Benner’s Theory

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# Theory’s Background and Influential Factors

Benner's Novice to Expert theory is a concept of development of nursing skills and an understanding of the delivery of care at healthcare facilities (Oshvandi et al., 2016). The theory includes knowledge through education and experience. Influential factors of the theory are education, a multitude of experience, practical knowledge, and research (Oshvandi et al., 2016). Dr. Patricia Benner has explained her views in the theory that practical experience is the predominant feature of nurses to become an expert (Oshvandi et al., 2016). Experiences of five levels in nursing are explained in the theory (Oshvandi et al., 2016). Major influential factors of the theory are skills, experience, and expertise in the nursing practice (Thomas et al., 2015).

There are five levels of nursing experience:

1. Novice
2. Advanced Beginner
3. Competent
4. Proficient
5. Expert

**Novice**

These are the nurses having no experience in nursing practice. They have no skills for nursing practice. They need specific cases to learn and the rules are applied universally (Oshvandi et al., 2016). They observe and learn through critical situations and scenarios to gain experience (Oshvandi et al., 2016).

**Advanced Beginner**

These are the nurses having prior experiences of actual circumstances. They demonstrate and formulate the situations at healthcare facilities to recognize the actions (Munro, 2019). They display acceptable performance and start to formulate the guidelines based on actions (Oshvandi et al., 2016).

**Competent**

They have 2 to 3 years of experience in healthcare facilities. They have gained experience in actual and practical situations (Munro, 2019). They can take their decisions based on analytical thinking to achieve proficiency in their field.

**Proficient**

They have a holistic understanding of everyday situations at healthcare facilities. They learn from their experiences to become specialists and capable (Oshvandi et al., 2016). They have improved decision making regarding situations at healthcare facilities.

**Expert**

They have experience and are not dependent on rules and principles. They connect situations with rules to determine actions (Munro, 2019). They have good experience because of their background knowledge in nursing practice (Munro, 2019). Their practice is highly proficient and flexible.

**Underlying Assumptions**

For the transformation of a nurse from novice to expert level, the nurses must learn and adopt the situational practice to gain experience (Oshvandi et al., 2016). The theory has significantly provided information that a nurse has various levels of transition (Munro, 2019). The theory delivered information for the nursing practice that it requires knowledge, autonomy development, and learning leadership skills to advance in the nursing profession.

**Strengths of the Theory**

The theory was simple that describe different levels of practice and development of nursing very well. The theory explained the problem-solving behaviors from novice to expert level (Munro, 2019). It has provided complex interaction and insight for nursing practice into theoretical form (Oshvandi et al., 2016). The role of nurses and their expertise has been explained fairly. Educational and practical experience has been highlighted as a significant factor for nursing practice (Munro, 2019). The theory has used an interpretive approach and theoretical methods to measure outcomes of nursing care plans. The theory has highlighted that nursing practice needs five levels of experience and practical knowledge to become proficient in nursing (Munro, 2019). The theory guides nurses that to become an expert, prerequisite knowledge and situational experience is mandatory. Different levels of practice have been explained in various ways.

**Weaknesses of the Theory**

The theory emphasized the learning process through experience, whereas, without education, no nurse would be able to gain knowledge (Munro, 2019). Another weakness is related to direct patient care without education (Oshvandi et al., 2016). It has been evaluated through theory that hands-on experience that is also not achievable without schooling (Munro, 2019). The theory is lacking in a few operational features and definitions of nursing career (Thomas et al., 2015). The theory has provided a framework only and has not explained any quantitative application (Munro, 2019). The status of the implications of this data is difficult as one nurse expert in one specific area might be lacking in experience in other areas (Thomas et al., 2015). The stages of novice to expert level are poorly explained in evidence-based research and clinical practice (Thomas et al., 2015).

**Clinical Implications**

Nursing skills are significantly required for nurses to become proficient in their practice (Thomas et al., 2015). Skills and experience are a significant part of the nursing field. It is required to become excel in nursing practice. The role of nurses and their expertise has been explained as an important factor that can be gained through practice and experience (Thomas et al., 2015). Educational and practical experience has been highlighted as an important factor for nursing practice to deliver quality care to communities (Munro, 2019). The theory has used the interpretive approach that can help to measure patient outcomes (Thomas et al., 2015). Nurses can take advantage of the theory that can help them attain skills through experience (Thomas et al., 2015). The theoretical and practical experience can help them understand the levels of skills and practice (Thomas et al., 2015).

The theory has highlighted that nursing practice needs five levels of experience and practical knowledge to become an expert in delivering quality of care (Munro, 2019). The theory has provided the healthcare providers and nurses that to become expert, prerequisite knowledge and practical experience is mandatory (Thomas et al., 2015). Levels of practice have been explained in various ways to help nurses become experts in quality care (Thomas et al., 2015). The theory has provided evidence for the nursing practice that it needs skills, information and learning leadership skills to advance and progress in the nursing profession (Thomas et al., 2015). Through this theory, nurses can develop their decisions based on analytical thinking to achieve proficiency in their field.

**Example**

A 60-year-old FG male was presented with severe chest pain and a nurse BD was assigned with the patient with 5 other patients. BD noted initial assessments of the patient. Hello! I am BD recommended to be your nurse for tonight, how r you? I am not fine and have chest pain. Which part of your chest is more painful? The right side of my chest if hurting me. May I record your vitals? Yes, please and do something to relieve my chest pain. If you want, I can have hot packs that will help you in alleviating chest pain. No, I would be thankful if you can do anything that can relieve me of this pain.

Your physician has asked me for a blood report this evening (Munro, 2019). What kind of report? It is a routine checkup for your sodium and electrolyte level (Thomas et al., 2015). Blood was sent for reporting (Munro, 2019). What were my results, have you checked it? Yes, it was normal however, your sodium and cortisol level is low. Are you feeling good? Yes, I am good now. Here is a book for you and it will help you maintain your blood sodium and cortisol level (Munro, 2019). Oh, thank you it would help me to get my health back (Munro, 2019). Yes, though you will be discharged in the evening with some antibiotics and let me know if you have any concerns (Oshvandi et al., 2016). I am grateful that you were there to help me out. Thank you.

References

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