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## Perceived Challenges to Prevention of Work-Related Conflicts Among Nurse Leaders in Teaching Hospital, Calabar, Nigeria

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**Purpose:** Work related conflicts (WRCs) occur regularly in the health care institutions. In many instances, there has been complete cessation of health-care services with seriously ill patients becoming stranded or looking up to private practitioners if they can afford the exorbitant costs of such care. Some others who cannot afford the exorbitant cost of health care services sometimes have their lives prematurely terminated. The consequences of WRCs wherever they occur are numerous. Nursing is a dynamic profession that is driven by the need to provide safe and high quality patients-centred care. There is need for leadership initiatives with practice of innovative leadership strategies by nurse leaders to adequately deal with WRCs to enhance quality patients' care and respect for professional colleagues at all times. This study assessed Nursing Leaders' Perceived Challenges to Prevention of WRCs in University Teaching Hospital, Calabar, Nigeria. Specific objectives were to determine nurse leaders' knowledge of causes of WRCs, conflict handling styles for prevention as well as management strategies, institution related factors, nursing practice-related factors, inter-professional collaboration-related factors, patients' related factors and nurse leaders' related challenges to prevention and management of work-related conflicts.

**Methods:** A descriptive survey design and census method was used to study a total population of 67 nurse leaders of which 62 (92.5%) provided complete data for analysis. Instrument for data collection was self-structured questionnaire with content validity index of 0.80 and reliability co-efficient of .82. Descriptive data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviations while the hypotheses were tested using Chi-square statistics determined at significant level 0.05.

**Results:** Results showed that 55 (88.7%) respondents perceived institution related factors including policies as challenges to prevention of work-related conflicts; 53 (85.5%) pointed towards leaders' related factors including differential treatments of different professional groups while 55 (88.79%) indicated inter-personal collaboration factors as challenges to nurse leaders' prevention of work-related conflicts. Poor knowledge of causes of conflicts and conflict handling styles were observed from 41 (66.1%) and 56 (90.3%) of the respondents respectively. A total of 50 (80.6%) of the respondents do not use any conflict handling styles to prevent conflicts at the work-place. Results from the hypotheses testing showed statistically significant influences of institution-related factors ( $P=.000$ ); nursing practice-related factors ( $P=.000$ ); patients' related factors ( $P=.000$ ); inter-personal collaboration-related factors ( $P=.000$ ); nurse-leaders' knowledge of causes ( $P=.000$ ) and knowledge of conflict handling styles ( $P=.000$ ) on their actual conflict handling styles.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, several variables including poor knowledge of conflict handling styles were perceived as challenges to prevention of WRCs. The implications therefore are that the nurse leaders who do not know the conflict handling styles will not also use any conflict handling styles that can assist them to mitigate conflicts in the work place. Since the consequences of WRCs can be disastrous wherever they exist, there is need for regular training of nurse leaders globally on conflict handling styles to improve skills for WRCs prevention. Furthermore, other perceived challenges which act as restraining forces for prevention and management of WRCs should be regularly addressed.

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**Title:**

Perceived Challenges to Prevention of Work-Related Conflicts Among Nurse Leaders in Teaching Hospital, Calabar, Nigeria

**Keywords:**

Conflicts, Nurse-leaders and Prevention

**Abstract Summary:**

Work related conflicts (WRCs) often result in grave consequences if not properly managed. Nursing is driven by the need to provide high quality care. This study examined nurse leaders' perceived challenges to prevention of WRCs. Institution-based and inter-personal collaboration factors were perceived as the greatest challenges to prevention of WRCs.

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