

Graduation Citation

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Thesis Title:

The experience of China-educated nurses working in Australia: A symbolic interactionist perspective

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Citation:

Informed by a symbolic interactionist framework, this research explored the experience of China-educated nurses working in Australia. Using a modified constructivist grounded theory method, the main source of data were 46 in-depth interviews with 28 Chinese nurses. The key findings are fourfold. First, the dominant concepts of acculturation, assimilation and integration, while relevant, are inadequate to explain the experience of participants. Second, in contrast to the dominant discourse which frames the experience of immigrant nurses around the themes of language and culture, this research concluded that it was not just language and nor was it simply culture. Third, the immigrant nurse as 'different' is depicted more so as a burden rather than of potential value. The enriching aspects of 'difference' are largely absent in both literature and practice. Finally, the experience was not to be judged as either good or bad. Rather, ambivalence was a more appropriate theoretical concept.

