

Masters Framework Dissertation

- European Masters of Science in Midwifery





UC Leuven
Limburg

MOVING MINDS

The 'real' lived experiences of
Flemish midwifery students
undertaking an internship in
Suriname: A phenomenological
pilot study

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Introduction

- European Union Directive 2013/36/EC:
 - 40 deliveries single-handedly
- Vlaamse OnderwijsRaad (VLOR):
 - 20% student mobility in 2020
- Midwifery students abroad
 - Europe is difficult
 - Solution: outside Europe

Rational & Background

1. Personal growth
2. Intercultural competence
3. Language skills
4. Global engagement
5. International disciplinary learning

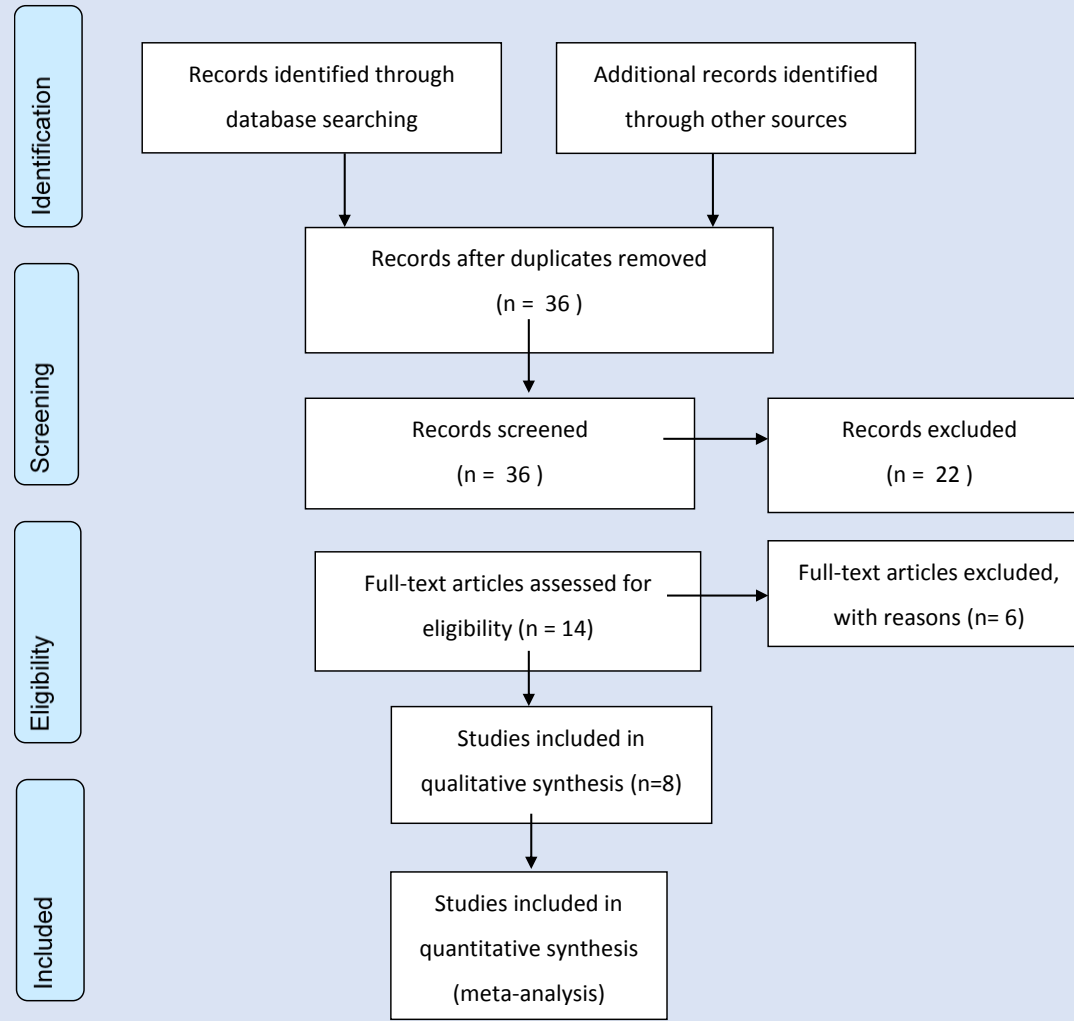
Purpose of the study

To investigate

- The 'real' lived experience of Flemish midwifery students undertaking an internship in Suriname:
 - to explore their real motivation to apply
 - to understand their 'real' professional and personal experiences
 - to explore their professional and personal requirements during their internship

Literature Review

PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram



Methodology - 1

- Hermeneutic phenomenological method as described by van Manen (1990)
 - Descriptive (phenomenological) elements of Husserl
 - +
 - Interpretive (hermeneutic) elements of Heidegger, the understanding

(Thomé et al, 2004; Dowling, 2007)

Methodology - 2

In this study, the meaning of undertaking an internship in Suriname as a Flemish midwifery student might correspond with the four fundamental existential themes described by van Manen (1990) as pervading the life worlds of all human beings:

- Lived body (corporeality)
- Lived human relations (relationality of communality)
- Lived space (spatiality)
- Lived time (temporality)

(Dowling, 2007).

According to van Manen (1990) these four existential can be differentiated but never separated.

Methodology - 3

Sample

- Participants were selected purposively because of their particular exposure to the experience to the phenomenon (Ryan et al, 2007; Topping, 2010, Polit & Beck, 2012)
- Gatekeeper approval
 - Midwifery education program
 - Hospitals in Suriname
- Informant consent
- Biographical questionnaire

<..\..\Werkmap\Appendix\Appendix K Characteristics of participants.xlsx>

Methodology - 4

Setting

- 2 students (2,7) largest and oldest public hospital – high birth incidence
- 2 students (4,6) Catholic hospital in the city centre - small birth incidence
- 3 students (1,3,5) Catholic hospital outside the city centre – medium birth incidence
- Each hospital has a particular policy, culture and population → space triangulation → maximum variation of the sample → enhanced transferability (Russell et al, 2003; Polit & Beck, 2012).
- Students
 - 3 different accommodations
- Researcher
 - Private flat

Methodology - 5

Procedure

- Analysing face-to-face unstructured open interviews with key informants → audio-taped and transcribed verbatim by the researcher



- High level of trust + keeping a certain level of distance (Polit & Beck, 2012)
- Comprehensive reflective diary (Todres & Holloway's, 2010) → Decision (audit) trail → dependability (Ryan et al, 2012)

Methodology - 6

Analysis

- Summarised immediately afterwards
- Transcribed by the researcher
- Analysed thematically using van Manen's approach
 - **Holistic reading approach** meaning that the text was attended as a whole while asking: '*What sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole?*' (van Manen, 1990; p. 93).
 - **Selective reading approach** meaning that the text was read several times while asking: '*What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described?*' (van Manen, 1990; p. 93) and these statements were highlighted or underlined.
 - **Detailed reading approach** meaning that the text was read in detail while looking at every single sentence or sentence cluster while asking: '*What does this sentence or sentence cluster reveal about the phenomenon or experience being described?*' (van Manen, 1990; p.93).
- Audit trail
- Second investigator
- Member checking

Ethical approval was obtained from Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)

Findings & Discussion - 1

<u>Table 1:</u> Overview of the major themes
Lived time (temporality)
A time to reconsider the time
A time of connection and disconnection
Lived Space (spatiality)
Spatiality for thought and rethinking
Lived Body (corporeality)
A body to undergo or a body to respond
Lived Relations (relationality of communality)
The other(s) among the others

Findings & Discussion - 2

Lived Time (temporality) is defined by van Manen (1990) as:
'the time of the lived experience',
in this study a period of five weeks in Suriname.

Findings & Discussion – 3

‘A time to (re) consider the time

‘Just do it, just go for it ... it is ONLY five weeks and you will win a lot from this experience, and then I knew (friend) wished to go too and that was really my buddy and I thought: yes!.. I really need to go, just throw yourself into it and learn how to get along ...’ (7)

‘Yes, really I’m sure that my desire to have children yet, has to wait ...’ (1)

Findings & Discussion - 4

'A time of connection and disconnection'.

And they talked about some manual in the 90's.

'And I thought, there are anyway handles which are still useful but they really stick to it... I think they are totally not engaged in scientific research...' (2)

A disconnection of the (controlled) medicalized approach of birth in Flanders towards an connection to the (relaxed) natural approach of Suriname.

'As it happens here more natural I think ... it should be like that, why do we always have to intervene ... and ... yes ... during that birth without epidural analgesia, it only took 10-15 minutes to push, just because they have such an urge to push and then the head descends very slowly against the perineum...and I think that's how birth should be...' (1)

Findings & Discussion - 5

‘A time of connection and disconnection’.

After the confrontation with a teenager who gave birth at 28 weeks after an unwanted pregnancy, one participant articulated her feelings like this:

‘...but that girl of 14, who now has a baby which is on intensive care for whom she has to take care of, and she doesn’t know how, and she ... normally went to school and then I thought: ‘she has to give up everything to take care of that baby, that she didn’t even want to have...’ (1)

Findings & Discussion - 6

Although **the time** abroad was limited to five weeks, it means:

- A process of disconnection from their own culture towards connection with another
- Making adjustments to cultural differences leading to the development of:
 - personal growth,
 - intercultural competences
 - internationally disciplinary learning

(Ruddock and Turner, 2007; Greatrex-White's, 2008; Edmonds, 2010; Kokko, 2011, Tucket & Crompton, 2014).

Findings & Discussion - 7

'Lived or felt space' *'the nature of lived space that renders that particular experience its quality of meaning'.*

(van Manen, 1990; p. 102)

Findings & Discussion - 8

'Spatiality for thought and rethinking'

'I have learned to see things in perspective, in proportion ... and yes ... yes, I have learned ... it's not because you're only 20 years old, that things are not achievable' (7)

Findings & Discussion - 9

'Spatiality for thought and rethinking'

'Yes, now I realize how it feels to assist a childbirth independently because in Belgium, I can tell you, you never can do it all by yourself as the gynaecologist is always behind you, he participates and he will take over ... and here in Suriname you are able to do everything from the moment a woman enters until the end ...you are doing it yourself.' (5)

Where after she adds:

'Why in God's name should we call gynaecologists when a woman gives birth and there is nothing wrong and there is no problem ...?' (5)

Findings & Discussion - 10

'Spatiality for thought and rethinking'

Critical reflections about their role as a midwife:

'Yes, in Belgium you can do everything under instruction because you have learned all the skills but to make real decisions yourself... as a midwife, here in Suriname, doing the admission and decide ... we will do that and do that ... that's not really the case in Belgium and that's what I have learned during this internship. That's another advantage of this internship.'(2)

'As to theory, yes ... I understand everything they are talking about, ... but really prepared for this internship...not really... perhaps it would be better to have a better preparation to...yes...to work on your own...but you cannot prepare everything, can you? Because it isn't allowed...they don't allow it in Belgium...'(3)

Findings & Discussion - 11

'Spatiality for thought and rethinking'

- International disciplinary learning requires:
 - 'the necessity of 'being there' and 'taking it in' and that 'it cannot be real until it is actually experienced'* (Edmonds, 2010; p. 560)
- rethinking of their home culture, which was previously invisible and taken for granted.
- correspondent with the findings of Greatrex-White (2008) and Tuckett and Crompton (2014) and reflect
 - personal growth,
 - intercultural competences but above all
 - international disciplinary learning.

Findings & Discussion - 12

The **'Lived Body' (corporeality)** to: *'how a person always is corporeality in the world and it is through bodily appearance that he/she first meets other people'*

(van Manen, 1990; p. 102)

Findings & Discussion - 13

'A body to undergo or a body to respond'

Being the friendly stranger which affects their authenticity

Being an outsider

'I think: I just do it 'because otherwise I would even stand more on the side ...'(6)

Or being a participant

'Ultimately, this is my internship, this is my experience and so I said to her: Look, you know? I'm here to learn, I am aware of my mistakes ... but' I am not God'(5)

Findings & Discussion - 14

'A body to undergo or a body to respond'

Caring & Communication

- Language is only one part of communication and communication is one aspect of care (Ruddock & Turner, 2007)
- Care to the women
- Care for each other

'How severe they are, they are watching over you to ensure that you drink enough and eat ... and occasionally sit down ...' .

While the same participant adds:

'In Belgium, they do not care whether you have eaten or not or that you are awake for 24 hours' (4)

Findings & Discussion - 15

'A body to undergo or a body to respond'

- Care as a fundamental need
- The duties of care for midwives comprise:
 - the instrumental part: the physical aspect of care
 - +
 - the psychological part: the emotional aspect (Chokwe and Wright, 2011)

Role models who take care not only for the women but also for them as a learner midwife

Findings & Discussion - 16

'lived human relations' defined by van Manen (1990; p. 104) as: *"Through lived relations to others we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them".*

Findings & Discussion - 17

'The other's among the others

The others

- Fellow students
- Midwives
- Suriname's culture

Comparing and contrasting

Findings & Discussion - 18

'The other's among the others'

Comparing learning opportunities

'Because I really could not talk to her because maybe I will sound jealous and I don't want to respond unpleasant and become a bad version of myself, just because of that pressure and frustration ... while the first week I visited (friends) quite often but now I cannot do that anymore just because I do not want to hear how well they are doing...' (4)

Placement Learning Packs (PLP) (Moore, 2013)

Reflection to prevent that students become isolated individuals (Ruddock & Turner, 2007, Greatrex-White, 2008; Briscoe, 2013; Kokko, 2014).

Findings & Discussion - 19

'The other's among the others'

- Ofman's Core Quadrant Model (2010)
- Differences in hierarchy and hierarchical thinking
- Being part of the team, being trusted, appreciated and treated like an equal
 - Enhanced self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-confidence
- The role of the midwife in the society

'... you know, in Suriname the midwife is someone who people look up to. She is the 'Sister' and you should listen to her and she will take almost all the decisions ...So, it is really different compared to Flanders...' (2)

Findings & Discussion - 20

'The other's among the others'

Means to measure and to contrast:

- the self at micro-level,
- the other at meso-level and
- the hierarchical role of the midwife in the society at macro-level

which reflects:

- personal growth,
- intercultural competences
- international disciplinary learning → graduate employability

(Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2010; Paige et al, 2009; and Crossman and Clarke, 2010)

Conclusion - 1

In general:

A process of awareness from the self with a main focus on the professional'

Conclusion - 2

The **motivation** for an internship abroad corresponded with Maslow's human motivation theory (1943):

1. Psychological (excitement), safeguarding (financial assurance) and social (friends).
2. An opportunity 'to visit and learn' as a tool to improve their self-esteem and therefore their personal growth, which might be seen as self-actualisation.

Moreover, it was noticeable that most participants became interested because of the shorter duration of the internship abroad.

Conclusion - 3

Their **experience at personal and professional** level means:

- a process of *'disconnection'* from their own culture towards *'connection'* with another and making adjustments to cultural differences.
- Personal:
 - Disconnection with familiar signposts
 - Leaving their comfort zone
 - Mastering: a strong source of independence, confidence and self-efficacy
- Professional
 - Having more or less learning opportunities
 - To rethink their home culture (role as a midwife)
 - Balancing between on one hand, guarding one's own authenticity by *'responding'* or at the other hand being the friendly stranger through *'undergoing'*

Conclusion - 4

Personal and professional requirements

- Most of the participants found PDT's superfluous as they perceived it as impossible to be prepared for this internship.
- However, more attention should be given within PDT regarding communication and coping strategies regarding the cultural diversity in Suriname.
- Meanwhile it is important within mentorship provided by the home institution, that students have the opportunity to reflect in confidence to prevent that students become isolated individuals (Ruddock & Turner, 2007; Briscoe, 2013).

Recommendations

- Providing internships abroad for a shorter period
- Guaranteeing a relationship of trust with their mentor
- More attention in PDT's towards communication skills and intercultural competences
- Midwifery curricula:
 - Psychological part + instrumental part of care
 - Role models
 - Sharing experiences
- Bilateral partnerships: primary stakeholders

Further research

- In-depth research regarding the motivation of students to apply for an internship abroad
- The experiences of clients, patients, and healthcare providers in the host country regarding care and collaboration with incoming students.
- Offman's Core Quadrants model as a tool during selection procedures
- The implementation of Placement Learning Packs (PLP's)

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