

The Career Pathways and Integration of Foreign-born and Canadian-born Nurses in Ontario, Canada



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Background

- Shortage of nurses or nurse distribution?
(Murphy et al., 2009; CIHI, 2015)
- Low and negative growth of nurses
(CIHI, 2015)
- Consequences of nursing shortage
(Sawatzky & Enns, 2012)
- Recruitment of skilled immigrants as a solution
(Boyd & Schellenberg, 2007)
- Barriers to immigrants labour market entry
(Li, 2003; Buzdugan & Halli, 2009; Chiswick & Miller, 2010).

Aim: Are there distinct differences between the career pathways of Canadian-born and foreign-born RNs and RPNs in Ontario.

Theoretical Rubric

Theory of segmented assimilation and reactive ethnicities (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

Path 1

- Traditional assimilation into White middle class (e.g. RN)

Path 2

- Selective integration when immigrants of color retain ethnic ties and culture to facilitate upward socioeconomic mobility (e.g. RPN)

Path 3

- Downward assimilation into a racialized minority with limited economic opportunities (e.g. PSW)

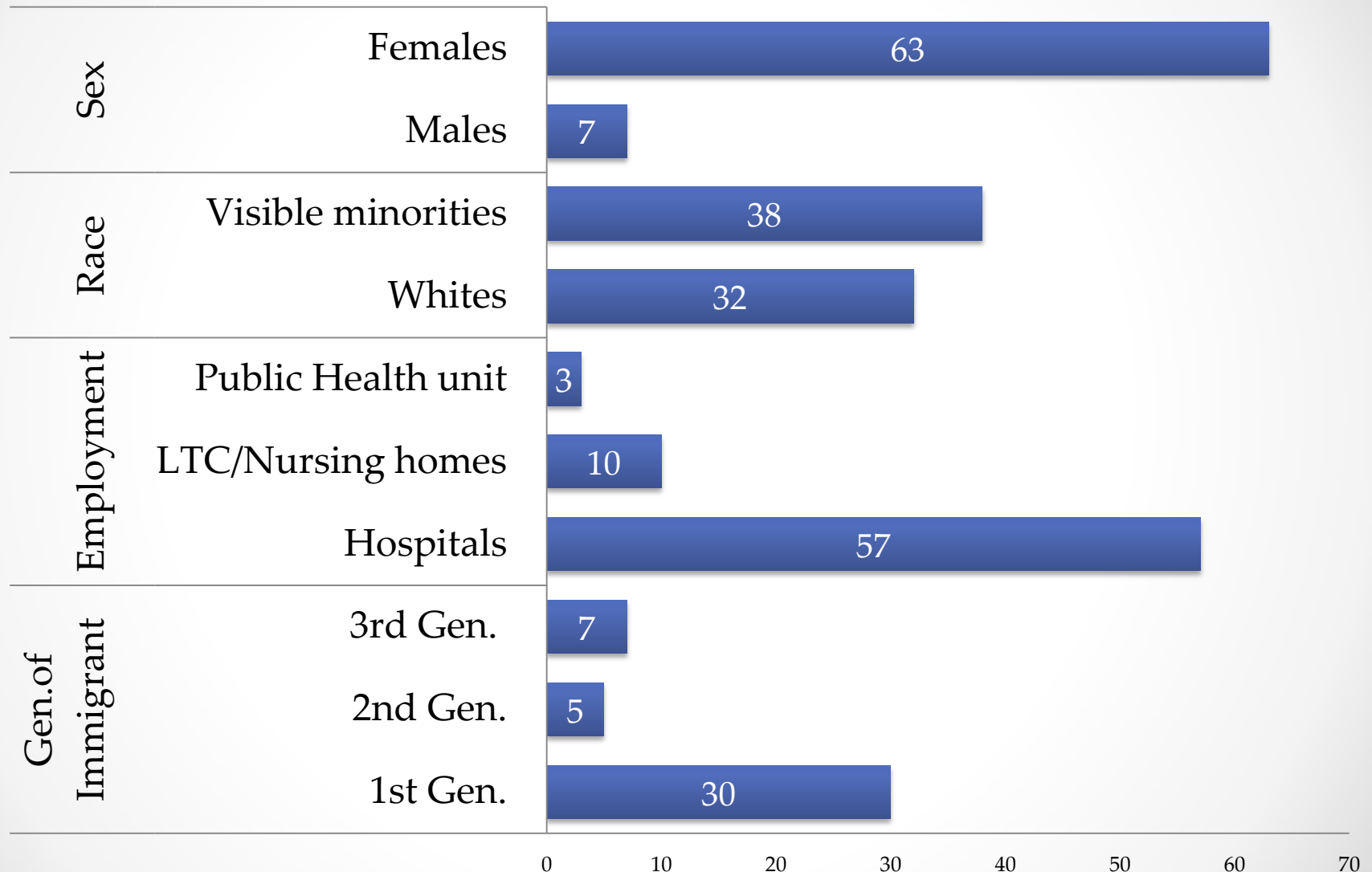
Research Questions

- Are the career pathways of foreign-born nurses different from Canadian-born nurses?
- What factors shape skilled immigrants' initial entry and integration into the nursing profession?
- Do foreign-born nurses have the opportunity to integrate?
- How are foreign-born nurses coping with the challenges of entry and integration?

Methodology: Qualitative Research Design

- Study setting & participants: Hospitals and nursing homes in Greater Toronto Area & London, Ontario
- Purposive sampling and passive snow ball sampling
- Sample size: 70 Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPN)
- Data collection : In-depth interviews

Participant Characteristics



Results: Are there distinct entry pathways?

- There are distinct pathways to career entry for foreign-born and Canadian-born nurses

“I have relatively a straight pathway. I went straight from high school to University. I got my Bachelor of Sciences in Nursing for the 4 years... My integrative practicum in fourth year was in clinical neurosciences in [a] Hospital. I applied for a job half way through my practicum and I was accepted and I have been working there for the past three years” [CEN, Female, RN, 3 years, Neurosciences]

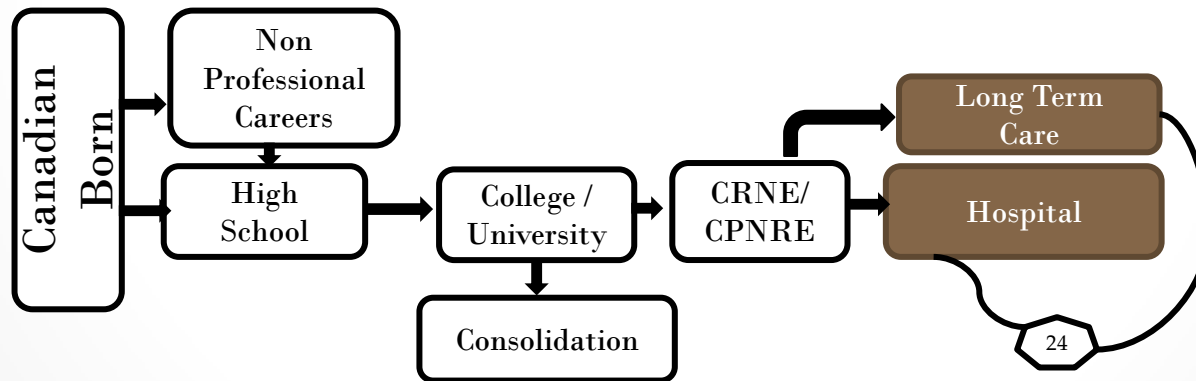
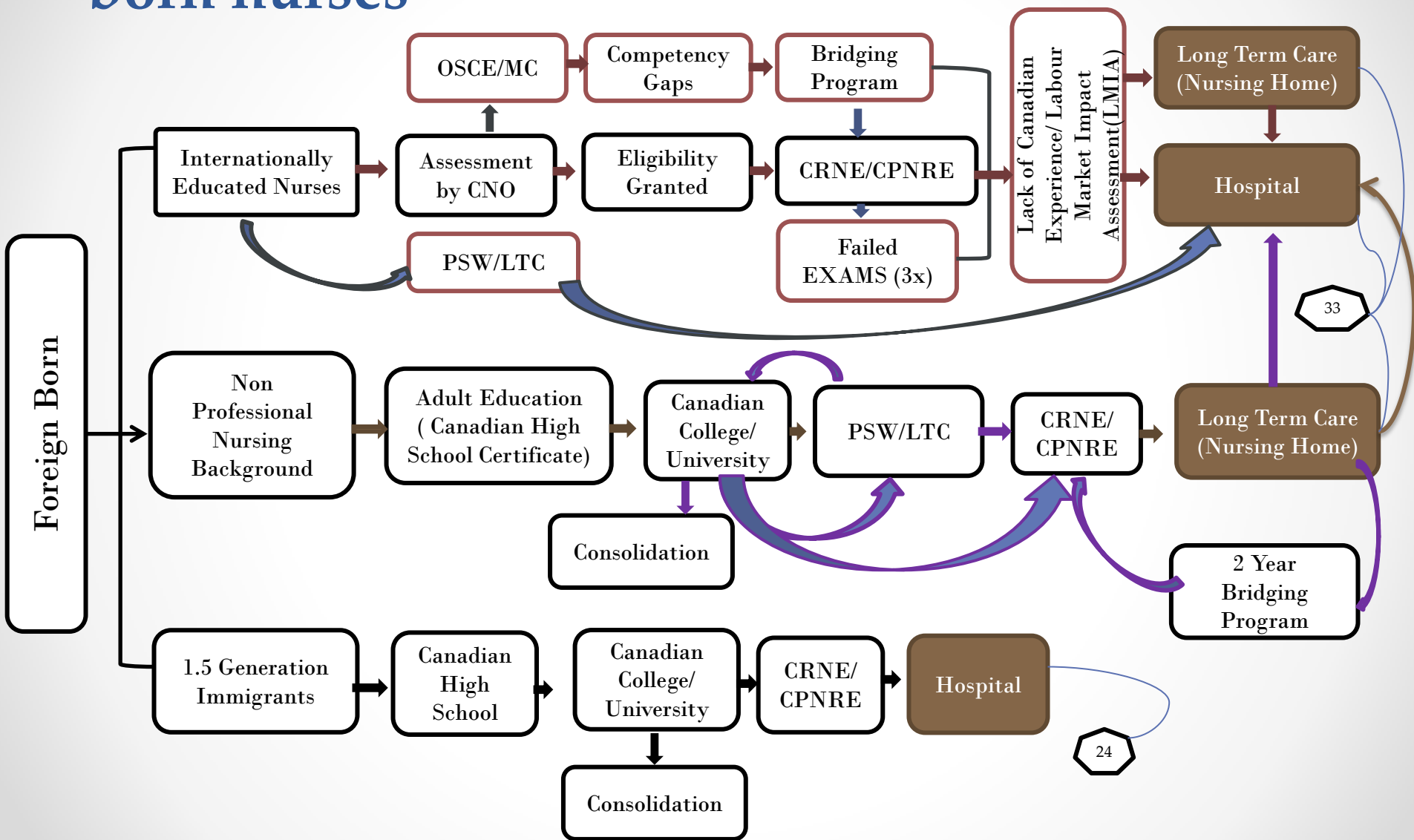


Fig. 1. Career pathways of Canadian-born nurse

Results: Fig. 2. Career Pathways of Foreign-born nurses



Factors shaping immigrants initial entry (IENs)

- Significant delays with professional entry (the 5 'D's)

“Most of the questions are ethics related. You don't think about it but it is ethics related. You should know the ethics and you should know the culture. You need to know what goes on in Canada otherwise you can't answer the questions” [Female, 4 years, Sub-acute medicine, India]

- The lack of Canadian work experience

“How am I going to get experience if nobody hires me? I did so many interviews, I went to workshops in Toronto, I drafted my resume. I talked to one of the recruiters she told me ‘oh first we usually hire our own nurses, then our own nursing students, if we have anything left we will consider you’. I said Whao!!! It is so mean. Yeah, that was my story. I said people who come here, they think the problem is getting the license; the problem is that after, getting a job is problematic” [Female, 3 years, Surgery, Iran]

- IENs worked in LTCs before moving to the hospital

“I got one interview here. I worked 7 months and I went off to Long term care. I got a position as PSW; I worked there for 5 months. In between I got my license. And I tried to work there as RN. I did not have any joy there. I quit that job after 10 days as RN and applied here [hospital]. I had an interview and that is it” [Female, 6 years, Palliative, India]

Factors shaping immigrants initial entry (non-professional)

- Skilled immigrants switch from other professions to nursing for economic integration

“Back home I was not a nurse, I was an accountant. When I came to Canada in 2002 I tried to get my CAG, I got level 1 and then I think level 3. But it was very expensive... I could not get a job as an accountant. The most I could get was an accounts clerk. With that kind of money I can't take [care of myself and go back to school]. After about 3 years of trying [to get] into the accounting field I just gave up and decided to go into nursing. I decided to do nursing because there are a lot more jobs available for nurses.” [CEN, Female, 6 years, Geriatrics, 1st Gen]

- Retraining (6 months – 3 years)
- Career paths interrupted by life course factors (age, marriage, pregnancy, child birth, family responsibilities)

Do immigrants have the opportunity to integrate?

- Average income estimates:
 - \$54,874/year for newly employed RNs
 - \$44,160/year for newly employed RPNs
- Nursing as a profession for economic integration
- *“...With the knowledge I have acquired you always have a job....besides acquiring two cars, a house which was my choice, for me the money I make goes to savings. I can look forward to a better future for my family. I can enrol my kids in various activities [such as hockey, soccer, and swimming] regardless of the cost. I am living a stress free life financially. I am not living pay check to pay check...I am able to contribute to the Canadian system; I am not dependent on government assistance”[CEN, Female, RN, 3 years, Sub-acute Medicine, 1st Gen., Black]*
- Immigrants negative experiences with co-workers and patients
 - (Drop dead...I need your job – Social Science & Medicine, 155:35-42)

Key findings & Propositions

- Foreign human capital facilitates entry into Canada, Canadian human capital expedites entry and integration into the labour force
- Younger immigrants are more likely to make an easy and faster entry into the nursing profession
- Visible minority nurses would appear to have better access to job opportunities in areas experiencing labour shortages
- Social networks support and greatly influence the integration, but not the entry of nurses into the profession

Policy Implications

- Adequate funding should be provided to institutions that facilitate immigrants professional entry and integration – e.g. CARE Centre for IENs
- Entry and career development procedures need to be restructured with a focus on providing equal opportunity, information and support for both visible and non-visible minority nurses
- Sustaining and optimizing the nursing workforce requires the engagement of a more diverse and culturally competent workforce
- Resocialization of immigrant nurses into the Canadian work culture

Thank you for your attention !!
Any Questions?



For further discussions:

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