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BRIDGING PROGRAM’S EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT AND ROLE TRANSITION OF INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED NURSES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore a bridging program's education environment and the role transition of internationally educated nurses (IENs) who were enrolled full-time in Semesters 1 and 2 of the Practical Nursing Bridging Program for IENs at a community college in Toronto, Canada, during the Winter Semester of school year 2018-2019. A survey questionnaire consisting of three parts was used to gather data from 68 IEN students who volunteered to participate in this study. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to analyze data. Participants' responses to the open-ended question, “Could you please list any problems/issues you have encountered in the bridging program?”, were grouped based on similarity of ideas presented. Results indicate that all bridging program education environment components, as well as role transition subscales, were described as “agree.” Age, sex, place where nursing course was completed, number of years working as registered nurse, work before living in Canada, working place before coming to Canada, and number of years not working as nurse seem not to be predictors of the respondent's perception on role transition. There is a significant relationship between the respondents' perception of the teaching process within their bridging program's education environment and role transition. However, view on teacher, academic, atmosphere and social self-perception seemed insignificant predictors of role transition. Participants' responses to open-ended the question were classified into four groups of problems: concern with teachers, program content issues, program pace, and financial issues. Recommendations are provided in view of the study's findings.

Keywords: internationally educated nurse, role transition, education environment, bridging program

INTRODUCTION

In Canada, nursing bridging programs have been developed to help IENs provide evidence of recent practice, address identified gaps in their education and work experience and support their role transition. Different models of bridging programs exist across Canada. There is currently limited information available that focuses on a bridging program's education environment and how this contributes to IENs' ability to transition to the workforce. While there seems to be some anecdotal evidence that such programs are useful in helping IENs pass the licensure exam in Canada, it is not clear what these programs' value is in preparing IENs to transition to the workplace. It is extremely important to understand IENs' experiences with bridging programs, and how these programs influence their ability to practice and transition within a Canadian health care context. This information will make it possible for bridging program providers to develop and implement policies and practices that are most meaningful to IENs in transitioning to their new roles and responsibilities as nursing professionals in Canada. Therefore, this study sought to explore a bridging program's education environment and the role transition of internationally educated nurses (IENs).

METHODS

- Transitions theory (Meleis, 2010; Meleis, Sawyer, Im, Hilfinger Messias, & Schumacker, 2010) (see Figure 1)
- Purposive sampling
- Research ethics board clearance
- Survey instrument
 - socio-demographic characteristics;
 - students' perception of IEN bridging program education environment using the Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM) (Roff, 2005);
 - students' role transition using the the Role Transitions Survey Instrument (Doody, Tuohy, & Deasy, 2012).
- Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis

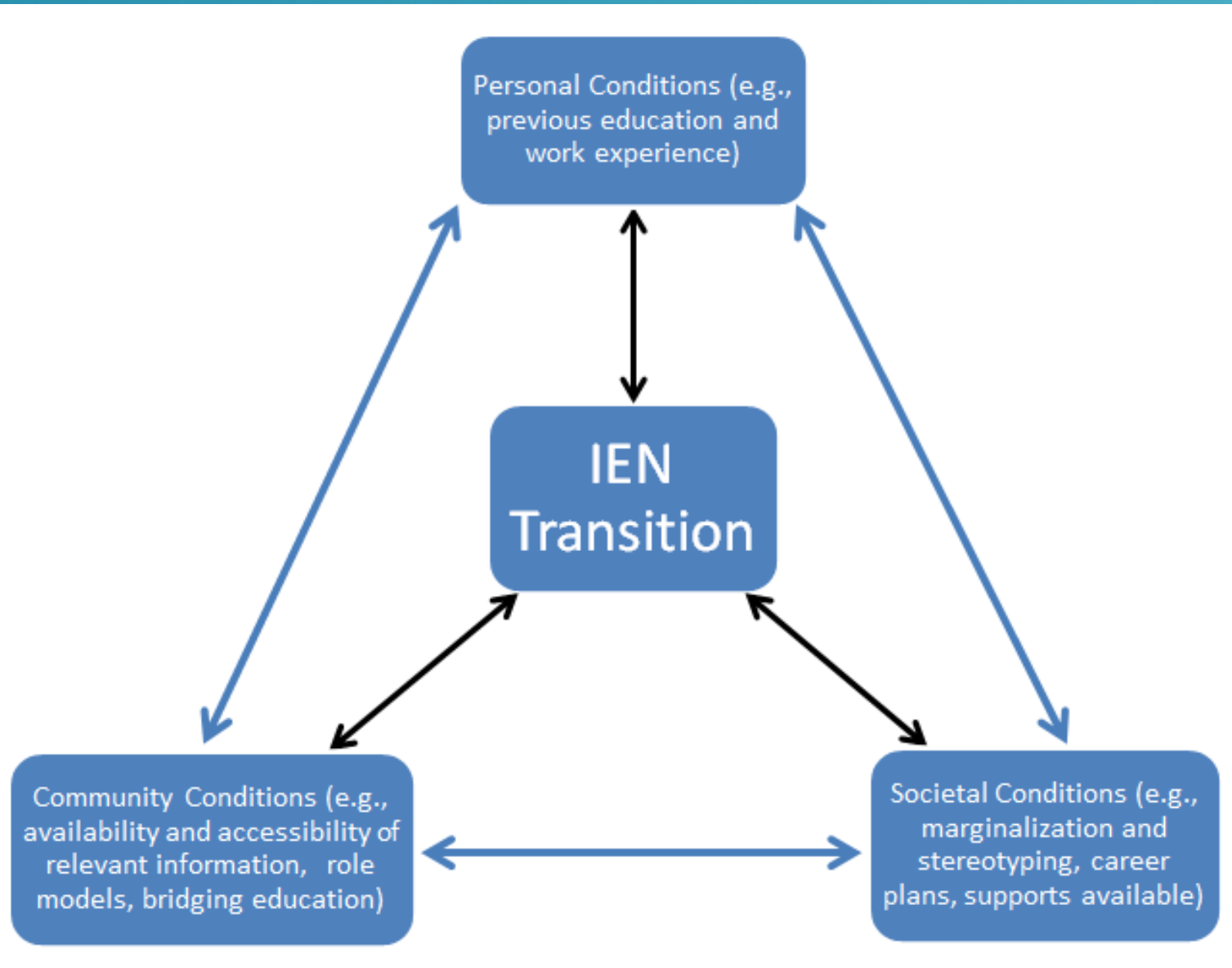


Figure 1. Transitions theory as applied to IENs. Adapted from “Experiencing Transitions: A Middle Range Theory,” by A. I. Meleis, L. M. Sawyer, E. O. Im, D. K. Hilfinger Messias, and K. Schumacher (2010).

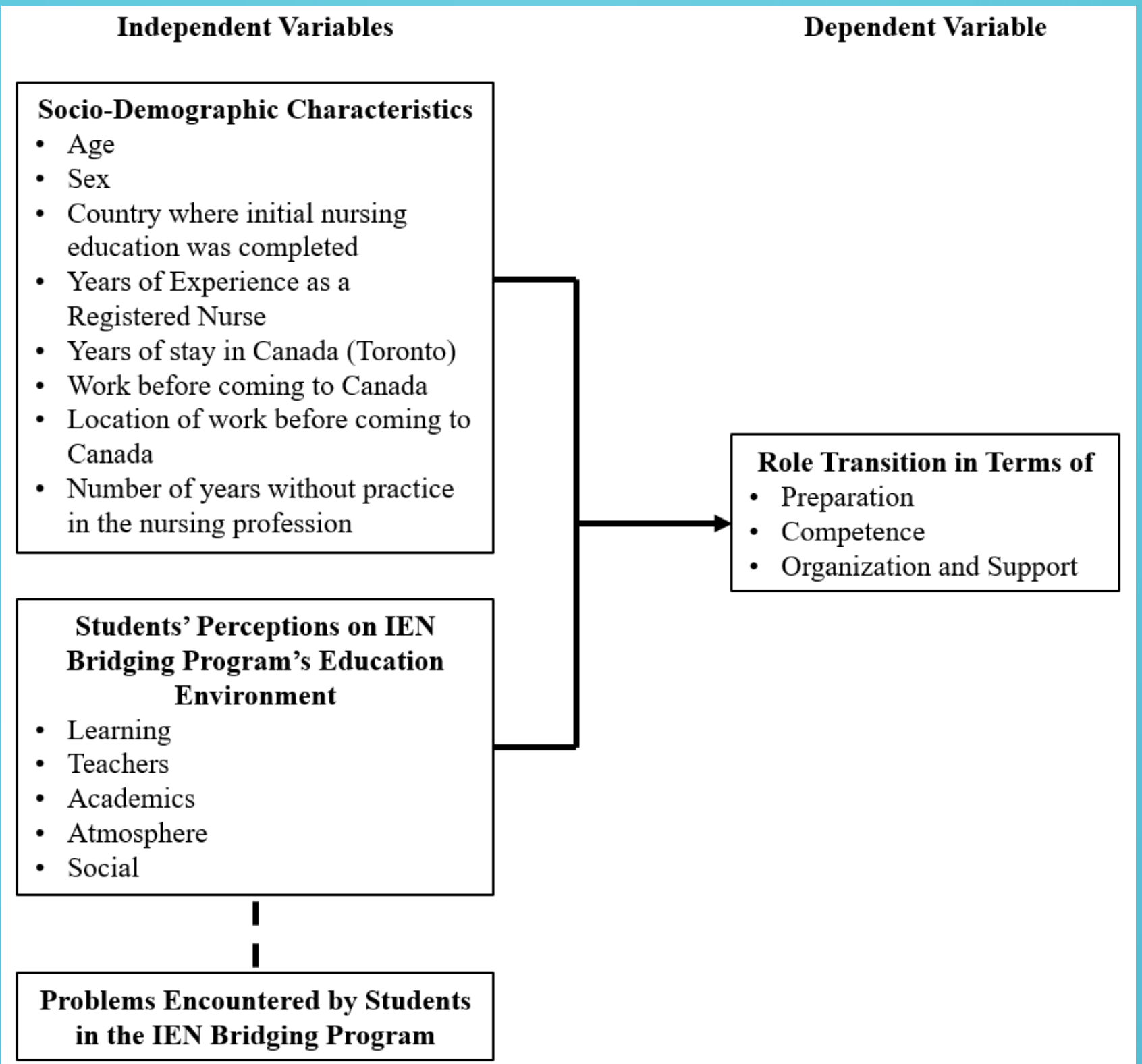


Figure 2. The conceptual framework.

RESULTS

Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics			
RESPONDENTS' SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE		FREQUENCY n = 68	PERCENTAGE
Age			
21 – 30		19	27.94
31 – 40		42	61.76
41 – 50		7	10.29
	Mean = 34.41 SD = 4.90		
Sex			
Male		9	13.242
Female		59	86.76
Geographic Region in which Nursing Education was Completed			
Africa		5	7.35
America		1	1.47
Asia		61	89.71
Europe		1	1.47
Number of Years Working as Registered Nurse			
0 – 4		30	44.12
5 – 9		21	30.88
10 – 14		14	20.59
15 – 19		3	4.41
Number of Years Living in Canada			
1 – 3		26	38.24
4 – 6		35	51.47
7 – 9		6	8.82
10 and above		1	1.47
Work before Arriving in Canada			
Nursing Related		53	77.94
Not Nursing Related		15	22.06
Working Place (Geographic Region) before Coming to Canada			
Africa		6	8.82
America		1	1.47
Asia		57	83.82
Europe		2	2.94
Did not Work		2	2.94
Number of Years not Working as Nurse			
1 – 3		22	32.35
4 – 6		22	32.35
7 – 9		18	26.47
10 and above		6	8.82

Table 2. Respondents' perception of the bridging program's education environment			
PARAMETERS	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTION
A. Students' Perception of Learning	3.86	0.93	Agree
B. Students' Perception of Teachers	3.84	0.96	Agree
C. Students' Academic Self-Perception	3.84	0.87	Agree
D. Students' Perception of Atmosphere	3.82	0.98	Agree
E. Students' Social Self-Perception	3.68	1.02	Agree
Overall Mean	3.82	0.95	Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 = Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 = Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 = Unsure; 3.41 – 4.20 = Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 = Strongly Agree

Table 3. Role Transition			
PARAMETERS	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTION
A. Role Preparation	4.09	0.90	Agree
B. Role Competence	4.13	0.75	Agree
C. Organization and Support	4.04	0.77	Agree
Overall Mean	4.08	0.79	Agree

Legend: 1.00 – 1.80 = Strongly Disagree; 1.81 – 2.60 = Disagree; 2.61 – 3.40 = Neutral; 3.41 – 4.20 = Agree; 4.21 – 5.00 = Strongly Agree

Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis for socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their perception on role transition					
PREDICTORS	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t - value	p - value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Age	.003	.025	.027	.128 ^{ns}	.899
Sex	-.184	.218	-.111	-.844 ^{ns}	.403
Place where Nursing Course Completed	.138	.313	.136	.442 ^{ns}	.660
No. of Years Working As Registered Nurse	-.018	.031	-.133	-.563 ^{ns}	.576
No. of Years Living in Canada	-.078	.064	-.265	-1.231 ^{ns}	.224
Work before Arriving in Canada	.113	.216	.088	.525 ^{ns}	.601
Working Place before Coming to Canada	-.135	.278	-.147	-.487 ^{ns}	.628
No. of Years not Working as Nurse	-.043	.052	.052	-.837 ^{ns}	.406

Note: Multiple R = .305 R² = .093 F_(8,59) = .720 p = .673
Legend: ns = not significant (p>.05)

Table 5. Multiple linear regression analysis for respondents' IEN bridging program education environment components and their perception on role transition					
PREDICTORS	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t - value	p - value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Perception of Learning	.277	.154	.308	1.800*	.049
Perception of Teacher	-.074	.129	-.080	-.575	.567
Academic Self-Perception	.193	.125	.207	1.544	.128
Perception of Atmosphere	.170	.169	-.193	1.007	.318
Social Self-Perception	.122	.131	-.138	.933	.354

Note: Multiple R = .698 R² = .487 F_(5,62) = 11.76 p = .000
Legend: * = significant (p<.05)

Table 6. Problems encountered by students in the IEN bridging program	
ENCOUNTERED PROBLEMS	
Encountered Problem 1: Concern with Teachers	
• They are dictator (some of them). One of them who is white remind me Hitler.	
• Some of them are rude and look us down.	
Encountered Problem 2: Program Content Issues	
• Too many assignments that are not able to focus more on learning the skills.	
• There was a time when I feel exhausted with numbers of requirements to be submitted following exams that I can't focus more on studying.	
Encountered Problem 3: Program Pace	
• It is good to have the fast track IEPN program in order to continue the chosen career back home. It is just too tight with the schedule because it was so compressed with the given amount of time.	
• The program is fast-paced. I was not prepared to handle the program. It was more complex than I thought it was. The way of teaching here in Canada is different than in the Philippines.	
Encountered Problem 4: Financial Issues	
• Balancing work and studies and family support	
• Financial problems - because of the amount of assignment, requirements and studying demanded by the program I had to give up my work hours, making paying for my daily need a very stressful problem.	

CONCLUSIONS

Majority of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 40 years old. Fifty-nine were females. The number of years that the respondents in this study worked as RNs before coming to Canada varied greatly. More than half of the respondents have lived in Canada from four to six years. Fifty-three of all respondents worked as nurses prior to arriving in Canada. Most of the respondents worked in Asia before coming to Canada. Twenty-two respondents have not worked as nurses for 1 – 3 years since arriving in Canada. Results showed that all bridging program education environment components were described as “agree.” Additionally, results indicate that all role transition subscales were described as “agree.” There is no significant relationship between the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their perceptions on role transition. There is a significant relationship between the respondents' perception of the teaching process within their bridging program's education environment and role transition. Respondents identified four categories of problems/issues in their bridging program. These were: concern with teachers, program content issues, program pace, and financial issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The program administration (PA) should endeavour to address the specific needs of its students by creating individual learning plans. They should also put in place quality improvement initiatives to understand the issues raised by students. Additionally, PA should consider collaborating with placement agencies in developing practices and programs that will help make school to work role transition less stressful for IENs. It is further suggested that the PA consider exploring other aspects of IENs' socio-demographic characteristics to determine possible relationships with regard to their role transition. Further research involving a larger population may help provide a better understanding of a bridging program's education environment components and how it influences IENs' perceptions of role transition. PA program administration should look into reports of incivility raised by students, and find ways to address this concern. For future researchers, using a longitudinal, mixed methods design may provide a much deeper understanding of the relationship between and among the dependent and independent variables of the study.

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