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# THE ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN MOTIVATING THE NURSING TEAM

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**Abstract:** Context: Leadership is an indispensable skill in nursing, enabling nurse managers to organize work processes and lead their teams to achieve their goals. Nurses' performance in their professional practice is influenced by motivation. **Objective:** To analyze transformational and transactional leadership models in the motivation of nurses. **Methodology:** Systematic review of the literature, based on the methodology proposed by the *Joanna Briggs Institute* (JBI). Research conducted in the *CINAHL Complete* and *MEDLINE with Full Text* databases. **Results:** The two leadership models under analysis have consistent relationships with motivation. The motivation of nurses is associated with involvement, commitment, and satisfaction. Transformational leadership is based on values of altruism and is grounded in the charisma of the leader. The transactional model is based on a hierarchical relationship of unilateral power and focuses on monitoring and controlling professional performance. It involves the use of rewards for achieving the outlined objectives. **Conclusion:** Transformational and transactional leadership models can be decisive in instigating team motivation. These models must be adapted to human and organizational capital. To this end, it is important to train available and competent leaders.

**Keywords:** Leadership; Motivation; Nursing.

## INTRODUCTION

Nursing, the most representative professional class in the health sector, is based on human relations. It has evolved as a discipline and science and is currently undergoing significant changes in the construc-

tion of a new professional identity. At the same time, it operates in a context of job instability, professional dissatisfaction, and low social recognition.

Increased health literacy and demand for quality care, along with technological innovation, are paradigms that underpin the need for development and transformation of work environments and organizational cultures. Motivation, commonly associated with satisfaction, is essential in clinical practice and in the effectiveness of institutions. It is associated with increased productivity and quality of care. Antunes and Sant'anna (cited in Batista et al., 2005, p. 86) define motivation as a "state in which the worker feels willing or eager to work productively." Several theories have sought to characterize this concept. Herzberg's two-factor theory best explains how motivation affects the harmony and stability of an institution. This theory defends the difference between satisfaction and motivation in the workplace. Satisfaction is related to factors extrinsic to the employee, such as workplace conditions, salary, and safety, among others. Motivation, on the other hand, depends on intrinsic factors related to the nature of the tasks to be performed, such as autonomy, freedom to innovate, and the use of one's own solutions to achieve results. It fosters individual growth and development and encourages professional recognition. Although satisfaction is associated with stability in the organization, it is through motivation that the employee becomes integrated with it. They become more responsible for their performance and directly promote efficiency, effectiveness, and quality (Bezerra, 2010).

Successful management aims to promote healthy relationships within teams and to balance the individual needs of employe-

es and organizations (Sousa, 2012). The nurse manager, who has knowledge of nursing and the specific field of management, has the role of adding economic value to the institution and professional and social value to nurses. As an active agent in change processes, the nurse manager chooses leadership criteria that ensure professional development and add importance to the organization (Ordem dos Enfermeiros, 2018). As a leader, it is essential to have a close, empathetic, and intuitive relationship with their employees, through which they promote trust, a sense of belonging, and motivation, which are necessary to achieve the outlined objectives. The nurse manager must possess a set of attributes such as: having initiative, being motivating and responsible for the organization, ensuring assertive communication, and being an agent of change. As such, it is important to train astute, competent, and available leaders.

Leadership, a complex concept, is an indispensable skill in nursing. It encompasses a set of behaviors, attitudes, and actions capable of influencing and motivating employees to achieve the outlined objectives (Haase & Franco, 2020). There are different types and styles of leadership. Haase and Franco (2020) note that transformational and transactional leadership models are particularly popular and are the most studied. Transformational leadership is characterized by the ability of the nurse manager to produce changes in nurses' self-perception. In this model, the nurse manager: (1) is perceived as a model of charisma and influence; (2) has motivation and an inspiring vision; (3) provides intellectual stimulation; (4) shows individual consideration, as they understand the idiosyncrasies of their employees. Transactional leadership, on the other hand,

is characterized by the exchange relationship between the nurse manager and employees in response to their own interests. It presupposes four dimensions: (1) provision of resources in exchange for support/service; (2) management by exception, which favors monitoring and adopting corrective actions prior to problems; (3) administration by exception, in which the leader intervenes when the problem becomes serious; (4) *laissez-faire*, in which there is eviction or absence of leadership.

The current healthcare context is complex and marked by economic constraints. Concern for the quality and effectiveness of healthcare has become an imperative and enormous challenge for healthcare institutions. Providing favorable work environments is essential as they ensure the provision of safe and excellent care, maximize client health and well-being, and promote better organizational performance. Nurses are crucial to the efficiency and effectiveness of quality care, expressed in gains for the health and wellbeing of clients, families, and communities. They are agents of change in healthcare and society.

The success of the organization, the team, and the nurse manager comes from implementing a leadership model that ensures everyone's trust. It is crucial to promote motivation, commitment, creativity, and professional autonomy. The prevalence of an appropriate work environment, expressed by a desire for belonging, loyalty, commitment, and dedication, reflects a commitment to the organization and dignifies its mission, vision, principles, and values.

This study aims to compare the transformational leadership model and the transactional leadership model in terms of their impact on the motivation of nursing teams.

## METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

To assess the impact of transformational and transactional leadership models on the motivation of nursing teams, a systematic review of the literature was conducted. To organize the information, the research was based on the guidelines and methodology of JBI *Reviewers* and the PRISMA – *Flow Diagram (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)* model.

The research question was developed based on the PICO model, which is the acronym for (P) Population, (I) Intervention, and (O) *Outcomes*. These three elements are fundamental in developing the research question: What is the impact of transformational and transactional leadership models on nursing team motivation?

The population refers to nurses, the intervention refers to the transactional or transformational leadership model used by nurse managers, and the *outcome* refers to the motivation of the nursing team.

An initial search was conducted using keywords and free terms. Subsequently, MeSH descriptors (Table 1) were defined and a Boolean phrase was constructed. The search was conducted on April 17, 2023, using the scientific content aggregator EBS-COhost® *web*. The databases used were: MEDINE *with Full Text*® and CINAHL *Complete*®. The inclusion criteria were: articles published since 2017, in Portuguese and/or English, full articles that allowed for methodological evaluation. A total of 997 articles were found. After removing duplicates and articles excluded by reading the title and abstract, 15 articles were obtained. The articles were read in full. Four articles were included in the final sample. The process of

identifying and including articles is outlined using the PRISMA *Diagram flow* (Figure 1) (Page et al., 2021).

MeSH descriptors	Leadership; nursing practice; nurse.
Free term(s)	Transactional; transformational; motivation.
Boolean phrase	((transactional leadership) OR (transformational leadership)) AND ((nursing practice) OR (nurs* practice) OR (nursing intervention) OR (nursing care)) AND (motivation))

Table 1 – Table showing MeSH descriptors and Boolean phrase

## RESULTS

The selected and analyzed articles are descriptive studies. The samples consist of nurses from different work contexts, and all articles aim to reflect on the influence of transformational and transactional leadership models on the motivation of nursing teams. The selected articles and their results are presented in the data extraction tables (Table 2 and Table 3).

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Leadership is one of the key competencies to be developed by nurse managers. In nursing, they are agents of change and must actively participate in the development and determination of policies, regulations, and strategies. Their collaboration in setting goals and identifying priorities is essential. They must influence decision-making, cooperate in action, and achieve goals. They are inspirers and promoters of the mission, vision, and respect for the values of institutions (Harris et al., 2018). In this dynamic and constantly changing context, it is essen-

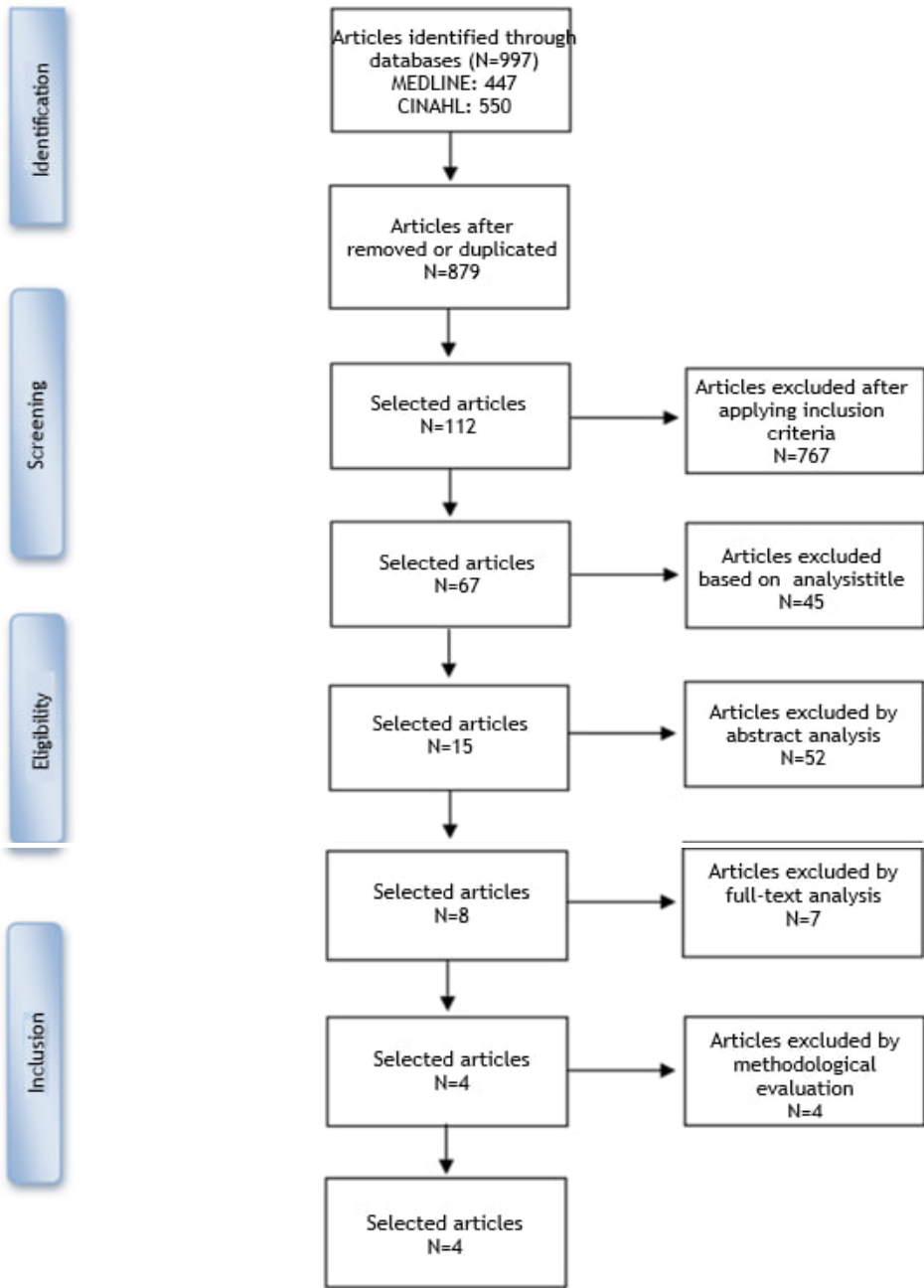


Figure 1 – Process of identification and inclusion of articles – PRISMA *Diagram flow* (Page et al., 2021)

Study code	Study/Article	Country	Participants	Study Objectives	Study Design	JBI Result
E1	Suliman, Mohammad, et al. (2020). Leadership styles and their effect on nurse turnover.	Jordan	280 nurses from three public sector hospitals and one university hospital.	To assess the effect of nursing managers' leadership styles on nurse turnover.	Descriptive cross-sectional and correlational study	7/8
E2	Morsiani et al., (2017). How staff nurses perceive the impact of nurse managers' leadership style in terms of job satisfaction: a mixed method study.	Italy	In the first phase of the study, the sample consisted of 87 nurses from internal medicine departments. In the second phase, the sample consisted of 27 nurses from the same departments.	Describe nurses' perceptions of the leadership models adopted by nurse managers; identify which leadership model promotes motivation in nurses' work; describe which behaviors nursing managers should modify.	Descriptive-comparative study	7/8
E3	Olu-Abiodun, Oluwatoshin & Abiodun, Olumide, (2017). Perception of transformational leadership behavior among general hospital nurses in Ogun State, Nigeria.	Nigeria	176 nurses in nine general hospitals in Ogun State, Nigeria.	To assess the perception of transformational leadership behavior among nurses working in general hospitals in Ogun State, Nigeria.	Descriptive study Cross-sectional	7/8
E4	Vatnøy, T.K., Dale, B., Skinner, M.S., & Karlsen, T.I. (2022). Associations between nurse managers' leadership styles, team culture and competence planning in Norwegian municipal in-patient acute care services: A cross-sectional study Associations between nurse managers' leadership styles, team culture and Competence planning in Norwegian municipal in-patient acute care services: A cross-sectional study.	Norway	182 nurse managers from Norwegian municipal acute care units.	To identify the leadership models that characterize nurse managers in municipal acute care units and to investigate the impact of leadership models on team culture and nursing skills development.	Descriptive cross-sectional	7/8

Table 2 – Summary table of data extracted from the selected articles

Study code	Results	Conclusions
E1	<p>The study shows that the transactional leadership model is the most common among nurse managers. It is mainly used to achieve the institution's objectives, rather than to motivate the team.</p> <p>The study also demonstrates the intention to leave the profession. As such, it is important for nurse managers and hospital administrators to intervene in order to reduce turnover and improve job satisfaction. The reasons given are related to high workload and low salary rewards. It appears that the leadership model of nursing managers has a significant impact on staff retention.</p> <p>Transformational leadership is more common among nursing managers in public hospitals than in university hospitals. This is because nursing managers in the public sector have more power and authority in decision-making than nursing managers in university hospitals. This is because the latter are subject to more restrictive rules and regulations.</p> <p>The transformational leadership model contributes to lower nurse turnover and has a positive impact on job satisfaction, which also contributes to retention in the profession/institution.</p>	<p>The transformational leadership model has a positive effect on nurses and reduces turnover rates. Institutions should provide training programs for nurse managers on effective leadership to improve job satisfaction and reduce nurse turnover.</p>
E2	<p>The results of this study show that nurse managers mainly adopted a transactional leadership model. This model is oriented toward performing tasks, routines, and practice models derived from obsolete working methods. Its purpose is to monitor, intervene to correct, and punish mistakes.</p> <p>This model has a negative impact on nurses' satisfaction levels.</p> <p>The transformational leadership model was rarely practiced by nurse managers. In contrast, the study reveals that nurses are awake to a paradigm shift, want more autonomy in decision-making, and better working environments.</p> <p>The study confirmed that the transactional leadership model has a lower correlation with team satisfaction compared to the transformational model.</p>	<p>The transformational leadership skills of Italian nurse managers need to be improved through the acquisition and refinement of behaviors and values such as respect, concern for others, development, and appreciation.</p> <p>The leadership models of nurse managers have a direct impact on the satisfaction of professionals.</p> <p>Nurse managers should be aware of the potential of the transformational leadership model and should be open to acquiring new skills.</p> <p>The assumptions of the transformational leadership model can guide nurse managers in their professional performance. They promote higher levels of job satisfaction and enable better results to be achieved.</p> <p>Due to the complexity and importance of the transformational leadership model, it should be viewed as a strategic priority for nurse managers.</p>
E3	<p>Nurse managers exert influence and are generally infallible in their speech and actions, influencing the team toward a common vision. They prioritize innovation, motivation, and development for efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>The results suggest that nurse managers exercise leadership in different ways, depending on the type and need for care.</p> <p>The transformational leadership model is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and psychological well-being.</p> <p>The fact that leaders empower nurses and support them in decision-making positively influences nurses' perception of their leaders.</p>	<p>The transformational leadership model is perceived by nurses as the model to be used by nurse managers.</p> <p>They demonstrate influence, motivation, inspire, stimulate intellectually, and consider the individuality of their employees. The perception of the transformational leadership model depends on the work environment and nursing qualifications. Innovation, self-motivation, and continuous development are important characteristics of nurse managers.</p>

E4

The predominant leadership model is transformational, compared to the transactional leadership model. Transformational leadership values and is associated with team culture. However, it was found that nurse managers adapt their leadership performance according to the situation they are experiencing. In other words, they adapt the leadership model in their professional practice according to the situation they are exposed to. The transformational leadership model emphasizes good working conditions and encourages employees to perform better. On the one hand, managers value the relationship with the employee, on the other, they emphasize leadership oriented towards the execution of tasks. The overlap of leadership models implies that nurse managers adapt to different requirements and contexts. Thus, appropriate leadership behaviors can be supportive or directive, depending on the situations, motivation, and competence of employees. The use of the position of “professional development nurse” seems to lighten the workload of the nurse manager, allowing them to share responsibilities. It promotes team culture and skills development.

The transformational leadership model promotes competent practice and the value of team culture. It fosters quality care in increasingly complex and challenging nursing practices. The development of nursing skills is an important responsibility of the manager. Nurse managers should encourage the development of nurses, promote healthy work environments, and foster professional satisfaction among the team. In this way, conditions that promote professional engagement are ensured. Nursing managers are challenged to adapt their leadership to specific situations. Thus, to promote change and improvement in nursing services and lead effectively, they need to have skills in the area of planning.

Table 3 - Table presenting the results and conclusions of the selected articles

tial that nurse managers perceive leadership as an important management tool to overcome all these challenges (Pereira et al., 2018).

The four studies analyzed explore the transformational leadership model. Of these four, three comparatively explore the transactional leadership model. All aim to analyze the impact of leadership on the motivation of nursing teams.

The implementation of leadership, guided by the transformational model, generates satisfaction and physical and psychological well-being in employees. It stimulates collective entrepreneurship, insofar as it allows for innovation and creativity within the organization. These leaders are seen as influential, prestigious people who possess inspiring motivation and intellectual stimulation. They pay attention to individuality and uniqueness in their relationships with their employees. Transformational leadership is intertwined with motivation.

The E3 study reports that the characteristics of transformational leaders encourage nurses to share their vision. This is also

used as a source of inspiration to achieve the outlined goals. Thus, nurse managers foster the involvement, commitment, and satisfaction of nurses. At the same time, they promote professional fulfillment, which stems from the perception that their work is meaningful to the client, family, community, and institution.

Studies E1, E3, and E4 show that favorable work environments promote commitment and attachment to the institution. For Haase and Franco (2020), transformational leadership promotes organizational commitment, expressed by the desire to belong, dedication, loyalty, and commitment to the organization's principles. In other words, employees identify with the institution's ideology. This leadership model is prevalent in healthcare institutions. It fosters positive attitudes, stimulates creativity, promotes autonomy in decision-making, and recognizes unique and complementary skills in the care process. Brewer et al. (2016) corroborate this when they mention that this attribute has a positive effect on work environments and describe them as healthier and more



stable. Yang & Yeh (2018) note that this effect stems from extrinsic motivation resulting from healthcare management policies.

The E3 study identifies the intrinsic dimensions of the transformational leadership model. In their professional practice, nurse managers exhibit behaviors and attitudes that are considered irreproachable by their employees. They inspire the team to move in a common direction, outlined by strategic planning. The nurse manager is a role model. Employees are receptive and, at the same time, perceive the manager's receptiveness to their contributions. Co-leadership, or shared leadership, is the product of collaboration between leaders and employees. They do not overlap, but perform interdependent, complementary, and shared functions. The roles that define them are unequivocal. Policies that promote reciprocal and dynamic cooperation result in maximized results and gains in health (Backes et al., 2022).

Communication is a fundamental tool for operationalizing the integration of an organization's work processes. The E4 study argues that communication acts as a mediator between transformational leadership and the *empowerment* of nurses. In the face of challenges, it promotes proactive and positive attitudes. The transformational leadership model highlights the importance of assertive and positive communication through information sharing, *feedback* opportunities, and relational transparency (Haase and Franco, 2020). For Malbona et al. (2022), effective communication is considered the core of organizational practices, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships. It improves working relationships, encourages knowledge sharing, and reduces conflicts, which are responsible for errors and dissatisfaction. It

is the basis of a healthy work environment. Effective communication contributes to increased safety and customer satisfaction and, therefore, to an improvement in the quality of care provided.

The E3 study highlights that leadership models have a direct impact on satisfaction. This is linked to the perception of greater respect, courtesy, and professional development. Respect for the opinions of the parties that make up the organization is important for involvement in the decision-making process. The transformational leadership model is based on these premises.

The transformational leadership model also contributes to reducing nurse turnover rates. Studies E1 and E4 report that this attribute has a positive effect on team stability, which becomes more cohesive and has lower absenteeism rates. Satisfied professionals and customers are synonymous with success, as productivity increases, costs decrease, and, consequently, the organization becomes more competitive and has a better social reputation.

The transactional leadership model is characterized by the exchange process between the manager and the employee. The exchange assumes that, in order to achieve the outlined objectives, there is guidance from the nurse manager or requirements previously stipulated with the team. Soardo et al. (2020) explain that, in the transactional leadership model, the leader's commitment to fulfilling their individual/organizational purposes is strongly dependent on the employees' fulfillment of the objectives. This model focuses on the effectiveness and clarity of the work process. The leader presents the desired results and monitors their achievement, which has positive effects on the institution's effectiveness. Employees, who

carry out these predefined work processes, have no possibility of differentiation. This can limit efficiency and reduce employee motivation, as there are no challenges for the team to overcome. The lack of space for sharing ideas can limit professional performance and condition the response to care.

In study E2, nurses' performance in relation to transactional leadership focuses on the action of "executing." This favors monotony and reduces creativity and individualization in the provision of nursing care. However, in study E4, transactional leadership is perceived as guiding work processes. This model highlights duality and ambiguity, depending on different conditions and contexts. On the one hand, it can be restrictive because it limits nurses in carrying out what is proposed to them, which ultimately reduces their intentions. On the other hand, it can be useful and vital in guiding the operational aspects of nursing practice. Furthermore, depending on the contexts and conditions, it can maximize the productivity and sustainability of the institution, or be limiting. This duality results from the reaction between leadership models, their stakeholders, and work environments. Haase and Franco (2020) clarify that dynamic environments benefit from the advantages of the transformational leadership model. In routine environments, the transactional leadership model is the most appropriate. Thus, the most appropriate leadership model depends on: the contexts, the work environment, the involvement and motivation demonstrated by the team in the care process, and the preparation of the nurse manager in the face of demands and diversity of variables.

The E2 study states that the transactional leadership model focuses on monitoring

and controlling errors, which is crucial to ensuring the safety and quality of care. The leader clearly presents the expected result, and any deviation is easily identified. Nurse managers use this leadership model to monitor professional performance, prevent errors, and intervene when they occur. This study suggests that the reward for nurses' practice stems from the competent performance of their work and can be psychological or material.

Study E1 shows that nurses believe managers use their power in a unilateral manner. They report that managers condition performance and pressure them to achieve objectives, which causes overload and job instability. The nurse manager plays a key role in promoting healthy work environments, raising team awareness of this problem, and detecting it early (Loureiro et al., 2022).

The two leadership models have been shown to have consistent relationships with efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. On the one hand, transformational leadership has a positive, significant, and consistent relationship with altruism, courtesy, understanding, and civic virtue. It is a values-based model that advocates differentiated, humanized, and holistic care. It encourages employee participation, drives innovation, and promotes training and the development of skills based on scientific evidence. On the other hand, in the transactional model, the awarding of rewards, which translate into positive reinforcement or praise, motivates employees to achieve a higher level of performance. This can be positive, as it aligns with increased motivation, recognition, and appreciation of the employee. Thus, combining the positive aspects of each model can be used to make the professional context

more promising, attractive, and motivating. It fosters employee commitment, which translates into the provision of safe and excellent care.

## CONCLUSION

Healthcare institutions, which are dynamic and complex structures, tend to evolve and adapt to social, demographic, and epidemiological changes. Managing them is a challenge, not only because of the complexity and uniqueness of the sector, but also because of the diversity of stakeholders and market and governance policies.

The articles analyzed emphasize the importance of leadership, particularly the leadership model and its contribution to social, economic, and political transformations. Regardless of the leadership model advocated by the manager, receptivity to team feedback is essential and enhances management performance. Analyzing the information provided by the team allows the manager to optimize their performance in areas of weakness in their professional management practice. Leadership, regardless of the model, transactional or transformational, should promote people-centered development. It will thus encourage the commitment of all employees.

In transactional leadership, tasks are defined according to goals, which involves the use of rewards for the possible achievement of the outlined objectives. The leader clarifies each employee's responsibilities, monitors performance, and, if necessary, proposes corrective actions. The leader has control over situations and employees (Marquis & Huston, 2010).

Transformational leadership is based on the leader's charisma. It is particularly relevant, as it addresses the intrinsic motivation of employees, which seems to be a beneficial approach for various types of organizations. It is the best predictor of performance, as this leadership model is suited to dynamic environments, such as the healthcare environment. In environments with little dynamism and routine functions, it is not considered as effective (Marquis & Huston, 2010).

Given the above, this study aimed to identify the impact of transformational and transactional leadership models on the motivation of nursing teams. The results show that leadership models have a positive relationship with each other, confirming leadership as an important characteristic in promoting and dignifying the skills of nurse managers. There is no ideal leadership model, but rather advantages and disadvantages in each. The adoption of one model over another should not be an isolated option. It should prioritize the combination of advantages that each manager identifies as relevant in their specific work context. Transactional and transformational leadership models are not opposing approaches. Both contribute to good organizational performance and influence motivation.

This review has contributed to improving understanding of the issue addressed and clarifying the central concepts for the management and innovation of nursing services. The impact of leadership models on nursing management emerges as a crucial area in which more knowledge is needed, hence the need for further studies/contributions.

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