

Exploring the Transition from Nursing Students to Newly Qualified Nurses: A Phenomenological Study



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Problem Statement

The journey from nursing students to registered nurses entails both gratifying and challenging aspects. Although newly qualified nurses (NQNs) are anticipated to start their careers smoothly, the reality often presents them with a phenomenon known as "reality shock."

General Research Approach

A qualitative mono-method approach was chosen to explore the subjective experiences of NQNs during their transition. This method, emphasizing human interaction and words, aligns with the interpretivist philosophy, enhancing the study's capacity to understand the complexities of NQNs' transitions.

Research Project Overview

This research explores the transition of nursing students to registered nurses through interviews with eight newly qualified nurses. Four main themes emerged, revealing both positive and negative aspects of the transition, the impact of the nursing role, and reflections on student days. The study emphasizes the challenges NQNs face and suggests strategies for support in nursing healthcare and education.

Abbreviation and Definition of Term

NQN = newly qualified nurse(s)

Research Objectives

- Explore and understand the transition from nursing students to NQNs.
- Assessment and analysis of global challenges and supporting factors in the transitioning period of NQNs.
- Identification of the methodological choice for this research project.
- Provision of detailed recommendations and potential advocacy for new policies to support the transitional period.

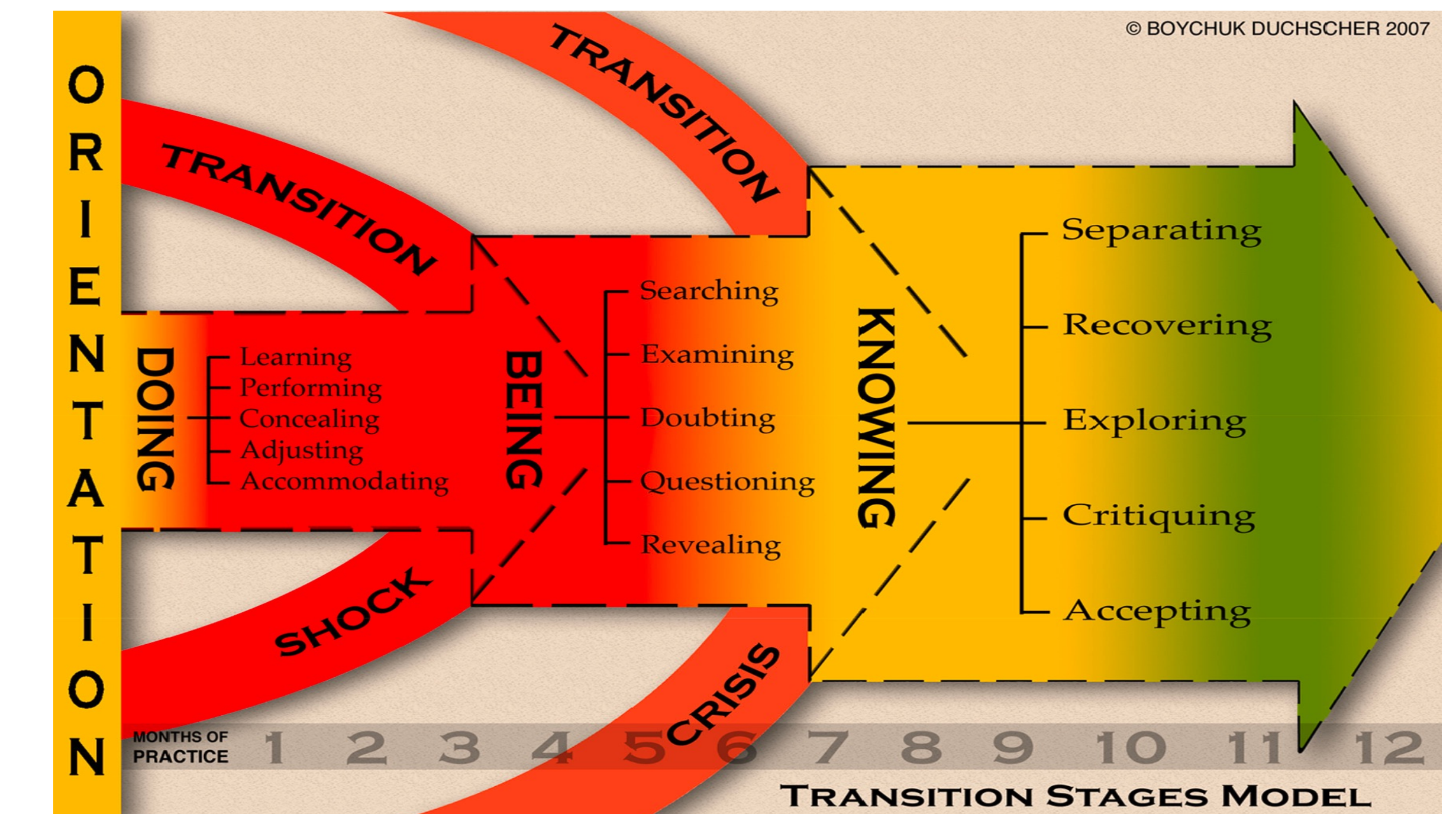
Research Methodology

A qualitative, phenomenological approach was adopted. Data was collected via individual, semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews. The targeted sample involved nurses who qualified in 2021. Transcripts were transcribed verbatim and analysed according to the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), using a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA Analytics Pro).

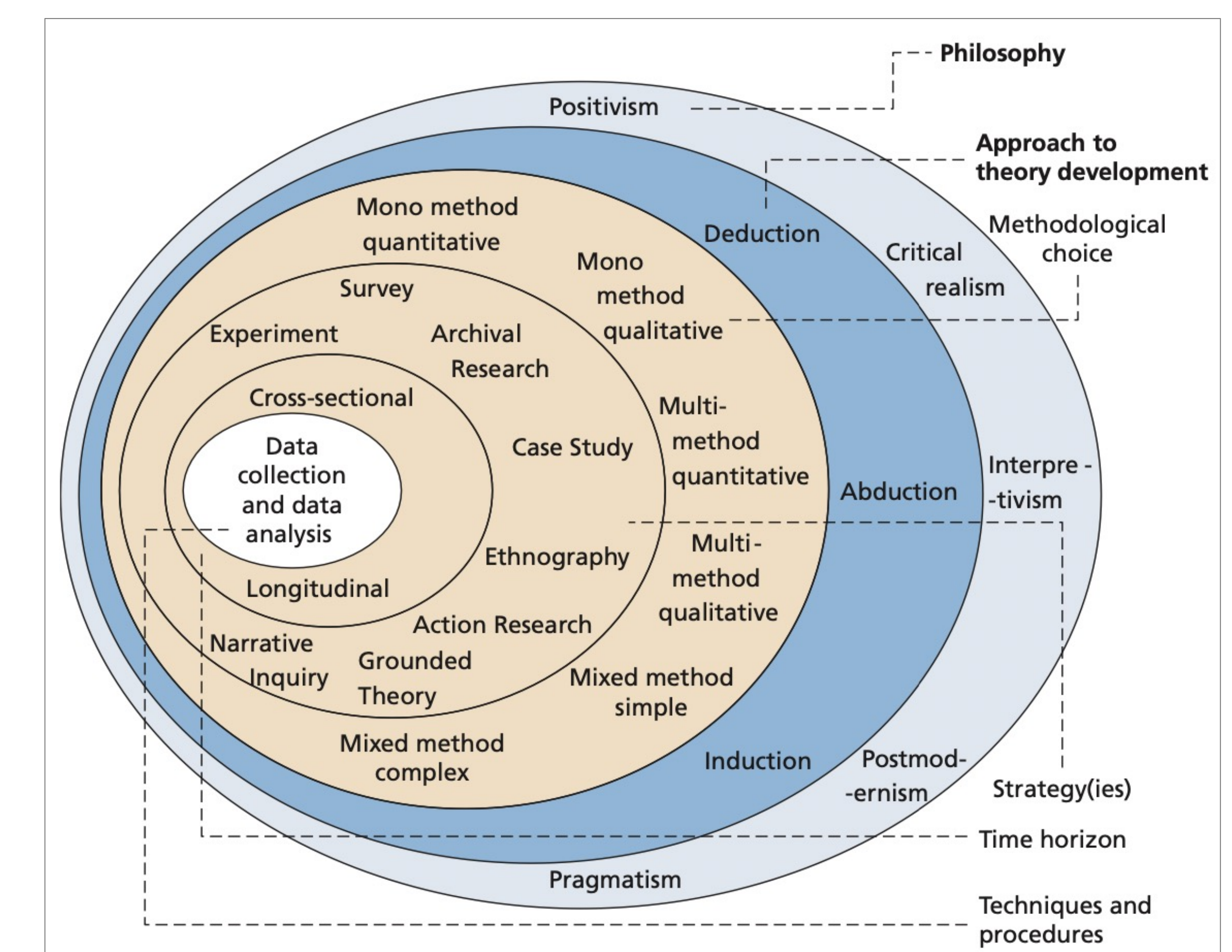
Research Propositions or Key Findings

- Peer support for skill and knowledge development during the transitional period.
- Implementation of effective support systems and strategies to alleviate stressors and reality shock.
- Enforcement of strategies to ease transitional shock, aiming to decrease attrition rates and enhance the work environment.

Key Figures & Visuals



Transition Stages Model (Duchscher, 2009)



The 'Research Onion' Framework (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019)

Key References

- Duchscher, J. (2009) 'Transition shock: the initial stage of role adaptation for newly graduated Registered Nurses', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 65(5), pp. 1103-1113 doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2648.2008.04898.x
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2019) *Research Methods for Business Students*. 8th edn. Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.