

Understanding the Nature of Nursing Phenomenon

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INTRODUCTION

A phenomenon is a real-life noticeable event that can be explained by human perceptions. Phenomenon exist in the real world...but not recognized to exist by any humans or named by scientists, it is the role of science to discover, identify, and delineate general features of phenomenon in order to gain systematic descriptions and explanations about them (Kim, 2010). Within current research, ...phenomena have been predominately described and understood through quantified articulations that give the reader a structural understanding of the phenomenon, but the more embodied or “*contextual*” human qualities of a phenomenon are often not visible (Wertz, et al., 2011). Phenomenon offers a variety of dimensions that are embedded with specific meanings in its sensible context. Such dimensions are subject to personal interpretations and must be unraveled using phenomenological investigation to understand the complexities of human experience.

Exploring the nature of phenomenon in nursing discipline is essential in order to uncover the hidden meanings of individual human structures of experience. In this article, the nature of nursing phenomena are explored. It also presents the definitions and meanings of the specific terms necessary to understand the context of the phenomenon. The terms discussed in this article are: *phenomenon*, *concept*, *theory* and *nursingmetaparadigm*. The contents of this article are freely taken from various scholars to provide readers a clear understanding on what nursing phenomenon entails.

DISCUSSION

The “*what is it like*” or the “*unsaid*” aspects of such human phenomena are not clear to the reader when proxies are used to “*account for*” a variety of situated conditions (Wertz et al., 2011). To better understand what constitute a phenomenon, it is important to understand the meaning of the word (Moran and Burson, n.d.). According to Merriam-Webster, *phenomenon* is defined as “a fact or event of scientific interest susceptible to scientific description and explanation; an exceptional, unusual, or abnormal person, things or occurrence.” Moreover, phenomenon can be a basis to develop a clear picture of structured human experience. Such human experience are grounded with vast arrays of concepts that can strengthen theoretical framework.

Theories provide a framework for explaining and predicting phenomena (Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment, n.d., para.1). *Concept*, on the other hand, refers to “a term or label that describes a phenomenon or a group of phenomena” (Meleis, 2007). A concept of...phenomenon is articulated in a symbolic construct, having a semantic value, formulated through the workings of scientist’s mind (Kim, 2010). Understanding the nature of the phenomenon can yield several concepts of human experiences and can deepen our thereoritical understanding about the phenomenon.

Nursing phenomenon, on the other hand, is described as “a type of factor influencing health status with specific characteristics: aspect of health of relevance to nursing practice” (International Classification of Nursing Practice [ICNP], n.d., para.1). The phenomenon in nursing discipline is distinct because of its strong connections to client outcomes or client-related goals. These phenomena in nursing discipline, such as client-nurse phenomena, focus more on health, as the major phenomenon of interest, and brings a form of understanding to improve patient care practices. To differentiate

client-nurse phenomena, in terms of their meaning-orientations in developing theoretical formulations (Kim, 2010, p.107), the researcher...(must) balance the texture and structure in describing the phenomenon (Wertz, et al., 2011). This process is fundamental to differentiate nursing phenomenon from other non-nursing phenomenon. According to Moran and Burson (n.d.), the phenomena within the realm of nursing are complex in nature. Phenomena incorporates humans and their environment and relate to all aspect of human function as an individual, as family member, or member of community – within the context of physical or biological environment and human-made environments of norms, attitudes and policy (ICNP, n.d.). To further understand the nature of nursing phenomena, one must fully recognize nursing in general and nursing practice in particular along its fundamental metaparadigm.

The term *metaparadigm* has gained usage in the nursing literature and is recognized as the generic feature of nursing science. In Fawcett's (2005, p.4) exemplar, she defined metaparadigm as "as the global concepts that identify the phenomenon of central interest to a discipline, the global prepositions that describe the concepts and the global prepositions that state the relations between or among the concept." On the other hand, *nursing metaparadigm* refers to a set of patterns, models, and concepts used to show a clear relationship among the existing theoretical exemplars in nursing science. At present, many nursing theories are focused on relationships among four major concepts (Nursing Theories, 2010). These four major concepts of nursing metaparadigm, which provide theoretical framework for nursing, are the person, health, environment and nursing. Because concepts are so abstract at the metaparadigm level, many conceptual models have been developed from metaparadigm of nursing. Subsequently, multiple theories have been derived from each conceptual model in an effort to describe, explain, and predict the phenomena within the model (Masters, n.d.).

Furthermore, the grand theories of nursing as well as its conceptual models provide a comprehensive guides for nursing practice. According to Alligood (2006), They are organizing frameworks that guide the reasoning process in professional nursing practice. At the level of the conceptual model, each metaparadigm concepts is defined and described in a manner unique to the model, with the model providing an alternative way to view the concepts considered important to discipline (Fawcett, 2005, pp.17-18). Understanding these four major concepts as well as the different theories in nursing are keys to undertand the complex nature of nursing phenomenon.

In her article, "*Phenomenon Development from Practice to Research*," Pate (2011) stressed that one of the most prudent and efficient ways of conquering the task of developing new knowledge is the utilization of practice to find phenomena. In his exemplar, he expounds on the topic by explicating the generation of new knowledge in nursing discipline. To exemplify his respective points, Pate believes that new nursing knowledge was developed by constructing a practice situation, identifying a phenomenon of interest, grounding the phenomenon in the focus of the discipline, and defining concepts related to the phenomenon. Such evolutionary process is fundamental for generating new information necessary for foundation of future research.

CONCLUSION

There is a wide variety of perspectives and frameworks from a single phenomenon as demonstrated by the descriptions of the concepts, theories and metaparadigm in nursing. Various phenomena represents different realities. Nursing phenomena address different aspects of nursing in general and nursing practice in particular. For this reason, the complexity of phenomena presented in this article should not be viewed as arduous, but rather as way that can provide insight into different areas of nursing discipline necessary to describe, explain, and predcit client-related outcomes. In addition, understanding the nature of nursing phenomenon is essential to extend nurses' knowledge beyond the boundaries of his or her clinical expertise. Such explicit understanding facilitates critical thinking, and advanced clinical decision-making that is basis for advanced nursing practice.

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