

Original Article

Educating Nursing Students – Emotional Intelligence and the Didactics of Caring Science

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Abstract

Background: The interest in and attention to emotional intelligence has increased within the healthcare profession in the last decades. Academic nursing education institutions are faced with challenging pedagogic and didactic duties and formal requirements for development.

Aim: To increase understanding of emotional intelligence from a caring science perspective and didactics and, to describe how nurse educators, through their ethos, can support nursing students' cultivation process. The purpose is also to pave the way for applied and further caring science research based on an empirical knowledge base.

Method: A narrative literature review. Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics with an explorative-descriptive, ideographic and inductive approach.

Results: Nurse educators' competence and qualifications open up for inspiration and motivational profiles. Emotional intelligence is highlighted as a counter reaction to a mechanistic and instrumental view of the human being.

Conclusions: Emotional intelligence is challenging for the cultivation process of the didactics of caring.

Keywords: Cultivation, didactics of caring science, emotional intelligence, nurse educator, nursing student, phenomenological hermeneutics.

Introduction

Caring science historical studies and research on the history of ideas from the first half of the 20th century show that nurses should be able to control themselves, their behaviour, and above all not express any kinds of feelings. It was improper to show patients gestures or emotions. If nurses received unkind behaviour they should respond with kindness and respect (Honkavuo, 2014).

Psychological and medical research has focused on affect and cognitions as separate constructions although the existence of feelings as part of a psychiatric caring context has been described since the 19th century (Thorndike & Stern, 1937). Hundred years later psychological research emphasized the importance of feelings for the human being's mental health. Feelings and reason are linked together like body, mind and spirit. Feelings control the body through which

the human being both consciously and unconsciously signals to the surroundings.

The breakthrough for emotional intelligence came when Goleman published his bestseller on the topic in 1995. The book garnered great interest among the public and scientific circles around the world. Goleman further developed the model for emotional intelligence together with Boyatzis & McKee (2002) and it consists of different areas of competence (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000). (Table 1.).

Psychology and pedagogy are scientific disciplines where emotional intelligence has attained a relatively established position. Didactics is one of pedagogys' subdisciplines and related to the development of knowledge within a specific scientific field or context (Uljens, 1997). The meaning context of the didactics of caring is nursing which originates in the caring science substance (Ekebergh, 2001; Matilainen, 2004).

The didactics of caring science is a synthesis of its theoretical core and tradition, history, art and culture rooted in the ethos – value base of caring science, in which ethics constitutes the lynchpin. According to caring science thought, ethos and ethics belong together.

The ethos of the didactics of caring is reflected in ethical deeds in the nurse educator. Ethos is realized in the nurse educator's inner being and recognized through evident and concrete actions within the meaning context and serving communion. Ethos as a value base and fundamental attitude conveys the human being's strength and is significant for the experience of health and meaning in life. The ethos of the didactics of caring, as evident knowledge, is possible to attain partly through caring science research and partly through the ontology of caring science (Matilainen, 2004).

The ontology of caring science forms the basis for understanding and interpretation in this study. The ontological fundamental assumptions of caring science has their meaning context in the innermost core of love and compassion. The theoretical caring science perspective of the study is based on Eriksson's humanistic caring science-tradition with a focus on the didactics of caring science (Matilainen, 2004).

Internationalization creates new accelerating challenges for academic nurse education institutions. This means that the job description and formal requirements for nurse educators have new dimensions in the last decades. Emotional intelligence has a stronger foothold as a result of the attention to caring science research and implementation of new knowledge. Nurse educators' work and activities include practical procedures, theoretical structures, relational influences and functions which are linked to interpersonal interaction. The importance of emotional competence is for natural reasons emphasized in academic nurse education institutions (Garner, 2010). Competence originates in pedagogy and cognitive psychology and refers to nurse educators' potential skills to handle different situations and fulfill their duties. Competence is the abstract form of qualifications. Qualifications entail the formal, specific and concrete ability to implement the didactic duties of caring. Competence implicitly or explicitly

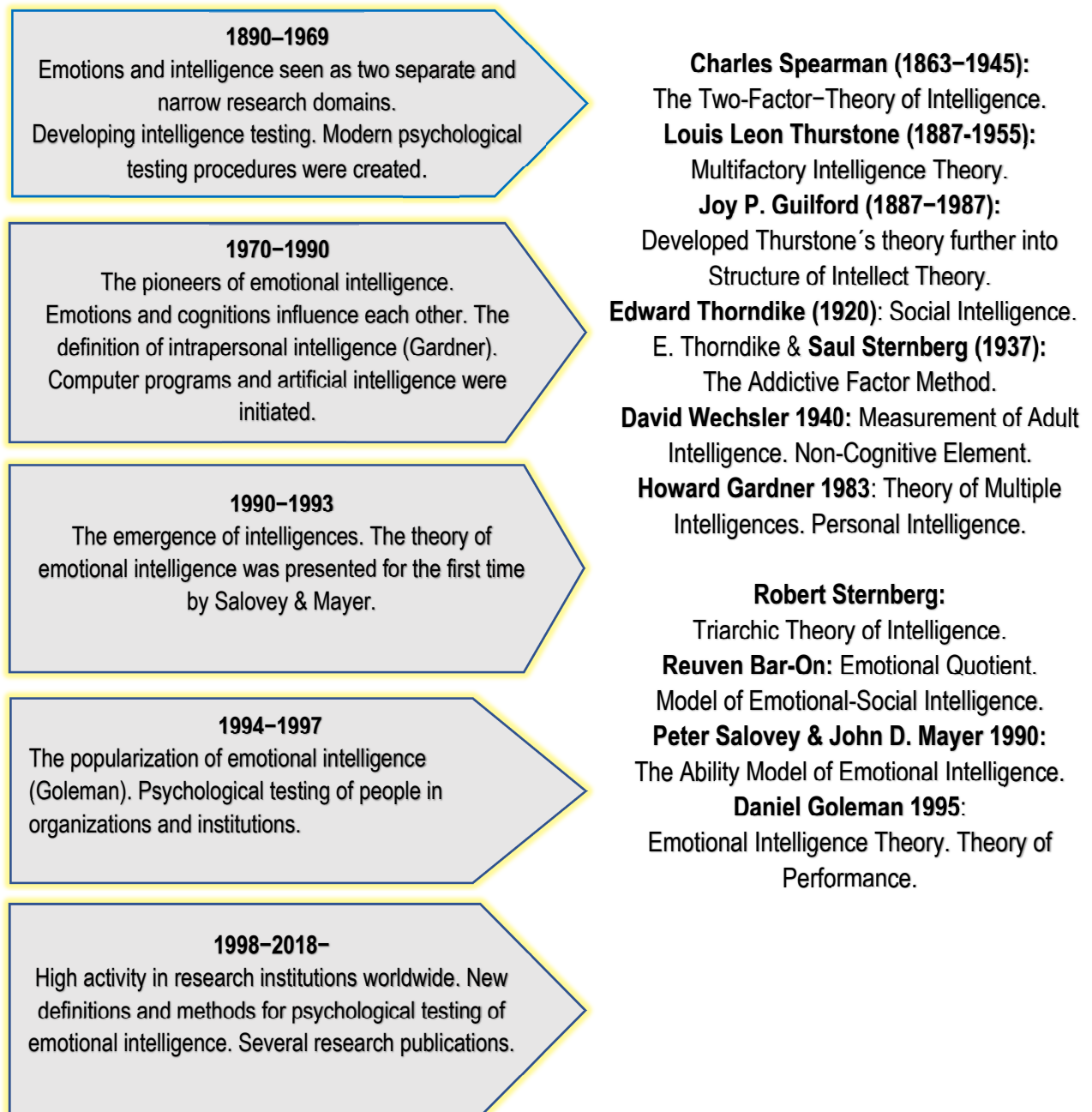
controls nurse educators' to fulfill their mission (Uljens, 1997).

Emotional intelligence is an independent and relatively new scientific concept consisting of two connected components. These are complicated to define. Emotional intelligence is linked to social intelligence in terms of the history, development and background of the concept. Social debates highlight other forms of intelligences which are linked to different scientific disciplines (Gardner, 1983; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Thorndike & Stern, 1937). This study is, however, limited to emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is studied abundantly within various scientific disciplines: only in caring science it is possible to discern a certain caution in the number of studies.

This qualitative basic research study seeks to understand what emotional intelligence is and describes how nurse educators through their ethos can support nursing students' cultivation process in the meaning context of the didactics of caring. The aim of this narrative literature review is to further pave the way for applied and further research based on an empirical knowledge base. The research question is as follows: How can emotional intelligence support nurse educators in nursing students' cultivation process?

Methodology

The narrative literature review enables the representation of nursing students' cultivation process and emotional intelligence in a context of the didactics of caring. In this paper it seeks to summarize previous studies to present a descriptive synthesis (Evans, 2008). In narrative literature reviews the starting-point is that the data material is treated freely: it has not undergone systematic analyses, but it is possible to reach conclusions which are characterized as syntheses. The nature of narrative literature review is such that it does not use a critical approach, but instead offers knowledge on existing research (Evans, 2008; Wheeler & Barrett, 1994). Caring science publications that use narrative literature reviews as a research method has received only scant attention even though the method opens up for a broader understanding and lays the groundwork for new hypotheses and theoretical frameworks for generating new theories.

Table 1. Historical development of the concept and theory of emotional intelligence.

The methodological approach is based on Ricoeur's thought and interpretation of texts. Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics is centred on the text's search for knowledge questions related to the researcher's pre-understanding and prejudices.

Ricoeur's (2016) philosophy focuses on the world of the text and the meaning of symbols. Each text has meanings that open up for a life world from the naïve reading through a hierarchical integrative structure analysis to a concentrated narrative story or understanding of the whole. The substance of the text is not that which is revealed through naïve reading but that which is conveyed through the formal structure of the text. Ricoeur's hermeneutic bow describes the whole-parts-interpretations.

According to the principles of didactics, the movements of the hermeneutic bow contains questions and answers that change the understanding through interpretation and interprets a new understanding about the field of interest in the context of the didactics of caring. The movement takes place between understanding and explanation, and there is no absolute or complete knowledge.

According to Ricoeur (2016), there is a mutual relationship between phenomenology and hermeneutics. The research process consists of a penetrating exploration, a discovery, that by nature is open and contributes to support the accomplishment of the object of study. The description shows the caring science knowledge that merges through understanding and interpretation.

The ideographic opens up for the education of nursing students where it includes a revelation and search for patterns that can produce new phenomena, insights and knowledge of the already known (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

The inductive approach aims for the creation of new theories. The Ricoeurian art of interpretation and approach to texts fulfill a promise of what bears the truth. The interpretation portrays a platform for formulating a figurative theoretical model for the purpose of describing something of emotional intelligence in nursing students' cultivation process and for developing caring

science and the didactics of caring science (Figure 1).

The procedure of the literature review

The study's phenomenological-hermeneutic movement involves the narrative literature review based on emotional intelligence, the education of nursing students and the didactics of caring science as a context. The review of literature seeks to identify relevant knowledge content, find structures and shared characteristics for the object of the study and to create an extensive background for pre-understanding and further research.

The aim and research question of the study guided the hierarchical literature search and aided in framing the selection. The aim of the literature search was to strive for relevance, openness and originality and to implement a retroactive search.

The search words for the study are presented in the abstract. An electronic and a manual literature search was conducted 2000–2018 in the databases Cinahl, Embase, Fennica, Medic, PubMed/Medline and ProQuest.

The first search showed the total amount of literature and the number of publications were abundant and varied. The popular science interest in emotional intelligence is vast and uses concepts from the other fields of intelligence research. Emotional intelligence in itself has generated a degree of skepticism in scientific fields that is difficult to articulate. This led to a decrease in the number of relevant references.

The initial aim was to find relevant caring science references with a higher level of abstraction. Publications that touch upon this study's area of interest exist and partly overlap. Results from previous research of a similar character do not contribute to this study with a deeper added value or more complete saturation above the references already chosen. The aim of the narrative literature review is delimited in connection to the already stated point of departure and is not to include all research in the field.

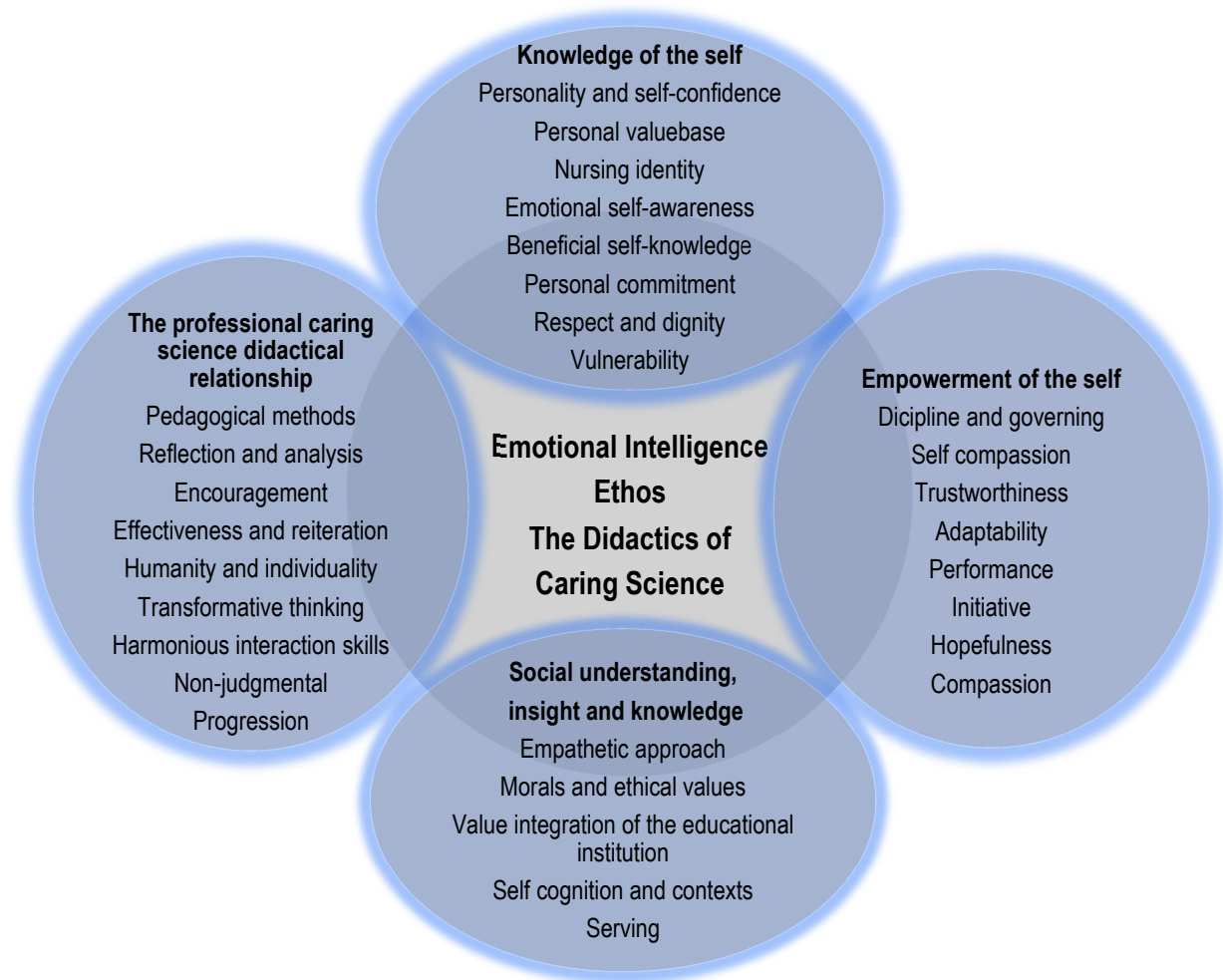


Figure 1. A figurative theoretical model of emotional intelligence in the didactics of caring science. Emotional intelligence opens for the path of the nursing student's professional formation that requires personal and social dedication and the contributions of society.

Literature review

The core in empathy is, according to Holm (2001), to understand another person's feelings or being controlled by empathetic understanding. Professionalism means to show one's fellow beings respect, interest, warmth, humanity and personal treatment. Empathy and empathetic ability is important in interpersonal contacts both in caring and the didactics of caring. Empathy and social awareness are closely related with emotional intelligence and are based on self-knowledge, the ability to read feelings and personal treatment. Emotional intelligence helps people to treat and understand others better and

to create interpersonal relations (Percy & Richardson, 2018).

According to Freshwater & Stickley (2004), emotional intelligence involves non-cognitive elements in the human being. The non-cognitive is related to the affective, personal and social knowledge factors of intelligence. Generally speaking, and without highlighting these knowledge factors, it is problematic to study intelligence. Stickley & Freshwater (2002) explain that academic nurse education that ignores the significance of emotions lacks understanding of the art dimension of the caring science of nursing. Emotional intelligence is central when nurses perform care interventions.

It is problematic to describe this dimension of caring without reflecting on emotions and interpersonal interaction. Nurses need knowledge, understanding and education that relate to emotional intelligence to be able to create professional caring relationships (Bulmer Smith, et al. 2009). Healthcare organizations and working communities influence the moulding and development of nurses' emotional competence (Vandewea, a et al. 2016).

Nurses must be professional when it comes to handling emotions (Cadman & Brewer, 2001). Emotional sensibility is often different during emergency illness, diagnostic phase and treatment period. Patients' vulnerability is emphasized at hospital admittance. It can be problematic for nurse educators to create a good caring didactic relationship to nursing students because of the number of nursing students, competition between them and because nurse educators are in continuous movement. Nurse educators' and also nurse leaders' emotional competence and motivational profile impact on how nursing students treat and reflect on emotions in clinical praxis (Bulmer Smith, et al. 2009; Garner, 2010). Nursing students stand to suffer and are not able to fulfill the goals and effects of the didactics of caring of the nurse training if nurse educators' and nurse leaders' emotional competence is lacking or has secondary priority. According to Codier and Odell (2014), it is important that today's academic nurse education institutions call attention to nursing students' opportunities to act as emotionally intelligent and professional nurses after training. The entrance requirements to nurse education programs should be critically assessed, emotional intelligence tests and selection of candidates should be conducted already at the level of application to nurse education programs (Sharon & Grinberg, 2018).

McQueen (2004) emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in caring relationships. Nurses need education on emotional intelligence and support so they can protect their well-being in intensive and stressful caring relationships. Difficult caring relationships can influence nurses' physical, mental and social health. According to Evans & Allen (2002), emotional intelligence is a form of social intelligence. Academic nurse education institutions should systematically and strategically include teaching on emotional intelligence in evidence-based curricula to strengthen nursing students' capacity

to master difficult situations characterized by strong emotions in the meaning context of clinical nursing (Feather, 2009; Foster, et al. 2014). Nursing students and nurses are repeatedly exposed to difficult situations that may cause them suffering and reduce their ability to serve the patients (Honkavuo & Lindström, 2014). Empathy, compassion and social skills in caring relationships are more important than technical skills (Percy & Richardson, 2018; Strickland, 2000). Limited emotional competence may result in an inferior healthcare quality and bad conditions in patient-care. The nurse leader's leadership style, ethos and personality are central for the well-being and collaboration of the working community (Davies, et al. 2010; Grangeat & Gray, 2007). Highly emotionally competent nurses are thoughtful, have ambitions, ethical conscience and high morals. Nurses' personality is directly connected to their emotional competence (Vandewaa, et al. 2016). It is essential that nurse educators are competent and qualified. Skills in emotional intelligence increase the sense of physical, mental and social well-being (Lewis, et al. 2017). Great portions of nursing students' period of training consist of clinical praxis where the ability to cooperate and emotional intelligence are highlighted before the working community, the nurse educator and the patient (Evans & Allen, 2002). Nurse educators should be aware of and understand their own feelings and express them in a controlled manner before nursing students. It is important that nurse educators can simultaneously put themselves in the nursing students' situation and understand their feelings and thoughts (Humphrey, et al. 2007).

Results – Synthesis of the literature review

This synthesis describes the movement of the part-whole and understanding-interpretation of the Ricoeurian hermeneutic bow of 18 caring science studies based on nursing students' cultivation process and emotional intelligence in the context of the didactics of caring (Ricoeur, 2016). The central results from the studies in the narrative literature review seek to answer the research question of this study. The intention is to present the synthesis systematically and in an objective way.

The general view on cognitive intelligence has previously been distanced and separate from emotions and affective thinking (Goleman, et al. 2002). There has been an understanding that

emotions interfere with rational thought and action. The literature review reveals that emotions and intellect increase performance and has an important cognitive meaning for the cultivation process in academic nurse education institutions that represent intellectual and rational thinking.

The emerging substance highlights the importance of teaching and improvement of the competence level of emotional intelligence in academic nurse education institutions (Garner, 2010). The integration of emotional intelligence belongs to evidence-based curricula that are continuously being revised. It is challenging and interesting that the competence level on emotional intelligence has received only a secondary focus in nurse education. This challenge needs to be considered, prioritized and the competence level built up simultaneously in nurse educators and nursing students alike. This enables a contribution and expansion of a pedagogical approach to caring. Nurse educators should understand that emotional intelligence along with the other intelligences support them in their didactic and pedagogic work of caring.

Emotional intelligence highlights ethical aspects and moral components. Emotionally competent nurse educators are aware of and sensitive to their own internal feelings as well as their influence on self and educational activities. Emotional competence is displayed through nurse educators' drive and desire to understand, discern, interpret and respect different forms of verbal and non-verbal emotions in themselves and others and to apply them to the situation (Ekebergh, 2001). Emotional competence includes the understanding of feedback, ethical reflection, moral actions, dignity and justice and alternative views and motives for the multidimensionality of understanding (Mayer, et al. 2001). The ability and understanding of nursing students' feelings and opinions open for the understanding of their goals for the cultivation process.

Empathy is connected with the emotional ability for development. Empathy is highlighted through the noble art of listening which consequently enables the act of understanding. Empathetic nurse educators show genuine interest in serving nursing students (Percy & Richardson, 2018; Wheeler & Barrett, 1994). Further development is rooted in involvement, requires discipline, motivation and curiosity for what is new, but

simultaneously requires the ability to perform. The importance of empathy for theoretical and practical teaching appears in the studies. Empathy includes a didactic responsibility of caring in nurse educators to create a caring and serving atmosphere in the teaching situation.

Emotional intelligence is said to be part of the context of the didactics of caring and should be studied in a diversified way and from different perspectives. The cultivation process in nursing students open for words and concepts that can be expressed in a safe environment and in a caring didactic relationship with fellow students and nurse educators (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997). The academic training period is a relationship between individuals (Stickley & Freshwater, 2002). It prepares and cultivates nursing students to receive and care for the patient and alleviate the patient's suffering. The intellectual ability opens up for the identification and understanding of nursing students' perspective and their life world.

Ethical considerations

A research ethical responsibility entails loyalty and honesty. This responsibility is realized in the selection of the object of study and methodology and during the handling of the data. General ethical principles and rules according to the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (WMA) from 2013, ICN (2012) and Etene (2001) are considered throughout.

The authenticity of the study

The study aimed at diversity in the literature search to obtain a valid, reliable and objective understanding. Continuous control was used, which means that inner logic and internal validation guided the search. The narrative literature review is based on published scientific studies which means that they have undergone processes for research ethical requirements and rules. It is possible that the authors of the studies have used the concept complex *emotional intelligence* variedly which may influence the validity. The selected studies are written by international researchers who have a different understanding of culture and tradition, social norms and laws and ways of expressing themselves in writing. It is important to draw attention to general generalisations in international studies while the studies have also offered diversity and universal research results. This study has made a contribution to an

increased understanding of cultivation and emotional intelligence within academic nurse education institutions and answered the research question which means that its validity can be seen as high. The synthesis is logical and non-controversial and based on the collected material. The theoretical perspective and ontology of caring science opened up for a deeper understanding of the object of study.

This study is theoretical and the theoretical perspective of caring science formulates the whole to which the research process relates. This provides a high level of reliability. The inner logic is in the parts which are united with the whole of the study. Harmony exists between the parts which enables understanding and an integrated interpretation (Ricoeur, 2016). The meaning-bearing substance is tied to caring science and the context of the didactics of caring which is linked to high reliability. The synthesis is objective because it does not rule out the possibility that the already presented elements are delimited or presented in another scientific context.

Discussion

This study aims to understand what emotional intelligence is and describes how nurse educators, through their ethos, can support nursing students in their cultivation process in the context of the didactics of caring. The study lays the ground work for applied and further research rooted in an empirical knowledge base. The theoretical perspective of the study is based on caring science with a focus on the didactics of caring science. The theoretical perspective enables the description of ontological entities and caring didactic knowledge-seeking epistemological premisses (Matilainen, 2004). The ontology provides the basis for further understanding of the study from pre-understanding to interpretation. Pre-understanding represents a part of the study's intradisciplinary theoretical perspective and is based on ontology. It comprises epistemology, Ricoeurian phenomenological hermeneutics and the methodology of the narrative literature review. This form of knowledge includes phenomenological understanding as the basis for thought and action (Ricoeur, 2006). This means that the didactics of caring science is evidently made visible through ethics and ethos, and can be understood as a factor of motivation for nurse educators and nursing students alike.

The concept complex *emotional intelligence* comprises different abilities and is a generic term for a number of human qualities. *Emotional intelligence* is sparingly used in everyday language: instead the concepts *teamwork*, *independence*, *collaborative skills* and *social competence* are used. These concepts have components that form part of synonyms to emotional intelligence, but it may be long before the immediate understanding of their meanings are apparent (Goleman, 2006). The extensive concept understanding can cause validity problems and scientific context-related challenges for the interpretation of what genuine and original emotional intelligence is.

The intellectualization and the emphasis on rational thought that lead to effectiveness thinking, along with the dawn of industrialism and mercantilism in the western world toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, resulted in theories on emotional intelligence (Salovey & Sluyter, 1997). The interest in and need for emotional intelligence has increased globally. Human beings in today's society testify to a form of paradigm shift, transition and counter-reaction to the present mechanistic and instrumental thinking. In modern academic nurse education institutions and healthcare organizations emotional intelligence is not just a desired quality but a prerequisite for studies and work (Goleman, 2006). Emotionally competent, qualified nurse educators and future nurses are not just intelligent and knowledgeable, but also possess professional communication skills (Goleman, 2006).

The professional caring didactic relationship which is integrated between nurse educators and nursing students represents the core in the context of the didactics of caring. The professional caring didactic relationship is characterized by the motive of love and compassion and is revealed through nurse educators' genuine free will and vision, responsibility, service and invitation which enable the recognition of nursing students' unique, absolute dignity and holiness (Ekebergh, 2001). This recognition is realized through nurse educators' ethos and is recognized for nursing students in a factual and evident course of action in an articulated caring didactic relationship and communion.

Caring, the alleviation of suffering and protection of health requires emotional and social skills as well as theoretical and clinical professional knowledge. Emotional intelligence is a skill that through the cultivation process invites infinite curiosity and continuous development (Sharon & Grinberg, 2018). The specific parts of the cultivation include a theoretical conception, a practical character and a sense that connects academic nurse education institutions with a whole and is shown to be the centre for caring science cultivation. The total competence expected of nursing students and their cultivation process by today's nurse education institutions is viewed as a combination of formal competence, qualifications, skills, personal experiences, social engagement and emotional intelligence. This total emotional competence has components that are mutually dependent on each other.

The figurative theoretical model on emotional intelligence in the context of the didactics of caring science emerges from the material and paves the way for new and further caring science research. It can be understood as an opening, an infinitely phenomenological and hermeneutic visioning and a deeper understanding of emotional intelligence, cultivation, ethos and the didactics of caring. The model is not definite but a temporary state that is preserved until a new interpretation can be presented. It is a reflective connection to emotional intelligence, the tradition and history of caring science and a discussion about the understanding between the parts and the whole of the study and a closing towards the theoretical perspective and pre-understanding. The model can be applied in modern academic nurse education institutions and healthcare organizations.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is legitimated by the nurse educator's ethos, awareness and ethical agreement. The cultivation of the didactics of caring involves preparations and dedication for future nursing students. Emotional intelligence is given a concrete meaning and is tied to the meaning-bearing represented by society's academic knowledge moulding nurse education institutions.

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