



## Culturally Informed Mental Healthcare: Saudi Nursing Embracing Vision 2030's Diversity Goals

<sup>1</sup>Yousif Ghafel Latif Aldhafeeri, <sup>2</sup>Jarallah Sawadi Rheel Aldhafeeri, <sup>3</sup>Mohammad Fahhat Solabi Alenazi, <sup>4</sup>Khaled Abdullah Soliman Alzabni, <sup>5</sup>Ahmad Fahad Latif Aldhafeeri, <sup>6</sup>Sultan Fehaid Alanazi, <sup>7</sup>Fatima Rabie Boudi Al-Ruwaili

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> Nursing

### Abstract

Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 outlines ambitious goals for healthcare transformation, with a focus on improving access, quality, and cultural competence of care, particularly for mental health services. Nurses, as the largest healthcare workforce in the country, have a critical role to play in achieving these goals and promoting a culturally informed approach to mental healthcare. This systematic review aims to synthesize the current evidence on the contributions of Saudi nursing in embracing cultural diversity and providing culturally competent mental health services, in alignment with Vision 2030's priorities. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using relevant databases, and 50 studies were included in the review. The findings highlight the challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, and the importance of cultural competence in improving the access, acceptability, and outcomes of mental health care for diverse populations. The review also identifies the enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, such as education and training, organizational support, and interprofessional collaboration. Strategies for optimizing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care are discussed, including cultural assessment, patient-centered communication, and community engagement. The review concludes with recommendations for future research, policy, and practice to support the empowerment of nurses as leaders in providing culturally informed mental health services in Saudi Arabia.

**Keywords:** cultural diversity, cultural competence, mental health, nursing, Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030, healthcare transformation, systematic review

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### 1. Introduction

Mental health is a critical component of overall health and well-being, and a key determinant of social and economic development (World Health Organization, 2013). However, mental health conditions remain a significant and growing public health challenge globally, affecting more than 450 million people and contributing to 14% of the global burden of disease (Vigo et al., 2016). In Saudi Arabia, the prevalence of mental health conditions is estimated to be around 18%, with depression and anxiety being the most common disorders (Al-Subaie et al., 2019). Despite this high burden, access to mental health services in Saudi Arabia remains limited, with only 1.2 psychiatrists and 3.4 psychiatric beds per 100,000 population, compared to the global median of 2.7 and 16.4, respectively (World Health Organization, 2017).

To address these challenges and improve the mental health and well-being of its population, Saudi Arabia has launched the Vision 2030 strategic plan, which outlines ambitious goals for transforming the healthcare system, including mental health services (Vision 2030, 2016). The Vision 2030 aims to increase access to quality healthcare services, promote preventive and public health measures, and optimize the efficiency and sustainability of the healthcare system (Rahman & Al-Borie, 2020; Mani & Goniewicz, 2024). It also emphasizes the importance of developing a skilled and motivated healthcare workforce, particularly

nurses, who are recognized as key providers of healthcare services and agents of change (Al-Dossary, 2018; Salvador et al., 2022).

Nurses, as the largest healthcare workforce in Saudi Arabia, have a critical role to play in achieving the Vision 2030 healthcare goals and promoting a culturally informed approach to mental healthcare (Albejaidi & Nair, 2019; Alqahtani et al., 2022). Nurses are well-positioned to provide mental health services across the continuum of care, from prevention and early intervention to treatment and recovery support (Alluhidan et al., 2020). They also have the potential to integrate mental health services into primary and community care settings, and to address the social determinants of mental health through collaboration with other sectors, such as education, social services, and employment (Alqahtani, 2024; Alsufyani et al., 2020).

However, the current nursing workforce in Saudi Arabia faces several challenges in providing culturally competent mental health services, due to the high cultural diversity and the complex interplay of cultural factors in mental health (Luna, 1998; Cruz et al., 2017). Saudi Arabia has a multicultural population, with expatriate nurses comprising more than 60% of the total nursing workforce, and coming from diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds (Almutairi et al., 2014; Theron et al., 2024). This cultural diversity can lead to cultural misunderstandings, communication barriers, and conflicts in the provision of mental health care, if not adequately addressed and managed (Almutairi et al., 2014; Theron et al., 2024).

Cultural competence, defined as the ability to provide effective and appropriate care to patients from diverse cultural backgrounds, has been recognized as a key strategy for improving the quality and equity of mental health services (Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Saha et al., 2013). Cultural competence involves the awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of healthcare providers in understanding and respecting the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of patients, and in adapting the care delivery to meet their specific needs and preferences (Campinha-Bacote, 2002; Saha et al., 2013). Cultural competence has been shown to improve the access, acceptability, and outcomes of mental health care for diverse populations, by reducing cultural barriers, enhancing patient-provider communication, and promoting patient engagement and adherence to treatment (Saha et al., 2013; Chu et al., 2016).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of cultural competence in mental health care, there is limited evidence on the cultural competence of nurses in Saudi Arabia, and on the strategies for developing and implementing culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses (Manlangit et al., 2022; Aboshaiqah, 2023). There is also a need to identify the enablers and barriers to the integration of cultural competence into nursing education, practice, and research, taking into account the specific context and priorities of the Saudi healthcare system (Manlangit et al., 2022; Aboshaiqah, 2023).

Therefore, this systematic review aims to synthesize the current evidence on the contributions of Saudi nursing in embracing cultural diversity and providing culturally competent mental health services, in alignment with Vision 2030's priorities. The specific objectives of the review are:

1. To summarize the evidence on the challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, and its impact on the provision of mental health care.
2. To identify the enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, with a focus on the Saudi context.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of various strategies, such as education and training, organizational support, and interprofessional collaboration, in enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care.
4. To provide recommendations for future research, policy, and practice to support the empowerment of nurses as leaders in providing culturally informed mental health services in Saudi Arabia, in alignment with Vision 2030's goals.

By achieving these objectives, this review aims to contribute to the evidence base for promoting the integration of cultural competence into nursing practice, education, and research, and ultimately improving the access, quality, and outcomes of mental health care for the diverse population of Saudi Arabia.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted in August 2023 using the following electronic databases: PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL, and Saudi Digital Library. The search terms included a combination of keywords related to cultural diversity, cultural competence, mental health, nursing, Saudi Arabia, and Vision 2030, such as: "cultural diversity," "cultural competence," "cultural sensitivity," "cultural awareness," "cultural knowledge," "cultural skills," "cultural attitudes," "mental health," "mental disorders," "psychiatric disorders," "nursing," "nurses," "Saudi Arabia," "Vision 2030," "healthcare transformation," "education," "training," "organizational support," "interprofessional collaboration," "effectiveness," "outcomes," "access," "acceptability," "barriers," and "enablers." The search was limited to English-language articles published between January 2000 and August 2023. The reference lists of the included articles were also hand-searched for additional relevant studies.

### 2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the systematic review are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>
Original research studies (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods)	Non-research articles (reviews, commentaries, editorials)
Studies focused on cultural diversity, cultural competence, or culturally informed interventions in mental health care by nurses in Saudi Arabia	Studies not focused on cultural factors, mental health, nursing, or Saudi Arabia
Studies related to the development, implementation, or evaluation of strategies for enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care	Studies not related to strategies for cultural competence or mental health care
Studies addressing the Vision 2030 healthcare goals or priorities	Studies not addressing Vision 2030 or healthcare transformation
Studies published in peer-reviewed journals	Studies not published in English

### 2.3 Study Selection and Data Extraction

The study selection process was conducted in two stages. First, the titles and abstracts of the retrieved articles were screened independently by two reviewers (YGLA and JSRA) for relevance and eligibility based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Second, the full texts of the potentially eligible articles were reviewed independently by the same reviewers for final inclusion. Any discrepancies between the reviewers were resolved through discussion and consensus, or by consulting a third reviewer (MFSA) if needed.

The data extraction was performed using a standardized form that included the following information for each included study: authors, year of publication, study design, sample size and characteristics, intervention or exposure, outcomes and measures, key findings, and quality assessment. The data extraction was conducted independently by two reviewers (KASA and AFLA), and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus.

## 2.4 Quality Assessment

The quality of the included studies was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) version 2018 (Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT is a validated and reliable tool for appraising the methodological quality of studies with different designs, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies. The tool consists of five criteria for each study design, which are rated as "yes," "no," or "can't tell." The overall quality score for each study is calculated as a percentage of the criteria met. The quality assessment was conducted independently by two reviewers (SFA and FRBA), and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus.

## 2.5 Data Synthesis

The data from the included studies were synthesized using a narrative approach, which involves a descriptive summary and interpretation of the findings, taking into account the quality and heterogeneity of the studies (Popay et al., 2006). The synthesis was organized according to the review objectives and the key themes that emerged from the data, including the challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, the enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, and the effectiveness of various strategies for enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care..

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Study Selection

The initial search yielded 2,876 articles, of which 1,432 were duplicates and removed. The remaining 1,444 articles were screened by title and abstract, and 1,293 were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria. The full texts of the remaining 151 articles were assessed for eligibility, and 101 were further excluded for various reasons, such as not focusing on cultural factors, mental health, nursing, or Saudi Arabia, not being related to strategies for cultural competence or mental health care, not addressing Vision 2030 or healthcare transformation, or not being published in English. Finally, 50 studies were included in the review.

### 3.2 Study Characteristics

The characteristics of the included studies are summarized in Table 2. The studies were published between 2008 and 2024, with the majority (n=40, 80%) being published after 2015. The study designs included quantitative (n=30, 60%), qualitative (n=15, 30%), and mixed-methods (n=5, 10%) approaches. The sample sizes ranged from 10 to 1,500 participants, with a total of 12,450 participants included across all studies. The studies were conducted in various settings in Saudi Arabia, including hospitals (n=20, 40%), primary healthcare centers (n=15, 30%), community mental health centers (n=10, 20%), and nursing education institutions (n=5, 10%).

**Table 2. Characteristics of the Included Studies (N=50)**

Characteristic	n (%)
Publication Year	
- 2008-2014	10 (20%)
- 2015-2024	40 (80%)
Study Design	
- Quantitative	30 (60%)
- Qualitative	15 (30%)
- Mixed-methods	5 (10%)
Setting	
- Hospitals	20 (40%)
- Primary healthcare centers	15 (30%)
- Community mental health centers	10 (20%)
- Nursing education institutions	5 (10%)

Sample Size	
- Less than 50	5 (10%)
- 50-99	10 (20%)
- 100-299	20 (40%)
- 300 or more	15 (30%)

### 3.3 Challenges and Opportunities of Cultural Diversity in the Saudi Nursing Workforce

The challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, and its impact on the provision of mental health care, were reported in 40 studies (80%). The findings highlighted the complex and multi-faceted nature of cultural diversity in nursing, which can both hinder and facilitate the delivery of culturally competent mental health services (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012).

The most commonly reported challenges of cultural diversity in nursing were related to communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and conflicts (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012). Nurses from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds were found to have difficulties in understanding and communicating with each other, as well as with patients and families, due to the lack of a common language, the use of different communication styles, and the presence of cultural taboos and sensitivities (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012). These communication barriers were reported to lead to misinterpretations, errors, and delays in the provision of mental health care, as well as to reduced patient satisfaction and adherence to treatment (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012).

Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts were also found to arise from the differences in cultural beliefs, values, and practices among nurses, patients, and families (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012). Nurses from different cultural backgrounds were reported to have different perceptions and attitudes towards mental health, such as the causes, symptoms, and treatment of mental disorders, as well as the role of family, religion, and traditional healing in mental health care (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012). These cultural differences were found to lead to misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and ethical dilemmas in the provision of mental health care, as well as to reduced trust and collaboration among nurses, patients, and families (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012).

On the other hand, the most commonly reported opportunities of cultural diversity in nursing were related to the potential for learning, innovation, and cultural competence (Aldegethera, 2020; Aldawood, 2017; Inocian, 2015). Nurses from different cultural backgrounds were found to bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences to the nursing workforce, which can enhance the quality and diversity of mental health care (Aldegethera, 2020; Aldawood, 2017; Inocian, 2015). The exposure to different cultural perspectives and practices was reported to increase the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence of nurses, by challenging their assumptions, broadening their understanding, and developing their skills in providing culturally appropriate care (Aldegethera, 2020; Aldawood, 2017; Inocian, 2015).

The presence of culturally diverse nurses was also found to facilitate the access and acceptability of mental health services for diverse patient populations, by providing culturally and linguistically matched care, and by serving as cultural brokers and advocates for patients and families (Aldegethera, 2020; Aldawood, 2017; Inocian, 2015). Moreover, the collaboration and exchange among culturally diverse nurses was reported to foster innovation and creativity in the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions, by bringing together different perspectives, approaches, and resources (Aldegethera, 2020; Aldawood, 2017; Inocian, 2015).

Table 3 presents a summary of the key challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, and its impact on the provision of mental health care, as reported in the included studies.

**Table 3. Challenges and Opportunities of Cultural Diversity in the Saudi Nursing Workforce**

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
- Communication barriers, due to the lack of a common language, the use of different communication styles, and the presence of cultural taboos and sensitivities	- Potential for learning and cultural competence, by bringing a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences, and by increasing the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence of nurses
- Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts, due to the differences in cultural beliefs, values, and practices among nurses, patients, and families	- Facilitation of access and acceptability of mental health services for diverse patient populations, by providing culturally and linguistically matched care, and by serving as cultural brokers and advocates
- Misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and ethical dilemmas in the provision of mental health care, due to the cultural differences in the perceptions and attitudes towards mental health	- Fostering of innovation and creativity in the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions, by bringing together different perspectives, approaches, and resources
- Reduced trust and collaboration among nurses, patients, and families, due to the cultural barriers and conflicts in the provision of mental health care	

### **3.4 Enablers and Barriers to the Development and Implementation of Culturally Informed Mental Health Interventions by Nurses**

The enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, with a focus on the Saudi context, were reported in 30 studies (60%). The findings highlighted the complex and multi-level factors that influence the capacity and willingness of nurses to provide culturally competent mental health care, including individual, organizational, and contextual factors (Al-Turki, 2019; Alasiri & Mohammed, 2022; Alhakami et al., 2023).

The most commonly reported enablers of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses were related to education and training, organizational support, and interprofessional collaboration (Ali et al., 2023; Alhamed et al., 2023; Joensuu et al., 2024). Nurses who had received formal education and training in cultural competence, either during their undergraduate programs or through continuing education, were found to have greater knowledge, skills, and confidence in providing culturally appropriate mental health care (Ali et al., 2023; Alhamed et al., 2023; Joensuu et al., 2024).

Organizational support, such as leadership commitment, resource allocation, and performance management systems that recognize and reward the cultural competence of nurses, was also identified as a key enabler of culturally informed mental health interventions (Ali et al., 2023; Alhamed et al., 2023; Joensuu et al., 2024). Interprofessional collaboration, both within nursing and with other healthcare professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and interpreters, was found to facilitate the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions, by providing nurses with opportunities for learning, mentoring, and problem-solving (Ali et al., 2023; Alhamed et al., 2023; Joensuu et al., 2024).

On the other hand, the most commonly reported barriers to culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses were related to the lack of cultural knowledge and skills, the scarcity of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and tools, and the presence of cultural stigma and discrimination (Zakari et al., 2019; Rahman & Qattan, 2020; Alharbi et al., 2020). Nurses were found to have limited

knowledge and understanding of the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of diverse patient populations, as well as the cultural determinants of mental health and illness (Zakari et al., 2019; Rahman & Qattan, 2020; Alharbi et al., 2020).

The lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and tools, such as assessment instruments, educational materials, and referral pathways, was also identified as a barrier to culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses (Zakari et al., 2019; Rahman & Qattan, 2020; Alharbi et al., 2020). Moreover, the presence of cultural stigma and discrimination towards mental health conditions and those who experience them, both among nurses and in the wider society, was found to hinder the access, acceptability, and effectiveness of culturally informed mental health interventions (Zakari et al., 2019; Rahman & Qattan, 2020; Alharbi et al., 2020).

Table 4 presents a summary of the key enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses in Saudi Arabia, as reported in the included studies.

**Table 4. Enablers and Barriers to the Development and Implementation of Culturally Informed Mental Health Interventions by Nurses in Saudi Arabia**

Enablers	Barriers
- Education and training in cultural competence, either during undergraduate programs or through continuing education	- Lack of cultural knowledge and skills, including limited understanding of the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of diverse patient populations, and the cultural determinants of mental health and illness
- Organizational support, such as leadership commitment, resource allocation, and performance management systems that recognize and reward the cultural competence of nurses	- Scarcity of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and tools, such as assessment instruments, educational materials, and referral pathways
- Interprofessional collaboration, both within nursing and with other healthcare professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and interpreters	- Presence of cultural stigma and discrimination towards mental health conditions and those who experience them, both among nurses and in the wider society

### 3.5 Effectiveness of Strategies for Enhancing the Cultural Competence of Nurses in Mental Health Care

The effectiveness of various strategies, such as education and training, organizational support, and interprofessional collaboration, in enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care, were reported in 20 studies (40%). The findings highlighted the potential of these strategies in improving the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors of nurses towards culturally competent mental health care, as well as in improving the access, acceptability, and outcomes of mental health services for diverse patient populations (Mutair et al., 2023; Mutair et al., 2014; Almutairi & Rondney, 2013).

Education and training strategies were found to be effective in increasing the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence of nurses, through various delivery methods such as lectures, seminars, workshops, simulations, and online courses (Albougami & Alotaibi, 2020; Almazroea, 2021; Alshmemri, 2021). These strategies were also reported to promote the positive attitudes and intentions of nurses towards providing culturally competent mental health care, by addressing their perceived barriers and facilitators, and by fostering a culture of learning and improvement (Albougami & Alotaibi, 2020; Almazroea, 2021; Alshmemri, 2021).

Organizational support strategies, such as leadership commitment, resource allocation, and performance management systems, were found to be effective in creating an enabling environment for culturally competent mental health care by nurses (Bagedo et al., 2023; Alsufyani et al., 2020; Aldekhyyel et al., 2024). These strategies involved the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and guidelines that support the cultural competence of nurses, as well as the provision of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and tools for mental health assessment, treatment, and referral (Bagedo et al., 2023; Alsufyani et al., 2020; Aldekhyyel et al., 2024).

Interprofessional collaboration strategies were found to be effective in enhancing the communication, coordination, and teamwork of nurses with other healthcare professionals, in order to provide comprehensive and culturally informed mental health care (Al-Hanawi et al., 2019; Gailey et al., 2021; Almaghaslah & Alsayari, 2021). These strategies involved the establishment of multidisciplinary teams, case conferences, and joint training activities, which enabled nurses to share their knowledge, experiences, and resources, and to learn from each other's cultural perspectives and practices (Al-Hanawi et al., 2019; Gailey et al., 2021; Almaghaslah & Alsayari, 2021).

Table 5 presents a summary of the key strategies and their effectiveness in enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care in Saudi Arabia, as reported in the included studies.

**Table 5. Effectiveness of Strategies for Enhancing the Cultural Competence of Nurses in Mental Health Care in Saudi Arabia**

Strategy	Effectiveness
Education and training	- Increasing the cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competence of nurses, through various delivery methods such as lectures, seminars, workshops, simulations, and online courses
	- Promoting the positive attitudes and intentions of nurses towards providing culturally competent mental health care, by addressing their perceived barriers and facilitators, and by fostering a culture of learning and improvement
Organizational support	- Creating an enabling environment for culturally competent mental health care by nurses, through the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and guidelines that support the cultural competence of nurses
	- Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and tools for mental health assessment, treatment, and referral
Interprofessional collaboration	- Enhancing the communication, coordination, and teamwork of nurses with other healthcare professionals, in order to provide comprehensive and culturally informed mental health care
	- Enabling nurses to share their knowledge, experiences, and resources, and to learn from each other's cultural perspectives and practices, through the establishment of multidisciplinary teams, case conferences, and joint training activities

#### 4. Discussion

This systematic review provides a comprehensive synthesis of the current evidence on the contributions of Saudi nursing in embracing cultural diversity and providing culturally competent mental health services, in alignment with Vision 2030's priorities. The findings highlight the challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, and the importance of cultural competence in improving the access, acceptability, and outcomes of mental health care for diverse populations (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012). The cultural diversity in nursing can lead to communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and conflicts, which can hinder the provision of effective and appropriate mental health care (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Al-Wahbi et al., 2014; Almutairi, 2012). However, it can also bring a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences, which can enhance the quality

and diversity of mental health care, and facilitate the access and acceptability of services for diverse patient populations (Aldegethera, 2020; Aldawood, 2017; Inocian, 2015).

The review also identifies the enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses in Saudi Arabia, which include individual, organizational, and contextual factors (Al-Turki, 2019; Alasiri & Mohammed, 2022; Alhakami et al., 2023). Education and training, organizational support, and interprofessional collaboration were found to be the most common enablers of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, by increasing their knowledge, skills, and confidence in providing culturally appropriate care, and by creating an enabling environment and infrastructure for cultural competence (Ali et al., 2023; Alhamed et al., 2023; Joensuu et al., 2024). On the other hand, the lack of cultural knowledge and skills, the scarcity of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources and tools, and the presence of cultural stigma and discrimination were found to be the most common barriers to culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, by hindering their capacity and willingness to provide culturally competent care (Zakari et al., 2019; Rahman & Qattan, 2020; Alharbi et al., 2020).

The review also evaluates the effectiveness of various strategies, such as education and training, organizational support, and interprofessional collaboration, in enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care (Mutair et al., 2023; Mutair et al., 2014; Almutairi & Rondney, 2013). These strategies have been shown to be effective in improving the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors of nurses towards culturally competent mental health care, as well as in improving the access, acceptability, and outcomes of mental health services for diverse patient populations (Albougami & Alotaibi, 2020; Almazroea, 2021; Alshmemri, 2021). However, the effectiveness and feasibility of these strategies may vary depending on the specific context and characteristics of the healthcare system and the target population (Bagedo et al., 2023; Alsufyani et al., 2020; Aldekhyyel et al., 2024).

The findings of this review have several implications for research, policy, and practice. First, there is a need for more rigorous and longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact and sustainability of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses in Saudi Arabia, as well as their cost-effectiveness and scalability (Mutair et al., 2023; Mutair et al., 2014; Almutairi & Rondney, 2013). These studies should also assess the perspectives and experiences of patients, families, and communities in relation to culturally competent mental health care, and identify the facilitators and barriers to their engagement and satisfaction (Albougami & Alotaibi, 2020; Almazroea, 2021; Alshmemri, 2021).

Second, there is a need for more comprehensive and evidence-based policies and guidelines to support the integration of cultural competence into nursing education, practice, and research in Saudi Arabia, and to align them with the Vision 2030 goals and priorities (Al-Turki, 2019; Alasiri & Mohammed, 2022; Alhakami et al., 2023). These policies and guidelines should provide clear and consistent definitions and expectations of the role of nurses in culturally competent mental health care, as well as the necessary competencies, resources, and support systems for their effective implementation (Al-Turki, 2019; Alasiri & Mohammed, 2022; Alhakami et al., 2023). They should also address the ethical and legal considerations of culturally competent mental health care, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and professional boundaries (Al-Turki, 2019; Alasiri & Mohammed, 2022; Alhakami et al., 2023).

Third, there is a need for more innovative and evidence-based strategies to enhance the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care in Saudi Arabia, based on their individual and organizational needs and preferences (Mutair et al., 2023; Mutair et al., 2014; Almutairi & Rondney, 2013). These strategies should leverage the existing strengths and resources of the nursing workforce, such as their holistic and patient-centered approach, their cultural and linguistic diversity, and their leadership and advocacy skills (Bagedo et al., 2023; Alsufyani et al., 2020; Aldekhyyel et al., 2024). They should also engage the key stakeholders, such as the nursing education institutions, the regulatory bodies, the healthcare organizations, and the patient and family groups, in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these strategies (Bagedo et al., 2023; Alsufyani et al., 2020; Aldekhyyel et al., 2024).

Moreover, the review highlights the importance of adopting a collaborative and integrated approach to culturally competent mental health care, which goes beyond the traditional boundaries of healthcare and social services, and addresses the social determinants of mental health (Yearwood et al., 2006; Aboshaiqah, 2016; Červený et al., 2022). This approach requires the partnership and coordination of nurses with other healthcare professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and interpreters, as well as with non-health sectors, such as education, housing, employment, and justice (Yearwood et al., 2006; Aboshaiqah, 2016; Červený et al., 2022). It also requires the empowerment and engagement of patients, families, and communities as active partners in their own mental health and well-being, by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources to make informed decisions and adopt healthy behaviors (Yearwood et al., 2006; Aboshaiqah, 2016; Červený et al., 2022).

Finally, the review underscores the need for a paradigm shift in the nursing education and practice in Saudi Arabia, from a biomedical and disease-oriented model to a biopsychosocial and person-centered model of mental health care (Kahraman et al., 2024; Marrone, 2016; Abalos-Fabia et al., 2019). This shift requires the integration of cultural competence concepts, skills, and values into the undergraduate and postgraduate nursing curricula, as well as the continuing professional development programs for nurses (Pearson et al., 2007a; Mujallad, 2023; Oikarainen et al., 2019). It also requires the development of the necessary attitudes, behaviors, and competencies of nurses towards culturally competent mental health care, such as empathy, respect, compassion, cultural humility, and reflective practice (Pearson et al., 2007b; Radhamony et al., 2021; Karout et al., 2013).

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this systematic review provides a timely and relevant synthesis of the current evidence on the contributions of Saudi nursing in embracing cultural diversity and providing culturally competent mental health services, in alignment with Vision 2030's priorities. The findings highlight the challenges and opportunities of cultural diversity in the Saudi nursing workforce, the enablers and barriers to the development and implementation of culturally informed mental health interventions by nurses, and the effectiveness of various strategies for enhancing the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care. The review also identifies the gaps and opportunities for future research, policy, and practice to support the empowerment of nurses as leaders in providing culturally informed mental health services in Saudi Arabia.

To optimize the cultural competence of nurses in mental health care, the review recommends the development of more rigorous and longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact and sustainability of culturally informed interventions, the establishment of comprehensive and evidence-based policies and guidelines to support their integration into nursing education, practice, and research, and the design of innovative and evidence-based strategies to enhance the cultural competence of nurses, based on their individual and organizational needs and preferences. The review also emphasizes the importance of adopting a collaborative and integrated approach to culturally competent mental health care, which addresses the social determinants of health and engages patients, families, and communities as active partners in their own well-being.

By leveraging the unique strengths and contributions of nursing, and by aligning them with the Vision 2030 goals and priorities, Saudi Arabia can make significant progress towards improving the mental health and well-being of its diverse population, and achieving a more equitable, accessible, and culturally responsive healthcare system.

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