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## AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT NURSE'S EMPATHY

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**Introduction:** Healthcare providers' empathetic attitude towards patient care significantly plays a role in the success of patient-centered outcome. However, across the empathy literature, there have been numerous studies which indicate that there had been a significant change in the level of empathy among nursing students in line with the length of their clinical exposure. Considering these studies, little is known on the factors affecting empathy. Hence, this study has purported to explore the factors influencing nursing students' level of empathy.

**Methods:** A descriptive-correlational research design was utilized. This study employed factor analysis to explore the factors which influence student nurses' level of empathy. Data was analyzed through SPSS Version 21. Inclusion criteria include regular nursing students with at least 18 years of age and above, on their 15th week of RLE and are currently enrolled in the academic year 2017-2018. A total of 255 nursing students were purposively selected from a tertiary institution in Manila.

**Results:** Nine factor dimensions identified namely: engaging, efficiency, emic, estranging, encumbering, enduing, emotive, embracing, and enervating factors. Out of the nine variables that were identified, only four have been identified to have a direct effect on empathy which are: engaging, efficiency, estranging and encumbering factors. Moreover, engaging and efficiency factors positively affect empathy while estranging and encumbering factors negatively affect empathy. Notably, engaging factors had the most impact among the student nurses' level of empathy.

**Conclusions:** Several factors affecting the nursing students' empathy are combination of personal, patient and environmental. Since it was revealed that some factors can cause decrease in empathy among the nursing students, selection of educators who will serve as positive role models should be considered. Likewise, empathy trainings may be conducted such as self-awareness and reflective listening among the nursing students before they face their patients.

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