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PROMOÇÃO DO CONFORTO EM ENFERMAGEM: UMA ANÁLISE CRÍTICA DA TEORIA DE KOLCABA CONSIDERANDO O MODELO DE CHINN E KRAMER

PROMOTING COMFORT IN NURSING: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF KOLCABA'S THEORY CONSIDERING THE CHINN AND KRAMER MODEL

LA PROMOCIÓN DEL CONFORT EN ENFERMERÍA: UN ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO DE LA TEORÍA DE KOLCABA CONSIDERANDO EL MODELO DE CHINN Y KRAMER

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RESUMO

Introdução: A “Teoria do Conforto” de Kolcaba, analisada por meio do modelo de Chinn e Kramer, representa uma abordagem analítica da enfermagem. Fundamentada em diversas influências filosóficas, a teoria abrange as dimensões física, psicospiritual e sociocultural do conforto.

Objetivo: Analisar criticamente a teoria, com o objetivo de revelar suas nuances, aplicações e relevância na enfermagem contemporânea.

Métodos: Ensaio teórico. O processo de análise foi conduzido com base nos componentes descritivos e de reflexão crítica. A teoria foi avaliada através de duas fases principais: descrição da teoria e reflexão crítica.

Resultados: A análise destaca a essência holística da teoria e o papel central da relação enfermeiro-paciente. Os resultados são discutidos com base na clareza, simplicidade, aplicabilidade e relevância social.

Conclusão: A “Teoria do Conforto” de Kolcaba contribui para o cuidado centrado no doente e influencia a educação e a prática em enfermagem. A análise sugere a necessidade de exames críticos contínuos para assegurar sua evolução no contexto dinâmico da enfermagem.

Palavras-chave: conforto do paciente; teoria de enfermagem; enfermagem; enfermagem holística

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Kolcaba's “Theory of Comfort,” analyzed through Chinn and Kramer's model, represents an analytical approach to nursing. Rooted in diverse philosophical influences, the theory encompasses physical, psychospiritual, and sociocultural dimensions of comfort.

Objective: To critically analyze the theory, aiming to uncover its nuances, applications, and relevance in contemporary nursing.

Methods: Theoretical essay. The analysis process was conducted based on descriptive and critical reflection components. The theory was evaluated through two main phases: description of the theory and critical reflection.

Results: The analysis underscores the theory's holistic essence and the central role of the nurse-patient relationship. Results are discussed based on clarity, simplicity, applicability, and social relevance.

Conclusion: Kolcaba's “Theory of Comfort” contributes to patient-centered care and influences nursing education and practice. The analysis suggests the need for ongoing critical examinations to ensure its evolution within the dynamic landscape of nursing.

Keywords: patient comfort; nursing theory; nursing; holistic nursing

RESUMEN

Introducción: La “Teoría del Conforto” de Kolcaba, analizada a través del modelo de Chinn y Kramer, representa un enfoque analítico de la enfermería. Basada en diversas influencias filosóficas, la teoría abarca las dimensiones física, psicoespiritual y sociocultural del confort.

Objetivo: Analizar críticamente la teoría, con el fin de revelar sus matices, aplicaciones y relevancia en la enfermería contemporánea.

Métodos: Ensayo teórico. El proceso de análisis se llevó a cabo basándose en los componentes descriptivos y de reflexión crítica. La teoría se evaluó a través de dos fases principales: Descripción de la teoría y Reflexión crítica.

Resultados: El análisis destaca la esencia holística de la teoría y el papel central de la relación enfermero-paciente. Los resultados se discuten en función de la claridad, simplicidad, aplicabilidad y relevancia social.

Conclusión: La “Teoría del Conforto” de Kolcaba contribuye a la atención centrada en el paciente e influye en la educación y la práctica de la enfermería. El análisis sugiere la necesidad de exámenes críticos continuos para garantizar su evolución dentro del dinámico panorama de la enfermería.

Palabras clave: comodidad del paciente; teoría de enfermería; enfermería; enfermería holística

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INTRODUCTION

In the complex landscape of clinical practice, nursing theories play a crucial role as both creative and systematic frameworks. They provide valuable insights into various healthcare phenomena by synthesizing knowledge, ideas, and experiences. These theories aim to clarify and improve our understanding of patient care dynamics (Alligood, 2021). When examining Katharine Kolcaba's (2003) "Comfort Theory" in the context of existing knowledge and contemporary healthcare literature, it is imperative to position this theoretical framework within the broader landscape of healthcare literature and existing knowledge.

Kolcaba's conceptualization of the comfort paradigm (K. Kolcaba, 1991, 1994, 1995, 2003; K. Kolcaba et al., 2006; K. Y. Kolcaba & Kolcaba, 1991) marks a significant milestone in the evolution of nursing philosophy. A cursory examination of contemporary literature highlights a growing acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of patient care. Recent research emphasizes the inadequacies of traditional paradigms, which primarily address physical well-being, advocating instead for holistic approaches that encompass the psychospiritual and sociocultural aspects of comfort.

"Comfort Theory" has emerged as a robust theoretical framework for assessing comfort needs across diverse populations. Its versatility lies in its capacity to guide various studies, accommodating different approaches, objectives, settings, and age groups (Algabri et al., 2023). Within the realm of nursing, this theory holds particular significance as it facilitates several key functions: identifying nursing diagnoses while considering comfort dimensions, prescribing nursing interventions based on identified comfort needs, delineating patterns of comfort and discomfort pre and post-intervention implementation, pinpointing experiences of comfort and discomfort associated with specific therapies, and utilizing specialized instruments for comfort assessment and measurement (Dayse e Silva & Souza Nascimento, 2023).

By highlighting the symbiotic connection between nursing theory and its practical application, this article underscores the importance of delving into and implementing Kolcaba's "Comfort Theory" within the ever-evolving domain of healthcare delivery. This study extends upon the foundational contributions of Kolcaba and aims to enrich the ongoing dialogue surrounding patient-centered care. Through a synthesis of perspectives from diverse sources, including seminal works, empirical investigations, and scholarly analyses, our objective is to situate this theory within the dynamic framework of modern nursing. The decision to center this study on "Comfort Theory" is grounded in its significant implications for nursing practice.

"Comfort", as delineated by Kolcaba, extends beyond basic physical wellness, encompassing the psychospiritual and sociocultural facets of patient care. This holistic theory offers a comprehensive framework aligning closely with the fundamental principles of nursing practice.

Explicitly outlining the objectives of this article is crucial to provide readers with a clear roadmap for their exploration. To this end, our primary goals are to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Kolcaba's "Comfort Theory", to explore its practical applications across diverse healthcare settings, and to evaluate its ongoing relevance in shaping modern nursing practices. Through these purposes, we aim to offer readers a nuanced understanding of the significance of "Comfort Theory" and its potential to enhance patient care outcomes.

The rationale for this choice is grounded in the necessity to address the multifaceted needs of patients, aiming to provide a nuanced comprehension that surpasses conventional paradigms. By highlighting the significance of comfort, this study endeavors to make a substantial contribution to the discourse on patient-centered care, reaffirming the enduring relevance and practical implications of Kolcaba's "Comfort Theory" in shaping contemporary nursing methodologies. Consequently, this article embarks on a journey not only to delve into the theoretical foundations of Kolcaba's theory but also to offer substantive contributions to the ongoing discourse within the nursing community. By contextualizing this study within the current landscape of nursing literature and delineating clear objectives, our aim is to furnish readers with a coherent and insightful examination of this theory role in contemporary nursing practices.

1. METHODS

This study is a theoretical essay. The process of analysis was conducted based on the descriptive and critical reflection components proposed by Chinn and Kramer (2022). The theory was assessed through two main phases:

1. Theory Description: Identifying the goals, concepts, definitions, relationships, structure, and assumptions.
2. Critical Reflection: Examining the theory's clarity, simplicity, generality, accessibility, and importance.

2. DEVELOPMENT

The conceptual and theoretical models discussed by Chinn & Kramer (2011) and Tomey & Alligood (2002) play a pivotal role in empowering nurses to articulate their professional beliefs and navigate their conduct within a moral and ethical framework. By providing a structured means of organizing thoughts on clinical nursing practice, these models equip nurses with the comprehension necessary to exercise professional autonomy. Linked to this, a nursing theory, as defined by Meleis (2018), serves as a conceptual framework aimed at elucidating aspects of nursing reality, with the objective of describing phenomena, elucidating relationships between them, predicting outcomes, and prescribing appropriate nursing interventions. Together, these

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components form a cohesive foundation for nurses to understand, articulate, and apply theoretical concepts in their professional practice, ultimately enhancing the quality of patient care.

Recognizing the potential contribution of Katharine Kolcaba's "Theory of Comfort" to the concept's relevance in nursing practice, it is imperative to conduct a thorough examination of this theoretical model.

According to Chinn et al. (2022), the processes of description and critical reflection are essential for analyzing theory and determining its utility or potential for modification to enhance effectiveness. These authors emphasize that theories offer more comprehensive guidance than isolated research findings, underscoring the importance of considering the context of care and allowing for personalized care practices tailored to each person's unique circumstances.

In accordance with Chinn et al.'s (2022, p. 160) definition of empirical theory as "a creative and rigorous structuring of ideas that projects an experimental, intentional, and systematic view of phenomena," we will assess Kolcaba's theory based on the following descriptive components: objectives, concepts and definitions, relationships, structure, and assumptions.

Purpose

Kolcaba's Theory of Comfort arises from a synthesis of multiple philosophical viewpoints, integrating insights from a range of sources including Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, existential philosophy, and established nursing theories. Essentially, it aims to offer a comprehensive framework that acknowledges the intricate interplay among physical, psychospiritual, and sociocultural factors in promoting holistic patient well-being.

Concepts and Definitions

An exploration of Kolcaba's "Theory of Comfort" delves into fundamental concepts and definitions intrinsic to the framework. At its essence, the theory defines comfort as the immediate and improved state of well-being achieved through the alleviation of physical, psychospiritual, and sociocultural discomforts (Kolcaba, 1994).

Relationships

Within this theory, the relationships between concepts exhibit intricacy and interconnectedness. The dynamic interplay among relief, ease, and transcendence, alongside the influence of environmental factors, underscores the theory's holistic nature. At the core of this framework lies the nurse-patient relationship.

Structure

The structural foundation revolves around the patient and the nurse as collaborative participants in the pursuit of comfort. The attainment of transpersonal comfort necessitates the simultaneous presence and engagement of both within the caring moment.

Assumptions

Kolcaba's theory is founded on explicit suppositions that serve as guiding principles for its application in nursing practice. Central to these assumptions is the belief that caring constitutes a fundamental aspect of nursing, with the theory positing that nurses possess the capability to effectively demonstrate and enact caring behaviors in their interpersonal interactions (Kolcaba, 1994; Kolcaba et al., 2006). The "comfort processes", akin to Watson's "caritas processes", are deemed pivotal in facilitating healing, fostering wholeness, and contributing to the personal and collective evolution of individuals.

Furthermore, the theory assumes that a caring environment is one that nurtures potential, providing patients with the space to make choices that promote their well-being. It acknowledges the distinction between the science of caring and the science of curing, underscoring the complementary relationship between these two dimensions within the nursing profession (Kolcaba et al., 2006).

The "Theory of Comfort", while providing valuable insights into holistic patient care, acknowledges the potential challenges that professionals may face in fully comprehending and implementing its concepts. This recognition underscores the importance of cultivating a nuanced understanding of the theory's implicit definitions, prompting practitioners and researchers to engage in a thoughtful exploration of its relevance and applicability within diverse healthcare contexts.

By acknowledging these assumptions, healthcare practitioners gain insight into the philosophical foundations of the theory. This heightened awareness serves as a cornerstone for reflective practice, encouraging nurses to critically evaluate their own assumptions and biases in the delivery of patient care. Recognizing the nuanced nature of these assumptions nurtures a culture of continuous learning and adaptability within healthcare settings.

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3. COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

Guided by the model of Chinn and Kramer (2022), this section presents the critical analysis of the theory.

Clarity and conceptual definition: The theory's strength lies in its depiction of comfort across multiple dimensions. However, clarity could be enhanced by refining terminologies like "transcendence". Providing vivid exemplars and real-world scenarios would ensure a unified understanding among practitioners and scholars.

Simplicity and internal consistency: While the theory's holistic nature contributes to its depth, there exists an opportunity to streamline its taxonomy of comfort needs—relief, ease, and transcendence—without compromising intricacy. Balancing simplicity with depth ensures accessibility for those new to the nursing profession.

Generality: The theory demonstrates commendable generality, transcending diverse healthcare settings. Customizing certain aspects to specific contexts, such as mental health or palliative care, would enhance its relevance. The adaptability of comfort interventions to unique patient demographics ensures universal applicability while addressing specialized needs.

Accessibility: To optimize the incorporation of this theory into practice, prioritizing its approachability is key. We recommend presenting the theory in easily understandable, jargon-free language and providing supplementary educational resources such as interactive modules or workshops. By adopting these strategies, we can enhance comprehension and facilitate a smoother integration of the theory into nursing education and practice.

Importance: The theory's paramount importance in fostering patient-centered care and holistic well-being stands out as a commendable strength. Emphasizing its significance within the broader healthcare paradigm, particularly in improving patient outcomes, satisfaction, and overall healthcare quality, reinforces its stature among competing models.

Strengths and Weaknesses: Recognizing the theory's strengths, particularly its holistic nature and patient-centric focus, is essential. Identifying challenges, such as the intricate interplay of its components, presents opportunities for refinement. Leveraging strengths in promoting overall well-being while proactively addressing implementation challenges ensures a holistic approach to continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the exploration of Kolcaba's Theory of Comfort underscores the paramount importance of embracing a holistic approach to patient care.

Implications for practice and future research: This analysis suggests that prioritizing comfort alongside traditional treatments can enhance nursing effectiveness, especially in chronic or terminal cases. Future research should focus on developing measurable indicators for the "transcendence" dimension to further validate the theory in diverse clinical settings. Additionally, integrating this framework into nursing curricula can better prepare future professionals for holistic care.

Limitations: One limitation of this theoretical analysis is its reliance on a specific evaluative model (Chinn and Kramer), which may overlook other perspectives. Furthermore, the inherent subjectivity of the "comfort" concept makes universal standardization challenging across different cultural backgrounds.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization, J.P. and R.O.; data curation, J.P. and R.O.; formal analysis, J.P. and R.O.; funding acquisition, J.P. and R.O.; investigation, J.P. and R.O.; methodology, J.P. and R.O.; project administration, J.P. and R.O.; resources, J.P. and R.O.; software, J.P. and R.O.; supervision, J.P. and R.O.; validation, J.P. and R.O.; visualization, J.P. and R.O.; writing – original draft, J.P. and R.O.; writing – review & editing, J.P. and R.O.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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