# Divided in Diversity: Cultural Insensitivity as a Factor Leading to Faculty Leaving a Nursing Education Institution in Johannesburg, South Africa

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| *Received: 10 December 2022*<br><br>*Reviewed: 01 January 2023*<br><br>*Revised: 06 February 2023*<br><br>*Accept: 16 February 2023* | **Purpose:** Nurse faculty retention continues to be a global concern especially in the face of worldwide nurse shortage. The nursing workforce shortage is further intensified by nurse faculty resignations from nursing education institutions. Although various factors have been attributed to nurse faculty resignations, few studies have reported cultural insensitivity as a factor that could lead to faculty leaving academia. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe cultural insensitivity as a factor that led to nurse faculty resigning from a nursing education institution in Johannesburg and to describe strategies for their retention. |
| *Keywords: Cultural Diversity; Cultural Insensitivity; Nurse Faculty; Resignations; Retention; Nursing Education.* | **Methodology:** A total of 15 purposively selected nurse faculty participated in individual semi-structured interviews of a broader exploratory-descriptive, and contextual qualitative study. Data were analyzed using Tesch's iterative thematic analysis protocol.<br>**Findings:** The study revealed that factors related to cultural diversity, specifically cultural insensitivity, also contributed to nurse faculty resigning from the nursing education institution.<br>**Originality/Value:** Although the institution has a reputable history of having culturally diverse nurse faculty, some of its faculty resigned due to the cultural insensitivity of their colleagues and institutional management. Based on findings and conceptualization of literature, the study makes various recommendations on how nurse faculty could be retained through promoting cultural sensitivity amongst diverse faculty. |

# 1. Introduction

Worldwide there is a shortage of nurses, which is further exacerbated by challenges related to attracting new recruits into the profession and retaining them, perceptions of unfair pay and remuneration, and unappreciative working environments [1]. The nursing workforce shortage is confirmed by the National Department of Health, which through its forecasting model predicted that the country needs at least 34000 professional nurses by the year 2025 [2]. One of the pertinent interventions in responding to the shortage of nurses is ensuring that there is an uninterrupted supply of newly qualified nurses from the nursing education pipeline. However, this intervention cannot be realized if the nurse faculty, who are expected to teach pipeline nurses, are also leaving their teaching posts.

The persisting nurse faculty retention issues continue to be a matter of growing concern as the country struggles to produce the required number of nurse cadres needed for quality healthcare provision, especially nurse and midwife specialist categories, who have also been added to the critical scarce skills [3]. Some of the factors leading to nurse faculty leaving academia include attractive salaries in clinical facilities and natural retirement of the ageing teaching workforce [4]. Other factors include high teaching workload that affect faculty's work life balance [5]. Other factors are attributed to institutional leaders' and policy makers' lack of understanding of the need to provide a supportive and appreciative working environment [6; 7]. Other nurse faculty leave academia to fulfil their quest to advance their personal goals and professional careers [7]. Nurse faculty also cite interpersonal issues such as uncivil and disruptive behaviors from peers, students, and managers as reasons for leaving academia [8; 9].

However, one of the significant aspects that is often overlooked on faculty retention is how factors related to cultural diversity can lead to faculty resignations [10]. Oftentimes, institutions are concerned with employment of diverse staff but they rarely consider the need to strengthen the retention strategies for such diverse employees [11]. The rapidly growing diverse healthcare clientele requires nursing personnel that can provide respectful nursing care within the clients' cultural context. Thus, nurse faculty play a significant role in leveraging student diversity in the classroom for the expansion of "intercultural understanding and intercultural experiences" of the culturally diverse student population [12]. The presence of culturally diverse faculty strengthens the institutional drives to recruit and support the teaching and learning of diverse students who will reflect the population served in class and clinically [13]. Therefore, diverse faculty also assist in the production of nurses that are expected to provide unbiased and inclusive nursing care [14].

## 1.1. The Culturally Diverse Academic Environment and Faculty Retention

Dietz defines cultural diversity as a state or situation in which multiple cultural groups within a specific environment, such as a workplace, for example academia are represented [15]. Cultural diversity describes the interaction between cultures, groups and societies within themselves and among each other and refers to differences between cultural groups, the diversity of their life worlds, lifestyles and identities in their heterogeneity [15]. It involves differences in values, lifestyles, customs, and cultural differences. The core dimensions of diversity are ethnicity, gender, physical attributes, race and sexual orientation, all of which have a lifelong impact on behaviour and the attitudes of those represented [16].

Cultural diversity of faculty may encourage acceptance of cultural needs in the classroom, can enrich curriculum, and concurrently improve clinical practice and nursing scholarship [13; 17]. It however remains an unfortunate situation to observe that individuals get categorized as minority and dominant racial and ethnic groups. Consequently, such categorisation leads to socio-cultural ills such as

discrimination, prejudice, segregation, and unequal distribution of resources [18]. Whilst having a culturally diverse faculty is indicative of how inclusive the institution is, Alsulami and Sherwood have observed from a global lens that minority faculty tend to bear the brunt of the negative experiences in the diverse environment [19]. These experiences include receiving little support; discrimination by colleagues, students, and managers; increased work overload; and often get overlooked for funding opportunities, promotion, and tenure [19]. At times minority faculty in culturally diverse academic environments indue "institutional gatekeeping, overt racism, and implicit biases" that perpetuate their resignations [20].

Compounding the situation is the perception that nursing is a conservative and monocultural profession, that operates within a hegemonic culture of a health care system that is immersed in Western medical traditions [21]. Indeed, even the curricula that is taught in the country's nursing education environments has been described as "absent" in offering an alternative African paradigm [22]. Eurocentrism, stereotyping and other discriminatory practices that are based on race and ethics tend to frustrate nurse faculty retention efforts as frustrated faculty leave academia [13].

## 1.2. Context of the Study

The nursing education institution (NEI) understudy is located in the city of Johannesburg, in the Gauteng Province. Johannesburg owes its rich multicultural diversity to the fact that its population is made up of a mixture of different ethnic cultures and races. Most of its inhabitants are indigenous Africans, many of whom used to live in segregated ethnic homelands which prevailed under the apartheid regime. These residents were drawn to the city in search of better paying jobs, opportunities for wealth and a better life as the city is the economic hub of the country. Therefore, the nurse faculty, student nurses and managers of the NEI understudy during the period of participants' resignations were predominantly of African descent and belonged to the country's diverse ethnic and cultural groups. With the city seen as one of the world's attractive financial hub, it also attracts a sizeable number of immigrants, most of which are from Africa, and some of which are health professionals.

The country has a long history of ethnic conflict and tribalism, which were aggravated by colonialism and apartheid that capitalized on the isolation of ethnic groups [23; 24]. Through the divide-and-conquer method, the apartheid government was able to locate the different ethnic groups and tribes into their own homelands, thus, pitting them against each other, and keeping them from revolting against the government's oppressive system. Furthermore, economic resources were distributed in a skewed manner in favor particular groups, which led to the marginalized ethnic groups using their ethnicity to mobilize for equality [24]. To this present day, these divisive apartheid-sponsored practices have been ascribed to the existing tribalistic practices and resultant nepotism in some government institutions and departments [23; 25]. The individuals involved in tribalistic practices make a conscious effort to be culturally insensitive to an extent that they alienate and ostracize themselves from colleagues from different tribal backgrounds [26].

To the best of the author's knowledge, not many studies on faculty retention have identified and described cultural diversity as a factor that could lead to nurse faculty resignation. Nor has literature dealt with cross-cultural insensitivity which is meted by nurse faculty who are predominantly of African descent against each other.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The broader study aimed to explore and describe the factors that led to nurse faculty leaving a Johannesburg NEI. This article describes one of the broader study's themes: *Diversity among nurse faculty*. The results, discussion and the conceptualization from the reviewed literature were used to formulate recommendations that could be utilized to retain nurse faculty in a culturally diverse academic environment. The two broad research questions that provided direction to the study are:

- *What led to nurse faculty to resigning from the NEI?*
- *What do you recommend needs to be done to retain nurse faculty at the NEI?*

## 3. Methods

This study followed a qualitative research design, following a descriptive approach. Specifically, an explorative, descriptive, and contextual qualitative research strategy was used to gain an in-depth understanding of nurse faculty's reflections on the factors that led to their resignations from the NEI under study, and their suggestions on how nurse faculty can be retained within the NEI. Employing a qualitative design allowed the researcher to capture the nurse faculty's views in their entirety within an academic context [27].

Institutional records indicate that more than a hundred (100) nurse faculty resigned from the subject NEI between the years 2000-2010. Nurse faculty who had resigned from the NEI during this period were approached to participate in the study. In the end, a total of 15 female nurse faculty volunteered to participate in the study.

Information was gathered through individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The researcher solicited the services of an independent interviewer, who was purposively selected on the grounds of her expertise in qualitative research and interviewing skills [28]. Each individual interview lasted forty-five to sixty minutes. The face-to-face interview method was preferred because it allowed collection of in-depth, authentic information [29], regarding the factors that led to nurse faculty leaving the subject NEI.

Tesch's iterative thematic analysis protocol as outlined in Creswell [30] was employed by the researcher and an independent coder who, because of her knowledge of qualitative research, was purposely selected to co-code the categories and subcategories. A consensus meeting was held between the researcher and the independent coder to discuss categories and subcategories, to independently verify if there were similar patterns or themes, as well as to identify gaps until they reached consensus. The researcher and the co-coder also discussed how categories and subcategories would be arranged. The consensus discussion was essential to establish the credibility of the research findings.

## 4. Results

The theme *Diversity among nurse faculty* emerged as one of the factors leading to nurse faculty resignations. Nurse faculty resigned from the NEI due to dissatisfaction with how their colleagues and institutional management handled issues related to cultural diversity. The subtheme *Cultural insensitivity* is presented below in the form of nurse faculty responses and quotations. The subject NEI always had a majority of black management (mostly heads of departments), students, and nurse faculty during the period of the participants' resignations. The cultural insensitivity discussed in this study was among people of African descent.

The participants resigned because there was no unity amongst nurse faculty at the NEI, which ultimately made it difficult for the faculty, especially the novice and new, to have a feeling of belonging at the institution.

Participant FP2's comments are a confirmation of the divisions within the diverse nurse faculty as well as a recognition of insufficient interventions from the NEI management:
*"No doubt, some of us got frustrated with the divisions that were there. But management only allocated one day in a year - Cultural Day as a day is where we came together – everybody shares their culture, you know, trying to break divisions…"*

FP13 was harshly reprimanded for conversing with a colleague in their ethnic language, and the participant considered the confrontation as part of insensitivity towards minority languages:

*"I was speaking vernacular with a tutor from the same culture as mine, and a senior nurse faculty reprimanded us for speaking in vernacular, citing that the medium of instruction at the institution was English, but then the other time I met her in the corridors speaking in vernacular with a head of department. I mean…who would want to work with such hypocritical people?"*

Some participants were unhappy at the insensitivity shown by the institutional management after they stopped religious practices at the NEI. An example cited was when the then principal of the NEI stopped the prayer gathering that used to be held by all staff, student and management on Fridays. The participants indicated that these gatherings were of value to them because they facilitated cohesion and collegiality amongst students, nurse faculty and management. FP7 said:

*"Previously, every Friday we would gather at the foyer and pray – all staff, students, and management, but that was all stopped by the new principal at the time, who said that it was time-wasting to pray."*

Most of the participants hinted at favouritism by heads of departments (HoDs) who were perceived as treating nurse faculty differently. FP8 was certain that some senior faculty were unfairly favoured by the HOD based on ethic grounds:

*"It was evident that senior faculty were favourites especially those because who spoke the same language with them, I mean you could easily see that the senior people were favoured in terms of asking for leave [and] in terms of tasks being delegated, and this also frustrated me, and I did not like it."*

Favouritism was rife at the NEI, to the extent that some participants grew accustomed to it as if it was part of the NEI culture. FP2 said:

*"I don't think we can change the manager having favourites - I think that goes with life. You can't expect to be at par with everybody, there are those that were closer to the managers, but even then the other people in the team must not feel that so-and so is the [manager's] favourite."*

FP13 suggested that in order to enhance cultural sensitivity at the NEI, nurse faculty should encourage professionalism amongst the student nurses:

"We need to go back to basic things such as etiquette, dressing appropriately in front of clients, respecting other people's cultures, and respecting other people's beliefs." The comment by FP13 illustrates that the participant recognises that cultural sensitivity is a responsibility of all stakeholders

at the NEI. FP10 felt confused and isolated as a new faculty at the NEI because there were different groups and subcultures of nurse faculty:

*"I discovered that there were a lot of cliques of nurse educators at the institution. I once joined group A at tea and when I joined group B the following day I was told by somebody in that group that they don't need me, they needed their space because I was with group A yesterday, so I am a sell-out…I didn't want to belong to any of the groups."*

FP1 shared her experiences about cultural cliques that prevailed at the institution:

*"The presence of cliques made it difficult for me to work in that environment..."*
On the same subject, FP 15 said: *With cliques…. This was very uncomfortable for me, because I had to listen to them [but] when I said, "But that's not how I'm seeing it or, that's how I'm seeing it, it caused more conflict."*

FP6 was a young novice faculty at the time of joining the NEI, who felt embarrassed and shocked by the way older faculty behaved themselves in front of younger faculty. They behaved in ways that were not expected of their culture or according to the FP6's values:

*"I think I was among the youngest faculty at that institution, it was so embarrassing to see old people that you looked up to, and who were of my mother's age, behaving the way they used to; and at times they used to fight like children. You would expect that at a certain age, people behave in a certain way."*

The comments show that nurse faculty found it difficult to work in an institution that was prevalent of divisive groups and cliques across ethnic languages, clans, or subcultures at the NEI.

## 5. Discussion of the Results

Nurse faculty resigned from the NEI due to dissatisfaction related to cultural diversity in the institution. The participants indicated that they resigned because they experienced incidents that demonstrated that some of their colleagues were insensitive to certain cultures or ethnicities. Members of an ethnic group appreciate recognition of their identity, as individuals get defined, differentiated, organised, and rewarded based on universally shared physical or cultural characteristics [31]. The nurse faculty, student nurses and the management of the NEI understudy majority of which were predominantly of African descent, belonged to different ethnic and cultural groups, and as such much of the cross-cultural insensitivity was from people who were themselves of African descent [24]. Thus, the varied nature of the nurse faculty of diverse black South African cultures made the participants susceptible to cultural insensitivity. Cultural insensitivity refers to incidents that demonstrate ignorance or negativity about the culture of the minority, which harms the integrity of the member(s) of the minority group [32]. It follows therefore that nurse faculty resigned from the NEI because they felt that they could not identify with people who ignored them and had negative attitudes towards their culture or ethnic group.

Futrell and colleagues [33] posit that for a higher education institution to succeed, its faculty and students should reflect the diversity that defines their nation. It is imperative that all faculty not only possess the ability to advice, teach and work effectively with a diverse student population, but there is also a critical need to ensure that students have opportunities to work with faculty who reflect intellectual diversity. When students are taught by faculty from a wide spectrum of experience and

training, that is, of different racial, ethnic, religious, gender, political groups, the intellectual experiences of students are enriched [33]. Therefore, there is a need to increase the diversity among faculty within nursing's educational programs so that students have diverse role models who are culturally sensitive [13]. This means that the NEI should always strive to ensure that there is tolerance of diverse cultures by all staff at the institution, so that diverse nurse faculty can feel valued and accommodated and are retained at the NEI.

Grobler and colleagues [34] assert that in an academic environment made up of individuals from diverse cultures, it is inevitable that there will be stereotyping ascribed to differences based on ethical, socio-political, and economic issues. The stereotyping could be a barrier for managers to effectively manage issues of cultural diversity in the academic environment [34]. Stereotyping is sustained by unequal social and political realms into which individuals are born, in which pre-existing categorisation of ethnic groups is attached to various stereotypes and beliefs. As Mahmoud [35] further asserts, "those pre-existing meanings attached to specific identities will play a significant role in people's identity formation". Challenges then arise when those preconceived mental images or meanings give way to discriminatory practices [31]. Thus, stereotyping at the NEI can easily create discrimination practices when that discrimination is based on perceived differences among nurse faculty with respect to ethnic-racial categories, age, geographic origin, sexual preference, and educational background [36].

The presentation of cultures in terms of stereotypes in South Africa was reinforced by the apartheid ideology, which created and reinforced an "us and them" syndrome. This tendency has further reinforced a "superiority and inferiority" mentality between the different racial groups which is difficult to overcome, regardless of the equity legislation, because people's values and beliefs are involved [34]. Thus, the ethnocentric behaviour of each other's lifestyles, social and personal conduct is a product of segregation that was deliberately structured to foster superiority and inferiority complexes amongst different racial and ethnic groups. Nurse faculty left the NEI because they were disappointed because of the unequal treatment meted out by their colleagues in a "new", "rainbow" and non-racial South Africa that prides itself of being a diverse country. Intercultural inequality leads to stigmatisation, prejudice, discrimination, and pressures on less powerful groups to assimilate to the norms of the powerful group. This leads to employees from minority groups leaving the organisation because they resent the treatment they perceive as unjust as this can be emotionally exhausting [37]. Nurse faculty feel retained when working in an academic that makes them feel equally valued [38].

According to Simons and Mawn [39], nurses may feel "out of the clique" when they are alienated and do not feel part of the group because of their ethnicity. This is because in such cliques or groups they experience demeaning and negative behaviours such as sarcasm and rumours circulated about them. When there is factionalism and division amongst faculty, there will be different views on many issues related to the institution, and ultimately the faculty do not have a sense of common purpose or collective purpose at the institution [40]. Therefore, the NEI management should ensure that every subordinate under their supervision fulfils job expectations according to job descriptions, job standards, the policies, mission and objectives of the NEI, as well as legal regulations, and that they are equally treated and equally corrected when there are deviations from the norms. This means that HODs should strive to be guided by the NEI's values of respect, fairness, being non-judgemental, and openly expressing opinions, because it may be difficult to maintain objectivity in the departments if HoDs are friendlier toward certain subordinates than others, and this may leave "othered" nurse faculty disillusioned and inclined to resign.

Some participants hinted that there were even acts of favouritism by HODs who were perceived as not treating nurse faculty equally, and some participants grew accustomed to favouritism, as though it was part of the NEI culture. Some of the examples signifying favouritism in an academic environment include selection of faculty; the distribution of learning and teaching materials among faculties and departments; assignment of course loads and allocation of classes for academic members; academic promotions; and in supporting faculty to further their studies [41; 42]. Some favoured faculty are rewarded with positive performance evaluations, and groomed for high positions [13; 43; 44].

Thupayagale-Tshweneagae and Dithole [45] warn that favouritism can create factionalism that can lead to strong impressions that the higher positions in the institution are filled based on the faction one belongs to. Such allegations can unnecessarily create animosity between faculty of different factions and can have a negative effect on newly employed nurse faculty who join teaching with vigour and a willingness to bring change through teaching. Thus, NEI management would be better advised to establish a positive diverse academic environment in which nurse faculty of different cultural backgrounds feel protected from discrimination and feel that all the characteristics that make them diverse are valued and that do not hamper advancement in their careers. Thus, researcher deduces that nurse faculty who are not favoured feel discriminated against by colleagues in the same department in the NEI; they then become disillusioned by these practices and suffer from low morale when they see other faculty supported with learning and teaching equipment and material whilst they are neglected. This situation may result in them feeling that opportunities for promotion are minimal in such an environment and become frustrated and resign.

Some participants were unhappy at the insensitivity shown by the NEI management after they stopped religious practices at the institution. An example cited was when the then principal of the NEI stopped the prayer gathering that used to be held by all staff, student and management on Fridays. The participants indicated that these gatherings were of value to them because they facilitated cohesion and collegiality amongst students, nurse faculty and institutional management. Celebrating cultural differences can lead to a supportive work environment because diversity facilitates retention of staff through embracing each other's richness of talents and abilities to a team. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa [46] advocates for everyone to use the language of their choice, and persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right to enjoy their culture or practice their religion with other members of the community. The Constitution further states that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. It further states that religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions provided that those observances follow the rules of the appropriate public authorities, are conducted on an equitable basis, and attendance is free and voluntary. Kotzé [16] assert that the management of NEIs must make provisions for religious rituals and beliefs of their students and staff in a way that balances their individual needs, and the requirements of the educational programme. The NEI management should ensure that the opportunity is made available for the students and staff to practice their religion, such as allowing time for worship during the day; and there should be flexibility at the NEI to accommodate religious days that are not acknowledged as public holidays [16].

Moreover, Leininger and McFarland [47] postulate that there may be students who believe in God and use prayer as an essential component of their academic success; thus, nurse faculty are advised to encourage these students to continue to draw on their religious beliefs and practices when nursing patients. Therefore, the NEI should aim to retain nurse faculty by promoting the NEI as a faith friendly organisation where staff feel free to openly discuss and practice their spiritual beliefs, because according

to Kerfoot [48], employers need to start "engaging the whole person". This is because individuals appreciate and appear productive when they can also "bring their souls to work" [48], and when they view the workplace as a safe space in which they can grow their spiritual, intellectual and emotional needs are met. When the relational side of work is ignored, it is easy for people to feel disengaged, and they detach themselves from work and resign [49].

## 5.1. Facilitating Nurse Faculty Retention through Cultural Sensitivity

For the NEI to be able to retain culturally diverse nurse faculty who work harmoniously with each other, both the faculty and HODs should be culturally sensitive. This study adopted Campinha- Bacote's [50] cultural competency framework to outline how the NEI could retain diverse nurse faculty through cultural sensitivity. Figure 1 is an adapted schematic representation of the process of cultural sensitivity in the NEI, which shows that it is through cultural desire that the process of cultural sensitivity is stimulated. The NEI's nurse faculty and management could engage in an ongoing process that integrates cultural desire, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, and cultural encounters, so that the work environment (NEI) can be one that continuously strives to ensure that individuals achieve their work effectively within their cultural contexts.
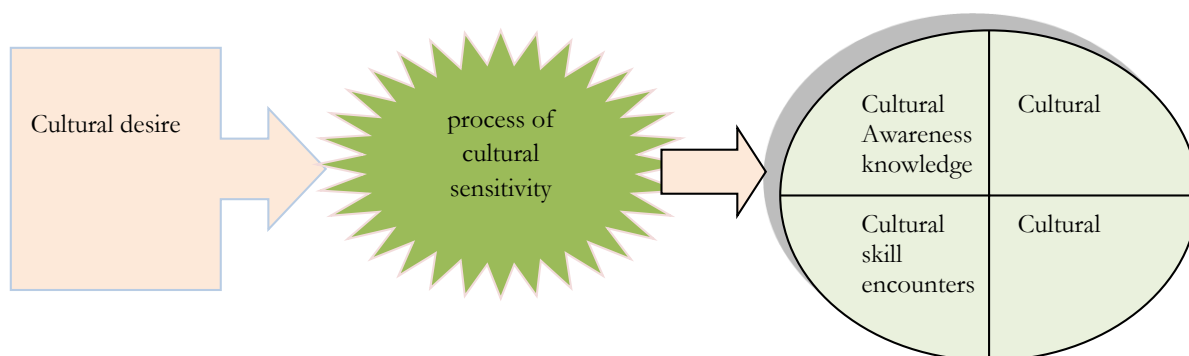


**Fig. 1. A schematic representation of the process of cultural sensitivity in the NEI (Adapted from Campinha-Bacote [50]). (*Source*: Matahela [51])**

Institutional management and nurse faculty engaging in cultural desire could give rise culturally sensitivity by acquiring cultural awareness, obtaining cultural knowledge, by genuinely looking for cultural encounters, and by demonstrating cultural skill when interacting with individuals of diverse cultures.

- *Cultural Desire*

Cultural desire refers to when an individual has the motivation to "want to, rather than have to", partake in activities that make one to be culturally aware, to have cultural knowledge, to be culturally skilful, and to intimately seek cultural encounters [50]. Thus, if the employer has cultural desire, it demonstrates that they care for their diverse staff. It is not enough for the NEI to merely articulate their respect for staff values, beliefs, and practices, or to go through the motions of providing a culturally specific intervention that is effective with a particular ethnic group. What matters most is the NEI's genuine motivation or desire to be culturally responsive to its entire diverse staff [50].

Cultural desire entails an authentic desire "to be open and flexible with others, to accept differences and build on similarities, and to be willing to learn from others as cultural informants" [50]. This type of learning is a lifelong process and is referred to as cultural humility. Cultural humility is an act of control, restraint, temperance, and modesty by practitioners whereby they endeavour to resist the inclination to privilege their cultures and their perspectives in their work [31]. Individuals who seek to engage in acts of cultural humility allow themselves to be vulnerable by reaching into the space between themselves and those of different cultures, and they strive to work across cultures without a guarantee of reciprocity. This requires courage and a willingness to abandon a position of social comfort.

Managers ought to "walk the diversity walk" through how they recruit, select and promote faculty. The NEI's demeanour of a largely diverse workforce at all levels that is, administrators, managers, faculty and students sends a clear and intentional message that the institution values cultural diversity. Neblett Jr. [52] supports this assertion by suggesting that the academic institution should incorporate cultural diversity as part of its strategic plan to initiate action and to develop programs that address the issue of diversity. Some of the strategic goals of an organisation on cultural diversity could be to maximise minority representation in the faculty workforce and students, and to develop programs and partnerships to address the institution's diversity issues [52]. Another important intervention is to evaluate and interrogate the current curriculum and its pedagogical approaches to ensure these are aligned to the institution' cultural diversity agenda [52].  The NEI's curriculum should be responsive to the needs of its student generation and to the community they serve [53].

- *Cultural Awareness*

Cultural awareness in an educational institution context is when the faculty and institutional managers perform self-examination and an in-depth exploration of their own cultural and professional backgrounds. Cultural awareness on a personal level is when individual nurse faculty or HODs ask themselves what their ethnic background and cultural group entails, and how their knowledge of their ethnicity affects their identity, as well as the meaning that they themselves ascribe to their ethnic origins. They also ask themselves on how the rules, customs, and rituals passed on to them inform how they interact with others [31]. Cultural awareness on a professional level is when individual nurse faculty and HODs reflect on how they relate to others of different cultures in the workplace. They are prepared to eliminate taken-for-granted assumptions and stereotypes that they hold, in order to keep attuned to and bridge the differences between colleagues of different ethnic backgrounds in the workplace [31]. Thus, the cultural awareness process involves acknowledging one's biases, prejudices, and assumptions about individuals who are different [50]. Without being aware of the influence of their own cultural or professional values, there is the risk that nurse faculty and HODs may engage in cultural imposition on other personnel of different cultures. Cultural imposition is when an individual feels inclined to impose own beliefs, values, and patterns of behavior on another culture [50]. Cultural awareness also prevents staff from being ethnocentric, that is, when staff view others unconsciously by using their own cultural group as the reference point for judging others [54]. Therefore, there is a need for NEI staff to commit to self-initiated continuous self-introspection and self-critique to redress power imbalances, to develop and maintain mutually respectful relationships with their colleagues, and to recognise and confront the attempts of cultural dominance. The NEI should also support nurse faculty by ensuring that the institutional values and principles enable faculty to function in a diverse environment that promotes cross-cultural interaction. This would mean that staff need to appreciate each other's various customs, experiences, interests, needs and expectations, and show respect and regard for the minority faculty skills and contributions to the NEI, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other socio-

biographical classifications. This also means that the NEI staff, irrespective of belonging from minority groups, must be involved in decision-making processes of the institution, so that they do not feel excluded and that decisions have been imposed on them.

- ***Cultural Knowledge***

Cultural knowledge is when individuals engage in a process to seek and obtain a sound educational base concerning a variety of cultural worldviews. Thus, institutional managers who have acquired cultural knowledge will be able to understand not only the cultural beliefs of the dominant cultural groups in the NEI, but also to improve their understanding in terms of the discrimination faced by minority ethnic groups [55]. Diversity education programs can help faculty to teach in a multicultural classroom by through recognising preconceptions and cultural prejudices in their own minds, while capacitating them with skills to dutifully seek understanding of other cultures that they encounter [56]. It follows therefore that the NEI management should evaluate the effectiveness of these cultural diversity training programmes by monitoring the interaction between employees during their day-to-day work interactions and note whether employees' cultural sensitivity skills have improved. If the NEI staff do not learn about each other's culture, they will continue with preconceived prejudices and stereotyping, and this leads to members of other cultures feeling discriminated against and they resign.

- ***Cultural Skill***

Cultural skill is an individual's capacity to acknowledge cultural differences in communication and interaction styles, such that misunderstandings related to cultures are easily dealt with [57]. Individuals with cultural skills can set aside their cultural judgements to understand and acquire pertinent knowledge, attitudes, and awareness about cultures even on issues that arise during interactions of members of different cultures, and have the skills required to draw when interacting with others from different cultures [58]. An individual with cultural skill is aware, flexible and versatile in relation to other individuals' cultural domains, such as the meaning, preference and preparation of food; rituals, taboos; the influence of religion on culture; and the meaning of death, mourning and bereavement. They are also aware of the cultural factors that may influence communication and the impact of quality of contact and interpersonal communication including eye contact, dominant language and dialect, personal space, use of gestures, greetings, appropriate use of humour, conflict resolution roles and decision-making roles [55; 58]. Thus, without cultural skills, faculty and HODs at the NEI may be inappropriate and insensitive during their communications with those of different cultures, and those affected may resign when they feel offended and unwelcome.

- ***Cultural Encounters***

Cultural encounter refers to the process of encouraging individuals to directly engage in face-to-face inter-cultural interactions with individuals from culturally diverse settings [50]. Thus, the NEI management and nurse faculty can directly interact with co-workers from diverse cultural groups to enhance their prevailing beliefs about a cultural group by for example, engaging in tasting other cultures' food and learning to speak other individuals' languages, their ways of dresses and appearances, and this may avert potential stereotyping. Managers could invest time for conversational chats that facilitate learning about each other's cultures with their faculty [16]. Ingram [59] urges staff to commemorate holidays of other minority staff, to celebrate religious holidays and cultures of different

staff with the purpose of learning more about each other. The celebration could be as basic as a short column that explains the meaning of the holiday in the institution's news bulletin or newsletter [59]. Thus, by celebrating different cultural groups and different religious affiliations at the NEI, all staff feel included, valued, and appreciated. The NEI can retain diverse nurse faculty by promoting cultural sensitivity amongst all staff. Cultural competence is demonstrated by employees engaging in cultural desires, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skill, and cultural encounters.

# 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Nurse faculty resigned when they could not tolerate a culturally insensitive work environment. This study illuminated the prevalence and context of cultural insensitivity in an academic nursing context which comprised of managers, faculty and students that were predominantly of the same (African) race but different ethnic groups, which led to nurse faculty resignations. It is prudent that cultural diversity in NEIs be strengthened and supported so that faculty can be retained. For the NEI to be able to retain culturally diverse faculty who work harmoniously with each other, both the faculty and HODs should be culturally sensitive.

From the study results, the discussion and literature, the following are considered as recommendations that could enhance cultural sensitivity towards the retention of diverse nurse faculty:

- *Incorporation of cultural diversity in the NEI's vision and mission statement to show its dedication to cultural diversity issues, so that diverse nurse faculty feel valued and accommodated in the NEI. The mission should state the significance of diversity and its goal toward the success of faculty, students, and positive academic environment.*
- *Writing of an aspirational public statement that demonstrate that the NEI is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The DEI statement outlines the NEI's values for and obligation to DEI, and its endorsement. Its desired outcome is to overcome bias and discrimination to create a teaching and learning atmosphere that welcomes all cultures. The drafting process of the DEI statement should include all internal NEI stakeholders such as managers, faculty, administrative staff, and students.*
- *Developing policies that are intentionally aimed at recruiting nurse faculties and managers of diverse cultures.*
- *Having a zero-tolerance attitude towards all forms of favouritism, such as those that are based on racial and ethnical differences.*
- *Creating a value-driven academic environment that is guided by the principles or values of respect, tolerance, fairness, transparency, and equity, and non-judgemental attitudes in the everyday interactions with diverse nurse faculty regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or socio-economic class.*
- *Fostering an environment that values and appreciates its faculty and provides diverse nurse faculty with a platform to openly express their opinions and feel free to participate in decision-making processes of the NEI, without fear of discrimination.*
- *Provision of a faith-friendly organisation where staff are free to openly discuss and practice their spiritual beliefs.*
- *Commemoration of nurse faculty diversity to facilitate cultural acceptance. This can be accomplished by organising cultural events such as fun days, Heritage Day and Cultural Day where faculty of different cultures and religious affiliations participate, so that all staff feel that their cultures are recognised, valued, and appreciated. During these events, the NEI staff are*

*introduced to the traditions and cultures of others so that they can be more sensitive and appreciative of each other's cultures, thereby encouraging staff to reflect on how they relate to colleagues of different cultures, and to facilitate a process of seeking a sound educational base about different cultures.*

- *Provisioning of cultural diversity training and cultural self-reflexivity programmes to NEI employees to improve their cultural sensitivity skills at work. This training should address attitudinal and behavioural change at individual faculty level to facilitate recognition and reckoning of own biases, prejudices, stereotypes, and ethnocentrism in the employees' minds, whilst also teaching them skills to pursue understanding of other cultures that they encounter as well as effective intercultural communication skills.*
- *Evaluating and interrogating the curriculum, pedagogical approaches, community engagement and research activities to ensure these are aligned to the institution's cultural diversity agenda.*

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