

USE OF ETHNONURSING METHODOLOGY IN HEALTH RESEARCH: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW



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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Developments in the field of health research have brought to light the need for ethical practices that respect the context, experiences, and health determinants of research participants, strengthening the validity and relevance of scientific findings. Madeleine M. Leininger introduced the Theory of Diversity and Universality of Cultural Care (TDUCC), which recognizes that individuals' worldview and social and cultural structures influence their state of health and well-being. This theory proposes that care should be culturally congruent, considering the patient's cultural situation and using this understanding to plan and execute care interventions. **OBJECTIVE:** To map the use of the Ethnonursing Theory in health research in the literature. **METHODOLOGY:** This is an integrative review of the literature following the methodological assumptions of Leininger in his Theory of Ethnonursing. The search was developed in the MEDLINE and BDENF databases, using the ethnonursing descriptor. **RESULTS:** 29 articles were included in the search, 28 in English, 7 in Portuguese and 2 in Spanish. **DISCUSSION:** The method established by Leininger's Theory relates social differences and transculturality to nursing practice, which is reflected in care and strengthened interpersonal relationships, the principle of respect for cultural diversity, since getting closer to culture allows nursing actions to be planned together with the being cared for and to be culturally congruent (Seima, 2011). **CONCLUSION:** The use of the theory has allowed a deeper understanding of cultural care practices, standing out for its ability to capture the nuances of beliefs and health practices of different communities. This is essential for the development of culturally congruent interventions that respect cultural specificities and promote more inclusive and effective care.

Keywords: Culture. Nursing. Ethnonursing. Research. Health. Nursing Theory.

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INTRODUCTION

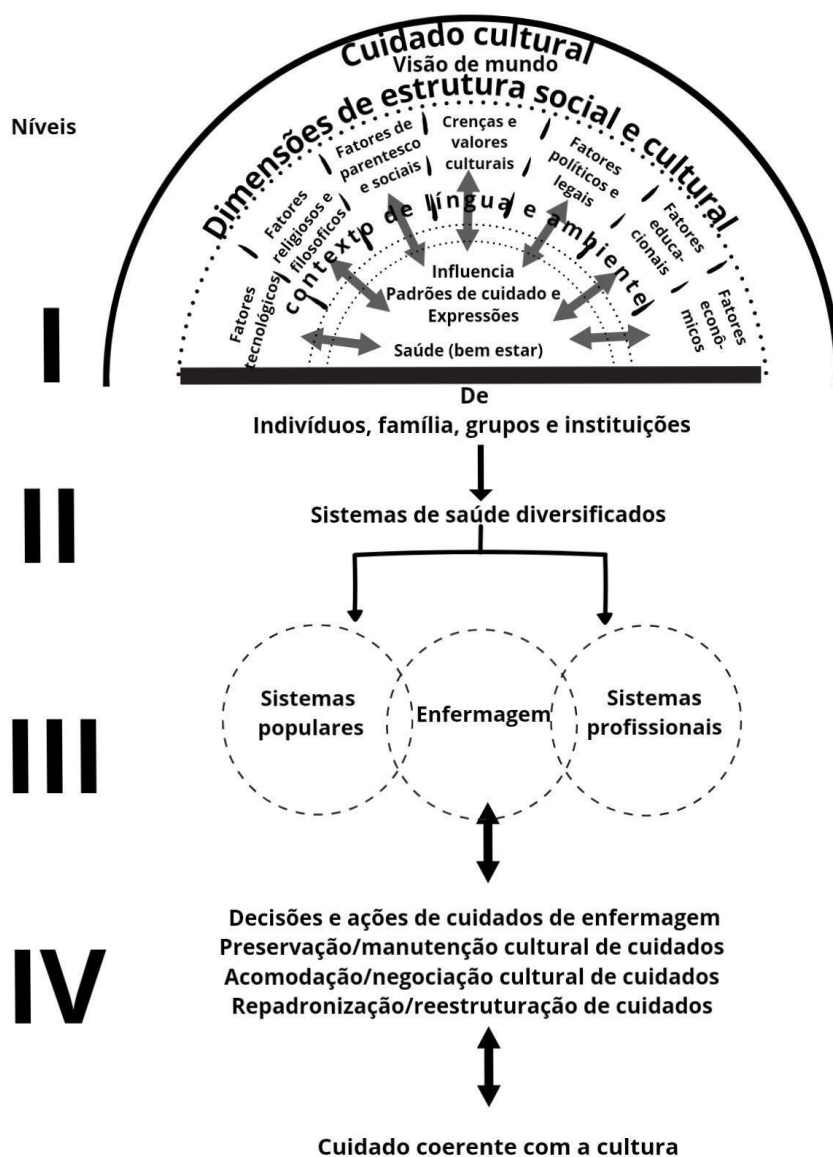
Developments in the area of health research have brought to light the need for ethical practices that respect the context, experiences, and health determinants of research participants, strengthening the validity and relevance of scientific findings. Madeleine M. Leininger introduced the Theory of Diversity and Universality of Cultural Care (TDUCC), which recognizes that individuals' worldview and social and cultural structures influence their state of health and well-being. This theory proposes that care should be culturally congruent, considering the patient's cultural situation and using this understanding to plan and execute care interventions.

Leininger's Rising Sun Model illustrates the phases of the nursing process, underlining the importance of understanding the patient's cultural context and using this information to guide care. This model facilitates the integration of theory and research, guiding the study of the universality of care and allowing the researcher to determine the scope and depth of the investigation, combining theory, research methods, and different levels of abstraction and analysis.

The upper portion of the circle (figure 1) shows the interdependent components of social structure that influence care and health through language and environmental context. It basically shows the patient's worldview and their social structures. The lower part represents the main points that must be observed in the patient to be able to measure their care, such as financial conditions, traditions and religiosity. The upper and lower portions describe a complete sun, which corresponds to the patient's universe, which needs to be explored by professionals, so that they know the relationship between human care and their health.

The second level demonstrates how the family structure is seen in relation to the community, micro, medium and macro. For example, the patient follows a certain culture individually from his family, or the family follows a certain culture different from the community in which it is inserted or if it is an entire community following a certain culture.

Figure 1. Leininger's model of the rising sun. Prepared by the authors, 2024.



Level three will outline the health systems used by this community, whether it makes use of folk medicine, such as teas and plants. If there is something restricted to this community and if there are traditional health behaviors that are not accepted by this group. It brings nursing as a connection between the patient and other professionals. At level four, we found nursing prescriptions based on the individuality of that group, respecting autonomy and culture.

Cross-cultural nursing is essential to the daily practice of care, allowing professionals to be sensitive to individual needs and provide holistic care. Understanding this theory is crucial to ensure that care is culturally appropriate. In this context, the

objective of this article is to map the use of the Ethnonursing Theory in health research in the literature by analyzing how Leininger's Rising Sun Model has been used in research in the last five years, seeking to understand its practical application and impact on transcultural nursing.

METHODOLOGY

This is an integrative review of the literature using as a theoretical framework the concepts and methods proposed by Leininger about the rising sun model. The PICO strategy was used to elaborate the guiding question of this research, which provides an accurate search for the scientific evidence related to the study (Neves, 2021).

For the construction of the review, it is necessary to follow the standards of methodological rigor and clarity in the presentation of the stages of the results, in order to identify the real characteristics of the included studies (Beyea, 1998).

The objective of the search strategy was to analyze previously published research on the theme "Use of the Ethnonursing methodology in research in the health area". The search and data collection took place in August 2024 with the search strategy including three databases: National Library of Medicine Institute of Health (MEDLINE); Latin American and Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS) via Virtual Health Library (VHL) and Nursing Databases (BDENF), within the period from 2019 to 2024, limited to articles published in Portuguese, English or Spanish.

The review was proposed in the following stages: 1) Search in the literature; 2) Mapping and survey of the data collected; 3) Data analysis.

Mnemonic	Description
P – Population/ Patient/problem	Health research
I – Interest	Ethnonursing Methodology
C – Context	Use by methodology

The guiding question, based on the PICO strategy, for conducting this review was: How is the methodology of Ethnonursing applied in research in the health area?

Of the eligibility criteria, the articles included are those that use Leininger's theory of Ethnonursing as a study method, full texts available in Portuguese, English and Spanish, within the period from 2019 to 2024. From the exclusion criteria, official documents, book

chapters, news, editorials, non-scientific texts, open educational resources or articles that deviate from the chosen study method were excluded.

RESULTS

MAPPING AND SURVEY OF THE DATA COLLECTED

Chart 1 shows the number of articles found in the databases based on the search strategies, in the period from August 2019 to August 2024. In the PubMed – MEDLINE database, the descriptor "ethnonursing" was used to search for works on the MEDLINE and BDENF platforms, where 31 titles on the theme were found, 24 in the first and 7 in the second, 28 in English, 7 in Portuguese and 2 in Spanish. Two were excluded by repetition.

Table 1. Studies selected for the construction of the scoping review on the Use of the Theory of Ethnonursing in research, regarding the year of publication and method used.

Year	Title	Method	Study Type
2024	Hantavirus preventive practices in a rural community in Panama.	A sequential mixed-methods explanatory design, guided by Leininger's Theory of Diversity and Universality of Cultural Care	Mixed research
2024	Dominant worldviews, institutional and contextual factors affecting cancer care: evidence from an institutional study of ethnonursing in Nigeria.	This study adopted a qualitative design using an ethnonursing approach	Systematic review
2024	Breastfeeding and the process of adaptation in the family context: a qualitative approach	This is a qualitative study based on the methodological framework of Ethnonursing	Qualitative research
2024	Influences of faith on the health of rural older adults in Appalachia: an ethnonursing study.	The Theory of Cultural Care and the Ethnonursing Method	Prognostic study
2023	Cultural care needs of Spanish-speaking parents with limited English proficiency whose children are hospitalized: an ethnonursing study.	Leininger's qualitative method of ethnonursing	Qualitative research
2023	Ethnosynthetic study on pain management in neonates in Indonesia.	This ethnonursing study was conducted in Pangandaran District, West Java Province, Indonesia.	Qualitative research
2022	Culturally congruent health activities for the prevention of functional impairments among older adults in forest communities in Japan.	The qualitative ethnonursing research method was used	Qualitative research
2021	Methods, ethics and interlinguistic considerations in research with children from ethnic minorities.	The aim of the study was to uncover cultural influences on healthy weight care in children of Burmese Karen refugees.	Qualitative research
2021	Cultural influences on healthy weight care in Karen children	The ethnonursing research method was used to seek healthy weight care perspectives from Karen children between 8 and 15 years of age	Qualitative research
2021	Contextualizing the cultural factors associated with cancer treatment in Nigeria: an ethnonursing study.	This study adopted an ethnonursing method involving participant observation and individual interviews.	Prognostic study

2021	Importance of home visits in caring for Filipino mothers and their babies during the postpartum period.	Data analysis was guided by the four phases of Leininger's ethnonursing method.	Descriptive qualitative research
2021	Cultural aspects of advance end-of-life care planning for African Americans: an ethnonursing study.	Leininger's Cultural Care Theory and the Ethnonursing Research Method guided the study.	Clinical practice guide
2021	An ethnohistory of cross-cultural nursing scholars and their contributions to the field.	Leininger's Ethnonursing Research Method was used to develop an ethno-historical qualitative approach that included a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide and data analysis plan	Qualitative research
2021	The process of nurse construction: ethnographic approach	Qualitative research based on the assumptions of ethnonursing	Qualitative research
2020	Beliefs, values and practices of families in the care of hospitalized children: subsidies for nursing.	This is a qualitative study developed in the Pediatrics Unit of a University Hospital in southern Brazil through non-participant observation	Clinical practice guide
2020	Caring for adolescents based on the wisdom of Indonesia's pandalungan culture: a pilot study of ethnonursing.	A pilot study with ethnonursing design was conducted to identify the local wisdom inquiry domain	Pilot Study
2020	Theoretical, methodological and analytical aspects of ethnographic research in obstetric nursing: an integrative review.	Integrative review carried out in the MEDLINE ®, LILACS, BDNF and CINAHL databases, in addition to the SciELO virtual library.	Integrative review
2020	Leininger's ethnonursing research method: historical retrospective and overview.	Criteria for evaluating qualitative research studies, such as the ERM, are highlighted.	Qualitative research
2020	End-of-life family decision-making in rural Appalachia.	Qualitative ethnonursing research method was used to analyze data from 25 interviews	Clinical practice guide
2020	Cultural experiences, patterns, and practices of Native American women with polycystic ovary syndrome: an ethnonursing study.	A qualitative study of ethnonursing based on Leininger's theory on diversity and universality of cultural care	Prognostic study
2020	Ethnonursing: cultural care in a Mapuche community in Puerto Aguirre, Aysén, Chile	Qualitative research based on ethnonursing, carried out during seven trips to Puerto Aguirre, carried out between July 2018 and January 2019	Qualitative research
2020	"We are pregnant": care rituals developed by families during the gestational process	Ethnographic research, developed between April and December 2016, with three families who experienced the gestational process and health professionals who accompanied them	Ethnographic study
2020	Family experience in the face of maternal death	This is an ethnographic, qualitative study using Leininger's ethno-nursing method.	Ethnographic study
2020	Educational activity for the development of cultural competencies of nurses who work in indigenous health in the Pará Amazon	Intervention study, with a qualitative focus with triangulation in the collection, analysis and evaluation of data.	Intervention study
2019	Leininger's Theory of Diversity and Universality of Cultural Care: An Overview with a Historical Retrospective and a Vision for the Future.	This is an ethnographic, qualitative study using Leininger's ethno-nursing method.	Qualitative research
2019	An ethnographic study on the feeding of Bugis children aged 0 to 23 months in Palopo, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.	The study used a qualitative research method with an ethnographic study approach.	Qualitative research
2019	Culturally acceptable advance care planning and advance directives for people experiencing homelessness.	The study used a qualitative research method with an ethnographic study approach.	Qualitative research

2019	Beliefs and practices of cultural care of Ethiopian immigrants.	Leininger's theory on diversity and universality of cultural care guided the research and was the framework for the design of this qualitative mini-study of ethnonursing.	Prognostic study
2019	Barriers for antenatal women with severe maternal morbidity in Antioquia, Colombia	This is a qualitative, ethnographic study using the ethnonursing approach proposed by Leininger and Spradley's ethnographic interview.	Qualitative research

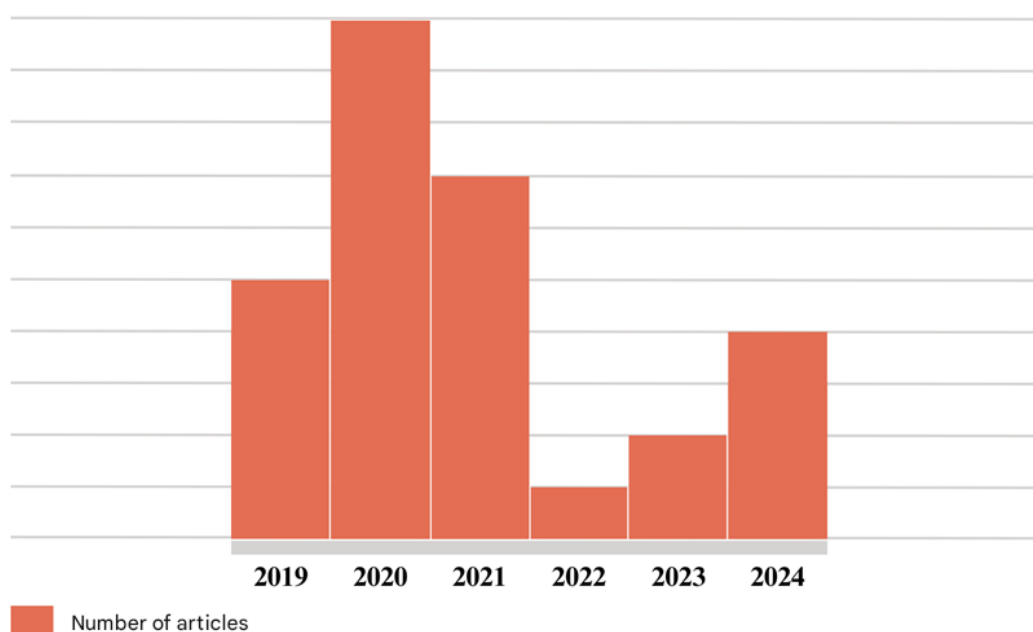
Of the 29 articles outlined, 17 are qualitative studies (58.6%), one of which is descriptive qualitative (3.4%) and one is a mixed research (3.4%). 4 deal with prognostic studies (13.7%); 3 articles of clinical practice guides (10.3%). 2 articles as ethnographic studies (6.8%). Only one study deals with a pilot study (3.4%), an integrative review (3.4%) and another research with an intervention study (3.4%).

Table 2. Number of selected articles on the theme and use of the Theory of Ethnonursing published in the period from 2019 to 2024, according to the types of studies outlined.

DESIGN OF STUDY	N° DE ARTIGOS (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Qualitative research	17	58,6
Prognostic study	4	13,7
Clinical practice guide	3	10,3
Ethnographic study	2	6,8
Pilot study	1	3,4
Integrative review	1	3,4
Intervention study	1	3,4

The distribution of the 29 studies designed and analyzed, by year of publication, reveals a concentration in the years 2020, with 10 articles published (39.5%), seven (24.1%) articles in 2021, five (17.2%) articles in 2019, four (13.7%) in 2024, and two (6.8%) articles in 2023. There was only one (3.4%) article published in 2022.

Figure 2. Representation of the distribution of articles by years.



Source: Prepared by the authors

DISCUSSION

The literature search revealed the scarce scientific production on the use of Leininger's Theory of Ethnonursing. Thus, most of the studies found addressed issues and themes associated with the six factors described in the "Rising Sun" model: social, educational, religious and philosophical, technological, legal and political, and economic factors, and nursing interventions adapted to the specific conditions of each cultural context and its peculiarities.

The studies outlined follow a similar methodological axis, interconnecting the factors described as potential causes of the impacts on the study population, so that knowledge and understanding of social and cultural contexts are essential for more targeted comprehensive and singular nursing care.

The discussions of the results about the analyzed articles are presented below according to the groups found in this integrative review.

According to Seima (2011), the ethnonursing method was proposed by Leininger as a means of getting to know different cultures and the meanings attributed to the health-disease process and health care. In this sense, the assumption of Ethnonursing allows for a closer relationship between the professional and the person being cared for, which

makes it possible to know the context in which they live, the worldview, and thus the factors that can interfere in behavior.

In general, in order to expand knowledge in search of health promotion and protection, the selected qualitative studies describe unfavorable institutional factors as potential causes of situations of health insecurity and deficient quality of life, in their physical and psychosocial aspects. The positive impacts related to the promotion of congruent and unique care offered in an integral way to the population are also addressed, taking into account the different historical, social and cultural situations experienced.

The method established by Leininger's Theory relates social differences and transculturality to the practice of nursing, which is reflected in care and strengthened interpersonal relationships, the basis of respect for cultural diversity, since getting closer to culture allows nursing actions to be planned together with the being cared for and to be culturally congruent (Seima, 2011).

Among the positive points of using this approach, the ability to provide a deep understanding of cultural care practices stands out. Ethnonursing allows researchers to explore the nuances of diverse communities' health beliefs and practices, providing essential *insights* for developing interventions that are culturally congruent and therefore more effective. For example, in studies conducted with communities such as the Karen ethnic group or in rural areas of Indonesia, the methodology has made it possible to capture the complexity of traditional care practices and adapt them to contemporary contexts, promoting a more holistic understanding of the health and well-being of these populations.

Another significant benefit is its flexibility and adaptability. The methodology can be applied in a variety of contexts, from rural communities to urban hospital settings, as demonstrated in studies carried out both in villages with high forest cover and in philanthropic hospitals. This adaptability allows researchers to adjust their data collection approaches according to the cultural and social environment, ensuring that the information obtained is relevant and accurate. In addition, ethnonursing promotes the inclusion of often marginalized voices, such as ethnic minorities and refugee populations.

By facilitating community participation in the research process, this methodology increases the relevance and impact of the results, ensuring that health interventions are not only culturally appropriate but also accepted by the community, promoting more inclusive and effective care.

Despite the benefits, the application of ethnonursing methodology also faces significant challenges. One of the main negative points is the presence of language and cultural barriers, especially in research involving multilingual and multicultural populations. As evidenced in the study of Karen refugee children, the need for accurate and culturally appropriate translations can complicate the data collection process. This challenge was partially mitigated with the use of interpreters who not only spoke the local language but were also members of the community, ensuring a culturally authentic interpretation of the data. However, this solution is not always available or feasible in all research contexts.

In addition to language barriers, another significant challenge is the time and resources required for cultural immersion. The methodology often requires researchers to delve deep into the culture of the community they are studying to build the trust needed for data collection. This process can be time-consuming and requires considerable resources, which is not always feasible, especially in research projects with limited budget or time constraints. The research with children illustrated the need for volunteerism and active participation in the community to gain the trust of participants, a process that, while effective, requires significant commitment on the part of researchers.

Finally, ethnonursing can also face specific methodological challenges, especially in crisis contexts, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. The need to quickly adapt data collection methods to meet new constraints, such as the shift to virtual interviews via Zoom, highlighted the need for methodological flexibility and continuous adjustments as circumstances evolved. While these adaptations are possible, they can compromise the quality of the data or the depth of cultural immersion, which are crucial elements for the cross-cultural approach.

CONCLUSION

Even with the scarce production of studies on Leininger's theory, through the rising sun model, in the research of the last five years, the analysis of the application of the theme reveals both the potentialities and the limitations of this methodological approach. The use of the theory has allowed a deeper understanding of cultural care practices, standing out for its ability to capture the nuances of beliefs and health practices of different communities. This is essential for the development of culturally congruent interventions that respect cultural specificities and promote more inclusive and effective care.

The use of ethnonursing methodology proved particularly effective in diverse contexts, from rural communities and ethnic minorities to urban hospital settings, where traditional care practices needed to be adapted to contemporary contexts. It also presents considerable challenges, such as language barriers, the need for cultural immersion, and methodological adaptations. These challenges require innovative strategies and flexibility on the part of researchers to overcome, ensuring that research is rigorous, relevant, and impactful.

This discussion allows nurses to see the direct impact that cultural understanding has on patients' health and well-being, contributing to more complete and satisfying care.

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