



Important Nursing Theory Problems, Obstacles, Developments, and Future Expectations

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Main Text

The nursing theory focuses on predicting, describing, analyzing, explaining, and justifying the nursing phenomenon. It offers the foundation of nursing practice while generating more knowledge (Yoost& Crawford, 2021). It provides direction that nurses need to develop to overcome issues and facilitate the achievement of the set objectives in the future. Nursing theories entail a set of interrelated definitions supporting a systematic view of a phenomenon of a predictive and explanatory nature (McFarland &Wehbe-Alamah, 2018). They are made up of assumptions based on models, ideas, descriptions, and principles. They provide tools supporting the identification of issues or problems. They enhance the development and assessment of health promotion and behaviors (Smith, 2019). Therefore, nursing theory offers concepts that explain relationships between different situations.

Nursing development occurs in four stages; theorizing, developing a syntax, development of the concept, and philosophical debate. The nursing theory supports the generation of new ideas and helps test phenomena of interest (Kaakinen et al., 2018). Therefore, it guides the research process and ensures that the most appropriate approach is used. It enhances the nursing practice while influencing the provision of better quality care to patients (McFarland &Wehbe-Alamah, 2018). The four main development theories are dependency, modernization, globalization, and worldsystems (Yoost& Crawford, 2021). A reciprocal relationship exists between practice and theory, and they have been obtained from two primary methods, namely inductive and deductive reasoning.

There are many issues during the development of nursing theories. The first problem is the belief in the presence of absolute truths regarding nursing and the perception that the truth is always available (Hockenberry & Wilson, 2018). The belief hinders nurses from questioning the theory and helps identify areas requiring improvement. Since no research is perfect, every theory can be improved by supporting better research and incorporating more ideas. Nurses must strive to understand the argument behind a theory and avoid following the provided guidelines blindly.

The second problem is a poor understanding of the functions and definition of theory. Researchers can sometimes lack sufficient knowledge of existing nursing theory. Failure to understand the functions of a given theory properly makes it difficult to apply in the right manner and affects the obtained outcome.

Another issue is the notion suggesting that there only exists a single nursing theory that would account for every nursing activity. The belief or feelings that every professional member must agree on theories that need to be used (Giddens, 2019). The belief encourages conflicts and disagreement, particularly when members have varying understanding and perceptions (Stegen& Sowerby, 2018). Issues arise since professionals can disagree on the most appropriate theories that should be applied based on the situation (Ellis, 2019). The other issue is poor empirical validation of developed theories. Failures during the validation process or ineffective validations affect the understanding of the theory and hinder its application (Winters, 2021).

Failure to provide room for modification is another issue affecting the development of nursing theories. No theory can be applied in every situation. Therefore, every theory has shortcomings that need improvement to attain better outcomes (Garmy et al., 2021). Failure to enable modifications hinders a given theory's wider application or effectiveness. Any theory that does not support modification can become obsolete or irrelevant if better approaches are developed (Watson, 2018). Another issue that emerges is the failure to develop an effective theory and the inability to relate it to clinical practice (Bittencourt et al., 2018). Every theory needs to focus on a specific clinical practice and strive to provide a solution to an existing problem.

Theory, practice, and research are interrelated since they complement and support each other. The three depend on each other to support the delivery of quality care to patients (Roy, 2018). Practice and theory enable researchers to acquire better skills, knowledge, and

attitudes to attain optimal care (Kongsuwan, 2020). Issues arise if nursing professionals cannot put the learned theory into practice. The problem hinders their ability to deliver the necessary care to the patient (Kitson, 2018). Many pitfalls and obstacles exist in health care centers and clinical settings that affect delivering effective and quality patient care (Stegen & Sowerby, 2018). Although some nursing professionals can define theories, they cannot apply them in diverse health-related situations.

Many factors influence the creation of theory-practice gaps, including poor workplace environment, experience, system inadequacies, poor collaboration among professionals, resource restrictions, and poor motivation (Foster et al., 2020). The development and implementation of the nursing theory are usually faced with many challenges. A major challenge is a lack of trust among practitioners in clinical competence (Yip, 2021). Practitioners cannot cooperate or work together if they cannot trust one another. Patients can doubt the ability of nurses to meet their expectations (Robinson-Lane, 2021). Distrust among nurses can encourage resistance and persistent disagreement affecting the quality of care to patients. Distrust creates an unfavorable working environment that hinders the effective utilization of knowledge in theory.

The development of nursing theories is usually faced with many problems. Some theories are abstract and complex, making it difficult for many health professionals to understand, interpolate and implement them (Grove & Gray, 2018). Poor understanding of existing theories makes it difficult to understand where they need to be applied. Therefore, many professionals fail to understand nursing theories and end up using them in the wrong situations. Poor guidance and education affect the ability of novice nurses to utilize nursing theories in practice (Arnold, & Boggs, 2019). The complexity of theories creates a practice gap where many nurses fail to apply the necessary theories when serving patients. Various factors usually obstruct the development of nursing theories. Poor or lack of perceived professional support is a major challenge in developing nursing theories (Hoeck & Delmar, 2018). Problems affecting the ability of nurses to collaborate limit their teamwork and guidance.

Nurses are expected to share ideas and support each other. Less experienced nurses depend on advanced nurses for guidance and support (McEwan & Wills, 2021). Poor support from advanced nurses is a major challenge in developing nursing theories since novice nurses lack the necessary skills to attain the expected outcome (Younas & Quennell, 2019). Whether actual or perceived, poor support is associated with many challenges and hinders practicing evidence-based practice guided by theory.

Nursing theory development is a complex process requiring the consideration of diverse factors and the utilization of knowledge. Insufficient learning and teaching process affects nurses' knowledge while limiting the acquired skills (Yayla, 2019). Poor coaching and assistance affect the ability of nursing to attain the most appropriate evidence-based practice (Stegen & Sowerby, 2018). Nursing is a dynamic field requiring regular updating of skills and knowledge to continue offering quality care to patients (Black, 2019). Failure to maintain regular updating of information can make it difficult to apply nursing theories in the best way possible.

Another challenge in developing and utilizing nursing theories is the variation between operating in a real clinical situation and a simulated world. Technological advancements have increased simulations during the learning process (Mudd et al., 2020). Although the advancement has many positive implications, it has shortcomings, particularly in utilizing nursing theories (McEwan & Wills, 2021). It sometimes becomes difficult for nurses to apply what they learned in a real situation due to the variation in the environment and expectations (Reed, 2020). Since every situation is different, nurses face problems applying the learned theories when serving patients in different clinical settings.

Nursing is an area of knowledge or pre-paradigmatic field that requires utilizing the best knowledge. Nurses must understand and learn how to utilize diverse models to realize the expected objectives (Masters, 2018). Since every model is different and specific, extensive knowledge and experience are expected to utilize and implement nursing theories (Chinn et al., 2021). Moreover, developing concepts and theories requires extensive experience (Butts & Rich, 2021). Therefore, it requires effective cooperation and collaboration of nursing leaders to develop and implement nursing theories.

Generalizing issues in nursing theory are impossible since situations tend to change and evolve from time to time. For instance, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has created a new situation that was never realized in the past (Touhy & Jett, 2021). Nursing theories could address issues in the new situation due to varying expectations (Venvertloh, 2019). The new situation has called for improved critical thinking and solutions to address the emerging issues (Peterson & Bredow, 2019). Nurses would not depend entirely on books but needed to focus on developing better solutions (Jeffries, 2021). Since the virus is new and is yet to be understood fully, critical thinking and seniority are necessary to handle the situation and provide the best care to patients (Griffith & Tengahan, 2020). The need to promote nursing safety emerged to limit the rate of infections among health care providers.

The future direction of nursing theory focuses on enhancing confidence, encouragement, and reflective time to enhance the reconciliation of care experiences (Stanhope & Lancaster, 2019). It is becoming more important to enhance thought development to improve the nursing profession while promoting the quality of life and professional caring (Venvertloh, 2019). Ideas must be relevant to life, creative, and free-flowing during nursing theory development. Future issues that need to be improved are confidence, trust, commitment, teamwork, determination, and encouragement.

Lack of consistency in providing information and managing the situation is a major issue affecting nursing theory. There exist inconsistencies between general clinics, primary healthcare, and hospitals (Roy, 2019). The variation makes it difficult to attain consistency when educating patients regarding issues affecting their health (Billings & Halstead, 2019). The future direction is to promote consistency and ensure that patients are given similar education. Provided information must be effective and evidence-based to attain better outcomes in the future (Stanhope & Lancaster, 2019). It is important to streamline patient teaching while streamlining the need for patient teaching. Nursing theory must

always focus on addressing issues affecting patients and caregivers. It should improve the workplace environment while encouraging providing the best care to patients. It should improve the ability to identify weak areas and establish effective solutions.

Future nursing concepts must support robotic nursing at more effective and robust levels while enhancing critical thinking. It is important to consider improving critical thinking skills to promote human interventions (Jairath et al., 2018). The future calls for better structuring professional education, practice, and research. Since the demand for better healthcare services is rising, offering better evaluation, interventions, and nursing care assessments is necessary.

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