

Nursing Faculty and Nursing Students Experiences of Participating in International Exchange Programmes



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Due to globalization, there is a need for nurses with skills and competence in providing safe, competent and culturally appropriate care. This study indicates that International Study Experience (ISE) during the basic nursing education in Sweden has a positive impact on newly graduated nurses' self-reported competence, especially legislation in nursing and safety planning, leadership and developing of nursing and education and supervision of staff and students. Measures should be taken to actively offer as many nursing students as possible the opportunity to do part of their clinical and/or theoretical education in other countries.

The aim of the study was to investigate whether International Study Experiences in other countries during basic nursing education had an impact on newly graduated nurses as regards to self-reported competence. A second aim was to explore what background factors that facilitated or constituted a hindrance for nursing students to choose to conduct part of their basic nursing education abroad.

Method: At 11 Universities/University Colleges in Sweden, 565 nursing students responded to the Nurse Professional Competence (NPC) Scale. The **NPC Scale** is based on formal national competence requirement set for registered nurses by the Swedish National Board for Health and Welfare. The NPC Scale comprises 88 items regarding self-reported competences considered important for society, the healthcare sector and the nursing profession, to provide safe and high-quality care. The items comprise eight sub-scales of competence areas and constitute the two overarching themes follows:

Theme 1: Patient-related nursing:

- Nursing care
- Value-based nursing care
- Medical technical care
- Teaching/learning and support
- Documentation and information technology
- Legislation in nursing and safety planning.

Theme 2: Nursing care organization and development:

- Legislation in nursing and safety planning
- Leadership in and development of nursing
- Education and supervision of staff/students.

The scale has been evaluated for psychometric properties and has shown satisfactory data quality, reliability and validity. Cronbach's α for the eight factors in the current sample ranged from 0.75 to 0.90, which indicates high reliability of the scale.

Result: Students with ISE rated their competence significantly higher on three NPC competence areas—(1) Legislation in nursing and safety planning, (2) Leadership and development of nursing and (3) Education and supervision of staff and students.

Background factors that significantly seemed to enhance International Study Experience were living alone, not having children or other commitments in relation to family, international focus at the Higher Education Institutions and previous international experience. Lack of financial means was reported to prevent students from choosing International Study Experience .

The study implies that several background factors are of importance whether students choose International Study Experience or not.

Take home message

Conclusion: International Study Experiences during basic nursing education might result in better self-reported competence in leading and developing nursing care, including education of future nurses, and in providing safe care.

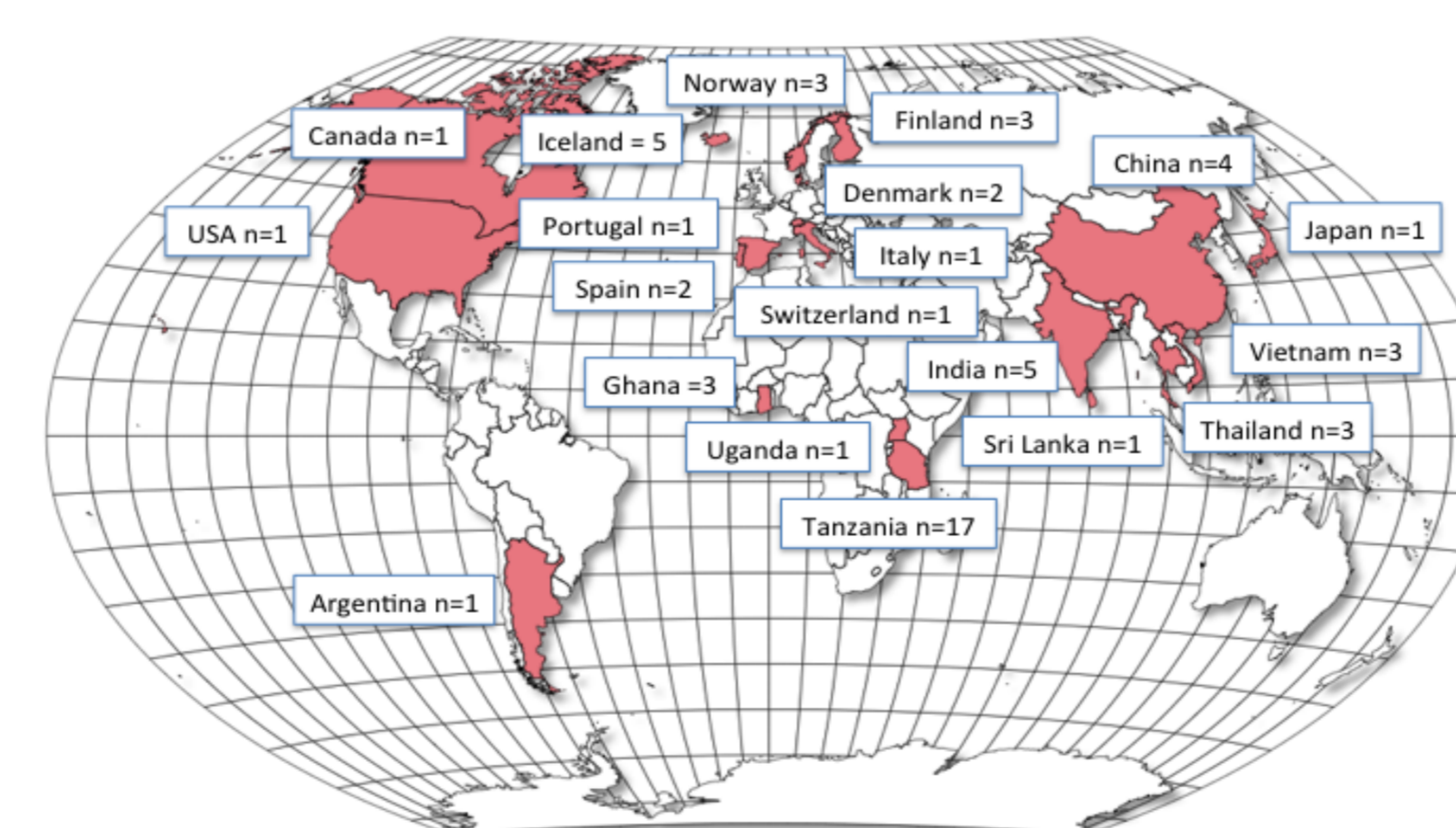


Figure 1. Distribution of countries chosen by the nursing students for part of their education abroad