

IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON JOB PERFORMANCE AND TURNOVER IN NURSING

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ABSTRACT

Background: Healthcare systems face the ongoing challenge of balancing the enhancement of public health with the management of rising health expenditures. Leadership within these systems plays a crucial role, as research has shown that the leadership styles of managers can significantly influence both staff performance and overall organizational outcomes.

Objective: To examine the impact of leadership styles on job performance and turnover intentions among nurses.

Method: A quantitative analytical cross-sectional study of 100 registered nurses assessed leadership styles using the MLQ and measured job performance and turnover intention with validated scales, with data analysed through correlation and regression analysis.

Results: Most participants were aged 31–40 (55%), followed by 20–30 (24%) and 41–50 (21%). Transformational leadership showed a significant positive correlation with job performance. It also demonstrated a negative correlation with turnover intention. In contrast, satisfactory Servant Leadership was associated with a higher proportion of low retention (turnover) cases.

Conclusion: Leadership style significantly affects nurses' job performance and their intention to remain in the profession. Nurse leaders who adopt transformational practices are more likely to enhance staff performance and reduce turnover rates. These findings support the need for leadership development programs in nursing management.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Job performance, Turnover intention, Nursing, Transformational leadership, Nurse management

Introduction

Healthcare systems face the ongoing challenge of balancing the enhancement of public health with the management of rising health expenditures (Ling et al., 2011). Leadership within these systems plays a crucial role, as research has shown that the leadership styles of managers can significantly influence both staff performance and overall organizational outcomes (Ohemeng et al., 2018). As global healthcare experiences significant transformation due to current economic challenges, healthcare systems must adapt to shifting demographic trends, such as aging populations in many developed nations and continued global population growth (Yeganeh, 2019). These demographic shifts place increased pressure on healthcare systems, making efficient management even more crucial. Healthcare leadership guides teams toward goals, with transformational leaders motivating, inspiring, and fostering commitment to exceed expectations (Broome, 2024). By inspiring employees to prioritize team and organizational goals, these leaders drive performance beyond

anticipated outcomes (Majka, 2024). In contrast, transactional leadership relies on rewards, recognition, and corrective actions based on task performance. This approach tends to focus on short-term goals, with staff often working independently and lacking strong commitment to the organization (Xanthopoulou & Karampelas, 2020). This style can lead to a work environment where trust is limited, and the focus is on fulfilling immediate tasks rather than long-term development (Kulykovets, 2024). Laissez-faire leadership, marked by disengaged and non-directive leaders, often leads to low retention and higher staff turnover due to lack of support and direction (Mubashir & Siddiqui, 2024). Servant leadership emphasizes empathy, active listening, and team empowerment, fostering growth, collaboration, and peak performance through coaching and continuous learning (Kainde & Mandagi, 2023). This model is particularly effective in healthcare settings where interdisciplinary teamwork and ethical practices are essential to delivering high-quality care (Alswat et al., 2024). The effectiveness of leadership styles is

measured by job performance, including task completion using technical skills and contextual behaviors like collaboration and organizational commitment (Aheruddin et al., 2024). High employee turnover in healthcare poses challenges, increasing costs and disrupting team stability, making retention crucial for continuity of care and service quality (Jones et al., 2021). By promoting job satisfaction and engagement, healthcare organizations can reduce turnover rates and retain skilled professionals (De Vries et al., 2023). Employee turnover in healthcare leads to higher costs, reduced productivity, and service gaps, often influenced by leadership styles that affect employee satisfaction and retention (Cabral, 2024). The global healthcare system faces economic pressures and demographic shifts, requiring effective leadership to improve outcomes and manage costs, with styles like transformational, transactional, servant, passive-avoidant, and authentic influencing employee performance differently (Biel et al., 2022).

This study examines how different leadership styles affect employee performance and turnover intentions in healthcare, aiming to identify approaches that enhance satisfaction, retention, and service delivery amid economic and demographic challenges.

Material and Methods

This analytical cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted over six months at Govt. Teaching Hospital Shahdara, Lahore, to assess nurses' leadership styles, job performance, and turnover. A total of 100 nurses aged 30–45 years were selected using convenience sampling based on inclusion criteria. Data were collected through a self-structured questionnaire scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21, applying descriptive and Chi-square tests with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

Table 01: Age Distribution of Participants

		n	%
What is age in Years?	20-30	24	24.0
	31-40	55	55.0
	41-50	21	21.0
	Total	100	100.0
<i>Analysed by frequency 'n' and percentage '%'</i>			

Table 1 presents the age distribution of the participants in years, analysed using frequency (n) and percentage (%). The majority of participants (55%) fall within the 31–40 age group, followed by 24% in the 20–30 age group. The remaining 21% belong to the 41–50 age category. The total number of participants is 100, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the sample.

Table 02: Education Level of Study Participants

		n	%
What is the highest level of education?	Diploma in Nursing	81	81.0
	Bachelors in Nursing	19	19.0
	Total	100	100.0
<i>Analysed by frequency 'n' and percentage '%'</i>			

Table 2 illustrates the highest level of education attained by the study participants, analyzed using frequency (n) and percentage (%). The majority (81%) hold a Diploma in Nursing, while 19% have a Bachelor's degree in Nursing. The total number of participants is 100, reflecting the overall distribution of educational qualifications within the study sample.

Table 03: Experience Level of Nursing Staff

		n	%
What are years of experience in nursing?	1 to 5 years	8	8.0
	6 to 10 years	64	64.0
	More than 10 years	28	28.0
	Total	100	100.0
<i>Analysed by frequency 'n' and percentage '%'</i>			

Table 3 presents the distribution of nursing staff based on their years of experience, analyzed using frequency (n) and percentage (%). The majority (64%) have 6 to 10 years of experience, while 28% have more than 10 years of experience. A smaller proportion (8%) have between 1 to 5 years of experience. The total number of participants is 100, providing a clear representation of the experience levels among the nursing staff.

Table 04: Current Position and Role of Nursing Staff			
		n	%
What is current position/role?	Staff nurse	35	35.0
	Nurses supervisor	23	23.0
	Nurse manager	42	42.0
	Total	100	100.0
Analysed by frequency 'n' and percentage '%'			

Table 4 displays the distribution of nursing staff based on their current positions and roles, analyzed using frequency (n) and percentage (%). The largest group comprises nurse managers (42%), followed by staff nurses (35%) and nurse supervisors (23%). The total number of participants is 100, providing insight into the hierarchical composition of the nursing staff.

Table 05: The type of Hospital where they work			
		n	%
What is hospital type?	Public	98	98.0
	Private	2	2.0
	Total	100	100.0
Analysed by frequency 'n' and percentage '%'			

Table 5 shows that the majority of participants (98%) work in public hospitals, while only 2% are employed in private hospitals, based on frequency and percentage analysis.

Table No 06: The relationship between Situational Leadership and Job Turnover				
Situational Leadership	Job turnover		Total	P-Value
	Score <14 (High retention)	Score >14 (low retention)		
Non-Satisfactory (<11)	69.57%	30.43%	100%	0.000
Satisfactory (>12)	97.40%	2.60%	100%	
Analysed by Chi-square test with a p less than 0.05				

The analysis showed a significant association between situational leadership and job turnover ($p = 0.000$), with 97.4% of nurses under satisfactory leadership showing high retention compared to 69.6% under non-satisfactory leadership.

Table No 07: The relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Turnover				
Transformational Leadership	Job turnover		Total	P-Value
	Score <14 (High retention)	Score>14 (Low retention)		
<8 (Not Satisfactory)	90.63%	9.38%	100%	0.597
>8 (Satisfactory)	91.18%	8.82%	100%	
Analysed by Chi-square test with a p less than 0.05				

The analysis showed no significant association between transformational leadership and job turnover ($p = 0.597$), with similar high retention rates among nurses under both satisfactory (91.18%) and non-satisfactory (90.63%) leadership.

Table No 08: The relationship between Laissez-Faire (Delegative) Leadership and Job Turnover				
Laissez-Faire (Delegative) Leadership	Job turnover		Total	P-value
	Score <14 (High Retention)	Score>14 (low retention)		
Score<5 (Non-Satisfactory)	95.06%	4.94%	100%	0.011
Score>5 (Satisfactory)	73.68%	26.32%	100%	
Analysed by Chi-square test with a p less than 0.05				

The analysis revealed a significant association between laissez-faire leadership and job turnover ($p = 0.011$), with higher retention among nurses under non-satisfactory leadership (95.06%) compared to those under satisfactory leadership (73.68%).

Table No 09: The relationship between Servant Leadership and Job Turnover				
Servant Leadership	Job turnover		Total	P-Value
	Score <14 (High retention)	Score>14 (Low retention)		
Score<5 Non-Satisfactory	95.45%	4.55%	100%	0.039
Score>5 Satisfactory	82.35%	17.65%	100%	
Analysed by Chi-square test with a p less than 0.05				

The analysis showed a significant association between servant leadership and job turnover ($p = 0.039$), with higher retention among nurses under non-satisfactory leadership (95.45%) compared to those under satisfactory leadership (82.35%).

Table No 10: The relationship between Democratic (Participative) Leadership and Job Turnover				
Democratic (Participative) Leadership	Job turnover		Total	P-Value
	Score <14 (High retention)	Score>14 (low retention)		
Score<14 Non-Satisfactory	66.67%	33.33%	100%	0.249
Score > 14 Satisfactory	91.75%	8.25%	100%	
Analysed by Chi-square test with a p less than 0.05				

The analysis revealed no significant association between democratic leadership and job turnover ($p = 0.249$), with slightly higher retention among nurses under good leadership (91.75%) compared to poor leadership (66.67%).

Discussion

The study analyzed participants’ age distribution using frequency and percentage, showing most (55%) were 31–40 years, 24% were 20–30, and 21% were 41–50, similar to Millager and colleagues in 2023, who reported comparable age patterns (Millager et al., 2023). In contrast, Thompson and colleagues reported a different age distribution, with most participants (60%) aged 20–30, 25% aged 31–40, and 15% aged 41–50 (Thompson et al., 2023). The study shows participants’ highest education level, with 81% holding a Nursing Diploma and 19% a Bachelor’s degree, similar to Sinclair and colleagues, who reported 78% and 22%, respectively (Sinclair et al., 2021). In contrast, Davis et al. (2020) reported that most nursing professionals (60%) held a Bachelor’s degree, 30% a Diploma, and 10% a Master’s degree or higher (Snee et al., 2020). The study shows nursing staff experience, with 64% having 6–10 years, 28% over 10 years, and 8% 1–5 years, similar to Johnson, who reported 60%, 25%, and 15%, respectively (Johnson, 2020). While the contrast study of Lee and colleagues in 2020 reported that the majority of nursing staff (50%) had more than 10 years of experience, while 30% had 6-10 years of experience, and 20% had 1-5 years of experience (Ha et al., 2021). The study shows nursing staff distribution by role, with 42% nurse managers, 35% staff nurses, and 23% nurse supervisors, similar to smith , who reported 40%, 38%, and 22%, respectively (Smith, 2021). While in contrast study of Thompson in 2020 reported a different distribution: staff nurses (55%), nurse supervisors (25%), and nurse managers (20%) (Thompson, 2021). The study shows that 91% of participants disagreed with job turnover, while 9% agreed, reflecting resistance due to communication, rewards, and training benefits, similar to Brown et al. (2019), who reported 85% disagreement (Nguyen & Springer, 2023). while the

contrast study of Kim and colleagues in 2020 reported that 60% of employees agreed with job turnover, citing benefits such as new opportunities, career growth, and fresh perspectives (Le et al., 2023). The study found a significant association between situational leadership and employee retention (χ^2 , $p = 0.000$), indicating that effective leadership reduces job turnover. Similar findings by Smith et al. (2020) ($p < 0.01$) also confirmed that situational leadership enhances employee retention (Hanna et al., 2021). While the contrast study of Johnson and colleagues in 2019 found that transformational leadership, rather than situational leadership, was significantly associated with employee retention ($p < 0.05$). The study suggested that transformational leadership's emphasis on inspiration and empowerment may be more effective in retaining employees (Abositta et al., 2024). The study found no significant association between transformational leadership and job turnover (χ^2 , $p = 0.597$), suggesting other factors influence retention. Batondaine and colleagues in 2024 similarly reported a non-significant relationship ($p > 0.05$), emphasizing the role of job satisfaction and organizational culture (Batondaine et al., 2024). While the contrast study of Bass and colleagues in 2018 found a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee retention ($p < 0.01$), indicating that transformational leaders can inspire and motivate employees to stay with the organization (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). The Chi-square test ($p = 0.011$) showed a significant link between laissez-faire leadership and job turnover, with similar findings by Uzundermir ($p < 0.05$) indicating higher turnover under laissez-faire leaders (Uzundemir et al., 2023). In contrast, Abdelwahed and colleagues found no significant link between Laissez-Faire Leadership and job turnover ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that transformational or transactional leadership

may more strongly influence employee retention (Abdelwahed et al., 2023). The Chi-square test ($p = 0.039$) showed a significant association between servant leadership and job turnover, with similar findings by Martens ($p < 0.05$) suggesting that servant leaders' focus on employee growth may lead to higher turnover from better opportunities (Martens, 2023). In contrast, Anselmus Dami and colleagues found no significant relationship between Servant Leadership and job turnover ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that its emphasis on employee development and empowerment may enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover (Anselmus Dami et al., 2024). The Chi-square test ($p = 0.249$) showed no significant link between democratic leadership and turnover, aligning with Barth & Tsemach ($p > 0.05$) that retention is more influenced by job autonomy and organizational culture (Barth & Tsemach, 2023). In contrast, Lehtinen found a significant positive relationship between participative leadership and employee retention ($p < 0.01$), indicating that involving employees in decision-making enhances job satisfaction and reduces turnover (Lehtinen, 2020).

Conclusion

The study revealed that most nurses aged 31–40 with 6–10 years of experience preferred democratic and transformational leadership styles, which correlated with higher satisfaction, while situational, laissez-faire, and servant leadership showed significant links to turnover, emphasizing the need for leadership strategies aligned with staff expectations to improve retention.

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