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The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Nurses' Performances in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Leadership has been known as one of the most influential factors in enhancing job performance. Leaders play a crucial role in this endeavor by facilitating opportunities for skill enhancement through training initiatives and other skill-improving activities. This study implements a qualitative approach, with deep interviews as the data collection method. The study was performed in several hospitals in Indonesia that apply transformational leadership styles to their management atmospheres. The research findings underscore the pivotal role and the potential of transformational leadership style as a driving factor for improved performance. Building upon these findings, it is recommended that leaders intensify efforts to enhance the leadership style and bolster further training programs to ensure a broader participation base. Additionally, transformational leadership can potentially provide specialized resources tailored to the nurses' specific functional responsibilities. This may include the provision of learning modules covering various areas surgical medical-surgical, communication, and documentation. By equipping these nurses with the requisite knowledge and skills, leaders empower them to fulfill their duties effectively, thereby fostering a culture of service excellence within the institution.

INTRODUCTION

Adaptability is paramount for survival and growth in today's dynamic and fiercely competitive organizational landscape, marked by ever-evolving complexities. It is imperative for organizations, spanning various sectors including the corporate realm, to exhibit heightened responsiveness to navigate these shifting tides effectively. Recognizing this imperative, scholars such as Alrowwad *et al.* (2020) underscore the indispensable role of individual change in facilitating organizational transformation. However, effecting this alignment between organizational and individual change poses a formidable challenge. Leaders, as the vanguards of organizational culture and ethos, wield significant influence in catalysing such transformative shifts (Labrague *et al.*, 2020a). Thus, initiating and championing change initiatives necessitates proactive engagement from leadership, starting at the apex of the organizational hierarchy.

By serving as exemplars of change, leaders set the tone and direction for organizational evolution (Finkelstein *et al.*, 2009). Their commitment to personal growth and adaptation not only instils confidence within the workforce but also fosters a culture conducive to change and innovation. Consequently, by leading by example, leaders inspire individual change and cultivate a collective mindset geared towards embracing and leveraging change as a catalyst for organizational advancement. In contemporary organizational contexts characterized by rapid change and heightened competition, the imperative for effective leadership has never been more pronounced. Acknowledging the exigency of navigating turbulent waters, scholars have emphasized the pivotal role of reformist leaders in driving organizational change (Gill, 2002). These leaders, imbued with a visionary outlook

and a propensity for innovation, serve as the driving force behind transformative initiatives, steering their organizations towards sustainable growth and adaptation in dynamic environments.

Central to the discourse on effective leadership is the concept of employee engagement, which has garnered considerable attention in organizational research. Numerous studies have underscored the intricate relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement, positing transformational leaders as catalysts for fostering a sense of purpose, motivation, and commitment among their subordinates (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020; Labrague *et al.*, 2020b). Furthermore, empirical evidence consistently links heightened levels of employee engagement to enhanced organizational performance across various domains (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020; Setyaningrum & Pawar, 2021). These findings underscore the significance of nurturing a workforce that is not only intellectually and emotionally invested but also actively aligned with organizational goals and values.

Despite the burgeoning body of literature on the individual constructs of transformational leadership, employee engagement, and performance, there remains a conspicuous gap in scholarship concerning their interrelationships. While extant research has established the direct impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement and subsequently on performance outcomes, the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between transformational leadership and performance has received scant attention. This gap in knowledge represents a critical lacuna in our understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which transformational leadership exerts its influence on organizational effectiveness (Olofunke, 2023).

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Addressing this gap holds significant implications for both theory and practice. By elucidating the mediating role of employee engagement, scholars can offer nuanced insights into the intricate dynamics of leadership and organizational performance. From a practical standpoint, such insights can inform the development of targeted interventions and leadership strategies aimed at enhancing employee engagement and, by extension, organizational performance. Thus, future research endeavours should be focused to unravel the complexities of this relationship, thereby advancing our understanding of effective leadership in contemporary organizational settings (Islam *et al.*, 2021).

The Regional General Hospital (RSUD) in Indonesia, operates as a vital governmental institution within the healthcare sector, catering to the diverse medical needs of the local populace. As a subsidiary of the Regional Government system, its mandate encompasses the enhancement of public health and the provision of quality healthcare services to the community. Central to its operational framework is the delivery of professional medical care, with nurses assuming a pivotal role as primary caregivers who engage extensively with patients, medical professionals, and administrative personnel. Given their frontline position, nurses play a fundamental role in ensuring the delivery of compassionate and effective healthcare services (Baljoon *et al.*, 2018; Botchwey & Ahenkan, 2021). Their daily interactions with patients, alongside their collaborations with doctors and management, underscore their multifaceted responsibilities spanning clinical care, communication, and administrative duties. As such, their professionalism and dedication serve as linchpins in upholding the hospital's commitment to excellence in patient care.

Furthermore, RSUD prioritizes transparency and accountability in its operations, exemplified by its robust system for addressing patient grievances. Patients and their families are afforded the opportunity to voice their concerns and lodge complaints, either directly or through established channels, thereby facilitating continuous feedback and quality improvement initiatives. This patient-centric approach underscores the hospital's unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of responsiveness and accountability, thereby ensuring that the healthcare needs and concerns of the community are addressed promptly and effectively. In essence, RSUD stands as a beacon of healthcare excellence in Indonesia, embodying the values of professionalism, compassion, and accountability in its pursuit of enhancing the health and well-being of the local populace. Through its dedicated workforce and patient-centred practices, the hospital remains steadfast in its mission to provide accessible, high-quality healthcare services to all members of the community (Friebel *et al.*, 2018).

Apart from its pivotal role in building healthy community, the environment in healthcare is increasingly fraught with problems such as payment reduction, higher workload, turnover, and professional conflicts (Mwachofi *et al.*,

2011). there are several complaints often delivered by patients attended Indonesian RSUD, through both direct and indirect channels. Direct complaints are typically addressed during working hours, either to relevant unit officers or directly to the public relations department. Conversely, indirect complaints may be lodged through various avenues such as mass media, call centres, or questionnaire sheets provided by the hospital. The complaint data highlights several recurring issues brought forth by patients or their families (Hidayah & Nurmiati, 2021). These include concerns related to administration, behaviour and communication of hospital staff, quality of treatment, queuing times, facilities and infrastructure, as well as response times or processing speeds. Notably, a substantial portion of these complaints pertains to aspects directly linked to nurse performance, underscoring the significance of addressing these issues within the nursing department. Despite concerted efforts, the report from the nursing department indicates a performance gap in the inpatient unit.

In response to these challenges, the hospital administrations adopt a proactive approach focused on identifying root causes, implementing corrective measures, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement within the nursing department. This may entail initiatives such as comprehensive training programs to enhance communication and interpersonal skills among nursing staff, streamlining administrative processes to reduce wait times, and investing in infrastructure upgrades to improve overall patient experience. Furthermore, fostering open communication channels and soliciting feedback from patients and staff can facilitate a deeper understanding of the underlying issues and inform targeted interventions. However, evidence shows that there is still a relatively low performance on inpatient treatment cases over the last six months, underscore critical areas for improvement within the nursing department. While nursing documentation activities are being carried out, the failure to meet established standards highlights systemic challenges that warrant attention. One plausible explanation for these shortcomings could indeed be attributed to the leadership style and work involvement of nurses within the hospital. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture, setting expectations, and fostering accountability among staff members. In this context, the influence of leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, on nursing performance cannot be overstated. Transformational leaders have the potential to inspire and motivate their teams, instilling a sense of purpose and commitment that drives excellence in patient care. Concurrently, the level of work involvement among nurses is another crucial determinant of performance. High levels of work involvement signify a deep sense of engagement and dedication to one's role, resulting in enhanced productivity and quality of care. However, if nurses perceive a lack of support or recognition from leadership, it can adversely impact their morale and motivation, potentially leading to suboptimal performance

and incomplete documentation practices.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach that encompasses leadership development, fostering a culture of accountability, and providing adequate support and resources for nursing staff. Leadership training programs can equip leaders with the skills and tools necessary to inspire and empower their teams effectively. Additionally, initiatives aimed at promoting greater work involvement, such as recognition programs and opportunities for professional growth, can bolster morale and motivation among nurses, thereby enhancing their performance and commitment to documentation standards. Furthermore, establishing clear expectations and protocols for nursing documentation, coupled with regular monitoring and feedback mechanisms, can help ensure compliance with established standards.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance within a government agency serves as a critical yardstick for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations, aligning with the overarching vision and objectives of the organization. As articulated by Spreitzer & Porath (2012) and Tătar (2011), performance is a key indicator of an agency's success in achieving its goals and objectives, providing valuable insights into the efficacy of operational policies and their impact. In essence, performance encompasses both tangible outcomes and intangible manifestations of work, spanning physical/material as well as non-physical/non-material domains (Nandasinghe, 2020; Porter, 1998; Warr & Nielsen, 2018). At its core, employee performance, as defined by Riyanto *et al.* (2021) pertains to an individual's capacity to fulfil their assigned responsibilities and tasks, typically gauged against predetermined success indicators. This evaluation process facilitates the categorization of employees into varying performance levels, often delineated as high, medium, or low, or as exceeding, meeting, or falling short of targets.

Such categorizations offer a comprehensive overview of an employee's overall performance, enabling stakeholders to discern patterns, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation, policy refinement, and strategic planning. By systematically evaluating and interpreting performance data, government agencies can optimize their operations, enhance service delivery, and ultimately advance their mission of serving the public interest. In sum, performance serves as a cornerstone of organizational effectiveness, providing the requisite insights and benchmarks for continuous improvement and strategic decision-making within government agencies (Ersari & Naktiyok, 2022). By prioritizing the cultivation of high-performance cultures and fostering accountability at all levels, agencies can strive towards greater efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness in fulfilling their mandates and serving the needs of their constituents.

Leadership, as elucidated by various experts in the field,

represents a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by its dynamic and influential nature. At its core, leadership can be conceptualized as a process of influence that unfolds within the intricate interplay between leaders and their subordinates (Kasapoğlu, 2018; Nandasinghe, 2020). While the essence of leadership lies in its relational dynamics, scholarly discourse often emphasizes the figure of the leader as a focal point for analysis and understanding.

Rost, as cited by Thompson & Glasø (2018), articulates leadership as a relational nexus marked by mutual influence between leaders and followers who aspire for tangible change aligned with shared goals. This conception underscores the interactive and reciprocal nature of leadership dynamics, emphasizing that influence is not unilateral but rather manifests as a symbiotic relationship devoid of coercion. Thus, leadership emerges as a dynamic process characterized by reciprocal influence, wherein both leaders and followers actively shape and drive organizational change (Banutu-Gomez & Banutu-Gomez, 2016; Jansson, 2013). Crucially, leadership entails a collective endeavour towards effecting meaningful change, with leaders serving as catalysts for translating shared aspirations into actionable outcomes. Importantly, the impetus for change emanates from a shared vision embraced by both leaders and followers, underscoring the collaborative nature of leadership pursuits (Lynch, 2015). This shared vision serves as a guiding beacon, motivating individuals to transcend personal interests and coalesce around common objectives.

As explored in the current study, transformational leadership epitomizes a leadership paradigm characterized by the ability to inspire and mobilize employees towards collective goals while transcending self-interests (Alrowwad *et al.*, 2020; Dwivedi *et al.*, 2020). Dwivedi *et al.* (2020) delineate four key dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions encapsulate the leader's capacity to engender admiration, stimulate intellectual curiosity, foster motivational fervour, and demonstrate personalized care towards subordinates. In essence, leadership unfolds as a collaborative endeavour predicated on mutual influence and shared aspirations, with transformational leaders embodying the ethos of inspiration, motivation, and collective empowerment. Through their adept navigation of relational dynamics and commitment to shared goals, transformational leaders galvanize organizational change and propel their teams towards sustained success.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology employed in this study aligns with a qualitative approach, as advocated by. In this study, the data collection method is operationalized with a non-structured or open interview. To picture the sources' demographic condition, we also provide data regarding age distribution, working period, and gender. By leveraging this methodological framework, the research

aims to elucidate the influence between phenomena under investigation, namely transformational leadership and nurse performance. Overall, through meticulous data collection and analysis, the study endeavours to contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership and performance dynamics within healthcare organizations. The collected data will be analysed qualitatively to provide systematic and comprehensive results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic characteristics of the respondents reveal that the majority fall within the age range of 25 to 35 years old, which aligns with the broader demographic trends observed among nurses at the hospital. This demographic profile holds significant implications for the study, as younger nurses are often perceived to possess greater physical strength and vitality, which may contribute to heightened productivity and effectiveness in delivering healthcare services to the community. The prevalence of younger nurses underscores the importance of considering age-related factors in examining the relationships between transformational leadership, work involvement, and employee performance within the hospital setting. By accounting for demographic variables such as age, researchers can gain deeper insights into how age influences nurses' attitudes, behaviours, and performance outcomes, thereby informing targeted interventions and strategies aimed at enhancing organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

The findings of this study indicate a significant and simultaneous influence of transformational leadership on nurses' performance. This result underscores the pivotal role of transformational leadership in shaping and enhancing nurse performance within the healthcare setting. Transformational leaders, characterized by their ability to inspire, motivate, and empower their subordinates, play a crucial role in fostering a culture of excellence, innovation, and patient-centred care. Transformational leaders can effectively mobilize and empower nurses to deliver high-quality healthcare services while achieving organizational goals by cultivating a shared vision, providing intellectual stimulation, and demonstrating individualized consideration.

The substantial contribution of transformational leadership to nurse performance highlights the importance of investing in leadership development initiatives and fostering a supportive organizational climate that nurtures and sustains transformational leadership behaviours. By empowering leaders to embrace their role as change agents and champions of excellence, healthcare organizations can enhance nurse engagement, satisfaction, and ultimately, patient outcomes. Overall, the research findings underscore the significance of transformational leadership as a key determinant of nurse performance, emphasizing the need for strategic interventions aimed at fostering and sustaining transformational leadership practices within healthcare leadership structures.

The outcomes of this research serve to reinforce the

conclusions drawn by (Alrowwad *et al.*, 2020), highlighting the substantial impact of transformational leadership and work engagement on employee performance when examined concurrently. Within organizational contexts, leadership plays a paramount role in steering subordinates towards task accomplishment while nurturing an environment conducive to professional growth and productivity (Erezina *et al.*, 2023). Transformational leaders possess the unique ability to not only provide clear direction and guidance but also to inspire and instil a sense of purpose among their followers.

By effectively transmitting their enthusiasm and expertise, transformational leaders empower their subordinates to perform at their best and strive towards meeting and surpassing established performance standards. This dissemination of vision and motivation fosters a collective commitment to excellence, driving individuals to exert greater effort and dedication in their work. Moreover, the findings resonate with the research conducted by Grin *et al.* (2018), which underscores the transformative potential of leadership in elevating both performance levels and employee engagement. Transformational leadership serves as a catalyst for organizational improvement, catalysing positive change and fostering a culture of continuous growth and development (Caldwell *et al.*, 2012; Montuori & Donnelly, 2018; Shields, 2010; Shields & Hesbol, 2020).

In essence, the synergy between transformational leadership and work engagement underscores their collective influence in shaping employee performance outcomes. Organizations can cultivate a dynamic and high-performing organizational culture by embracing transformational leadership principles and fostering an engaged workforce. Through targeted interventions and leadership development initiatives, organizations can harness the full potential of their workforce, driving sustained success and achievement of strategic objectives. The findings suggest that superior support, particularly in the form of transformational leadership, plays a crucial role in enhancing nurse performance. Transformational leaders serve as role models who inspire and motivate nurses to perform at their best, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement within the hospital environment. By embodying the characteristics of transformational leadership, superiors can effectively guide and empower nurses, driving them towards achieving higher levels of performance and professional fulfilment.

Furthermore, the results highlight the significance of work involvement in influencing nurse performance. Nurses who exhibit high levels of work involvement demonstrate a strong commitment to their roles and responsibilities, actively contributing ideas for hospital improvement and readily complying with regulations and policies. Their deep sense of engagement and identification with their work not only enhances their performance but also fosters a positive and supportive organizational climate. Conversely, nurses with lower

levels of work involvement may exhibit less enthusiasm and commitment towards their work, leading to routine and uninspired performance. Such nurses may be less supportive of hospital initiatives and may only engage in their work at a superficial level, lacking the passion and dedication necessary for optimal performance. In summary, the findings underscore the importance of superior support, particularly through transformational leadership, in cultivating a work environment that promotes high levels of work involvement and, consequently, enhanced nurse performance. By fostering a culture of engagement, empowerment, and collaboration, organizations can unlock the full potential of their nursing staff, driving excellence in patient care and organizational outcomes.

The results gleaned from this study underscore the pivotal role of transformational leadership in shaping the performance of nurses. It's evident that leaders wield significant influence in fostering professional development through avenues like formal continuing education and certified informal training, which are customized to meet the diverse needs of nurses within their specialized fields. These initiatives not only empower individual practitioners but also contribute to the collective enhancement of organizational capabilities.

However, the successful execution of such programs necessitates robust support from hospital management. It's imperative for management to ensure the availability of diverse resources required to facilitate these initiatives effectively. This includes but is not limited to financial investments, access to learning materials, and dedicated personnel. Without this crucial backing, the transformative impact of leadership initiatives may be stymied, impeding the attainment of optimal organizational performance.

In essence, the synergy between transformational leadership and management support is indispensable for realizing the full potential of nursing teams and, by extension, the broader healthcare organizations they serve. Only through collaborative efforts can we truly harness the power of leadership to drive sustained improvements in nursing performance and patient care outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Transformational leadership exerts a profound influence on enhancing nurse performance, with the efficacy of its implementation directly correlating to the extent of performance improvement achieved. To amplify the positive outcomes stemming from transformational leadership practices, fostering synergy among all stakeholders is essential. This includes active participation from nurses themselves, who serve as implementers of leadership initiatives, as well as proactive engagement from management and directors in allocating requisite resources. One critical resource allocation strategy involves earmarking educational funds to support nurses pursuing higher levels of education or engaging in certified informal education, such as specialized training programs tailored to enhance their skill sets. By investing in continuous learning opportunities, organizations can equip nurses with the

knowledge and competencies needed to optimize their performance and adapt to evolving healthcare dynamics effectively. Moreover, fostering a culture of professional engagement among nurses is paramount. Encouraging active involvement in professional organizations provides a platform for ongoing knowledge exchange, enabling nurses to stay abreast of emerging trends and pertinent issues in healthcare and nursing. This proactive approach not only empowers nurses to address challenges proactively but also safeguards against potential obsolescence in an ever-evolving healthcare landscape. In essence, by nurturing collaboration among all stakeholders and investing in continuous professional development, organizations can thereby transform leadership's full potential, fostering a culture of excellence and innovation in nursing practice.

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