
How Nursing Students Develop Cultural and Professional Awareness through the Tropical NurseTalk Podcast: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

As global health challenges continue to evolve, nursing students must develop cultural competence and strong professional identity alongside scientific knowledge. However, accessible and culturally grounded learning resources remain limited within nursing education. The Tropical NurseTalk podcast was created to address this gap by introducing tropical nursing concepts that integrate global perspectives with local wisdom. This study explored nursing students' learning experiences, reflections, and perceptions after listening to the introductory episode, "Welcome to The Tropics: What is Tropical Nursing?". A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Undergraduate nursing students who enrolled in the Community Health Nursing and Tropical Disease Nursing course and listened to the episode participated in semi-structured interviews. The interview guide explored five core areas: learning experience, reflective learning, professional identity, behavioral change, and cultural awareness. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Three themes emerged. The first theme, Immersive Audiovisual Learning Experience, highlighted how the video format enhanced engagement and comprehension through visual-audio storytelling, while also revealing learning barriers such as internet connections. The second theme, Reflective and Professional Identity Development described how visual narratives triggered personal reflection, strengthened students; professional identity and fostered intentions for behavioral improvement in communication and empathy. The third theme, Cultural Sensitivity and Global-Local Understanding, demonstrated how audiovisual cues enhanced cultural awareness, encouraged cultural humility, and helped students connect global health issues with local practices in tropical communities. Overall, Tropical NurseTalk video podcast effectively supported holistic learning by integrating knowledge, reflection, professional values, and cultural competence. These findings suggest that audiovisual podcasts can serve as a meaningful digital learning tool to empower

future nurses in navigating culturally diverse and globally interconnected health environments. Overall, the Tropical NurseTalk podcast serves as an accessible and meaningful tool that fosters reflective, culturally informed, and professionally oriented learning among nursing students.

1. Introduction

Tropical regions continue to face a high burden of communicable diseases, cultural complexities, and environmental vulnerabilities, requiring nurses to possess both scientific competence and culturally informed practice (Akoit et al., 2025; Triani et al., 2025). Despite this need, accessible learning resources that integrate global health perspectives with local cultural realities remain limited in nursing education. Podcasts have emerged as an innovative educational medium that supports flexible, engaging, and self-directed learning (Marlina, 2025; O'Brien et al., 2024). They provide narrative-driven learning that helps students understand complex topics through storytelling and contextual illustration (Adelina et al., 2024; Ayudiyah et al., 2025).

While studies highlight the effectiveness of podcasts in language learning, professional training, and public health education (Douglass et al., 2024; Safitri et al., 2024), their role in developing cultural awareness, contextual understanding, and professional identity specifically within tropical nursing remains underexplored. Furthermore, digital learning tools such as project-based media, concept maps, and multimodal resources have shown potential to improve motivation and critical thinking (Mehboob & Chandani, 2024; Meiriza et al., 2025; Terara, 2024), yet little is known about how nursing students internalize these concepts through podcast-based learning.

To address this gap, this study explores nursing students' learning experiences after listening to the introductory episode of the Tropical NurseTalk podcast, "Welcome to the Tropics: What Is Tropical Nursing?". The study examines students' engagement, reflective learning, professional identity, behavioral change, and cultural awareness, providing insight into how digital media can support tropical-nursing education.

1.1 Literature Review

A literature review synthesizes and critically evaluates previous research to establish a foundation for the current study. In the field of nursing education, four key areas inform the present research: (1) podcast-based learning, (2) digital and multimodal learning strategies, (3) tropical nursing and cultural competence, and (4) professional identity formation.

Podcast-Based Learning in Health and Education

Podcasts facilitate flexible, self-paced learning and improve comprehension through narrative formats (Marlina, 2025; O'Brien et al., 2024). They support students in understanding complex material and increase retention by providing real-life scenarios (Ayudiyah et al., 2025). However, podcasts also pose challenges such as language complexity and lack of visual cues, which can hinder full comprehension (Adelina et al., 2024; Douglass et al., 2024).

Digital and Multimodal Learning Strategies

Digital tools including video podcasts, project-based learning (Terara, 2024), concept maps (Mehboob & Chandani, 2024), and digital mind mapping (Meiriza et al., 2025) have been shown to enhance motivation, critical thinking, and active engagement. These approaches provide multimodal reinforcement that complements audio learning, suggesting potential synergy with podcast-based formats.

Tropical Nursing and Cultural Sensitivity

Tropical nursing requires understanding environmental determinants, endemic disease patterns, and cultural beliefs that influence health behavior (Akoit et al., 2025; Triani et al., 2025). Transcultural nursing frameworks

emphasize the need for cultural humility and context-based care (Payasan et al., 2024). Students' awareness of these complexities forms a core component of their competence.

Professional Identity Formation

Professional identity influences how nurses perceive their role, values, and commitment (Douglass et al., 2024). Factors such as personality, resilience, and reflective learning shape how nursing students internalize their identity (Wu et al., 2024). Digital media particularly reflective tools like podcasts may strengthen this development, though empirical evidence in tropical nursing remains limited.

Gap in the Literature

While podcasts have been examined across health and education settings, no prior research specifically explores how nursing students develop cultural, environmental, and professional insight through podcast-based learning focused on tropical contexts. This study addresses that gap.

2. Research Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to explore nursing students' learning experiences, reflections, and perceptions after listening to the introductory episode of the Tropical NurseTalk podcast, "Welcome to the Tropics: What Is Tropical Nursing?". This design was chosen to capture participants' detailed descriptions and interpretations of their experiences with podcast-based learning.

The methodology section typically has the following sub-sections:

- Sampling (description of the target population, research context, and units of analysis; sampling; and respondent profile)
Participants were undergraduate nursing students enrolled in a Bachelor of Nursing program who had completed the Community Aggregate Nursing course. Purposive sampling was used to recruit students who met the inclusion criteria:
 - Had listened to the podcast episode 1 in full.
 - Aged 18 years or older.
 - Willing to participate and provide informed consent.
- Data collection
Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews using an interview guide focused on five core areas: (1) learning experience (engagement and barriers), (2) reflective learning, (3) professional identity, (4) behavioral change, (5) cultural awareness.
Interviews lasted 30–45 minutes, were conducted face-to-face or online, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim.
- Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's Interactive Model, which involves: (1) Data Reduction, (2) Data Display, (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification. The final themes reflected participants' shared experiences and perceptions.
Credibility was ensured through member checking, while dependability was supported by maintaining an audit trail. Transferability was strengthened through rich, detailed descriptions of context and participants, and confirmability was addressed through reflexive notes during analysis.
- Ethical Considerations
Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board. Informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were upheld throughout the study.

3. Result and Discussion

This qualitative study generated three major themes that reflect students' learning experiences after engaging with the Tropical NurseTalk audiovisual podcast. The themes include: (1) Immersive Audiovisual Learning Experience, (2) Reflective and Professional Identity Development, and (3) Cultural Sensitivity and Global-Local Understanding. Each theme consists of subthemes supported by representative participant statements. The findings are presented in Tables 2, Table 3, and Table 4 and further elaborated in narrative form. The demographic characteristics of participants were evaluated before thematic analysis. Table 1 shows the respondents' age range, gender, and prior podcast experience.

Table 1. Participant Characteristics (n=5)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age 18-20	3	60%
Age 21-22	2	40%
Female	5	100%
Used podcast before	2	40%
First time podcast	3	60%

Findings from Table 1 indicate that most participants were young female students, and the majority were first-time podcast learners. This suggests that digital audio-visual media such as podcasts are still relatively new in nursing education yet hold strong potential to be adopted by the younger digital generation. According Meilizia (2025), audio-visual immersive learning can effectively support comprehension and motivation in modern learners, aligning with how students in this study expressed increased engagement despite initial unfamiliarity. Table 2 shows that students experienced enhanced understanding through multimodal elements visual cues, narration, and storytelling confirming that immersive design can heighten focus and emotional connection to learning content (Karasynska & Leite, 2024).

Table 2. Immersive Audiovisual Learning Experience

Participant	Statements	Subtheme	Theme
P1	The podcast was interesting and helped me understand the material.... The subtitles were too fast and affected comprehension.	Audiovisual engagement, Technical barriers, Story-based comprehension	Immersive Audiovisual Learning Experience
P2	Real-case explanations made learning easier.... Translation moved too quickly.		
P3	I felt engaged during the learning process.	Enhanced engagement	
P4	I prefer audiovisual formats for learning.... Translation disappeared when internet was unstable.	Preference for multimodal learning, Connectivity barriers	
P5	Explanations were simple and relevant... Medical terms were difficult....	Contextual clarity, Language barriers	

However, students also reported barriers such as unstable internet and fast subtitles, indicating that accessibility and language load must still be addressed for optimal audio-visual learning implementation. These mixed responses reinforce the need for robust infrastructure and tailored instructional design in digital nursing education. Table 3 highlights that the podcast triggered reflective thinking and strengthened students' perception of their professional values. Students recognized the nurse's role beyond physical disease management, including attention to environmental and psychosocial dimensions.

Table 3. Reflective and Professional Identity Development

Participant	Statements	Subtheme	Theme
P1	Nurses must pay attention to both disease and the environment.	Holistic nursing reflection	Reflective and Professional Identity Development
P2	I became aware of how environment influences illness.	Health determinants awareness	
P3	Being a nurse requires understanding patient backgrounds.	Professional identity awareness	
P4	Cultural beliefs affect how we communicate health information.	Communication reflection	
P5	As a future nurse, I must educate communities effectively.	Professional responsibility	

Rath (2025) emphasizes that reflective practice is central to professional identity formation, enabling students to internalize nursing values early in their training. The observed reflections on responsibility, holistic care, and improved communication demonstrate that immersive media can be a powerful tool in reinforcing professional growth. Table 4 demonstrates increased awareness of cultural contexts and the importance of culturally sensitive communication.

Table 4. Cultural Sensitivity and Global-Local Understanding

Participant	Statements	Subtheme	Theme
P2	We must understand culture because it shapes perceptions.	Cultural influence awareness	Cultural Sensitivity and Global-Local Understanding
P5	Nurses must adapt to cultural contexts...		
P3	Nurses must understand endemic diseases and cultural context.		
P4	Communities rely on cultural beliefs.... education must adapt.	Culturally sensitive communication	

Participants described how culture shapes health perceptions, aligning with Kondo et al. (2025), who identified cultural sensitivity as a key factor influencing global readiness in nursing educators and students. Similarly Jui-Chin et. al. (2024) highlight that exposure to real-world cultural narratives can enhance nurses' empathy and adaptability in diverse care settings. The podcast's integration of global local perspectives on tropical nursing helped students connect theoretical understanding with the realities of culturally diverse communities.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the Tropical NurseTalk podcast positively influences engagement, professional identity formation, and cultural competence, supporting its potential as a transformative tool in nursing education. However, technical challenges and linguistic complexity remain areas for improvement. Future enhancements could include multilingual subtitles, interactive reflection prompts, and better accessibility to ensure equitable learning outcomes for all students.

4. Conclusions

The Tropical NurseTalk podcast effectively supported nursing students' learning by increasing engagement, enhancing understanding of tropical health contexts, strengthening professional identity, and fostering cultural awareness. Although language barriers and subtitle limitations were noted, the podcast encouraged students to adopt active, multimodal learning strategies.

These findings suggest that podcasts can serve as meaningful digital resources in tropical-nursing education. Future research should examine integration of podcasts with structured tools such as concept maps, reflective journals, or multilingual adaptations to maximize accessibility and learning outcomes.

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