

# Influence of the Nurse Manager's Leadership Style on Nurses' Job Satisfaction

Ana Luiza Ferreira Aydogdu

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Istanbul Health and Technology University, Istanbul, Turkey

Author's Mail Id: luizafl@gmail.com, ana.luiza@istun.edu.tr, Tel.: +905356370703

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**Abstract**— The productivity of the nursing team is directly related to job satisfaction, which in turn is influenced by the leadership style adopted by nurse managers. The quality of care provided by nurses will reflect in the success of the health institution. Frustration at work increases the turnover of nurses and decreases the quality of care. The study aimed to contextualize the influence of the nurse manager's leadership on nurses' job satisfaction. It is a study based on literature about leadership and nurses' job satisfaction. Leaders who act as mentors and monitors, supporting their teams, communicating clearly, providing feedback, and being role models will have a positive influence on nurses. No one style of leadership will be ideal for all occasions, thus leaders need to be able to adapt and change styles according to different situations. Nurse managers should keep improving themselves through leadership training, self-assessment, self-awareness, and self-compassion to better understand the nursing team members' needs and lead with competence, increasing nurses' job satisfaction and retention.

**Keywords**—Job Satisfaction, Leadership, Nurse Managers, Nursing.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Factors such as globalization, technological advances, changes in the health demands of the population, and the growing competition between private health institutions have made the concept of productivity gradually gain importance in the sector [1]; [2]. Productivity is an important indicator for the evaluation and improvement of healthcare institutions [3]; [4]. Thus, health care workers must be increasingly efficient and effective when performing their duties so that the organizations they work for achieve success and be recognized by an increasingly aware and demanding population [4]; [5]. On the other hand, job satisfaction is pivotal for health professionals to provide quality care [6].

Healthcare institutions employ several professionals whose functions are much diversified. Nursing is part of this complex professional group, whose importance for the success of care is indisputable, as they are the most representative professionals and spend long periods of time with patients [7]; [8]. Therefore, the success of the healthcare institution is directly related to the productivity of nurses, and undoubtedly job satisfaction plays an important role in their productivity [9]; [10].

The poor working conditions of nurses, characterized by long working hours, low wages, interpersonal conflicts, diverse occupational risks, and lack of recognition are discussed in several studies [11]; [12]. These conditions lead to a decrease in job satisfaction. Frustration at work is among the main causes of turnover intention and

abandonment of the profession among nurses [13]; [14]; [15]. On the other hand, dissatisfaction and high turnover of nursing professionals negatively interfere with the quality of care [14], so keeping experienced nursing teams in the institution should be one of the main health administrators' objectives.

The nursing shortage is a problem worldwide, and with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, this problem has gained even greater proportions, making the attention of health authorities turn to the importance of retaining nurses. Dissatisfied nurses have intentions to leave their jobs. It is believed that in the coming years, many nurses will leave the labor market, which could cause an irreversible impact on the health system, thus, measures must be taken now to increase nurses' job satisfaction [8]. Nurse leaders play fundamental roles in motivating, empowering and improving nurses' working conditions, which will increase staff nurses' job satisfaction [15].

Providing a work environment where nurses feel satisfied when performing their duties will bring benefits to the entire health team and also to patients, which will directly reflect on the success of the healthcare institution [16]. In this context, nursing leadership plays a pivotal role, having to identify the signs of job dissatisfaction in the members of their teams, seeking to develop strategies that aim to alleviate the pressures of the work environment, and improving working conditions that increase the job satisfaction of nurses [15]; [17]. In other words, the manager must pay attention to the needs of the team members [18]. Nurse managers must lead their teams

efficiently and effectively so that quality care is provided and the healthcare institution achieves its goals [19]. Here it is important to emphasize that the nurse manager's leadership style can decrease or increase the job satisfaction of staff nurses [20]. The shortage of nurses is a serious problem faced for a long time worldwide; however, the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated this problem. Thus, the moment is opportune to discuss nursing leadership and nurses' job satisfaction, which are fundamental factors for the retention of nurses. Given the above, this article aimed to contextualize the influence of the nurse manager's leadership style on nurses' job satisfaction.

In section I introduction is presented; related works are reported in section II; section III elucidates the methods; the results and discussion are reported in section IV. In section V the study is concluded and the future scope is presented.

## II. RELATED WORK

According to reference [21], work is an essential activity, which ennobles the human being, therefore must be performed with satisfaction. Concerning nursing, reference [9] pointed out that nurses need to feel motivated to provide effective and efficient care. Reference [17], research from Taiwan, focused on the job frustration as a factor that increases turnover intention among nurses, and as identified in the reference [14], high turnover in nursing is a major threat to the quality of care. As reported in reference [21], nursing leadership is a decisive factor for the satisfaction and performance of nurses, and consequently for the intention to remain at work, as the nursing leader's attitudes directly interfere with the work environment and the team members' motivation. Reference [22] is a study conducted in Brazil that pointed out that a good interpersonal relationship with the manager increases the job satisfaction of nurses.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This is a study about the influence of the nurse manager's leadership style on nurses' job satisfaction. Several types of studies were read and analyzed. The methods for selecting the studies included in this paper are not described in detail, as the study's strength is related to the reflective ability to analyze and interpret the information collected and not to methodological rigor [23]; [24].

The material was collected in May 2022, through the reading, analysis, and interpretation of articles found in the Medline database, using the descriptors: "Job satisfaction", "Leadership", "Nurse managers", through diversified word combinations using "AND". The search was carried out for articles published in the last 10 years whose full texts were available on the Internet in English, Portuguese, or Spanish. The search was not limited by the type of study design. A total of 195 articles were found. After reading titles and abstracts, articles that did not correspond to the

objectives of the study were excluded. Articles found through other sources were also included. Studies that addressed the topic of nurse manager's leadership style and nurses' job satisfaction were read in full, analyzed, and discussed.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpreting the selected studies, two themes emerged for reflection: types of leadership; and nurses' job frustration and intention to leave.

### Types of Leadership

A literature review pointed out that authentic leadership style, characterized by transparent, ethical, and self-aware leaders; resonant style, in which leaders are empathetic and committed, and servant leadership result in greater nurses' job satisfaction. On the other hand, passive/avoidant and liberal leadership styles present a negative correlation regarding the job satisfaction of the nursing team [15].

The leadership style is directly linked to the employees' well-being [25]; transformational [20]; [26] and transactional [26] leadership styles are better accepted by nurses. Leaders need to recognize and control their emotions and also act with empathy, giving importance to the feelings of other team members, as the emotional intelligence of leaders is important for the satisfaction of staff nurses [25]. In addition, the millennial nurses, those born between 1981 and 1996, when reporting the importance of leadership for their job satisfaction, emphasize that they prefer leaders who behave as mentors, directors, and monitors [27].

It is important to notice that when nurses identify their preference for leaders who are mentors and monitors, they are emphasizing the importance of leaders who know how to communicate, give feedback and be a model for their teams [27]. Thus, employee empowerment and innovative leadership styles will have positive effects on job satisfaction [28]. Nurses want transformational leaders, in other words, leaders who motivate and inspire them [29]. Nurses need leaders with whom they can communicate honestly and openly, in a work environment characterized by experienced professional support [21]. In contrast, managers who do not pay attention to interpersonal relationships can increase nurses' turnover intention [30]. Toxic leaders cause problems for the entire health team and consequently for the organization in which they work, through harmful behaviors. Faced with such leadership, nurses get frustrated and want to leave the profession [20]. Nursing managers must be able to adapt to different situations through different leadership styles [27]. There are many leadership styles (Table 1) and no style is right for all times. Therefore, nursing leaders need to constantly assess themselves, assuming a leadership style that is appropriate for each situation and according to the needs of their team members [31].

It was observed that the relationship between nursing leadership and the professional satisfaction of staff nurses occurs through empowerment, support, and supervision, so when there is no adequate leadership, there is also no job satisfaction [21]; [27]. Developing leadership training for nurse managers may be a good strategy to increase nursing retention [25].

Table 1: Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles	Characteristics
Authentic	Focused on transparency, ethics, and self-awareness
Autocratic	The leader makes decisions alone. It is focused on the work success
Bureaucratic	It is focused on detailed guidelines
Charismatic	Motivational. The leader inspires employees
Democratic	Decisions are made by the group. It is focused on interpersonal relationships
Laissez-faire	Free rein leadership. It is focused on the freedom
Servant	Focused on followers, on putting them first, and favoring their personal growth
Transactional	Focused on managerial tasks and the achievement of organizational objectives
Transformational	Focused on change and the empowerment of followers

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**Nurses’ Job Frustration and Intention to Leave**

The shortage of nurses is a problem in many countries worldwide, so it is important to create strategies that increase their intention to stay [20]; [25]; [32]. Employee productivity is directly related to job satisfaction. Regarding nurses, interpersonal relationships, especially with their superiors, are decisive to increase satisfaction and reduce turnover [31]; [33]. When nurse managers support their team, staff nurses’ job satisfaction increases [32], so leaders should encourage staff nurses to express themselves sincerely and support them since improving nurses’ well-being is an important strategy to solve nursing shortages [25]. On the other hand, nurses who experience problems with their leaders have low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of intention to leave the nursing profession [20]. Although nurses’ job satisfaction has decreased and turnover has increased since the emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is known that adequate leadership in which measures are taken to improve nurses’ working conditions can change this situation and increase nurses’ intention to stay [34].

While other generations retire, millennial nurses enter the workforce [35]; novice nurses report various reasons that increase their intention to leave, one of them is related to interpersonal relationship problems thus only adequate leadership can increase their job satisfaction and consequently their intention to stay [36]. Leadership styles seem to be key points for recruiting and retaining millennial nurses [27], who by 2025 will be 75% of the

global workforce [37]. Millennial nurses want to be empowered, stimulated, and valued by their leaders and only this type of leadership will be able to keep them at work [38]. When compared to previous generations, millennial nurses are found to be less satisfied at work, which increases the importance of strategies developed by nursing leaders to increase their job satisfaction [35].

Different generations of employees bring different dynamics to companies. It would not be different with nursing; nurse managers need, therefore, to recognize the characteristics of their team members and seek to lead them through motivation and empowerment [35]. However, culture seems to influence nurses’ job satisfaction more than differences between generations. It is essential to emphasize that, regardless of nurses’ culture or generation; leadership always affects their job satisfaction [39].

It is necessary to put an end to narcissistic leadership styles, investing more in supportive and spiritual leaders, thus it is important to assess the personality characteristics of candidates for nursing leaders [25]; [40]. In addition, it is necessary to promote leadership training and reinforce the importance of the topic by including more leadership courses in the nursing curriculum so that leaders become aware of the importance of their attitudes for the job satisfaction of staff nurses [31].

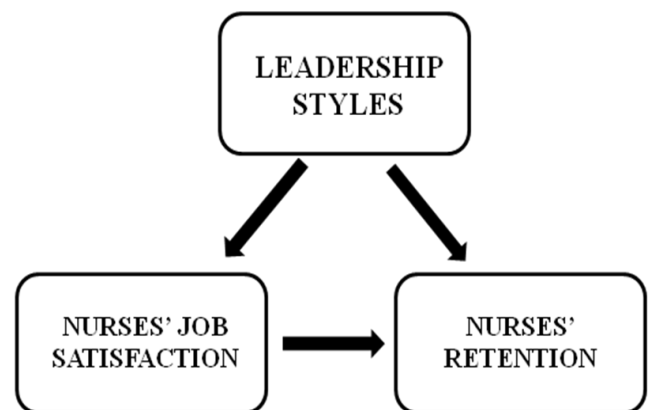


Figure 1: Relationship between leadership styles, nurses’ job satisfaction and retention

Nurses need training in modern leadership. Many nurse managers do not have the necessary skills to lead their teams. Thus, gaps related to the motivation and empowerment of staff nurses can be identified, as well as communication problems between members of the nursing team, which can lead to an increase in turnover among nurses [41]. Leaders who adopt assertive and participatory communication, develop healthy and inspiring interpersonal relationships, and who have technical competence, will always bring positive consequences to the nursing team [42]. It is worth mentioning that nursing leaders have the possibility to participate in public policy changes, thus increasing nursing autonomy and

recognition, which consequently will increase nurses' job satisfaction and retention [21].

## V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

This paper sought to contextualize the influence of the nurse manager's leadership on nurses' job satisfaction [21]; [31]. This study highlights that investing in nursing leadership is essential for the maintenance of the health system [43] since the role of the nursing leader is essential for the job satisfaction and retention of nurses. Leaders who act as mentors and monitors, supporting their teams, communicating clearly, providing feedback, and being role models will have a positive influence on nurses. No one style of leadership will be ideal for all occasions, thus leaders need to be able to adapt and change styles according to different situations.

It is necessary to be aware of the changes that are constantly taking place in society and the health sector. The insertion of new generations of nurses in the workforce changes the dynamic of health care institutions and determines the type of appropriate leadership to lead them so that they feel satisfied and able to provide quality care [35]; [38]; [39].

Nurse leaders should inspire and support their teams [42]. Nurse managers should keep improving themselves through leadership training, self-assessment, self-awareness, and self-compassion to better understand the nursing team members' needs and lead with competence, which will increase the job satisfaction of staff nurses. Further studies using different methodological designs should be carried out to explore the influence of leadership on nurses' job satisfaction, especially after the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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#### AUTHORS PROFILE

Dr. A L F Aydogdu is a nurse who graduated from Fluminense Federal University (UFF-2002), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She has a Post-Graduation degree in Public Health Nursing from the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO-2004). Master in Hospitals and Health Institutions Administration from Istanbul University - 2016. Doctorate in Nursing Administration from Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa. She worked for seven years as a Preceptor Nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit of a private hospital in Istanbul, Turkey. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor at Istanbul Health and Technology University, Istanbul, Turkey.

