

Transformational Leadership and Nurse Performance Among Hospital Nurses

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ABSTRACT

Background: Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as an effective leadership approach for enhancing nurses' motivation, engagement, and job performance. However, evidence regarding its relationship with nurse performance in Indonesian hospital settings remains limited. Nurse performance is a critical determinant in ensuring patient safety and the quality of nursing care within hospital settings. The relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance remains a significant issue that requires thorough examination to support improvements in the quality of nursing services.

Purpose: This study aimed to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance in a hospital setting.

Methods: A total of 60 nurses were recruited using a total sampling technique. Data were collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to assess transformational leadership and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) to measure nurse performance. Data analysis was conducted using Spearman's rank correlation test.

Results: A significant positive correlation of moderate strength was identified between transformational leadership and nurse performance ($r = 0.488$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of transformational leadership are associated with better nurse performance.

Conclusion: Transformational leadership demonstrates a positive, moderately strong association with nurse performance at RSI Aisyiyah Malang.

Keywords: Hospital; Nurse Performance; Nursing Management; Transformational Leadership.

BACKGROUND

Nurses constitute the frontline healthcare workforce in hospitals, playing a fundamental role in delivering nursing care, executing clinical procedures, and safeguarding patient safety (Shin et al., 2022). Consequently, nurse performance serves as a key indicator in determining the quality of service and patient safety outcomes within hospital environments (Daba et al., 2024). The International Council of Nurse has reported ongoing, global nursing shortages with the potential to adversely affect nurses's capacity to deliver optimal care (Jester, 2023). In Indonesia, burnout and elevated nurse turnover rates have emerged as critical challenges that undermine nurse performance and, in turn, the quality of nursing care (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2023; Nur et al., 2024).

Lamuri et al. (2023) reported that Approximately 33.5% of nurses in Indonesia experience burnout syndrome. Additionally, Hariani et al. (2024) found that nurse performance was significantly impaired by workload and occupational stress. Alkubati et al. (2025) demonstrated that nurse with poor performance faced difficulties in carrying out clinical tasks, making timely decisions, and collaborating effectively within multidisciplinary teams. These conditions adversely affect the quality of nursing care, patient safety, and the productivity of work units (Yousif & Al-Fayyadh, 2024).

Transformational leadership represents one of the most effective leadership approaches for enhancing nurse motivation, psychological empowerment, teamwork, and professional competence development, thereby contributing to improvements in individual and team nursing performance (García-Sierra et al., 2023). Moreover, transformational leadership has been shown to enhance the quality of care and the productivity of nursing staff in hospital settings (Satchi et al., 2025). In contrast, transactional leadership, which is overly focused on reward-and-punishment systems, and laissez-faire leadership, characterized by minimal guidance, have been reported to be less effective in supporting nurse performance and nursing care quality (Al-Rjoub et al., 2024; Alsadaan et al., 2025).

Although previous studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership is associated with improved nurse performance, most evidence originates from countries outside Indonesia. Moreover, limited research has examined this relationship in Islamic hospital settings, where organizational values and leadership practices may differ from those of general hospitals. Therefore, this study aims to address this research gap by investigating the relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance at Aisyiyah Islamic Hospital, Malang. These findings suggest that transformational leadership holds potential as an effective strategy for improving nurse performance and the overall quality of hospital services.

Type C hospitals face particular challenges in nursing resource management that may affect nurses performance and service quality. In such contexts. transformational leadership is considered to play an important role in fostering a supportive work environment, enhancing work motivation, and promoting the achievement of optimal nurse performance.

OBJECTIVE

The study aimed to analyze the relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance in a hospital setting.

METHODS

This study employed an analytical cross-sectional design using a correlational approach to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance. The study was conducted at RSI Aisyiyah Malang and involved all staff nurses working across four inpatient wards. A total of 60 respondents were recruited using a total sampling technique. The inclusion criteria were staff nurses working in the inpatient ward, directly involved in nursing care, holding at least a Diploma III (Associate Degree) in Nursing, and willing to participate in the study. Nurses who were on leave (e.g., maternity leave, sick leave, or other types of leave), occupied senior managerial positions, or failed to complete the questionnaire were excluded from the study.

Data collection was conducted using two validated and reliable questionnaire instruments. Transformational leadership was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X-Short), consisting of 20 items. The instrument demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0,874$). Nurse performance was assessed using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), developed by Koopmans and colleagues (Lousã et al., 2024). This instrument consists of 18 items encompassing aspects of task performance, work responsibility, teamwork, and adherence to established standards and operational procedures. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (Chalco-Ccapa et al., 2024; Dhingra et al., 2024).

Scores for transformational leadership and nurses performance were obtained by summing all item within each respective questionnaire. The total scores were subsequently categorized into three levels (low, moderate, and good). for descriptive analysis using the division of the theoretical score range into three equal intervals, calculated as: $\text{Interval} = (\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Minimum Score}) / 3$. For the MLQ, which consist of 20 items scored on five-point Likert scale, the theoretical score range was 20-100. Accordingly, transformational leadership was categorized as low (20-46), moderate (47-73), and good (74-100). For the IWPQ, which consists of 18 items scored on five-point Likert scale, the theoretical score range was 18-90. Accordingly, nurses performance was categorized as low (18-42), moderate (43-66), and good (67-90). The categorized scores were used only for descriptive analysis, where as the total questionnaire scores were used in the Spearman's rank correlation test was employed because the data were not normally distributed.

This study received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, under registration number E.4.d/125/KEPK/FIKES-UMM/V/2026. All research procedures were conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.

RESULTS

Distribution Respondents' Characteristics

The study involved 60 nurses with age's ranging from 23 to 39 years and a mean age of 28.92 ± 3.78 years. The majority of respondents were female (81.7%), held a diploma III (D3) qualification (51.7%), and had been employed for more than one year (81.7%).

Table 1. Distribution Respondents' Characteristics (n = 60)

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Sex</i>		
<i>Male</i>	11	18.3
<i>Female</i>	49	81.7
<i>Education</i>		
<i>D3 Nursing</i>	31	51.7
<i>S1 Nursing</i>	29	48.3
<i>Lenght of Employed</i>		
<i>>1 Year</i>	49	81.7
<i><1 Year</i>	11	18.3
<i>Age (years), Mean $\pm$ SD = 28.92 $\pm$ 3.78; Min = 23; Max = 39</i>	60	100

Distribution of Transformational Leadership and Nurse Performance

The results of univariate analysis indicated that the majority of respondents rated transformational leadership as good (96.7%). Regarding nurse performance, most nurses were categorized in the good performance level (90.0%).

Table 2. Distribution of Transformational Leadership and Nurse Performance (n = 60)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>		
<i>Good</i>	58	96.7
<i>Moderate</i>	2	3.3
<i>Low</i>	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	60	100.0
<i>Nurse Performance</i>		
<i>Good</i>	54	90.0
<i>Moderate</i>	6	10.0
<i>Low</i>	0	0.0
<i>Total</i>	60	100.0

Cross-Tabulation and Spearman Correlation Results

Cross-tabulation results revealed that 52 respondents (86.7%) who rated transformational leadership as good also demonstrated good nurse performance, while 6 respondents (10.0%) who rated transformational leadership as good were found to have moderate performance. Both Respondents who rated transformational leadership as moderate displayed good performance.

Table 3. Cross-tabulation correlation between transformational leadership and nurse performance (n = 60)

<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	<i>Nurse Performance</i>		<i>Total</i>
	Good n (%)	Moderate n (%)	
<i>Good</i>	52 (86.7)	6 (10.0)	58
<i>Moderate</i>	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	2
<i>Total</i>	54 (90.0)	6 (10.0)	60

Spearman's rank correlation analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.488$ with a significance value of ($p < 0.001$). This result indicates a significant positive correlation of moderate strength between transformational leadership and nurse performance, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0). Based on the interpretive criteria established by Akoglu, (2018), an r value of 0.488 falls within the range of 0.40-0.59, indicating a moderate correlation strength.

Table 4. Spearman correlation between transformational leadership and nurse performance (n = 60)

		<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	<i>Nurse Performance</i>
<i>Transformational Leadership</i>	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.488
<i>Nurse Performance</i>	Correlation Coefficient	0.488	1.000

DISCUSSION

Transformational Leadership at RSIA Malang

The study findings revealed that the majority of nurses at RSIA Malang perceived the applied transformational leadership as being in the good category (96.7). This finding is presumed to be associated with the respondents' work experience, given that most had been employed for over one year (81.7%). A longer tenure provides nurses with greater opportunities to observe and evaluate the leadership behaviors demonstrated by their supervisors in the workplace. Nurse with extensive working experience tend to possess a more comprehensive understanding of how leaders deliver motivation, inspiration, and individualized attention to team members (Kadim Masaong et al., 2023).

Beyond individual respondent characteristics, the positive perception of transformational leadership can also be linked to the organizational characteristics of RSIA Malang as a hospital grounded in Islamic and Muhammadiyah values, which may facilitate the implementation of humanistic and empathetic leadership approaches. Leaders who effectively integrate organizational values with transformational behaviors are more likely to be perceived positively by subordinates (García-Sierra et al., 2023). Conceptually, transformational leadership is characterized by the leader's capacity to exercise idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration toward team members (Collins et al., 2020). These findings are consistent with those reported by Kambey et al. (2025) at Manembo-Nembo Bitung Hospital, which demonstrated that transformational leadership was positively perceived by nurse. A comparable finding was also reported by Kadim Masaong et al. (2023) at RSUD Otanaha, where the majority of nurses rated the ward head's transformational leadership as good.

Nurse Performance at RSIA Malang

The results indicated that the majority of nurses at RSIA Malang demonstrated good performance (90.0%). This condition may be attributed to the work experience enables nurses to develop clinical competencies, enhance decision-making abilities, and strengthen team collaboration in delivering nursing care (Kallerhult Hermansson et al., 2024). Furthermore, all respondents met the minimum educational qualifications, with 51.7% holding a Diploma III degree and 48.3% holding a Bachelor's degree in Nursing, both of which are expected to support the optimal delivery of nursing care. Good nurse performance reflects the ability to fulfill professional duties and responsibilities, provide effective nursing service, accomplish tasks within established targets, and maintain productive collaboration with fellow team members (Morales-García et al., 2024).

This finding aligns with the work of Alkubati et al. (2025), which affirmed that nurses with good performance are capable of executing, clinical task, making well-timed decisions, and engaging in effective interprofessional collaboration.

Despite the predominantly positive performance outcomes, six respondents (10.0%) were still categorized at a moderate performance level. This finding warrants attention from hospital

management, as nurse performance can be influenced by multiple factors including excessive workload, occupational stress, and inadequate workplace support (Hariani et al., 2024). Furthermore, burnout, work fatigue are recognized as contributors to declining nursing care quality and reduced effectiveness in profesional performance (Yousif & Al-Fayyadh, 2024).

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Nurse Performance

Spearman's rank correlation analysis demonstrated a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance at RSIA Malang ($r = 0.488$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that higher quality of transformational leadership implementation is associated with improved nurse performance. The moderate correlation coefficient suggest that transformational leadership contributes to nurse performance improvement, while acknowledging the influence of additional contributing factors (Akoglu, 2018).

These findings are consistent with those of Kambey et al. (2025), Kadim Masaong et al. (2023) and Yuliandari & Jaka Sarwadamana (2021), all of whom reported significant associations between transformational leadership and healthcare worker performance. The convergence of these results indicates that the implementation of transformational leadership is consistently associated with improvements in nursing workforce performance across various healthcare facilities.

Theoretically, the relationship between transformational leadership and nurse performance can be explained through the four core dimensions of this leadership style. The idealized influence dimension positions the leader as a professional role model for nurses. The inspirational motivation dimension fosters the development of a shared visions and strengthens work enthusiasm. Intellectual stimulation encourages nurses to engage in critical and innovative thinking when addressing clinical problems (Tsapnidou et al., 2024). The individualized consideration dimension enables leaders to provide tailored attention, guidance, and support according to the individual needs of each nurse, thereby enhancing their sense of being valued and their overall work engagement (García-Sierra et al., 2023).

Huang et al. (2025) demonstrated that transformational leadership can enhance ICU nurse performance through psychological empowerment and work engagement. Leaders who effectively empower nurses psychologically strengthen their self-confidence, competence, and professional autonomy, ultimately, contributing to improved job performance (Bektaş et al., 2025). These findings are further supported by the cross-tabulation results of the present study, which showed that the majority of respondents who rated transformational leadership as good also demonstrated good performance.

Nevertheless, six respondents rated transformational leadership as good yet demonstrated only moderate performance. This finding underscores that nurse performance is also shaped by additional variables, including workload, occupational stress, intrinsic motivation, and peer support (Hariani et al., 2024). Consequently, improving nurse performance requires not only effective leadership but also support from organizational and individual factors. Moreover, the cross-sectional design and self-report instruments employed in this study limit the ability to draw longitudinal causal inferences. Subjective self-assessment may also be influenced by respondents's emotional states at the time of questionnaire completion.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The cross-sectional design allows for the identification as associations between variables at a single point in time, thereby precluding direct causal inference. Additionally, the reliance on self-report instruments introduces potential subjectivity bias, as responses may be shaped by personal perceptions or emotional conditions during data collection.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that a significant positive relationship of moderate strength exists between transformational leadership and nurse performance at RSIA Malang ($r = 0.488$; $p < 0.001$). The findings suggest that stronger transformational leadership implementation is associated with higher nurse performance. Based on these findings, the management of RSIA Malang is encouraged to strengthen the application of transformational leadership through ongoing leadership development programs for ward heads. Future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal or multicenter designs and include additional variables such as work engagement, organizational commitment, and psychological empowerment.

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