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The Relationship between Ward Manager Conflict Management Strategy and Nurse Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Surgical inpatient ward is a hospital care unit with a high workload and demanding work, which has the potential to cause conflict in nursing work environment. Conflicts that are not managed properly can have a negative impact on work comfort and reduce nurse job satisfaction. The role of the ward manager in implementing appropriate conflict management strategies is very important in creating a conducive work environment. This study aims to analyze the relationship between the ward managers' conflict management strategy and nurse job satisfaction in the surgical inpatient ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital. This study implemented a correlational analytic design using a cross-sectional approach. The study involved 47 nurses selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data collection was conducted using a conflict management strategy questionnaire, assessed as an overall construct based on several dimensions (collaboration, accommodation, compromise, competition, and avoidance), and a job satisfaction questionnaire. This study employed both univariate and bivariate analysis. Data analysis was performed using the Chi-square test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The results of statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between the ward managers' conflict management strategy and nurse job satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). It was concluded that the ward manager's implementation of effective conflict management strategies has the potential to increase nurses' job satisfaction. Therefore, hospital management is encouraged to strengthen the conflict management competencies of ward managers to promote a harmonious work environment and improve the quality of nursing care.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Job Satisfaction, Ward Manager

INTRODUCTION

Nurses, as healthcare professionals, play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of hospital services. Nurses cannot work independently in providing nursing care but must collaborate with other healthcare professionals. Interpersonal interactions and relationships with fellow nurses and other healthcare professionals have the potential to cause friction or conflict in the workplace [1]. Although conflict in nursing practice has been widely studied, research that specifically highlights the role of ward managers in managing

conflict and its relationship with nurses' job satisfaction remains limited.

Nurses have a high potential for conflict due to the large number of human resources in healthcare institutions and the continuous provision of nursing care to patients [2]. Conflict refers to internal or external disagreements resulting from differences in perspectives, values, or emotional responses among individuals [1]. When not managed effectively, conflict can have negative effects, including stress, deterioration of psychological well-being, decreased job

satisfaction, reduced productivity, and compromised quality of healthcare services [3].

The prevalence of conflict among nurses is supported by various studies. Research conducted by A previous study reported that approximately 60% of ward managers encounter conflict on a daily basis, in which they attempt to accommodate the opinions of the parties involved and to reach mutually acceptable solutions [4]. Previous research reported that 91.2% of nurses have experienced conflict, especially with ward managers, fellow nurses in the same unit, doctors, or nurses from other units [5]. Specific national data regarding conflict among healthcare professionals in Indonesia remains limited. However, one study found that 90% of nurses experienced interpersonal problems with colleagues. These results indicate that conflict is a real problem in nursing practice that required appropriate management. Conflicts are experienced directly by nurses as individuals; however, the success of conflict management is strongly influenced by the role of the ward manager as the leader of the work unit. Ward managers are responsible for coordinating teams, facilitating communication, and managing conflicts that arise in the work environment. Conflict management is an approach to problem-solving that aims to achieve common goals. Strategies that can be applied include accommodation, compromise, collaboration, competition, and avoidance [6].

Previous studies have shown variations in the conflict management strategies used by nurses. One study conducted in India showed that 34.7% of nurses used accommodation strategies [7]. In Indonesia, it was reported that most nurses (97.2%) used collaborative strategies [8]. Another study indicated that all nurses (100%) chose integrating and compromising strategies as the main approaches in managing problems [6]. Based on these studies, it can be concluded

that the use of conflict management strategies among nurses varies. This variation indicates that the effectiveness of conflict management is not only determined by individual nurses but also by the ability of ward managers to implement appropriate strategies according to the conditions of the work unit.

Effective conflict management by ward managers plays an important role in creating a conducive work environment and supporting nurse job satisfaction [9]. Job satisfaction refers to the feeling of happiness or comfort experienced by individuals in their work, which includes fair treatment, recognition, appropriate placement, and a pleasant work environment [10]. This finding is supported by previous research showed that nurses with poor conflict management tended to have low levels of job satisfaction [11]. A similar study reported that less effective conflict management strategies were associated with nurse job dissatisfaction. These findings confirm that conflict management strategies are related to nurse job satisfaction [12]. However, there are still a few studies that examine the conflict management strategies of ward managers and nurse job satisfaction in general.

A preliminary study of three ward managers and ten nurses in the surgical wards at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital in August 2025 showed that all nurses reported that conflicts had occurred in the ward. The conflicts were interpersonal conflicts caused by miscommunication, discipline issues, and high work intensity. Approximately 60% of nurses said that the consequences of these conflicts were emotional stress and discomfort at work, which in some cases led to reluctance when having to work a shift with colleagues. These problems have been resolved by the ward managers through mutual agreement among the parties involved. Regarding job satisfaction, 40% of nurses said they were satisfied with their

work. However, the other 60% of nurses stated that they were dissatisfied with their work due to the high workload, which led to miscommunication in the ward.

Based on the above phenomenon, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between the conflict management strategy of ward managers and the job satisfaction among nurses in the surgical inpatient wards at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed correlational analytic approach with a cross-sectional design. This research was conducted at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital from November 24th to November 28th, 2025. The study population included all nurses working in the surgical inpatient wards on the 3rd floor stroke unit, the 4th floor, and the 5th floor. The study sample consisted of 47 nurses selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. The inclusion criteria were (1) nurses with a minimum of ≥ 1 year of service; and (2) nurses who were willing to be respondents. The exclusion criteria were (1) nurses who served as ward managers, team leaders, or clinical case managers (CCMs); and (2) nurses who were on leave or absent from work.

Age, gender, level of education, and work experience were identified as potential confounding variables that could influence the study outcomes. These variables were controlled by restricting respondent characteristics through the inclusion and exclusion criteria, using the same work units.

Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of three sections. Section A contained data on respondent characteristics, Section B contained the ROCI-II (Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II) conflict management strategy questionnaire developed by Rahim, and

Section C contained a job satisfaction questionnaire based on Maslow's theory of needs. The questionnaire was adapted from an instrument developed [12]. This instrument has been reworked and tested for validity and reliability. The validity test of the instrument was conducted on nurses with similar characteristics in different places. The validity results showed a calculated r value > r table (0.632) and Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.970 for conflict management and 0.962 for job satisfaction. Data analysis involved univariate and bivariate methods. Statistical analysis was performed using the Chi-Square test. This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of RSPAD Gatot Soebroto with No. 250/XI/KEPK/2025.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This subsection presented the results of the study, including the respondent characteristics based on age, gender, educational level, and work experience, the dimensions of ward managers' conflict management strategies, and an analysis of the relationship between ward managers' conflict management strategies and nurse job satisfaction.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Characteristics of Nurses in Surgical Ward of Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital in 2025 (n = 47)

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
< 30 years	19	40,4
≥ 30 years	28	59,6
Gender		
Male	2	4,3
Female	45	95,7
Education		
D3	30	63,8
Nursing	17	36,2

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Work Experience		
< 5 years	20	42,6
5-10 years	14	29,8
11-15 years	1	2,1
>15 years	12	25,5

Source: Primary Data 2025

According to Table 1, the results of the study show that overall, respondents were predominantly adult female nurses with vocational nursing education and relatively shorter work experience.

Table 2. Dimensions of Conflict Management Strategies by Ward Managers in Surgical Inpatient Ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital in 2025 (n = 47)

Conflict Management Strategy	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Collaboration		
Good	45	95,7
Fair	2	4,3
Poor	0	0
Accommodation		
Good	38	80,9
Fair	9	19,1
Poor	0	0
Competition		
Good	6	12,8
Fair	23	48,9
Poor	18	38,3
Avoiding		
Good	5	10,6
Fair	22	46,8
Poor	20	42,6
Compromise		
Good	43	91,5
Fair	4	8,5
Poor	0	0

Source: Primary Data 2025

The results in Table 2 above show that the the distribution of ward managers'

conflict management strategies as perceived by nurses. Overall, collaborative and compromise strategies were the most dominantly applied approaches, whereas competitive and avoidance strategies were less frequently perceived.

1. Analysis Univariante

Table 3. Conflict Management Strategies by Ward Managers in Surgical Inpatient Ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital in 2025 (n = 47)

Conflict Management Strategy	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Good	29	61,7
Fair	18	38,3
Poor	0	0
Total	47	100

Source: Primary Data 2025

Table 3 presents the overall assessment of ward managers' conflict management strategies. In general, ward managers were predominantly perceived as applying good conflict management strategies in the surgical inpatient ward.

Table 4. Job Satisfaction among Nurses in Surgical Inpatient Ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital in 2025 (n = 47)

Job Satisfaction	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Satisfied	30	63,8
Fairly satisfied	17	36,2
Not satisfied	0	0
Total	47	100

Source: Primary Data 2025

Table 4 describes nurses' job satisfaction levels in the surgical inpatient ward. Overall, nurses tended to report a positive level of job satisfaction, indicating that the work environment was generally perceived as supportive and acceptable by the nursing staff.

2. Analysis Bivariate

Table 5 below presents the cross-tabulation results and analysis of the relationship between ward managers'

conflict management strategies and nurses' job satisfaction in the surgical inpatient ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital.

Table 5. The Relationship between Ward Manager Conflict Management Strategy and Nurse Job Satisfaction in Surgical Inpatient Ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital in 2025 (n = 47)

Conflict Management Strategies	Job Satisfaction				Total		OR (95% CI)	P-Value
	Satisfied		Fairly Satisfied		f	%		
	f	%	f	%				
Good	24	82,8	5	17,2	29	100	9,600 (2,429-37,942)	0,001
Fair	6	33,3	12	66,7	18	100		
Total	30	63,8	17	36,2	47	100		

Source: Primary Data 2025

The Relationship between Ward Manager Conflict Management Strategy and Nurse Job Satisfaction

Based on the results of the bivariate analysis above, of the 29 respondents who rated the ward manager's conflict management strategy as good, the majority expressed satisfaction with their work, namely 24 nurses (82.8%). Conversely, of the 18 respondents who perceived the conflict management strategy as adequate, most had adequate job satisfaction, namely 12 nurses (66.7%). The statistical analysis results obtained a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the ward managers' conflict management strategy and the job satisfaction of nurses in the surgical ward at Gatot Soebroto Army Hospital.

The analysis of the strength of the relationship through the odds ratio (OR) value yielded a result of 9.600. This indicates that nurses led by ward managers with good conflict management strategies are 9.6 times more likely to experience optimal job satisfaction compared to nurses under leadership with adequate conflict management strategies. This finding highlights the substantial role of ward managers in creating a conducive

work environment, which in turn has the potential to increase nurse satisfaction and retention as well as the quality of nursing services.

The results of this study are supported by previous findings indicating a significant relationship between ward manager conflict management and the job satisfaction of nursing staff. Although that study focused more on collaboration and negotiation strategies, the results still show that the effectiveness of conflict management by ward managers plays an important role in shaping nurses' positive perceptions of their work environment [13].

This study is also supported by previous research showing that effective conflict management is associated with increased work motivation and decreased work stress among nurses. These conditions indirectly contribute to increased job satisfaction among nurses [14]. In addition, another study reported that conflict management strategies, particularly collaborative approaches, have a significant effect on nurses' job satisfaction. Effective conflict management by ward managers is an important factor in creating a conducive work environment and increasing nurses'

job satisfaction. This shows that conflict management involving cooperation and participation of nurses can increase their sense of appreciation and involvement in the work process, which ultimately has a positive impact on job satisfaction [15].

Theoretically, job satisfaction can be explained through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which can be analyzed through five levels of needs: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization [16]. Based on the above theory and empirical findings, nurses' job satisfaction is influenced by the fulfillment of basic needs, job suitability with abilities and interests, harmonious interpersonal relationships, effective supervision, and career development opportunities. This is supported by previous research, which states that indicators of job satisfaction include work facilities, salary, work relationships, job suitability, supervision, and opportunities for promotion. The fulfillment of these factors plays a role in increasing nurse satisfaction [17].

The fulfillment of these job satisfaction factors is inseparable from the role of the ward managers in creating a conducive working atmosphere, including managing conflicts in the work unit. The results of the preliminary study reinforce that the ward manager strives to minimize conflicts in the ward through open communication if there is a problem with colleagues, doctors, or patients or their families, and if possible, the problem is resolved immediately so that it does not drag on. This approach contributes to good teamwork and increases the job satisfaction of nurses in the surgical ward.

The findings confirm that effective conflict management by ward managers is an important factor associated with nurse job satisfaction. The results of this study confirm that effective conflict management by ward managers plays an important role in creating job satisfaction among nurses. A conducive work environment, open communication, and constructive conflict resolution will make

nurses feel valued and comfortable at work, thereby supporting improved performance and quality of nursing services.

This study has several limitations. The use of self-administered questionnaires may introduce information bias, including social desirability bias, which refers to respondents' tendency to provide answers perceived as more favorable. However, this limitation was minimized through the use of standardized and validated instruments. In addition, potential confounding variables were addressed by restricting respondent characteristics through the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a relationship between ward managers' conflict management strategies and nurses' job satisfaction (p -value $0.001 < 0.05$). The results of this study indicate that ward managers' conflict management strategies play an important role in creating a harmonious work environment, enhancing nurse job satisfaction, and supporting the improvement of nursing service quality.

Therefore, hospital management is expected to strengthen the competence of ward managers in conflict management through training and seminars to enhance the quality of nursing care. Further research is recommended to analyze the specific effects of each conflict management strategy and to examine other variables that may affect job satisfaction using different research designs.

This study has several limitations as it was conducted only in the surgical inpatient ward with a limited number of respondents, and data were collected using questionnaires, so the results cannot be fully generalized. In addition, other factors that may affect nurse job satisfaction, such as workload, organizational culture, and interprofessional relationships, were not analyzed in this study and therefore need to be investigated further.

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