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## Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: A narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning experience, and future career planning

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**Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: a  
narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning  
experience, and future career planning**

This thesis is presented for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Carol Chunfeng WANG**

Edith Cowan University  
School of Nursing and Midwifery

2017



## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

## Abstract

This study presents a narrative inquiry of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities in order to examine these students' motivations, learning experiences and future career planning. Australia seeks to attract international nursing students from China to maintain its economic advantage and alleviate its projected nursing shortage. In contrast, China desperately needs its best and brightest citizens who have trained abroad as nurses to return to China in order to cope with its current challenges in the healthcare system and nursing education. Little is known about the underlying factors that motivate Chinese nursing students to study in Australia, these students' learning experiences at Australian universities, and whether or not these students will return to China after graduation.

This study undertook a narrative inquiry using the three-dimensional space narrative structure approach, with an epistemological perspective drawing on constructivist and interpretivist theory. Through interviews, the authentic voices of six participants' stories were collected to capture the entire emotional, social, intellectual and reflective processes of each student's motivations, learning experiences and future career plans. The research findings from this study are presented as both narrative and thematic representations. By exploring and representing each theme and narrative that emerged from the field texts, meaning was unpacked to provide insights to the 'reality' as seen by the study participants.

The findings revealed that the students' key motivation to study in Australia was related to the possibility of permanent residency post-qualification. The decision to move was dynamic, with the participants describing cultural and social push and pull factors. Encouragement and support from peers and family were strong contributors to the motivation to study nursing and eventually work and live in Australia. Parents played an especially vital role in this decision-making process. In addition, the participants expressed a strong desire to maximise Australia's opportunities and cultural experiences.

The participants' experience of studying in Australia was characterised by the need to learn a new language, feeling lost in a new education system vastly different to the one at home, the challenge of making new friends and socialising, and eventually

successfully completing their study and attaining their goals. The experience of being an international student was not described as easy. It requires taking risks, courage, determination, motivation and persistence to succeed. Through their lived experiences and reflections of their learning journey in Australia, the six participants reconstructed their personal identity and worldviews, which ultimately helped them locate their place in Australia.

The conclusion of the participants' journey highlighted that their learning experiences have particular implications for international education, healthcare development, future educational connections and investment globally. The insight gained from this study can support the development of successful human capital investment strategies for all parties involved.

In the field of international student education, nursing education is relatively understudied. This thesis presents insight into the reality of international student migration through the lens of individual actors in the process, the students themselves.

## Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. Incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii. Contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- iii. Contain any defamatory material.

I also grant permission for the library at Edith Cowan University to make duplicate copies of my thesis as required.

.....

Carol Chunfeng Wang

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

## Acknowledgments

I would have been lost in learning and accomplished nothing without the support of the following people to whom I wish to express my deepest gratitude.

To Associate Professor Kate ANDRE, Professor Tony FETHERSTON, Professor Lisa WHITEHEAD and Associate Professor Sara BAYES, for your sincere care and hearted support—I cannot express your importance to me. You have been the teachers in my life throughout my entire doctoral learning journey. I have learnt to live as a person and as my profession from you.

To all participants who continue to teach me in so many unexpected ways, for your trust, honesty and commitment to my study—thank you for allowing me to share your stories and for your contribution to teaching and learning through international education.

To my wonderful family and friends, especially Wayne, I have not forgotten your warm-hearted concern, your care, your companionship and your generous physical and mental support.

## **Dedication**

For my beloved family

一颗感恩的心在说：谢谢您！

I am blessed to have the love and support of my wonderful family.

This book is dedicated to my resilient parents, who always remind me to be the best that I can possibly be; to my loving boyfriend, Wayne, who tried his best with responsibilities and supported me with generous understanding and belief in my work; and to my beloved daughter, Ellen, who always supported and believed in me.

## List of publications included as part of the thesis

1. **Wang, C. C.**, Whitehead, L., & Bayes, S. (2016). Nursing education in China: meeting the global demand for quality health care  
*International Journal of Nursing Sciences* **3(1): 131-136**  
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2016.02.009>
2. **Wang, C. C.** (2016). Closing the gap: Comparing nursing registration systems between Australia and China  
*Chinese Nursing Research* **3(1): 1-6**  
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cnre.2016.03.001>
3. **Wang, C. C.**, Andre, K., & Greenwood, K. M. (2015). Chinese students studying at Australian universities with specific reference to nursing students: A narrative literature review  
*Nurse Education Today* **35(4): 195-208**  
doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2014.12.005  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0260691714004006>
4. **Wang, C. C.**, Whitehead, L., & Bayes, S. The real 'cost' of study in Australia and the ramifications for China, Australia, and the Chinese nursing students: what do these three players want? A narrative review  
*Globalisation, Societies and Education*  
doi: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14767724.2016.1195727>
5. **Wang, C. C.**, & Geale, S. K. (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research.  
*International Journal of Nursing Sciences* **2(2): 195-198**  
doi:10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352013215000496>
6. **Wang, C. C.** Conversation with presence: A narrative inquiry into the learning experience of Chinese students studying nursing at Australian universities

7. **Wang, C. C.**, Whitehead, L., & Bayes, S. Global mobility in nursing: why Chinese students leave to study nursing in Australia

*Nurse Education Today*

The manuscript is under review

8. **Wang, C. C.**, Whitehead, L., & Bayes, S. 'They are friendly but they don't want to be friends with you'. A narrative inquiry into Chinese nursing students' learning experience in Australia

*Globalisation, Societies and Education*

The manuscript is under review

9. **Wang, C. C.**, & Greenwood, K. M. (2015). Chinese nursing students' culture-related learning styles and behaviours: A discussion paper

*International Journal of Nursing Sciences* **2(3): 253-258**

doi:10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.07.009

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S235201321500071X>

## **Statement of contribution of others**

The purpose of this statement was to summarise and clearly identify the nature and extent of the intellectual input by the Candidate and any Co-Authors. The statement was signed by the Candidate and Supervisor.

I, Carol Chunfeng WANG, have contributed at least 80% to each component of the research reported in the nine papers/publications.

The signed written statement from each of the Co-Authors is provided in appendix G.

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## **PROLOGUE: The Start of My Doctoral Journey**

It has long been my passion to explore international students' learning experiences abroad. My academic journey, beginning as an international student and becoming a nursing educator at an Australian university, has changed my life and shaped me as a person and a professional. I have wished to be an inspiration for international students on their learning journey in Australia—to inspire them to realise their potential, assist them to benefit from their learning experience abroad, and help them become the best they can be. I have long wanted to be the witness of their learning journey in Australia because I was once one of them.

Our stories are created through linking events together over time that have implications for our past, present and future actions. By telling and retelling stories, we interact and respond with one another, and share and understand who we are, who we have been and who we are becoming.

My personal experience as an international student is relevant to the stories of my participants—the six Chinese nursing students. My background gives me entry to their world; thus, it is impossible for me to stay silent—I will be in the past, present and future of both my participants' and my own stories. Resonance is portrayed as the connecting principle between my stories and my participants' stories. My voice will be part of their stories while I am endeavouring to ensure their voices are heard unclouded by my own.

As international students, we have journeyed in, through and around our learning experience in Australia. This academic adolescence is part of our life journey, and part of my doctoral journey.

# **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

Australian universities have been admitting students from overseas locations since the 1950s. The number of students in Australia for whom English is a second language continues to grow, which is likely to be partly driven by the relationship created by the Australian government between permanent residency and Australian academic qualifications. For example, the independent overseas student visa allows students to gain permanent residency if they study in a professional area that the government has included on the 'skilled occupation' shortage list. However, there are numerous issues related to international students, including cultural differences, English language proficiency and the commoditisation of university study (C. C. Wang, Andre, & Greenwood, 2015). This chapter provides an overview of the key issues in the field of international students, and outlines the study methods and layout of this thesis.

## **Significance**

Australia seeks strategies to attract international nursing students from China in order to maintain its economic advantage and alleviate its projected nursing shortage (C. C. Wang, Whitehead, & Bayes, 2016). At the same time, China needs nurses who have trained abroad to return to China in order to cope with current challenges in its own healthcare system and nursing education (C. C. Wang et al., 2016; Welch & Hao, 2015). The existing literature has failed to explore the underlying factors that motivate Chinese nursing students to study in Australia, these students' learning experiences at Australian universities, and whether these students will choose to return to China or remain in Australia after graduation. This study explores these issues and relates the findings to national government goals and policies, and considers their implications for international education, healthcare provision, bilateral relations and investment in global education.

## **Purpose and aims of the research**

The overarching purpose of this study is to help contribute to knowledge on how to best support the development of human capital investment in the form of Australian-educated Chinese nurses, with the aim of benefiting all involved parties.

The aims of the study are to appreciate the motives underlying Chinese nursing students' motivation to study in Australia, and to understand their learning experience at Western Australian universities and future career plans, including whether or not they plan to return to China after graduation.

### Research questions

The primary research questions of this study are as follows:

- ✓ What are the participants' motivations to study in Australia?
- ✓ What are the participants' learning experiences at Australian universities?
- ✓ What are the participants' future career plans and, specifically, do they plan to return to China or remain in Australia after graduation?

### Research design

Working within a constructionist and interpretivist epistemological framework, this study employed a narrative inquiry approach based on Clandinin and Connelly's three-dimensional space narrative structure model (2000) (Table 1) in order to explore six Chinese nursing students' experiences, and the meaning they have constructed from these experiences.

Table 1: The Three-dimensional Space Narrative Structure

<i>Interaction</i>		<i>Continuity</i>			<i>Situation/Place</i>
<i>Personal</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Past</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Future</i>	
Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view	Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories relating to actions of an event	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines	Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with topological and spatial boundaries with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view

This approach enabled me to gain a deep and rich understanding of the reasons why the participants specifically came to Australia to study nursing, the participants' learning experiences at Australian universities, and why the participants would or would not return to their home country after graduation. By giving voice to their collective experience and decision-making processes, this research seeks to contribute to a more

accurate understanding of Chinese nursing students' international education-related expectations, choices and experiences.

### **Structure and organisation of the thesis**

Unlike a traditional thesis, this *thesis with publication* comprises five sequentially arranged chapters constructed around standalone research papers that have been published, have been accepted or are under review in international peer-reviewed journals. Six of the papers have been published, one has been accepted for publication, and two are under review. The details of the published, accepted and submitted papers are included in the list of publications previously mentioned (see p. viii). This section has provided an overview of the thesis and an outline of the research's value, purpose, questions and design. An overview of the remainder of this thesis is presented below.

**CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review.** This chapter comprises four standalone research papers that have been published in international peer-reviewed journals. Paper 1 (Nursing Education in China: Meeting the Global Demand for Quality Health Care) and Paper 2 (Closing the Gap: Comparing Nursing Registration Systems between Australia and China) outline the research context. Paper 3 (Chinese Students Studying at Australian Universities with Specific Reference to Nursing Students: A Narrative Literature Review) identifies gaps in the literature, while Paper 4 (The Real "Cost" of Study in Australia and the Ramifications for China, Australia and the Chinese Nursing Students: What Do these Three Players Want? A Narrative Review') outlines the significance of and justification for the research.

**CHAPTER THREE: Methodology.** This chapter presents two standalone research papers that have been published in international peer-reviewed journals, as well as additional information regarding the ethical considerations of the research. Paper 5 (The Power of Story: Narrative Inquiry as a Methodology in Nursing Research) and Paper 6 (Conversation with Presence: A Narrative Inquiry into the Learning Experience of Chinese Students Studying Nursing at Australian Universities) detail current understandings of narrative inquiry as a research methodology in the international education context, including its value, considerations and application to my study.

**CHAPTER FOUR: Research Findings.** This chapter includes two standalone research papers, additional themes and 11 stories to present the key findings of the research. The

two research papers (Papers 7 and 8) are currently under review in international peer-reviewed journals. Paper 7 (Global Mobility in Nursing: Why Chinese Students Leave to Study Nursing in Australia) presents findings related to the first research question: what are Chinese nursing students' motivations to study in Australia? Paper 8 ('They are Friendly but They Don't Want to be Friends with You': A Narrative Inquiry into Chinese Nursing Students' Learning Experience in Australia) presents findings related to the second research question: what are Chinese nursing students' learning experiences at Australian universities? Additional findings not included in these two papers are also presented in the chapter, which relate to the third research question: what are Chinese nursing students' future career plans and, specifically, do they plan to return to China or remain in Australia after graduation? Eleven narrative sketches detail the six participants' learning experiences of studying nursing at Australian universities.

**CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion and Conclusions.** This final chapter discusses the findings of the research in relation to the research questions, in the context of the relevant extant literature. This chapter also provides a conclusion to the thesis, including the study limitations and recommendations for future research. This chapter also includes Paper 9 (Chinese Nursing Students' Culture-related Learning Styles and Behaviours: A Discussion Paper'), which was published in an international peer-reviewed journal and discusses one aspect of the research findings—a culture-related learning approach.

**REFERENCES:** This thesis is presented in American Psychological Association (version 6) style. The reference list includes papers that have been published, have been accepted or are under review in international peer-reviewed journals. Citations for each individual paper are also included in Appendix H, in their originally published format.

### **Chapter summary**

This chapter has presented the case for a study to explore the motivations, experiences and future career planning of Chinese students studying and graduating in nursing in Australia, and explained the rationale for conducting this research using a constructionist and interpretivist epistemological framework. In addition, this chapter has provided an overview of the thesis and the format of each chapter's presentation and content.

Through four publications, this paper will now present a review of the literature relevant to my research questions in order to inform the state of knowledge and to undertake further development of the areas for research.



## **CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This chapter comprises four standalone research papers published in international peer-reviewed journals. Together, these four papers provide a review of the existing literature that is relevant to the topic of interest, identify research gaps, and outline the significance of and justification for the research presented in this thesis.

To establish the research context, this chapter begins with a review of the current state of nursing education in China (Paper 1: ‘Nursing Education in China: Meeting the Global Demand for Quality Health Care’). This is followed by a focus on the nursing registration systems in Australia and China to provide an understanding of how the nursing registration process differs between the two countries (Paper 2: ‘Closing the Gap: Comparing Nursing Registration Systems between Australia and China’). This chapter then discusses the current awareness in the literature around Chinese nursing students studying at Australian universities, and identifies the research gaps (Paper 3: ‘Chinese Students Studying at Australian Universities with Specific Reference to Nursing Students: A Narrative Literature Review’). Finally, to further justify the significance of the study, the fourth paper considers China’s and Australia’s competing interests in attracting international talent (Paper 4: ‘The Real “Cost” of Study in Australia and the Ramifications for China, Australia and the Chinese Nursing Students: What do these Three Players Want? A Narrative Review’).

## **Paper 1: Nursing education in China: meeting the global demand for quality healthcare**

The following article was published with *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2016, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 131-136.

### **Abstract**

With a predicted global nursing shortage, ensuring the provision of quality healthcare has become a pressing concern. In China, these concerns include the need to produce nurses trained to a level to support advancing nursing practice and a healthcare system that supports the growth and retention of nurses in China.

This paper argues that the standard of nursing education in China plays a crucial role in preparing graduates to meet the health demands of China's growing population and the role that China can play into the future in the global progression of nursing.

Collaboration between nursing authorities, educators, and legislators is required to support the progression of nursing worldwide.

**Keywords:** China; nursing education; globalisation; global healthcare; transcultural nursing

**Paper 1: Nursing education in China: Meeting the global demand  
for quality healthcare**

The fulltext of Paper 1 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

This paper was originally published as:

Wang, C. C., Whitehead, L., & Bayes, S. (2016). Nursing education in China: Meeting the global demand for quality health care. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences* 3(1): 131-136. doi: [10.1016/j.ijnss.2016.02.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2016.02.009)

## **Paper 2: Closing the gap: comparing nursing registration systems between Australia and China**

The following article was published with *Chinese Nursing Research*, 2016, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1-6.

### **Abstract**

**Aim:** to provide a better understanding of how the nursing registration process in China compares with that of Australia, to identify common features and potential barriers that may impact or facilitate the development of China's ever-demanding healthcare and nursing education.

**Background:** Chinese nursing graduates are increasingly being used to augment the shortage of nurses in other countries including Australia whereas China is desperately in need of strategies to cope with challenges it's currently encountered in healthcare and nursing education. There is little discussion concerning the differences in nursing registration systems between countries such as China and Australia. It is unknown how the differences and potential similarities of nursing registration systems in the two countries contribute to or impede nurses training in China or the potential for these Australia trained Chinese nursing returnees to cope with the challenges China is facing.

**Evaluation:** using Bereday's four steps comparison method, this paper will describe, explain, compare, and contrast the nursing registration systems of Australia and China.

**Key issues:** differences were found in qualification requirements for 1) initial registration, 2) levels of registration, 3) continuing professional development, 4) requirements of the registration renewal process, and 5) whether each country has a national nursing registration system. These factors may impact nursing education and healthcare development in China.

**Conclusion:** while differences to nursing registration process between Australia and China were identified, the insights gained can support the development of strategies that to support China's ever-demanding nursing education and healthcare development, thereby, alleviate its nursing shortage.

**Implications for nursing management:** the implications of globalisation for nursing education, research, and clinical practice, coupled with nursing shortages on a global

scale, have demanded increasing attention to the development of a high standard nursing education and one which supports a safe and effective nursing workforce. This paper argues that there is value in nursing authorities, educators, and legislators working together in a network of collaborative engagement in order to support nursing education thereby, alleviate nursing shortage on a global scale.

**Key words:** nursing registration; China; Australia; comparative

## **Paper 2: Closing the gap: Comparing nursing registration systems between Australia and China**

The fulltext of Paper 2 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

This paper was originally published as:

Wang, C. C. (2016). Closing the gap: Comparing nursing registration systems between Australia and China. *Chinese Nursing Research* 3(1): 1-6.  
doi:[10.1016/j.cnre.2016.03.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cnre.2016.03.001)

### **Paper 3: Chinese students studying at Australian universities with specific reference to nursing students: A narrative literature review**

The following article was published with *Nurse Education Today*, 2015, Vol. 35, No. 4, pp. 609-619.

#### **Abstract**

**Objective:** To report the current knowledge on the Chinese nursing students' learning at Australian universities. The intent is to provide educators and researchers with a background to the contexts, the methodologies, the emphases of various relevant studies, and to provide recommendations for future research.

**Background:** Attracting international students has become an important part of Australian universities' business and contributes to their cultural diversity. Teaching international students has received considerable attention in the educational research literature. Experiences of international students can vary greatly depending on their country of origin. This paper critically reviews current literature relating to issues for Chinese students and in particular, Chinese nursing students, the biggest single group of international nursing students at Australian universities.

**Design:** Narrative literature review.

**Method:** A comprehensive search of seven electronic databases for literature between 2003 and 2014 helped to identify qualitative and quantitative studies that addressed issues of Asian international students with English as a second language (ESL) (included nursing students) studying in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, the United States and China. Pertinent websites were also searched. The reference lists and bibliographies of retrieved articles were hand- searched to identify other relevant studies.

**Results:** Fifteen studies met the inclusion criteria for the review. The majority of existing literature claimed that there is a range of challenges confronting international students including Chinese nursing students, in assimilation into their host country. These include issues with English language proficiency, cultural barriers, social problems, different learning styles, academic demands, perceived racism, homesickness, lack of assertiveness and financial problems.

**Conclusion:** There is limited research about the Chinese students' study in Australia. In particular, the learning experience of Chinese nursing students has not been fully explored nor understood. This paper highlights the need for further research into the lived learning experience of Chinese nursing students studying at Australian universities.

**Key words:** international students, international education, study abroad, learning experience, Asian students, Chinese students, ESL students, nursing student.

**Paper 3: Chinese students studying at Australian universities with specific reference to nursing students: A narrative literature review**

The fulltext of Paper 3 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

This paper was originally published as:

**Wang, C. C.,** Andre, K., & Greenwood, K. M. (2015). Chinese students studying at Australian universities with specific reference to nursing students: A narrative literature review. *Nurse Education Today* **35(4): 195-208.**  
doi:[10.1016/j.nedt.2014.12.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2014.12.005)

**Paper 4: The real ‘cost’ of study in Australia and the ramifications for China, Australia, and the Chinese nursing students: what do these three players want? A narrative review**

The following article was published with *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 2016, Vol. x, No. x, pp. xxx-xxx.

**Abstract**

Australia attracts international nursing students from China to maintain its economic advantage and to alleviate the projected nursing shortage; conversely, China needs its best and brightest citizens who have trained abroad in nursing to return to cope with current challenges within its healthcare system and nursing education. Existing literature has failed to address the learning experience of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities, their underlying motivations to study in Australia, and whether or not they will return to China after graduation.

This paper explores the real ‘cost’ of study in Australia and what the ramifications are for China, Australia, and the Chinese nursing students. Specifically, it explores whether China can lure its foreign-trained nurses home to achieve its goals; whether China or Australia will win the nursing talent war; and do Chinese nursing students want to remain abroad or return home.

We argue that future research seeking answers to address these questions becomes critical for international migration, healthcare development, future connections and investment in education globally. The insight gained can support the development of successful human capital investment for all parties involved.

**Keywords:** returnees; human capital investment; Chinese nursing students; international education; China; Australia.

**Paper 4: The real 'cost' of study in Australia and the ramifications for China, Australia, and the Chinese nursing students: What do these three players want? A narrative review**

The fulltext of Paper 4 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

This paper was originally published as:

**Wang, C. C.,** Whitehead, L., & Bayes, S. The real 'cost' of study in Australia and the ramifications for China, Australia, and the Chinese nursing students: what do these three players want? A narrative review. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*. doi: [10.1080/14767724.2016.1195727](https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2016.1195727)

## Chapter summary

Paper 1 ('Nursing Education in China: Meeting the Global Demand for Quality Health Care') argues that the standard of nursing education in China plays a crucial role in preparing graduates to meet the health demands of China's growing population and the role that China can play into the future in the global progression of nursing.

Collaboration between nursing authorities, educators, and legislators is required to support the progression of nursing worldwide. While differences to nursing registration process between Australia and China were identified in Paper 2 ('Closing the Gap: Comparing Nursing Registration Systems between Australia and China'), the insights gained can support the development of strategies to support China's ever-demanding nursing education and healthcare development and work toward alleviating its nursing shortage and, on a global scale. (Paper 3: 'Chinese Students Studying at Australian Universities with Specific Reference to Nursing Students: A Narrative Literature Review') concludes that there is limited research about Chinese students' study in Australia. In particular, the learning experience of Chinese nursing students has not been fully explored nor understood. This paper highlights the need for further research into the lived learning experience of Chinese nursing students studying at Australian universities. (Paper 4: 'The Real "Cost" of Study in Australia and the Ramifications for China, Australia and the Chinese Nursing Students: What do these Three Players Want? A Narrative Review') explores whether China can attract its foreign-trained nurses home to achieve its goals; whether China or Australia will "win" the nursing talent war; and do Chinese nursing students want to remain abroad or return home. The paper argues that future research into these areas becomes critical for international migration, healthcare development, future connections and global investment in education. The insight gained can support the development of successful human capital investment for all parties involved.

The four publications included in this chapter provide a clear justification for a study investigating the motivations, experiences and decision making of Chinese students studying nursing in Australia. Together, these papers demonstrate the extent of competing interests between China and Australia in attracting international nursing students. As this chapter has shown, China desperately needs its overseas-trained nurses to return in order to cope with challenges currently encountered in healthcare and

nursing education. Meanwhile, Australia continually seeks strategies to attract international nursing students from China in order to maintain its economic advantage and alleviate projected nursing shortages. However, the existing work on this topic does not feature the learning experiences of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities, these students' underlying motivations to study in Australia, and the considerations informing these students' decisions to return to China or remain in Australia after graduation.

Now that the need for the study reported in this thesis has been established, the next chapter presents the methodology and methods by which the phenomenon of interest was investigated. The next chapter consists of two publications, which, together with additional information presented in traditional thesis format, describe and explain these processes in-depth.

# CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

## Introduction

The research presented in this thesis seeks to explain Chinese nursing students' international education choices, learning experiences at Western Australian universities, and future career planning decision making. This chapter presents two research articles that have been published in peer-reviewed journals, together with additional information on the ethical considerations of the research presented in a traditional thesis format to complete the methodology chapter.

The purpose of this methodology chapter is to inform the reader about how narrative inquiry as a research design—and, specifically, the three-dimensional space narrative structure approach with an epistemological perspective drawing on constructivist and interpretivist theory—was employed to inform and guide this research at all stages. It also explains how this study's philosophical position, methodology, methods and analysis work together to address the central research questions.

This chapter opens with an exploration of the essential elements and value of narrative inquiry in nursing research (Paper 5: 'The Power of Story: Narrative Inquiry as a Methodology in Nursing Research'). It then reflects on current understandings of the possibilities of narrative inquiry research giving voice to students, and moves on to explore the philosophical, theoretical and methodological considerations of narrative inquiry and its application to this research (Paper 6: 'Conversation with Presence: A Narrative Inquiry into the Learning Experience of Chinese Students Studying Nursing at Australian Universities'). This chapter then presents additional detailed information regarding Credibility, Transferability and Trustworthiness, and the ethical considerations of this research, which are not fully encompassed by the two papers.

## **Paper 5: The power of story: narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research**

The following article was published with *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 195-198.

### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to explore the essential elements and value of narrative inquiry in nursing research. We propose that understanding a previous experience allows the nurse researcher an ‘insider view’ and hence a deeper understanding of the issues that arise in the relationship between participant and researcher. We suggest that narrative inquiry in nursing research offers a particular way of caring about how knowledge is produced. Nursing science would benefit from the understanding that health and nursing practices are dynamic processes characterized by the continuous interaction of human thought and behaviour that continuously ‘pumps’ into personal, social and material environments. Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research is exceptionally useful to uncover nuance and detail of previous experiences.

**Keywords:** narrative inquiry; subjectivity; nursing research.

**Paper 5: The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology  
in nursing research**

The fulltext of Paper 5 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

This paper was originally published as:

**Wang, C. C., & Geale, S. K.** (2015). The power of story: Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences* 2(2): 195-198  
doi:[10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnss.2015.04.014)

**Paper 6: Conversation with presence: A narrative inquiry into the learning experience of Chinese students studying nursing at Australian universities**

The following article was accepted and currently is in press with *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2016, Vol. x, No. x, pp. xx-xx.

**Abstract**

To enhance teaching and learning in international education contexts and better cater to international students, it is important to understand these students' experiences and perspectives. There is no better way to achieve this level of understanding than to let students' voices be heard—to let them speak for and about themselves—because reality exists within these students' perceptions. As a research methodology, narrative inquiry offers a new dimension to international education research when used with sensitivity and reflexivity, through the power of stories.

The aim of this methodological article is to reflect on and extend current understandings of the possibilities of narrative inquiry research giving voice to students, and to expand the power of story by sharing the philosophical, theoretical and methodological considerations of narrative inquiry in an international education context. It is not my intention here to present the findings of my research—the 'Australian Education through Chinese Eyes' project—but to use this project as an example in the exploration of issues I raise.

**Keywords:** narrative inquiry, story, voice, international education, international students, Chinese students

**Paper 6: Conversation with presence: A narrative inquiry into the learning experience of Chinese students studying nursing at Australian universities**

**(The manuscript was accepted and is currently in-press)**

The fulltext of Paper 6 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

This paper was originally published as:

Wang, C. C. Conversation with presence: A narrative inquiry into the learning experience of Chinese students studying nursing at Australian universities. *International Journal of Nursing Sciences* (In-press)

this interpersonal dynamic requires that we be good containers, that we can listen empathically but nonjudgmentally, feeling from within the participant's emotional space rather than from the locus of our own idiosyncratic reactions.

### **Chapter summary**

In Paper 5 (The Power of Story: Narrative Inquiry as a Methodology in Nursing Research), we suggest that narrative inquiry in nursing research offers a particular way of caring about how knowledge is produced. Nursing science would benefit from the understanding that health and nursing practices are dynamic processes characterized by the continuous interaction of human thought and behaviour that continuously 'pumps' into personal, social and material environments. Narrative inquiry as a methodology in nursing research is exceptionally useful to uncover nuance and detail of previous experiences. Paper 6 (Conversation with Presence: A Narrative Inquiry into the Learning Experience of Chinese Students Studying Nursing at Australian Universities) reflects on current understandings of the possibilities of narrative inquiry research as giving voice to students, and expands the power of story by sharing the philosophical, theoretical and methodological considerations of narrative inquiry in an international education context. Additional information in this Chapter adds detailed discussion of ethical considerations of the research and the techniques of rigour used in the qualitative analysis.

In this chapter, I introduced readers to how I employed the narrative inquiry methodology, what narrative inquiry is, how narrative inquiry could address my research questions, and how I used narrative inquiry in my study. I also introduced the six Chinese nursing students involved in the research, who you will get to know better through their stories, starting in the next chapter. I encourage you to enjoy reading about these Chinese nursing students' learning experiences in Australia. I hope that their stories will take you to the time and place they were located when they spoke with me, and that they lead you to empathise with their learning journey. Moreover, I hope that you will remember your new experiences as if you were one of them, and be inspired to join the circle of supporting international education.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Findings

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore Chinese nursing students' underlying motivations to study nursing in Australia, learning experiences at Australian universities, and future career plans—specifically, whether they would return to China after graduation. In this chapter, the findings are presented in the format of two research papers, as well as additional themes (Part A) and narrative representations (Part B).

### Profile of the Participants

Before presenting the narratives, I introduce the six Chinese nursing students to help capture the entire story of their learning experience in Australia. The study participants included five females and one male, who were all in their twenties, from Mainland China, and studying an undergraduate nursing program at one of three Western Australian universities: Edith Cowan University, Curtin University or Murdoch University. These students were Chinese nationals holding full-time student visas. They had been in Australia for two years at the time of the interviews. None of the participants were in receipt of a scholarship—they were all wholly sponsored by their parents. All participants were the only child in their family as a result of the one-child policy in China. Pseudonyms are used to protect the participants' identities.

林 (male, 20 years old) was in his last year of nursing study at the time of the interviews. His hometown was in Eastern China, in a city well known for its beautiful natural scenery. Like the other participants, he was the only child in his family. His parents operated a business and were always busy, so he was raised by his grandparents, to whom he was very close. He successfully completed his nursing degree in a reputable nursing university in his hometown, where he was an outstanding student. He was also an outstanding student in his nursing course in Australia. From my observation, he was a very intelligent and capable person. He described his school experience as follows:

<p>My background knowledge [in nursing] really assisted my learning [here in Australia] because I have already learnt once in China, I am learn again in English, it comes really easy, especially for bioscience—we have already learnt bioscience in China, and, in here, the bioscience [taught] is not really as difficult as China, so to pass [exams] are really easy (interview, 15 March 2014).</p>
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哲 (female, 21 years old) was in her last year of nursing study at the time of her interviews. She came from Eastern China, from a city that is a prominent place in Chinese history and culture, and a huge commercial centre in East China. Her parents were both professionals working in one of the large hospitals in her hometown. She was the only child in her family, and had a strict upbringing—her father was particularly strict with her and sometimes beat her to discipline her. Despite her parents' strict discipline, she was very close to her them and frequently contacted them via telephone or online. She described the discipline she received from her father:

My family is quite strict; dad will beat me if I do things wrong, he beat me since I was very little ... I think discipline is important for kids. If they [parents] did not discipline me, I maybe never had chance to go to university, study in Australia. They won't beat me together, dad focus on my study, and mum focus on my daily life. When mum beating me, is more of symbolic beating, but when dad beating me, is really painful (interview, 22 March 2014).

苑 (female, 22 years old) was in her last year of nursing study at the time of her interviews. She came from Southeast China in a city ranked one of the China's most liveable cities. The city is well known for its import and export industry. She had already successfully completed her nursing degree in China, so this was her second time completing a degree in nursing, except this time in English and in Australia. She stated:

I am the only child in our family, my parents are ordinary people, and they work very hard to make [a] living. My cousin [is] in Australia, so I know a bit more information about study in Australia, my parents also feel a bit secure thinking I am not alone abroad ... My parents are very supportive—mum especially, she's a strong woman, and she wanted me to have a better opportunity, have a good education, and have a better life in future. Parents wanted the best for their children, going abroad is kind of trends, and many people wanted [to] study abroad, so my parents wanted me to have that opportunity as well (interview, 23 March 2014).

莉 (female, 19 years old) was in her second semester of her second year of nursing study at the time of her interviews. She came from Northeast China. Her hometown was a financial and shipping centre for Northeast China that was ranked one of the China's most liveable cities. Her father operated a small transport business, renting and hiring cars, while her mother was an accountant. Like the previous participant, 莉 had successfully completed her nursing degree in China, and this was her second time studying a degree in nursing, except this time it was in English and in Australia. She stated:

I am the only child in my family. I have never been away from home before, even when I did my nursing degree in China. In China, when children go to university, they usually live there, not home. But for me, even when I studied at university, the university is close by my home, so I can go back home any time when I want to. This is very first time away from home so far (interview, 22 March 2014).

春 (female, 20 years old) was in her last year of nursing study at the time of her interview. She came from the largest city in Northwest China after she completed her nursing degree there. Her hometown city was a key regional transportation hub that allowed areas further west to maintain railroad connections to the eastern half of the country. Her mother was an accountant in a large company and her father was an engineer in reputable private company. Like many other participants, she was the only child in her family and her parents wished to provide the best they could for her, and wished her to have a better life. Despite being so close to her parents, 春 only contacted them via telephone once per fortnight—she stated that she did not want to them to worry and ‘only want to bring them good news when I talk to them’. She stated:

I am very close to my parents, especially my mum. My parents are so good to me and they have sacrificed so much for me. There is nothing I ever want to do to disappoint them. I know they focus on my study, want me have a good life ... and I was always a good student in school because I didn't want to let them down (interview, 5 September 2015).

萍 (female, 27 years old) was born in a large city in Northeast China. Her hometown was ranked one of the China's most liveable cities. Her parents operated a clothing wholesale shop. They were very busy with their business and 萍, as a single child, spent lots of time with friends and was quite independent in looking after herself and studying. At the time of the interview, 萍 had just graduated from her Australian nursing course and was working at one of the largest private hospitals in Perth. She was planning to marry her boyfriend, who was also from China and was in his last year studying at university in Australia. She stated:

I think study nursing in Australia is the right decision because I am a stronger person now and, most importantly, I am a registered nurse working in hospital and I have got my permanent residency granted! (interview, 5 September 2015).

## **Part A: Presentation of Themes**

The analysis of data collected for this study generated 10 themes (Figure 9), each relating to one of the three research questions. While interrelated, the analysis informed the creation of the two research papers included in this chapter. The themes that were not included in the papers are presented separately in this chapter.

Four themes were related to the participants' motivations to study in Australia: pull factors, parents' and peers' influence, cultural and social push factors, and strong desire for opportunities. Four themes were related to the learning experiences of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: separation, unfamiliarity, passing exams and sources of support. Two themes were related to the participants' future career plans and whether they would return to China or remain in Australia after graduation: new identity and future career plan.

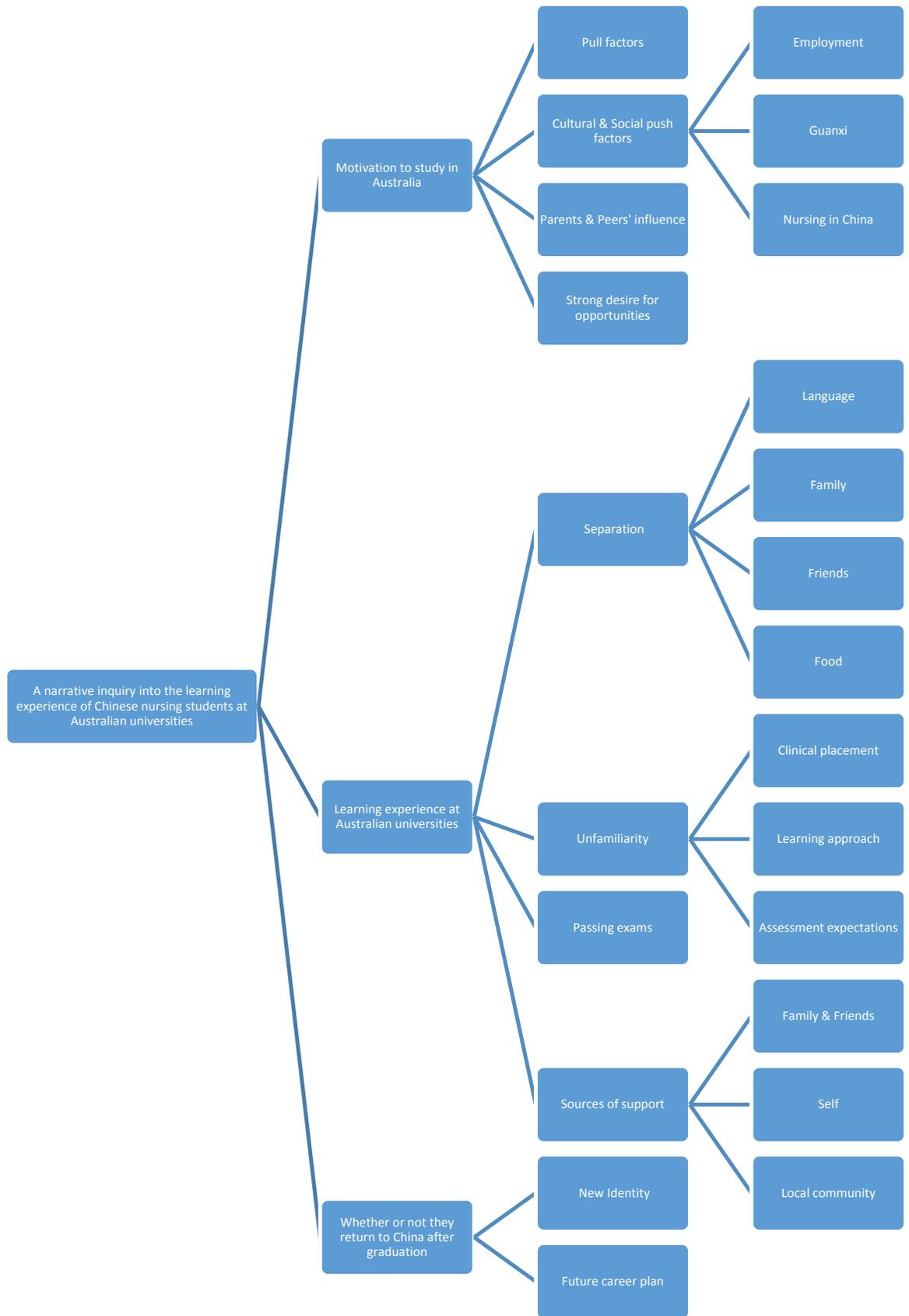


Figure 9: Themes and subthemes

## **Paper 7: Global mobility in nursing: Why Chinese students leave to study nursing in Australia**

The following article is under review with *Nurse Education Today*.

### **Abstract**

**Aim** This paper explores the factors shaping the decisions of six Chinese students to study nursing in Australia, and their preferences to eventually live and work in either China or Australia.

**Background** Currently, Chinese students comprise the single largest group of international nursing students in Australia, and the largest group of international students in Australian universities. Given the global competition for skilled nurses, understanding the reasons why Chinese students leave home to study nursing in Australia is important for institutions, policymakers and nursing administrators in both China and Australia. However, little research is available exploring global mobility among nursing students and nurses, and specifically why Chinese students study nursing in Australia.

**Design** This study employed a three-dimensional space narrative structure approach.

**Method** This study conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with six Chinese nursing students who were studying nursing at universities in Western Australia.

**Results** The findings revealed that the most important factor influencing Chinese students' decisions to study nursing in Australia was the possibility for permanent residency. The decision to move was dynamic, with cultural and social push factors (*guanxi*, poor employment opportunities and inferior nursing status) and pull factors of the host country ('blue sky', 'sweet air', 'friendly people' and perceived opportunities to work and live). Encouragement and support from peers and family were strong contributors to the motivation to study nursing and eventually work and live in Australia. In particular, parents played a vital role in this decision-making process. The participants also expressed a strong desire for opportunities and cultural experiences.

**Conclusion** The insights gained from this study are critical for international migration, healthcare development, and future connections and investment in education on a global scale.

Keywords: international mobility, study abroad, Chinese nursing student, 'push and pull' model, human capital, nursing shortage

**Paper 7: Global mobility in nursing: why Chinese students leave to  
study nursing in Australia**

**(The manuscript is currently under review)**

The fulltext of Paper 7 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

**Paper 8: ‘They are friendly but they don’t want to be friends with you’: A narrative inquiry into Chinese nursing students’ learning experience in Australia**

The following article is under review with *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.

**Abstract**

**Background and purpose:** There is increasing interest in the phenomenon of international student mobility and the growing global demand for skilled nurses. However, little is known about the learning experiences of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities. This study begins to address this gap.

**Design:** This study employed a narrative inquiry methodology.

**Method:** This study conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with six Chinese students studying undergraduate nursing in Western Australia.

**Findings:** Chinese nursing students in Australia experience fear and anxiety, driven by unfamiliarity with the hospital environment, education methods and assessment expectations. Clinical placement experiences in Australian health services were identified by participants as the most stressful learning experience. Forming friendships with domestic students was difficult and rare for these students—none made friends with local students or joined university groups. Despite the challenges they experienced, the participants were motivated and adapted to the new culture and learning methods, and all demonstrated academic success.

**Conclusions:** This study provides new knowledge about the learning experiences of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities. The findings not only relate to Chinese students who wish to study nursing in Australia, but also to the wider discussion around providing effective support for international students.

**Keywords:** international mobility, international student, Chinese student, nursing shortage, nursing mobility, narrative inquiry

**Paper 8: 'They are friendly but they don't want to be friends with you'. A  
narrative inquiry into Chinese nursing students'  
learning experience in Australia**

(The manuscript is currently under review)

The fulltext of Paper 8 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

## Summary

In this Chapter, I introduced the six participants to readers before reporting research findings. The findings are presented in the format of two research papers, additional themes and eleven stories.

The findings of Paper 7 (Global Mobility in Nursing: Why Chinese Students Leave to Study Nursing in Australia) revealed that the most important factor influencing Chinese students' decision to study nursing in Australia was the possibility for permanent residency. Encouragement and support from peers and family were strong contributors to the motivation to study nursing and eventually work and live in Australia. In particular, parents played a vital role in this decision-making process.

Paper 8 ('They are Friendly but They Don't Want to be Friends with You': A Narrative Inquiry into Chinese Nursing Students' Learning Experience in Australia) confirmed that Chinese nursing students in Australia experience fear and anxiety, driven by unfamiliarity with the hospital environment, education methods and assessment expectations. Clinical placement experiences in Australian health services were identified by participants as the most stressful learning experience. Forming friendships with domestic students was difficult and rare for these students.

In addition to the themes presented in the above two papers, the themes related to future career planning are 'a new identity' and 'future career plan'. The participants recognised that the experience of learning abroad had a significant effect on their lives. Their future career plans were to successfully completing their nursing degree and becoming registered nurses working and living in Australia.

The authentic voice of each story captures the emotional, social, intellectual and reflective processes of each students' lived experience in Australia. The next chapter, the discussion and conclusion chapter, draws together the findings and explores these in relation to the research questions; the wider literature; and clinical, educational and cultural contexts. This final chapter also discusses the study limitations and presents recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion and Conclusions

### Introduction

This chapter first summarises the key findings of the study, before exploring these in relation to the wider literature, and discussing the implications of this study. It also considers the study limitations and explores future research directions. The paper titled ‘Chinese Nursing Students’ Culture-related Learning Styles and Behaviours: A Discussion Paper’ includes elements relevant to this discussion chapter. It is included in this chapter as a standalone paper to avoid potential repetition.

This study found that long-term work prospects and lifestyle in Australia were the most important factors influencing these Chinese students’ decisions to study nursing in Australia. During their study abroad, these students experienced social disconnection, unfamiliarity with culture, and a strange new learning environment. Despite these challenges, the students were motivated and adaptive, and all demonstrated academic success.

This study provides new knowledge about the learning experiences of Chinese nursing students at Australian universities. The findings not only relate to Chinese students who wish to study nursing in Australia, but also to the wider discussion on effective support for international students.

### Discussion

The findings revealed that the most important factor that influenced the Chinese students’ decisions to study nursing in Australia was the possibility for permanent residency. The decision to move was dynamic, with cultural and social push factors (*guanxi*, poor employment opportunities and inferior nursing status in China) and pull factors of the host country (‘blue sky’, ‘sweet air’, ‘friendly people’ and perceived opportunities to work and live). Encouragement and support from peers and family were strong contributors to the motivation to study nursing and eventually work and live in Australia. Parents played a particularly vital role in this decision-making process.

These findings support some previous research findings, but also reveal differences in nursing students’ decision-making processes. The results are in contrast to the findings of Zwart (2013), but consistent with Lawson (2011), Bodycott (2009) and Yang (2007).

Zwart (2013) concluded that university ranking and the cost of living and tuition are the pull factors most heavily influencing Chinese students' country choice, while the least important pull factor was the possibility of immigration to the host country. This is contrary to the findings of this study. However, participants in Zwart's research (2013) majored in business, English language and engineering, not nursing; thus, their motives for international study may be different to the participants in the current study.

Forming friendships with domestic students was difficult and rare for the students in the current study—none made friends with local students or joined university groups. This finding aligns with the findings of both Volet and Ang (1998) and Robertson and team. (2000). This finding indicates that international students are not achieving Australian universities' graduate attributes—the characteristics, qualities, skills and capabilities that universities seek to develop in their students by the time they graduate (ECU, 2015)—one of which is the development of an international outlook in *all* students.

An earlier literature review (C. C. Wang et al., 2015) reported a range of challenges confronting international students in their assimilation to the host country. These include issues with English language proficiency, cultural barriers, social problems, different learning styles, academic demands, perceived racism, homesickness, lack of assertiveness and financial problems. In the current study, Chinese nursing students in Australia were found to experience these challenges, which were compounded by fear and anxiety driven by unfamiliarity with the Australian hospital environment. Clinical placement experiences in Australian health services were identified by the participants as their most stressful learning experiences. While there are no other studies that relate to Chinese nursing students studying in Australia to draw comparisons, these findings demonstrate that the need to engage with an unfamiliar healthcare system, in addition to a new education system, affected the experiences of the nursing students, and this will be unique to students engaging in study with clinical placements.

Another stressor that emerged in this study for the participants was the lack of a sense of community and belonging within learning environments. Instead, these students linked to local communities, such as church organisations and the St John ambulance service, to experience the local culture and 'practice English'. One of the findings suggests that forming friendships with domestic students was difficult for the Chinese nursing students, despite their awareness of the importance of this to ensure a successful learning experience. It appeared that the local students attributed a deficiency of culture and experience to Chinese international students, blaming them for the Australian

students' negative experiences in teamwork. This low level of interaction between Australian and Chinese nursing students is an issue that warrants concern, as it can cause feelings of isolation among international students and can be an obstacle to them achieving their educational goals. It could also be a hindrance to institutions achieving their internationalisation goals.

The achievement of internationalisation goals requires both Australian and Chinese students to have the motivation and skill to venture into different cultures. The time has passed when we can only expect international students to cross cultural borders—Australian students need to be equally equipped, motivated and rewarded for crossing cultural boundaries. Cultural diversity and internationalisation should be key issues for universities across Australia (Johnston, 2015) and on a global scale. It should be the aim of all Australian universities to have their graduates fully immersed in different cultures in order to prepare them, as global citizens, to pursue mutual respect and understanding—to be both in the world and for it (Forsey & Low, 2014).

The volume of Chinese students choosing to study abroad is huge and rising. This has provided a welcome source of income for many Western universities, but has also made them vulnerable if the student flow slows, and there are reasons why that may happen, including China's growing economy and tougher competition from better Chinese institutions. According to a report released this year by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 'at current rates of higher education growth and demographic transition, there will be a university seat for every child in China by 2030' (Matthews, 2016)—potentially sapping demand for foreign education. Further, there are now substantially more Chinese universities in China's own ranking—the Shanghai Jiao Tong University academic ranking of world universities—and citation analysis suggests that Chinese research has improved markedly in recent years. If China's economy continues to advance, Chinese students might realise that there are perfectly good universities in their hometown, and decide to save huge amounts of money by studying locally because of the opportunities in China itself.

I argue that Australian universities need to do more to make themselves attractive to international students. If universities disregard and undervalue the learning experience of Chinese students, this lack of awareness and appreciation hinders these students' learning. At the same time, it propagates the stereotypical perceptions of Chinese students as deficient learners, and subsequently intensifies the imbalanced power

relations between teaching and learning in an international education context. Chinese students bring with them the perspectives, values and academic practices that are deeply embedded in their culture. The change in the educational contexts cannot and should not undermine their prior learning in China. Understanding the cultural values and philosophy that underpin these students' learning is a desirable strategy to foster a more inclusive learning environment. Paper 9 ('Chinese Nursing Students' Culture-related Learning Styles and Behaviours: A Discussion Paper') included in this chapter provides insight to this aspect, and offers practical examples of how this may be achieved.

Many countries are experiencing a shortage of nurses and this demand is set to increase and potentially reach a crisis point in the next decade (Health Workforce Australia, 2012; Twigg et al., 2013; World Health Organization, 2013). Further, 40% of nurses are predicted to retire in the next 10 years in developed countries (World Health Organization, 2013). This is an important issue for the nursing profession, as both low nurse staffing numbers and skill mixes that include fewer registered nurses have been implicated in significant deficits in patient care (Cavendish, 2013; Francis, 2013). Given the global competition for skilled nurses (C. C. Wang, 2016; Welch & Hao, 2015), understanding how and why students make the decision to move overseas to train as nurses is relevant to both recruitment and retention strategies.

It is estimated that, in Australia, there will be a shortage of approximately 109,000 nurses by 2025 (Health Workforce Australia, 2012; Twigg et al., 2013). Many countries are instituting strategies to address this problem, including improved work conditions and increasing nursing student numbers. In line with this direction, Australian universities are enrolling more nursing students from overseas for this and other reasons, such as gaining economic advantages and cultural enrichment. Consequently, nursing education and international nursing students' successful learning are of interest and significance to Australian universities (Briguglio & Smith, 2012; Jeong et al., 2011; C. C. Wang et al., 2015; C. C. Wang et al., 2016).

China is also experiencing nursing workforce issues and has identified particular challenges related to its nursing shortage (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, 2014). For example, in 2010, China's population was 1.3 billion, with only 2.18 million nurses to attend to patient care (Gao et al., 2012)—a ratio of 0.16:100, as compared to 1.07:100 in Australia. China has suffered a loss of economic investment due to its continuing loss of nurses (Zweig & Wang, 2013). Reduced national economic strength and capacity to invest in public services may further affect the weak identity of the nursing profession

and subsequently have a negative effect on nursing recruitment and retention (C. Liu et al., 2012; C. C. Wang et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2014; Zou et al., 2012). Despite the need for nurses at home, Chinese citizens comprise the single largest group of international nursing students in Australia (Australian Education International, 2015).

In response to its own domestic nursing shortage, the Chinese government has embarked on a quest to attract its nurses to return from overseas, which will certainly contribute to China's healthcare development and strengthen its nursing education system (C. C. Wang, 2016; C. C. Wang et al., 2016). It is China's expectation that its study-abroad students will bolster their international awareness, increase their cultural competency and contribute to national competitiveness as a consequence of their overseas experiences. However, China faces a challenge—the findings of this study reveal that the most important factor influencing Chinese students' decision to study nursing in Australia is the possibility of a permanent Australian residency visa, and that parental encouragement played a vital role in this decision-making process.

As an important global export economy and major attraction for international investment, China's continued economic growth and technological advancement has resulted in increased demand for international talent. When examining the trend in international flows of Chinese human capital, China's economic success and ensuing social change has allowed China to effectively reframe itself as a provider and receiver. Accordingly, China is now perceived as a land of opportunity, and many overseas Chinese citizens have returned to their country of origin; however, this is yet to eventuate among overseas-trained nurses. As a result of studying abroad and having intercultural encounters, Australian-trained Chinese nurses' return to China could potentially make a great difference in their home country. They could play an increasingly significant role in China's globalisation and be part of the new and changing forces in China in the near future.

Given the global competition for skilled nurses (C. C. Wang, 2016; Welch & Hao, 2015), the policy implication of the research is important for key decision makers in Australia, China and beyond, which could include university administrators, educational ministries, healthcare administrators, and even private enterprises in the field of international education, healthcare development, future connections and investment in education globally. The insight gained can support the development of successful human capital investment for all parties involved.

## **Recommendations**

A pre-departure orientation and planning program should prepare nursing students for the realities of study abroad (such as food, culture, learning styles, assessment methods and the hospital environment), so that they may be better prepared for a high-quality international learning experience. For example, a culturally contextualised clinical simulation CD could provide insight for nursing students on how Australian hospitals function.

By applying and incorporating a list of ‘graduate attributes’ into their curricula, Australian universities have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring that their graduates have the generic skills and attitudes required in the workplace. Thus, Australian universities should help their students (including international students) become ethical and engaged contributors to ensure more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous communities. These skills and attitudes aim to give students a competitive edge as graduates in the workplace (ECU, 2015). However, there is no research in the area of whether international students do actually acquire these attributes by the time they graduate.

Since some students indicated that they did not know where to find help on campus, better awareness of resources is needed and students should be encouraged to use these campus resources. These resources could perhaps be offered at the school or faculty level, instead of the university level, in order to promote visibility and accessibility.

Mentors could be created by pairing new students with other international students who have already been in Australia for some time. This could help new students cope with the challenges they face and adapt to the new system. A smaller group size could ensure proper mentoring and support are attained. For example, an appropriate mentor could speak Mandarin; understand the students’ home country’s culture; support the students to learn the nursing language, show sympathy and negotiation, and learn communication skills with patients and a multidisciplinary team in a safe simulation environment; provide the opportunity to visit hospitals; help students write assignments and learn appropriate referencing skills; and so forth.

Providing opportunities for Chinese nursing students to interact personally with domestic students in the learning environment and in local communities is central to

ensuring their meaningful community engagement. The findings of this study indicate that the cost of engaging in activities at university is discouraging. Thus, free or university-sponsored activities could better support these students. Providing local students with orientation on the benefits of making friends with international students may also ease some of the social adjustment and relationship challenges that affect Chinese nursing students' positive learning experiences. Friendly interaction between Chinese nursing students and local students could be beneficial to both parties—each has much to learn from the diverse views of the other. In particular, healthcare provision increasingly values culturally competent care.

The students in this study did not describe struggling in learning as much as some literature has indicated that international students can do. They were not struggling to pass exams, but were stressed about exams. Strategies to reduce 'fear of exams' could support them to take time to 'smell the roses' and enjoy their learning experience, thereby providing them with positive learning experiences in Australia.

The findings from this study suggest that there is an urgent need to provide training and professional development to support faculty educators to initiate a teaching space that is inclusive for all students, and to encourage teamwork between Chinese and Australian students. It is also imperative to raise awareness of unconscious bias and cultural assumptions in the higher education learning space.

Cultural adjustment is a complex process. Cultural learning that affects Chinese nursing students' experiences in Australia should not only occur at an individual level (such as with students' language fluency and coping ability), but at local, institutional, regional and national levels, which is arguably of even greater importance. The quality of emotional, material and social support provided by institutions, members of the local region and the nation significantly affects Chinese students' integration.

In order to achieve goals around enhancing internationalisation, this study recommends the development of frameworks and plans that involve a broad range of people.

Australian universities must be aware that international students are not just coming to visit—some are planning to stay for the long term. In the case of the study participants, these students are Australia's future nurses and will serve Australian communities.

Thus, opportunities for acculturation—such as practical courses and opportunities for work experience—are important. Further, it is important for Australia and its universities to consider ways to enhance their strategies to attract more international

nursing students from China, given that these students' home country urgently needs its citizens who have gained advanced knowledge through study abroad to return home and contribute. We need to realise the importance of balance between one country (Australia) increasing recruitment and the other (China) wishing to retain and attract its citizens to return.

The exchange of Chinese nurses between China and Australia can be a positive trend—returnees could play a large role in China's healthcare reform and nursing education, and may serve as international diplomats to liaise between their host and home countries as agents for social change and cultural transformation. They could play a bridging role in linking China to the rest of the world. However, in order to enhance a healthy exchange and flow, China could consider paying greater attention to the factors that could attract overseas nurses to return. It is likely that pull factors would include the opportunity for career development and pay commensurate with experience, in addition to the ability to reconnect with family, culture and Chinese society.

### **Strength and limitations**

Given the lack of research on Chinese nursing students' learning experiences in Australian universities, the findings from this study have started to bridge the gap in existing knowledge on this phenomenon of interest. I have used narrative inquiry to understand other people and their interactions as an alternative way of knowing that involves curiosity, interest, caring and passion.

The term *trustworthiness* in qualitative research is often used interchangeably with *authenticity*, *goodness*, *plausibility* and *credibility* (Carlson, 2010). Trust is demonstrated in this study by the data being appropriately, mindfully and ethically collected, analysed and reported.

The study sample originated from three universities in Western Australia, which presented its own unique set of limitations because close proximity of sampling may cause research bias. However, in qualitative research, researcher bias is not essentially viewed as problematic, providing the researcher is transparent about that influence (Carlson, 2010). In addition, the number of participants should not be a limitation in qualitative research if saturation is achieved. Despite the small convenience sample of six Chinese students studying undergraduate nursing programs at three universities in Western Australia, the depth of the data allowed for meaningful exploration and response to the research questions and research aims.

## **Future research directions**

Future research about the experiences of Australian local students compared to Chinese students could provide a better understanding of the challenges faced by this specific group of Chinese nursing students—the largest group of international students in Australia. In addition, a study that includes a more diverse sample of participants and nursing faculties is needed. Further, future research needs to investigate whether international students and nursing students as a whole acquire the specified graduate attributes by the time they graduate.

## **Conclusion**

This ‘thesis with publication’ represents a novel attempt to study Chinese student migration to Australia in the area of nursing. It aims to study their motivations for overseas studies, learning experiences in Western Australian universities, future career trajectory and decision to remain in Australia or return to China. The scientific focus of the thesis is highly topical in the Australia-China context, and innovative in terms of its methodological approach and practical and policy implications.

The study has implications for international education, healthcare provision, bilateral relations and investment in global education. By means of narrative inquiry, this study explored six Chinese nursing students’ motivations to study nursing in Australia, learning experiences at Western Australian universities, and whether they would return to China after graduation. Through the participants’ authentic voices, this study captured the entire emotional, social, intellectual and reflective processes of their learning experience at Australian universities, and unpacked meaning to provide insight to the ‘reality’ seen by the participants. The findings from this study were portrayed in both narrative and thematic representations.

The study findings not only provide valuable insight for Chinese students who wish to study nursing in Australia, but also offer insight to support the implementation of effective strategies to assist international students. The insights gained can also support the development of successful human capital investment for all parties involved.

## **Paper 9: Chinese nursing students' culture-related learning styles and behaviours: A discussion paper**

The following article was published with *International Journal of Nursing Sciences*, 2015, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 253-258.

### **Abstract**

Globalisation requires that nursing education focuses on culturally competent care. International students studying in Australia present a valuable resource for cultural learning, yet internationalisation presents opportunities and challenges for both lecturers and students. This paper explores Chinese nursing students, the single largest group of international students in Australia, their communication behaviour, patterns and learning styles at Australian universities from cultural and psychosocial perspectives. Our aim is to provide insight for educators in Western countries to better understand this particular ethnic group and help Chinese nursing students overcome learning difficulties and develop their potential learning capabilities. We further recommend coping strategies to help international Chinese nursing students' learning.

**Keywords:** Chinese nursing students; international students; international education.

**Paper 9: Chinese nursing students' culture-related learning styles  
and behaviours: A discussion paper**

The fulltext of Paper 9 is unavailable in this version of the thesis.

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## **EPILOGUE: My Narrative Inquiry Journey**

My doctoral journey with this narrative inquiry of Chinese nursing students' learning experiences in Australia was intense, involving and challenging, and required endurance. I witnessed my participants' learning journey in Australia, attended to their concerns, assisted in their troubles, encouraged them in times of difficulty, rejoiced in their achievements, and expressed compassion for their cross-cultural learning experiences. These six Chinese nursing students have become a part of my life, and I have never regretted this journey.

Qualitative research is observational and narrative in nature. It employs interpretive and naturalistic approaches to the nature or qualities of observable group behaviours in order to learn what it means to be a member of that group. It lends itself to thick narrative description, and can be intensive, given the complexity of group interactions. The purpose is to aim for objectivity, while taking into account the views of the participants. My job as a researcher, rather than to describe a stable entity, was to give continually updated accounts of observations on multiple levels of group interactions that simultaneously occurred on both a temporal and continuous basis.

Narrative inquiry was selected as the preferred research methodology for this study, rather than ethnography, which is a long-term investigation of a group or culture that is based on immersion and, optimally, participation in that group to achieve a theoretically comprehensive understanding of a group or culture. Narrative inquiry, which is a form of naturalistic inquiry, placed me in close contact with my participants for a 'snapshot' period, during which they were undergoing a life transition. The awareness, meaning and insight generated from in-depth inquiry enhanced the information I collected from the participants and my observational and analytical capabilities as a researcher (Patton, 2002). In addition, I was more sensitive to the participants' emotional and other issues because I shared the common experience of the participants. In addition, my understanding of the contexts of this topic was cultivated by my experiences of interacting with the participants.

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space made me more circumspect and led me to ponder what I experienced as I travelled with the participants. It was also a journey in which I started to make sense of my story, my participants' stories, and our shared stories. In the midst of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, inquiries occur alongside the personal, social, temporal and place dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000). Each pondering begins to be part of the compressing process, much like the layers of the onion, where each layer is considered independent of the other, only to form a complex and interconnected fabric of understanding and exploring experience. There is always another layer underneath if one digs deeper. Narrative inquiry helped me reveal these complex layers of stories that link our past, present and future with cultural and social contexts (Riet, Jitsacorn, Junlapeeya, Dedkhard, & Thursby, 2014). As the stories of my participants presented in this thesis, I wonder which of the stories is more figuring in our life, and I begin to recognise that these stories have become the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual encounters we have experienced, for the personal and cultural acquisition in our life. A life filled with identity, history and cultural narratives—a life filled with both possibilities and impediments. My passion for this narrative inquiry grew from my desire to know who I am and how I became this person today. I knew that my international learning experience had a great effect on who I am and, without the experience, I would not be able to imagine myself as I am today.

When I started this narrative inquiry, I had intentions to gain insight and understanding of the learning experience of Chinese nursing students studying in Australia. Through this process, intention became experience. My participants and I reinvented our past experiences by reliving and retelling our stories, and we also envisioned our possible future. Like Bruner (2003), who suggested that ‘narrative seems to open possible worlds’ (p. 22), I hope my research opens possibilities for readers to engage in open-ended thinking of similar depth in an international education context. I also hope to see our international students being enabled to move from an uncomfortable place of being to a comfortable place of becoming during their learning in Australia.

In line with this, I have established an **OzAsia Cultural Club**, which was incorporated in August 2016 (Registered No: A1020839T). This club aims to provide a platform for Eastern and Western culture exchange, support international students in particular, and people who embrace both cultures and with a willingness for self-improvement. As the president of the club, I am very passionate about supporting international students, especially because I was one of them. There are currently 135 members in my ‘WeChat’ group. Members enjoy free English classes, etiquette training, Tai Chi sword practice, yoga, golf, photography, and cuisine appreciation.

In the WeChat group, we cover everyday topics. For example:

- Monday: speaking English
- Tuesday: humour
- Wednesday: speaking English
- Thursday: fashion
- Friday: photography
- Saturday: all kinds of topics
- Sunday: chicken soup for the soul.

On the weekend (Saturday), we meet up and I teach English, Tai Chi sword, yoga and Western etiquette. We also do photography and cuisine appreciation. My contribution is entirely voluntary, with no fees involved (no joining or training fees).

My WeChat ID is: Carolwcf888.

I believe groups like this are a good way forward and could be expanded in other cities across Australia.



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# APPENDICES



## Appendix A: Consent Form for Participants

### **Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: a narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning experience, and future career planning**

Name: .....

I have read and understood this informed consent form, relating to the study on Chinese nursing students studying in Australia.

I understand and accept the nature of the study that has been explained to me in the previous meeting. I have been given information about the study.

I understand that by giving consent I am agreeing to take part in the study and am free to withdraw participation at any time. I am agreeing to have the interviews (individual and group interviews) Audio - recorded. I am also aware of and agree to participate in one follow up interview upon completion of my nursing study in Australian university. I also agree that all data materials (photographs, journals/ diaries and letters) will only be shared with people involved in working with Carol Wang on the research project, then only with all names, places, and identifying information removed or disguised.

I understand that if I have any questions I can contact Carol Wang on: 0448 316 588 or [chunfenw@our.ecu.edu.au](mailto:chunfenw@our.ecu.edu.au) . Alternatively, I could also contact Carol's supervisors at:

Associate Professor Kate Andre (Nursing): [k.andre@ecu.edu.au](mailto:k.andre@ecu.edu.au)

Associate Professor Tony Featherstone (Education): [t.featherstone@ecu.edu.au](mailto:t.featherstone@ecu.edu.au)

I understand that the ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the ECU Ethics Committee. If I have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of my participation in this research, I may contact the ECU Research Ethics Officer phone 6304 2170. Any complaint I make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and I will be informed of the outcome.

Signed .....Participant                      Date .....

Signed .....Researcher                      Date .....

## Appendix B: Participant's Information Sheet

### **Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: a narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning experience, and future career planning**

#### What is this study for?

The purpose of the study is to develop a deeper, richer understanding of the lived learning experience of Chinese international students studying in an undergraduate-nursing program in Western Australia. The study aims to gain insights into how various factors related to teaching and learning affect their experience. Ultimately, I aim to capture the Chinese international nursing students' voice as heard in their stories of their learning experience.

By investigating nursing students from Mainland China, this research will offer insight into the resources, processes, strategies and interventions of international education that potentially offers support and opportunities to academic staff in their development of their teaching for this group. Ultimately it will enhance international students' learning experience in Australia.

The data we collect from the recording of your stories on lived learning experience in Australia will generate meaning offering a deeper understanding of how various factors of teaching and learning affect your experience.

This research project is being undertaken as part of the requirements of my PhD at Edith Cowan University.

#### Who may participate in this study?

International students from mainland China who are studying in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of an undergraduate nursing program in WA Universities: ECU, Curtin or Notre Dame. These students are Chinese nationals, holding a student visa, and have already undertaken their first 2 years nursing study in the same university.

#### What do I have to do?

When you have read and understood this information sheet and had a chance to ask any questions, I will organise a meeting with you to explain more details about your participation and answer your questions. If you are willing to participate in this study, I will provide you a consent form for your participation. You are free to withdraw participation at any time.

You will be interviewed two or three times which will be Audio recorded. The interview will either be individual or group interviews/ focus groups. The interview will take 40-60 minutes each time. I will also advise you of the required travelling time if applicable. I will be flexible to anticipate the inconvenience caused to you i.e. travel, transport, time, location. You may choose to conclude the interview at any stage if you feel discomfort or emotional when sharing your stories during the interview.

I will visit you after our interviews and provide you with materials interpreted from our interviews, so that you can illustrate and clarify your story. I will then take the materials away with me for detailed analysis.

As it may help to fully describe your story during the interview, you may choose to bring along your written notes (or diaries/ journals) and/ or photographs when sharing your stories. I will take notes and, with your permission, would also like to take copies of any material that contributes to your story.

I would also like to interview you after the completion of your nursing course. This interview will take 40-60 minutes and can be arranged so that it is also convenient to you.

What will happen to the information you collect?

All the information you give me will remain confidential. All data materials will only be shared with people involved in working with me on the research project, then only with all names, places, and identifying information removed or disguised. The information obtained will be stored securely during and following the completion of the study.

The findings of this study will be published and presented at conferences but again you will not be identified.

The ECU Ethics Committee has approved this study.

Who should I contact?

If you have any questions or would like any further information concerning this study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0448 316 588, or [chunfenw@our.ecu.edu.au](mailto:chunfenw@our.ecu.edu.au)

Alternatively, you could also contact my supervisors at:

Associate Professor Kate Andre (Nursing): [k.andre@ecu.edu.au](mailto:k.andre@ecu.edu.au)

Associate Professor Tony Featherstone (Education): [t.featherstone@ecu.edu.au](mailto:t.featherstone@ecu.edu.au)

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
270 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 63042170  
Email: [research.ethics@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research.ethics@ecu.edu.au)

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Carol Wang (PhD Candidate)

Edith Cowan University

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## Appendix C: Invitation

### **Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: a narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning experience, and future career planning**

Dear .....

My name is Carol Wang; I am a PhD student at ECU. I was also an international student originally from China. My passion has always been as an advocate for international students. My research area is the lived learning experience of Chinese international nursing students.

The purpose of the study is to develop a deeper, richer understanding of the lived learning experience of Chinese international students studying in an undergraduate-nursing program in Western Australia. The study aims to gain insights into how various factors related to teaching and learning affect their experience. Ultimately this research will enhance international students' learning experience in Australia.

I am conducting this study as part of a research degree at Edith Cowan University.

You are invited to participate in this study if you are an international student from mainland China who is studying in your 3rd year of an undergraduate nursing program in WA Universities: ECU, Curtin or Notre Dame. You have to be a Chinese national, holding a student visa, and having already undertaken your first 2 years nursing study in the same university.

You are invited to participate in this study, your contribution is very valuable, as your voice as heard, will potentially benefit future international students by enhance their learning experience in Australia. However, your participation (or withdrawal) will have no bearing on your status as a student.

If you are interested in sharing your stories and would like to participate in this research, please contact me directly on 0448 316 588, or [chunfenw@our.ecu.edu.au](mailto:chunfenw@our.ecu.edu.au)

Thank you very much

Carol Wang (PhD Candidate)

Edith Cowan University

## Appendix D: Interview Probes

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### Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: a narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning experience, and future career planning

#### FAMILY OF ORIGIN

To start with, can you tell me a little about yourself?

How old are you?

Could you tell me about your hometown in China?

What was going on in your family, your community, and the world at the time prior to your coming to Australia?

What are you trying to get at here?

What feelings come up when you recall your parents and your hometown?

What is your best memory of your own hometown?

What characteristics do you remember most about your study in China?

What did you like most about your study? What did you like least?

How did you feel about coming to Australia?

Why do you choose to study in Australia?

Who were the important people involved in this decision making process?

In what ways did these individuals influence your decision to come here to study?

What were you told about the educational system in Australia and higher education?

How do you feel now about your decision?

#### CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

What is the cultural background of your hometown?

Were there a noticeable cultural flavour/characteristic to the hometown you grew up in?

What was growing up in your hometown like?

What are some early memories of cultural influences?

What cultural celebrations, traditions, or rituals were important in your life?

Was your family different from other families in your neighbourhood?

What cultural values were passed on to you, and by whom?

What beliefs or ideals do you think your parents tried to teach you? What was the feeling of this cultural setting for you? What did that mean to you? How did that make you feel?

What was your first experience with away from them?

What was that like for you?

Was religion important in your family?

How would describe the religious atmosphere in your home?

Did you attend religious services as a child, as a youth? Are you attending any religious services in Australia?

What was that like for you? Is a religion important to you now?

What cultural influences are still important to you today?

How much of a factor in your life do you feel your cultural background has been?

What is the most important thing given to you by your family?

What is the most important thing you have given to your family?

What is different or unique about you?

What are the cultural differences here in Australia compared to your own cultural? Can you give me an example how you experienced the differences?

#### SOCIAL FACTORS

What was the process you went through to become an international student in Australia?

What were your first impressions of Australia?

What were your first impressions of university life in Australia?

What were the major positive factors in your experience as a student in Australia?

What were the major negative factors in your experience as a student in Australia?

What did you need as a student that you feel you did not get from friends, family or the university while in Australia?

Did you feel supported as an international student at your university?

What kinds of support did you need?

What do you remember most about living here without family and friends?

What did that mean to you?

How did that make you feel?

How did you manage to get through that?

How easy was it to make local friends?

Did it affect your learning?

What was your overall experience with your university peers?

Did you make friends easily?

What friendships were most important to you?

Did you get along with your local peers?

What kinds of activities did you do with them?

What were some of your struggles as an international student?

What was the saddest time for you?

What would you say was the most significant event in your life up to now?

What pressures did you feel as an international student, and where did they come from?

What clubs, groups, or organizations did you join? Did you enjoy being alone, or was that too boring? What did you do for fun or entertainment?

Was social aspect important in your life?

What was the most trouble you were in as an international student?

What did that mean to you?

How did that make you feel?

How did you manage to get through that?

What was the most significant event during your time here in Australia?

What was being an international student like? The best part? The worst part?

What was your first experience of leaving home like? What special people have you known in your life here in Australia?

Who shaped and influenced your life here the most?

Who are the heroes, guides and helpers in your study here in Australia?

Who most helped you develop your current understanding of yourself?

What social pressures have you experienced as an international student?

What was this experience like?

How do you use your leisure time?

Is a sense of community important to you? Why? How?

Have you experienced racism since you coming to Australia?

Could you tell me about your financial management?

How stressful is the money situation?

Do you have a part time job?

Could you tell me about your accommodation?

## **EDUCATION**

How would you describe your learning experience here in Australia?

What are some of the best and worst things about them?

What did that mean to you?

How did that make you feel?

How did you manage to get through that?

Do you remember anything about your first Month of arriving Australia?

Could you tell me about your English level?

How good was your English before you came to Australia?

Do you think your English has improved? How did that happen?

What strategies do you think could improve your English?

How does your English language proficiency affect your learning?

What is your first memory of attending university here in Australia?

Did you enjoy school in the beginning?

What do you remember most about the first week in the university?

Did you have a favourite lecturer in your university? Why that? How did they influence you?

What are your best memories of studying?

Can you describe your favourite learning experience in the nursing program?

Did you approach to learning change over the semester?

What advantages and disadvantages do you think there are in this type of learning environments?

How do you think your educational experiences in Australia compares with study in your own country?

Where there hard times?

Those things that you recall were hard to get through. How did you survive them?

What helped you get through those years?

Were there people who helped you?

What factors assist your learning?

What factors hinder your learning?

What do you think about the assessment here?

What do you think about plagiarism?

How do you learn best?

How would you like to learn or be taught?

What resources, both personal and community assist you in your success?

What challenges do you face in your learning?

What accomplishments in your study are you most proud of?

What do you remember most about your first year in university?

What did you learn about yourself during these years in Australia?

What has been your most important lesson in life, outside of the classroom?

What is your view of the role of education in a person's life?

### **MOTIVATIONS, EXPECTATIONS, VALUES, DREAMS AND AMBITIONS**

How did you make the decision to study Nursing in Australia?

What advantages do you think learning abroad offer?

What do you think you benefit from studying in Australia?

What are your dreams or ambitions?

Where did they come from?

What do you want to be when you finish your study?

What are your hopes and dreams in life?

How will you achieve this?

How did you end up in the type of study you do?

What is important to you in your future career, why?

What would you like to achieve so that your life will seem fulfilled?

### **INNER LIFE AND SELF AWARENESS**

How would you describe your personality and emotional qualities?

How would you describe yourself as an international student?

Do you think you are happy studying in Australia?

What was your happiest memory in Australia?

Did you feel supported as an international student? How?

What was it like when you complete your study?

What changes have you undergone since you came to Australia?

Do you feel you have inner strength?

Where does that come from?

What values would you not want to compromise?

What do you see as the purpose of life?

Did you ever have any doubts about achieving your goal in life?

What has been the most important learning experience in your life?

How have you overcome or learned from your difficulties? How do you handle disappointment?

Are you satisfied with the life choices you have made?

Is there anything you would change?

What has been the happiest time in your life here in Australia?

What was the worst time?

What is your biggest worry now?

In what ways are you changing now?

What has been the greatest challenge of your life so far?

What matters the most to you now?

What was the most important thing you have had to learn by yourself?

How would you describe yourself?

## GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing communication skills in its graduate students. They define **communication** as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in a range of contexts using communication, literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. How would you describe the teaching of communication skills at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience? What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing **cross- cultural and international outlook** in its graduate students. They define this as a capacity for international and global perspectives based on an understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity and individual human rights. For example, recognise

the importance of cultural diversity, engaging productively and harmoniously with diverse cultures. How would you describe the teaching of cross- cultural and international outlook at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience? What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing team work skills in its graduate students. They define **team work** as a capacity to contribute in a positive and collaborative manner in order to achieve common goals. This includes collaboration, negotiation and conflict resolution. How would you describe the teaching of team work skills at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience? What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing critical, creative and reflective thinking skills in its graduate students. They define **think critically, creatively and reflectively** as the ability to collect, analyse and evaluate information and ideas and solve problems by thinking clearly, critically and creatively. For example, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving and research skills. How would you describe the teaching critical thinking, creative thinking and problem solving skills at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience? What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing independent and life- long learning skills in its graduate students. They define **independent and life- long learning** as a capacity to be a self-directed learner and thinker and to study and work independently. This includes organisational and time management skills, and independent study. How would you describe the teaching independent and life- long learning skills at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience? What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing access, evaluate and synthesise information skills in its graduate students. They define **access, evaluate and synthesise information** as decide what information is needed and where it might be found using appropriate technologies; make valid judgements and synthesise information from a range of sources. How would you describe the

teaching access, evaluate and synthesise information skills at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience? What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

Most of universities in WA say that they value developing ethics standards in its graduate students. They define **ethics** as an awareness of and sensitivity to ethics and ethical standards on interpersonal and social levels, and within a field of study and / or profession. These include personal ethics, social ethics, ethics in a field of study, and professional ethics. How would you describe the teaching ethics standards at your University here in Australia? How has this teaching affected your learning experience?

What does that mean to you? Can you give me an example? Is this different to China?

### **CLOSURE QUESTIONS**

Do you have any advice for the younger generation of international students?

Is there anything that we've left out of your story that you think we should know about?

What are your feelings about this interview and all that we have covered?

## Appendix E: Interview Guide

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### **Chinese nursing students at Australian universities: a narrative inquiry into their motivation, learning experience, and future career planning**

#### *Motivations, Expectations, Values, Dreams and Ambitions*

- a. Benefits of studying in Australia
- b. Importance of this course
- c. Alignment with values
- d. Dreams and ambitions

#### *Graduate attributes*

- a. Communication
- b. Cross-cultural and international outlook
- c. Team work
- d. Think critically, creatively and reflectively
- e. Independent and life-long learning
- f. Access, evaluate and synthesise information
- g. Ethics

#### *Family, Culture and Traditions*

- a. Personal Background and values
- b. Hometown
- c. Family
- d. How was the decision made to come to Australia?
- e. Cultural differences between China and Australia

#### *Social Factors in Australia*

- a. Support
- b. Friends and Leisure
- c. Influences
- d. Pressures, Money
- e. Significant events

#### *Education*

- a. Learning experience
- b. English language
- c. Learning approach
- d. Factors that helped
- e. Challenges

#### *Personal, Inner Life and Self-Awareness*

- a. Happiness
- b. Support
- c. Values
- d. Goals
- e. Who are you

#### *Closure Questions*

- a. Advice
- b. Anything else

## Appendix F: Ethics Approval

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9502 WANG ethics approval

Page 1 of 2

9502 WANG ethics approval

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FORWARD

Research Ethics <research.ethics@ecu.edu.au>

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Thu 29/08/2013 11:15 AM

To: Carol WANG; 'carolwangcf@yahoo.com';

Cc: Kate ANDRE <k.andre@ecu.edu.au>; Tony FETHERSTON <t.fetherston@ecu.edu.au>;  
FHES Student Information Office <siofhes@ecu.edu.au>;  
Research Assessments <researchassessments@ecu.edu.au>;

1 attachment

Conditions  
~.pdf

Dear Carol

**Project 9502 WANG**

**The lived learning experience of Chinese international nursing students study in Australia**

**Student Number: 3032617**

The ECU Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has reviewed your application and has granted ethics approval for your research project. In granting approval, the HREC has determined that the research project meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

The approval period is from 29 August 2013 to 30 April 2020.

The Research Assessments Team has been informed and they will issue formal notification of approval. Please note that the submission and approval of your research proposal is a separate process to obtaining ethics approval and that no recruitment of participants and/or data collection can commence until formal notification of both ethics approval and approval of your research proposal has been received.

All research projects are approved subject to general conditions of approval. Please see the attached document for details of these conditions, which include monitoring requirements, changes to the project and extension of ethics approval.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Regards  
Kim

Appendix G & H are not included  
in this version of the thesis