

The Four Function Theory for Nurse Educators

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Ede Njideka Angela was born on 6 October, 1987 in Enugu State, south eastern part of Nigeria. She hails from Iheaka Igbo-eze south local government area of Nsukka in Enugu State. And was born to Mr Gabriel Okafor Ede who is late since 12th August 2002. And Mrs Peace Uche Ede. She has 3 siblings: Mrs Happiness Aji, Mrs Samuela Ani, and Master Samuel Ede (late since 2015). She obtained her primary school education at University Primary School Enugu and her secondary school training at Queen's School Enugu, graduating in 2005. She did her registered nurse education at School of Nursing Esuth Teaching Hospital Parklane Enugu. She did her midwifery training at School of Post Basic Midwifery, Esuth Teaching Hospital Parklane Enugu. She did her training in public health and bachelor's degree in nursing science in University of Nigeria Enugu Campus. Currently, she is undergoing her master's degree in nursing science under the specialty, nursing education in the same University. In May 23, 2020, she developed a theory for nurse educators titled; the four function theory. This theory states that the essential role of the nurse educator falls into four functions

- (1) function 1: the function of knowledge
- (2) function 2: the function of skill
- (3) function 3: the function of behavior/attitude
- (4) function 4: the function of motivation

The four function theory explains that these essential roles of the nurse educator are necessary to achieve the major aim of nursing which is to

- (1) to restore health
- (2) to promote health
- (3) to alleviate suffering &
- (4) to save lives

This can be done by producing graduate nurses that are well knowledgeable, very skilled, well behaved & highly motivated to render care and to save lives of the populace.

When there is a deficit in any of the functions of the nurse educators, it will lead to malfunctioning of the nurses in clinical practice.

Angela defined the following concepts in relation to the theory

- (a) the concept of functioning
- (b) the concept of malfunctioning

Functioning - this is the ability of the nurse to operate at a recommended standard expected of her by her professional body.

Malfunctioning - the inability of the nurse to operate at the recommended standard expected of her by her professional body.

The four function theory explained using the general system theory.

According to the general system theory which was postulated by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1950 which states that " the various parts of a system have functional as well as structural relationship between each other," nursing as a profession is viewed here as a system that achieves it's proficiency via the four parts/ areas of knowledge, skill, behavior & motivation. Since according to the system theory, the whole is more important than the parts, nurses likewise need to be knowledgeable, skilled, have appropriate professional behavior/ attitude and be motivated all together in order to render high quality services in order to function and save lives of the populace and not just excelling in one or two functions only.

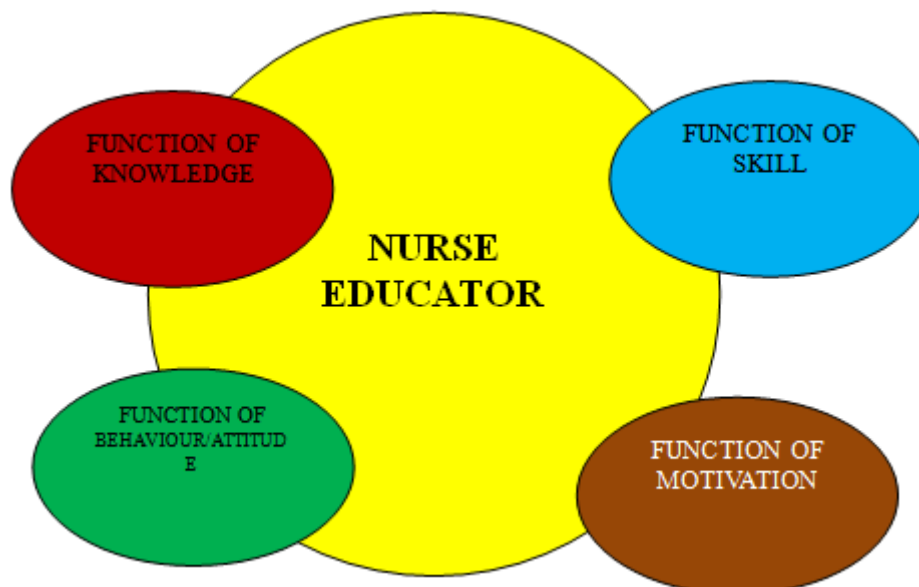


Figure 1.0 A diagram of the four function model by Ede Njideka Angela

Function 1: The function of knowledge

This theory is of the opinion that the nurse educator have a critical role to educate nurses on all aspects as pertaining to or relevant to nursing, rendering assistance as much as it is necessary.

This function was born out of the fact that there are still countries where quack nurses practice (nurses not registered with a known professional body). They commit malpractices and yet due to culture and norms of their group, they are still being patronized knowingly and unknowingly. Student nurses enrolled in the nursing program should be taught using high standard curriculum, high quality textbooks & good teaching methods that makes learning interesting and more captivating. When this is not done, it can lead to malfunctioning.

Function 2: The function of skill

The theory postulates that nurses should be skilled to save lives. This can be achieved via clinical posting or experience and practical demonstration in schools. Since man is a biopsychosocial being, training in skill should involve not just the biophysical aspects (as pertaining to physical health) but social and psychology aspects, for example, a midwife being trained to manage domestic violence.

Function 3: the function of behavior

The nursing students should be taught on importance of professional attitudes and behavior as bad unprofessional behavior can lead to constant litigation. For instance, in nursing the following are liable to a jail term.

- bribery
- battery
- assault
- violation of privacy & confidentiality etc.

Function 4: the function of motivation

Nurses need to be motivated to work and save lives other wise they will work only in areas were there is high remuneration neglecting countries or places that will need their services more. This occurred due to the mass exodus of nurses from the underdeveloped countries to the developed countries, worsening the health care delivery system in the resource poor countries. Motivation is not all about good salary scale, but satisfaction. Therefore nurse educators should catch the students young and teach them on how to use the following while working in the clinical setting,

- (a) common methods of motivation
- (b) uncommon methods of motivation

Common methods include;

- (1) good salary scale
- (2) promotion
- (3) adequate equipment and resources to work with
- (4) good employer- employee relationships.

Uncommon methods include

- (1) Use of incentive to reward creativity and hard work
- (2) Paying of stipend in training institutions of nursing