

Patient Care Quality Management through Transformational Leadership: Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: Leadership is a central aspect of the nursing management process, with nurses serving as front-line personnel in providing services to patients. Inadequate quality of care has a significant impact on high mortality rates and substantial cost burdens.

Purpose: This study aims to explore the relationship between the transformational leadership style of nurse managers and the quality of patient care.

Method: Literature search was conducted in five database journals covering various disciplines. Original research and peer-reviewed methods published in English were included in the review criteria. The initial search yielded 4397 articles and only 24 articles met the criteria for analysis. The review process used the PRISMA system guideline.

Results: The results of literature from various articles reveal that factors influencing the quality of care included job satisfaction, non-compliance with standard drug administration, high staff turnover, stress and fatigue, and organizational commitment.

Conclusion: There was a significant correlation between transformational leadership and the quality-of-care outcomes. This leadership style provided inspiration to nursing managers enhancing care quality to the best level. Further study needs to provide evidence of adoption and implementation transformational leadership style.

Keywords: literature review, quality of care, transformational leadership

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BACKGROUND

Nursing is an integral component of healthcare services (Androniceanu et al., 2020). Globally, it is well-recognized that the quality of care and recovery rates are essential indicators in measuring healthcare quality (Asif et al., 2019). According to the World Health Organization (2019), the quality of care is assessed by the extent to which healthcare services consistently improve desired outcomes and are supported by evidence-based professional knowledge.

Data from the World Health Organization (Donald.M.Berwick, 2018) reveals that between 5.7 and 8.4 million deaths are attributed to poor quality of care annually in low- and middle-income countries, constituting up to 15% of total deaths in these regions. Sixty percent of deaths in these countries result from poor quality of care and suboptimal use of the healthcare system. The inadequate quality of care also imposes a substantial cost burden, amounting to US\$ 1.4–1.6 trillion annually, due to the loss of productivity in these countries.

The global healthcare system confronts multifaceted challenges in delivering safe, cost-effective, and high-quality care, driven by the dynamic nature of the system, escalating healthcare expenditures, technological advancements, and an intensification of patient illnesses (Gashaye et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the imperative for quality care persists, necessitating adherence to planning standards, the provision of patient-centered services, judicious resource allocation, the maintenance of an adequate staff, the cultivation of a culture centered on quality improvement and safety, and the strategic prioritization of areas for enhancement (Elmontsri et al., 2017).

One of the primary mandates of healthcare service organizations, such as hospitals, is the delivery of quality services to fulfill patient expectations (Yusefi et al., 2022). The multifaceted concept of quality of care has been a subject of prolonged discourse within the scientific community, encompassing diverse dimensions of healthcare, including interpersonal and technical care aspects, patient recovery outcomes, structural and procedural elements, and the establishment of rigorous quality standards (Stavropoulou et al., 2022). Yusefi et al. (2022) assert that the definition of quality extends to the intricate values, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals engaged within the healthcare system. Quality-of-care services are expected not only to address patient needs (Raadabadi et al., 2017) but also to adhere scrupulously to professional ethical standards (Barati et al., 2019). The overarching objective of healthcare service quality is to attain optimal performance outcomes (Ryu & Kim, 2018), ensuring that the services rendered are not only effective but also efficient and economically viable (Sagong & Lee, 2016).

In healthcare organizations, leadership assumes a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture, elevating service quality, and bolstering patient safety—an assertion well-supported by Alfadhalah and Elamir's research (2021). Nurse leaders, faced with this responsibility, are tasked with employing critical thinking, particularly through the lens of their leadership styles within the healthcare domain, as emphasized by Gashaye et al. (2023). This underscores the central role of leadership in the care management process, where adept professionals are indispensable for resource management, the establishment of an effective work environment, the organization of a proficient staff, and the empowerment of capabilities to achieve optimal quality care outcomes (Ferreira et al., 2020).

The imperative of effective leadership in healthcare services transcends mere organizational considerations; it extends to the enhancement of management systems' effectiveness and efficiency, as articulated by Goh et al. (2018). Leadership, as a determinant,

exerts a profound influence on outcomes for professionals, patients, and the overall healthcare environment, as posited by Specchia et al. (2021). Amidst diverse leadership styles and practices, the preeminent model in nursing remains transformational leadership, as corroborated by den Breejen-de Hooge et al. (2021).

James MacGregor Burns is credited with pioneering this transformative leadership concept, introducing the term in his 1978 book. Subsequently, in 1985, Bass provided a definition, characterizing this model as one embraced by leaders aspiring to elevate the performance of their followers and motivate them to reach their full potential through a combination of charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Alkarabsheh et al., 2022). Transformational leadership entails a sequence of transformative actions advocated by leaders to their followers, instilling an awareness of the paramount importance of embracing a mission committed to achieving organizational goals (Ferreira et al., 2020).

Numerous studies highlight the significant impact of managerial approaches and leadership styles on staff performance and performance metrics within healthcare systems (Specchia et al., 2021). Previous research has consistently demonstrated a positive correlation between transformational leadership practices and the potential for optimal care quality, concurrently leading to a reduction in employee turnover rates (Asif et al., 2019). Correspondingly, the transformative leadership approach has been reported to elevate job satisfaction levels among nursing staff (Goh et al., 2018).

Further studies delve into the positive outcomes associated with transformational leadership styles that prioritize the cultivation of positive relationships. These outcomes include heightened patient satisfaction, a decrease in medication errors, and lower patient mortality rates (Poels et al., 2020). In alignment with the extant literature, this review aims to contribute evidence supporting the utilization of transformational leadership management strategies for the explicit purpose of enhancing the quality of care.

METHOD

The study design incorporated a literature review as part of a synthesis research approach. Previous examinations of the correlation between transformational leadership style and the quality of care have been explored by Page et al. (2021).

Search Strategy

The authors utilized the PICO model to delineate all components relevant to the identified issue and formulate the research question. PICO served as an acronym for Population, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome—essential elements in evidence-based practice for constructing bibliographic search queries (Behghadami & Ali Janati, 2020).

In this study, the research question was formulated using the PIO acronym, with specified details: (P) Nurses; (I) the utilization of diverse transformational leadership styles by nurse coordinators, managers, and leaders; (O) the ensuing effects on the quality of patient care. The databases employed for article retrieval encompassed ProQuest, PubMed, Taylor & Francis, SAGE, and Wiley. The keyword combination used included (nurs* OR personnel OR staff OR patient OR healthcare professional OR employee) AND (leader*) AND (transformational) AND (impact OR quality OR satisfaction OR care OR service OR outcome) AND (hospital OR secondary care OR department OR division OR directorate OR ward OR service OR unit).

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for this study comprised articles published in both English and Indonesian, focusing on nursing. Primary studies that specifically explored the correlation between transformational leadership style and the quality of care were considered. Additionally, articles needed to be published within the last five years, from 2018 to 2023, and should be complete and freely accessible. Conversely, exclusion criteria were applied to articles that addressed leadership styles unrelated to nursing or were associated with professions outside the healthcare field.

Data Synthesis

Data were entered into a Microsoft® Excel spreadsheet, meticulously organized into tables, and grouped according to various parameters, including each article's author, publication year, country of origin, title, study design, objectives, and research findings.

RESULTS

The initial search across PROQUEST, PUBMED, Taylor & Francis, SAGE, and WILEY databases yielded a total of 2502, 28, 653, 550, and 664 articles, respectively. Following the removal of duplicates, the remaining unique articles totaled 3517. A preliminary selection based on titles reduced the pool to 3081 eligible articles. Subsequent evaluation through abstract reading further narrowed the focus, leaving 92 articles with full texts for comprehensive scrutiny. The objective of this research is to refine the focus exclusively to primary studies that delve into the specific correlation between transformational leadership style and the quality of care, resulting in a substantial reduction in the number of articles. Ultimately, only 12 studies, meeting stringent inclusion/exclusion criteria, aligning with the research question, and qualifying for the final qualitative synthesis, were selected.

Among the 24 thoughtfully selected research articles, Proquest journals contributed 3 articles, PUBMED provided 6, Sage furnished 3, Taylor & Francis supplied 5, and Wiley contributed 7. The publication years of the articles spanned from 2018 to 2023, with a notable 75% being published post-2020. Predominantly sourced from journals, 18 articles (75% of the chosen results) employed a cross-sectional research design, while the remainder incorporated qualitative, commentary, discussion paper, systematic review, and mixed-method designs.

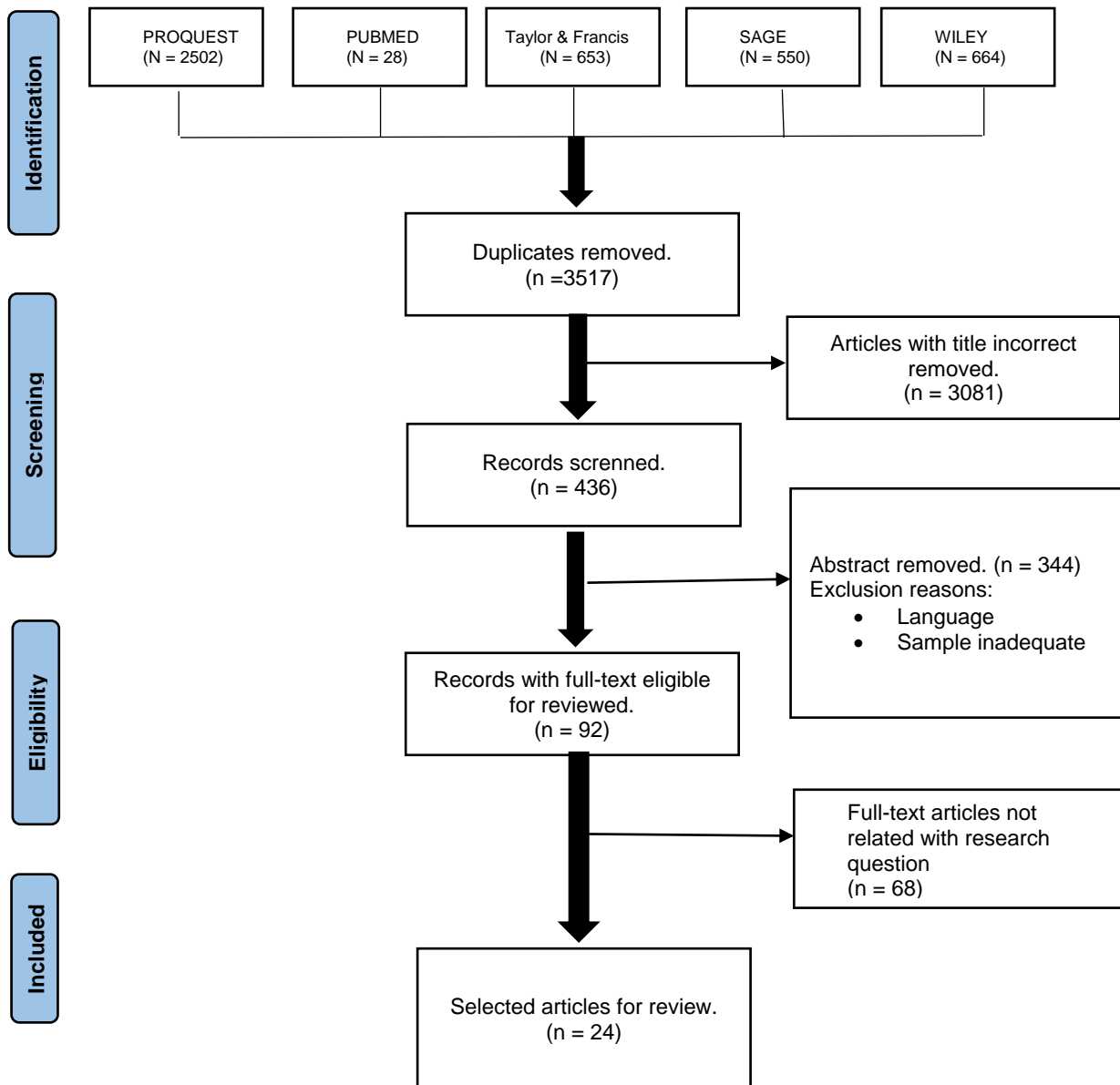
In terms of data collection instruments, 75% of the selected articles employed questionnaires. Originating from diverse countries such as Belgium, Italy, Pakistan, the USA, Qatar, Singapore, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Korea, the Netherlands, Brazil, Ethiopia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Norway, the research showcased an international perspective.

In cross-sectional studies, sample sizes varied from 89 participants (Al-Thawabiya et al., 2023) to 1626 (Alfadhalah & Elamir, 2021). Qualitative methods were applied in studies with sample sizes of 42 using semi-structured interviews (Bijl et al., 2019) and 237 (Ferreira et al., 2020). Diverse instruments were employed, such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Goh et al., 2018; Alfadhalah & Elamir, 2021; Al-Thawabiya et al., 2023) and the Global Transformational Leadership (GTL) scale (Anselmann & Mulder, 2020).

Several of the selected articles conducted a comparative analysis of leadership models, encompassing transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, servant, resonant, passive-avoidant, and authentic leadership models (Specchia et al., 2021; den Breejen-de Hooge et al., 2021; Alkarabsheh et al., 2022; Al-Dossary, 2022). Among these studies, the transformational leadership model emerged as the more commonly adopted framework compared to other

leadership models. The process of article identification, selection, and exclusion is illustrated in Figure 1.

Picture 1. PRISMA flowchart articles selection



No	Author (s)	Country	Design & Sample	Research Findings	Instrument	Databases
1	Poels et al. 2020	Belgium	cross-sectional analysis (n=302)	Laissez-faire and transactional leadership styles are unlikely to meet the complex demands	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire	ProQuest
2	Specchia et al. 2021	Italy	Systematic review (n=12)	transformational leadership has a significant positive correlation with the level of nursing job satisfaction	PubMed, CINAHL dan Embase database	ProQuest
3	Asif et al. 2019	Pakistan	cross-sectional (n=386)	transformational leadership is an important indicator that can help health care organizations to improve the quality of care, nurse job satisfaction, and avoid adverse events in patients	Global Leadership scale	ProQuest
4	Bijl et al. 2019	Netherlands	mixed methods (n=42)	lean model leaders also use other transformational practices, such as effective listening, active information sharing, and valuing people	semi structured interviews	PubMed
5	Kim et al. 2020	Korea	cross-sectional descriptive design (n=153)	transformational leadership can increase the perceived benefits of using the system as an important factor in obtaining positive treatment	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire	PubMed
6	Hooge et al. 2021	Netherlands	A cross-sectional survey (n=655)	A significant relationship was found between transformational leadership and quality of care	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire	PubMed

7	Stuber et al. 2019	Germany	cross- sectional study (n=1137)	Transformational leadership behavior impacts the quality of relationships with their staff members	Integrative leadership dan leader member exchange questionnaire	PubMed
8	Ferreira et al. 2020	Brazil	qualitative and exploratory study (n=237)	Transformational Leadership Practices have been relevant in nurses' daily lives and contribute to the quality of care.	NVivo 11.0 software	PubMed
9	Liu et al. 2020	China	cross- sectional survey (n=499)	‘Coaching’, ‘transformational leadership’ and ‘information sharing’ were more likely to be associated with higher quality ratings patient care by nurses	Victorian Patient Satisfaction questionnaire	PubMed
10	Goh et al. 2018	Singapore	cross- sectional survey (n=111)	found a strong significant correlation between transformational leadership and outcomes related to extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction.	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Organizational commitment Questionnaire	SAGE
11	Habib et al. 2020	Pakistan	cross- sectional (n=336)	transformational leadership is considered a powerful motivational tool for improving employee performance.	Interpersonal leadership questionnaire	SAGE
12	Pesut 2021	USA	Commentary	a transformational leadership style is associated with better perceived quality of care	None	SAGE
13	Gashaye et al.2023	Ethiopia	cross- sectional	transformational leadership is a	Multifactor Leadership	Taylor & Francis

			(n=403)	leadership style commonly used by nursing leaders and is key to achieving organizational goals and increasing the productivity of nursing staff	Questionnaire	
14	Alkarabsheh et al.2023	Jordan	cross-sectional (n=354)	Transformational leadership has a positive relationship to reducing the number of nurse resignations	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire	Taylor & Francis
15	Liu et al.2019	China	cross-sectional (n=385)	Transformational leadership can reduce the risk of burnout by promoting employee psychological empowerment	Transformational leadership questionnaire dan Psychological Empowerment scale	Taylor & Francis
16	AL-Dossary 2022	Saudi Arabia	cross-sectional (n=390)	Transformational and transactional leadership are positively correlated with organizational commitment and nurse involvement	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Organizational commitment Questionnaire, Utrecht Work Engagement scale	Taylor & Francis
17	AlFadhalah & Elamir 2021	Kuwait	cross-sectional (n=1626)	Effective transformational leadership can be enhanced through training, education, experience, and professional development.	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Organizational Description questionnaire	Taylor & Francis
18	Ree 2020	Norway	Cross-sectional (n=165)	Transformational leadership, job demands, staffing and communication are important factors for nursing home care and home care	Person-centered Care Assessment Tool	Wiley

				services		
19	Vatnoy 2022	Norway	cross-sectional (n=182)	high levels of transformational leadership behavior, which was significantly related to team culture.	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire,	Wiley
20	Pattison & Corser 2021	UK	Discussion paper	Transformational leadership plays a role in standards of care by inspiring nurses to take care of patients	None	Wiley
21	Anselmann & Mulder 2020	Germany	cross-sectional (n=183)	The positive influence of transformational leadership on teams in nursing and social work fills an important gap in the literature	Global Leadership scale	Wiley
22	Al-Thawabiya et al 2023	Qatar	cross-sectional (n=89)	The transformational leadership style was the most frequently displayed style	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire,	Wiley
23	Haoyan et al 2021	China	systematic review (n=6)	transformational leadership style was a driver of nurses' organizational commitment.	The CINAHL Complete, MEDLINE, PubMed, Business Source Complete, Cochrane Library, along with Open Grey	Wiley
24	Ree & Wiig 2019	Norway	Cross-sectional (n=139)	Transformational leadership has a significant impact on patient safety culture and work engagement in home care services	Global Leadership scale	Wiley

DISCUSSION

In concurrence with the findings of other studies in the literature (Pesut, 2021) and (Pattison & Corser, 2023), irrespective of the research methods, the country of origin, or the healthcare professional backgrounds of the participants, a significant correlation between the transformational leadership model and the fundamental quality of care was identified. Across the 24 studies, the results consistently underscored a positive association between transformational leadership and the quality of care. Factors influencing the quality of care services encompassed job satisfaction (Specchia et al., 2021), adverse patient events (Asif et al., 2019), lack of information sharing within the team (Bijl et al., 2019), non-compliance with medication standards (Kim et al., 2020), an uncomfortable working environment between supervisors and subordinates (Stuber et al., 2019), high staff turnover rates (Alkarabsheh et al., 2022), stress and fatigue (Liu et al., 2020), and organizational commitment (Al-Dossary, 2022). The transformational leadership model exhibited a positive influence on these factors, contributing significantly to the enhancement of patient care quality.

Job satisfaction demonstrated a positive correlation with transformational leadership (Specchia et al., 2021). This finding aligns with other research (Asif et al., 2019), indicating that nursing leaders displaying transformational behaviors play a crucial role in predicting desired patient outcomes by mitigating losses and improving care quality through the implementation of structural empowerment interventions and fostering job satisfaction. This suggests that transformational leaders, through their inspiring and motivating behaviors, can instigate changes in the psychological state of team members within the organization. The relationship between job satisfaction and nursing service quality warrants attention, supported by research (Salahat & Al-Hamdan, 2022) stating that the organizational work environment impacts care quality. Nurse discomfort at work can affect work processes and outcomes, subsequently influencing patient satisfaction.

Nurse performance and mental health in providing nursing care can also impact the quality of care, and in this context, the role of transformational leadership correlates positively in fostering harmonious relationships between superiors and subordinates in creating a conducive work climate (Stuber et al., 2019). Job-related stress can damage the physical and mental health of an individual, ultimately negatively impacting work productivity with increased stress levels (Babapour et al., 2022). Through transformational leadership, a leader provides support and motivation to subordinates, facilitates team discussions through two-way communication, and creates a mutually supportive work environment (Stuber et al., 2019).

Other studies emphasize the importance of a leader having capabilities and the need to sharpen knowledge of transformational leadership (Alfadhalah & Elamir, 2021). This research recommends further transformational leadership training for current and future leaders, including the effectiveness of its implementation and its advantages. This is necessary because transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on organizational innovation and learning, which are essential components of organizational culture.

Another crucial component of care quality is improving patient safety related to proper drug administration (Alandajani et al., 2022). According to Lappalainen et al. (2020), one of the causes of medication errors is fatigue, influenced by various factors, including excessive workload. In this literature review, the role of transformational leadership was found to enhance perceived benefits from the implementation of medication safety systems in hospitals (Kim et al.,

2020). On the other hand, transformational leadership can reduce the risk of fatigue by promoting psychological empowerment of employees (Liu et al., 2020).

The leadership model adopted by a nursing manager adjusts to the situation and needs based on team complexity, although transformational leadership is more commonly used and can even be combined with other leadership models (Vatnøy et al., 2022). In this literature, several studies compared transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, servant, resonant, passive-avoidant, and authentic leadership models (Poels et al., 2020; den Breejen-de Hooij et al., 2021; Habib et al., 2020; Alkarabsheh et al., 2022; Al-Dossary, 2022; Alfadhalah & Elamir, 2021; Vatnøy et al., 2022; Al-Thawabiya et al., 2023). The results of these studies found a positive correlation between transformational leadership and care quality, focusing on creating a positive work climate, team communication, and good relationships between leaders and staff, ultimately leading to patient safety and satisfaction.

This study indicates that managerial efforts to facilitate the right balance between job demands and resources and enhance employee work engagement by providing them opportunities to utilize their skills and competencies will be a strategy for leaders to improve the quality of care and patient safety culture.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, considering the correlation between transformational leadership and care quality, nursing leaders must empower team members, provide motivation, and create a positive and supportive work environment. Through positive and supportive leadership styles, nurse leaders can enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduce emotional fatigue, and ultimately improve patient care quality and satisfaction (Ree & Wiig, 2020).

These findings have several implications for nursing management. Challenges faced in the nursing world, such as high turnover rates leading to staff shortages, limited financial support for nurse training—factors affecting care quality (Alkarabsheh et al., 2022). In healthcare organizations, leadership plays a key role in providing effective, efficient care and producing positive outcomes for professionals, patients, and the work environment. Therefore, it is necessary to identify and address current gaps in leadership skills, which are expected to positively impact healthcare professional job satisfaction and subsequently improve healthcare service quality indicators.

This review reveals that transformational leadership has a significant positive correlation with care quality. This means that transformational leaders, through their inspiring and motivating behaviors, can drive changes in the psychological state of team members working within the organization. Nurse leaders have a clear role in planning nursing actions for patients by inspiring the nurses they lead to consistently improve the quality and provide not only adequate care but also the best care.

Employee involvement during decision-making gives them the opportunity to express personal perspectives and enhance mutual respect and teamwork within the group. Institutions should promote the use of two-way communication processes and highlight the need to strengthen trust between leaders and staff. The results of this research offer a starting point for researchers, professionals, and leaders in the healthcare context to understand the benefits of effective implementation of transformational leadership styles.

This literature review relies on several qualified yet relatively limited studies. Additionally, the quality assessment of each article did not use criteria such as the standard

appraisal conducted in systematic reviews through the quality appraisal process. The author acknowledges that this may introduce bias to the results. Nevertheless, the hope is that the results of this literature review will contribute to the understanding of leadership models in the nursing world and provide a knowledge gap that will be the focus for further research in the future.

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