

ROLE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE IN ENHANCING HEALTH WORKERS JOB PERFORMANCE

Bhatti M.A., Alyahya M.*

Abstract: Health care is considered an important sector in any economy, and the government takes multiple initiatives to improve healthcare and health workers performance. Past research has highlighted that without a suitable leader and appropriate leadership style, health workers may not be able to improve their job performance. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate among different leadership styles, which leadership styles are suitable in the health sector and strongly influence health workers job performance. In this regard, data was collected from 284 health workers working in different government and private hospitals in Saudi Arabia and analyzed using SPSS version 16. Descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression analysis techniques were used to test the study hypothesis. Findings of this study suggest that among different leadership styles, transformational and multicultural leadership styles positively influence health workers job performance. The outcomes of this study will be helpful for policymakers and healthcare professionals to focus more on transformational leadership style and multicultural leadership style especially when health workers belong to a diverse culture. There is a limited study exploring appropriate leadership styles to improve health workers job performance in the healthcare sector of Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: Transactional Leadership Style, Transformational Leadership Style, Health Workers, Job Performance.

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Introduction

The health sector has gone through major changes and transformations globally since the start of the current pandemic. Health professionals and policymakers have been continuously focusing on improving health sector performance, which is not possible without improving health workers job performance. In this regard, Franco and Almeida (2011) argued that the healthcare sector should be more proactive to respond continuously changing environment, which is only possible if they are continuously involved in organizational learning. Specchia et al. (2021) pointed out that it is a major challenge for the health sector to provide better health services to the public while managing the allocated budget for the health sector. Therefore, effective leadership is vital to overcome these challenges and improve both health

***Muhammad Awais Bhatti**, Associate Professor, Department of Management, College of Business Administration, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. **Mansour Alyahya**, Associate Professor, Department of Management, College of Business Administration, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia
✉corresponding author: mbhatti@kfu.edu.sa

sector and health workers' performance. Alloubani et al. (2019) have highlighted that leader's role in the health sector is not limited to management but also to influencing people around them and maximizing performance. Past researchers have pointed out that an effective leadership style may influence health workers job performance (Abdulkareem et al., 2021). Still, researchers have been struggling to answer this question about the nature of the relationship between leadership style and health workers job performance (Specchia et al., 2021) more specifically which leadership style influences health workers' job performance. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the appropriate leadership style required to enhance health workers' job performance.

Literature Review

Leadership Styles and Health Workers Job performance

The term job performance covers many important dimensions of employee behavior, attitudes and traits, which improve the productivity of organizations (Som et al., 2015; Bhatti et al., 2014). In this regard, Byars and Rue (2006) argued that performance is the degree of employee's task accomplishment according to the nature of job. Therefore, improving contextual and task performance of employees is becoming an increasing concern for practitioners and academicians (Madsen et al., 2005). Thus, job performance is estimated to show the contribution of individuals in the job, especially when employees are working in a multicultural setting.

Alloubani et al. (2019) argued that leadership style in the healthcare sector plays an important role in the quality of services. They further explained that leaders in healthcare are involved in a variety of tasks, such as supervising the health workers, managing workflow, and training health workers to provide quality services for patients. In addition, leaders play an essential role in creating organizational culture, values, tolerance, motivation and leadership style that influence organizational strategies formulation, implementation and execution.

Although past researchers have well-defined nature of leadership styles in health care, such as Bass (2008) theory explained meaningful and systematic views of leadership in healthcare. Limited studies have been done to examine the type of leadership styles, and health workers' job performance, including (Denhardt et al., 2013; Alloubani et al., 2019), but even these studies were limited to nurses only. The following section explains the type of leadership style and its role in health workers job performance.

Transformational Leadership

Rapid changes in healthcare sector force leaders to update the healthcare sector and reconsider their leadership style. In this regard, Alloubani et al. (2014) argued that the health sector has changed drastically in recent years, which forces health sector leaders to adopt new technology, adjust to new organizational culture and cope with new challenges. Therefore, to manage and deal with these changes, improvement in leadership style is critical. Huber (2017) defined the transformational leadership style in which leaders inspire and motivate followers to perform at their maximum

capacity. Past researchers have explored the role of transformational leadership style in the health care sector and proposed that transformational leadership style influences efficiency, effectiveness, and satisfaction of health workers (Dunham-Taylor, 2000). In this regard, Chen (2004) found that compared to the transactional leadership style, the transformational leadership style of deans and directors influences the job satisfaction of nurses in healthcare. Therefore, based on these arguments, this study hypothesized that

H1: Transformational leadership style positively influences health workers job performance.

Transactional Leadership

Huber (2017) defined transactional leadership style in which leaders focus on day-to-day activity and focus on operational tasks instead of inspiring and motivating followers. In addition, Kumar (2013) argued that the transactional leadership style is widely practiced in the healthcare sector due to the “ingrained hierarchical nature of professional relationship” in healthcare in which leaders possess authority and motivate health workers through reward or punishment. He further suggested that transactional leadership might be useful in achieving operational and financial goals, but the effects of this leadership style might be limited in service improvement. Furthermore, Alloubani et al. (2014) argued that the transactional leadership style may not improve services offered by healthcare but is still important for performing day-to-day tasks. These arguments have pointed question mark on the exact role of transactional leadership style in the healthcare sector. Therefore, based on these arguments, this study hypothesized that

H2: Transactional leadership style positively influences health workers job performance.

Laissez-fair Leadership

Alloubani et al. (2019) explain that an individual with a laissez-faire leadership style allows followers to independently find the solution to the problem when the leader is frequently absent. They further reported that a few individuals were inclined towards laissez-faire leadership style, which explains that individuals in healthcare sectors show low interest in using laissez-faire leadership style. Although past studies have highlighted that laissez-faire is an unfavorable leadership style (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). In addition, Sfantou et al. (2017) argued that laissez-faire leadership style may not be effective in the healthcare sector since health workers may not feel appropriate that they need to find the solution of the problem independently without any appropriate reward. In this situation, health workers may feel independent and perform job tasks according to their level of motivation and inspiration. When health workers perceive that their leaders display a laissez-faire leadership style, they may feel free to use different methods to improve their job performance and freedom to work independently, and decision making may motivate them to improve their job performance. Therefore, based on these arguments, this study hypothesized that

H3: Laissez-Faire leadership style positively influences health workers job

performance.

Multicultural Leadership

Past research has highlighted many factors that influence employee's job performance. These factors are divided into two main categories as individual and environmental factors. According to Chien (2015), leadership is one of the important environmental factors which influence employee's job performance. Mosadegh and Yarmohammadian (2006) argued that organizational success in achieving goals and objective depends on leaders and their leadership styles, and by using appropriate leadership styles, leaders can influence employee commitment and job performance. Jung and Avolio (1999) suggested that collectivist cultures prefer the transformational leadership style because followers prefer leader's traits that focus on organizational goals and share a common workplace mission. They further argued that collectivist culture prefers transformational style due to follower tendency to follow leader ideology, higher power distance and acceptance of authority. In addition, some other research also confirms these views based on a sample from Japanese managers (Yokochi, 1989) and principles in Singapore (Koh, 1990) that in a collectivist culture, transformational leadership style is associated with leadership success. In contrast, Uma (2010) have also investigated transformational and transactional leadership style in high power distance collectivist culture like Malaysia and reported that transactional leadership style is commonly used in a collectivist culture. Furthermore, Ali et al. (2013) reported that transformational leadership style predicts job satisfaction compared to transactional leadership style in the Iranian automobile industry. Contradictory findings from past research suggest that research should further investigate culturally linked leadership styles to provide a more consistent and clearer picture because the meaning and importance of leadership differ across cultures. Alberto and Ana (2008) argued that although past research has highlighted many important aspects of leadership and diversity management, further study is required about cultural diversity and leadership in a multicultural framework. Therefore, based on the above arguments, this study hypothesized that

H4: Multicultural leadership style positively influences health workers job performance.

Servant Leadership Style

Augustine (2021) argued that servant leadership style consists of multiple aspects of leadership, such as ethics, relational and outcome-based dimensions, which provide better results for individuals, organizations and companies. In this regard, Coetzer et al. (2017) have highlighted that servant leadership style produces worthy outcomes for individuals and organizations to maximize employee's citizenship behavior, work engagement, organizational commitment, and low turnover intentions. In addition, Lacroix (2017) has highlighted that servant leaders can inspire followers to serve and help others, which is considered the most important aspect of healthcare workers. They further explained that servant leaders create a culture of serving others, which helps followers to understand the true nature of their task and its effects

on individuals, organizations, and society. Furthermore, Coetzer et al. (2017) argued that the servant leadership style inspires others to serve, lead, and develop others. Therefore, once servant leader encourages followers and motivates them to serve and help others, health workers perform their job task with focus and dedication, which ultimately improves their performance and enhances patient's satisfaction. Based on these arguments, this study hypothesized that
H5: Servant leadership style positively influences heal workers job performance.

Methodology

This study is quantitative with deductive reasoning. Bhatti et al. (2015) argued that deductive reasoning helps researchers understand the nature of relationships between endogenous and exogenous variables. To collect the data, a questionnaire was used, which was adopted from previous studies. To measure transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, a multi-factor leadership questionnaire, which consisted of 36 items, was used as suggested by Sfantou et al. (2017). In addition, to measure multicultural leadership style, 14 items were used developed by Bhatti et al. (2021).

A simple random sampling method was used to collect the data from health workers working in different public and private hospitals in Saudi Arabia. Data was collected between August 2021 and September 2021. A total of 300 questionnaires was sent to health workers with a cover letter explaining the purpose of data collection. After 1 week, a soft reminder was sent about completing the questionnaire. 286 questionnaires were returned in which 2 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete and illogical responses. Therefore, 284 questionnaires were used in data collection. SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the data. Before testing the nature of relationships among variables, a reliability test was run to check the scales' reliability, and descriptive statistics and correlation were performed. The following section reports reliability of the scales, descriptive and correlation analysis, t-test to evaluate the differences and regression analysis.

Results

Table 1. Demographic profile

Demographics	No.	Percentage
Male	190	66.9
Female	94	33.1
Age 18-28 years	59	20.7
29-39 years	140	49.2
40-49 years	60	21.1
50 and above	25	8.8
Education High school	34	11.9
Diploma	55	19.3
Graduates	129	45.4
Masters	65	22.8

Ph.D	01	0.3
No. of years' experience less than 5 years	68	23.9
5-10 years	177	62.3
11-15 years	98	34.5
16-20 years	14	4.9
21-25 years	8	2.8
25 and above	1	0.3

Table 2. Reliability

Variables	Reliability
Transformational Leadership	0.701
Transactional leadership	0.687
laissez-fair leadership	0.611
Multicultural leadership	0.788
Servant Leadership	0.670
Health workers job performance	0.719

Note: $*\alpha > 0.6$ (Bhatti et al., 2015)

As presented in Table 1, the reliability of the scales explains that all variables carry a reliability level of more than 0.6, which means that scales used in this study are reliable. According to Bhatti *et al.* (2013), construct reliability (Cronbach Alphas) above 0.6 explains that the constructs are reliable. Means, S.D and correlations among variables as presented in Table 2 explain that all variables are significantly correlated. There is a meaningful correlation between all variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Transformational Leadership	3.58	0.28					
Transactional leadership	2.11	0.31	0.27				
laissez-fair leadership	1.57	0.22	0.21	0.22			
Multicultural leadership	3.47	0.39	0.37	0.32	0.39		
Servant Leadership	2.89	0.37	0.22	0.28	0.34	0.27	
Health workers job performance	3.01	0.21	0.28	0.33	0.29	0.22	0.29

Note: $p < 0.05$ (Bhatti et al., 2013)

Table 4. Multiple Regressions for Psychological Attributes

Independent Variables	Beta	t-value
Transformational Leadership	0.51	6.01
Transactional leadership	0.18	1.25
laissez-fair leadership	0.29	2.01
Multicultural leadership	0.58	5.87
Servant Leadership	0.38	2.88
Health workers job performance	0.24	
F-value	69.0	
Durbin Watson	3.11	
R Square	0.69***	
Adjusted R square	0.71***	

*** $p < 0.01$; t -values > 1.96 (Bhatti et al., 2013)

As presented in Table 2, regression results explain that relationship among independent variables (Transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, servant leadership style, multicultural leadership style and laissez-faire leadership) and health workers job performance is a statistically significant correlation with $p < 0.001$ (Bhatti et al., 2013). The regression results showed that 69.2 percent variation (R square 0.69) in health workers job performance can be explained by Transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, servant leadership style, multicultural leadership style and laissez-faire leadership. In addition, a bell shape histogram and P-P plots fulfilled the normality requirement of the sample. The Durbin-Watson coefficient of 1.64 was between the acceptable limits of 1.5 to 2.5.

The results of regression analysis reported that tested relationships are significant at $p < 0.001$ (Bhatti et al., 2013) and suggested that the tested hypothesis should be accepted for H1 and H4 but should be rejected for H2, H3 and H5. The beta value (standardized coefficient) of Transformational leadership style ($\beta = 0.51$; t -value=6.01) showed that the Transformational leadership style positively influenced health workers job performance. In addition, transactional leadership style ($\beta = 0.18$ t -value=1.25) showed that transactional leadership style does not influence health workers job performance. Whereas servant leadership style ($\beta = 0.38$ t -value=2.88) weekly influenced health workers job performance. Lastly, multicultural leadership style positively influences health workers job performance ($\beta = 0.58$ t -value=8.57). Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 4 are accepted, but hypothesis 2, 3 and 5 are rejected.

Discussion

In response to deal with the current pandemic, Saudi Arabia has equipped private and public institutions to deal with major challenges. In this regard, maximum resources have been allocated for health workers training, testing equipment's,

effective plans for healthcare facilities and most importantly, preparing the leader to successfully handle the current challenges. In addition, basic health units and hospitals were prepared to handle a huge number of infected persons with maximum use of digital health services to decrease the number of visitors in the health care facilities. As results of all these initiatives, the number of Covid-19 cases was reduced at a minimum level compared to other countries in the region specifically and in the world in general. In addition to the current challenge related to the pandemic, the Kingdom is working to achieve set goals in "Vision 2030," which require major transformation in the health sector, including the privatization of health sector. To successfully handle the pandemic and transformation process, health workers job performance and effective leadership have important role in achieving desired goals. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of different leadership styles in enhancing health workers' job performance.

Past researchers have highlighted many leadership styles, which may be appropriate in different situations and contexts. Therefore, an effective leadership style may require change according to the situation and context, and research has struggled to understand the type of leadership style required in a particular situation. Since leadership style may influence organizational mission and strategies, followers perceive and develop culture accordingly and perform job tasks. Similarly, in the health sector, where employees need to be internally motivated and inspired to help others, a transactional leadership style may not be suitable. The findings of this study suggested that transformational leadership style has a strong influence on health workers job performance. The possible justification behind these findings could be that a transformational leader inspires followers and motivates them to perform at their maximum capacity. Followers feel motivated internally and serve and help others. In contrast, the transactional leadership style requires followers to perform job tasks daily and focus on the operational process instead of inspiring and motivating followers. Therefore, one of the possible reasons behind health workers' poor performance could be the widespread use of transactional leadership style. The findings of this study suggest that the transformational leadership style is more appropriate for higher patients' satisfaction and better performance of health workers. In addition, the servant leadership style is more closely related to the transformational leadership style, in which leaders try to inspire and motivate followers to serve and help others. In this regard, Lacroix (2017) suggested that the servant leadership style could be suitable in the healthcare sector since the healthcare sector needs employees' traits, such as serving and helping others. These findings and arguments are also supported by Lacroix (2017), in which the researcher explains that the servant leadership style could be more suitable in healthcare since a vital trait in servant leadership style is helping others.

Since the globalization of the economies, the healthcare sector attracts health workers from different cultures/countries, and health care management believes that these multicultural health workers will improve services in healthcare if they manage cultural differences well. Therefore, when health care management acknowledges

and respects cultural differences, health workers feel committed and motivated to serve, which ultimately improves the performance of health workers and health sector. The findings of this study also support this viewpoint that multicultural leadership styles strongly influence health workers job performance. The possible reason behind these findings could be the nature of style because multicultural leadership style focuses on understanding cultural differences, which might motivate health workers to perform at their maximum capacity. These findings are similar and supported by Bhatti et al. (2021), which suggest that when management respect and accept cultural differences, employees feel more committed to the organization, which help them to perform better in the workplace.

Transformational, multicultural and somehow servant leadership styles influence followers' motivation and inspire them to perform at their maximum capacity, which results in a higher level of patient's satisfaction. Since patient satisfaction is one of the key criteria to evaluate health sector performance (Mari et al., 2017), health sector management continuously works on finding different ways to achieve a higher level of patient's satisfaction by motivating and inspiring health workers to perform at maximum capacity. In this regard, transformational and multicultural leadership styles are considered important strategies to achieve desired goals. In this regard, Bhatti et al. (2021) and Lacroix (2017) also suggested that an effective leadership style might improve followers/employees' job satisfaction, ultimately improving job performance. Therefore, in a situation when the health sector in Saudi Arabia is going through a major transformation, "shifting from public to private sector" and facing the major challenge of a pandemic, selecting appropriate leadership style may become more critical because achieving a higher level of patient's satisfaction through improvement in service quality is more critical.

Implications

This study has several theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, from theoretical viewpoints, the findings of this study strengthen the body of knowledge by explaining the importance and role of leadership theory and explaining that transformational leadership style is considered more effective in healthcare than transformational leadership style. The findings of this study are aligned with the past research findings, which explain that the transformational leadership style is essential when followers need to be inspired and motivated. In addition, the findings of this study support the viewpoints, endorse the conceptualization of multicultural leadership style developed by Bhatti et al. (2021) and explain that when leaders acknowledge and respect cultural differences, followers feel motivated and committed to the organization, which ultimately influence their satisfaction and performance.

From practical implications viewpoints, the results suggest that policymakers and health sector management should encourage leaders to adopt transformational leadership style and motivate followers to perform at their maximum capacity or on the other hand, health sector management should assign leadership roles to those

individuals who possess transformational leadership style and have cultural awareness. Individuals with transformational leadership style will acknowledge and respect cultural differences and inspire health workers to serve others, increasing patients' level of satisfaction. In addition, health sectors management may conduct different workshops and training programs to equip the leaders with the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to be effective leaders considering health care sector needs and context.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Like other studies, this study also displays certain limitations, such as only 5 leadership styles were examined in this study like transformational leadership, transactional leadership, servant leadership, multicultural leadership and laissez-faire leadership. Future research should explore other leadership styles and study the nature of these leadership styles within healthcare settings. In addition, future studies should explore the role of these leadership styles in other settings, such as in education, telecom, etc. Lastly, job performance was rated by individuals who may have chances of self-response biasness. Future studies should measure job performance based on peer-rated or supervisor-rated to overcome self-rated biasness.

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ROLA STYLU PRZYWÓDZTWA W POPRAWIE WYDAJNOŚCI PRACY PRACOWNIKÓW SŁUŻBY ZDROWIA

Streszczenie: Opieka zdrowotna jest uważana za ważny sektor w każdej gospodarce, a rząd podejmuje liczne inicjatywy w celu poprawy wydajności opieki zdrowotnej i pracowników służby zdrowia. Wcześniejsze badania wykazały, że bez odpowiedniego lidera i odpowiedniego stylu przywództwa pracownicy służby zdrowia mogą nie być w stanie poprawić swojej wydajności pracy. Dlatego też celem tego badania jest zbadanie spośród różnych stylów przywództwa, które style przywództwa są odpowiednie w sektorze zdrowia i silnie wpływają na wydajność pracy pracowników służby zdrowia. W związku z tym zebrano dane od 284 pracowników służby zdrowia pracujących w różnych rządowych

i prywatnych szpitalach w Arabii Saudyjskiej i przeanalizowano przy użyciu programu SPSS w wersji 16. Do przetestowania hipotezy badawczej wykorzystano statystyki opisowe, techniki analizy korelacji i regresji wielokrotnej. Wyniki tego badania sugerują, że wśród różnych stylów przywództwa, transformacyjny i wielokulturowy styl przywództwa pozytywnie wpływa na wydajność pracy pracowników służby zdrowia. Wyniki tego badania będą pomocne decydentom i pracownikom służby zdrowia, aby bardziej skoncentrować się na transformacyjnym stylu przywództwa i wielokulturowym stylu przywództwa, zwłaszcza gdy pracownicy służby zdrowia należą do zróżnicowanej kultury.

Słowa kluczowe: transakcyjny styl przywództwa, transformacyjny styl przywództwa, pracownicy służby zdrowia, wydajność pracy.

领导风格在提高卫生工作者工作绩效中的作用

摘要: 医疗保健被认为是任何经济体中的重要部门，政府采取多种举措来提高医疗保健和卫生工作者的绩效。过去的研究强调，如果没有合适的领导者和适当的领导风格，卫生工作者可能无法提高他们的工作绩效。因此，本研究的目的是调查不同的领导风格，哪种领导风格适合卫生部门并强烈影响卫生工作者的工作绩效。在这方面，收集了在沙特阿拉伯不同政府和私立医院工作的 284 名卫生工作者的数据，并使用 SPSS 16 版进行分析。使用描述性统计、相关性和多元回归分析技术来检验研究假设。本研究的结果表明，在不同的领导风格中，变革型和多元文化的领导风格对卫生工作者的工作绩效产生积极影响。这项研究的结果将有助于政策制定者和医疗保健专业人员更多地关注变革型领导风格和多元文化领导风格，尤其是当卫生工作者属于多元文化时

关键词: 交易型领导风格，变革型领导风格，卫生工作者，工作绩效