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Critical thinking in nursing education: concept analysis

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Background & Aims: The development of critical thinking among nursing graduates is so much important that education experts refer to it as the main goal of all the educational endeavors. Despite the experts and scholars' consensus over the importance of critical thinking in nursing education, there is a great diversity of views on its nature and definition. Therefore, we conducted this study aiming at analyzing the concept of critical thinking in the Iranian nursing education context.

Methods: Hybrid concept analysis method was used in three phases. In the theoretical phase, data was retrieved from Elsevier, Wiley, CINAHL, Proquest, Ovid, and Springer as well as Iranian databases such as SID, Magiran, and Iranmedex. The literature search used the keywords 'critical thinking', 'nursing', 'education', and 'nursing education'. The final sample included 35 papers published in English between 1990 and 2013. In the field work phase, a purposive sample of seventeen key informants was recruited- including seven nursing faculties, three PhD students, two clinical instructors, and five clinical nurses. Deep interviews were carried out with them. In the analytical phase the obtained data from theoretical and fieldwork phases was compared.

Results: Antecedents, attributes, and consequences of the critical thinking concept generated in the first and the second phases was compared and determined the similarities and differences. Finally commonalities of the two phases were identified. Finally definition of critical thinking in nursing education derived in literature and finding of this study was introduced.

Conclusion: Finding showed that critical thinking should be defined contextually; participants pointed out to several contextual factors—such as being interested in the Persian literature and poems, relating the educational materials to the religious beliefs, and asking the students to think about creation and existence—which had not been addressed in the literature

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