

## The Impact of Leadership Styles on Healthcare Professionals' Well-Being, Job Performance, and Burnout: Evidence from Greece

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### Abstract:

This study investigates the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction, burnout, well-being, and job performance among healthcare professionals in Greece. Using the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model, it examines how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership correlate with healthcare workforce attitudes and outcomes. The study, based on responses from 351 professionals in public hospitals in Central and Western Macedonia, found that transformational leadership was positively associated with job performance and well-being and negatively associated with burnout. The findings underline the critical role of effective leadership in healthcare systems, with implications for managerial practice and organizational development.

**Keywords:** *Transformational Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Burnout, Healthcare Professionals, Job Performance, Well-Being, Clinical Leadership.*

### المخلص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير أنماط القيادة على الرضا الوظيفي، والإرهاق، والرفاهية والأداء الوظيفي بين العاملين في مجال الرعاية الصحية في اليونان. باستخدام نموذج "متطلبات الوظيفة-الموارد (JD–R)"، تدرس كيف ترتبط القيادة التحويلية، والقيادة التبادلية، والقيادة الترسلية (laissez-faire) بتوجهات القوى العاملة في القطاع الصحي ونتائجها. وبناءً على ردود 351 متخصصاً في المستشفيات العامة في منطقتي مقدونيا الوسطى والغربية، وجدت الدراسة أن القيادة التحويلية كانت مرتبطة إيجابياً بالأداء الوظيفي والرفاهية، ومرتبطة سلباً بالإرهاق. تؤكد النتائج على الدور الحاسم للقيادة الفعالة في الأنظمة الصحية، مع تبعات على الممارسات الإدارية والتطوير التنظيمي.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** القيادة التحويلية، الرضا الوظيفي، الإرهاق، العاملون في الرعاية الصحية، الأداء الوظيفي، الرفاهية، القيادة السريرية

### INTRODUCTION

Healthcare organizations globally face challenges including workforce shortages, increased demand, financial constraints, and rising expectations for patient-centered care. In this complex environment, leadership plays a vital role in shaping organizational culture and influencing workforce outcomes. However, the healthcare sector is often dominated by hierarchical structures, and effective leadership must go beyond positional authority to include clinical and team-based leadership.

This study examines the impact of leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—on the attitudes and well-being of healthcare professionals. Specifically, it explores how these styles influence job satisfaction, burnout, well-being, and job performance in Greek public hospitals.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership theory in healthcare has evolved from traditional trait-based approaches to behavioral and contingency models. Transformational leadership, defined by Bass and Avolio (1994), emphasizes vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. It is often contrasted with transactional leadership, which is based on reward-based exchanges. Laissez-faire leadership, the absence of active leadership, is generally seen as detrimental.

Prior research highlights the importance of effective clinical leadership in promoting teamwork, reducing medical errors, and improving job satisfaction. The Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) integrates transformational and transactional behaviors, suggesting that effective leaders combine both styles as situational demands evolve. Moreover, the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model provides a framework to understand how leadership acts as a resource to mitigate job demands. In healthcare, this model helps explore how leadership influences burnout and performance through resource allocation, role clarity, and emotional support.

## METHODOLOGY

### A. Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional study was conducted using a structured questionnaire composed of demographic questions and validated scales measuring leadership styles (using the MLQ scale), burnout (Maslach Burnout Inventory), job satisfaction, well-being, and job performance.

### B. Study Population

The survey was administered to healthcare professionals—doctors, nurses, and allied health staff—working in public tertiary and secondary hospitals in Central and Western Macedonia, Greece. A total of 351 valid responses were collected out of 400 distributed questionnaires.

### C. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS v25. Reliability of scales was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha. Hypotheses were tested using t-tests, ANOVA, Pearson correlation, and Chi-square tests at a 95% confidence level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

## RESULTS

The analysis of the data from 351 healthcare professionals provided clear insights into how different leadership styles correlate with job-related attitudes and well-being metrics.

### A. Correlation Between Leadership Styles and Outcome Variables

Transformational leadership exhibited a statistically significant positive correlation with:

- Job performance ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )
- Employee well-being ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )

It also showed a significant negative correlation with:

- Burnout ( $r = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )

Transactional leadership showed weaker but still positive correlations with:

- Job performance ( $r = 0.28$ )
- Job satisfaction ( $r = 0.21$ )

However, it was not significantly related to burnout ( $r = -0.14$ ).

Laissez-faire leadership showed no positive correlations with the outcome variables.

Instead, it had:

- A positive correlation with burnout ( $r = +0.33$ )
- Negative correlations with both job satisfaction and performance.

These relationships are visualized in Figure 1.

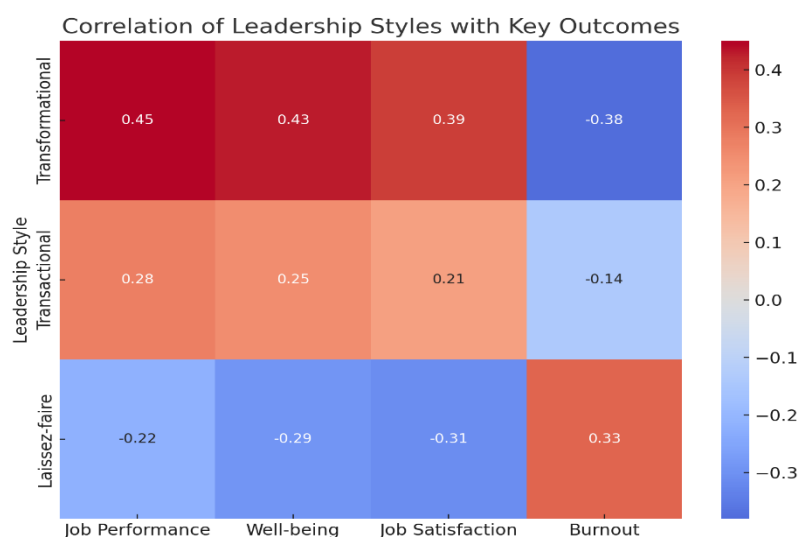


Figure 1: Correlation of Leadership Styles with Key Outcomes

### B. Relationships Between Work

-Related Outcomes

Additional findings include:

- Job satisfaction was positively correlated with:
  - Job performance ( $r = 0.51, p < 0.01$ )
  - Well-being ( $r = 0.49, p < 0.01$ )
- Burnout negatively correlated with:
  - Job performance ( $r = -0.41, p < 0.01$ )
  - Well-being ( $r = -0.46, p < 0.01$ )

These results support the mediating role of burnout and job satisfaction in the JD-R model framework.

### C. Influence of Demographics

The analysis also indicated that demographic variables had a moderating effect:

- Age and years of experience influenced how professionals perceived leadership styles—especially transformational leadership.
- Nurses, compared to doctors and allied professionals, reported significantly lower job satisfaction and higher burnout ( $p < 0.05$ ).

These patterns suggest that tailoring leadership strategies based on workforce demographics can enhance organizational outcomes.

## DISCUSSION

The findings support the hypothesis that leadership style significantly affects healthcare professionals' attitudes and performance.

Transformational leadership, characterized by motivation and emotional intelligence, is particularly effective in enhancing morale and mitigating burnout in high-stress environments like hospitals.

Transactional leadership may support short-term objectives but lacks the visionary component needed for sustainable improvements. Laissez-faire leadership remains counterproductive, associated with disengagement and dissatisfaction.

These outcomes reinforce the JD-R model's applicability in healthcare by demonstrating how leadership, as a job resource, counteracts job demands and fosters resilience and productivity.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence on the role of leadership in shaping key outcomes for healthcare professionals.

It confirms that transformational leadership has a direct, positive effect on job satisfaction, performance, and well-being while reducing burnout.

Healthcare organizations should prioritize leadership development programs emphasizing emotional intelligence, shared vision, and team empowerment. Future research should explore longitudinal effects and interventions across diverse healthcare systems.

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