

# CONCEPT ANALYSIS: HUMAN AGENCY IN NURSING

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Abstract

**Purpose:** The need for conceptual clarity is essential in order to communicate. This paper will attempt to clarify the concept of human agency. Human agency has been explored with some success in the social theory domain; however its use in nursing has been limited. Prior nursing research has looked at extracted attributes such as self-efficacy, self-care and self-management. By conceptualizing human agency, research can identify and distinguish the differences within a given cultural context. Empirical indicators can be developed in the hopes of identifying varying degrees of human agency.

**Methods:** This concept will be analyzed using the Evolutionary Method (Rodgers, 2000). According to Rodgers concept are phenomena that are dynamic and fluid reflecting a certain sociocultural and environmental context.

**Findings:** The concept of human agency within the nursing literature is limited. In CINHALL there are approximately 1400 citations related to self-efficacy which is an integral component of human agency. Within the context of self-efficacy many different constructs are used to define the concept of self-efficacy. There are multiple variations of self-efficacy such as self-care agency which is an evolution of human agency. The number of actual studies that looked at human agency was limited.

**Discussion:** Currently there exists a large opportunity in nursing to define the total construct of human agency within nursing. By defining this concept research can look beyond self-efficacy and identify the agentic attributes that contribute to not only self-efficacy but also human agency which is comprised of intentionality, forethought and self-reflectiveness. Furthermore nursing can look at the impact of self-agency vs. collective agency as an indicator of healthy self-care outcomes.

Key Words: human agency, self-efficacy