



# Organizational Leadership: Chief Nursing Officer Motivations and Challenges in a Private Primary Hospital Context

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## Abstract

Leadership is the act of navigating an organization towards success and handling the difficulties it confronts using logic and control. It is widely acknowledged that the best management always offers total order and consistency to organizational goals and procedures, whereas leadership brings about dynamic change. Good management provides stability, efficiency, and consistency while keeping personnel engaged and motivated to fulfill a well-articulated Organizational leadership. Especially in healthcare, leadership faces challenges such as factionalism and seniority mindsets. These can create power imbalances and hinder effective leadership. Chief nursing officers (CNOs) play a crucial role in addressing these challenges, especially in the context of increasing healthcare demands. The researcher aims to investigate the fundamental role of organizational leadership factors, in which nurse executives play a crucial role in leading the nursing department. This case study aims to understand the experiences of a chief nursing officer in navigating these complexities and provide recommendations for effective leadership in a private primary hospital. Key challenges for the CNO included dealing with resistance from subordinates, managing a diverse workforce, and ensuring effective time management. The CNO emphasized the importance of empathic and participative leadership, active listening, and providing constructive feedback as crucial for building trust, fostering collaboration, and guiding personnel toward achieving organizational goals. This study provides insights into how a CNO can prepare for and effectively address various organizational challenges through empathetic leadership, constructive feedback, and effective time management. The researcher concluded that the chief nurse in the nurse executive position in a dynamic work setting plays a significant role in spearheading the nursing department.

*Keywords: surgical smoke, electrocautery, healthcare workers, lasers, evacuate, hazardous, toxic- chemicals, surgical tools, chemical, exposure, Ultrasonic scalpel, Electrosurgery*



## INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is essential to the success of any organization because it fosters positive working conditions, supports organizational growth, and significantly influences overall productivity. Yet many managers struggle to fully utilize their leadership potential, which can result in operational inefficiencies and hinder organizational progress. In connection, Managers play an important role in guiding the performance of subordinates, ensuring that teams remain aligned with organizational goals and capable of meeting evolving demands. The issue is that managers do not entirely understand how to maximize leadership potential, resulting in organizational inefficiencies. If nursing managers can genuinely learn to comprehend leadership, their organizations will grow and at the same time, leaders focus on improving the performance of their subordinates. The nursing workforce faces organizational challenges (Raderstorf et al., 2020). Like any organization, effective leadership fosters excellent working conditions and drives business growth (Northouse, 2021; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Engaged and inspired workers create a supportive atmosphere where employees feel valued, fostering creativity and initiative in problem-solving and service enhancement (Drucker, 2007; Vuorivirta-Vuoti, 2023). However, managers are often challenged with how to maximize leadership potential, and even in preparing for a resilience plan in a rapidly changing landscape (Ballantyne & Achour, 2022). Among the many styles, transformational leadership inspires innovation and fosters a shared vision among its teams (Qurratul, 2024). In every organization, those in leadership positions must have good leadership skills. Effective leadership can lead to excellent conditions and growth within a business. A significant influence on an organization's productivity, it is critical to grasp the genuine consequences and implementation. The issue is that managers do not entirely understand how to maximize leadership potential, resulting in organizational inefficiencies. If leaders can genuinely learn to comprehend leadership, their organizations will grow.

Moreover, leadership abilities are essential for both personal and professional growth. Various writers define leadership differently. The most common definition of leadership is the ability to influence or the art of persuading individuals to work freely and enthusiastically toward collective goals. In hospital organizations, nurse executives are essential and play a critical role. In any hospital, the role of chief nursing officers cannot be overemphasized (Auerbach & Buerhaus, 2011). This complex, demanding, and multidimensional role requires a great deal of accountability (Ingwell-Spolan, 2016; Raderstorf et al., 2020), necessitating a set of executive leadership skills and professional abilities to hold top-level authority in decision-making and to remain receptive to everyday turmoil and difficulties (Ahlqvist, 2023). They require a specific set of executive leadership skills and professional abilities to hold top-level authority in decision-making. A nurse executive is the highest-ranking administrative officer in a nursing organization. They direct the nursing staff, supervise the management of patient care services, and make administrative choices that support the organization's objectives. According to Ballantyne and Achour's (2022) study, a comprehensive resilience plan is necessary to ensure the resilience of healthcare services, which are primarily dependent on nurses. In essence, nurse executives oversee the entire nursing workforce within a healthcare facility. According



to Raderstorf et al. (2020), the state of the nursing workforce is described as challenging, thereby increasing the need for flexibility and adaptation among nurse leaders. Their responsibilities include enabling communication across numerous.

In connection, a Chief Nursing Officer can only influence an organization's vision by demonstrating excellent leadership abilities. Nurses can advance from bedside responsibilities to become responsible boardroom partners in charge of providing high-quality care, which is a challenging task since a low shortage of nurses across the world is being encountered. According to the World Health Organization (2020), the global lack of nursing professionals has created a significant issue for healthcare, and efforts are needed to develop leadership that can work effectively to create a more sustainable workforce. It has been discovered that excellent leadership qualities can assist CNOs in realizing their vision for a care organization. With nurses increasingly linked to positive care outcomes, care systems may leverage their efforts to improve care quality. Chief Nurse executives are well-positioned to offer strategic insights and influence on emerging nursing issues that are developing from current healthcare delivery challenges. As cited by Ahlqvist et al. (2023), chief nurse officers face a significant workload and pressure commensurate with their designation as organizational leaders. To be the CNO, they must be able to identify and be receptive to the everyday turmoil and difficulties that hospitals provide, such as ongoing financial struggles and budgeting disputes; possible disagreements on labor, staffing, and other personnel issues with top leadership; and patient satisfaction and quality result metrics. Top-level management needs the necessary credentials and must be prepared.

Healthcare organizations encounter varying degrees of organizational conflict, such as factions and a seniority mindset. A faction describes a group of persons that form a smaller and informal group emerging from shared interests or beliefs (Robinson & Judge, 2019). Leadership is often challenged or undermined by factions, particularly when leaders are perceived as favoring one group over another (Northhouse, 2021). This can lead to confusion, a lack of direction, and erosion of trust. On the other hand, the "seniority mindset" perspective prioritizes value for people according to years of service rather than their existing skills or capabilities. This mindset impacts decision-making, communication, and unity (Drucker, 2001). Institutions founded on seniority may perpetuate power imbalances. For example, senior staff members may be given decision-making authority or promotions only due to their seniority rather than their qualifications or achievements, which would disadvantage younger employees and limit the organization's flexibility (Wu & Wang, 2018). These are among the concerns currently faced by the chief nursing officer in the study locale. This is added to the pressure of implementing UHC (Universal Health Care), which also increases the number of individuals pursuing treatment in primary healthcare facilities. Although equally important in both big and small organizations, failure of unity can easily shake the foundation of smaller organizations. The chief nursing officer is in a position to handle prevailing situations, such as factions and a seniority mindset.

This case study was conducted to understand the experiences of a chief nursing officer in a private primary hospital in addressing the complexities of organizational leadership which address the knowledge void gap since there is no particular study that gives the result to the topic and the context. As Miles (2017) described knowledge void gap where the desired finding does not exist. This is geared towards describing the motivations, challenges, and contextualized solutions, along with recommendations, in a private hospital context.



## METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the management experiences of a chief nurse officer through detailed and in-depth data collection, involving interviews and observations (Morse, 2011; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this inquiry, the chief nurse officer is an individual with distinctive characteristics that enable them to fulfill the study's objectives (Siggelkow, 2007; Stake, 1995), thereby understanding the challenges and strategies to motivate subordinates in the nursing department. The chief nurse officer is the head of the nursing department of a private primary hospital situated in an urban community with 36 beds. It caters to outpatient and inpatient services and is manned by thirty nurses, two head nurses, one nurse supervisor, and twelve nurse assistants. Through reflective thematic analysis (RTA), the researchers aim to provide contextualized solutions to the various problems encountered by the nursing department.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interview was analyzed using reflective thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Member checking was done by asking the chief nursing officer to confirm the findings and interpretations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The themes are discussed

### Dealing with Resistance

As a chief nursing officer (CNO), the leader faced resistance, including subordinates who often disobeyed orders. Some subordinates constantly made excuses, failed to meet deadlines, and disregarded directions and procedures. This presents itself in various ways, both overtly and subtly, and can disrupt the workflow, undermine leadership, and impact team morale. The CNO reflected that this was a common scenario when he was first appointed to the role.

*“Some may like you and some may not, as they say you cannot please everybody. Yes, there were many encounters as the day passed by. Some may follow, some may not. But it does not cause me to give up and stop because challenges in any work setting will always be there”*

In light of the findings, people have a strong need to be liked and accepted by others, which drives many of them to go to extreme measures to satisfy everyone around them. However, this is an unattainable and meaningless ambition. The reality is that, no matter how hard one tries, it is impossible to make people follow orders or commands in the workplace (Oc et al., 2023). This is because people's ideas and tastes vary and change throughout time. Furthermore, aiming to satisfy everyone frequently involves compromising one's principles and concepts, leading to the loss of personal identity. As a result, it is critical to recognize that satisfying everyone, even in crucial roles such as the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), is not a realistic or healthy goal. The non-physical work environment encompasses all aspects of professional connections, including those with coworkers and superiors or leaders (Sedarmayanti, 2017). The idea of satisfying everyone is an unrealistic and harmful objective. People's preferences and perspectives are diverse and ever-changing, making it challenging to satisfy everyone's needs. Trying to satisfy everyone frequently



means compromising one's principles and ideas, resulting in a loss of personal identity, and sometimes, this leads to ostracism. It is crucial to value authenticity, which involves recognizing and embracing one's unique self. It is unrealistic and harmful to try to please everyone. This can lead to compromising one's principles and losing personal identity. It is important to value authenticity and be true to oneself. Workplace exclusion and power distance jointly predicted all facets of subordinates' quiet behavior, suggesting that solitary subordinates tend to behave silently. It was revealed that occupational exclusion is a predictor of staff quiet. Individuals may, therefore, focus on building genuine connections with like-minded people who value and respect their uniqueness rather than futilely attempting to satisfy everyone (Gkorezis et al., 2016).

### **Handling Diverse Subordinates**

As their organization also values people, the CNO shared that they had dealt with people from various backgrounds, opinions, experiences, and cultures. CNO recognized the subordinates' peculiarities. Due to this diversity, factions arose. Understanding the diverse structures and functions of different groups was crucial. The CNO reflected that a leader must develop effective connections with personnel from diverse backgrounds to lead others. Identifying the best leaders involved forming social groups. Compassion is valued as a leadership strategy. By triggering participation from the group, a mutual learning relationship is fostered.

*“After my first year as the chief nurse of the hospital, one of the biggest struggles that came my way was building camaraderie with the staff members of a diverse culture...As a leader, you must know where your staff is coming from whenever a problem arises. You have to listen and weigh each situation as much as possible to achieve a positive and good working environment.”*

Building on these findings, workplace diversity shapes the unique experiences of an unusual leader in a way that equips them with skills and values like inclusion, tenacity, resilience, flexibility, and empathy (Ozbilgin, 2019). As a manager, you must understand the differences within the organization and learn to adapt in order to achieve a unified goal. Understanding the diverse structures and functions that different ethnic groups have is crucial. My goal is to motivate people to achieve more. Understanding the networks and foundations that various groups have established is essential. Work with them to understand them. Additionally, it is crucial to understand social structures in order to develop one's ideals and skills. Organizations should encourage managers to become "diversity champions" and promote intellectual curiosity. Strong leadership is essential, especially for recent graduates facing job challenges (Dobbin & Kaley, 2016).

### **Empathic and Participative Leadership**

Analogous to managing diverse subordinates, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) emphasized the priority of active listening. The CNO consistently emphasized the importance of compassion and appreciation for diverse perspectives and ideas. Furthermore, establishing an enabling, positive, and supportive environment is imperative to foster comfort and motivation. The CNO acknowledged that challenges are inherent in daily responsibilities. Despite the exigencies of on-the-spot decision-making, actively listening to subordinates' concerns, irrespective of their perceived magnitude, was deemed a valuable strategy. Empathy was characterized not merely as a human expression but as a form of leadership that empowered the



CNO to guide personnel towards the organization's vision. Proficient communication skills are indispensable for cultivating rapport with subordinates, thereby facilitating the prompt resolution and prevention of concerns and challenges.

*“I am a leader who always listens to my subordinates and shows empathy. I consider their suggestions and ideas whenever there is something to be accomplished. I always believe in their abilities and capabilities and provide technical assistance if necessary. Also, I participate in every activity so that I will be involved to know and be part of the process.”*

*“As a leader, you have to project a good atmosphere of support and communication to let teams stay driven all through. You have to concentrate on giving the team the tools they need to reach their well-defined objectives. You also have to acknowledge the work of your team members and provide professional development while encouraging feedback.”*

Considering the result presented above, the experiences of the chief nurse officer demonstrated a journey of empathic leadership (McKee & Massimilian, 2007; Choi & Lee, 2013; Brown, 2018). Empathy was emphasized as one of the strategies. Empathy fosters an awareness of others' needs, which in turn aids in the development of a secure and supportive community. An individual who demonstrates an effort to understand the perspectives of their colleagues inspires others and fosters an inclusive environment. Supported by Edmondson and Lei (2014), People require help and understanding (empathy) in all aspects of life, including work-related concerns. Demonstrating empathy is beneficial for people, as they are likely to experience multiple kinds of stress, work-related exhaustion, or burnout. A critical aspect of leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate people. (Eliyana et al., 2019) A work environment that mutually supports one another will produce a leader in the organization who can motivate others, and lower-level employee engagement will increase since a leader is an example to follow. According to Atijah and Bahri (2021), work motivation drives individuals to direct their expertise, energy, and time toward fulfilling their responsibilities and achieving the goals set by their previous agency. A true leader can inspire passion and excitement in their team, enabling them to achieve greatness. By providing a good example, a leader may create an environment in which individuals feel empowered and inspired to work toward a common goal, allowing them to be persuasive and supportive leaders. Motivation is a crucial component of student leadership, as it drives individuals to achieve their objectives and inspires others to do the same. A prospective student leader must be able to motivate their team, promote involvement, and drive achievement. The findings of Qobilovna in 2024 demonstrate that leaders enhance work engagement both directly and indirectly through communication skills with their subordinates. Compassion is more than just expressing empathy or listening and understanding; it involves genuine care and concern. Leaders must demonstrate compassion by acting on the knowledge they gain. This research found that an individual will not feel entirely acknowledged unless their leader takes substantial action regarding their expressed concerns or issues. An organization's trust, collaboration, and retention may all benefit from this cornerstone of compassionate leadership. Keep in mind that leadership is not about a strong or charismatic person but rather a group of people working together to accomplish shared objectives. As mentioned by Thelen et al. (2023), empathy is a key aspect of effective leadership that can be developed through practice and commitment.



### **Leading through Constructive Feedback**

The CNO shared that they believe and inspire others, even though it is difficult. They expounded that having leaders who dream and work for the organization's success is truly admirable. Compassion is more than just expressing positive feedback that inspires; likewise, providing feedback on negative behaviors can help address their weaknesses. Leaders must demonstrate compassion by acting on what they learn and believe. The CNO shared that this is the bedrock of caring leadership, and it helps keep nurses from leaving the profession and promotes an environment of trust and collaboration.

*“To inspire others is a very challenging situation, but in my case, as a leader, I can inspire them by simply believing and trusting their potential. Though sometimes I set clear and challenging goals in the end, I make sure that I provide regular and constructive feedback and criticism to improve and develop more for future use.”*

A notable aspect of these findings indicate that, to be a leader, it should possess a vision of the future that is both distinct and motivating. One must also be able to explain this vision in a manner that inspires others to strive toward achieving it. Inspirational leadership is the most significant leadership approach. An inspirational leader inspires others to achieve their goals, and as a result, makes them better individuals. According to Lewis & Clark (2020), visionary leadership motivates individuals to achieve a shared goal, which requires everyone in the team to follow the same vision. To be a leader, one must be able to articulate one's vision and objectives in a way that is both clear and successful, both verbally and in writing. It is essential to possess strong listening skills, empathy, and the ability to adapt to various modes of communication to gain a comprehensive understanding of others and the qualities they possess. Every successful leader is aware that they want to serve as a source of motivation for their followers. As stated by Fiset and Robinson (2020), visionary leadership can be created in the same way that leaders can be educated to develop and deliver an exciting vision to employees. A leader must set an example for their team. Also, he should motivate them whenever possible. When faced with challenging conditions, a leader must also have an optimistic outlook. In every hospital, an organization's leadership role is filled by a person who is in control of multiple subordinates. Such a leader is critical to both the hospital and its subordinates. This essay aims to demonstrate how a leader may provide guidance to subordinates by motivating and inspiring them to attain corporate goals.

### **Time Management as the Key**

The CNO must be organized and prioritize critical matters. As a leader, ensuring all specific requirements are fulfilled is imperative. Effective leadership and goal attainment necessitate proficiency in time management, as reported. A CNO possessing exceptional time management skills is more likely to achieve success by focusing on essential tasks, addressing urgent matters, and accomplishing established objectives.

*“I would say learning to manage your time is the biggest challenge as the Chief Nurse Officer. In any setting, you have to multitask, and you have parameters for when certain things need to be done. As the leader, you should always set standards and priorities.”*

Lastly, the findings describe time as the most valuable resource. Keeping that in mind is critical to understanding why learning practical time management skills is essential for success in



all aspects of life. With a wide range of duties, leaders must recognize that time management is a critical step to take and a critical goal for professional nursing organizations. Pidgeon (2017) highlighted that time management plays a key role in nursing leadership. Leaders must delegate responsibility, engage with stakeholders, adapt to change, and resolve workplace issues. Leaders' actions have a profound influence on everyone around them. Therefore, they must find ways to deal with the growing workload and exhaustion. According to Neck et al. (2019), evidence-based time management practices can be beneficial for leaders to reduce the perception of time pressure among nurses under their supervision. The practice of organizing and managing time to accomplish specific activities is known as time management. With practical personal time management abilities, you can make the most of your day. Moreover, it is not only about working harder, but also about working smarter. Effective time management is a crucial component of personal success in various fields. They have obligations comparable to those of someone with organizational management, sourcing and procurement, operations, and other business skills that must be acquired on the job, all while fulfilling patient and nurse obligations (Roussel et al., 2020). Experience has shown us that prioritizing work enables you to accomplish more. Effective time management is crucial for handling time-sensitive tasks and for individuals who face unexpected, large workloads and deadlines.

## CONCLUSIONS

The crucial role of the chief nursing officer in a dynamic work environment is challenged by some degree of resistance and handling diverse subordinates. Challenges stemming from internal and external factors within the organizational context emerge as significant considerations in departmental leadership. Small organizations, such as a private primary hospital, also encounter the intricacies of managing human behavior. The chief nurse demonstrates various motivational leadership styles, including empathy, vision, and effective time management, to enhance organizational dynamics. A leader must demonstrate versatility in a diverse workplace, where satisfying all individuals can be a challenging task. Some nurses within the organization exhibit resistance and diversity. Organizational leadership encompasses the functions of overseeing, assessing, and rectifying the performance of people or groups to achieve alignment with established objectives. This study offers insights into leadership succession planning for nurses who are inclined towards administrative work, such as the chief nursing officer. Insights are also provided on the use of empathic leadership, constructive feedback, and time management as tools to effectively manage a healthcare institution while leading the organization towards a common goal.

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