Silvey and Parreñas, 2019). Contrary to the Kingdom's attempt to reduce its reliance on foreign labour (part of the Saudisation national strategy), it is highly unlikely that this trend will reverse soon. As a result, cross-cultural management competencies are of paramount importance for all managers and leaders in the Saudi Kingdom to establish cohesive and mutually supportive work units.

The main motives behind the inflow of Filipino nurses include access to higher salaries and career progression (Manilla Buletin, 2021). Yet, taking into the magnitude of cultural differences between the Saudi and Filipino national cultures, performance may suffer if cultural variations remain under-managed (or even neglected) (Ginsberg, 2005). According to Arab News (2022), over 1.6 million Filipinos resided in Saudi Arabia, making it one of the largest expatriate communities in the Saudi Kingdom. Consequently, the issue (within or beyond the healthcare sector) constitutes a solid research rationale for further investigation. Furthermore, based on Alreshidi et al.'s (2021) research, less than 20% of the Saudi nurse population comprises Saudi nationals, indicating the country's reliance on highly skilled but culturally rather different talents. An in-depth cultural analysis of Saudi and Filipino cultural differences is presented in the findings/discussion chapter of the dissertation to indicate the likely cultural dissimilarities, potentially explaining the core propagators of the HR challenge(s) in the case study organisation.

The literature review (secondary research) component of the dissertation has revealed a range of relevant models facilitating cross-cultural understanding in organisations. However, despite these theoretical models' availability, the frequency of cross-cultural conflicts remained alarming. This, once juxtaposed with the mantra of seeking and retaining talent in the workforce, revealed many contradictions and problems to be resolved through effective HR practices and leadership (Ting-Toomey and Dorjee, 2018). Fundamentally, one of the most crucial mistakes observed is that acting personnel simply neglect culture's impact and misleadingly assume that people would respond similarly to leadership actions. However, there is considerable past research underpinning that leadership is not culturally universal; correspondingly, cultural sensitivity and awareness at higher levels of the organisation are essential to building cohesive and high-performance teams (Ting-Toomey and Dorjee, 2018). The symptoms of cultural mismanagement could be rather compound, but most importantly, a deterioration of organisational and individual performance is usually a stable indicator of unresolved cross-cultural issues in organisations. Moreover, according to Lai *et al.* (2018), an above-average turnover rate may also be one of the symptomatic manifestations of cultural conflicts in organisations, which further emphasises the business case behind appropriate cross-cultural management practices. On the same account, Gaganis *et al.* (2019) warned that under

certain circumstances, the escalation of intercultural conflicts may erode firm profitability and success, which adds yet another justification behind the practicality of this research paper.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the last few decades, cross-cultural research has mainly concentrated on the western hemisphere, with only a small number of academic papers discussing the issue in the Saudi context. Given that the Saudi Kingdom has historically relied on migrant (culturally dissimilar) talents, this research gap is particularly alarming and perhaps explains the case study organisation's difficulty in integrating and retaining foreign talents (Filipino nurses). Over the last few years, the company's talent strategy has been rather simplistic, with no particular attention to cultural integration and/or cross-cultural training. Whilst the issue has not been looked upon in detail (i.e. this study is the first structured attempt to diagnose the staffing difficulty), prior academic publications suggest that the inability to manage and lead a multicultural workforce could be one of the primary causes of dissipating staff satisfaction level among Filipino nurses. Other than the efficiency losses inherent to non-productive conflicts, there is also a latent risk of deteriorating patient safety and care quality.

Filipino expatriate nurses' working conditions, the acculturation process, and experiences in Saudi Arabia have been subject to some cursory academic research. Nevertheless, the vast majority of these papers remained only in a descriptive capacity, without offering hands-on solutions to resolving the challenges. Therefore, the core issue remaining for further exploration encompasses the lack of cross-cultural training, language barriers, and the ignorance of cultural integration in the first critical phase of accepting employment (e.g. part of an organisational onboarding programme) (Alsulaimani, 2014). These misunderstandings ultimately lead to higher (dysfunctional) turnover rates and possibly early repatriation (Albougami *et al.* 2020), with a series of adverse consequences for patient safety and the supply of qualified nurses in the Saudi healthcare system. Even though reliance on a single organisation would not lead to representative conclusions, many of the participating research subjects have articulated similar concerns, thus indicating a degree of reliability of the findings.

1.3 The rationale for Research and Expected Practical Contributions

The research rationale is twofold. First, it aims to expand the extant body of research on the management of cultural differences in Saudi Arabia. Second to this, given the case study strategy adopted for this research, insights from this paper could be the first step in reforming the selected private hospital's company culture and setting the foundation for organisational intervention (e.g. cross-cultural sensitivity training), preferably supplemented by a concrete action plan for improvement. Yet, as long as the Saudi cultural and institutional environment remains under-explored, there is an alarming level of uncertainty inherent to planned retention strategies aimed at Filipino nurses. Likewise, the exploratory study's contribution could assist acting managers in the selected organisation in devising a suitable intervention plan, including but not limited to cross-cultural training, cultural transformation, and the establishment of a variety of conflict resolution techniques to resolve cross-cultural misunderstandings promptly. Accumulated academic research in this realm supplies the necessary foundational understanding of cross-cultural management in the Saudi healthcare sector. Owing to the methodological constraints of the study, the findings may not equally apply to other organisations. Nonetheless, as the identified managerial problem affects a large share of Saudi healthcare organisations, the study's outputs offer a robust foundation for similar healthcare organisations to investigate Filipino nurses' work experience in the Saudi Kingdom and devise appropriate methods of overcoming cultural barriers.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question underpinning this empirical qualitative inquiry reads as follows:

Research Question 1: How can cultural barriers within multicultural workforces be overcome?

Due to the innate complexity of the research problem, an additional set of research questions were then added to the inquiry. These include the followings:

Research Question 1a: What are the main cultural aspects at play for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia and how do they differ from cultural theories?

Research Question 1b: What are the main barriers for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia and how do they impact upon multicultural workforces?

Research Question 1c: What are the main strategies that should be put in place to help nurses and healthcare organisations to suitably adapt to having multicultural workforces?

1.5 1.4 Dissertation Outline

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The literature review is a comprehensive, systematic summary of the relevant conceptual models, frameworks and ideas setting the foundation of the present study's inductive reasoning. Particular attention was placed on outlining research gaps recognised in existing cross-cultural/international HRM literature.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The methodology chapter is a comprehensive overview of the methodological design, incorporating a range of methodological options considered for the study (e.g. quantitative, qualitative and mixed/multi-methods). A solid justification is also provided in favour of using the selected data collection procedure (semi-structured interviews). Limitations, as well as ethical considerations pertinent to the study, are also drawn upon in the chapter.

Chapter 4 – Findings and Discussion

The findings sub-chapter introduces the readers to the analysis of primary data collected (semi-structured interviews with nurses in the set case study organisation). Upon the presentation of the thematic analysis, the chapter cross-references the findings, models and theories shown in the literature review (chapter 2) to identify the theoretical significance of the findings, using combined deductive-inductive reasoning.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter is organised into two pivotal sections. The first part offers a concise summary of the extent to which the study addressed the pre-set research questions and contributed to the gap(s) observed in the existing body of literature (i.e. the challenges of managing a cross-cultural healthcare workforce in Saudi Arabia). The second part relates mainly to the practical deliverables of the study to improve existing management practices and instil a high-performance, culturally sensitive work environment. Suggestions for organisational interventions, as well as areas for further academic/industry research, are also stipulated in the section.

References

The section contains all citations used and referred to in the main body of the dissertation, using the Harvard referencing convention.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction and Key Definitions

Multicultural workforces are becoming increasingly popular all over the world as globalisation continues to drive the international movement for work and leisure purposes (Rebecca, 2013). Workforces comprising individuals from different nations and backgrounds require the assimilation of a multitude of different cultures. Culture is defined by Schneider et al. (2013) as the shared understandings that people have about the world based on the specific groups that they are attached to. Although culture can be at multiple different levels, most commonly it is understood in terms of national culture. In particular, national culture relates to the specific orientations that individuals have based on their heritage and background (Beugelsdijk and Welzel, 2018). However, national culture is more than this and, as explained by Hofstede (2001) involves key definable features that are stable over time and can be quantified and compared to others from different cultural backgrounds. National culture has a significant impact on interactions within groups. Most often this is studied within an organisational context, within which it is found that culture exerts a significant impact on practices and activities within an organisation (Erthal and Marques, 2018). Alongside national culture, organisational culture is also an important consideration that impacts practices and individuals. A definition of organisational culture is provided by Erthal and Marques (2018) as values that are held within an organisation that are similar to those of national cultures but are less entrenched. Conversely, this definition is too loose to enable a full understanding of how organisational culture is different to national culture. To explain, a more suitable definition is offered by Barney (1986) as the complex grouping of values, beliefs and assumptions that differentiate an organisation from its competitors and establish a specific manner of conducting activities and practices within an organisation. This definition is useful as it recognises that organisational culture establishes a specific way of undertaking business and, thus, influences individuals and the organisation as a whole.

Both national and organisational cultures impact the capability of individuals to work together as a unit. In particular, multicultural workforces are impacted by both the national culture

aspects of the individuals working in the team and by the organisational culture embedded into the organisation in question (Chen et al., 2020). Multicultural teams are classified as a group of individuals that work together from a diverse set of backgrounds for a common purpose (Erciyas, 2019). Thus, a multicultural workforce comprises individuals from different backgrounds working together. However, it must also be recognised that this does not only comprise individuals based on their national cultural background but also how this influences them specifically based on their own ability to merge organisational, contextual and national cultures into their personality (Pacquiao, 2018). One further concept that is useful here is that of cultural diversity. This concerns people who have different values and understandings of the world and who come together to create a shared reference and way of navigating the world (Pacquiao, 2018). This definition is similar to the one proposed by Karim et al. (2019), who define workforce diversity simply as those individuals belonging to different national, social and racial backgrounds. Importantly, multicultural workforces can sometimes be difficult to navigate due to cultural differences which make organisational activities difficult, in particular communication (Karim et al., 2019). Nonetheless, there are also many advantages of multicultural workforces, for instance how they can help to drive organisational creativity and innovation (Chua, 2015). Thus, it is evidently important for organisations to learn how these cultural barriers can be overcome. By doing so, organisations, in particular global ones such as multinationals, can increase their operational effectiveness and their overall capability of success (Beugelsdijk and Welzel, 2018).

This literature review evaluates the key aspects of multicultural workforces and how they can be utilised for maximum effectiveness. It begins by exploring concepts such as national and organisational culture and how they relate to multicultural workforces. Next, it examines cultural barriers in the workplace and examines how these can be overcome for maximal effectiveness, thus supporting research objective 2. This also includes a consideration of cultural nuances and how they can impact performance, supporting the completion of research objective 1. Next, it transitions to the Saudi Arabian context and explores how Filipino nurses commonly experience working in this context. Therefore, this literature review provides the groundwork for understanding how strategies can be developed to support cultural adaptation by nurses and healthcare organisations, thus supporting research objective 3. Subsequently, the key literature gaps in the field are examined and it is determined how well these can be met by

the existing research study. Finally, a summary is provided of the overall findings concerning multicultural workforces and how cultural barriers can be overcome.

2.2 National Culture

National culture is most commonly used to refer to those specific ways that individuals differ across national borders (Hofstede, 2001). National culture is important because it affects the ability to undertake organisational activities; for instance, marketing and teamworking activities (Hallikainen and Laukkanen, 2018). It has also been found that national culture has a key influence on the suitability of undertaking certain human resource practices, given that individuals from different backgrounds need to be managed differently (Alqudah et al., 2022). Others have found that national culture means that different approaches need to be taken to supply chain management and operations management (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). Nonetheless, national culture needs to be understood first for organisations to understand how to alter practices. One of the most seminal works in achieving an understanding of national culture is given by Hofstede et al. (2010), who explains how it can be perceived as software of the mind (Hofstede et al., 2010). In other words, the computer analogy suggests that the hardware of the mind refers to the person themselves and then the software that is installed is the national culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). In addition to recognising how national culture is like a program that has been installed, Hofstede (1980) proposed a national culture dimensions framework that highlights several key measures of culture that differ across national borders and areas. This framework includes five key measures of culture including individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long/short-term orientation, and power distance (Hofstede, 1980). Although other authors such as Earley and Ang (2003) propose alternative models that incorporate other dimensions such as high vs low context, cultural intelligence and cultural tightness vs cultural looseness, Hofstede's (1980) original five have stood the test of time and proven to be a reputable and generalisable way of measuring culture across different countries (Gupta and Gupta, 2019).

2.2.1 Individualism/Collectivism

Individualism/collectivism concerns how tightly individuals from a nation interact together and whether they tend to prefer to work together or alone (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). Importantly, individuals from individualistic countries such as the UK or USA tend to prefer to work on their own and be managed in accordance with this (Hofstede, 1980). For instance, practices such as supply chain management and human resources are impacted by individualism/collectivism. Notably, the management of individuals from an individualistic nation tends to benefit from managing relationships on a one-to-one basis, whilst those from collectivist countries may prefer to be managed together (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). Nonetheless, this is not deterministic and an individual within a team's propensity to prefer to work alone also depends on individual factors such as personal understanding and preferred way of navigating the world (Schein, 1985).

2.2.2 Masculinity/Femininity

The masculinity/femininity dimension refers to the extent that individuals from a nation prefer to perceive themselves as heroic and assertive (masculinity) or that it is more important to be caring and look after people's quality of life (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). However, Huang and Crotts (2019) conceptualise this dimension slightly differently and argue that the masculine dimension is more about the nation's preference for valuing the motivation to achieve and compete through masculinity versus a more cooperative approach, as represented by femininity. Nonetheless, both of these aspects are important for consideration (Hofstede, 1980).

2.2.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance concerns an individual's overall tolerance and preference to adopt risk and uncertainty (Huang and Crotts, 2019). Gupta and Gupta (2019) generally agree with this conceptualisation of the dimension, recognising that certain countries have a greater preference for tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty than others. Importantly, uncertainty avoidance has an important impact on activities within business; in particular, the tendency to explore entrepreneurship (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). Uncertainty avoidance also impacts upon how much employees expect standardisation or are willing to tolerate unexpected events and changes within management and business (Gupta and Gupta, 2019).

2.2.4 Long/Short-term Orientation

Long-term orientation concerns individuals from those countries that take a long-term approach to planning, such as China (Hofstede, 1980, Gupta and Gupta, 2019). By comparison, shorter-term countries such as the United Kingdom have a lesser preference for stability and are more oriented to the here and now (Gupta and Gupta, 2019, Hofstede Insights, 2022a). Additionally, countries such as China typically have a greater level of frugality and respect for tradition, whilst countries such as the UK are more fluid, dynamic and changing (Huang and Crotts, 2019, Hofstede Insights, 2022a). Critically, the long or short-term orientation impacts business practices in many ways. To explain, this cultural value impacts the rate of entrepreneurship and an individual's propensity to undertake tasks at a certain time or speed, thus impacting practices and their effectiveness (Gupta and Gupta, 2019).

2.2.5 Power Distance

Huang and Crotts (2019) provide a simplistic explanation of the power distance dimension and posit that it concerns the degree of acceptance of class differences. Conversely, this explanation fails to understand the nuances of power distance and how it can impact practices. Recognising this, Gupta and Gupta (2019) suggest that power distance concerns how much less powerful members accept being dictated to through an uneven distribution of power. Importantly, countries such as Nigeria have high levels of power distance, whilst the UK has a lower level, suggesting that the former accepts unequal power distribution and the latter does not (Hofstede Insights, 2022b). Power distance can impact aspects within a business such as outsourcing, innovation and how successful joint ventures can be (Gupta and Gupta, 2019). Even more critical than this is communication; importantly, high levels of power distance can make communication across businesses harder as there are more barriers and procedures to navigate (Dai et al., 2022).

2.3 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is important given that it is a more localised version of national culture that comprises the specific values of the organisation that impact how individuals interact and

act (Erthal and Marques, 2018). Within organisational culture there are many different important aspects; most notably, the values, beliefs and hidden assumptions that are held by individuals (Barney, 1986). Organisational culture is important because it adds another layer of moderation to how activities are undertaken within an organisation. In other words, the values held by the organisation impact factors such as creativity and productivity, which then impact the bottom line and the output and success of an organisation (Ogbeibu et al., 2018). There are arguably three main components of organisational culture: values, beliefs and behaviours (Roscoe et al., 2019). Values concern what individuals believe is correct behaviour in accordance with their moral codes and perceptions of ethical behaviour (Holt and Stewart, 2000). By contrast, beliefs relate to the specific perceptions that individuals have and these are influenced by individual positionalities and either true or false understandings about the world (Roscoe et al., 2019). Behaviours are then the specific actions that are undertaken by an individual (Roscoe et al., 2019). Importantly, behaviours follow individual beliefs and values and are, therefore, representative of them (Schein, 1985).

The main components of organisational culture combine to influence patterns of behaviour within organisations that are specific to the organisation itself and, therefore, represent its organisational culture (Roscoe et al., 2019). One of the most important aspects of organisational culture is how it influences and impacts organisational decision-making (Saha and Kumar, 2018). In this manner, Wallach (1983) posits a model that illustrates three key types of organisational culture: bureaucratic, innovative and supportive. A bureaucratic organisational culture represents one that is managed hierarchically and has clear authority that is supported by systematic work (Wallach, 1983). By contrast, the innovative culture has looser boundaries and facilitates innovation and creativity through more dynamism and less control, whilst the supportive culture has a friendly environment and is people-oriented and focuses on delivering quality service (Saha and Kumar, 2018, Wallach, 1983). Although this model is fairly old, recent research continues to find support for these categories, recognising that these cultures still exist within organisations (Saha and Kumar, 2018). Although Mouton (1964) provides an alternative model that dichotomises organisational cultures into concern for production and concern for people, the trichotomy is more useful for differentiating between supportive and innovative cultures, which have different features and unique advantages and disadvantages (Wallach, 1983, Saha and Kumar, 2018).

2.4 Cultural Barriers in the Workforce

Modern workforces encounter many different cultural barriers. In particular, the rise of multinational corporations through globalisation has meant that more people across the globe are encountering individuals from different countries than their own (Dominique, 2020). This can mean that when people enter a new organisation with a deep-rooted culture and set of values, they can experience ageism or racism through unconscious or conscious bias, and a lack of respect from others who are already functioning within the organisation (Periyakoil, 2019). One of the most common barriers to face is a lack of awareness of how people from different countries operate, making it difficult for individuals to be integrated (Periyakoil, 2019). Additionally, the existence of in-groups within the organisation can make it hard for people to be integrated into the organisation, given that people need to assimilate themselves into friendship or acquaintance groups (Han et al., 2022). Thus, organisational culture can often be an important barrier to multicultural workforces. It is important to recognise that some organisational cultures can be hostile to new entrants, especially when they are unaware of the organisational culture before they begin working there (Adebayo et al., 2020). For instance, organisations managed through the bureaucratic organisational culture may make it harder for people from different cultures to the norm to be successfully integrated, given that these cultures require people to understand the authority in place within the organisation and who they should report to and how they should conduct themselves for certain activities (Saha and Kumar, 2018, Wallach, 1983). By contrast, innovative cultures are typically more diverse, given the fact that diversity is often correlated with innovation and creativity (Chua, 2015).

Consequently, one of the main barriers for the many organisations that are bureaucratic and are not inherently supportive of individuals from diverse backgrounds is to make their workplaces culturally safe and responsive (Jongen et al., 2019). Organisations arguably have a responsibility to their employees and other stakeholders to support individuals' specific and unique cultural needs, doing what they can to facilitate them (Jongen et al., 2019). Despite this, research indicates that many organisations are not fulfilling this obligation to their employees, as evidenced by high levels of employee turnover within many industries (Lai et al., 2018). Thus, there is a business case for supporting individuals in their cultural needs, given that it can impact human resource outcomes (Jongen et al., 2019, Lai et al., 2018). Nonetheless, it is not

only human resource outcomes that are affected by organisations not overcoming cultural barriers. Alongside human resource outcomes, research also indicates that cultural barriers and providing for different cultural needs can affect overall key organisational success factors such as overall levels of profitability and success (Gaganis et al., 2019).

2.5 Overcoming Cultural Barriers

Based on the above, it is important to overcome cultural barriers to support organisational success. To overcome cultural barriers, many different techniques could be used. In particular, human resource management can be utilised to ensure that individuals from different nations are included within the organisation and are accounted for, given their unique needs (Roscoe et al., 2019). For instance, Roscoe et al. (2019) found that some of the key elements of human resource management that could support a positive workforce culture were hiring, training, suitable appraisals and incentivisation. Alongside this, they found that key supporting factors for this were leadership support and focus, involving peers and empowering employees (Roscoe et al., 2019). In addition, business cultural training can be offered to employees to help them to understand the unique cultures that are within the workforce and how they can help people from these cultures to be included (Dominique, 2020). Whilst Bussetto et al. (2018) found that there were many cultural barriers within healthcare, they also found that these could be mitigated through facilitating motivation and enthusiasm for teamwork alongside ensuring good communication and cooperation between managers and employees. Thus, there are many suitable ways to overcome cultural barriers within organisations.

Although these ideas emphasise specific techniques that can be used to overcome cultural barriers, when applied in isolation they lack a cohering framework. To explain, Fandrejewska and Wasilik (2018) suggest that cultural intelligence could be used as a determinant of how suitable an environment and its people are for the protection and nurturance of cultural differences. Cultural intelligence is defined as how capable a person is of adapting to different cultural settings (Caputo et al., 2019). However, this definition specifies that it must be an individual that holds cultural intelligence; importantly, organisations and other entities can also have their own level of cultural intelligence and ability to navigate cultural differences (Fandrejewska and Wasilik, 2018). Thus, organisations may also seek to develop their cultural

intelligence capabilities and their employees' overall levels of cultural intelligence. In other words, organisations may focus on developing cultural intelligence and then assess their capabilities overall alongside numerous dimensions such as those already identified: communication, cooperation, and the existence of cultural sensitivity or business cultural training (Fandrejewska and Wasilik, 2018, Dominique, 2020). Cultural intelligence ensures that the knowledge of cultures commonly encountered within an organisation is suitable and that employees have the necessary attitudes to be inclusive of all individuals regardless of their cultural background (Fandrejewska and Wasilik, 2018). Therefore, cultural barriers can be largely overcome by improving firm-level and individual cultural intelligence and also supporting this through organisational activities such as those related to human resource management; in particular, recruitment, training and providing line manager support (Roscoe et al., 2019).

2.6 Achieving Cultural Adaptation

It is important for new employees within organisations to be able to adapt to the organisation quickly. This helps the organisation to ensure that the employee can become productive within the organisation as quickly as possible and it also supports employees to feel at home in the new environment and enables them to engage with their work (Ang et al., 2007, Caputo et al., 2019). Organisations can support cultural adaptation by ensuring that there are suitable supporting human resources and organisational practices in place. For instance, inductions can be helpful for introducing the employee to how practices are undertaken in the organisation and also for introducing them to their co-workers (Ahmad, 2015). Critically, using inductions in this manner can help to facilitate new relationships being fostered between the new employee and their peers, thereby helping the employee to be welcomed into the organisation and feel comfortable at work (Armstrong, 2020). A helpful consequence of this is that it can help to increase organisational effectiveness, given that more engaged and comfortable employees are more productive (Armstrong, 2020). Nonetheless, other practices should also be combined with inductions. Combining different practices is likely to be synergistic, given that a multi-pronged approach to supporting employees is likely to give them the support they need in multiple areas (Dass and Parker, 1999). For instance, commitment-focused human resource practices can help to establish trust and cooperation alongside helping groups of individuals to develop shared

ways of communicating through codes and language (Buller and McEvoy, 2012). For instance, aspects such as training and development, compensation, recruitment and selection can be used to introduce employees to the organisation's way of doing things and help them to learn to understand how they can fit into the organisation suitably (Buller and McEvoy, 2012). However, this cannot be a one-way approach; organisations should also look to understand their employees too; by doing this, they can increase their cultural sensitivity and ability to work effectively with employees from diverse set of backgrounds (Bratton and Gold, 2017). Nonetheless, different employees have varying levels of capability to adapt to new environments and this depends on their own cultural background and also their individual disposition (Caputo et al., 2019). Thus, the approach necessary to support individuals should be bespoke and recognise the specific diverse needs of the individual (Dass and Parker, 1999).

2.7 Multicultural Workforces

A multicultural workforce is one that is from a diverse range of backgrounds, in which individuals come together for a common work purpose (Nichols et al., 2015). Thus, a multicultural workforce merges organisational and national cultural factors, establishing a new culture that has a mix of different aspects of culture (Erthal and Marques, 2018, Barney, 1986). Multicultural workforces are useful in global economies particularly when trying to come up with solutions to problems that involve a wide range of individuals from different backgrounds, cultures and national backgrounds (Rebecca, 2013). Consequently, many scholars have sought to understand the intricacies of multicultural workforces so that they can determine the best approaches to take to ensure that they are led and managed appropriately and effectively (Hutt and Gopalakrishnan, 2020). Ensuring that multicultural workforces are led properly can lead to a number of positive organisational outcomes, including improved performance, success and coherence (Erthal and Marques, 2018, Hutt and Gopalakrishnan, 2020, Barney, 1986). Nonetheless, multicultural workforces face a number of challenges that need to be overcome to ensure that they are effective in the global landscape. Therefore, the best strategies need to be determined for multicultural workforces to satisfy stakeholders and ensure that these groups of people working together are as effective and efficient as possible (Castaneda and Bateh, 2013).

One of the key challenges that face multicultural workforces is communication. As argued by Nichols et al. (2015), multicultural workforces can provide a multitude of benefits such as improved skills, diversity of practice and increased capabilities due to the ability to merge knowledge. Additionally, many workforces such as those related to healthcare are often reliant on multicultural workers, given that workers from their home country often do not want to do certain jobs (Cangiano et al., 2019, Nichols et al., 2015). Therefore, strategies are often adapted to recognise that organisations often require individuals from different cultures and backgrounds than that of the home country in order to succeed in the business (Castaneda and Bateh, 2013). In such industries, workers from different cultures and backgrounds are very useful, given that they fill necessary and useful roles (Nichols et al., 2015). However, multicultural workforces also raise a number of issues and challenges. Notably, there can be issues with workers not being culturally sensitive alongside other lapses in communication, often due to misunderstandings and a different frame of reference (Nichols et al., 2015). Additionally, multicultural workforces can require organisations to invest in establishing multiculturalism, given that workers often need to be taught and trained about cultural sensitivity and appropriate language use (Davis and Smith, 2013). Nonetheless, the investment into this is often worth the cost, given the numerous benefits that a multicultural workforce can provide, especially in the areas of creativity (Chua, 2015). Therefore, organisations should look to establish strategies that can help to overcome the common challenges faced in multicultural workforces (Castaneda and Bateh, 2013).

2.8 Common Challenges within Multicultural Workforces

One of the main challenges in multicultural workforces is ensuring effective communication. As explained by Castaneda and Bateh (2013), multicultural workforces often come from a wide range of backgrounds and, therefore, have a wide and disparate set of values and beliefs. This can often lead to communication issues and conflict if issues are not dealt with in a suitable manner (Madera et al., 2013). One of the best ways of dealing with conflict is arguably to use leaders to manage and direct the flow of conversation and communication (Hutt and Gopalakrishnan, 2020). Nonetheless, other issues often arise within multicultural teams. Notably, there can sometimes be breakdowns in conflict due to misunderstandings (Castaneda and Bateh, 2013). As a consequence, it is necessary for organisations utilising multicultural

workforces to establish strategies that help to bridge the gaps between the different values that employees hold (Castaneda and Bateh, 2013). To do this, many scholars recommend the establishment of intercultural competence development, pressing upon both employees and managers the importance of communicating effectively with individuals from a wide range of different backgrounds (Grobelna, 2015). Research indicates that human resource management activities can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of multicultural teams, given that they can impact the ability of individuals to communicate and perform their jobs, thus impacting job satisfaction and performance (Al Doghan et al., 2019).

Alongside breakdowns in communication, there can also be misunderstandings that are nonverbal. For instance, the different frameworks of understanding, values and beliefs held by individuals from different backgrounds can lead to different perceptions of what constitutes good customer service and, therefore, result in varying degrees of capability and service provision (Grobelna, 2015). It is often, therefore, an issue for human resource management practitioners to deal with to ensure that employees understand the provision that they need to provide and also that the individual is aligned with suggested group outcomes (Buller and McEvoy, 2012). Alongside this, a challenge is ensuring that managers are also capable so that they understand how they should be managing for the best performance and what policies they should put in place to deal with human resource challenges and performance issues (Grobelna, 2015). There are a number of different activities within human resource management that can impact the ability of multicultural teams to work together. Notably, this can include recruitment and selection, training and development, pay, reward and compensation, and performance appraisal (Al Doghan et al., 2019). Additionally, establishing intercultural competence by training individuals in this area can also be beneficial and can have the benefit of increasing team harmony and satisfaction (Al Doghan et al., 2019, Behrnd and Porzelt, 2012). Nonetheless, it is also arguable that the best way to develop intercultural competence is not solely through training but mostly through experience. As argued by Behrn and Porzelt. (2012), the more time that individuals spend together, the greater their intercultural competence improves. Thus, it is important for organisations not just to solely focus on delivering intercultural competence training but also to provide the opportunities necessary for individuals to interact and engage in a team environment to improve their ability to communicate (Behrn and Porzelt, 2012).

2.9 The Saudi Arabian Context

The Saudi Arabian context impacts heavily upon the practices and decisions relevant to individuals and organisations within the country (Al. Harbi et al., 2017). The Saudi Arabian organisational context is characterised by a significant reliance on an expatriate workforce, which makes up a large proportion of those working in the Kingdom (Aboshaiqah, 2016). Nonetheless, since 1992, the focus has been given to the Saudization of the workforce, attempting to reduce the reliance on the number of expatriates used from abroad (Aboshaiqah, 2016). Concerning Saudi Arabia's national culture, Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions can be used to identify its main characteristics. Notably, Hofstede Insights (2022c) indicate that Saudi Arabia has a high level of power distance of 72%. This compares to a much lower level of 35% in countries such as the UK, which are typically more distributed in terms of power and less hierarchical (Hofstede insights, 2022c). Critically, this shows how practices are often dictated by managers and employees are utilised mostly to fulfil the objectives set by managers and leaders (Al. Harbi et al., 2017). National cultural factors impact many aspects of Saudi Arabian culture. For instance, research indicates that the Saudi Arabian culture impacts business due to its hierarchical nature which influences the nature of management and operations (Alkahtani et al., 2013). In particular, people are typically used to direct supervision and instruction rather than a participatory style (Alkahtani et al., 2013, Hofstede Insights, 2022c). Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that the level of hierarchy used within organisations also depends on the specific organisation itself and its contextual factors (Al Saifi, 2015). Additionally, Saudi Arabia has a high level of collectivism, meaning that people are used to working in teams to complete tasks rather than individually (Alkahtani et al., 2013). Conversely, other research has indicated that even though the Saudi Arabian context has many differentiated cultural dimensions to countries such as the UK, the actual impact of this on practices is limited in some cases such as enterprise resource planning system adoption (Alhirz and Sajeev, 2015).

Nonetheless, there are also other cultural aspects unique to Saudi Arabia not highlighted in the Hofstede (1980) model. Notably, Saudi culture has been defined by Almutari et al. (2012, p. 1, in Aboshaiqah, 2016, p.501) as a "unique blend of Arabic tribal traditions and customs and the Islamic worldview, which shapes the mindset and behaviour of the Saudi people". Thus, Saudi

culture is multifaceted and has multiple different aspects; most notably, there is a sense of national pride and an ancient cultural heritage which influences all different aspects of the country such as the legal system and nation-wide practices (Aboshaiqah, 2016, Alghamdi et al., 2022). One of the main issues that people have when moving to Saudi Arabia or working with individuals from this national culture is communication. To explain, the Arabic language in particular is difficult to master and can create many issues in communication and misunderstandings (Alkahtani et al., 2013). Alongside communication, other cultural factors that impact practices include the emphasis on religion and culture, which can also impact human resource management and other organisational practices (Al. Harbi et al., 2017).

2.10 Filipino Nurses in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a country that many Filipino nurses perceive to hold significant opportunities (Alsulaimani, 2014). Given that Saudi Arabia typically employs a lot of expatriates, the nursing workforce is also comprised of many expatriates, with statistics showing that only roughly 20% of the workforce is comprised of Saudi Arabian nurses (Alonazi and Omar, 2013). Research into the foreign workforce in Saudi Arabia found that the remainder of the Saudi workforce was mostly Filipino (43.8%) or Indian (49%) (Alreshidi et al., 2021). Although Filipino nurses make up a large proportion of the Saudi Arabian workforce, research indicates that they do not have high levels of satisfaction due to the specific cultural issues faced in the country (Almutairi et al., 2015). Notably, issues such as discrimination can be fairly common in the country and have been cited in research as issues faced (Almutairi et al., 2015). This means that Filipino nurses have to learn to adapt to be able to succeed in such a challenging environment. One of the key factors influencing the success of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia is cultural competence (Albougami et al., 2019). In other words, Filipino nurses are likely to succeed when they look to adapt to the Saudi Arabian culture and provide healthcare that is bespoke to patient needs (Albougami et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, it is a common theme across the world that nurse roles typically have a high level of turnover, with many nurses citing reasons for leaving related to the specific difficulties related to healthcare, inadequate staffing of nurses and high levels of stress due to increased workloads (Albougami et al., 2020). Qualitative research into a Saudi Arabian government

hospital found that high levels of turnover led to a nursing shortage in the hospital (Alonzi and Omar, 2013). Therefore, this appears to be a common aspect of the landscape for nurses in Saudi Arabia. Most importantly, research into Filipino nurses found that many wanted to leave their healthcare roles (Albougami et al., 2020). Evidently, nurses leaving their jobs has a negative impact on healthcare organisations and their clients; research indicates that high levels of nurse turnover adversely impact patients' well-being, which is a key issue in Saudi Arabia (Albougami et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to identify the specific barriers that Filipino nurses face in Saudi Arabia to understand how these can be overcome. By achieving this, measures may be identified to improve their job performance and help them to succeed for themselves, their clients and the hospitals (Albougami et al., 2020, Alonzi and Omar, 2013, Alsreshdi et al., 2021).

2.11 Barriers for Filipino Nurses in Saudi Arabia

Nonetheless, Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia face a number of challenges. For instance, some researchers have found that the culture can be unaccommodating for Filipino nurses (Alsulaimani, 2014). Alsulaimani (2014) found that some of the key challenges faced by Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia were a lack of training and understanding of transcultural nursing alongside a lack of understanding of the Saudi culture, language and practices in place in the country to support individuals from different cultures. This is supported by Almutairi et al. (2015), who found that Filipino nurses in their study experienced discrimination in the case where Saudi locals and other nationalities looked down on them for being perceived to be stupid. For these reasons, the job satisfaction of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia is typically low (Almutairi et al., 2015, Alsulaimani, 2014). Alongside this open discrimination, the authors also found that nurses of origins other than Saudi Arabia often went through cultural shock as they adapted to the new culture, language and way of operating (Almutairi et al., 2015). One of the consequences of experiencing cultural shock and unique challenges of facing the Saudi Arabian context is that nurses experienced a sense of disempowerment, which can also result in lowered self-esteem and, consequently, lower levels of job performance and satisfaction (Lincoln et al., 2002, Almutairi et al., 2015).

Nurse turnover is a common challenge faced by healthcare organisations (Aljohani and Alomari, 2018). In particular, Saudi Arabia faces a high level of nurse turnover, especially related to Filipino nurses (Aljohani and Alomari, 2018). Supporting this, Albougami et al. (2020) found that Filipino nurses had a higher likelihood of leaving their jobs than individuals from other origins. This finding is supported by Alshareef et al. (2020), who also find that Filipino nurses were more likely to want to leave their roles than those of Malaysian, Pakistani or Saudi heritage. This suggests that Filipino nurses face particular challenges within the Saudi Arabian culture. Assessing this using Hofstede's (1980) dimensions, it can be recognised that these challenges may well be faced because of cultural dimensions issues. For instance, although both countries have high levels of power distance, the Philippines has a lower level of uncertainty avoidance at 44% compared to 64% in Saudi Arabia (Hofstede Insights, 2022d). This dimension means that Filipino nurses may be less content to tolerate management oversight that allows for uncertainty, whilst Saudi nationals would be more used to the kind of management already in place, placing Filipino nurses at a comparative disadvantage (Hofstede Insights, 2022d, Hofstede, 1980). Nonetheless, this combines with the bespoke challenges within the country to establish a difficult environment for Filipinos to succeed (Aljohani and Alomari, 2018). One of the main challenges for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia is having a low salary, which Aljohani and Alomari (2018) found to be a challenge for a large proportion of Filipino nurses. Thus, Saudi Arabian organisations may be able to overcome some of the challenges for nurses by offering a higher salary.

2.12 Literature Gaps

There has been much past research into the impact of culture on organisational practices (e.g., Hofstede, 1980, Alkahtani et al., 2013). Supporting this, other researchers have examined multicultural workforces and how they can affect job satisfaction and performance (Al Doghan et al., 2019). There has also been further research into the healthcare industry, such as those that explore the factors that affect the retention of different cultures within the industry (e.g., Lai et al., 2018). However, there has been less research into the Saudi Arabian healthcare context, despite the growing prevalence of the country and its Saudization (Aboshaiqah, 2016). Of the existing studies, research has been conducted into how the nursing shortage can be countered in Saudi Arabia, which filled a useful research gap to help identify strategies for the

future (Aboshaiqah, 2016). Adding to this research is Albougami et al's. (2019) exploration into cultural competence and the perception of patient-centred care amongst expatriate nurses in the Kingdom. This study identified the importance of multicultural strategies to improve the nursing landscape in Saudi Arabia. Importantly, cultural competence appears to be an important area for research to explore in further detail in the future (Albougami et al., 2019).

However, there has been less research into the specific utilisation of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia, with only a few papers from reputable sources that can be cited (e.g., Aljohani and Alomari, 2018). Importantly, Aljohani and Alomari's (2018) study examined the high levels of turnover among Filipino nurses in hospitals in Saudi Arabia and recommended areas for improvement. However, the authors stopped short of examining the specific cultural nuances in place for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia, establishing an important literature gap. Additionally, the authors did not examine specific strategies that may be utilised to facilitate cultural adaptation. The last noteworthy study by Alsulaimani (2014) explored the competency of Filipino nurses but did not examine the influence of culture or examine how these issues may be overcome recognising cultural factors. This establishes an important literature gap for a research study that explores this area and utilises an understanding of the cultural nuances related to Filipino nurses to develop suitable strategies for the future of Saudi healthcare organisations, supporting past research.

2.13 Summary of Literature Review

Overall, national culture exerts a significant influence over organisational practices. The most influential framework over time for examining cultural differences is Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions framework, which identifies five key dimensions that differ across cultures: individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long/short-term orientation, and power distance. Although other dimensions have been proposed by other authors, the original five remain an established and verified standard for understanding stable differences across cultures. Nonetheless, national culture is not the only form of culture that influences organisational practice. Critically, organisations also have their own organisational cultures. A useful framework here is Wallach's (1983) three types of organisational culture: bureaucratic, innovative and supportive. This framework helpfully identifies some of the key

differences across organisations. Conversely, both national and organisational cultures merge together to establish an organisation's own unique culture, meaning that neither national nor organisational cultures can be understood on their own. Thus, both national and organisational cultural factors need to be understood when researching contexts within which multicultural workforces operate.

Culture plays an important role in the workplace and whether it has a positive or negative impact is unclear. For instance, having a diverse range of cultures within an organisation can help to increase organisational creativity and innovation, given that there is a wider range of perspectives available to develop solutions to problems. However, cultures differ significantly and this affects not only beliefs but also values and behaviours. Importantly, behaviours can clash and conflict or misunderstandings can emerge concerning the most appropriate approach that should be taken to solving a problem or conducting an activity. Most importantly, there can be breakdowns in communication, which can make it difficult to function effectively and can negatively impact the team and organisational performance. Thus, organisations must identify appropriate ways to overcome cultural barriers. For instance, human resource management can be used to implement suitable practices to support employees. In particular, hiring, training, appraisals and incentivisation may be used to develop a positive and productive organisational culture that supports multiculturalism. Additionally, training may be used to teach individuals how to function effectively with others from varied backgrounds. However, utilising individualised techniques may not be the best and most effective way of overcoming issues. Rather, a coherent framework could be adopted and utilised; for instance, by using the frame of developing cultural intelligence. In other words, organisations could rate themselves and their capabilities within cultural intelligence and use this to determine the best course of action to support a variety of cultures in the workplace.

Although the Saudi government has focused on Saudization over recent years, there remains a significant expatriate workforce. Within healthcare, Filipino nurses account for nearly half of all migrant worker employment. However, research also suggests that Filipino nurses face specific challenges within the Kingdom such as discrimination and difficulties adapting to the culture, leading to cultural shock. This has led to a larger number of Filipino nurses having the intention to leave their jobs than individuals from other nations. Synthesising this with previous

research into national cultural dimensions indicates that some issues faced could relate to Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions. Most notably, the Philippines has a lower level of uncertainty avoidance than Saudi Arabia, which could be one of the reasons for the difficulties faced by Filipino nurses. However, the ability to understand this is limited, given that there has been little research into the Saudi Arabian healthcare context and its Filipino workers. The research into the topic that does exist mostly suggests that there is a high level of turnover amongst Filipino nurses but does not explain how cultural adaptation can be achieved, nor does it determine the specific cultural barriers that Filipino nurses face or identify strategies that healthcare organisations can use to overcome the turnover issue. Thus, this establishes a literature gap for the present study which looks at all of these aspects and seeks to critically evaluate the multicultural workforce within Saudi Arabia and the experience of its Filipino nurses. Undertaking this research study will support all the past research into the topic of national culture and provide a detailed study that highlights how cultural barriers can be overcome for improved multicultural workforce competence.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Questions to be Investigated

One research question and three underlying sub-questions were established to investigate this topic. The main research question was:

How can cultural barriers within multicultural workforces be overcome?

Following the establishment of this research question, three underlying questions were formed:

Research Question 1a: What are the main cultural aspects at play for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia and how do they differ from cultural theories?

Research Question 1b: What are the main barriers for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia and how do they impact upon multicultural workforces?

Research Question 1c: What are the main strategies that should be put in place to help nurses and healthcare organisations to suitably adapt to having multicultural workforces?

Research question 1a sought to develop past research into the topic which explored cultural aspects within different countries and contexts. In particular, the research expanded on past studies conducted by authors such as Hofstede et al. (2017) into national cultures and how they affect interactions between individuals and society. This study then sought to consider these cultural dimensions and how they operate within a specific context; that of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia. Whilst Hofstede et al. (2017) took a quantitative approach that emphasised statistical measures, this research study considered the main paradigms but was not restricted by them. Instead, the study used them as a loose tool to recognise the actions and interactions in play but also considered whether there were other cultural factors or paradigms to be recognised and understood (Verma et al., 2016). Thus, cultural theories were examined through

an interpretivist paradigm that also incorporated aspects of the positivist methodological approach (Saunders et al., 2012, Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Question 1b then explored the main barriers that Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia face. This represented the need for the exploration of specific contextual factors using aspects of an abductive approach although emphasising mostly an inductive research approach (Saunders et al., 2012). Concerning abduction, the main aspects were that data collection was undertaken and then a conceptual framework was established to help to explain the data (Mitchell, 2018). In this way, theory was generated through the literature review to explore the key barriers faced by multicultural workforces in general and this review also examined the main ways that these related to the literature such as the cultural dimensions recognised by authors such as Hofstede et al. (2017). However, instead of simply attempting to create theory through the inductive approach to falsify/verify hypotheses through induction, this research question attempted to also modify and improve upon past theories and conceptual frameworks to build upon past works and ideas (Saunders et al., 2012).

Research question 1c then sought to build upon the first two research questions by exploring the main strategies that can be used to help nurses to deal with issues related to multicultural teams working together in healthcare organisations. This emphasised the inductive aspects of the research study, which involved incorporating the existing theories with the data. In particular, those cultural dimensions highlighted by Hofstede et al. (2017) were utilised to scrutinise the data and to understand it. This then enabled the development of a conceptual framework and surrounding theories (Bryman and Bell, 2011). A multimethod qualitative approach could have been used for this, which examined a specific organisation from multiple angles, such as using interviews with managers and observations of organisations (Hair et al., 2019). However, due to time restrictions, it was necessary to develop the recommendations based on a singular observation tool; that of mono method qualitative (Saunders et al., 2012). This approach had the benefit of enabling a higher level of confidence in the results of the data collection, given that efforts could be concentrated into one area (Saunders et al., 2012). In particular, to answer research question 1c, the mono method qualitative approach allowed particular strategies to stand out in the data collection process that were helpful and could then be developed into recommendations for nurses and healthcare organisations.

Thus, the three sub questions helped to answer the main research question. To assimilate the aforementioned sub questions, a thematic analysis approach was utilised, which focused on identifying specific themes related to cultural barriers within a specific multicultural workforce; that of 10 Filipino nurses working in a private hospital in Jeddah. Thematic analysis was utilised for this purpose, which put into practice the inductive and abductive aspects (Marn and Tan, 2015). Thus, the main ideas established in the literature review such as Hofstede et al.'s. (2017) dimensions were utilised to scrutinise the data and cohere it into themes that could explain how exactly cultural barriers within multicultural workforces can be overcome, using the context of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia. Thematic analysis involved cohering all the data from interviews undertaken into key themes that related to the topic being explored, based on past data (Alhojailan, 2012). Although thematic analysis is criticised by some for ignoring generalisations and key patterns in data, it was determined to be useful for this study given the emphasis on the interpretivist research paradigm, which seeks to understand key contextual factors (Saunders et al., 2012). Nonetheless, it must be recognised that thematic analysis can ignore some important data points by overemphasising qualitative aspects and overlooking generalisations (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Thus, thematic analysis also included quantitative considerations. In particular, the analysis was undertaken on Microsoft Word using the comments function and themes were identified alongside their instance frequency, thus recognising both rich qualitative data whilst also identifying quantitative considerations (Bryman and Bell, 2011, Saunders et al., 2012). Nonetheless, the interpretivist paradigm was followed and emphasised and the instance frequencies were used mostly to support and validate the qualitative recognitions.

3.2 Overview of Methods of Investigation

This research study utilised Saunders et al.'s. (2012) research onion framework to identify the possible methods of investigation. Within cultural research, many studies utilise survey research, in particular questionnaire research (e.g. Khalaila, 2013). These studies are particularly useful for understanding key cultural considerations. One of the main outcomes of such studies is the development of the aforementioned cultural dimensions proposed by authors such as Hofstede et al. (2017). These cultural dimensions are useful for establishing a framework to understand the main generalisable differences across cultures in terms of variety

within cultures (Bruder et al., 2013). Dimensions such as power distance, collectivism/individualism and uncertainty avoidance can explain cultural differences within organisations and across countries (Shao et al., 2013). Nonetheless, one of the drawbacks of these methods of investigation is that it assumes that all cultural dimensions are the same across different countries and contexts (Bruder et al., 2013). Notably, all countries and organisational contexts have their own unique culture and, thus, the use of questionnaire approaches typically overlooks this rich diversity of contexts (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). In other words, questionnaires can identify the same generalisable trends but cannot add to existing knowledge. Thus, they can only confirm hypotheses or answer restricted questions (Saunders et al., 2012). Additionally, questionnaires do not support the interpretivist philosophy that was identified through the literature review and the literature gaps that are necessary to explore the topic (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This led to the rejection of the mono method quantitative approach.

Following the rejection of the mono method quantitative approach due to its limitations, it was considered that this could be paired with qualitative research through a multimethod quantitative approach that favoured qualitative data but also incorporated quantitative aspects (Saunders et al., 2012). This would have had the benefit of utilising both quantitative paradigms and unique contextual considerations (Bryman and Bell, 2011). For instance, semi-structured qualitative interviews could have been undertaken and then verified using questionnaires. However, this approach was deemed too time consuming and also may have led to qualitative research being overlooked or the overall research being less thorough (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, it was decided that the emphasis needed to be on rich qualitative data, which surveys could not have provided and it may not have matched well with the data from the interviews. Thus, the multimethod quantitative approach was also rejected.

Given the limitations of both the mono method quantitative and multimethod qualitative approaches, the main method of investigation that was considered was the multimethod qualitative approach. This approach needed to understand rich contextual factors and, thus, structured interviews were considered. Although the interpretivist philosophy did not inherently support this, these may have been useful in advancing Hofstede et al's. (2010) cultural dimensions by applying them in a specific context and verifying them (Saunders et al., 2012). The benefit of this was that it mixed both the benefits of questionnaire research and

interpretivist philosophy work due to the ability to enter a context and recognise its main aspects (Saunders et al., 2012). However, this was rejected because structured interviews did not allow for contexts to be considered enough. In other words, structured interviews did not allow the researcher to identify aspects outside of the research questions. Thus, the researcher may have heard interesting contextual aspects within the respondents' answers but could not probe further (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Thus, this approach was deemed to have many limitations.

Unstructured interviews were also considered as a possible method of investigation. This would have comprised starting with general themes and then asking all respondents within the private hospital in Jeddah different questions (Dana et al., 2013). A main benefit of this approach was that it could have offered flexibility for changing questions related to what came up within the answers provided (Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, unstructured interviews enabled context to be considered within answers and then this context to be considered further (Dana et al., 2013). This was particularly helpful given the research questions which emphasised the need to examine multicultural workforces and overcoming cultural barriers within specific contexts (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Unstructured interviews could also help the researcher to identify new cultural paradigms or aspects that have not been addressed in previous research (Bohnet, 2016). In other words, the existing work within the field could have been added to with further knowledge and understanding (Dana et al., 2013). This was a particularly attractive benefit that was considered by the researchers. This was because of the interpretivist philosophy that was established due to the need to understand about the cultural barriers to nurses in Saudi Arabia and how this can be addressed. However, there were also many drawbacks to the unstructured interviews approach that needed to be considered.

Firstly, unstructured interviews are particularly difficult to analyse, given that there can be a multitude of different themes that emerge from the data (Saunders et al., 2012). In addition to this, the themes that emerge can also be difficult to align with others, given that the conversations do not have structure and so may be difficult to align with the research questions (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, the findings from unstructured interviews can be difficult to align with existing research, given that the conversation flow can go anywhere and is not restricted by any limitations placed on it by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2012). Consequently, it was deemed to be an inadequate approach that could not answer the research

questions and objectives suitably (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Furthermore, different interview responses are difficult to cohere within this framework and then align to the main themes through thematic analysis. This is explained by Saunders et al. (2012) within the limitations of the unstructured interview approach; most notably, that it is difficult to create useful themes that can be to some extent generalisable or useful for other research in similar setting. For instance, the findings may have applied for hospitals in Saudi Arabia but not within hospitals in other countries.

Secondary research was also identified as a possible approach. Given the large number of previous research studies conducted into the topic area, secondary research had many benefits. For instance, Hofstede et al's. (2017) dimensions have already been applied into many settings. These could have been analysed in more detail and then books and other websites that have data on hospitals in Jeddah could have been analysed in more detail. For instance, previous research conducted into Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia could have been used to examine the trends and how cultural barriers can be overcome (Ibrahim et al., 2016). However, there has not been much past research conducted into the Saudi Arabian context and there are very few studies into the topic that could have been analysed (e.g., Ibrahim et al., 2016). In addition to this, the data that was available on the topic was collected for different purposes to that of this study. For instance, Ibrahim et al. (2016) sought to understand different factors such as the quality of life for nurses. This was a different purpose to that of this research study, which was centred around understanding how to overcome cultural barriers. Thus, it was determined that this approach would not have provided enough rich contextual data on the research questions mentioned above to answer the research questions suitably. Overall, the secondary research approach seemed unsuitable for answering the research questions within the specific topic area specified. Furthermore, it was unsuitable for understanding aspects that applied within Saudi Arabia but not within other countries due the lack of specific in-detail and contextual data on the topic specified within the research aim.

The final method of investigation considered was that of semi-structured interviews. This approach was recognised to be able to overcome the issues inherent within the unstructured interview approach. Most notably, it meant that there could be some structure to the research; for instance, identifying key themes to ask respondents about and then asking them.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview approach was much more suitable for analysing data. This is because semi-structured interviews can be set around key themes that are set beforehand based on the data. This research study had many themes that could have been used; most notably the cultural dimensions framework identified by authors such as Hofstede et al. (2017). Therefore, there was less time costs associated with both undertaking the interviews and transcribing, analysing and discussing the results. To explain, semi-structured interviews can be undertaken quickly due to them focusing on key themes (Saunders et al., 2012). Whilst structured interviews also provide this benefit, semi-structured interviews also enable a certain degree of flexibility, meaning that they can comprise probing, in which the interviewer can probe respondents on important and interesting topics (Bryman and Bell, 2011). For instance, for this research study it would have been possible to examine reasons why specific nurses found that they wanted to leave their jobs because of cultural barriers. Structured interviews do not enable such a process to take place. Unstructured interviews cannot also provide as much structure, making them harder to analyse than semi-structured interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

Conversely, semi-structured interviews also have many drawbacks that were important for this research study. For instance, the content of replies is still structured based on past research paradigms (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This arguably contradicts the interpretivist paradigm which seeks to understand key contextual factors (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews also are more supportive of deductive research approaches than unstructured interviews, arguably making them less suitable than them (Casula et al., 2021).

3.3 Justification of Research Method

One of the main benefits of using semi-structured interviews is that they support an inductive approach, given the emphasis on moving from theory to data (Saunders et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews support induction because they collect data and then cohere it into themes instead of trying to verify themes (Bryman and Bell, 2011) Within research into cultural issues, deduction has been used by researchers to examine culture's impact upon individual and group interactions and actions (Novaes, 2013). Induction is, in contrast to deduction more appropriate for exploring a topic and identifying key themes from it (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In addition,

it is used to establish theories and developing conceptual frameworks to explain phenomena (Saunders et al., 2012). One of the main benefits of the inductive approach is that it helps for the construction of theory that can be used to explain the main aspects of a research area or context (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). In other words, the deductive approach moves from the general to the specific, whilst the inductive approach goes from the specific to the general (Saunders et al., 2012). As a result, the research approach chosen to underlie this study was the inductive approach. This was because of the need for understanding the specific context of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia, which required inductive data collection and then testing it afterwards (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Thus, the data was collected using qualitative methods which then were analysed and used to generate a variety of perspectives on phenomena (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Although deduction is a useful approach, it is generally used by quantitative researchers and, thus, is more useful within quantitative research than for qualitative (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). As a consequence of its limitations, deduction did not allow for the completion of the research objectives of this study which set the goal to evaluate multicultural workforces within a specific context; that of Jeddah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Thus, the inductive approach selected was that of semi-structured interviews. The main reasons that it was selected were due to the flexibility that it provides in comparison to the other interview approaches such as structured and unstructured interviews (Newcomer et al., 2015). Furthermore, the semi-structured interview approach was more suitable than the questionnaire approach in answering the research questions given its ability to match the interpretivist paradigm. Conversely, there were some considerations. A limitation was the inability to follow a structure that structured interviews could (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, the key limitation was its inability to establish generalisable patterns that were reliable and relevant across all other research contexts, such as those applied within other countries (Saunders et al., 2012).

3.4 Survey all Data Collection Tools

Saunders et al's. (2012) research onion methodology framework was used within this study. This was deemed as necessary to identify how exactly the data collection tools fitted into the

aim and objectives of the research study. The research onion framework was split into five key categories: the main research questions to be investigated, the relevant methods of investigation, the main method, a survey of all data collection tools, and the selection of the main data collection tool.

The interviews were selected as a suitable approach given the limitations inherent in other approaches. The main research philosophy that guided this research was the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasised the need to understand cultural barriers within a specific context to understand the differences that culture plays (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). This guiding philosophy was chosen because of the focus that the research took on understanding the specific contextual factors unique to Saudi Arabia, thus developing a good contextual understanding. In other words, the unique cultural factors within Saudi Arabia needed to be understood to recognise how they impact upon the ability for organisations within healthcare to overcome multicultural workforce challenges (Greeff, 2015). Interviews were useful given the emphasis of previous research into the topic of culture which has been typically positivist and quantitative by nature (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2017). Although a positivist methodology was considered, it was recognised that this would not have achieved enough in-depth, rich, qualitative information to understand the context of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia. Methods such as questionnaires were unable to recognise the interplay of different contextual factors within specific multicultural workforces (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005). The questionnaire method supports an interpretivist framework which helps to focus on a specific context within a private hospital in Jeddah, which enabled the researcher to find the most important factors to focus on, with in-depth, qualitative information. The questionnaire method is also supportive of all five key categories considered within the methodology: conducting a detailed account of the research questions to be studied, providing an overview of all methods of investigation, establishing a justification of the most appropriate method, conducting a survey of all data collection tools, and providing a justification for the data collection tool utilised.

Some interview approaches were considered such as structured and unstructured interviews. However, due to the limitations explained above, these were rejected. An interesting choice that was considered was case study research. In particular, the specific hospital of interest; a private hospital in Jeddah, could have been studied in detail and a case study could have been

constructed (Yazan, 2015). This may have been qualitative or quantitative. One of the most useful approaches given the interpretivist paradigm would have been qualitative case study research, which focused on key contextual factors that provided challenges within multicultural workforces (Yazan, 2015). Although the main benefit of this approach was that it could have focused the research study on specific contextual factors, it was deemed inappropriate because of time considerations inherent in the approach (Yazan, 2015).

Another consideration was quantitative research. Quantitative research seeks to establish generalisations across data patterns to find trends to explain differences and similarities (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This compares to qualitative research, which emphasises high levels of validity and in-depth understanding but has lower levels of reliability (Saunders et al., 2012). The benefit of this was that it could have helped to create generalisable findings to explain the reasons for cultural barriers and experience of Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, quantitative research does not support the interpretivist paradigm as it cannot provide rich, contextual data (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, quantitative data could not explain the main reasons that are specific to nurses in Jeddah (Saunders et al., 2012). Although quantitative research was considered, it followed from the interpretivist choice that this approach was unsuitable as the interactions between individuals and social actors was required to fulfil the research objectives. In other words, the research study did not seek to understand or utilise generalisations but instead to explore rich, in-depth information that examines a topic within its own context (Dworkin, 2012). Quantitative research designs are those that typically follow a positivist approach and utilises a highly structured data collection technique to understand a topic at a broad level (Saunders et al., 2012). Quantitative research choices also examine specific relationships between variables and analyses them using statistical techniques that help to understand the interplay and interactions between variables (Apuke, 2017).

3.5 Justification of Chosen Data Collection Tool

Given the reasons above, qualitative research was decided to be the main focus of this study. The researcher conducting the study was a university student. The main data collection tool chosen was comprised within the mono method qualitative research choice, which chose a

single method of data collection; that of semi-structured interviews. 10 semi-structured interviews were undertaken over a period of 1 week in a hospital in Jeddah. 10 nurses were interviewed over a period of 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interviewee followed a template using key themes to ask questions about and then probed further when it was important and could have provided more contextual information to add to the existing data stream (Saunders et al., 2012). Respondents were asked questions about the challenges they faced when working in multicultural teams. Analysis took place by identifying key themes in the data and then analysing them using Microsoft word using a set of themes. Given the benefits of semi-structured interviews provided above, this approach was deemed to be the most useful. In particular, semi-structured interviews were able to answer the main research question by explaining how cultural barriers can be overcome by Filipino nurses. In addition, they are able to explore the rich context of a hospital in Jeddah, considering both contextual and national culture aspects (Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, the semi-structured interview data collection tool supports the interpretivist paradigm and chosen research methodology.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Theme 1 – Communication Siloes

One of the main themes drawn from the semi-structured interview material is that Filipino nurses struggle with the lack of intra-team communication and information exchange. Culturally, nurses from the Philippines are accustomed to freer and more open communication lines between different departments. This is reflected in the following quote provided by Interviewee A: “For me one of the biggest challenges is the lack of communication. I am used to colleagues making time for me and to consult on key workplace issues but I find that if I approach my colleagues in this hospital with an issue, it is perceived as rude and as though I am impinging on their time”.

Interviewee D added that: “there is almost a sort of underlying culture that if you try to engage with your colleagues or ask them for help it is an admission that you are in some way incompetent or that you do not know what you are doing”. This quote highlights that some Filipino nurses are being made to feel incompetent when asking for support and guidance on how to approach a particular task or situation. In view of the inherent complexity involved in the frontline nursing or care professionals role, this underlying culture must be challenged/addressed by senior management officials for the hospital to function effectively and to deliver the best standard of care possible.

4.2 Theme 2 – Agile Decision Making

In analysing the various interview transcripts compiled, it also emerges that some Filipino nurses struggle with the unique agile decision-making model operated by the Jeddah hospital. Agile decision making refers to the process of decisions being made quickly and expediently with as few personnel as possible. Some of the interviewees noted that this approach marks a fairly radical shift in what they are used to. Indeed, Interviewee E opined that: “For me it is not necessarily a problem of not being directly involved in how decisions are made, it is just that decisions are made so quickly that there is rarely any resolution. For example, you could ask

one of your colleagues about a particular issue with a patient and their response will often be ‘oh did he/she not tell you, plan X or Y is being followed’. It can get quite frustrating in terms of having no sense of completion in your work in terms of seeing the positive outcomes of your labours”.

4.3 Theme 3 – Culture Shock

Expanding on some of the issues above stated, the vast majority of Filipino nurses interviewed also stated that they suffered from a significant culture shock when first joining the Jeddah hospital. A culture shock occurs when an expatriate underestimates the scale of adjustment needed on their part to successfully integrate within a new society. On this issue, Interviewee C stated that: “I must admit that I was overwhelmed by some of the lifestyle differences at first. There was just so much to learn and the new pace of working life made it difficult to find the time to learn about some of the organisation’s core cultural values”.

This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that many Filipino nurses perceive there to be too few training and development programmes which clearly and explicitly deal with cultural adjustment. This issue is perhaps best encapsulated by the following quote provided by Interviewee F: “It becomes not really a question of where do I fit in but how do I fit in?”. This quote broadly intimates that nurses and healthcare professionals within the Jeddah Hospital are not being provided with the requisite level of training and/or coaching and mentoring support to better acculturate themselves to their new work environment.

4.4 Theme 4 – Age Discrimination

Contrary to many active scholars in the field including but not limited to Lincoln et al (2002), Almutairi et al. (2015), and Alsulaimani (2014), the current research project finds that many Filipino nurses are discriminated against not because of their ethnicity, rather their age. A recurring theme emerged across all of the interview transcripts compiled that younger nursing professionals feel that their ideas and opinions are readily discredited because of their age. This theme is clearly reflected by the following quote provided by Interviewee D: “For me ethnic discrimination was not something that I experienced but I did experience age discrimination. I

have also witnessed this occurring to many other young expatriates whereby senior management will more likely follow the ideas/remit set out by older nurses irrespective of whether their ideas/remit are any more valid than those ventured by younger nurses”.

Interviewee F adds that: “I have experienced considerable levels of age discrimination since I started working at this hospital. There have been many situations where I have been made to feel because of my age that my opinions are naïve and that I have not yet gathered sufficient life experience to challenge or discuss ideas with older nursing and healthcare professionals”. This quote intimates that culturally, senior strategic officials within the sampled Jeddah Hospital are broadly dismissive towards the input provided by younger nursing professionals believing it to be naïve or ill-considered. The primary negative consequence of this form of discrimination from a purely operational perspective is that the Jeddah Hospital is not fully utilising/maximising the value adding potential of young nursing talent (i.e., new ideas, new strategic concepts, new service innovations etc.).

4.5 Theme 5 – Strategies for Breaking Down Barriers

Interviewee G explained that multiculturalism could be better managed at the hospital via: “extending the learning and orientation period, offering more formal and informal opportunities for teammates to get to know each other and establish friendly, productive team-orientated relationships”. There is a feeling among some employees that they are somewhat ‘thrown into the deep end’ with respect to the onboarding process with minimal support provided by senior management to facilitate team integration. In implementing the strategy recommended by Interviewee G it could be argued that team integration issues could be addressed immediately at source.

Some of the interview responses also suggest that greater levels of inclusivity and diversity could be achieved via the hospital cultivating a climate that is more psychologically safe and therefore one in which the employee is unafraid to contribute new ideas and/or to ask colleagues for help. Interviewee H explained that this can first be achieved via moving from individual toward collective responsibility: “I think one of the biggest things which is undermining multiculturalism in the workplace at present is the naming and shaming culture that surrounds

mistakes. I think if senior management insisted that we share the responsibility for team failures, the team would then work closer together as a more cohesive unit". This suggestion could help to create a more psychologically safe work environment in terms of nurses no longer feeling embarrassed about asking for guidance and support.

Whilst the solutions above stated are (in theory), Suitable, Acceptable and Feasible (SAF) they focus only on barriers occurring in the workplace and not on those which occur outside of the workplace. Interviewee K recommends the following: "What I feel would have benefited me during my initial months at the hospital was a peer reference group – other Filipino expatriates who have settled and adjusted to the ways of life and customs in Saudi Arabia. I feel that this would have helped me to become not only better acclimated but also less homesick therefore enabling me to approach my work from a more positive state of mind". Based on this suggestion, it could be of value for the case study hospital to set up an inclusion council consisting of Filipino expatriates who can offer general life and work/life conflict coping strategies to new nurses who are struggling to effectively acculturate.

4.6 Discussion

Research Question 1: How can cultural barriers within multicultural workforces be overcome?

In response to research question 1, the study found that cultural barriers within multicultural workforces can be overcome via organisations: promoting more open and inclusive communication structures, offering peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring opportunities, overseeing more rigorous learning and orientation periods, and eliminating communication siloes. Critically none of the above solutions are mutually exclusive from the communication solution. Without first opening up communication channels to promote more frequent and transparent dialogue, no solution that is subsequently introduced will effectively address and eliminate the barriers precluding multiculturalism in the workplace. This finding mirrors the views of many other active scholars in the field including but not limited to Fandrejewska and Wasilik (2018) and Dominique (2020) who have also found that any solution that successfully breaks down barriers towards workplace multiculturalism starts with an open conversation between the various parties involved. The principal strength of the current study over those

composed by Fandrejewska and Wasilik (2018) and Dominique (2020) however is that it drew data and insights directly from a real life organisation. The output is therefore perhaps of greater practical value to modern-day HR practitioners seeking a solution to effectively tackle this problem.

Research Question 1a: What are the main cultural aspects at play for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia and how do they differ from cultural theories?

The data results generated in response to research question 1a potentially suggest that the main cultural aspects at play for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia fall within the Hofstede taxonomy. In particular, the individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and short versus long-term orientation are at play. The latter of these aspects was noted to result in higher levels of age discrimination across the hospital. This is due to the fact that when making quick and/or agile decisions, the senior management team within the Jeddah Hospital disproportionately favour the input of longer-serving, older nurses than recently onboarded, younger nurses. These cultural aspects differ from some other cultural theories (i.e., functionalist theory, conflict theory, and institutional theory) in that they reflect wider societal norms outside of the organisation. This distinction is critically important to note because if many of the cultural barriers faced by Filipino nurses in the Saudi Arabia healthcare profession are not unique to the organisation but rather a reflection of wider societal norms and beliefs, the organisation is therefore not necessarily well placed to take positive action which successfully delivers the required outcomes (i.e., breaking down barriers and facilitating higher levels of inclusion and diversity in the workplace).

Research Question 1b: What are the main barriers for Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia and how do they impact upon multicultural workforces?

In terms of research question 1b much of the primary research output signifies that the following constitute the major barriers facing Filipino nurses in Saudi Arabia: communication siloes, decision making structures, age discrimination, culture/life adjustment, low levels of support and guidance and feeling psychologically unsafe in the workplace. Of these barriers above listed, it could be argued that the most negative of them is communication siloes. This is chiefly

due to the fact that all other listed issues are in effect a direct consequence of poor communication and information exchange. If the case study, Jeddah Hospital embedded a more open and less judgemental communication culture across the organisation, Filipino nurses would likely face far fewer barriers towards successful integration within the existing team of nurses and care professionals. This sub-sphere of the research output complements the views of a wide variety of other active scholars in the field including but not limited to Fandrejewska and Wasilik (2018) and Dominique (2020). Comparable to these scholars, the study also finds that effective communication is key to breaking down the cultural barriers that face expatriate nurses working in the contemporary Saudi Arabian healthcare sector.

Research Question 1c: What are the main strategies that should be put in place to help nurses and healthcare organisations to suitably adapt to having multicultural workforces?

The main strategies that should be put in place to help nurses and healthcare organisations to suitably adapt to having multicultural workforces are: extending the learning and orientation period, offering more formal and informal opportunities for teammates to get to know each other and establish friendly, productive team-orientated relationships, cultivating a climate of psychological safety (asking nurses to venture ideas and opinions without fear of ridicule), and establishing an inclusion council to assist minority workers in resolving out-of-work cultural adjustment issues. The latter of these strategies was considered to be especially workable based on the input provided by some of the nurses interviewed.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Conclusions

The findings generated by this research project clearly indicate that the principal issues precluding workplace multiculturalism at the Jeddah Hospital are communication siloes, agile decision making structures, culture shocks and age discrimination. It was noted by the study that the communication siloes problem was most requiring of a solution because it exacerbates all subsequent issues. A further major insight streamed from the critical analysis and discussion engaged in throughout the study is that asking peers and colleagues for help is often seen as a weakness by frontline nursing and healthcare staff within the Jeddah Hospital. This was found to alienate some Filipino nurses from the team.

Contrary to many other prominent scholars in the field, the present study found that the primary form of discrimination alienating many frontline nurses and care professionals within the Jeddah City hospital is age not ethnic. The ideas and opinions of younger nurses are often not taken as seriously by members of the senior management team as is the case with older, more experienced nurses. Beyond some of the core learning outcomes detailed above, the output of the study also potentially highlights that some Filipino nurses would benefit from coaching and mentoring with specific focus on facilitating improved adjustment to the unique ways of life in Saudi Arabia. Significantly, the study also found that extending the learning and orientation period for new onboards could help to promote improved levels of intra-team and intra-departmental integration thus eliminating the risk of new communication siloes emerging.

5.2 Recommendations For Improved Practice and Future Research

5.2.1 Practice

Based on some of the results generated by the current study, senior HR officials within the Jeddah Hospital should consider creating a more open and inclusive culture of communication. Brown (2019) reports that there are ostensibly 5 main steps involved in facilitating this change: 1) establish an open-door policy for all employees, 2) encourage frequent anonymised feedback

sessions, 3) organise team outings, 4) commend employees for contributing irrespective of whether their feedback is affirmatory or critical, and 5) establishing post-appraisal follow-up conversations. One of the many benefits to the hospital of putting this strategic recommendation into practice is that it should (in theory) help to increase senior HR managers' level of awareness regarding the main barriers facing Filipino nurses in their attempts to seamlessly integrate and function with teammates. With increased awareness of the issue, the senior HR management team can then begin strategizing positive actions to reduce the scale of the issue. Moreover, by actioning the suggested recommendation, the Jeddah Hospital may also be better placed to intervene and resolve small intra-team conflict issues before they germinate into much larger, unmanageable problems. A potential limiting issue to note with regards to the Suitability, Acceptability and Feasibility (SAF) of this recommendation however is that it may prove too time consuming, especially in view of the unique time pressures faced by senior HR staff in the dynamic, fast-paced hospital environment.

Going forward, it may also be of fairly considerable value for senior HR personnel within the Jeddah Hospital to implement a more rigorous and formalised system for diversity and inclusion training. King et al (2022) posit that some of the more effective systems in the field include some of the following vital activities: sensitivity training, unconscious bias training, cultural competency training, respect training, career focused leadership, clearly defined goals and targets and continuous reviews and reassessments. Perhaps the most significant benefit to the organisation of actioning this strategic recommendation is that it should help employees to work together as a stronger, more cohesive unit. Another critical advantage of putting this strategic recommendation into practice is cultivating a work environment which promotes greater levels of togetherness and team spirit (King et al, 2022). This is a reflection of the fact that employees will be trained more effectively to respect and appreciate the contribution(s) made by their teammates. A possible challenge which may be encountered when attempting to practice this strategic suggestion however is that inclusion and diversity training programmes can often be quite expensive particularly when external agencies need to be onboarded. This may be required in the Jeddah City Hospital in view of the scale of the multicultural barriers faced by the majority of the Filipino nurses interviewed for the current project.

5.2.2 Future Research

A useful and pursuable route for future research could be to critically compare the case of Filipino healthcare expatriates in Saudi Arabia with expatriates in other countries across the world. This type of study would likely reveal the extent to which some of the multicultural barriers identified by the current study are universal or case-specific. Another route for future research that could yield insights of some value is critically investigating case studies where some of the recommendations advanced by the current study have been or are in the process of being implemented to break down barriers to workplace multiculturalism. The main, anticipated benefit of carrying out research on this issue is either proving or disproving the validity of some of the claims made by this project. The main challenge which is likely to be encountered when attempting such a study however is how to identify and source case studies which sample hospitals of a similar size and structure. This challenge will need to be overcome to ensure that the comparison remains representative.

5.3 Limitations

A possible drawback of the research output is whether the opinions voiced by the interviewees constitute a fair and accurate representation of multicultural work practices at the Jeddah Hospital. Saunders et al (2009) caution that when interviewing employees of an organisation, their input may be biased by negative manager interactions or having recently been overlooked for a promotion. A further potential issue to consider in respect of the value of the research output is that it is based solely on primary data and may therefore lack sufficient supporting context. This issue was mitigated for as effectively as possible via comparing and contrasting the data results against the views of other active scholars in the field.

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