

Critical Thinking in the Nursing Profession: Analysis with a Socratic Method and Nurse Theorist Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Critical thinking skills are increasingly imperative skills in the nursing profession. Both the Socratic method and nursing theorist philosophy can lead to enhance critical skills. The Socratic method has been rooted in ancient Greek Philosophy, whereas nursing theorist philosophy in the 21st century. This paper discusses critical thinking in the nursing profession and compares the critical thinking concept with the Socratic Method and nurse theorist philosophy. The prime aim of this study is to compare which method is effectively utilized in the nursing profession. The literature pertinent to the topic was searched using the database library, including PubMed, BioMed, Google Scholar, PakMediNet, and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature CINAHL. Literature was searched using keywords including Socratic method, nurse theorist philosophy, critical thinking skills, nursing education, and nursing clinical practice. The full-text article was included in the study. Relevant original articles, systemic reviews, quasi-experimental design, philosophical papers, and cross-sectional studies focusing on nurses' critical thinking skills, the Socratic Method, and nurse theorist philosophy were included. The study analysis portrayed Socratic questioning as primarily embedded in critical thinking concepts which nurses utilized in theoretical knowledge. The Socratic Method is explicitly known as the student-centered method that probes critical thinking in classroom teachings. Critical thinking has become vital in professional accountability and excellent nursing care. Nurse theorists have generally employed critical thinking skills to obtain the maximum patient care outcome. In conclusion, the Socratic method increases critical thinking in academia while nursing's theorist philosophy in nursing clinical practice.

KEYWORDS: Critical thinking, Nursing, Nursing theory, Socratic Method.

INTRODUCTION

The Socratic method is suited for classroom learning as it enhances critical thinking (CT) skills and self-reflection [1]. It is demonstrated that the teachers have effectively applied Socratic questioning in education to develop CT skills in students [2]. Socratic inquiry can be utilized robustly in nursing students to raise critical CT skills [3]. Furthermore, for formulating the nursing process in a clinical setting, CT skills are relatively important [4]. It is exhibited that CT encourages developing practical learning and self-directed learning with a simulation that significantly improves the CT components, including personal characteristics, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, self-management, and technical skills among nurses [5].

Furthermore, it is established by current research that problem-based learning is an exceedingly effective

instructional strategy that profoundly enhances CT [6]. It is affirmed by the present study that clinical decision-making skills have been improved substantially by utilizing CT among nurses, guaranteeing the quality of nursing care [7]. Therefore, CT is reasonably practical for nursing education and can be used for better patient outcomes. Additionally, it can boost higher-order thinking abilities like analyses, evaluation, and creation and improve self-confidence, maturity, and tolerance. CT has tremendous advantages for individuals becoming innovative and creative and dealing the difficult circumstances while imparting knowledge in a real class setting [8]. Moreover, academic achievement is significant for the future triumph of the students.

Consequently, its failure can lead to a decline in academic achievement, and it has a detrimental effect on both personal and professional life. As a result, CT is one of the foremost factors for accomplishing the maximum educational goals

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and a crucial element for clinical decision-making, nursing practice, and nursing education simultaneously. Nurses should learn critical thinking skills due to specific inevitable reasons. Firstly, critical thinking is a pretty necessary reason for cultivating problem-solving skills. Besides, problem-solving skills in nursing education are documented as essential for making precise decisions in an educational setting. Secondly, nurses must possess problem-solving skills that are incredibly imperative competency as nurses have to make substantial decisions about critical conditions related to patients individually and speedily. Current research has depicted a statistically significant association between critical thinking and decision-making skills [9].

Most importantly, CT has been extensively acknowledged as an outcome of higher education [10]. CT has tremendous importance in nursing education because it supports set priorities and devising decisions in surprising nursing circumstances. CT is recognized as a core nursing skill, requires in both classroom teaching as well as in clinical practice [11]. According to nurse theorist philosophy, CT is a core skill for dealing with critical patients and emergency situations as nurses have to take quick decisions to tackle critical situations [12].

Therefore, the study aimed to discuss critical thinking in the nursing profession and compares the critical thinking concept with the Socratic Method and nurse theorist philosophy.

METHODOLOGY

The literature relevant to the topic was searched using the database library, including PubMed, BioMed, Google Scholar, PakMediNet, and Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature CINAHL. Literature was searched using keywords including Socratic method, nurse theorist philosophy, critical thinking skills, nursing education, and nursing clinical practice. The full-text article was included.

Relevant original articles, systemic reviews, quasi-experimental design, philosophy papers, and cross-sectional studies focused on critical thinking skills among nurses, the Socratic Method, and nurse theorist philosophy published from 2006 to 2022 were included as it is current literature. The articles published before 2006 were not included because it was old literature.

Roots of critical thinking in the Socratic Method:

On top of that, the earliest evidence of critical thinking embedded in the Western school of thought in ancient Greek philosophy is the teaching of Socrates, compiled by Plato in the form of dialogues called Socratic questioning [13]. Moreover, the Socratic Method is incredibly effective and conclusive for enhancing critical thinking skills, and it is extensively used across the globe as a highly successful pedagogy. The Socratic inquiry is a preferably robust and suitable technique for probing in nursing classrooms and clinical settings. As a result, it boosts critical thinking noticeably, which positively impacts patient care. A nurse educator can employ Socratic questioning to attain the maximum outcomes in education. It can lead to the

development of a higher-order level of cognitive skills among students when they use their mental ability to precisely responding the questioning [14]. In recent times, it is equally important that nurses have a profound understanding of the Socratic Method as nurse leaders inculcate it in the nursing curriculum [15]. The Socratic Method enables sensible decision-making, accomplished by reasoning that promotes incredible thinking [15]. Both teachers and students interested in probing thinking in-depth must formulate the Socratic Method that may probe critical thinking profoundly. Not only critical thinking but also Socratic questioning shares mutual conclusions. The paramount goal of critical thinking is to generate an advanced level of thinking that measure a much more rational direction. Socratic questioning is primarily comprised of critical thinking concepts.

Origin of critical thinking skills in nurse theorist philosophy:

Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, argued significantly that nurses must utilize the brain, heart, and hands to make a healing environment to care for the patient body, mind, and soul. This tenet of Florence Nightingale provides insight into critical thinking for nurses while delivering patient care to maintain body, mind, and soul [20]. The notion of Florence Nightingale for utilization of the brain for the attainment of maximum outcomes for patients certainly increases the critical thinking skills in a clinical setting.

According to Imogene King, a nurse theorist, critical thinking continuously remains a fundamental part of the nursing perspective. It is further highlighted that CT is exemplified by utilizing the terms such as analyzing, synthesis, verifying, and interpretation. Kings connected CT to mental acts of judgment like perception, communication, and decision-making, which are equally incredible competencies in nursing that help to endorse quality nursing care. Kings added nursing theories and their principles to the nursing process. It provides a rationale for carrying out nursing care according to the nursing process, including assessing, planning, implementation, and evaluation [21]. Levine's nurse theorist illustrates that nurse develops their scientific knowledge and creative capabilities to give nursing care to patients using the process of integrating abilities through thinking critically [22]. Levine's and Imogene King's premise about CT is suitable for nurses for clinical practice.

Neuman system model describes the structure of CT, and it permitted reconceptualization when clinical conditions endured sudden change. Due to the swift alteration in clinical circumstances, the Neuman system model consents widely to identify the interrelation between recognized systems, parts, subparts, and atmosphere that can lead to subsequent and logical nursing actions. Consequently, the conceptualized nursing phenomena encourage effective CT process, including application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and it further classifies the nursing process into nursing diagnosis, nursing goals, and nursing conclusions to formulate format owing to decisive CT and decision making

that interprets to nursing action [23].

As far as critical thinking is concerned, Orem's self-care deficit nursing theory sturdily underlined four structured cognitive operations such as diagnostic, prescriptive, regulatory, and control. Firstly, in diagnostic procedures, a therapeutic relationship has been established. Furthermore, it is exhibited that the investigation of assessment data caused the diagnosis of the kinds of self-care demands. Likewise, individual characteristics, for instance, intelligence, skill performance, and readiness have been assessed. Secondly, the physiological process has been ranked as a top priority in prescriptive operations. Thirdly, the regulatory phase involves designing, planning, and producing the regulatory nursing systems. Fourthly, in control operations, it is established that evaluations happen in the control phase [23].

From Jean Watson's nurse theorist viewpoint about CT, caring is the essence of the nursing profession and certainly involves healing the patient, who ultimately reflects the caring perspective. Nurses have to tackle the dire conditions in the clinical setting and need to apply CT to make quick decisions for the progress of patient health. Nurses require critical reflection to tackle complex health-related situations [24].

DISCUSSION

It is established by current research that learning is a central need of human beings. Learning is the process that is genuinely connected with the transmission of information vigorously. Hence, for effective learning, critical thinking skills are highly essential which increases cognitive ability extensively. The study findings align with a study carried out in Egypt revealed that CT increases cognitive learning ability which ensures academic performance [25].

It is identified in the present analysis that critical thinking is a vital skill as well as an analysis skill that permits students to learn. CT enables the student to be a problem solver, innovative, creative, communicative, and collaborative as well. These study findings are parallel with a study employed in Turkey disclosed that having robust CT skills in nursing students can lead to increased problem-solving skills and motivation as well [26].

It is documented by current research that nursing is an exceedingly challenging profession that requires substantial critical thinking skills to care the patients effectively [27].

Consequently, it is greatly important to equip students with critical thinking skills to tackle problems efficiently [28]. It is depicted by the present analysis that higher-order thinking skills are greatest correlated under the umbrella of 21st fundamental skills. Subsequently, nursing students must be equipped with higher-order thinking skills to face critical conditions in the future. It is indicated by recent research that critical thinking skills develop the ability to examine information objectively, think rationally, and make logical judgments.

These study findings are congruent with a study accomplished in Egypt that portrayed critical thinking skills are extremely important skills of the 21st century. It is further recommended that nursing students must be equipped with CT skills to take wise decisions during critical conditions [29]. On the other hand, it is documented that Socratic inquiry is truly helpful for the development of CT in classroom teaching as teaching pedagogy. These study results are in line with a study carried out in Malaysia established that the Socratic method of questioning can be utilized effectively in classroom teaching [30].

CONCLUSION

The study findings concluded that Socratic inquiry is an appropriate approach for enhancing critical thinking skills in classroom teaching; however, nurse theorist philosophy increases critical thinking skills which is highly beneficial for nurses to tackle critical circumstances in the clinical setting.

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Badil: Designed the study, and scientific writing.

Najma Naz: Proofreading and critical analysis.

Mehrin Kousar: Literature research.

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