

Stepping Into Leadership: Conflict Management Among Newly Appointed Charge Nurse in a Tertiary Hospital

Katherine V. Benesio¹, Prof. Mary Ann E. Lopez, MAN, RN, LPT²

<https://orcid.or//0009-0001-4810-615X>¹, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7566-5152>²

St. Bernadette of Lourdes College^{1,2}

kbenesio@sbllc.edu.ph¹ melopez@fatima.edu.ph²

ABSTRACT

The study was of qualitative phenomenological design, the objective being explored were the lived experiences of nine newly appointed charge nurses. The data were gathered using a semi-structured interview, analyzed to establish themes that emerged from the data. The themes that emerged were: (1) Embracing the transition to a leadership position: from doubts and uncertainty to accountability, (2) Management of conflicts at the workplace through fair and professional leadership, (3) Implementing dynamic and adjustable styles for conflicts management, (4) Development of an adaptable and reflexive leader, and (5) Fostering leadership effectiveness through professional training and institutional supports. At the outset of their roles, the participants reported fears, doubts, and anxieties; they, however, experienced growth in confidence and self-esteem with accumulated experiences, role modeling, and organizational support. Leadership development and mentoring as key organizational support initiatives proved significant to enhancing the leadership capability of novice charge nurses.

Keywords: Newly appointed charge nurses, conflict management, leadership transition, nursing leadership, lived experiences, mentorship, organizational support

INTRODUCTION

As you step into the role of charge nurse, leadership, communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills are needed (World Health Organization, 2020; Wong et al., 2024; International Council of Nurses, 2022). Although research has examined nursing leadership, little has specifically examined the lived experiences of novice charge nurses regarding the management of workplace conflicts as part of leadership transition (Tisalona & Aliswag, 2025; Nikitara et al., 2024). The research study addresses the experience of novice charge nurses and aims to use this knowledge to improve nursing leadership programs, mentorship, and support systems.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of newly appointed charge nurses in managing workplace conflicts during their transition into leadership roles in a tertiary hospital.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research question:

1. What are the lived experiences of newly appointed charge nurses in managing workplace conflicts during their transition into leadership roles in a tertiary hospital?

Scope and Delimitations

This qualitative study sought to uncover the lived experiences of nine new charge nurses with 1 to 6 months of leadership experience regarding managing workplace conflict during leadership transition. A single tertiary hospital was included, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews.

Review of Related Literature

Transition to charge nurse is an ambitious role transition that involves a leader, communication, decision-making, and conflict management capabilities (EveryNurse, 2023; Nursing CE Central, 2022). The confidence, capability and role adjustment of newly initiated nurse leaders were reinforced with mentorship, leadership, organizational assistance, training, development, and support programs (Ordaneza, 2025; "Just Dive Right In!", 2026; Cangco et al., 2023; Salvador et al., 2025; American Nurses Association, 2023; Catrambone et al., 2025; Ariar & Bacarisas, 2026). Nevertheless, the lived experiences of newly appointed charge nurses in tertiary hospitals have not yet been investigated, and there is an urgent need to conduct a phenomenon-based study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings of this study included: Benner's (1984) "Novice to Expert" theory, Peplau's (1952) Interpersonal Relations theory, and Orem's (1995) Self-Care Deficit theory as a framework to define leadership, communicate effectively, resolve conflict, and cope during the newly promoted charge nurse transition to a leadership role.

Conceptual Framework

This article explored leadership transition in new charge nurses and their workplace conflicts, and provides an example of how leadership transition, experience of conflict management, coping methods, and support from the organization influence the process of acquiring leadership ability and adapting to the new role successfully.

METHODOLOGY

The present study utilized a qualitative phenomenological design in which the lived experiences of the newly assigned charge nurse with workplace conflicts during their leadership transition period were described through semi-structured interviews, and the analysis was based on thematic analysis.

Research Design

This study was designed using a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of newly assigned charge nurses experiencing workplace conflicts while adapting into their roles as leaders

Research Steps

Data collection was performed in a systematic manner consisting of several phases: Gaining ethics and institutional approvals, followed by participant recruitment, after which interviews were conducted. Subsequently, the data were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted

to determine the primary themes that articulate the lived experiences of newly appointed charge nurses. The findings were then triangulated and discussed in order to conclude the study.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Nine (9) newly appointed charge nurses in a tertiary hospital located in Marikina City who were purposively chosen participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews, transcription, and data analysis yielded a list of themes describing the lived experiences of new charge nurses managing workplace conflicts during their leadership transition.

Data Analysis Methods

Data from interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological approach. Interview transcripts were read; meaningful statements were extracted, analyzed for meaning, organized into theme categories, and then themes were constructed and confirmed to describe participants' experiences. Findings were checked through member-checking.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

Since this is a qualitative, phenomenological study, no hypotheses were posed in the research. Trustworthiness was assured through member checks, perusal of the interview data, and checking themes for fidelity with participants' lived experiences.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

This study was limited to newly appointed charge nurses from a single tertiary hospital; thus, the findings may not be generalizable to other settings. Ethical approval and informed consent were obtained prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and participants' confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy were strictly maintained throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What are the lived experiences of newly appointed charge nurses in managing workplace conflicts during their transition into leadership roles in a tertiary hospital?

Theme 1. Embracing the Transition into Leadership: From Uncertainty to Responsibility. *It is revealed that newly-appointed charge nurses first went through a phase of doubt and self-criticism, before eventually learning to grow in their roles through the guidance of experience.*

Theme 2. Navigating Workplace Conflicts Through Fair and Professional Leadership. *Workplace conflict resolution was observed to take place in a Fair, Professional, Transparent, and Emotionally Controlled way by the participants. This theme indicates what was lived and observed in practice to achieve successful workplace conflicts while at the same time sustaining workplace relationships.*

Theme 3. Employing Adaptive Conflict Management Strategies. *The analysis showed that participants used a combination of situation, individual-based and leadership mentoring in flexible ways to managing conflict. This theme shows how leaders adjusted their approaches to challenges they faced at work.*

Theme 4. Growing as a Resilient and Reflective Leader. *In addition to what was already mentioned above it was found that resilience and reflection developed as participants gained more leadership experience. Within this theme workplace conflicts helped to foster professional and personal development.*

Theme 5. Strengthening Leadership Through Organizational Support and Continuous Professional Development. *It stressed that mentorship, management training, and the organization's commitment were important tools for supporting charge nurses to grow leadership skills and successfully navigate workplace conflict as they adjust.*

SUMMARY

This study investigated newly appointed charge nurses' lived experiences in dealing with conflict in the work environment in an environment where leadership is changing. The findings produced five themes which illustrate the new leaders' process of moving from novice to expert as their confidence grew through their experience, the impact of mentoring, their approach to adaptive leadership, and organizational supports.

CONCLUSIONS

Newly appointed charge nurses became more confident in their leadership skills by using communication, mentorship, reflection, and experience as their guides; these elements collectively prepared them to address workplace conflicts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. **Hospital administrators** should develop systematic mentorship and leadership development programs to assist the transition of novice nurse leaders into charge nurse roles.
2. **Nursing managers** can facilitate the work of novice charge nurses by modeling effective communication skills and developing a safe and collaborative work environment with appropriate mechanisms for resolving conflict fairly.
3. **Healthcare institutions** can utilize effective communication and conflict management training as well as leadership training in the form of a "boot camp" approach for all new nurse leaders.
4. **Newly appointed charge nurses** should utilize critical self-reflection, develop a working relationship with an experienced mentor, and attend formal continuing education as part of the development process.
5. **Future researchers** may be interested in exploring similar questions within other acute care environments or by utilizing a larger sample size to continue the refinement of this evidence-based practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express our gratitude to all individuals who provided assistance in completing this research. We would also like to express our gratitude to our colleagues and friends for their unwavering encouragement, support, and valuable comments over the entire process. Ultimately, our families warrant gratitude for their enduring patience and unwavering support

throughout the entire process. These individuals contributed to the feasibility of this research.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

REFERENCES

- American Nurses Association. (2023). *Healthy work environment standards for nursing*. <https://www.nursingworld.org/your-career/healthy-work-environment>
- Ariar, B., & Bacarisas, J. P. (2026). Adaptive leadership on the empowering behavior of nurse managers in a Level 2 hospital. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science*, 11(5). <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.1105>
- Cangco, N. C., Detera, J. D., Sirajani, K. B., Vinluan, R. D. D., & Noceda, J. L. P. (2023). *Role and training of emergency department charge nurses: A phenomenological inquiry* [Preprint]. Zenodo. <https://zenodo.org/records/8026814>
- Catrambone, C. D., & Mohr, L. D. (2026). Clinical credibility bridges leadership capability: Pathway to nursing leadership excellence. *Nurse Leader*, 24(2), 102557. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2025.102557>
- Department of Health. (2022). *The nurse-to-patient ratio in the Philippines from 2016–2021* [Freedom of Information response]. Republic of the Philippines. <https://www.foi.gov.ph/requests/the-nurse-to-patient-ratio-in-the-philippines-from-2016-2021/>
- EveryNurse. (2023, June 21). *The transition from staff nurse to charge nurse*. <https://everynurse.org/transition-staff-nurse-to-charge-nurse/>
- International Council of Nurses. (2022). *2021: The International Year of the Health and Care Worker and the COVID-19 pandemic*. <https://www.icn.ch/resources/publications-and-reports/2021-international-year-health-and-care-worker-and-covid-19>
- Just dive right in!* Nurse leaders' experiences of challenging times in clinical settings: A phenomenological study. (2026). *PubMed Central*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12911960/>
- Labrague, L. J., McEnroe-Petitte, D. M., Bowling, A. M., Nwafor, C. E., & Tsaras, K. (2019). High-fidelity simulation and nursing students' anxiety and self-confidence: A systematic review. *Nursing Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12337>
- Nikitara, M., Dimalibot, M. R., Latzourakis, E., & Constantinou, C. S. (2024). Conflict management in nursing: Analyzing styles, strategies, and factors associated with their selection: A systematic review. *Healthcare*. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11676306/>
- Nursing CE Central. (2022, July 12). *The transition from staff nurse to charge nurse*. <https://nursingcecentral.com/charge-nurse/>
- Ordaneza, J. H. (2025). *Taking up the challenge: Lived experiences of novice nurse leaders* (Master's thesis, Davao Doctors College, Inc.). <https://www.davaodoctors.edu.ph/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/ORDANEZA-JENNIFER-H.pdf>

- Ortiga, Y. Y. (2018). Learning to fill the labor niche: Filipino nursing graduates and the risk of the migration trap. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, 4(1), 172–187. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2018.4.1.10>
- Salvador, R. F., Adique, L. C., Manaloto, A. M., Pasco, R. T., & Cuevas, J. E. (2025). The relationship between nurse leaders' conflict management styles and staff morale in a hospital-based healthcare setting in the Philippines. *Puissant*. <https://puissant.stepacademic.net/puissant/article/view/672>
- Tisalona, K. J. G., & Aliswag, E. G. (2025). Conflicts experienced and preferred conflict management style among staff nurses in selected private hospitals in Laguna, Philippines: Basis for a conflict resolution framework. *Journal of Neonatal Surgery*. <https://www.jneonatsurg.com/index.php/jns/article/download/4786/4024/17577>
- World Health Organization. (2020). *State of the world's nursing 2020: Investing in education, jobs and leadership*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003279>
- World Health Organization, & World Innovation Summit for Health. (2022). *Our duty of care: A global call to action to protect the mental health of health and care workers*. <https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/health-workforce/working4health/20221005-wish-duty.pdf>