

Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership to Improve Work Environment and Nurses' Job Satisfaction: A Systematic Review

M. Alrashidi Nasser Ayidh*

Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract—In recent years, leadership style and job satisfaction have become important issues in the healthcare system. Various nursing leadership styles have a direct or indirect impact on the nursing profession, and quality of patient care. The discussion regarding the influence of leadership style on nurses' job satisfaction focus on how various leadership style affect the work environment and the quality of care delivered by nursing professionals. Transformational leadership has become one of the leadership styles believed to have a positive effect on nurses job satisfaction, work environment, and performance. This review primarily focused on evaluating the influence of transformational leadership style on the work environment and nurses' job satisfaction. **Objective:** The review aimed at assessing the effectiveness of transformational leadership style to improve work environment and job satisfaction among nurses. **Methods:** A systematic literature review approach was used. Comprehensive literature searches were conducted in PubMed, MEDLINE, CINAHL, Web of Science, and Research4Life. The main search terms used in the databases were "Transformational leadership and nurses, and job satisfaction." All English articles published between 2019 and 2024 reporting the effectiveness of transformational leadership on work environment and nurses' job satisfaction were eligible for inclusion. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines was used to select cross-sectional studies. **Results:** Five articles were included in the review. These studies were conducted in healthcare settings, with a total of 1285 nurses and they reported the positive influence of transformational leadership on nurses' job satisfaction, work environment and the quality of care provided by nurses. **Conclusion:** The transformational leadership style significantly enhances job satisfaction among nurses. Consequently, it is advisable for healthcare organizations to adopt a transformational leadership style to improve the work environment and nurses' job satisfaction.

Index Terms—Nursing, Job satisfaction, Transformational leadership.

1. Introduction

The role of the nursing profession cannot be overemphasized as nurses play a critical role in healthcare service delivery and comprise the most numerous groups of healthcare workers (Tomaszewska, K., Kowalczyk, K., Majchrowicz, B., Kłos, A., & Kalita, K., 2024). Primarily, nurses provide indispensable care to patients and ensure that their physical, emotional and

psychological needs are met. Beyond providing direct care to the patient, nurses also interact with family members or caregivers related to the patients under their care. They educate patients, caregivers and community members about lifestyles that facilitate recovery from illness and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviors (Lorber, M., & Skela Savič, B., 2012).

In recent years, leadership style and job satisfaction have become important issues in the healthcare system. Leadership roles in healthcare organizations is very critical because leaders and leadership styles can greatly impact followers and affect how they execute their responsibilities towards achieving the objectives of the organization and also influence job satisfaction (Alilyyani et al., 2022). Various nursing leadership styles have a direct or indirect impact on the nursing profession, and quality of patient care (Sfantou et al., 2017). Every leadership style possesses a distinct approach and influence within the nursing profession. Among the most commonly adopted leadership styles in the healthcare sector are transformational, transactional, passive/avoidant, servant, situational, authentic, charismatic, and quantum leadership (Carrara et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2019).

Transformational leadership has become one of the leadership styles believed to have a positive effect on nurses' job satisfaction, work environment, and performance (Kiwanuka et al., 2021; Moon et al., 2019). Transformational leadership is a leadership style where leaders inspire, motivate, and encourage followers to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape the future success of an organization. It emphasizes the importance of vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration to foster high levels of commitment and performance among followers (Northouse et al., 2021).

The benefits of transformational leadership in nursing have been demonstrated by several studies conducted globally. Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and Indonesia, (Lin, Chun Pei et al., 2020) among others, reported that transformational leadership style improved staff morale, work effectiveness, productivity and nurses' job satisfaction levels (Suratno et al., 2018), and it was also shown to positively impact nurse retention, organizational

*Corresponding author: nasrayed99@gmail.com

commitment of nurses, quality of healthcare delivery and patient outcomes (Alsayed et al., 2022; Gebreheat et al., 2023; Leiter & Spence Laschinger, 2006). Albagawi, B. (2019) conducted the study entitled "Leadership styles of nurse managers and job satisfaction of staff nurses", and the study has shown that there was a significant relationship between the nurse managers' transformational leadership style and the staff nurses' level of job satisfaction. Another study conducted in China reported a positive association between transformational leadership and challenge stressors and thriving at work which also results in improved performance (Lin, Chun pei et al., 2020).

Given all of the above, it is highly recommended that healthcare organizations, especially the nursing department, embrace the transformational leadership style to facilitate the evolution and improvement of quality care (Khan et al., 2020).

2. Research Question

To what extent does the transformational leadership style influence the job satisfaction of nurses?

3. Methods

A systematic literature review approach was used. Comprehensive literature searches were conducted in PubMed, MEDLINE, CINAHL, Web of Science, and Research4Life. The main search terms used in the databases were "Transformational leadership and nurses, and job satisfaction."

All English articles published between 2019 and 2024 reporting the effectiveness of transformational leadership on work environment and nurses' job satisfaction were eligible for inclusion.

All search results from the database were transferred to the Mendeley reference management software. Utilizing this software, duplicate entries were removed. Subsequently, a two-phase selection process was conducted. In the first phase, the titles and abstracts of all articles discussing the influence of transformational leadership on nurses' job satisfaction were reviewed. In the second phase, full-text articles were screened to assess their eligibility. Ultimately, articles deemed fully eligible were chosen for further analysis (Figure 1).

4. Quality Assessment

The methodological quality of the papers was evaluated using Cross Sectional Study Critical Appraisal tool (Appendix A).

5. Results

The literature search generated 243 articles, and 5 full studies met the inclusion criteria for the review (Figure 1). These studies were conducted in Portugal (n=1), Turkey (n=1), Jordan (n=1), Saudi Arabia (n=1), Pakistan (n=1). These studies were conducted in healthcare settings, with a total of 1285 nurses and they reported the positive influence of transformational leadership on nurses' job satisfaction, work environment and the quality of care provided by nurses (Table 1).

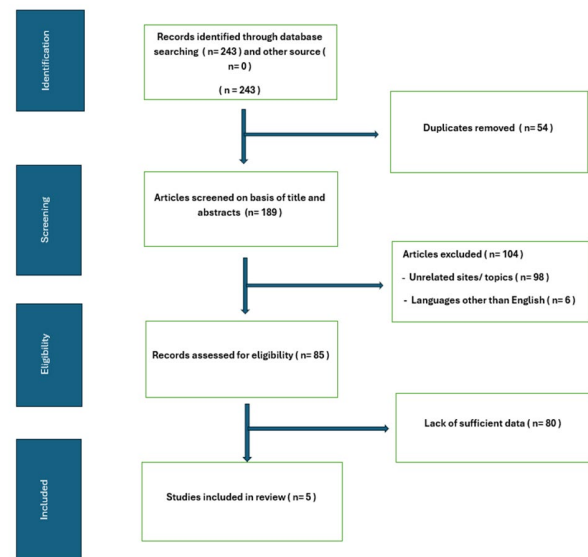


Fig. 1. A PRISMA diagram showing the article selection process

6. Discussion

The author aimed to evaluate the influence of a transformational leadership style on the job satisfaction of nurses. Five articles illustrated the connection between transformational leadership and nurses' job satisfaction within healthcare environments. This review revealed that all the studies affirmed a positive correlation between transformational leadership and nurses' job satisfaction. Additionally, the studies indicated that adopting a transformational leadership style could improve nurses' intentions to remain in their positions, as well as enhance the quality of care and patient outcomes. Transformational nurse leaders possess the ability to identify and anticipate the needs of their nursing staff by fostering strong relationships and actively working to address those needs. This approach promotes a sense of empowerment and autonomy among nurses, which can ultimately lead to increased job satisfaction.

Table 1

Databases	Author (Year), Country	Study design	Findings
PubMed	(Quesado et al., 2022), Portugal	Cross sectional	There was a significant correlation indicating a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and nurses' satisfaction.
MEDLINE	(Sahan & Terzioglu, 2022), Turkey	Cross sectional	The transformational leadership practices implemented by nurse managers contributed to the overall organizational commitment and job satisfaction among staff nurses
CINAHL	(Othman & Khrais, 2022), Jordan	Cross sectional	A significant and positive correlation was observed between transformational leadership and nurses job satisfaction
Web of Science	(Albagawi, 2019), Saudi Arabia	Cross sectional	The staff nurses' level of job satisfaction increased while nurse managers demonstrated transformational leadership.
Research4Life	(Asif et al., 2019), Pakistan	Cross sectional	Transformational leadership is a crucial to improve quality of care, nurses' job satisfaction

(Asif *et al.*, 2019).

7. Limitations

The search for literature was limited to articles published from 2019 to 2024. Additionally, studies published in languages other than English may not have been included. These limitations can affect the interpretation and reporting of findings.

8. Conclusion

The transformational leadership style significantly enhances job satisfaction among nurses. Consequently, it is advisable for healthcare organizations to adopt a transformational leadership style to improve the work environment and nurses' job satisfaction.

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Appendix A

Cross Sectional Study Critical Appraisal tool.

	Question	Yes	No	Don't know /comment
Introduction				
1	Were the aims/objectives of the study clear?			
Methods				
2	Was the study design appropriate for the stated aim(s)?			
3	Was the sample size justified?			
4	Was the target/reference population clearly defined? (Is it clear who the research was about?)			
5	Was the sample frame taken from an appropriate population base so that it closely represented the target/reference population under investigation?			
6	Was the selection process likely to select subjects/participants that were representative of the target/reference population under investigation?			
7	Were measures undertaken to address and categories non-responders?			
8	Were the variables measured appropriate to the aims of the study?			
9	Is it clear what was used to determine statistical significance and/or precision estimates?			
10	Were the methods (including statistical methods) sufficiently described to enable them to be repeated?			
Results				
11	Were the basic data adequately described?			
12	Does the response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?			
13	If appropriate, was information about non-responders described?			
14	Were the results internally consistent?			
15	Were the results presented for all the analyses described in the methods?			
Discussion				
16	Were the authors' discussions and conclusions justified by the results?			
17	Were the limitations of the study discussed?			
Other				
18	Were there any funding sources or conflicts of interest that may affect the authors' interpretations of the results?			
19	Was ethical approval or consent of the participants attained?			