



Development of a theoretical derivation of nursing: Spiritual transcendence Theory

Desarrollo de una derivación teórica de enfermería: Teoría de espiritualidad trascendental

Desenvolvimento de uma derivação teórica da enfermagem: Teoria da espiritualidade transcendental

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Abstract

Nursing research tends to add a theoretical basis, which helps comprehend the reality of a nursing phenomenon; however, when the existent theories do not have the necessary elements for the exploration of a certain phenomenon it is possible to opt for a theoretical derivation that contains the attributes necessary for the development of a research. This work pretends to develop a theoretical derivation based on the theory of self-transcendence, to approach the phenomena of spirituality and quality of life for elders. The latter under the methodology of Jaqueline Fawcett, which integrates five steps for the development of concepts, propositions, and relationships from the proposed theory derivation. Also, it encourages to use this proposal in future research to prove its efficiency.

Key words: Spirituality, elders, nursing, nursing theory

Resumen


La investigación en enfermería suele agregar una base teórica, que ayude a comprender la realidad de un fenómeno presente en esta disciplina; sin embargo, en ocasiones las teorías existentes, no tienen los elementos necesarios para la exploración de algunos fenómenos, por lo que se debe optar por realizar una derivación teórica que contenga los atributos necesarios para el desarrollo de una investigación. Desde este punto de vista con el presente trabajo se pretende desarrollar una derivación teórica, a partir de la teoría de la autotranscendencia, para abordar el fenómeno de la espiritualidad y la calidad de vida en el adulto mayor. Al respecto la metodología a tener en cuenta se desarrolla a partir de los aportes de Jaqueline Fawcett, quien integra cinco pasos necesarios para explicar los conceptos, proposiciones y relaciones sobre su derivación teórica. Además, se exhorta a que se tome en cuenta esta propuesta en próximas investigaciones, para que se pueda probar su efectividad.

Palabras clave: Espiritualidad, adulto mayor, enfermería, Teoría de enfermería.

Resumo

A pesquisa em enfermagem geralmente contribui ao fortalecimento da base teórica, que permita compreender a realidade de um fenômeno em enfermagem, entretanto, ocasionalmente as teorias existentes, não fornecem os elementos necessários para a exploração de determinado fenômeno, pelo que pode se optar por realizar uma derivação teórica que contenha os atributos necessários para o desenvolvimento de uma pesquisa. O presente trabalho pretende

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desenvolver uma derivação teórica, a partir da teoria da autotranscendência, para a abordagem do fenômeno da espiritualidade e da qualidade de vida no idoso. O anterior empregou a metodologia de Jackeline Fawcett, que integra cinco etapas para o desenvolvimento de conceitos, proposições e relações da proposta de derivação teórica. Além disso, propõe-se a implementar essa proposta em futuras pesquisas, para estabelecer a sua efetividade.

Palavras-chave: Espiritualidade, Idoso, Enfermagem, Teoria de Enfermagem.

Introduction

Research is an inevitable and inseparable function of the nursing professional (1); therefore, it must be done under specific and safe conditions that minimize methodological and statistical errors.

It is here where the nursing discipline has a particular form of approaching research, taking as its base a theory denominated as an organized set of abstract concepts, supported by scientific research and logical analysis, that provide the bases to understand the reality of nursing; also, training the nursing personnel to understand why an event occurs (2). Which, in turn, helps the professional to try and give a solution to the problem.

From this perspective, the theories are obtained from the systematization of professional knowledge. Therefore, in nursing, they are a determinant role in the comprehension and analysis of the care provided, as well as being a useful tool for reasoning, critical thinking and the decision making necessary for the quality of the nursing practices (3).

However, in occasions, the problem of research chosen does not agree completely with the concepts of a selected theory; additionally, the phenomenon that it pretends to address, does not coincide with the structure of the relationships between the concepts (4), consequently those that approach the measurement of the specific problem that wants to be addressed must be built.

Selecting a complex phenomenon such as spirituality, which is understood as a reality that has to do with personal fulfilment, evokes psychophysiological well-being, happiness (5) and quality of life. Facing this situation, the perception of the individual is oriented towards their life position within the cultural context and the set of values in which the person lives, their goals, expectations, rules, and preoccupations which encompass their physical health, psychological pro-

cess, level of independence, social relationships, and personal beliefs (6), especially in the elder population. Similarly, it is observed that it is necessary to propose a theoretical derivation when not finding total coherence with other theories. Also, it is an issue that is addressed from a holistic approach to the person; in other words, that it recognizes humans as biopsychosocial and spiritual beings with a continuous relationship with their surroundings, which leads to require a unique and quality care (7).

According to the previously mentioned, the Self-transcendence theory of Pamela Reed will be considered (8), created under the perspective of health and development processes. With this scientific proposal, elder are presented as people who value their life, despite of the difficulties that might endure. Thus, self-transcendence in elders is related to a sense of the elder and its human values unified as a whole (9).

From this, the objective is to develop a theoretical derivation from the Self-transcendence Theory to address the phenomenon of spirituality and quality of life in elders. This proposal is expected to be applied by the nursing personnel in the direct care of elders

Method

For this process, the methodology of Jaqueline Fawcett (10) was chosen, which has 5 steps: 1. The identification of concepts, where the name of the conceptual model is observed; 2. The concepts of the theory that comprise the properties of the study phenomenon and the concepts of interest are selected for the study; 3. The classification of concepts, which is made according to the observability and variability properties of the phenomenon, the identification and classification of propositions, meaning, the declarations about one or more concepts that pretend to affirm what is believed about a case and that can be relational or not relational; 4. The hierarchic order of proposals, meaning, the organ-

ization of the propositions in a hierarchic way according to their level of abstraction, inductive or deductive reasoning; and, 5. The construction of diagrams,

the formalization of a conceptual-theoretical-empirical structure, as well as the creation of a diagram of the relationships of the propositions (See Table 1).

Table 1. Theoretical-Conceptual-Empirical structure of the theory of transcendental spirituality

	SELF-TRANSCENDENCE	WELL-BEING	MODERATING VARIABLES	MEDIATING VARIABLES
TEORICO	<p>↓</p> <p>SPIRITUAL TRANSCENDENCE</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>PERSONAL QUALITY OF LIFE</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>PERSONAL INFLUENCES</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>↓</p> <p>CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES</p> <p>↓</p>
CONCEPTUAL	<p>Individual attribute of the human being that is intrapersonally expressed (self-conscience, values, philosophy, beliefs, experience, and relationships beyond tangible), which includes judgement/inspiration and a deep feeling of inner peace. Intrapersonally (connecting with others and their surroundings, as well as integrating the present with the past and future possibilities); it contains gratitude, compassion, a feeling of connection with compassionate and transcendent love from a pandimensional approach to being.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>The perception of the elder person of feeling healthy, with their personal and emotional role, their general health (physical, social, mental, and spiritual) and the declaration of these signs of health.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>Personal overview of the elder adults about their selves in a holistic way (lifestyles, knowledge, activities, and social networks).</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>Extrinsic variables of the elder adult, such as the society they belong to (lifestyle, culture, beliefs, common activities, geographic location, and public policies).</p> <p>↓</p>
EMPIRIC	<p>The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale</p> <p>Underwood LG., 2011 (11)</p>	<p>Health questionnaire SF-36</p> <p>Alonso J, Prieto L, Anto JM, 1995 (12)</p>	<p>Information document</p> <p>Mazatan CI y Guerrero RF, 2020</p>	<p>Information document</p> <p>Mazatan CI y Guerrero RF, 2020</p>

Source: author

Development

Theoretical derivation

Step 1. Concept identification

To be able to derive the theory of “self-transcendence” (13), a deeper study of this theory was made, observing that its purpose is to provide a framework for research and the practice of promoting well-being through hard life situations, particularly when people and families

face loss or a disease that limits life (14). Similarly, other concepts are considered: self-transcendence, vulnerability, well-being, intervention, and mediating and moderator variables, to use them as a basis of the theory.

The basis of our theory was also reviewed, considering the empirical evidence related to the potential of changing its development (influenced also but in a lower degree by chronological age or time passing and more by normative and not normative life events and the accu-

mulation of life experiences), which exist throughout life, beyond childhood and adolescence, adulthood and the processes of aging and death (15).

Similarly, the Rogerian argument and some philosophical perspectives about pandimensionality of human beings and the human potential of healing and well-being were considered. Also, the practice experiences during the application of the theories of development in psychiatric-mental care for children and teenagers were considered (16).

It should be specified that two main assumptions of the theory were made: the first, that human beings are an integral of their surroundings (as stated by Rogers in the science of unitary human beings). In other words, human beings are pandimensional (17), coextensive with their surroundings and capable of having a conscience that extends beyond physical and temporal dimensions (18). This conscience can be experienced through the altered stated of conscience, but more often they are found in everyday practices when going into depth about themselves and approaching others, nature, god, or other sources of transcendence (16).

The second assumption which parts from the statement on which self-transcendence is essential for the development, meaning that it is a human resource that demands expression, just like walking (for small children), abstract reasoning (in adolescents) and the duel for those who have suffered a loss. These resources are part of the human being, that must take advantage to obtain greater potential in their well-being. As such, the participation of the person in self-transcendence is a comprehensive component of well-being, and therefore nursing has an important role in facilitating this process (8).

According to the previously exposed, the propositions developed by the theory were reviewed, which clarify the perspective of the concepts, based on the relationships between them (See Table 1), which allows the improvement of the application and evaluation of the theory.

It should be noted that the process was initiated with the theoretical derivation, by visualizing in detail the theory of Reed and observing that the phenomenon that the research intends to study requires a higher specificity for the application of its concepts, which leads to the derivation of the following concepts:

Step 2. Classification of concepts

Transcendental spirituality.

Accepting the main concept of the theory of self-transcendence, Reed defines it as the “capacity of expanding the self-limits in various ways. Intrapersonally (towards a higher conscience of the philosophy, values, and dreams), interpersonally (to connect with others and with the surrounding), temporarily (to integrate the past and the future in way that makes sense for the present), and transpersonally (to connect with dimensions beyond the typically discernible world)” (8).

Similarly, self-transcendence has been defined by other authors as the highest and inclusive or integrative levels of human conscience, of behaving and interacting, as purposes instead of means, to one-self, to humans in general, to other species, to nature and to the cosmos (19).

Guerrero-Castañeda defines it as “the ability of the human being to go beyond one-self and as a consequence to expand their personal limits, through a spiritual path, to give sense to life and which is linked to a connection with oneself, others, the surrounding and the spirit of the universe; as a meaning of self-existence” (20).

Also, other authors, define self-transcendence as the belief where God is present inside creatures that evolve, not only enabling them to exist, in a static way, but also enabling them to transcend from what they already are. God enables them, not only to be, but to get to be more than what they are (21). Likewise, it is mentioned that there exists a relationship with a peak at the spiritual, the mystical, or peak experiences, since transcendence seeks to go beyond oneself and experience a communication beyond oneself through peak experiences (22).

Therefore, the concept of self-transcendence refers to the spiritual transcendence, which is an attribute of the human being when expressing oneself intrapersonally (self-conscience, values, philosophy, beliefs, experiences, and relationships beyond the tangible). Also, it includes measures of judgement/inspiration and a deep feeling of inner peace that are related intrapersonally (connecting with others and their surroundings, as well as integrating the present with past and future possibilities). Similarly, it contains gratitude, compassion, the sense of connection with compassionate and transcendental love, from a pandimensional approach of being

Personal quality of life

Regarding the well-being concept, Reed points out that

“there is a sensation of feeling whole and healthy, according to their own criteria about integrity and health” (8). Similarly, Reyes et al., (23) conceptualize it as the feeling of a person when seeing all its needs satisfied in a physiological and psychological way in the present; equally, it makes reference to having encouraging experiences that support their project of life in society, according to their experiences as individuals that are part of a community; particularly in function of their needs from the most vital, to the most superfluous needs, aspirational prospective and their feasibility of realization in an admissible time-lapse.

Likewise, it can be appreciated how a state of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and occupational well-being, allows the individuals to properly satisfy their needs (24).

From this point of view, this concept was taken to apply it to personal quality of life and define it as the perception of the individual when feeling healthy with its personal and emotional role, their general health (physical, mental, social, and spiritual), and the declaration of these signs of health.

Personal influences and contextual influences

According to the previously mentioned, this section will consider a concept Reed calls “mediating and moderating variables”, which she refers to as “personal and contextual variables that can influence the existent relationship between vulnerability and self-transcendence, and between self-transcendence and well-being” (8). However, even if it is a composed concept, there are people that define it as different types of intervening variables that affect the relationship of the two variables in different ways (25).

It is convenient to indicate that the decision to address each of the variables separately, originated two concepts: personal influences and contextual influences.

It is important to mention that the definition of Reed about the moderating variables seems unspecific, since it refers to personal variables, that can influence the existent relationship between vulnerability and self-transcendence, and between self-transcendence and well-being (8).

By contrast, other authors have defined moderating variables precisely, determining that these are variables that act before the interaction between an independent and a dependent variable (25) or in a similar way. On the other hand, Baron et al. (26), define them as intervening variables that affect the direction and/or force of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable (by reducing, augmenting, annulling, or inverting the relationship).

Step 3. Identification and classification of propositions

This way, the concept of moderating variables is derived from personal influences such as the personal overview in a holistic way (lifestyles, knowledge, activities, and perceived social networks).

It should be included that, as stated by Reed, the mediating variables are given in an unspecific form, acting during the interaction period of the independent and dependent variables, explaining how and why the relationship between these two happens (25).

Therefore, the concept was derived to contextual influences, defined as extrinsic variables in the individual such as the society in which the person is immersed (lifestyle, culture, beliefs, common activities, geographical location, and public policies).

Other concepts

On the other hand, the self-transcendence theory has other concepts such as vulnerability and intervention points, that were not selected for this theoretical-conceptual-empirical derivation (see Table 2).

Tabla 2. Proposiciones de la teoría madre y la teoría derivada

Teoría de la Trascendencia del yo	Teoría de la Espiritualidad Trascendental
1. El aumento de la vulnerabilidad se asocia a la trascendencia del yo. Cuando el apoyo es adecuado, la relación puede ser positiva.	1. El aumento de la espiritualidad trascendental repercute en el incremento de la calidad de vida y las influencias personales, con una relación positiva.
2. La trascendencia del yo tiene una relación positiva con el bienestar.	2. El incremento de la calidad de vida personal, las influencias personales y las influencias contextuales, aumentan la espiritualidad trascendental. Pero al disminuir ésta, las influencias personales y contextuales cambian a una visión negativa y la espiritualidad trascendental, puede tener una relación positiva o convertirse en negativa.
3. La trascendencia del yo puede funcionar también como mediador entre la vulnerabilidad y el bienestar.	3. Las influencias personales muestran una relación positiva con la calidad de vida personal.
4. Los factores personales y del contexto pueden condicionar la relación entre vulnerabilidad y trascendencia del yo, y la trascendencia del yo y el bienestar.	4. Las influencias contextuales pueden condicionar la calidad de vida y las influencias personales en una relación positiva.

Fuente: Pamela Reed.

Step 4. Hierarchic order of proposals

Relationship of concepts of the Self-Transcendence Theory.

After defining the concepts of the derivation, the propositions were built (See Table 2), where 4 sets of relationships of the concepts that compose it were analyzed, with the purpose of extending and specifying their application, this way improving the comprehension of these interactions

First relationship

It starts with the relationship that analyzes transcendental spirituality with quality of life and personal interactions. In other words, it describes a lineal and positive relation, that perceives a transcendental spirituality positively expressed; also, considering a good personal quality of life, as well as excellent personal interactions and vice versa.

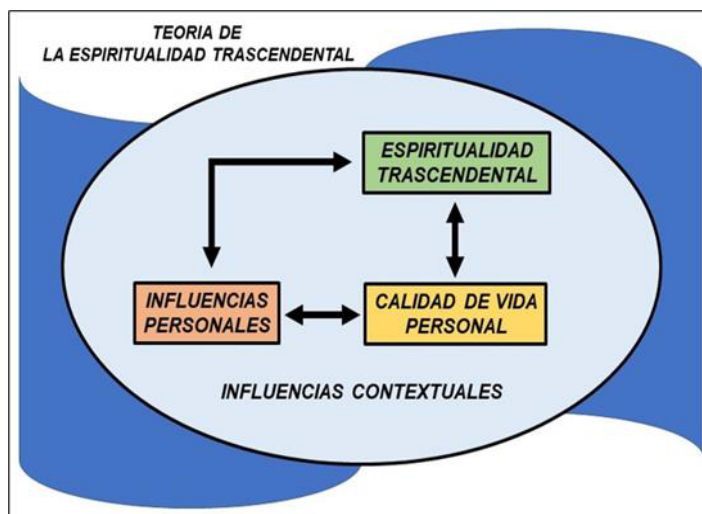


Figura 1. Diagrama de la teoría de la espiritualidad trascendental

Fuente: Autora

Second relationship

A second instance will consider the relationship that integrates quality of life with personal and contextual influences positively with transcendental spirituality, showing a positive linear relationship. On the contrary, a negative perspective with the other concepts towards spiritual transcendence depends on the stability or maturity about this concept, since when it is negatively influenced, it can maintain its own positive vision or change it to a negative correlation.

Third relationship

Third, personal influences have a positive linear correlation with quality of life, since improving personal influences is also present in personal quality of life and vice versa

Fourth relationship

Last, the contextual influences will be considered with the components of quality of life and personal influences. From this perspective a lineal, positive, and unidirectional correlation can be appreciated; this means, that the contextual influences will condition the other two concepts since they cannot interfere in the contextual influences.

Thus, the fifth step for theoretical derivation, according to the Fawcett's methodology is developed in Figure 1, is further studying the spirituality phenomenon and the quality of life of the elder adult, regarding the theory of spiritual transcendence.

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Conclusions

- The result of the theoretical-conceptual-empirical structure suggests a relevant and complex research, since, selecting a theory and working with the theory for the own construction of a theoretical framework for this research is necessary to clarify the path of the study.
- A consequence is that many times research pretends to adapt the concepts of a theory instead of adapting the theory to the study phenomenon, which allows to contribute to the discipline by building new concepts and a different perspective to address a specific situation.
- On the other hand, this research was made under a methodology that allowed to elaborate, through a quality process, a theoretical proposal that enriches the profession; therefore, this research encourages to be considered for future research to proof its effectiveness.

Conflict of interest

The author declares not having any conflict of interest, since it is not a financed study, nor a group work

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