Application of Critical Theory in Nursing Research Design

Dwi Retnaningsih1*, Muhammad Ridlo2, Bagas Biyanzah Drajad Pamukhti3, Eko Budi Laksono 4, Megah Andriany5

1,2,3,4,5 Medical and Surgical Nursing Division, Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia

Article info

Correspondence author:
Dwi Retnaningsih
E-mail:
dwiretnaningsih18@gmail.com

Abstract. A person infected with HIV/ AIDS has many things to deal with in their daily lives. Changes that occur within and outside of people living with HIV AIDS (PLWHA) create negative perceptions about themselves and affect their self-development. Nursing research on illness perception has been proven to be related to the outcome of one's treatment. This study used the concept of philosophical theory in nursing research. The critical theory ontologically was similar to post-positivism, which critically assesses objects or reality (critical realism) unnoticeable correctly by human observation. Epistemologically, critical theory was an inseparable relationship between the observer and reality. Therefore, this theory emphasizes the concept of subjectivity in finding a science. This theory perceives reality as an integral variable from the research subject. The values of the subject influence the truth of reality. Axiology was a study of the benefits on the purpose of the knowledge utilization that refers to the development and selection of the research field priorities and the implementation of knowledge utilization. People living with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA) are perceived negatively by both family and community. This negative judgment leads to the negative perception of PLWHA, which impacts on the inadequate treatment and worse condition of the patients. The negative perception of PLWHA towards their illness can be measured using qualitative methods with the focus group discussion (FGD) method or in-depth interview. PLWHA with a poor perception of the disease can change their perspective to be more positive and can be cooperative in conducting treatment by using therapeutic communication techniques in a professional manner

Keywords: philosophy, ontology, epistemology, axiology on the perception of PLWHA
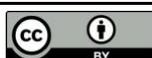
INTRODUCTION

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in Indonesia reported by the Ministry of health in 2018 amounted to 640,443 people with the percentage of 47% of people with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA), and the highest percentage was in the age group of 25-49 years and 20-24 years. The most upper provinces with HIV are DKI Jakarta which consists of 55,099 people, followed by East Java 43,399 people, West Java 31,293 people, Papua 30,699 people, and Central Java 24,757 people (1).

According to the data on the prevalence of HIV / AIDS, it can be inferred that the majority of PLWHA are young adults and those in productive age. The results of research conducted by Shaluhiyah found that nearly half of the respondents had negative behavior when dealing with PLWHA, such as; refuse to eat food provided by PLWHA, do not want to use the toilet with PLWHA, do not allow their children to play with HIV children, and even refuse to live surrounded by the PLWHA (2)

A person infected with HIV / AIDS has many things to deal with in their daily lives. Changes that occur within and outside of people living with HIV AIDS (PLWHA) create negative perceptions about themselves and affect their self-development. PLWHA tend to show forms of reaction to the misleading attitudes and behavior due to the inability of PLWHA to accept the reality of their conditions and the assumption that HIV is an incurable disease (3)

Nursing research on illness perception has been proven to have a relationship with a person's treatment outcomes. Illness perception was crucial because it can determine patient behavior and can positively affect treatment outcomes, such as treatment compliance and functional recovery. If the illness perception of the patients is right, then the results obtained are also good, whereas if the patient's perception of the disease is weak, then the results obtained are also same (4,5)

Frostholm revealed that communication affects the illness perception and satisfaction of the patient. The patient's uncertain and negative feelings about the disease cause them to be dissatisfied with the service. Health perception was essential in predicting future health care. The studies show that involving patients in discussions on their illness can reduce misunderstandings and reduce the risk of the chronic condition of their health problems (6,7).

The contribution of critical theory to the development of nursing discipline enables nurses to carry out their duties to patients regarding the social and cultural aspects. It was intended to readily identify social inequalities related to health and change the situation through the application of innovative knowledge to face current health challenges [8]. Based on the background mentioned above, illness perception of PLWHA affects their health conditions, so it was necessary to find the solution for this problem to change the negative perception of patients through a critical theory approach. The purpose of the concept is to explain the concept of critical theory in the research design on PLWHA.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study was:

1.1 To describe the concept of an ontology of critical theory in the research design on PLWHA.

1.2 To describe the concept of the epistemology of critical theory in the research design on PLWHA.

1.3 To describe the axiological concept of critical theory in the research design on PLWHA

1.4 To illustrate the application of critical theory in the research design on PLWHA.

METHOD

The method of the study used the concept of philosophical theory in nursing research. The critical theory started from the renaissance period, where humans must not question its origin because everything comes from the scriptures. Critical theory is there to criticize the traditional people who are considered subservient, while the critics perceived that everything was not given. According to the essential theory experts, this theory was born to criticize the existing theories or perspectives, to free people from the conditions that enslave them (8). This theory is the result of Karl Marx's initial unpublished ideas newly discovered in the 1900s (especially the Paris Manuscript), which were finally put forward by several thinkers from Germany. Critical theory is one part of the post-positivism theory. Critical theory is the development of Marxism theory (9). The Marxism perspective or scientific socialism is the designation for a set of ideas first formulated by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). These ideas provide the theoretical basis that has been fully elaborated for the struggle of the working class to achieve a more grand form of society – socialism (10).

The critical paradigm believes that the element of truth is inherent in the relationship between research actions and the surrounding historical situations. Research cannot be separated from specific contexts, for example, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender situations. Researchers must also develop conscientization. It requires cautious attitudes in research activities because research activities can uncover a lack of knowledge and misunderstanding. Not all assumptions and theories can contain the truth. Hence, in the process of research activities, it is also possible to obtain new insights in specific ways of thinking (11). The Marxists theories revealed that new perspectives are born from the underlying assumptions of the Marxists, such as critical theory and structuralism, both of which focus on inequality and exploitation. However, there are differences between the two. The structuralism focus on structures and mechanisms in the capitalist system.

Meanwhile, the critical theory emphasizes culture and ideology to create a harmonious relationship with the community. Critical Theory is also different from structuralism, which considers that humans can be understood scientifically, even though humans are all ideological knowledge, and are created following specific interests. Moreover, the critical theory also perceives that it is not only the factors of class differences that cause oppression but also the differences in ethnicity, race, nation, and gender. Therefore, the critical theory does not refer much to the relationships between economic and social systems (12).

The conceptual structure of critical theory has been analyzed along with its possibilities to contribute to nursing research (13). One of them is the incorporation of essential elements from critical theory to Karl Martinsen's "Philosophy of Care," which is an important concept to be applied in communicative nursing actions from critical theory, namely autonomy and responsibility that operates independently. The concept of autonomy refers to the principle that guides a person when speaking without coercion and external or internal obstacles. Meanwhile, the principle of responsibility relates to the implications and commitment of individuals to the context of communication in which each individual can express themselves freely. This principle leads to professional relations, provides an opportunity to expose and reduces communication errors, and produces fairer nursing practices (13).

RESULTS

ONTOLOGY OF THE CRITICAL THEORY

The critical theory ontologically is the same as post-positivism, which critically assesses objects or reality (critical realism) unnoticeable correctly by human observation (14). Meanwhile, according to Miller, critical theory is based on a meta-theoretical framework(15). Critical theory is based on a general perspective of the nature of social reality, both in factual and normative dimensions. The past and present social realities are an essential reference in building the expected community projections. A general perspective of the nature of society will shape the perspective of the past and present from the historical dimension - the aspired factual (15).

According to the comprehension of modern society, Habermas understood some oppressive tendencies from the enlightenment tradition as openly attacked by postmodernism, thereby rejecting the intuitive and idealistic approach to ratio. Habermas presented a concept of ratio that will be used as a basis for evaluating norms (16). The entire Habermas project aimed at liberating people from all forms of oppression carried out in the name of modern rationality. Ratio, freedom, and equality are not theoretically explored issues, but practical tasks that must be achieved (17).

Several basic concepts form the basis of reality, according to Habermas, namely interests, life-world, systems, argumentation, rationality, and colonization of the life-world.
   a. Interests
      Interest is a basic orientation rooted in human ability and becomes an essential means for humans to preserve their existence and to determine their creations (18).
   b. Life-world
      Life-world is a concept related to interpersonal communication that is free and open without any pressure. Communication relies on mutual understanding (19).
   c. System
      The system is a built structure that grows and develops in a complex and can meet the needs of oneself with the ability to control and direct (19).
   d. Argumentation
      Argumentation is a situation that places participants in communication, which can critically examine a hypothesis claim for validity (20).
   e. Rationality
      Rationality is a free and open communication relationship (19).
   f. Colonization of the life-world
The colonization of the life-world is a form that is not more important than the fact that the system forces itself on the communication which takes place in the living world, and limits the ability to argue (19)

EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE CRITICAL THEORY

Epistemologically, critical theory is an inseparable relationship between the observer and reality. Therefore, this theory emphasizes the concept of subjectivity in finding a science. It rejects the idea of positivism and post-positivism, which state that the fact is value-free. This theory perceives reality as an integral variable from the research subject. The values of the subject influence the truth of the fact. This understanding methodologically addresses the problem by proposing a dialogue method (14)

AXIOLOGY OF THE CRITICAL THEORY

Axiology is a study of the values on the purpose of the knowledge utilization that refers to the development and selection of the research field priorities and the implementation of knowledge utilization (18).

DISCUSSION

Ontology

People living with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA) are perceived negatively by both family and community. PLWHA is still considered dangerous for some individuals due to the lack of public understanding of the transmission of HIV. Stigma is also the biggest obstacle to HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment. The negative stigma from the community pointed at PLWHA causes the illness perception of the PLWHA to be negative. The negative perception of disease prevents a person from getting optimal treatment. This is because the individual considers that the disease is incurable so that the patients became uncooperative with healthcare workers in performing treatment (2,3)

Epistemology

Therapeutic communication methods can change perceptions of PLWHA, focus group discussions (FGDs), and counseling, which provides knowledge and ways to deal with the disease and discuss therapeutically and professionally as partners to change the perspective of PLWHA towards the treatment (19,20).

The negative perception of PLWHA towards their illness can be measured using qualitative methods with the focus group discussion (FGD) method or in-depth interview. Perception of PLWHA can also be measured quantitatively by the technique of illness perception questionnaire (IPQ) (6,7).

Axiology

PLWHA with a poor perception of the disease can change their perspective to be more positive and can be cooperative in conducting treatment by using therapeutic communication techniques in a professional way both medically with health services and independently to improve their quality of life

CONCLUSION

People with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA) are perceived negatively by both family and community. This negative judgment leads to the negative perception of PLWHA, which impacts on the inadequate treatment and worse condition of the patients.

The negative perception of PLWHA towards their illness can be measured using qualitative methods with the focus group discussion (FGD) method or in-depth interview. Perception of PLWHA can also be measured quantitatively by the technique of illness perception questionnaire (IPQ).

PLWHA, with a poor perception of the disease, can change their perspective to be more positive and can be cooperative in conducting treatment by professionally using therapeutic communication techniques.

REFERENCES

(1)   Ministry of Health Republic Indonesia. World AIDS Day, the campaign of STOP HIV transmission: I'm brave, I'm healthy. 2018.

(2)   Shaluhiyah Z, Musthofa SB, Widjanarko B. Community Stigma on People living with HIV / AIDS. National Public Health Heal J. 2015; 9 (4): 333-9.

(3)   Reysa M. Self-stigma on People Living with HIV / AIDS (PLWHA) in Makassar City. 2017;

(4)   Leventhal H, Benyamini Y, Brownlee S, Diefenbach M, Leventhal EA, Patrick-Miller L, et al. Illness representations: theoretical foundations. Petrie KJ, Weinman J, editors. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic; 1997. 155–188 p.

(5)   Petrie KJ, Jago LA, Devcich DA. The role of illness perceptions in patients with medical conditions. Curr Opin, Psychiatry. 2007;20(2):163–7.

(6)   Frostholm L, Fink P, Oernboel E, Christensen KS, Toft T, Olesen F, et al. The uncertain consultation and patient satisfaction: The impact of patients' illness perceptions and a randomized controlled trial on the training of physicians' communication skills. Psychosom Med. 2005;67(6):897–905.

(7)   Frostholm L, Fink P, Christensen KS, Toft T, Oernboel E, Olesen F, et al. The patients' illness perceptions and the use of primary health care. Psychosom Med. 2005;67(6):997–1005.

(8)   Horkheimer M. Critical Theory: Selected Essays. Newyork: Continuum; 1982.

(9)   Adams I. Modern Political Ideology. In Yogyakarta: Qalam; 2004.

(10)   Woods A, Sewell R, Trotsky L, Marx K, Lenin V, Engels F. What is Marxism. 2nd ed. USA: Wellred Books; 2017. 238 p.

(11)   Salim A. Theories and Paradigms of Social Research. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana; 2006.

(12)   Steans, Jill and Pettiford, Lloyd & Diez T. Introduction to International Relations, Perspectives & Themes. In: Pearson & Longman, editor. 2nd editio. 2005. p. 103–28.

(13)   Mosqueda-díaz A, Vílchez-barboza V, Valenzuela-suazo S, Sanhueza-alvarado O. Critical theory and its contribution to the nursing discipline. Invest Educ Enferm. 2014;32(2):367–363.

(14)   Salim A. Theories and Paradigms of Social Research. Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana; 2001

(15)   Miller K. Communications Theories: Perspectives, Processes, and Contexts. Boston: McGraw Hill; 2002.

(16)   Endres B. Habermas and Critical Thinking. 1996.

(17)   Bernstein RJ. Habermas and Modernity. Cambridge: The MIT Press; 1991.

(18)   Imam Ghozali. The Shifting of the Accounting Paradigm from Positivism to the Sociological Perspective and Its Implications for Accounting Education in Indonesia. Available from:
http://eprints.undip.ac.id/35130/1/JMAKSI_Jan_2007_04_Imam_Ghozali.pd

(19)   Mohammed SA. Examining Health disciplines : critical social theory in pediatric nursing. J Spec Pediatr Nurs. 2006;11(1):68–71.

(20)   Saki M, Mohammad S, Kermanshahi K, Mohammadi E. Perception of Patients With HIV / AIDS From Stigma and Discrimination. Iran red crescent Med. 2015;17(6).