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Caring Behavior of Nurses in a Hospital: a Descriptive Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

The caring behavior of the nurses is the core of professional nursing practice and the culture of the nursing profession that affects the quality of service, patient satisfaction, patient health, and well-being. This study aims to analyze the caring behavior of nurses in a private hospital in Manado, Indonesia. Philosophical underpinning based on Husserlian's thought and descriptive phenomenological research design was used, with six participants in the hospital obtained through the snowball sampling technique. Collaizi's seven-step methodological interpretation was used in the analysis. This study found that nurses have seven caring behaviors: compassion, responsiveness, self-control, thoroughness, critical thinking, comforting, and educating. It is recommended that nurses maintain and improve their caring behavior, and for the next study, it is recommended to do the interview directly face-face

INTRODUCTION

The success of hospitals in providing health services is influenced by various factors, one of which is nursing services which are the spearhead of health services in hospitals. One form of nursing service is the caring behavior of nurses, which is the core of the professional nursing practice (Demur et al., 2019). Caring behavior is not passed down through genetic inheritance. It is passed down through the profession's culture as a distinctive means of existing in its surroundings. As a result, nursing has always taken a caring approach to treat other people (Watson, 1979).

Caring is fundamental and the core of nursing (Davidson et al., 2011b; Watson, 1979). Therefore, nursing professionals and healthcare management understand that caring in complex organizations facilitates excellent nursing care, healthcare delivery, and patient outcomes (Davidson et al., 2011b). Since nurses provide the majority of the patients' direct care (Modic, et al., 2016), it's not that doctors don't care; rather, the curative emphasis that comes with the practice of medicine might be understood as stressing cure at the expense of care in the provision of healthcare services (Sellman, 2017).

Since defining caring is difficult due to its complex nature, some nursing researchers have tried to define "caring behaviors" instead of "caring." Caring behaviors are actions concerned with the well-being of a patient, such as sensitivity, comforting, attentive listening, honesty, and non-judgmental acceptance (Salimi & Azimpour, 2013). Furthermore, (Asikin et al., 2020; Klarare et al., 2021; Octaviani et al., 2020) revealed that caring nurse behavior is one aspect that is very related to nursing services because caring includes human relationships and affects the quality of service, patient satisfaction, patient health, and well-being.

For this reason, this study aims to analyze the caring behavior of nurses in a private hospital in Manado, Indonesia.

METHODS

The methods included research design, sampling, instruments, ethics, and data analysis. hypothesis testing processes, and data display processes.

Research Design

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) describes phenomenology as investigating experience through reflection. The person reflects on an experience and uses creative manipulation to capture its essence (an intuitive understanding of what is fundamental about a situation) (Given, 2008). Moreover, (Gearing, 2004) stated that phenomenology is the study of a phenomenon that involves a thorough description and interpretation of lived experience through bracketing and is perceived by people at a deeper level of understanding in a particular scenario. Furthermore, (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011) stated that bracketing is the intellectual act of putting aside one's beliefs, refraining from passing judgment on what one has seen or heard, and remaining receptive to information as it emerges.

Thus, in this study, the researchers study the phenomenon of the participants at a deeper level of understanding and the participant's reflection on an experience of nurses caring behavior in the hospital. In contrast, the researchers clarified her thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about phenomena, then bracketed those thoughts, feelings, and perceptions.

Sampling

Researchers used snowball sampling in this study, where participants came from a private hospital in Manado. Nurses in this study were those working in the hospital equal to or more than a year, and there were 6 participants, one male and five females. Furthermore, in this study, the participant marked as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6.

Instrument

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to get the best information from the participants. In the interview, participants were asked to share their experiences of caring behavior in the hospital. Furthermore, to record the interview, the researchers was used an Oppo cellphone.

Ethics

The data was collected in September 2020 via WhatsApp calls with semi-structured in-depth interviews. The phone calls were recorded using a different cell phone of the researcher for 10-15 minutes. After finishing the interview, the researcher transferred the recording to the researcher's laptop, which only the researcher could access because a username and password protected it that only the researcher knew. Then, after the interpretation, the researcher deletes the audio recording.

Data Analysis

This study uses Collaizi's methodological interpretation as follows: verbatim transcription, identifying significant statements, formulating meaning, grouping themes, developing complete descriptions, producing fundamental structures, and validating research data as part of the trustworthiness in this study by conducting member checking. The researcher sends research data to participants to ensure that the researchers are following the results of interviews and the intended phenomenon by the participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

In this study, seven caring behaviors of nurses were found which were phenomena while working in the hospital.

Table 1. Themes and Sub-Themes of Nurses' Caring Behavior

No	Themes	Sub-Themes
1	Compassion	Expressing Enthusiasm
		Showing Empathy
		Expressing Concern
		Showing Sympathy
2	Responsiveness	Taking Action Promptly
3	Self-Control	Managing Emotion
		Having Patience
		Smiling
4	Thoroughness	Delivering and Careful Nursing Service
		Accurately Carrying Out Procedure
5	Critical Thinking	Recognizing the Present Status
		Conducting Comprehensive Examination
6	Comforting	Exploring and Understanding
7	Educating	Giving Information

The nurses' most frequently expressed theme was compassion, evidenced by the participant's answers to the following sub-themes: expressing enthusiasm, showing empathy, displaying concern, and showing sympathy.

“Nurses should be enthusiastic; that’s the key. If nurses are not enthusiastic, the patient will notice that, well, even the nurse are not enthusiastic (P2)”.

“Caring is a synonym of concern. Concern. Empathy Care to patient. Care about the progress

made by the patient. e.g., Recovered. Maybe that, shortly defined (P3)".

"Show caring in every action, truly serve, be sincere, on time, and not delay. Do not neglect every action (P3).

"Serving the patients devoted to our care as best as we can, rendering best service, and exerting effort to help them (P5).

"Caring for others, showing sympathy, empathy. In caring, what should the nurses give ... others can see from the attitude, how to provide the care. From the heart, not only from the head's knowledge of the procedure, it was performed. When we come to the patient, when a nurse comes, we greet the patient, smile, and be concerned about the needs of patients, trying to meet the needs of patients. (P6)".

The second theme found in this study is responsiveness with a sub-theme: taking action promptly, as evidenced by the following interview results:

"So, since I am currently working at the ICU, automatically I am exactly in front of the patient, then if the patient is calling me, "nurse," go without procrastinating. Whatever would be the patient's request, the nurses must do it immediately if she/he is in Compos Mentis state (P1)".

"If we do not care about the patient... in medication administration, we need to be sure that the patient takes the medication. If the medication is after a meal: Sir, have you finished your meal? These are your medication, and please pray first according to your belief and faith. If I don't care, then it is up to the patient if they will take the medication or not (P2)".

It happened several times in my ward. The client and family needed information regarding BPJS (National Health Insurance and Security), which is not in the nurses' job description, but we need to

communicate it. Then there was some payment error; eventually, they asked for payment remission. Then, at discharge time, the patient forgot to bring the medications, so I called the patient to come to get the medicine. Other nurses won't do that (P3)".

The third theme found in this study is self-control, as evidenced by the responses from participants, namely managing emotion, having patience, and smiling:

"Even though I had a fight with my husband or had problems with someone, it is a must for us to serve as a form of our responsibility P1)".

"As a nurse, in times we almost lose temper, we need to hold back the emotion, as we assist client's daily activities (P2)".

"Patience is a must (P2)".

"Smile is a must. Need to know how to manage the emotion. If you lose your temper at home, don't bring that to the hospital (P2)".

The fourth theme found in this study is thoroughness, one of the caring behaviors mentioned by the participant, which is marked by accurately carrying out procedures.

"We need to be caring, because not only doing something based on the procedure or according to the standard rules, and no care to the patients. Because there are lots of similar cases in our hospital. For instance, when it was time for us to administer the medication, we need to wait until the client take it, especially for oral medications (P5)".

"The most important thing of being a nurse is accuracy. Whether the medicine is successfully administered or not, is it on the proper schedule or not (P5)".

The fifth theme found in this study is critical thinking through the participants' experiences by

recognizing the present status and conducting a comprehensive examination.

"If they are unconscious, in response to a drop saturation, suction should be immediately done. Do not forget to turn the patient frequently. Turning the patient should always be kept in mind (P1)".

"Maybe the patient was brought to the hospital, not actually because he/she is sick, but because of family problems, pretending to be sick. Trying to find comprehensive information about the patient, physically and emotionally. Concern not only the physical but the mental also, when the patient is admitted to the hospital. Assess everything (P4)".

The next theme found in this study is comforting the patient by exploring and understanding the patient condition.

"If the patient is fully aroused (compos mentis), and then their face looks sad, I will ask the patient, "What is going on, ma'am? Is there anything?". For me, that's the meaning of caring. Not ignoring the patient. The patient will directly share her/his concern like, "my daughter/son is like this... (P1)".

The last theme found in this research is educating proof by giving information to the patient.

"..... health education, that they may apply healthy lifestyle, not only at the hospital but when home. Because, when they are discharged, they will be back to their own habits and possibly come again (P5)".

DISCUSSION

Theme 1-Compassion

Compassion is the theme that appears most frequently in this study. The compassion theme was proven by the participants expressing enthusiasm, showing empathy, expressing concern, and showing sympathy. Compassion refers to the inclination to

share the feelings of others and to show compassion and concern for the patient's comfort and well-being. Typical behavioral indicators include: displaying concern about the patient, acting to help a patient with special problems; expressing enthusiasm for nursing work; putting the patient's interest (Zhang et al., 2001). Moreover, (Noveno, 2018) revealed that compassion as an expression of sympathy. The nurse reveals this through regular and continuous interaction with the patients and their family members. Most patients want to feel they are considered family members, not just someone who requires medical management.

Theme 2-Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the next theme which is supported by phenomena obtained from participants, namely taking action promptly. Responsiveness is promptness in responding to the patient's questions, needs, and issues. Behavioral indications include: consistently demonstrating "being there" behavior, immediately correcting minor errors; acting rapidly in an emergency; and promptly contacting other experts for assistance [13]. Furthermore, reference [3] revealed that nurses must comprehend the patient's needs to provide care and be able to do it effectively.

Theme 3- Self-Control

Self-control is the next theme found in this study which shows how participants can manage their emotions, be patient, and smile even though they have personal or family problems, but when working in a hospital, nurses must be able to control themselves. Self-control is maintaining calm and patience when providing nursing care in challenging circumstances. Common behavioral markers include tolerating discomforts and pains experienced by oneself, keeping emotional control, performing one's duties well under pressure, and restraining from acting badly (Zhang et al., 2001). Moreover,

(Davidson et al., 2011) revealed that “patience is an important ingredient in caring. By being patient, I give time, enabling the other to find itself in its own time. On the other hand, the impatient man does not give time and often takes time away from the other. If we know that someone is impatient with us, or if we are impatient with ourselves, even the time we might have had is often reduced”. Besides, (Noveno, 2018) revealed that patients are admitted to a hospital for various causes, whether serious or not, and this causes an interruption to their daily lives. Even though they are exhausted, nurses must make an effort to smile and even show a sense of humor in front of the patients since doing so makes them feel better about whatever they are going through. Even with difficult patients and a tremendous schedule, nurses can convey their feelings with the greatest.

Theme 4-Thoroughness

The results of this study indicate a theme of thoroughness which indicates that nurses must act in delivering attentive nursing service and accurately carrying out procedures according to schedule. (Zhang et al., 2001) revealed that thoroughness tends to provide nursing care with great accuracy and care. Regularly checking the patient's status and attending to their demands and issues are typical indicators. Supplying the patient with prepared or meticulous nursing care; recognizing minor changes connected to the patient's condition; identifying the patient's new issue. Moreover, (NICE, 2007). stated that to prevent significant issues, it is essential to routinely monitor patients (checking on them and their health) while in the hospital and respond if they worsen.

Theme 5-Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the following theme that is obtained in this study. As a nurse, critical thinking is needed to recognize the present status of the patient and conduct a comprehensive examination. According to (Zhang et al., 2001) critical thinking is

the ability to assess the patient's condition accurately and carefully. Typical indicators include making a proper diagnosis of the patient's symptoms, determining the precise cause of the disease, recognizing the patient's disease's current state, and comprehending the underlying causes of the patient's behavior. Furthermore, (Andersson et al., 2015) revealed that caring was described as collecting data about the patient to form a basis for diagnosis, assessment, and action following the patient's needs, e.g., pain. Caring was also conceived as a pharmacological intervention, i.e., drugs, and non-pharmacological actions, such as ‘touching’ and ‘changing the patient’s position to relieve symptoms.

Theme 6-Comforting

Comforting is to provide the patient with physical, educational, or psychological support to improve their well-being. The following actions are typical behavioral indicators: reducing the patient's discomfort through touch or physical contact, reducing the patient's fear by imparting pertinent medical knowledge, and providing counseling to the distressed patient (Zhang et al., 2001). Furthermore,(Hawley, 2000) found nurses’ comforting strategies under the following categories: immediate and competent technical/physical care, positive talk, vigilance, attending to physical discomforts, and including and attending to family. The comforting strategies used by nurses had a positive impact on the physical and emotional well-being of the participants.

Theme 7-Educating

Nurses need to educate patients, which is why the last theme is educating by giving information to the patient. According to (Noveno, 2018) health education also includes informing patients about the procedure and meeting any demands. A key component of health education involves the patient's importance to others by clearly

outlining the issues. Therefore, promoting health education will gradually help to improve bad habit.

CONCLUSION

Seven themes of nurses caring behavior in the nursing practice, specifically in the hospital, were found with each sub-themes that prove that caring behavior: compassion with the sub-themes expressing enthusiasm, showing empathy, expressing concern, and showing sympathy; responsiveness with the sub-theme taking action promptly; self-control with the sub-themes having patience and smiling; thoroughness with the sub-themes delivering and careful nursing service and accurately carrying out procedure; critical thinking with the sub-themes recognizing the present status and conducting the comprehensive examination; comforting with the sub-themes exploring and understanding; and educating with the sub-theme giving information.

It is recommended for the next study to interview the participants directly or face to face to know the body language during the interview and observe the daily tasks of the participants in the hospital to gain a better understanding and dig deeper into the data from the participants. Furthermore, it is recommended that the nurses maintain and or improve their caring behavior.

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