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Abstract: In nursing education, three concepts of: leadership, emotional intelligence and empathy are correlated and supporting each other in preparing high quality graduate of nursing students. The study aimed to assess leadership style, empathy and emotional level of nursing student. Descriptive correlation study used with non probability convenience sample. 59 students from level fourth and eight participated in this study. Three questionnaires, namely: Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the Hogan Empathy Scale (HES) and the Emotional Empathy Tendency Scale (EETS) used as data collection tools. SPSS version 17 used for statistical analysis. It was found that both of the junior and senior students perceived their leadership to be more transformational rather than transactional leadership. Furthermore, majority of the leadership domain were correlated negatively with empathy scores. It is recommended for future research to use greater sample size and various settings. In nursing practice, educators need to encourage the application of transformational leadership, emotional intelligence and empathy in order to improve the quality of graduates.

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1. Introduction:

Nowadays, the dominant topic in nursing administrative literature for past several years are the full-range theory of transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. One of the key concepts in transformational leadership is empathy. Specifically, for nursing students the three components of: leadership; emotional intelligence; and empathy are correlated. These three components are supporting each other in preparing high quality graduate of nursing students.

Leadership :Leadership defines as a process of uses interpersonal skills to influence others to accomplish specific goals. Leadership requires attending to and acknowledging others and being authentic and accountable (Sullivan & Decker, 2005). Particularly, for leaders in learning organizations, they need to master various types of leadership behavior in order improve their flexibility in adapting with different situations (Chanpoe, 1998). The teaching of leadership can enable students to develop realistic hypotheses based on contemporary leadership theories and observed behaviours (Densten & Gray, 2001). Moreover research by Chanpoe (1998) discovered that there was a significant

relationship among leadership behaviour and learning organization.

In educational setting, Alger (2008) found that transformational leadership was a desirable style for school leaders involved in improvement efforts because it improve the level of awareness of workers so that they come to value organizational goals and strategies to achieve those objectives. Furthermore, the effects of transformational leaderships were closely linked with those exerted by educational structure and culture (Lam, 2002). In addition, study by Gill *et al.* (2010) concluded that student educational satisfaction was positively related to the transformational leadership used by the instructors or professors.

Emotional intelligence: Salovey and Mayer (1990) refers emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. In other words, Ionnidou and Konstantikaki (2008) refers it as the ability control someone's wishes and to postpone their fulfillment, to regulate others' mood, to isolate feeling from thinking, to place you into another's

shoes and to hope. Consequently, it is the process of regulating both feelings and expressions. Theorist studying emotional intelligence which is significant component for leader to establish a cooperative and effective team (Marquis & Huston, 2006).

Abilities and skills of emotional intelligence are classified into four parts, namely: the ability to (a) perceive emotion, (b) use emotion to facilitate though, (c) understand emotions, and (d) manage emotion (Mayer *et al*, 2004)

In 2002, Boyatzis *et al*, stated that emotional intelligence was significance in the educational program to prepare future leader. Moreover, Cavallo and Brienza (2001) concluded that emotional intelligence correlated with the leadership level of the manager.

Empathy: Williams and Stickley (2010) defines empathy as a series of stage that is difficult to delineate because of the interactive, dynamic and involving interpersonally through a shared understanding relationship between client and therapist. Arnold & Boggs (2003) inferred empathy as the ability to be sensitive to and communicate understanding of the client's feelings. It is closely aligned to the concept of presence and it is impossible to be fully present without being empathetic. The stages are: affective dimensions, emotional engagement and the employment of behavioural skills, respectively (Williams & Stickley, 2010).

As a nurse, empathy is an important characteristic need to be mastered in order to give a high quality nursing care for patients. Concomitantly, in the past 4 decades empathy has been touted as appropriate, desirable, therapeutic and the main component for the nurse-patient relationship (Prince & Archbold, 1997). Moreover, empathy considers as a main significant component for both emotional intelligence and leadership (Humprey, 2002). Based on this, nursing education has responsibility to facilitate education that ensures emphatic feeling (Williams & Stickley, 2010).

Significance of the study:

In Kingdom Saudi Arabia, researches combined three scope of concept, namely: leadership, emotional intelligence and empathy are scant to nonexistent especially in scope of nursing education. However, to improve the quality of education in the Kingdom to be a world class institution, this research is important. This research could act as a database for further leadership, emotional intelligence and empathy research in the Kingdom or other gulf countries.

Purpose:

This research aimed to assess leadership style and empathy level of nursing students. In addition, it also able to reflects different style of leadership between senior and junior students and correlation of it with the empathy and emotional intelligence.

2. Methodology

Design:

Descriptive correlation study used in this research to assess the leadership style, emotional intelligence and empathy level of nursing students.

Sample & Setting:

Non probability, convenience sample conducted in this study. Subjects were participated voluntary and no risk involve in this research. There were two groups involved in this study, junior students (n=29) and senior student (n=30) which was at the semester fourth and eight, respectively. The study conducted at College of Nursing, King Saud University.

Data Instrument Tool:

There were three questionnaire used in this study. First, for the leadership style, Multifactorial Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) used to assess the leadership style of participants (Bass & Avolio, 2005). Secondly, for the cognitive dimension of empathy, the Hogan Empathy Scale (HES) used in this research. The HES is a dichotomous instrument with 39 true or false response alternatives to measure participant perception of the emotional life of others (Hogan, 1969). Thirdly, the Emotional Empathy Tendency Scale (EETS) to measure inborn trait characteristics of respondents (Mehrabian, 1972).

Ethical Consideration:

Permission to use the MLQ granted from the Mind Garden institution as the official institution for using this instrument. Furthermore, the study purposes and methods were described to the students by researchers. Students were assured that their response would be confidential and that it would not affect their academic success.

Procedures:

Directly after finishing from the ethical consideration procedures, the questionnaire distributed to students in two groups, namely: student in the fourth level semester and in the eight level semesters. The questionnaire was distributed to students by researcher during their study activities both inside college and in clinical settings.

Statistical Analysis:

SPSS 17 used to performed data analysis. A p -value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

3. Results And Discussion

Generally, participants' main characteristics were senior student, with the age more than 21 years

old and single. The distribution between senior and junior student was quite equal with 48.2% and 51.8%, respectively. For the participant age, almost 45% of respondent with the age below of 21 years, whereas the other 55% were more than 21 year olds. The marital status of respondent was three fourth of them were single (80.4%).

Table 1. Relation between empathy and leadership styles and academic level

	Academic level				Mann Whitney test	p -value
	Junior (n=27)		Senior (n=29)			
	Mean	SD	mean	SD		
EETS	-0.44	8.36	4.00	13.66	-1.00	0.317
Hogan	19.52	3.37	19.38	3.06	-0.39	0.698
Styles of leadership:						
Transformational	2.49	0.63	2.84	0.43	-2.42	0.016*
Transactional	2.42	0.64	2.73	0.46	-2.18	0.029*
Laisser-faire	1.96	0.80	2.85	0.53	-1.00	0.317

(*) Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

From statistical analysis, it was found that there were statistically significance differences between junior and senior students for the transformational and transactional leadership. Both of the groups were more transformational rather than transactional. This result is similar with the study of Gunther *et al.* (2007), which found both the senior and junior student perceived their style to be transformational leadership style.

Furthermore, table (1) confirmed negative mean for the EETS of junior student. It means that when

EETS score increase affect to the lower score of leadership. Moreover, it infers a low mean regarding empathy for the junior students. This result was different with study by Ozcan *et al.* (2010) which inferred that the newly registered student score for empathy was higher compared with other levels. The result of the current study might occur because of less exposure with empathy subject for junior students compared with student in senior level.

Table 2. Relation between Empathy and predominant leadership styles

Predominant leadership style:	Mean	\pm SD	Kruskal Wallis Test	p -value
EETS score:				
Transactional	-1.00	9.40		
Transformational	1.84	8.90		
Laisser-faire	4.89	15.30	2.249	0.325
Hogan score:				
Transactional	18.84	3.63		
Transformational	18.79	3.19		
Laisser-faire	20.78	2.32	3.643	0.162

Table (2) reflects that there was no statistically significance difference for the relation between empathy and predominant leadership style. This result was in contrast with the research of Gunther *et al.* (2007) who concluded there was a weak positive correlation between the predominant transformational leadership style and empathy levels in both junior and senior students. Furthermore, the statistical analysis reveal that no statistical significance difference between the predominant leadership style and the EETS score which is regarding the emotional

intelligence. This result, differ compared with study by Hur *et al.* (2011) which concluded that emotional intelligence was positively related with the transformational leadership. This result might occur due to limited sample in the present study.

There were negative correlations between empathy score and different leadership domains, namely: idealized influence (attribute); idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, contingent reward and active management by

exception. This result differ with study of Esfahani and Soflu (2011) found that there was a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership method ($r=0.16$).

Table 3. Correlation between empathy scores and various leadership domains scores

	Pearson correlation	
	EETS Score	Hogan Score
Hogan score	,091	
Transformational:		
Idealized Influence "Attributed" (IIA)	-,129	-,158
Idealized Influence "Behavior" (IIB)	-,007	-,009
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	-,080	-,020
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	-,124	,002
Individual Consideration (IC)	-,136	-,073
Transactional:		
Contingent Reward (CR)	,014	-,077
Management-by-Exception "Active" (MBEA)	-,127	,023
Laissez-faire:		
Management-by-Exception "Passive" (MBEP)	,117	,094
Laissez-faire Leadership (LF)	,151	,051

Limitation

This study was limited to one college and result in inability to generalize results for other setting. Moreover, other factor that related with empathy, emotional intelligence and leadership were not investigated.

Recommendation Research

It is recommended to use greater sample size and various setting for better generalization of study result. In addition, longitudinal study that follow student from junior level up to their senior level could give better illustration regarding the leadership style, empathy and emotional intelligence of nursing students during their study period.

Nursing Practice

In nursing practice, educators need to encourage transformational leadership for both junior and senior students in order to improve the quality of learning outcomes. Moreover, it is advisable for teaching staff

to conduct learning and teaching session that able to improve empathy and emotional intelligence of their nursing students.

Conclusion

Both of the junior and senior students perceived their leadership to be more transformational rather than transactional leadership. In addition, there was no statistically significance difference for the relation between empathy and predominant leadership style. Consequently, most of the leadership domain were correlated negatively with empathy scores.

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