Vol. 5 No. 1 (2026)

Pakistan Journal of Medical & Cardiological Review

https://pakjmcr.com/index.php/1/about

Online ISSN Print ISSN

Khan et al - 2026 3007-2387 3007-2379

IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENT'S BEHAVOIR AT PRIVATE NURSING COLLEGES

Mehdi Hayat Khan
Principal/Associate Professor, Bahawalpur Institute of Medical Sciences, College of Nursing, Bahawalpur
mehdisnc05@gmail.com
Philip Zafar
Nursing officer, Shalamar Hospital Lahore
philipzafar7@gmail.com
Fatima Afzal
Nursing officer, Shalamar Hospital Lahore
amirazamalirao@gmail.com
Isma Khan
Nursing officer, Shalamar Hospital Lahore
ismakhan0991@gmail.com
Muqadas Mai
Nursing Officer, College of Nursing, District Headquarter Hospital (DHQ), Rawalpindi,
muqadasm025@gmail.com
Sidra Batool
Sidra Batool, Nursing Officer, Shoukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital & Research Center, Lahore
sidramunirkhan38@gmail.com

DOI: http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18692344

Vol. 5 No. 1 (2026)

Pakistan Journal of Medical & Cardiological Review

https://pakjmcr.com/index.php/1/about

Online ISSN 3007-2387

Print ISSN 3007-2379

Khan et al - 2026

Author Details

Keywords:

Academic work culture, Incivility, Nursing Students, Nursing Colleges, Transformational Leadership

Received on 19 Dec, 2025

Accepted on 03 Feb, 2026

Published on 18 Feb, 2026

Corresponding E-mails & Authors*:

Mehdi Hayat Khan

mehdisnc05@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: Transformational leadership is a trending style and competency that has been embraced by many Nursing Institutions. Unfortunately, Nursing Institutes lack the essential awareness and implementation of transformational leadership (TFL). Pre-licensure nursing students do not often practice these skills in a meaningful way during their undergraduate educational experience and don't operate effectively in today's healthcare environment. If transformational leadership is employed by administration and nursing faculty as a guiding framework for nursing students, the impact of embedding could be significant on the nursing profession. There is a dire need to adopt this style to improve nursing student's behavior, their knowledge and skills.

Method:

This study was conducted using a descriptive and cross-sectional design within the framework of quantitative research methods. The study was conducted in four private Nursing Institutes affiliated with the University of Health Sciences in Pakistan. The study group consisted of a sample group of 317 nursing students in total.

Results:

The results showed that transformational leadership was positively and significantly related to innovative behavior ($p < 0.001$). There was a positive relationship between psychological counselling and innovative behavior ($\beta = 0.406$, $p < 0.001$). Psychological counselling had a positive mediating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative behavior ($\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions

This study examined the effect of transformational leadership on innovative student's behaviors and the role of psychological counselling in mediating this relationship. The findings show that transformational leadership positively affects nursing students' innovative behaviors, and this effect is strengthened through psychological counselling.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing students entering practice today must be prepared to meet continually challenging demands for rapid-cycle improvement within a turbulent environment of shifting advancing technology, and diminishing resources. Healthcare has always been a team sport, yet current demands require unprecedented team-building and negotiation skills for nursing students to collaborate effectively with professional team to meet these challenges. Nursing students continue to struggle with establishing themselves as integral team players, both inter professionally and intra-professionally (Horton-Deutsch & Sherwood, 2023). For example, large healthcare systems still fail to consistently have the voice of nursing students at the senior leadership table, and decision-making boards and public policy bodies all too often lack the perspective of nursing.

Within the nursing profession, opportunities for promoting and advancing nursing students have been waylaid by infighting and lack of professional solidarity, with subsequent inability to gain consensus on foundational topics, such as entry level for practice. Significant opportunity exists for the improved collegiality, teamwork, and solidarity that may result from consciously and passionately prioritizing leadership development in nursing education (Alexander et al., 2024).

The quality and success of the nursing education, hence the profession's future, depends on solid education programs with healthy team cultures, as professional values and expectations begin to form during the educational process. Nursing students can realize its potentials only when linking elbows with inter- and intra-professional colleagues to tackle the challenges of today's and tomorrow's healthcare environments.

Building faculty team cultures that produce nursing students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to prepare them to be strong team players is key; embracing transformational leadership (TFL) as a framework for developing leadership competencies in academic administrators, faculty, and students is one opportunity for cultivating a team-focused faculty culture (Andrews, Haskell, & Nursing, 2024). By increasing TFL competencies among educational administrators, nurse faculty, and nursing students, many current challenges might be addressed and stabilized.

TFL and Nursing Education: An Historical Perspective

Faculty are not incented to perform as a team. For example, faculty that frequently co-author manuscripts are considered suspect in the tenure and promotion process; faculty members lacking solitary scholarly production could be perceived as inadequate or worse, as slackers, jeopardizing the ultimate reward of tenure. It might even be said that competing successfully is better rewarded than team-oriented or collaborative behaviors, particularly in the current era of scarce funding for research. A paradigm shift in nursing education that counters tradition and moves toward a team- focused culture could be driven by embracing the essentials of TFL in the academic environment at all levels (van Engen et al., 2024). If administrators model the attributes and behaviors of TFL, faculty leadership skills also develop and in turn model the same for nursing students. The cascading effect of TFL skill development may result in increased professional conduct and collegiality and decreased divisive behaviors, thus cultivating a team focused culture.

Making the Case: Preventing and Addressing Incivility

One example of the team-building benefit of embracing TFL is the way, it counters alienating behaviors such as incivility. Horizontal hostility or lateral violence continues to challenge nursing students in all areas of practice. A full 85% of nursing students report experiencing lateral violence in the Nursing Institutions and continues to exist (Goddard & Mason, 2023). For decades, nursing faculty have written about professional conduct and pleaded, “Can’t we all just get along?” (Dörmann, Nauck, Wolf-Ostermann, & Stanze, 2023).

The divisive nature of unprofessional conduct detracts from the solidarity of nursing, the very thing needed for the profession to realize full potential. Nursing students cannot be catalysts without being collaborators, nor can nurses model the change needed in regard to civility. Some assume that academic nursing practice rises above the rest of the professional practice settings in terms of civility, and the assumption is justifiable; in general, higher education broadens perspective and tolerance. In reality, however, academic nursing students experience at least as much incivility as that found in the practice environment. According to Clark (2013), faculty-to-faculty incivility is one of the most under researched areas, hence one of the least understood phenomena. Proposed antecedents or contributing factors include faculty competition for diminishing resources (Clark, Olender, Kenski, & Cardoni, 2013), issues of rank and power (Fischer, 2017), reward structures and inadequate development of mentoring and peer review processes (Camfield, 2020), leadership style and administrative avoidance of the problem (Tan, Peters, & Reb, 2023), and lack of institutional policy or procedure for addressing the issue (Clark et al., 2013).

With the Pakistan facing profound faculty shortage, coupled with unprecedented growth in demand for nurses (K. Khan & Sabah, 2024), opportunity for embracing TFL as one solution for enhancing teamwork within the academic nursing environment looms large. Further research is needed exploring TFL and teamwork among nurse faculty, especially in the context of the reappointment, tenure, and promotion process.

The Chief Executive officers of any nursing institute establishes the expectations for conduct among the nursing faculties. As such, leaders that allow unprofessional or destructive behaviors among faculty to go unaddressed inadvertently reinforce these behaviors and can foster a dangerous spiral of aggression within the institute culture. It is crucial for behavior standards to be developed and disseminated throughout nurse faculty as early as possible, and it is even more important for administrators to swiftly address deviations from standards (Plimmer et al., 2023). In turn, recognition Universities (UHS &IUB) that highlight and reinforce affiliated institution's values and standards are very effective in promoting and fortifying a team culture (Wilson, FAMIA, Terhaar, & Laura, 2023).

Embracing a "developmental culture" (Wilson et al., 2023), and consistently modeling these leadership responses requires courage, confidence, passion, and other TFL skills related to communication and follower support. "Fear and anxiety will only be fully addressed when nursing students feel they are being freely served with the skills, knowledge, strategies, and resources of all faculty of the nursing institutes— regardless of culture" (Aronowitz et al., 2023).

Making the Case: Enhancing Academic Practice Relationships

In addition to addressing faculty comportment, another opportunity exists for TFL as a framework for informing leadership development in the academic nursing setting, namely improving relationships with the nursing practice environment. Linkages with practice sites are often weak Linkages with practice sites are often weak (Alhamed, 2023) due to tensions between academic and practice nursing students secondary, in part, to many of the same cultural factors that prevent effective learning environment among faculty (Attia & Ibrahim, 2023).

Likewise, expanding TFL competencies among faculty may contribute to the skillsets required to help bridge gaps between the academic and practice settings. Building academic- practice relationships and teamwork may stabilize the foundation for nursing student development and furthers point of care research opportunities. Practice site-based research, in turn, may expedite translation of research findings to care, advance evidence-based practice, and further faculty development (Rivera & Shelley, 2024). It stands to reason that improved academic-practice relationships could foster recruitment of practitioners to faculty positions as well. Overall, embracing TFL as a framework for leadership development among nursing faculty can improve external as well as internal teambuilding.

Making the Case: Improving Work Environment Culture and Faculty Retention

While faculty-to-faculty incivility, academic-practice tensions, and the need for leadership development have significant impact on educational and nursing workforce outcomes, their impact on the nursing education workforce is significant. Rising salaries and employment opportunities for

master (MSN) prepared nurses within healthcare practice settings are increasing, posing escalating competition for faculty. All sorts of creative solutions are needed at this time, including a retention strategy related to improving the work culture and environment in nursing education institutions. TFL is known to have a significant positive effect on work environment culture and student's behavior (Wahyuni, Pamungkas, Mustikawati, & Services, 2024). Faculty mentors with TFL characteristics are significantly more effective than those without (Fisher, 2023). If embracing TFL as a framework for leadership development in the academic setting can improve nursing institution's culture and, as a result, decrease turnover and loss of faculty to retirement or other practice settings, the subsequent impact on nursing workforce development could be significant.

TFL and Nursing Education

Interestingly, there is not a great deal of research evidence related to effectiveness of leadership in higher education in general. While little research has been published evaluating TFL in the context of nursing education, evidence does exist to support the positive influence of TFL in higher education (I. U. Khan, Idris, & Amin, 2023; Ystaas et al., 2023). While TFL is readily adaptable to nursing, the work has not yet been conceptualized as nursing theory. To bolster nursing science while honoring the contribution and expertise from other disciplines, the next step should be to develop and test an adaptation of the TFL framework to nursing education. If we "unpack" the essential components of TFL, the supportive role it can play in the nursing academic setting is clear. In summary, TFL competencies can and should be modeled and taught in nursing education on a wholesale basis; administrators, faculty, and students will benefit, as will the profession and healthcare in general. Administrators should model TFL skills and attributes to build teamwork within faculty, address and prevent incivility, and increase retention through enhanced job satisfaction. In turn, faculty benefit from learning and embracing TFL and can improve practice site relationships and serve as role models for the nursing students. In the end, graduating nursing students may have stronger TFL knowledge, skills, and attributes to bring to the bedside, enhancing

patient care outcomes, building solidarity within the profession, and improving relationships with the inter- professional team.

Study design

This study was designed as a descriptive and cross-sectional study. It was conducted on nursing students in four private nursing colleges in Lahore, Pakistan. A total of 1107 undergraduate nursing students were enrolled in these institutes. These four nursing colleges were selected based on specific criteria, including geographical location, hospital volume, and data accessibility. The number of nursing students enrolled in these institutes is 117, 233, 359, and 398. The sample size was determined as 276, with a 5% margin of error, a 95% confidence interval, and a universe size of 1107. A total of 325 participants were surveyed using the convenience sampling method. However, 8 participants were excluded due to missing data. Participants filled out the surveys independently without any intervention from the researcher. The inclusion criteria for the study were being a nursing students, enrolled in these institution for at least one year, and voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study. Those who did not meet these criteria were excluded. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous and that their data would be kept confidential.

Data collection tools

Data collection tools consist of personal information form, transformational leadership scale, and innovative behavior scale.

Data analysis

SPSS software was used to analyze the data. To test normality, skewness and kurtosis values were examined. The skewness and kurtosis values of the variables were between − 1.5 and + 1.5, and this result confirmed that the variables showed normal distribution. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) value was

used to test the internal consistency of the scales. The Cronbach alpha value of the scales was greater than 0.80 and the results showed that the scales were highly reliable.

Results:

The average age of the participants was 21.41 ± 2.32 years, 77.3% were female, 26.5% were married, 42.6% had Bachelor degree (BSN), and the average years of study was 2.61 ± 1.26 years.

Table: 1

Sample characteristics (n = 317)

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	245	77.3
	Male	72	22.7
Marital status	Married	84	26.5
	Single	233	73.5
Education	Diploma (LHV)	64	20.2
	Bachelor's degree (BSN)	135	42.6
	Bachelor's degree (Post RN)	99	31.2
	Diploma (CNA)	19	6.0
Average age			21.41 ± 2.32
Years of study			2.61 ± 1.26

Discussion:

Innovation is an important factor to elevate the nursing students at the global level, and creating work environments that support innovative behaviors has become extremely important. This study aims to reveal the effect of transformational leadership on the innovative behavior of nursing students and the mediating role of staff empowerment in this relationship.

Our study revealed that transformational leadership positively affects nursing student innovative college behaviors. By creating a vision for the future and fostering a culture of innovation, transformational leaders can significantly increase the capacity for innovation in the nursing institution by motivating students to embrace new ideas, drive change, and aim for excellence. The results can be attributed to the fact that transformational leaders provide an inspiring vision to their employees, encouraging them to think beyond current boundaries. The need to produce fast and effective solutions to constantly changing needs, especially in the health sector, brings nurses' creative and flexible thinking skills to the fore. Transformational leaders activate this potential in nursing students, helping them go beyond traditional practices and develop innovative practices in clinical processes. In this context, transformational leadership can be considered not only as a managerial approach but also as a strategic element in the formation of an innovative organizational culture.

The findings indicate that nursing students who perceive themselves as more competent, autonomous, and impactful in their study processes demonstrate a greater propensity to engage in creative thinking and generate innovative solutions. Psychological empowerment not only motivates students to fulfill their formal responsibilities but also fosters proactive and novel approaches to addressing study-related challenges. Within this framework, psychological empowerment can be conceptualized as a fundamental intrinsic resource that facilitates innovative behavior and serves as a strategic determinant in enhancing an organization's capacity for innovation.

The results show that transformational leaders indirectly encourage students' innovative behaviors by increasing their psychological empowerment levels. Visionary and supportive attitudes of leaders pave the way for nurses to feel more competent, effective, and autonomous, which makes it easier for them to think creatively and engage in innovative practices. Therefore, psychological empowerment functions as a critical mediating mechanism that channels the influence of transformational leadership on innovative behavior, thereby reinforcing and sustaining this relationship over time.

Strengths and limitations

The study used a comprehensive research design to examine complex relationships, and a robust data collection process was conducted. The research conducted in a private sector nursing institutions, allowed for meaningful results to be obtained for practice. The study examining leadership approaches and students behaviors in the nursing field offers valuable implications for putting theoretical findings into practice. Practical suggestions are presented to help develop strategies to increase innovation in nursing.

In addition, this study was conducted only on undergraduate nursing students in the nursing colleges in Lahore. This may limit the generalizability of the findings, and results may be obtained in different sectors or cultural contexts.

Conclusion

The professional potential for nursing students is exciting—we are at a precipice to play pivotal roles in policy development and wholesale reform of the healthcare system. The time is right, with political doors opening (PN&MC recommendations), improving equality for male and female-dominated professions, along with the bolstering of diversity in nursing with growing numbers of millennials and males. Yet despite good timing, nursing student will realize its full potential only if a collective voice and a united front is present.

The time is now to get serious about professional leadership development, embracing the tenets of TFL in all aspects of practice, research, and education, to develop the competencies essential to solidarity of the nursing profession. Reliving and owning victimization and oppression should remain in nursing's past. Now is the time to seize the power potential of nursing, granted by public trust and respect as well as the sheer volume of nursing professionals, to influence healthcare and to create a foothold for future leadership in healthcare.

By modeling, cascading, and expanding TFL competencies; reaching "across the aisle" to our partners in other practice settings; and honoring each specialty for the unique value and contribution, it brings to the professional table, nursing can, and must, do so much more than just

"all get along." Nursing can be the collective voice for patient- focused care and balanced budgets that advocate for quality and safety in healthcare, a far greater purpose.

References

Alexander, K. A., Aycock, D., Randolph, S. D., Cothran, F., Young, H. M., & Harden, J. T. J. J. o. P. N. (2024). Leadership in Nursing Science: Four Scholarly Journeys Rooted in Historically Black College and University Excellence. *50*, 35-42.

Alhamed, A. A. J. J. o. P. N. (2023). The link among academic stress, sleep disturbances, depressive symptoms, academic performance, and the moderating role of resourcefulness in health professions students during COVID-19 pandemic. *46*, 83-91.

Andrews, S. P., Haskell, B. J. T., & Nursing, L. i. (2024). Establishing a nursing academic healthy work environment: An evolving process. *19*(2), 180-184.

Aronowitz, T., Amoah, R. K., Fisher, M. A., Manero, C., Peterson, K., Terrien, J. M., . . . Morris, N. J. J. o. P. N. (2023). Facilitating diversity of thought in learning environments for nursing students. *46*, 141-145.

Attia, Y. K., & Ibrahim, R. H. J. I. i. M. U. (2023). Difficulties experienced in clinical learning settings for nurses in Iraq: Perspectives of nursing administrators and nursing instructors. *38*, 101229.

Camfield, E. (2020). Beyond the blame game: How faculty culture in higher education constrains change.

Clark, C. M., Olender, L., Kenski, D., & Cardoni, C. J. J. o. N. E. (2013). Exploring and addressing faculty-to-faculty incivility: A national perspective and literature review. *52*(4), 211-218.

Dörmann, L., Nauck, F., Wolf-Ostermann, K., & Stanze, H. J. P. m. r. (2023). "I Should at Least Have the Feeling That It [...] Really Comes from Within": Professional Nursing Views on Assisted Suicide. *4*(1), 175-184.

Fischer, S. A. J. N. S. Q. (2017). Transformational leadership in nursing education: Making the case. *30*(2), 124-128.

Fisher, K. J. I. J. o. L. i. E. (2023). Reimagining mentorship for doctoral student success: the potential utility of transformational leadership practices. 1-17.

Goddard, D., & Mason, H. M. J. G. N. (2023). Lateral violence in the nursing profession. *46*(3), 259-262.

Horton-Deutsch, S., & Sherwood, G. D. (2023). *Learning Guide & Journal for Reflective Practice: Reimagining Ourselves, Reimagining Nursing*: Sigma Theta Tau.

Khan, I. U., Idris, M., & Amin, R. U. J. I. J. o. L. i. E. (2023). Leadership style and performance in higher education: the role of organizational justice. *26*(6), 1111-1125.

Khan, K., & Sabah, M. N. J. i.-M. s. J. o. N. (2024). Unleashing the Power of Transformational Leadership: Revolutionizing the Nursing Profession in Pakistan. *14*(2), 23.

Plimmer, G., Kuntz, J., Berman, E., Malinen, S., Näswall, K., & Franken, E. J. A. J. o. P. A. (2023). The negative relationships between employee resilience and ambiguity, complexity, and inter-agency collaboration. *82*(2), 248-270.

Rivera, R. R., & Shelley, A. N. J. N. L. (2024). Building a Foundation for Excellence: Advancing Evidence-Based Practice and Nursing Research in a Multi-campus Healthcare Setting.

Tan, N., Peters, E. K., & Reb, J. J. M. (2023). Effects of a Mindfulness-Based Leadership Training on Leadership Behaviors and Effectiveness. *14*(9), 2181-2194.

van Engen, V., Buljac-Samardzic, M., Baatenburg de Jong, R., Braithwaite, J., Ahaus, K., Den Hollander-Ardon, M., . . . Systems. (2024). A decade of change towards Value-Based Health Care at a Dutch University Hospital: a complexity-informed process study. *22*(1), 94.

Wahyuni, M. A., Pamungkas, R. A., Mustikawati, I. S. J. I. J. o. N., & Services, H. (2024). Leadership Style, Supervision Techniques, Competencies, and Implementation of Professional Nursing Practices on Service Quality: A Cross-Sectional. *7*(5), 173-181.

Wilson, M. L., FAMIA, F., Terhaar, F. M. F., & Laura, A. J. P. f. D. S. i. N.-E.-B. P. f. D. S. i. N.-E.-B. (2023). Building Nursing for the Future. 44.

Ystaas, L. M. K., Nikitara, M., Ghobrial, S., Latzourakis, E., Polychronis, G., & Constantinou, C. S. J. N. R. (2023). The impact of transformational leadership in the nursing work environment and patients' outcomes: a systematic review. *13*(3), 1271-1290.