
ENHANCING PATIENT SAFETY THROUGH LEADERSHIP: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF HEAD NURSES IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS

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Abstract. The aim of the study is to analyse the process through which nursing management affects patient outcomes to promote a culture of safety. Patient safety has moral, ethical, and economic implications. Medical errors significantly increase healthcare costs, prolong hospital stays and lead to the need for additional treatment, accompanied by legal expenses that can impact the reputation of a healthcare institution. Therefore, patient safety in healthcare is important, and the role of management in shaping this culture and practice is central. To achieve this goal, a systematic review is conducted, including searches in electronic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, EBSCO Discovery, MedLine, EBSCO host, and ScienceDirect, from the year 2013 onwards. Additionally, manual searches are carried out in leading journals in the field. After evaluating and analysing the articles, 28 remain, focusing on four main themes: nurse engagement and patient safety climate, the impact of management style on patient outcomes, challenges in implementing safety culture in practice, and innovative practices and general management skills. Based on the results, it can be argued that a transformative nursing leadership style plays a significant role in reducing unfavourable patient outcomes. These findings emphasize the involvement of nursing leaders and the associated challenges in addition to proposing strategies for enhancing patient safety and shaping the future of nursing management in the healthcare system.

Keywords: *Leadership, nurse, patient outcomes, safety management, safety culture.*

JEL Classification: J13

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, researchers such as Sepp & Tint (2017) and Linnik & Sepp (2023) have raised concerns about the deficient safety culture in healthcare environments, which exerts an adverse influence on patient outcomes. Within this context, unfavourable patient outcomes are defined as injuries or complications resulting from healthcare interventions rather than the patient's inherent medical condition (Wang & Dewing, 2020). Murray et al. (2018) underscore the fact that the lack of a robust safety culture critically threatens patient outcomes.

In the context of improving safety culture through leadership, it is crucial to consider the influence of both organisational and individual factors, as highlighted

by various studies (Chen & Chen, 2014; Kim et al., 2018; O'Donovan et al., 2021). This strategic approach signifies a transition from the traditional management model to a self-regulating and performance-oriented model, promoting proactive leadership, engagement, and greater integration into various organisational activities (Kontogiannis et al., 2017; Srivastava & Bajpai, 2020). These significant changes require a systemic approach since errors are associated with management decisions and organisational processes (Murray et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018). A systemic approach allows leaders to strategically plan, understand, and manage their objectives and activities. This typically involves defining strategic goals and priorities, developing action plans, assessing risks, and allocating resources to achieve desired outcomes. To support the systemic approach, there are European-wide moment-in-time surveys, monitoring protocols, the Magnet Program, and global hand hygiene initiatives in place.

In addition to the importance of a systemic approach, individual consideration of each employee is equally necessary to ensure patient safety. It is the responsibility of leaders to create a work environment that not only aligns with the organisation's strategic goals but also enables each employee to realize their full potential. This entails many aspects, including open communication practices, systematic training programs, workload management strategies, staff support, effective feedback mechanisms, adequate resources, and regular situational assessments. Implementing these measures is crucial in supporting the development of every employee while simultaneously strengthening the safety culture, thereby ensuring patient safety (Murray et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2018; Srivastava & Bajpai, 2020).

Leaders' perceived level of safety has an impact on employees' perception of workplace safety culture and patient safety, which, in turn, influences their individual responsibility and behaviour in ensuring safety (Kim et al., 2018). Employees' understanding of leadership priorities and commitment is associated with leadership style, which James MacGregor Burns (1978) categorized as transactional or transformational. Transactional leadership primarily focuses on task accomplishment, where the leader sets goals, delegates tasks, and applies rewards or punishments based on performance (Bass & Riggio, 2010; McCleskey, 2014).

Transformational leaders motivate followers to achieve exceptional results and help them develop leadership skills. Researchers argue that the transformational leadership style is characterised by four key features known as the 'Four Is': idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Hickman, 1998). Leaders using transformational leadership encourage their followers to find new perspectives if they solve problems (intellectual stimulation), offer individual support and encouragement, and motivate people to pursue greater goals (individualized consideration). At the same time, they pass on an inspirational vision that considers followers' needs in regard to self-fulfilment, self-esteem, and personal development (inspirational motivation) and create emotional and shared experiences (idealized influence) (Lin, 2014; Bass & Riggio, 2010; Fisher, 2016; Murray et al., 2018; Seljemo et al., 2020; O'Donovan et al., 2021). Inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation have a positive influence on employees'

creativity and teamwork development (Lin, 2014; O'Donovan et al., 2021).

A transformational leadership style has much in common with charismatic leadership; however, charisma is just one part of transformational leadership. Both transformational and charismatic leadership are focused on the role of a charismatic person, who can encourage and manage followers; the difference is in the way they execute the role (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Fisher (2016) and Fowler et al. (2021) claim that transformational leaders have high energy levels, enthusiasm, passion, good communication skills and a deep interest in their field, as well as actively participate in the process.

Transformational leadership is akin to authentic leadership. Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to inspire and motivate the team towards new and greater goals while promoting their personal and professional growth. Authentic leadership, on the other hand, centres around the leader's authenticity, honesty, and genuineness, rooted in self-development and self-awareness (Labrague et al., 2021; Brubakk et al., 2019).

The autocratic leadership style differs from the transformational leadership style in that it primarily focuses on maintaining the leader's power and control. An autocratic leader establishes clear rules and decisions, often influencing the team's behaviour in an authoritarian manner. While this approach can be effective in some cases, it may simultaneously stifle team creativity and motivation (Hinski, 2017; O'Donovan et al., 2021).

Based on the above description, the choice of leadership style and the creation of a work environment hold significant importance in ensuring patient safety. Transformational leadership is considered significant in enhancing patient safety, taking into consideration both organisational and individual influencing factors. However, the precise scope and mechanisms of the impact of this leadership style may vary in different healthcare contexts, cultures, and conditions. Therefore, it is appropriate to seek additional evidence to elucidate how transformational leadership is linked to patient outcomes. The objective of this research is to investigate the influence of transformational leadership on safety culture in healthcare organisations and to ascertain the extent of its impact on patient safety and outcomes. This study will examine whether transformational leadership serves as an effective tool for fostering safety culture and ensuring patient safety in healthcare systems.

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1. Design

A systematic review allows for the creation of a comprehensive and objective summary of multiple relevant studies (Bettany-Saltikov, 2016; Xiao & Watson, 2019). Systematic literature review is a valuable method in the study of leadership styles, as it enables the synthesis of reliable information and emphasises practical applicability, thereby helping leaders to better understand how leadership styles can impact the performance and success of organisations. The characteristics of this systematic review include the clear formulation of objectives and the PICO question, well-defined criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of studies, and a

thorough search for relevant research. The quality of studies was assessed using the Checklist for Analytical Cross-sectional Studies and the Checklist for Qualitative Research. Adherence to the suitability criteria specified in the review protocol ensures that the studies selected for inclusion are chosen based on their research methodology and the study's PICO elements, rather than on the study's outcomes alone (Aromataris & Pearson, 2014). The current systematic review covers both quantitative and qualitative studies as well as theoretical literature.

1.2. Research Question

Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, a PICO question was formulated, where: population (P) is nurse managers in healthcare organisations; intervention (I) is application of transformational leadership; comparator (C) is absence or limited use of transformational leadership; and outcome (O): is patient outcomes and safety culture in healthcare organisations.

The PICO question guiding this study is: What is the evidence that patient outcomes and safety culture in healthcare organisations improve when nurse managers apply transformational leadership compared to situations where transformational leadership is not exercised or is used to a limited extent?

1.3. Search Strategy

Systematic literature review comprises the multi-step method (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) as follows: identification of the problem, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis, and presentation of the findings. Keywords for searching: "safety management" AND "safety culture" AND "leadership" AND "nurse" AND "patient outcomes". Using all the defined search terms and their combinations with the following databases: PubMed, Medline, EBSCOhost, EBSCO Discovery Service, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science, the online search produced 1784 titles/abstracts. We identified additional six studies via a manual search. After removing duplicates, we were left with 1759 references. Titles and abstracts were screened based on inclusion criteria (see Table 1).

Table 1. Results of Literature Research

Databases from 2013–2023	Total in each database	Results after title and abstract reading	Results after full-text reading (JBL)	Results after quality appraisal
PubMed	77	41	15	15
Medline	7	7	1	1
EBSCOhost	431	37	2	2
EBSCO Discovery Service	229	37	5	5
Scopus	431	4	1	1
ScienceDirect	49	2	0	0
Web of Science	569	17	4	4
Total from all databases	1759	145	28	28

1.4. Screening and Quality Control

To ensure the consistency and reliability of the review, stringent criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of articles were established before the search commenced. The review encompassed only peer-reviewed studies published in English between 2013 and 2023, providing information on both safety culture management and patient safety and outcomes, in accordance with the PICO question methodology. Books and nursing forum materials were excluded from the review.

The initial author systematically reviewed all 1759 titles and abstracts twice, adhering to the predefined inclusion criteria. Consequently, the screening process reduced the number of potentially relevant sources from 1759 to 28. The establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria was aimed at ensuring the consistency and rigor of the literature review, in accordance with the JBI Critical Appraisal Tool (Aromataris & Munn, 2020). Following this, a meticulous quality assessment of the selected sources was conducted, using both the Checklist for Analytical Cross-sectional Studies and the Checklist for Qualitative Research. The appraisal tool was assessed in four categories: yes, no, unclear, and not applicable. The checklist for cross-sectional studies has eight criteria, while the one for qualitative studies had ten criteria. An article was included if it met ‘yes’ for at least five criteria. One study met ‘yes’ for eight out of eight questions. The second author confirmed the quality of the review and assessment process through critical dialogue to ensure the eligibility of the literature included in the review. Ultimately, 28 sources were retained for the study (Fig. 1).

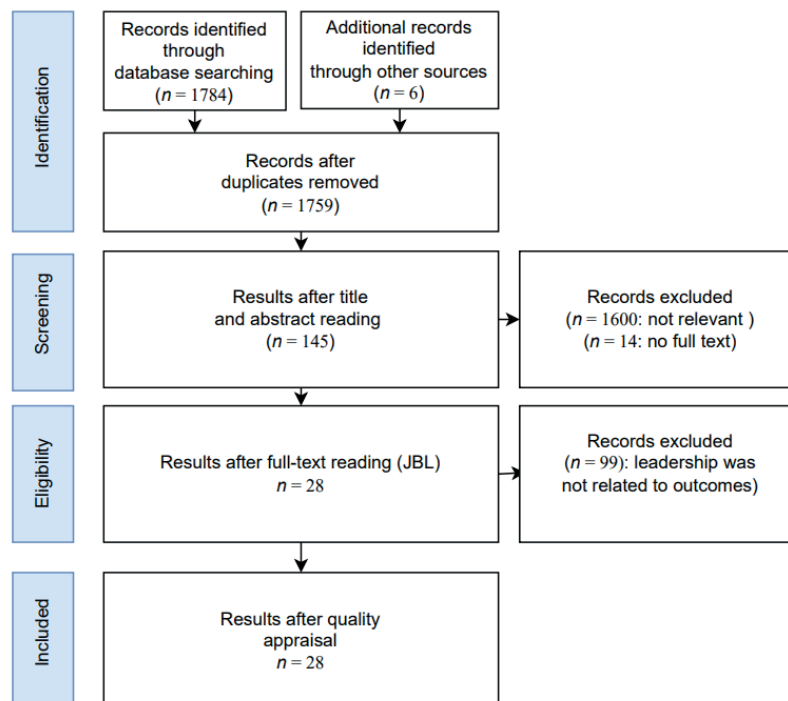


Fig. 1. PRISMA, Source screening.

2. RESULTS

2.1. Search Results

Out of the twenty-eight studies included (Fig. 1), which were published between 2013 and 2023, four were conducted in Norway ($n = 4$) and in the United States ($n = 4$), and the rest were carried out in various countries of the world: in Canada ($n = 1$), the United Kingdom ($n = 1$), Poland ($n = 1$), South Korea ($n = 1$), Finland ($n = 2$), Denmark ($n = 1$), China ($n = 2$), Oman ($n = 1$), Portugal ($n = 1$), the Philippines ($n = 1$), and Taiwan ($n = 1$). Seven literature reviews were included ($n = 7$). Of the twenty-two research studies, eight were qualitative in nature (Murray et al., 2018; Fowler et al., 2021; Yodang & Nuridah, 2020; O'Donovan et al., 2021; Ferreira et al., 2022; Liukka et al., 2018; Wang & Dewing, 2020; Renolen et al., 2020), while the rest were quantitative.

In the context of the twenty-eight methodologically rigorous qualitative and quantitative studies, the significance of the transformative leadership style in ensuring patient safety is emphasised. Two authors presented favourable outcomes concerning the authentic leadership style (Yodang & Nuridah, 2020; Labrague et al., 2021), while findings regarding the task-oriented leadership style were equivocal (O'Donovan et al., 2021). Within the confines of this study, four principal themes were discerned to elucidate the influence of leadership style on patient outcomes.

2.2. Nurse Engagement and Patient Safety Climate

The review of the selected articles highlighted the importance of employee engagement in shaping patient and organizational safety culture (see Table 2). McFadden et al. (2015), however, found this connection moderate. Many researchers have shown that employee engagement increases when nursing leaders employ a transformational leadership style. Engaged nurses have demonstrated improved outcomes in both patient care and the overall organisational safety culture. At the individual level, the benefits of engagement stem from a desire for self-fulfilment, supported by a conscious awareness of potential, self-control, and a longer-term perspective. Transformational leadership inspires employees towards self-fulfilment, offering them the opportunity to consciously develop their potential and take responsibility for their work (Seljemo et al., 2020; Fowler et al., 2021; Wang & Dewing, 2020).

Murray et al. (2018) highlighted the role of leadership walkarounds in Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) departments, allowing active nurse participation in discussions related to patient safety. This approach provided senior clinical leaders and organisations with a deeper understanding of patient safety issues at the leadership level. Direct involvement allows for immediate feedback to be provided, making communication more efficient and transparent. Individual feedback enables a tailored approach, helping each employee maximize their potential. The leader's direct interaction with employees ensures the correct and adequate dissemination of information while reducing tension and conflicts in the work environment (Farag et al., 2019). Additionally, employees can propose novel solutions to problems, increasing innovation. Employee engagement involves not only sharing

information with employees but also seeking their opinions and granting decision-making authority.

Table 2. Employee Engagement Reduces Adverse Patient Outcomes

Leadership style	Conclusion	Authors
Transformational	Employee engagement is positively linked to transformational leadership	Murray et al., 2018; Fowler et al., 2021; Ree & Wiig, 2019; Zhao et al., 2020; Yodang & Nuridah, 2020; Deetz et al., 2020; Lappalainen et al., 2020; Seljemo et al., 2020; O'Donovan et al., 2021; Ferreira et al., 2022; Liukka et al., 2018; Bush, 2021; Labrague & Obeinat, 2021; Wang & Dewing, 2020; McFadden et al., (2015)
	A just and blame-free safety culture promotes employee engagement in reporting errors, thus enhancing the overall safety culture	Murray et al., 2018; Farag et al., 2019
	Effective nurse leaders who communicate clearly and lead by example achieve higher levels of engagement	Fowler et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2020; Labrague et al., 2021; Ferreira et al., 2022
Inclusive	Inclusive leadership fosters psychological safety, which promote forgiveness and rapid service recovery	Zhao et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021; Yodang & Nuridah, 2020; Deetz, 2020; He et al., 2023; Quesado et al., 2022; Labrague et al., 2021

Fowler et al. (2021) and Zhao et al. (2020) emphasise that employee engagement depends on the nursing leader's communication skills. Nurse leaders who can clearly define guidelines, share their vision, and set an example to achieve better employee engagement.

Inclusive leaders communicate openly with their subordinates and are accessible. Inclusive leadership, as indicated by the authors, was positively associated with psychological safety, which, in turn, mediated a forgiving climate and rapid service recovery (see Table 3). In the case of the task-based leadership style, involvement entails only informing employees about their job tasks (O'Donovan et al., 2021).

The transformative leadership style generally enhances the organisation's safety culture as it creates a common organisational vision and goal in the workplace (Ree, 2020; Boamah et al., 2018; Liukka et al., 2018). This helps to achieve a shared understanding among employees regarding the priorities of the safety culture, which, in turn, increases employee engagement and satisfaction in the work environment. The commitment and satisfaction of engaged employees reduce the hospital expenses on employee turnover, recruitment, and training, positively impacting the overall performance and reputation of the organisation (Ree & Wiig, 2019; Zhao et al., 2020; Wang & Dewing, 2020). A fair and blame-

free safety culture promotes employee engagement in reporting errors, thereby enhancing the overall safety culture (Murray et al., 2018; Farag et al., 2019).

2.3. Leadership Styles and Patient Outcomes

The literature review revealed a substantial body of evidence concerning the impact of leadership styles on patient outcomes and safety culture (see Table 3). Transformational leadership emerged as a prominent and positively correlated leadership style with better safety culture outcomes when compared to task-oriented or laissez-faire leadership styles (Labrague & Obeidat, 2022; Yodana & Nuridah, 2020; Lappalainen et al., 2020). Interestingly, the study by Chen et al. (2021) unveiled a negative association between stress related to interpersonal relationships and the work environment and patient safety culture. However, stress in nurse-patient relationships had a positive impact on patient safety culture, underscoring the complexity of these relationships.

Table 3. Leadership Styles and Patient Outcomes

Leadership style	Conclusion	Authors
Transformational leadership	Transformational leadership positively impacts safety culture and patient outcomes	Wang & Dewing, 2020; McFaden et al., 2014; Seljemo et al., 2020; Lappalainen et al., 2020; Labrague et al., 2021; O'Donovan et al., 2021; Labrague & Obeidat, 2022; Ferreira et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2020
	Transformational leadership contributes to conflict resolution	Grubaugh & Flyn, 2018; Labrague & Obeidat, 2022
	Transformational leadership positively influences psychosocial resources	O'Donovan et al., 2021; Wang & Dewing, 2020; Fowler et al., 2021; Seljemo et al., 2020;
	Transformational leadership style promotes medication safety in departments	McFadden et al., 2014; Lappalaine et al., 2020;
Autocratic leadership	Autocratic leadership can negatively affect teamwork and care quality	O'Donovan et al 2021; van Zijl et al., 2020; Fowler et al., 2021
Transactional leadership	Transactional leadership elicits employee dissatisfaction and provokes negative responses during the implementation of evidence-based practices	O'Donovan et al., 2021

Ree & Wiik (2019), Boamah et al. (2018), and Ree (2020) demonstrated that transformational leadership, work resources, and work engagement were positively associated with patient safety culture, while job demands were negatively associated. Transformational leadership proved to be a stronger predictor of patient safety culture than job demands, work resources, and work engagement. This leadership style, along with the pace of work, plays a crucial role in establishing

patient-centred nursing care. However, workplace factors such as overwork, staff shortages, lack of time and tools, and workload hinder patient-centred care.

The evidence presented by Chen et al. (2021), Wang & Dewing (2020), McFaden et al. (2015), Farag et al., (2019), and He et al. (2023) highlights the importance of openly addressing errors and creating a blame-free environment through the use of the transformational leadership style. Clinical staff expressed concerns that their mistakes would be recorded in their records and could affect their future career development. Ineffective leadership and a culture of blame were identified as major obstacles hindering the development of a positive patient safety culture. Lappalainen et al. (2020) indicate that a moderate but statistically significant relationship exists between transformational leadership and medication safety. The authors also highlight that employee fatigue and workload result in medication administration errors.

Fowler et al. (2021) and Seljemo et al. (2020) identified a link between employees' emotional intelligence and the transformational leadership style. The regulation, expression, and self-assessment of emotions are closely associated with the practices of transformational leadership. Wang and Dewing (2020) emphasise that nurse burnout significantly affects the quality of life of patients and can lead to adverse outcomes in the workplace.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Mota et al. (2021) in the context of Portuguese nurses emphasised the need for diverse leadership skills, as the predominant roles of nursing managers focused on productivity, control, and outcomes. These findings indicate the importance of enhancing competencies in facilitating adaptation and change processes and promoting leadership dedication and collective effort among nurse managers.

Additional evidence demonstrated the varying impacts of leadership styles. Transformational leadership styles yielded positive results in terms of employee job satisfaction, patient outcomes, team performance, creativity, learning, and patient safety indicators. Labrague et al. (2021) highlight that authentic leadership was statistically significantly associated with positive patient outcomes. Nurses working under an authentic leader reported better management of side effects. In contrast, autocratic leadership negatively affected team building and case quality (Fowler et al., 2021; van Zijl et al., 2020). Notably, in crisis situations, an autocratic leadership style was found to be more effective (O'Donovan et al., 2021).

O'Donovan et al. (2021) indicated that transactional leadership was marginally associated with the use of evidence-based practices. This leadership style results in employee dissatisfaction and negative responses to new initiatives. Autocratic leaders operate within a set framework, presenting their vision to the team (Hinski, 2017; van Zijl et al., 2020).

2.4. Challenges in Implementing and Ensuring Safety Culture

The review identified challenges in implementing and ensuring a safety culture, with factors like cultural barriers and fear of reporting errors playing significant roles. In cultures like South Korea, which are characterised by collectivism, obedience, and respect for authority, open communication about social and organisational issues, including error reporting, is rare (He et al., 2023). Fear of

punishment, retaliation, threats to self-esteem, unfamiliarity with reporting systems, lengthy reporting processes, and a lack of feedback on errors were identified as reasons for underreporting medical errors (Farag et al., 2019; Murray et al., 2018; McFadden et al., 2015; Liukka et al., 2018).

2.5. Innovative Practices and Leadership Skills

Finally, the role of nurse leaders in promoting innovative practices and general leadership skills within the nursing context was emphasised. Leaders with strong communication skills were found to be essential in the presence of innovative employees and less likely to lose their current jobs (Fowler et al., 2021; Murray et al., 2018; McFadden et al., 2015; Kalbarczyk et al., 2022). Transformational leadership was noted for its ability to promote professional development and contribute to the provision of high-quality nursing care (O'Donovan et al., 2021; den Breejen-de Hooge et al., 2021; O'Donovan et al., 2021).

Obstacles to the integration of evidence-based outcomes into practice, such as lack of time and knowledge and skills gaps, were identified among clinical nurses (Renolen et al., 2020; Kalbarczyk et al., 2022). Nurse leaders were recognized as key figures in promoting the implementation of evidence-based outcomes, requiring suitable leadership skills, commitment, and consistency (Renolen et al., 2020).

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Factors Promoting Patient Safety Culture

In healthcare organisations, nursing leaders play a pivotal role in shaping patient safety culture, improving patient outcomes, and fostering a favourable work environment. Several studies have emphasised the significance of transformational leadership concerning patient outcomes. This leadership style creates a motivating work environment that encourages nurses to be dedicated, feel valued, and engage in self-improvement, thereby directing them towards achieving excellence (Fowler et al., 2021; Murray et al., 2018).

In the context of employee engagement, the transformational nursing leader relies on two main aspects. First, their leadership style is aimed at enhancing organisational performance and quality by involving employees in decision-making. This leads to improved decision quality, reduced implementation time, a more positive employee attitude towards innovations, and an increased interest in the organisation's priorities (Murray et al., 2018; Wang & Dewing, 2019; Seljemo et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021). Employee engagement allows for more comprehensive decision-making, as employees possess information that may be lacking at the managerial level. Furthermore, employee engagement is associated with the redistribution of resources and power in the decision-making process, which involves granting employees greater decision-making authority (Wang & Dewing, 2019).

Second, an important aspect is the competence of the nursing leader and their individual approach to the employees. For a nursing leader, it is essential to

understand that achieving positive patient outcomes requires a good understanding of the overall system's functioning. Ferreira et al. (2022), McFaden et al. (2015), Fowler et al. (2021), Farag et al. (2019) and He et al. (2023) emphasise that most problems related to patient safety demand solutions through systemic changes. Searching for the root causes of problems at the systemic level is extremely important to avoid blaming employees for errors and instead focus on improving processes and systems. Thus, by involving employees, a comprehensive overview of the entire system is gained.

In addition, transformational leadership is characterised by an individual approach to employees, encompassing aspects such as providing constructive feedback and offering training. These leadership practices have a positive impact on employee satisfaction and create a psychologically safe work environment. Fowler et al. (2021) emphasise that leaders with strong communication skills employ a consistent and systematic approach to recognize and praise nursing staff. The individualized leadership practices and intellectual stimulation detailed here clearly reflect the principles of James MacGregor Burns' (1978) transformational model.

3.2. Factors Hindering Safety Culture

Several factors negatively impact patient outcomes, a significant portion of which are preventable. Murray et al. (2018) highlight that high workloads and demands on nursing leaders reduce their ability to focus on individualized approaches and providing feedback to nurses. This increases the risk of nurse burnout and attrition. Nurses often experience fear after reporting errors, stemming from a blame culture evident in varying perspectives among organisational leaders. Simultaneously, nurses may feel disengaged. Similar findings have been presented by Grubaugh & Flynn (2018), Fowler et al. (2021), McFaden et al. (2015), Labrague & Obeidat (2022), and Lappalainen et al. (2020).

Another significant aspect is the competence of the leadership. It can affect nurse absenteeism, as nurses may not feel they receive adequate support from their leaders. This exacerbates nurse burnout and the desire to leave the organisation. The issue is influenced by the psychosocial work environment, where high work demands and low decision-making authority, inadequate communication, and blame-oriented and punitive error reporting strategies prevail (Lappalainen et al., 2020, Murray et al., 2018).

To further our understanding of the vital role of leadership in enhancing patient safety, the following details research gaps and future directions that warrant attention: (1) to investigate the specific mechanisms through which transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and other leadership styles impact safety culture, nurse behaviour, and patient outcomes (Grubaugh & Flynn, 2018; Fowler et al., 2021); (2) to explore the effectiveness of different leadership interventions and strategies for enhancing patient safety and promoting a culture of safety in various healthcare contexts (Seljemo et al., 2020; Wang and Dewing, 2020); (3) to understand how leadership styles, including transformational leadership, impact the engagement and satisfaction of healthcare staff, and how these factors influence patient care quality and safety (Chen et al., 2021; Yodang &

Nuridah, 2020);

By addressing these research gaps and exploring these future directions, healthcare organisations can better inform leadership practices and strategies to foster a culture of safety, improve patient care, and enhance patient outcomes in hospital settings.

CONCLUSION

Changing leadership styles in the healthcare sector is not a simple task; it demands a shift in fundamental principles. The current literature review emphasises that healthcare requires systematic changes in its core principles, focusing on the competence of nursing managers to raise awareness about modern management strategies. Effective management in healthcare requires understanding the complexity of the system and driving systemic changes that tackle the root causes of issues. Rather than blaming employees, managers need to concentrate on improving processes and systems. Active involvement of employees allows healthcare organisations to gain a comprehensive understanding of the entire system and work toward its enhancement.

In essence, the literature review highlights that transformational leadership significantly contributes to patient safety by establishing a robust foundation for both structural and interpersonal relationships, leading to shared objectives. Research results demonstrate a clear connection between workplace safety culture, job satisfaction, work motivation, employee stress, personal achievements, and the transformational leadership style. Providing timely and personalized feedback, combined with open communication, positively influences nurses' willingness to report medical errors. Leadership-led "rounds" effectively boost employee engagement, enhancing safety knowledge. However, a friendly working environment and a sense of belonging may not directly impact nurses' safety motivation.

Managers in healthcare institutions can use these literature findings to shape their leadership style effectively, especially when aiming to improve patient care and foster a safety culture. The review equips leaders with evidence-based insights, illustrating how different leadership styles influence patient safety outcomes. A crucial aspect of transformational leadership lies in the individualized approach to employees, encompassing constructive feedback, training, and promoting a psychologically safe work environment. Implementing this approach requires investment in leadership development that emphasises individual leadership practices, thereby positively impacting employee satisfaction and overall healthcare quality. Understanding how the transformational leadership style influences patient safety outcomes empowers healthcare organisations to manage safety practices, enhance employee engagement, cultivate a safety culture, and mitigate the risk of errors.

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