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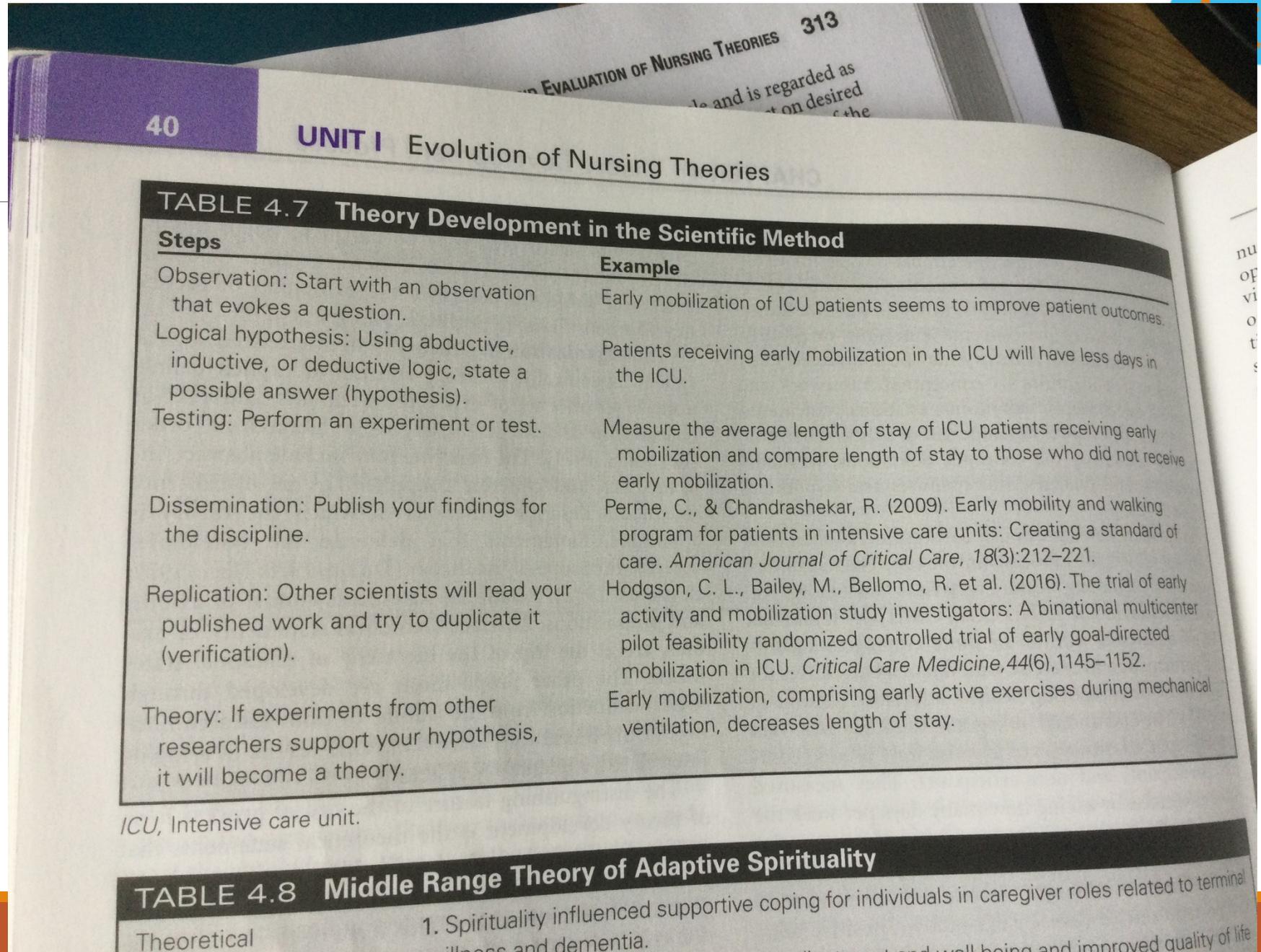


Evaluation of nursing and caring theories

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Evolution of a theory:
Observation
Logical hypothesis
Testing
Dissemination
Replication
Theory
Alligood 2018, p. 40.



UNIT I Evolution of Nursing Theories

TABLE 4.7 Theory Development in the Scientific Method

Steps	Example
Observation: Start with an observation that evokes a question.	Early mobilization of ICU patients seems to improve patient outcomes.
Logical hypothesis: Using abductive, inductive, or deductive logic, state a possible answer (hypothesis).	Patients receiving early mobilization in the ICU will have less days in the ICU.
Testing: Perform an experiment or test.	Measure the average length of stay of ICU patients receiving early mobilization and compare length of stay to those who did not receive early mobilization.
Dissemination: Publish your findings for the discipline.	Perme, C., & Chandrashekar, R. (2009). Early mobility and walking program for patients in intensive care units: Creating a standard of care. <i>American Journal of Critical Care</i> , 18(3):212-221.
Replication: Other scientists will read your published work and try to duplicate it (verification).	Hodgson, C. L., Bailey, M., Bellomo, R. et al. (2016). The trial of early activity and mobilization study investigators: A binational multicenter pilot feasibility randomized controlled trial of early goal-directed mobilization in ICU. <i>Critical Care Medicine</i> , 44(6), 1145-1152.
Theory: If experiments from other researchers support your hypothesis, it will become a theory.	Early mobilization, comprising early active exercises during mechanical ventilation, decreases length of stay.

ICU, Intensive care unit.

TABLE 4.8 Middle Range Theory of Adaptive Spirituality

Theoretical	1. Spirituality influenced supportive coping for individuals in caregiver roles related to terminal illness and dementia.
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Framework for analysis and evaluation of nursing theories (Fawcett & DeSanto-Madeya 2013)

- ❑ The framework for analysis and evaluation of nursing theories separates questions dealing with analysis from questions more appropriate to evaluation.
- ❑ **Analysis** refers to an **objective and nonjudgmental description of a nursing theory.**
- ❑ **Evaluation** involves **judgments about the extent to which a nursing theory satisfies certain criteria.**



ANALYSIS OF NURSING THEORIES

1. Analysis step 1: Theory scope
2. Analysis step 2: Theory context
3. Analysis step 3: Theory content

Analysis step 1: Theory scope

Question: **What is the scope of the theory?**

- Grand theories** are broad in scope and substantively nonspecific, concepts and propositions are relatively abstract
- Middle-range theories** are more circumscribed and substantively specific and relatively concrete concepts and propositions.
- Middle-range theories** are classified as descriptive, explanatory or predictive
- Situation-specific (practical oriented) theories** are focused on specific nursing phenomena from clinical practice, limited to a specific population, and historically and socially contexted

Analysis step 2: Theory context

- The context of a nursing theory is the environment in which nursing acts occur.
- The nature of the world of nursing
- Characteristics of the patient's surrounding
- Includes also the identification of the concepts and propositions of the nursing metaparadigm addressed by the theory

Analysis step 2: Theory context

Questions:

- Which metaparadigm concepts are addressed by the theory?
- Does the theory deal with human beings, environment, health and/or nursing processes and goals?
- On what philosophical claims is the theory based on?
- What world view is reflected in the theory?
- From what conceptual model was the theory derived?

Analysis step 3: Theory content

- ❑ The content, or the subject matter, of a theory is articulated through the concepts and propositions of the theory
- ❑ Concepts of the theory are words that express a mental image of some phenomenon.
- ❑ The concepts enable the theorist to categorize, interpret, and structure the phenomena encompassed by the theory.
- ❑ Concepts can be unidimensional or have more than one dimension.

Questions:

- What are the concepts of the theory?
- What are the propositions? Nonrelational or relational?

Im, Eun-Ok. (2015) The current status of theory evaluation in nursing. Journal of Advanced Nursing 71(10), 2268–2278. doi: 10.1111/jan.12698

Aim was to identify the current status of theory evaluation in nursing and provide directions for theory evaluation for future development of theoretical bases of nursing discipline.

Background. Theory evaluation is an essential component in development of nursing knowledge, which is a critical element in development of nursing discipline. **Despite earlier significant efforts for theory evaluation in nursing, a recent decline in the number of theory evaluation articles was noted and there have been few updates on theory evaluation in nursing.**

Design. Discussion paper.

Data sources. A total of **58 articles published from 2003–2014** were retrieved through searches using the PUBMED, PsycInfo and CINAHL.

Implications for nursing. **Diverse ways of theory evaluation need to be continuously used in future theory evaluation efforts.**

Conclusion. Six themes reflecting the theory evaluation process were identified:

(a) rarely using existing theory evaluation criteria; (b) evaluating specifics; (c) using various statistical analysis methods; (d) developing instruments; (e) adopting in practice and education; and (f) evaluating mainly middle-range theories and situation-specific theories

Evaluation of nursing theories (Fawcett & DeSanto-Madeya 2013)

❑ Evaluation of a theory requires judgements to be made about the extent to which a theory satisfies certain criteria.

❑ **Criteria for evaluation are:**

➤ **Significance** – social significance, when the theory is about a health condition, considerable actual or potential impact on desired lifestyle; theoretical significance when the theory offers new insights

Questions: Are the metaparadigm concepts and propositions addressed explicitly?

➤ **Internal consistency** –

Questions: Are the context and the content of the theory congruent?

Are the same term and same definition used consistently for each concept?

Criteria for evaluation

➤ **Parsimony** – 'parsimony theory explains a complex phenomenon simply and briefly without sacrificing the theory's content, structure, or completeness.

Questions: Is the theory content stated clearly and concisely?

➤ **Testability** – the major characteristic of a scientifically useful theory.

Methods: testing of hypothesis by experiments, clinical trials, questionnaires, observations etc.

Questions: Is the research methodology congruent with the philosophical claims?

Does the research methodology reflect the middle-range theory?

Criteria for evaluation

Questions: Is the research methodology congruent with the philosophical claims?

Does the research methodology reflect the middle-range theory?

- **Empirical adequacy** – is about the degree of confidence warranted by the theory, the theory should be congruent with empirical data. No theory should be considered final or absolute.
- **Pragmatic adequacy** – is the theory used in real world in nursing practice, understand the nurses the theory

Questions for pragmatic evaluation

- Are education and special skill training required before applying the theory in nursing practice?
- Is it generally feasible to implement practical activities based on the theory?
- Does the practitioner have the legal ability to implement and measure the effectiveness of theory-based practical activities?
- Do the theory-based practical activities lead to favorable outcomes?
- Are outcomes measured in terms of the problem-solving effectiveness of the theory?

The model for analysis and evaluation of nursing theories according to Alligood 2018

- ❑ Description of theoretical sources
- ❑ Description of major concepts and definitions
- ❑ Analysis of the use of empirical evidence
- ❑ Description of major assumptions regarding the metaparadigm concepts of nursing (human being, nursing, environment, health)



The model for analysis and evaluation of nursing theories according to Alligood 2018

- ❑ Analysis of theoretical assertions and the logical form of the theory
- ❑ **Acceptance by the nursing community** in practice, education and research
- ❑ Description of further development
- ❑ Critical reflection on the theory's clarity, simplicity, generality, accessibility and importance



Questions for analysis and critical reflection of theoretical works (Alligood 2018, p. 46)

1. CLARITY: How clear is this theory or philosophy?
2. SIMPLICITY: How simple is this theory?
3. GENERALITY: How general is this theory?
4. ACCESSIBILITY: How accessible is this theory?
5. IMPORTANCE: How important is this theory?



CLARITY: How clear is this theory or philosophy?

- Clarity are reviewed in terms of semantic clarity and consistency
- Structure is reviewed in terms of clarity and consistency.
- Definitional consistency
- Analysis starts with identification of major concepts and subconcepts and their definitions.
- Are the concepts defined according to the framework (philosophy, conceptual model, thoery etc)
- Is the structure logic?
- Are the assumptions stated clearly?

SIMPLICITY: How simple is this theory?

- Simplicity is highly valued in nursing theory development (Alligood 2018).
- A theory should be sufficiently comprehensive, presented at a level abstraction to provide guidance, and have as few concepts as possible with as simplistic relations as possible to aid clarity.

GENERALITY: How general is this theory?

- The generality of a theory is about the scope of application and the purpose within the theory.

- The generality of a theoretical work varies by how abstract or concrete it is.

ACCESSIBILITY: How accessible is this theory?

- ❑ 'Accessible addresses the extent to which empirical indicators for the concepts can be identified and to what extent the purposes of the theory can be attained' (Chinn & Kramer 2015, p. 205).
- ❑ Accessibility is vital to developing nursing research to test a theory.
- ❑ Accessibility facilitates testing, the empirical indicators provide linkage to practice for testability and ultimate use of a theory to describe and test aspects of practice.

IMPORTANCE: How important is this theory?

The theory should promote understanding that is important to nursing.

What topics are today important in nursing? Answer in the chat!

Research, theory and practice are closely related, nursing theory lends itself to research testing, and research testing lends itself to knowledge for practice.

Neto JMR et al. Meleis' Nursing Theories Evaluation: integrative review. Rev Bras Enferm [Internet]. 2016;69(1):162-8. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7167.2016690123i>

Objective: to analyze the application of the theory evaluation model proposed by Meleis in Brazilian studies.

Method: integrative review of online articles published from 2002 to 2012 in the databases LILACS and BDENF.

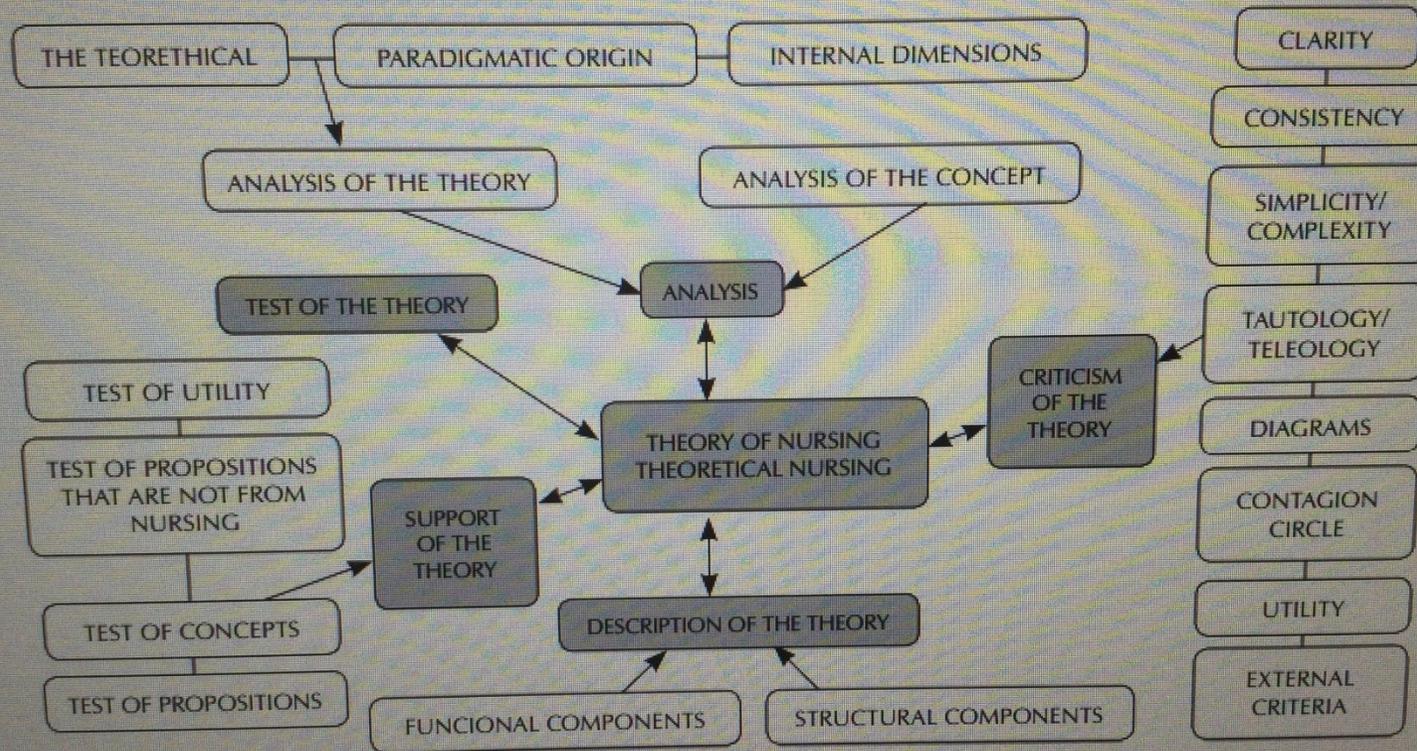
Results: the 16 selected studies confirmed the use of only three of the five stages proposed for Meleis' theories analysis: Description of the Theory, Criticism of the Theory and Analysis of the Theory, with a predominance of a single unit of analysis in each.

Conclusion: the analysis of nursing theories provides support to nurses in the practice, research, education and administration of the different dimensions of care. Meleis' model figures as very important by contributing to the development of knowledge of nursing discipline, considering that its use as a method allows several reflections on theories in order that they be revalidated to support a more theoretical and practical applicability



proposed, this model can be applied in its entirety or in part, not being necessary to follow the order of phases⁽¹⁾.

attention and of acceptance of it identifies the existence of



Source: Meleis (2012).
Note: Free Translation of the authors.

Figure 2 - Theories Assessment Model⁽¹⁾

Fagerström L et al. (2020). The core of Katie Eriksson's caritative caring theory – a qualitative study from a postdoctoral perspective. Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences, doi: 10.1111/scs.12942

Aims: The aim of the study was twofold; to explore and describe central concepts in the development of caritative caring theory from a postdoctoral perspective, and to uncover and explore the relationships between the concepts.

Methodology: The design of the study was qualitative with a mixed method approach. The material was collected from a postdoctoral group (n=38) mainly through electronic questionnaires. The texts were interpreted through manifest and latent content analysis.

Research questions and analysis

- 1) Which concepts emerged and how many times?
- 2) How were the concepts described?

A manual calculation of how many times a concept appeared in the material was made, and, additionally, relationships between concepts were calculated.

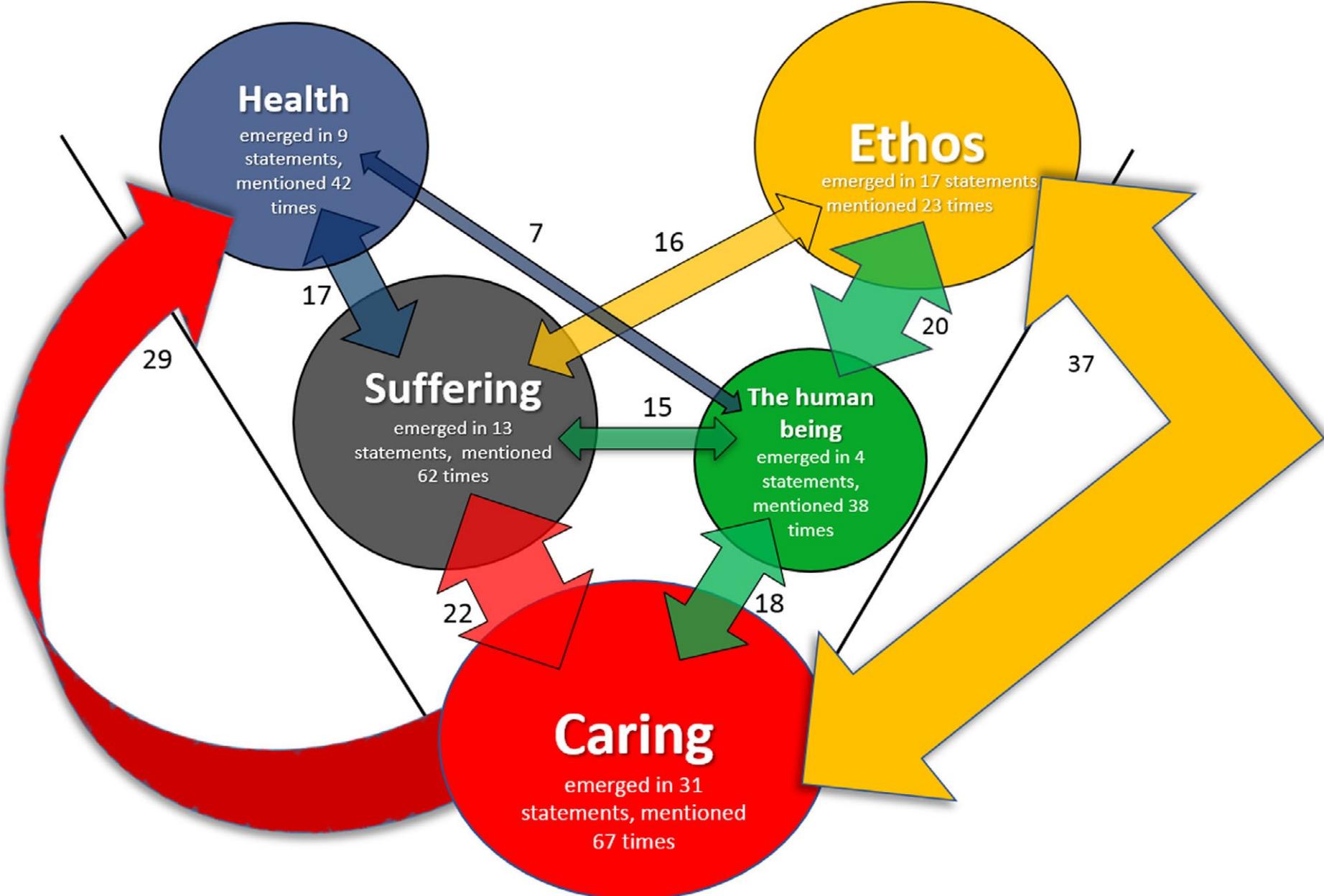
The participants' statements, consisting of shorter and longer statements were collected, compiled and analyzed individually by the first researcher and second researchers, after which the research group discussed the results and finally agreed about the analysis.

The software program NVIVO was used to further check if it could support these findings. The process of the manifest content analysis resulted in five main concepts with subcategories.

Table 1 Main categories with related subcategories

Main category	Subcategory
Caring	Being caring Nursing activities
Ethos	Inner ethics Ethical guidelines
Suffering	Suffering as ill-health Suffering as an existential dimension
Health	Health as multidimensional Health as becoming
The human being	The person as a human being The human being as a patient

Figure 1. A tentative synthesis of the main concepts and the relationships between them.

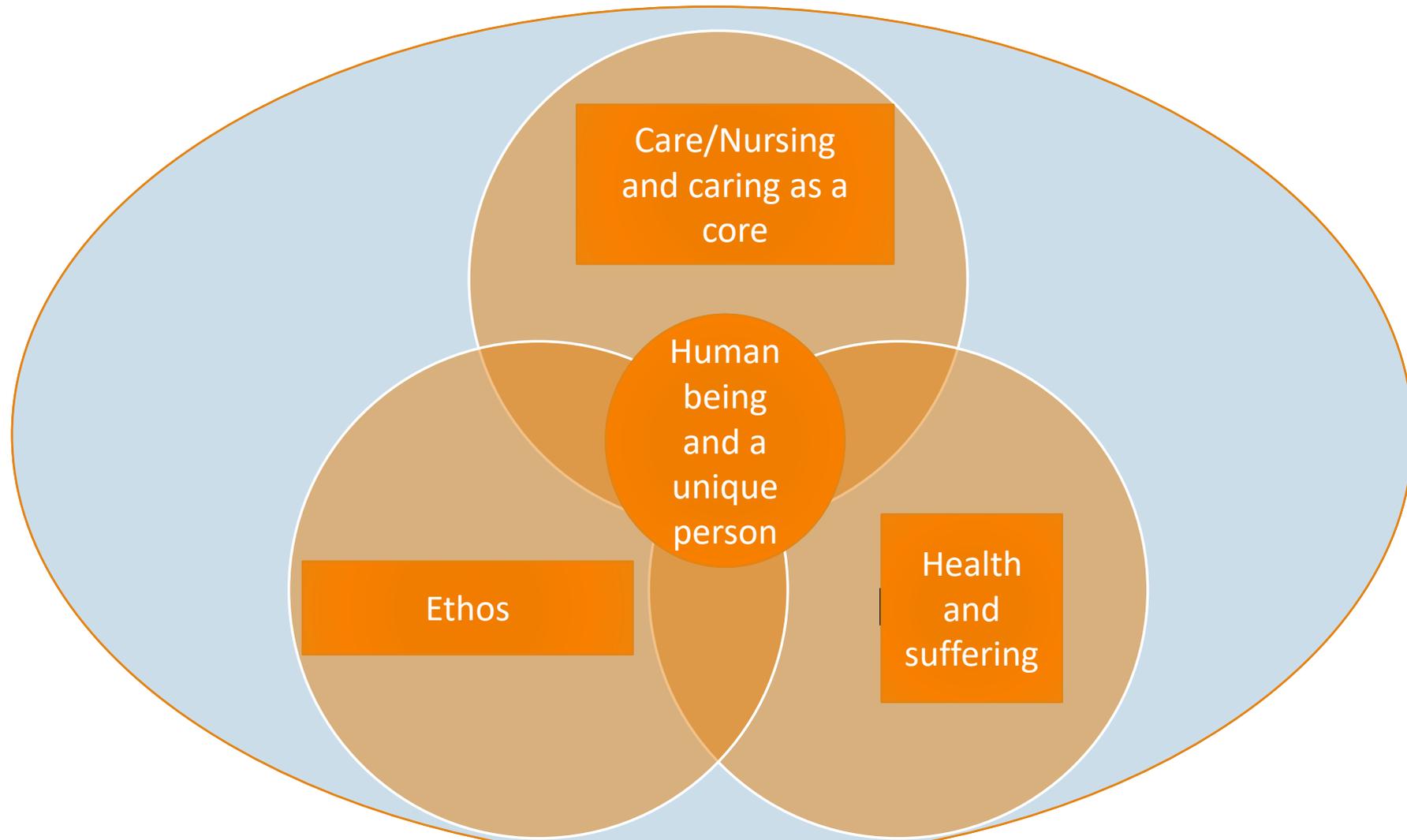




Findings and Conclusions

Findings: The analyses generated five main categories including subcategories. The main categories were ‘Caring’ ‘Ethos’, ‘Suffering’ ‘Health’ and ‘The human being’. The relation between the main concepts compiled as ‘A tentative synthesis of the main concepts and the relationships between them’.

Conclusion: This study contributes to an understanding of the most fundamental and valuable concepts in the development of caritative theory during its first 40 years according to postdoctoral researchers’ perspectives. This study also displays that the concepts ethos and caring have the strongest relationship followed by that between caring and health, indicating the inner core of ethos and love within caring which bears the potential of enhancing the patient’s wellbeing and health.



Central concepts of the caritative theory that together constitute a philosophical perspective for research, education and clinical practice for Caring Science as a knowledge domain for healthcare professionals