Critical Thinking Dispositions of Nursing Students in Asian and Non-Asian Countries: A Literature Review

Mahvash Salsali¹, Mansooreh Tajvidi² & Shahraz Ghiyasvandian¹

¹ School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran
² School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, International Campus, Tehran, Iran

Correspondence: Mansooreh Tajvidi, BSN, MSN, PhD student, PhD Department, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Tehran University of Medical Sciences International Campus. Postal Code: 1419733171. E-mail: mansooreh_tajvidi@yahoo.com

Received: July 30, 2013   Accepted: August 27, 2013   Online Published: September 26, 2013
doi:10.5539/gjhs.v5n6p172          URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/gjhs.v5n6p172

Abstract
Critical thinking disposition represents an inclination of a person to use possessed skills in relation to critical thinking. The trend of critical thinking has been described as inner motivation to solve problems and make decisions by thinking. In nursing as a practical profession, the concept of critical thinking dispositions is important component in helping to manage complex health situations and to deal with patient issues effectively. Willingness to think critically is a prerequisite for safe and subtly performance. The results of studies show critical thinking dispositions of nursing students in Asian countries are different from non-Asian countries. Aim of this literature review was to compare critical thinking dispositions of nursing students in Asian and non-Asian countries. Literature review was done in English and Persian databases. The results showed of the 795 articles published in English and Persian language that studied critical thinking, 73 ones studied critical thinking skills and dispositions in nursing education, and relationship between teaching methods and critical thinking skills and dispositions in nursing education of different countries. Fifteen of seventy three articles assessed critical thinking dispositions in nursing students. Limited studies showed that the Asian nursing students had mostly undermining score of the critical thinking dispositions, while non-Asian countries tend to positive scores. The reasons for these differences could be due to issues such as environmental, educational methods and cultural differences. However, future studies should measure critical thinking disposition by discipline-based tools.

Keywords: critical thinking, disposition, nursing student, literature review

1. Introduction

Literature on critical thinking shows that there is little agreement about the concept of critical thinking. Dewey (1910), from a philosophical view, proposed that critical thinking involves probing, discriminating and testing ideas as well as exploring various options on an issue. Paul (1992) described critical thinking as the ‘art of thinking about your thinking while you are thinking in order to make your thinking better; more clear, more accurate and more defensible’ (p. 11). In another study by Paul (1993), three essential elements—thought, intellectual standards, and affective traits—were identified as central to the critical thinking process. Ennis (1987) and Halpern (1998) defined the term critical thinking as represents a set of cognitive skills and dispositions which are conducive to decision making and problem solving in different situations. Watson and Glaser (1980) defined critical thinking as a composite of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. According to Facione, Facione, and Sanchez (1994), a critical thinking disposition represents an inclination of a person to use possessed skills in relation to critical thinking. The trend of critical thinking has been described as inner motivation to solve problems and make decisions by thinking (Huan & Vickie, 2008). According to American Society of Philosophy (1990) that has proposed a precise consensus on the definition of critical thinking which comprises emotional and cognitive components, ‘critical thinking is purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference as well as explanation of the evidential conceptual, methodological, criteriological or contextual considerations upon which that judgment was based. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgements, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria,