

A Case Study of the Omani Ministry of Health's Approaches to Nursing Education and its Cultural Congruency

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“In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”

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Abstract

Culture is a complex concept, but it is central to the task of curriculum design and development. The Ministry of Health (MoH) in the Sultanate of Oman plays a major role in healthcare education because it is the main employer and producer of healthcare professionals in the country. The MoH claims that its educational programmes are designed to meet the healthcare needs of the country at international standards, with ample consideration to the culture. As nursing is the major profession that the MoH invests in, produces, and employs, the purpose of this study is to explore the MoH's approaches to designing, developing, and implementing the current basic (general) nursing curricula and its cultural congruency in the context of Oman. A qualitative case study design is used to answer the research questions. Educational policy documents, semi-structured qualitative individual interviews and focus groups have been used to collect data from the MoH's nursing education decision makers, educators, students and service users (public) over a period of six months. Data was analysed using [RichieRitchie](#) and Spencer's five-stage analytical framework to identify the themes from the data collected from the documents and the interviews. A purposeful sampling was used to select study participants from the MoH nursing education decision makers, educators, students and service users. Findings of the study reveal that the MoH's current approach to nursing curriculum fails short of what Denis Lawton considers a culturally competent curriculum. The study proposes a framework, adapted from Lawton's cultural analysis model, aimed at developing culturally congruent nursing education in Oman.

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List of Abbreviations

BSN/BSc	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
CEC	Curriculum Evaluation Committee
DGET	Directorate General of Education and Training
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GNP	General Nursing Programme
HE	Higher Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoEd	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHEIs'	Ministry of Health Educational Institutes'
ONMC	Oman Nursing and Midwifery Council
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Overview

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter one provides an overview of the study context, the Sultanate of Oman, including general information on Oman; its demographical, historical, political and cultural background, with special attention given to Oman's link with other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. In addition, this chapter sheds light on the Omani healthcare system, nursing education, and the MoH basic general nursing programme.

Chapter two provides an overview of the relevant literature. This chapter discusses a number of definitions of the concepts of culture, culturally congruent care and curriculum. In addition, it focuses on common philosophical bases or foundations of education, and common curriculum approaches, particularly, nursing education (curriculum). In addition, the association between curriculum and context is explored, and an overview of nursing theories/models that emphasise culturally congruent care in the nursing curriculum. Finally, Lawton's Cultural Analysis Model is discussed as the main theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter three sets out the justification for the use of a qualitative case study approach as the methodology of choice and the approaches taken to ensure rigour and quality in the chosen research process.

Chapter four explores the case studies based on [RiechieRitchie](#) and Spencer's framework analytic process discussed in Chapter three. Themes and sub-themes reflect the findings generated from two data sets: MoH nursing education documents, and the semi-structured interview (individual and focus group) data. Themes and sub-themes are presented with example quotations from the raw data regarding MoH approaches to nursing education and its cultural congruency with the healthcare needs of the population.

Chapter five presents the cross-case findings from the four study cases which emerged from the process of cross case analysis.

Chapter six presents the main themes of this study identified in chapters four and five and discusses them in the context of previous literature, which leads to a

discussion on the framework of a culturally congruent nursing curriculum for the Omani context. The chapter concludes by reiterating the findings of this study and an acknowledgment of its strengths and limitations, and also providing recommendations.