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## The effects of philosophic components on nursing education

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### Abstract

Historically, the basis of the knowledge called as education philosophy has been based on understanding the components of philosophy defined as metaphysics, epistemology and axiology by Greeks. Philosophy is a value system required in relieving of scientific nursing knowledge. The values and beliefs in the education program developed provide suitability, shape and consistency for a program. Organizations providing nursing education should define philosophy clearly during developing and implementing of an education program. While doing this, they should take into consideration organization's values, personal beliefs of lecturers as well as many social and political factors. Consequently, the philosophy that forms the basis of curriculum and necessary for revealing the scientific nursing information has been based on metaphysics to understand the culture, the real and the existent; on epistemology to question what and how we know; on axiology constituents for our values that distinguish the good from bad.

Keywords: Nursing education; philosophy; components of philosophy.

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## 1. Introduction

From the historical perspective, the basis of the knowledge called as education philosophy has been based on understanding the components of philosophy defined as metaphysics, epistemology and axiology by Greeks. Metaphysics seeks answer to the basic question of “What is real?” Epistemology scrutinizes the nature, source and validity of knowledge. But axiology tries to explain the nature of values, ethics and logic (Basavanthappa, 2009).

## 2. Metaphysics (What is real)

Metaphysical principles include theology, God’s realities and anthropology. Each individual carries beliefs about the nature and the aims of the persons in the cultural and social group (Basavanthappa, 2009). Metaphysics, one of the four main investigational issues of philosophy, is related to existence problem (metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, logic) (Pektetin, 2013). Existence knowledge/ontology is one of the disciplines of philosophy that investigates the things already exist and the things to be existed (Sonmez, 2014). The focus point on this discipline is to understand what the first source or the beginning of existent is and to answer the question of “What is real?” (Erden, 2008). Traditionally, ontology was considered equal to metaphysics, because ontological definitions defined the extramental realities above (meta) the physical (physical) appearance of human. Ontological or metaphysical investigations have struggled to define the fundamentals and real features of being human (Flaming, 2004). Nursing ontology scrutinizes the nature of nursing, individuality, environment, health and illness (Bruce, Rietze & Lim, 2014). These definitions that focus on individuals are formed by enclosing the person which is one four metaparadigms of nursing. In order to understand nursing practice better, metaparadigm advocates believe that nurses should investigate what the human being means (e.g. biopsychosocial being). In nursing, ontology helps recalling the importance of philosophy and philosophical research (Flaming, 2004). Two nurse theorists, Madeline Leininger (1978) and Jean Watson (1979), possess metaphysics-originated theoretical beliefs. Leininger, as an anthropologist, writes articles about the requirements of nursing in order to understand the culture during holistic care planning for patients (Basavanthappa, 2009). Leininger, has started to develop “Intercultural Nursing and Cultural Care Theory” in the mid-1950s and she wrote the book called “Intercultural Nursing: Concepts, Theories, Research & Practice” in 1978. She reported that intercultural nursing information should be used to obtain more meaningful, effective and successful results in nursing care (Durmaz, 2013). According to Leininger’s theory; attempts of and the decisions to be made by nurses who know the values of cultural care and show respect will contribute to an obvious difference in continuation of health and curing of diseases (Pektetin, 2013). The aim of this theory is to provide culturally appropriate nursing care (Ozkan, Yasar & Akten, 2014). Therefore, knowledgeable nurses should be raised related to this topic. In this context, in all cultures similar and different behaviors should be identified and relevant training programs developed (Biol, 2005). Watson’s studies on care theory comprise her metaphysical belief about humans (Basavanthappa, 2009). Watson’s theoretical focus point is the care that distinguishes nursing from medicine as a separate discipline, like the body of knowledge (Warelow, 2013). According to Watson’s “Human Care Theory”, nursing is a caring philosophy and science. Care involves affectionate care awareness, values and impulses and is defined with the features of art and sciences (Ozkan, Yasar & Akten, 2014). Watson accepted this philosophy and combined it with existentialist/humanistic philosophy in order to guide the controversy about the role of caring as a theoretical nursing framework (Basavanthappa, 2009).

## 3. Epistemology (What is truth)

Epistemology is known as a philosophical activity that investigates the structure, resource, criteria and nature of knowledge; questions how and at what extent knowledge can be obtained; concerns with the nature and requirements of human knowledge (Orgun, Khorsid & Eser, 2013). The issue of truth and human’s perception of truth poses challenge to the nursing instructors. Tradition, instinct and emotions are not considered to be valid sources of knowledge. Whereas, knowledge is subjected

to certainty and investigations related to what it meant (Basavanthappa, 2009). Carper's four different ways of knowing (empirical, ethical, personal and aesthetic) is often used as an epistemological basis for nursing knowledge (Garrett and Cutting, 2015). Nurse theorist Martha Rogers (1961) is an advocate of metaphysics/epistemological basis of nursing education that progresses in line with a professional model (Basavanthappa, 2009). According to Rogers professional nursing practices are formed through scientific knowledge applications (Pektekin, 2013). According to Roger's theory human is at center of nursing goal and nursing science is human science (Birol, 2005). In order to develop this theoretical frame, nurses should possess individualistic philosophical viewpoint that encompasses required knowledge, skills and abilities so that they can develop individual's identity, its role in universe and logical thinking models (Basavanthappa, 2009). Because, nursing is a humanist science that defends holistic approach and examines nature and development of humans; therefore, nurses must understand human and life cycle very well (Birol, 2005; Pektekin, 2013).

Benner (1984) has focused on philosophical and theoretical opinions related to nursing through identifying the differences between practical and theoretical knowledge and using descriptive explanations of clinic applications in order to discover/scrutinize the information involving in nursing practice (Warelow, 2013). Kritek (2001) defends the epistemology of healthful practices in nursing and places emphasis on "What do we know and how we know it?" About revealing the health and nursing definitions she clearly mentions about a philosophical requirement that reflects what nursing is and where members of profession belong to (Basavanthappa, 2009).

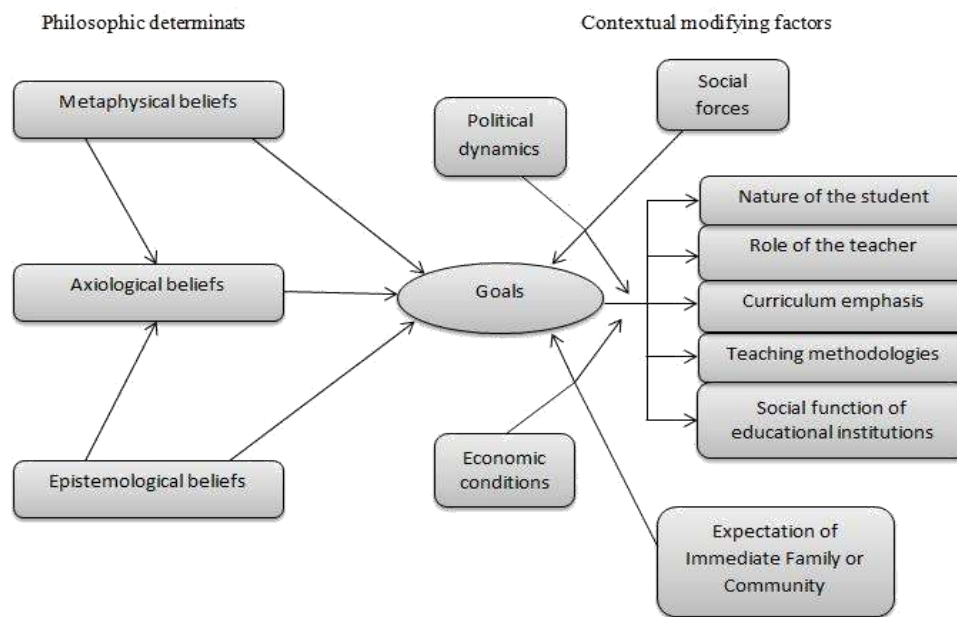
#### **4. Axiology (What is good)**

Axiology involves ethical and aesthetical subjects. In Greek, the word "etikue" generally means moral. Moral is concerning with human behaviors. Axiology encompasses all the values formed by human and scrutinizes human's activities. It investigates the principles and values that these behaviors are based. None of the human behaviors learned can be deprive of values. However, human's every behavior cannot be subject of axiology, because in moral behaviors right-wrong is out of the question. For these behaviors there are values such as good-bad and beautiful-ugly (Sonmez, 2014). Occupational ethics depends on person's commitment and responsibility and occupational and individualistic values are essential. Occupational nursing values are; human dignity, equity, to prevent suffering, honesty and responsibility (Kangasniemi, Pakkanen & Korhonen, 2014). At this point, philosophy gives nurses an opportunity to notice how their values and beliefs affect their practices. Nursing ethics examines the moral events encountered during nursing application, the fundamental elements of the rights and values and the nature of good nursing application (Bruce, Rietze & Lim, 2014). Nursing profession ethics covers the definition of the professional responsibilities and liabilities that support and protect the social aim of profession. The aim is to protect patients and to provide nursing counseling that will contribute development of a healthy population (Kangasniemi, Pakkanen & Korhonen, 2014).

Axiology generally can be interpreted by the community as what is good or bad for the group. Investigation of this philosophical problem is address through studying the axiology or, value. Human being has not only knowing and understanding capacity but also ability to put emphasis on thoughts and behaviors. Our values are indications of our humanity rather than how much information we collected. Proponents of this viewpoint suggest that instructor's duty is not only to defend information and develop understanding. They state that instructor should be supported in order to be role model for the behaviors supported by school. In other words, to teach one philosophy is not enough. Besides, philosophy should be kept alive as a model for the student (Basavanthappa, 2009).

Philosophy is a value system required in relieving of scientific nursing knowledge (Sabanciogullari & Dogan, 2012). It comprises the basis of developed education programs. Even, most education programs are constructed according to not only one but a few philosophies. The values and beliefs in the education program developed provide suitability, shape and consistency for a program (Dillard &

Skitberg, 2012). Organizations providing nursing education should define philosophy clearly during developing and implementing of an education program. While doing this, they should take into consideration organization’s values, personal beliefs of lecturers as well as many social and political factors (The divergent forces affecting curriculum and the components of philosophy is shown in Figure 1) (Basavanthappa, 2009).



**Figure 1. The divergent forces influencing curriculum and the components of philosophy (Basavanthappa, 2009)**

Philosophy is used to define fundamental events related to discipline and develops nurses’ theory development ability. Thereby, it provides a way to conceive, define and criticize the meaning of nursing practices (Bruce, Rietze & Lim, 2014). Education arranges the thoughts, values and principles obtained through philosophy (Basavanthappa, 2009). It gives chance to development of philosophy and formation of new domains by providing new and scientific information (Ocak, 2004). Because human is the subject of investigation in education, philosophy and nursing, it has caused a continuous interaction between them. In this context, the relationship of philosophical components with nursing education is inevitable.

Consequently, the philosophy that forms the basis of education programs and necessary for revealing the scientific nursing information has been based on metaphysics to understand the culture, the real and the existent; on epistemology to question what and how we know; on axiology constituents for our values that distinguish the good from bad.

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