

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF UKRAINE

Sumy State University

Academic and Research Institute of Business, Economics and Management
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_____ 20__ y.

QUALIFYING WORK

to obtain an educational degree bachelor's

in the specialty 073 Management,

educational-professional program Management

on the topic:

**Conflict management and methods of their resolution in modern
organizations in Ghana**

The recipient of the group

M-91an

Agyemang Adusei Akwasi

The qualifying work contains the results of own research. The use of ideas, results and texts of other authors are linked to the appropriate source.

Agyemang Adusei Akwasi

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Head of Department
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_____ 2023 y.

ASSIGNMENT FOR QUALIFYING WORK
to obtain an educational degree bachelor's
(bachelor's
/ master's degree)

in the specialty 073 Management,

educational-professional program Management

on the topic: **Conflict management and methods of their resolution in modern organizations in Ghana**

The recipient of the group M-91an Agyemang Adusei Akwasi

1. The topic of the work “Conflict management and methods of their resolution in modern organizations in Ghana” approved by order №0569-VI dated 25.05.2023 y.
2. The deadline for submission of the completed work by the acquirer 10.06.23 p.
3. The purpose of the qualifying work: to investigate conflict management in the Asuofua Polyclinic in Ghana and provide valuable insight to enhance the effectiveness of conflict resolution and prevention strategies.
4. Object of study:
 - to identify the key factors contributing to conflict within the Asuofua Polyclinic;
 - to explore and evaluate existing conflict resolution and prevention strategies employed in the Asuofua Polyclinic;
 - to develop recommendations for effective conflict management strategies tailored to the Asuofua Polyclinic.
5. Subject of study: address of critical issues of conflict management which directly impacts of healthcare delivery.
6. Qualification work is performed on the basis of statistics data, Asuofua polyclinic’s documentation, researches and best practices implemented in Ghana organizations.

7. Approximate plan of qualifying work, deadlines for submission of sections to the manager and content of tasks to fulfill the set goal.

№ of order	Title of the section	Submission deadline
I	Chapter 1	29.04.23
II	Chapter 2	15.05.23
III	Chapter 3	05.06.23

The content of the tasks for fulfilling the set goal of the master's qualifying work:

In section 1, the student must give the potential causes, sources, importance and impact of conflict on patient care quality , staff satisfaction at Asuofua Polyclinics.

In section 2, the student must address conflict management in organization structure, barriers to effective conflict management and resolutions at Asuofua Polyclinics.

In section 3, the student must explore and analyse the key conflict management strategies, conflict resolution process implementation in modern organizations in Ghana and benefits of proactive conflict management.

8. Consultations on work performance:

Section	Surname, initials and position of the supervisor/consultant	Signature, date	
		Issued the task	I accepted the task
1			
2			
3			

9. Issue date of the assignment

Head of qualification work senior lecturer, Ph.D. in Economics, Ass.Prof.

Tetyana Mayboroda

Tasks to be completed received Agyemang Adusei Akwasi_____

ANNOTATION

Effective conflict management is crucial in modern organizations in Ghana, especially in polyclinics to maintain a harmonious work environment and ensure high-quality patient care. This study provides an in-depth analysis of conflict management in polyclinics in Ghana, examining various aspects such as organizational structure, conflict resolution strategies, barriers, and their impact on patient care quality. The literature review reveals that conflicts in polyclinics can arise from interprofessional differences, communication breakdowns, limited resources, and cultural factors. These conflicts can have detrimental effects on patient care quality, staff satisfaction, and overall organizational performance. To address these challenges, recommendations are proposed, including promoting a culture of respect and collaboration, providing conflict management training, establishing clear policies and procedures, and utilizing technology-enabled conflict resolution tools. Moreover, barriers to effective conflict management, such as limited resources and high workload, are identified, and strategies for their mitigation are suggested.

This work emphasizes the need for an interdisciplinary approach, considering the economical, social, and environmental factors in conflict management. By implementing these strategies, polyclinics in Ghana can create a conducive work environment, enhance patient care quality, improve staff satisfaction, and optimize resource utilization. The thesis concludes that continuous evaluation and adaptation of conflict management practices are necessary to ensure their effectiveness and long-term success in polyclinics.

The structure and scope of a bachelor's thesis. This study discusses the structure and purpose of a bachelor's thesis focused on investigating conflict management and resolution strategies in a polyclinic setting. The thesis follows a specific structure, consisting of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, and a list of references.

Relevance. The relevance of the study is rooted in the need for effective conflict management and resolution in the Asuofua polyclinic. As conflicts can arise between healthcare professionals, staff, and patients, understanding and implementing appropriate strategies are essential for maintaining a harmonious work environment and ensuring quality patient care.

Purpose of the study. The purpose of the study is to explore conflict management and resolution approaches within the Asuofua polyclinic setting. The thesis examines both theoretical and practical aspects of conflict management, focusing on strategies that can be utilized to prevent and resolve conflicts effectively. By employing empirical research methods, the study assesses the effectiveness of these strategies and identifies potential challenges in their implementation.

Additionally, the thesis analyzes the causes of conflicts in a polyclinic and presents strategies to address and mitigate them within the context of conflict management and resolution. It identifies areas for improving the efficiency of conflict resolution processes and proposes recommendations based on the study's findings.

Testing of the results. The results obtained from this research will contribute to the development of effective conflict management and resolution strategies in polyclinics, fostering positive relationships between healthcare professionals, staff, and patients, and ultimately enhancing the overall quality of care provided.

Keywords. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION, POLYCLINIC, HEALTHCARE, PATIENT CARE, WORK ENVIRONMENT, STRATEGIES, EMPLOYEE RELATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflict management is a critical aspect of effective healthcare delivery within hospitals. The healthcare environment is complex, involving multiple stakeholders such as medical professionals, administrators, patients, and their families. Conflicts can arise due to differences in opinions, communication breakdowns, resource allocation, or organizational challenges. Unresolved conflicts can lead to negative consequences, including decreased patient satisfaction, increased staff turnover, and compromised patient care quality (Ezziane, 2020).

The Ghana Health service has a mandate to provide and prudently manage comprehensive and accessible health service with special emphasis on primary health care at region, district and sub district levels in accordance with approved national policies. (ghs.gov.gh).

In Ghana, conflict management assumes great significance due to the unique challenges faced by healthcare facilities in the country. Ghana's healthcare system operates under constraints, including limited resources, staffing shortages, and infrastructure limitations (Ankrah, 2018). These challenges can contribute to increased stress levels, heightened emotions, and potential conflicts within hospital settings.

Effective conflict management strategies are essential to mitigate these issues and ensure a harmonious work environment that prioritizes patient safety and quality care. These strategies may include establishing clear communication channels, implementing conflict resolution training for staff, and promoting a culture of collaboration and respect (Agyemang, 2017).

Given the challenges and opportunities for conflict management in hospitals in Ghana, it is essential to examine the specific factors contributing to

conflicts within Ghanaian hospitals and explore the best practices for conflict resolution and prevention. Effective conflict management in healthcare facilities is critical for ensuring optimal patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, and retention (Baker et al., 2018). By addressing the unique challenges faced by healthcare facilities in Ghana, such as resource limitations and staffing shortages, hospitals can create an atmosphere of collaboration, respect, and effective communication. The findings of this research can therefore inform hospital administrators and policymakers in Ghana about the importance of conflict management and guide the development and implementation of effective strategies tailored to the Ghanaian healthcare context.

Problem Statement: Conflict has an unfavourable effect on productivity. Resolution of conflicts in institutions have different outcome, that is, either positive or negative, depending on the management strategies used.

Within hospitals in Ghana, conflicts often arise due to factors such as differences in opinions, communication breakdowns, resource allocation, and organizational challenges. These conflicts can negatively impact patient care quality, staff morale, and overall healthcare outcomes. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific factors contributing to conflicts within Ghanaian hospitals and the most effective strategies for conflict resolution and prevention.

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this research is to investigate conflict management in the Asuofuo Polyclinic in Ghana and provide valuable insights to enhance the effectiveness of conflict resolution and prevention strategies. By addressing the unique challenges faced by healthcare facilities in Ghana, the study aims to improve the work environment, promote patient safety, and optimize healthcare outcomes. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to the development of evidence-based practices and recommendations for hospital administrators and policymakers in Ghana.

Research Objectives: This research seeks to address the following specific objectives:

- To identify the key factors contributing to conflicts within the Asuofua Polyclinic.
- To explore and evaluate existing conflict resolution and prevention strategies employed in the Asuofua Polyclinic.
- To develop recommendations for effective conflict management strategies tailored to the Asuofua Polyclinic.

Research Questions: The following below are the questions to solicit the opinions of respondents.

- What are the main factors contributing to conflicts within hospitals in Ghana?
- How effective are the existing conflict resolution and prevention strategies employed in Ghanaian hospitals?
- What recommendations can be made for developing and implementing effective conflict management strategies in the Ghanaian healthcare context?

Significance of the Study: This study holds significant importance for Asuofua Polyclinic as it addresses the critical issues of conflict management, which directly impacts the quality of healthcare delivery. By identifying the factors contributing to conflicts within the Asuofua Polyclinic and evaluating existing strategies, the research can provide insights to improve conflict resolution and prevention practices. The study's findings and recommendations will enable the administrators and management of the Asuofua Polyclinic to implement evidence-based conflict management strategies that promote a positive work environment, enhance patient care quality, and ensure better

healthcare outcomes. Furthermore, the research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on conflict management in healthcare, providing valuable insights for future studies and guiding the development of effective conflict management strategies in other healthcare contexts globally.

CHAPTER 1 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ANF ITS EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS IN GHANA

1.1. Importance of conflict management in modern organizations in Ghana

Polyclinics play a crucial role in providing primary healthcare services to communities in Ghana. However, like any organization, polyclinics are not immune to conflicts that arise between healthcare professionals, administrators, and support staff. Effective conflict management is vital for maintaining a positive work environment and improving overall patient care. This literature review aims to explore existing research on conflict management within the context of polyclinics in Ghana, focusing on strategies employed to address conflicts, key contributing factors, and preventative measures.

- **Types and Sources of Conflict in Polyclinics:** Conflicts in polyclinics can stem from various sources, including interpersonal dynamics, differences in professional roles, resource allocation, organizational policies, and communication breakdowns. This section examines the common types and sources of conflicts encountered within polyclinics, providing insights into the underlying causes that must be addressed to manage conflicts effectively.
- **Conflict Management Approaches:** This section reviews different conflict management approaches and models applicable to polyclinics. Traditional approaches, such as compromise, accommodation, and avoidance, are compared with more contemporary methods, such as collaboration and negotiation. The review highlights the benefits and limitations of each approach in the context of polyclinics, emphasizing the importance of selecting the most appropriate strategy based on the specific conflict situation.

- **Strategies for Resolving Conflicts in Polyclinics:** This section explores specific conflict resolution strategies employed within polyclinics in Ghana. Mediation, facilitation, and the use of formal grievance procedures are discussed as effective means of resolving conflicts and restoring harmony in the workplace. The review also addresses the significance of effective communication, active listening, and emotional intelligence in conflict resolution processes.
- **Preventative Measures and Conflict Prevention:** Preventing conflicts before they escalate is essential for maintaining a positive work environment and ensuring optimal patient care. This section focuses on preventive measures that can be implemented in polyclinics to minimize the occurrence of conflicts. Strategies such as team-building activities, promoting a culture of open communication, and implementing clear policies and procedures are examined.
- **Cultural Considerations in Conflict Management:** Culture plays a significant role in shaping conflict management practices. This section explores the cultural dimensions specific to Ghanaian polyclinics and their influence on conflict management approaches. It discusses the importance of cultural sensitivity and the need to tailor conflict management strategies to align with the cultural norms and values of the workforce.

Conflict and its relevance within the healthcare context

Conflict is a term commonly used to describe a state of disagreement or discord arising from incompatible goals, interests, or values between individuals or groups. In the healthcare context, conflict can manifest in various forms, including interpersonal conflicts between healthcare professionals, conflicts between healthcare providers and patients, and conflicts between different departments or teams within healthcare organizations.

Conflict in the healthcare context is particularly relevant due to its potential impact on patient care, staff morale, and overall organizational effectiveness. Research has shown that unresolved or poorly managed conflicts in healthcare settings can lead to negative outcomes such as increased stress levels among healthcare professionals (Ong et al., 2013), reduced job satisfaction (Zeytinoglu et al., 2016), decreased patient safety (Reader et al., 2011), and compromised quality of care (Tracy, 2012).

Moreover, conflicts in healthcare settings can also affect patient outcomes by hindering effective communication, collaboration, and teamwork among healthcare providers (Haddad & Toney-Butler, 2021). Effective conflict management in healthcare is crucial to address issues promptly, foster a positive work environment, promote open communication, and ensure patient-centered care delivery.

By understanding the nature of conflicts within the healthcare context and implementing effective conflict management strategies, healthcare organizations can mitigate the negative consequences of conflicts, enhance employee satisfaction and well-being, and ultimately improve the quality of care provided to patients.

➤ **Potential causes and sources of conflict in hospitals.**

In polyclinics, conflicts can arise from various causes and sources, leading to interpersonal disputes and organizational tensions. Understanding these causes and sources is crucial for effective conflict management. The following are potential causes and sources of conflict in polyclinics:

- **Communication breakdown:** Inadequate or ineffective communication can be a significant cause of conflict. Misunderstandings, lack of clarity,

and poor information flow between healthcare professionals, staff, and patients can contribute to conflicts (De Dreu&Weingart, 2003).

- **Role ambiguity and overlapping responsibilities:** Unclear job roles and responsibilities within a polyclinic can lead to conflicts. When healthcare professionals or staff members are uncertain about their roles or when roles overlap, it can result in disagreements and conflicts over authority, tasks, and decision-making (Bacharach et al., 2007).
- **Limited resources:** Polyclinics often face resource constraints such as limited budgets, equipment, or staffing. These resource limitations can create competition, conflicts of interest, and disagreements over resource allocation and priorities (Huczynski& Buchanan, 2013).
- **Differences in values and priorities:** Healthcare professionals and staff in polyclinics may hold diverse values, beliefs, and professional priorities. Conflicts can arise when these differences clash, particularly regarding treatment approaches, patient care strategies, or ethical considerations (Deutsch, 2006).
- **Interprofessional dynamics:** Polyclinics typically involve multidisciplinary teams where healthcare professionals from different disciplines collaborate. Conflicts may emerge due to power struggles, differing professional perspectives, or perceived hierarchy within the team (Lambrou&Kontodimopoulos, 2010).
- **Organizational policies and procedures:** Conflicts can also stem from disagreements or dissatisfaction with organizational policies, protocols, or decision-making processes. Differences in interpretation or implementation of policies may trigger conflicts among staff members or between staff and management (Eisenbeiss&Knippenberg, 2008).
- **Patient-related conflicts:** Conflicts can arise between healthcare professionals and patients or among patients themselves. Factors such as patient expectations, dissatisfaction with care or disagreements over

treatment options can contribute to conflicts within a polyclinic (Cheung & Kwong, 2011).

It is important to recognize and address these causes and sources of conflict in polyclinics to promote a harmonious work environment, enhance patient care, and improve overall organizational effectiveness.

The impact of conflicts on patient care quality, staff satisfaction, and organizational performance.

Conflicts in healthcare settings can have a significant impact on various aspects, including patient care quality, staff satisfaction, and organizational performance. Understanding these impacts is crucial for recognizing the importance of effective conflict management. The following discussions highlight the effects of conflicts in these areas:

- **Impact on Patient Care Quality:** Conflicts among healthcare professionals can directly affect patient care quality. Research suggests that unresolved conflicts can lead to communication breakdowns, compromised teamwork, and decreased collaboration, which in turn can result in medical errors, reduced patient safety, and suboptimal treatment outcomes (Reader et al., 2011; Rosenstein & O'Daniel, 2008). Additionally, conflicts can disrupt care continuity, create inconsistencies in care delivery, and contribute to delays or inefficiencies in healthcare processes, ultimately affecting the overall quality of patient care (Mitchell et al., 2018).
- **Impact on Staff Satisfaction:** Conflicts in healthcare settings can negatively impact staff satisfaction and well-being. Constant exposure to conflicts can increase stress levels among healthcare professionals, leading to decreased job satisfaction, burnout, and intention to leave their positions

(Ong et al., 2013; Reader et al., 2014). Conflict-ridden work environments can also diminish employee morale, hinder professional growth, and create a toxic atmosphere that undermines teamwork and collaboration (Tracy, 2012). Consequently, staff satisfaction and retention rates may decline, resulting in the potential loss of skilled and experienced healthcare professionals.

- **Impact on Organizational Performance:** Conflicts can significantly impact the overall performance of healthcare organizations. Persistent conflicts can lead to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher staff turnover rates, all of which can undermine organizational efficiency (Aiken et al., 2008). Conflicts may also impede effective decision-making, hinder the implementation of organizational changes or initiatives, and create resistance to organizational goals and strategies (Zeytinoglu et al., 2016). Furthermore, conflicts can negatively influence teamwork, collaboration, and communication within the organization, thereby hampering overall operational effectiveness and organizational performance (Haddad & Toney-Butler, 2021).

It is crucial for healthcare organizations to address conflicts proactively and implement strategies for conflict resolution and prevention. By promoting a culture of open communication, fostering teamwork, providing conflict resolution training, and establishing supportive structures and processes, organizations can mitigate the negative impact of conflicts, enhance patient care quality, improve staff satisfaction, and ultimately enhance organizational performance.

1.1 Effective conflict management strategies in Hospitals in Ghana.

Effective conflict management strategies are essential in addressing conflicts and promoting a harmonious work environment. The following discussions highlight the need for such strategies:

- **Enhancing Communication and Collaboration:** Effective conflict management strategies facilitate open and constructive communication among individuals or groups involved in conflicts (De Dreu&Gelfand, 2008). By providing platforms for dialogue, encouraging active listening, and promoting respectful communication, conflicts can be addressed before they escalate. Strategies such as mediation or conflict resolution training programs can enhance collaboration, teamwork, and understanding among conflicting parties (Schruijer&Voskuijl, 2020).
- **Preserving Relationships and Reducing Negative Impact:** Conflict management strategies aim to preserve relationships among individuals or groups involved in conflicts (Rahim, 2017). Constructive approaches such as negotiation, compromise, and finding win-win solutions help maintain positive relationships and minimize the negative impact of conflicts on personal or professional connections. These strategies promote a sense of fairness and understanding, which contributes to long-term relationship building and effective teamwork (Thomas, 2009).
- **Promoting Organizational Productivity and Well-being:** Effective conflict management strategies have a direct impact on organizational productivity and well-being (Lambrou&Kontodimopoulos, 2010). By addressing conflicts promptly and providing appropriate support, organizations can minimize disruptions, increase employee satisfaction, and reduce stress levels. Conflict resolution strategies contribute to a positive work environment, fostering employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall organizational effectiveness (Haddad & Toney-Butler, 2021).

- **Improving Patient Care and Safety:** Conflicts among healthcare professionals can directly impact patient care and safety (Reader et al., 2011). Effective conflict management strategies promote a culture of patient-centered care, where collaboration, effective communication, and shared decision-making are prioritized. By addressing conflicts and improving teamwork, patient care coordination, and information sharing, organizations can enhance the quality and safety of healthcare delivery (Mitchell et al., 2018).
- **Enhancing Organizational Reputation and Stakeholder Relationships:** Organizations that effectively manage conflicts demonstrate a commitment to professionalism, ethical practices, and stakeholder satisfaction (Huang et al., 2019). By proactively addressing conflicts and utilizing appropriate strategies, organizations can protect their reputation, build trust with stakeholders, and foster positive relationships with patients, staff, and external partners.

Effective conflict management strategies are vital for promoting positive relationships, improving communication and collaboration, enhancing organizational productivity and well-being, improving patient care quality and safety, and maintaining a positive organizational reputation. Organizations that invest in developing and implementing these strategies can create a supportive and harmonious work environment conducive to optimal performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2 CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE, BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION STRATEGIES IN POLYCLINIC

2.1 Conflict Management in organizational Structure in Polyclinics

The organizational structure of polyclinics plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of conflict management within healthcare settings. In the context of polyclinics in Ghana, understanding the organizational structure and its impact on conflict management is essential for developing strategies to address and prevent conflicts. This section explores the organizational structure of polyclinics in Ghana and its relationship with conflict management, highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities faced in this setting.

Let's consider hierarchical structure and power dynamics in Polyclinics in Ghana. They typically operate within a hierarchical organizational structure, with clear lines of authority and reporting relationships. This hierarchical structure can have implications for conflict management, as power dynamics and decision-making processes may influence the way conflicts are addressed. For example, conflicts between healthcare professionals at different levels of the hierarchy may be handled differently, with power imbalances potentially hindering effective resolution (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2019). Understanding the impact of the hierarchical structure on conflict management is crucial for implementing appropriate strategies and interventions.

Communication Channels and Reporting Systems

Effective communication is fundamental to conflict management in any organization. Within polyclinics, clear and open lines of communication are vital for addressing conflicts in a timely and efficient manner. This includes both formal communication channels, such as department meetings and reporting

systems, as well as informal channels, such as interpersonal communication between healthcare professionals. In the context of polyclinics in Ghana, the effectiveness of communication channels and reporting systems may vary, impacting the identification and resolution of conflicts. Exploring the communication processes within polyclinics and their relationship with conflict management can provide insights into areas for improvement.

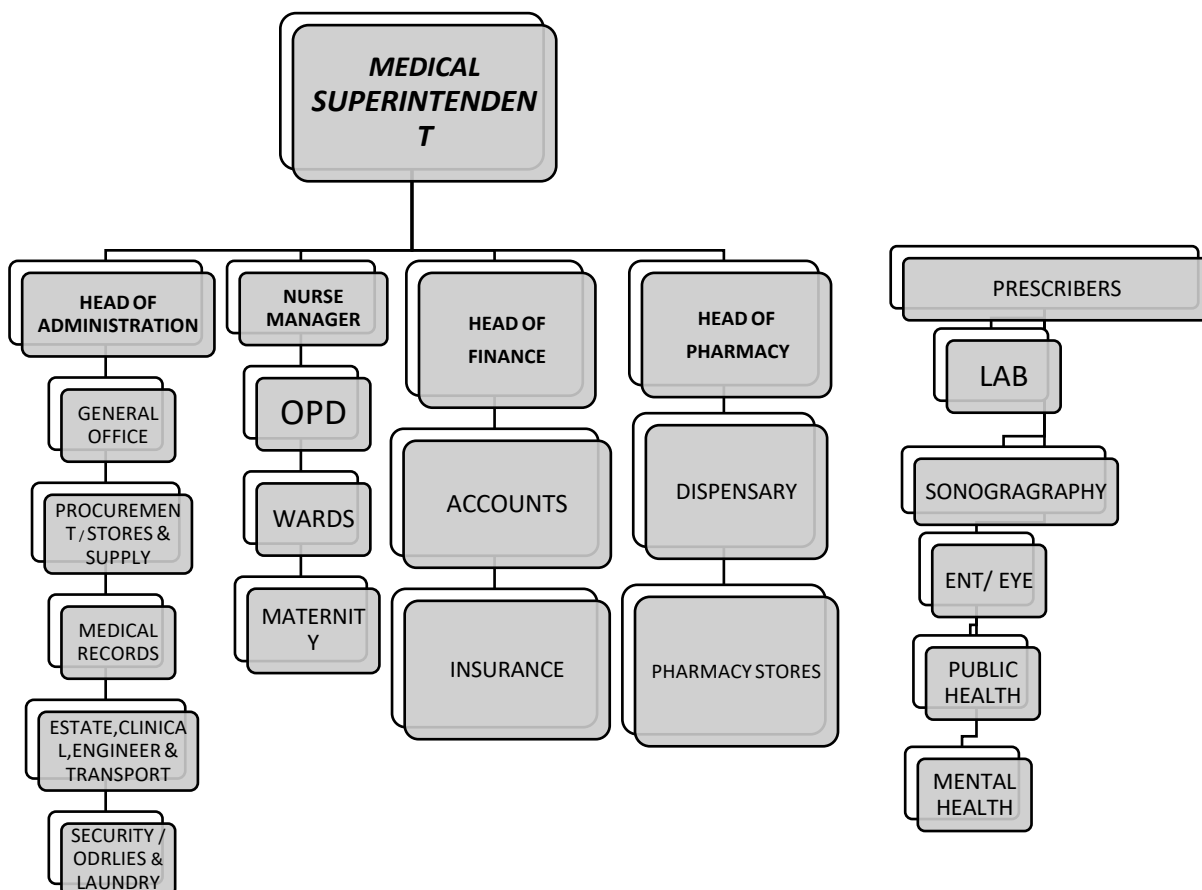


Figure 1.0: Asuofua Polyclinic Organizational Structure

Source: Asuofua Polyclinic

Impact of Organizational Structure on Conflict Management

The organizational structure of polyclinics in Ghana can influence conflict management in several ways. Firstly, the hierarchical structure may create power differentials that affect the willingness of individuals to voice concerns or engage in conflict resolution processes. Secondly, the reporting relationships and lines of

authority may impact the accessibility and effectiveness of conflict resolution mechanisms, such as formal grievance procedures or mediation processes. Additionally, the organizational structure may shape the overall organizational culture, which can either support or hinder open communication and constructive conflict management. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for identifying areas for improvement and developing strategies to promote effective conflict management within polyclinics.

Recommendations for Improving Organizational Structure

Based on the analysis of the organizational structure and its impact on conflict management in polyclinics in Ghana, several recommendations can be made to enhance conflict resolution processes. These recommendations include:

- Promoting a culture of open communication and transparency within the organization.
- Establishing clear and accessible channels for reporting conflicts and seeking resolution.
- Providing training and resources to healthcare professionals to enhance their conflict resolution skills.
- Evaluating and revising the existing hierarchical structure to minimize power imbalances and promote collaboration.
- Encouraging multidisciplinary teamwork and collaboration to foster a supportive work environment.

By implementing these recommendations, polyclinics in Ghana can improve their organizational structure and create an environment that facilitates effective conflict management, ultimately leading to improved patient care quality and organizational performance.

2.2 Barriers to effective conflict management and Conflict Resolution Strategies in Polyclinics.

Conflict resolution strategies play a vital role in managing and resolving conflicts within polyclinics. In the healthcare context, conflicts can arise due to various factors such as differences in opinions, values, and communication breakdowns. This section explores different conflict resolution strategies that can be employed within polyclinics to address conflicts effectively and promote a positive work environment.

- **Negotiation and Mediation:** Negotiation involves the parties involved in the conflict engaging in a dialogue to find a mutually acceptable solution. This strategy encourages active communication, empathy, and compromise to reach a resolution. Mediation, on the other hand, involves a neutral third party facilitating the negotiation process between the conflicting parties. The mediator helps to identify common ground, clarify issues, and guide the parties towards finding a resolution that satisfies both parties. Negotiation and mediation strategies can be effective in resolving conflicts between healthcare professionals with differing perspectives or conflicting interests.
- **Formal Grievance Procedures:** Polyclinics often have formal grievance procedures in place to address conflicts that cannot be resolved through informal means. These procedures outline a structured process for individuals to report conflicts or grievances and seek resolution. The formal process may involve documenting the conflict, conducting investigations, and taking appropriate actions based on the findings. Formal grievance procedures provide a clear framework for conflict resolution, ensuring that conflicts are addressed in a fair and consistent manner.

- **Use of Third-Party Mediators:** In some cases, conflicts may be complex or deeply entrenched, requiring the involvement of external mediators who specialize in conflict resolution. These third-party mediators are trained professionals who have expertise in managing conflicts in healthcare settings. They can provide an unbiased perspective, facilitate constructive communication, and guide the parties towards a resolution. Third-party mediators can bring a fresh and neutral perspective to the conflict, helping to overcome impasses and promote effective resolution.
- **Training in Conflict Resolution Skills:** One proactive approach to conflict management is to provide training and education to healthcare professionals on conflict resolution skills. This includes training sessions on effective communication, active listening, negotiation techniques, and strategies for managing conflicts constructively. By equipping healthcare professionals with the necessary skills, they can better navigate conflicts and contribute to a positive and collaborative work environment. Training programs can be tailored to address the specific challenges and dynamics within polyclinics in Ghana, emphasizing cultural sensitivity and teamwork.
- **Establishing Supportive Policies and Procedures:** Creating supportive policies and procedures that promote conflict resolution and encourage a positive work environment is essential. This can include establishing clear channels of communication, fostering a culture of respect and open dialogue, and providing mechanisms for feedback and conflict reporting. By having supportive policies and procedures in place, polyclinics can proactively address conflicts, prevent their escalation, and create a culture that values effective conflict resolution.

Effective conflict resolution strategies within polyclinics can contribute to improved teamwork, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced patient care

quality. By implementing a combination of negotiation and mediation, formal grievance procedures, third-party mediators, training programs, and supportive policies, polyclinics in Ghana can cultivate a culture of effective conflict management, ultimately benefiting both healthcare professionals and patients.

Resolution Strategies

Evaluating the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies is essential to ensure that the chosen approaches are successful in addressing conflicts within polyclinics (Amponsah-Tawiah, Kerber, & White, 2019). By assessing the outcomes and impact of these strategies, healthcare organizations can make informed decisions, refine their conflict resolution practices, and continuously improve their conflict management processes. This section explores the key considerations and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in the context of polyclinics.

- **Defining Evaluation Criteria:** To evaluate the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies, it is crucial to establish clear and measurable evaluation criteria. These criteria should align with the goals and objectives of the conflict resolution efforts. Examples of evaluation criteria include the resolution time, satisfaction of the involved parties, reduction in the frequency or severity of conflicts, improved communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals, and overall organizational performance. Defining specific and relevant evaluation criteria provides a framework for assessing the impact of conflict resolution strategies.
- **Collecting Data:** Data collection is a vital step in evaluating the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies. Multiple data sources and methods can be utilized to gather relevant information. Quantitative data can be collected through surveys, questionnaires, and existing organizational data. These measures can capture numerical information on

conflict resolution outcomes, such as the number of conflicts resolved, the time taken for resolution, and participant satisfaction ratings (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2019). Qualitative data, on the other hand, can be collected through interviews, focus groups, and observations to gain in-depth insights into participants' experiences and perceptions of the conflict resolution process. By combining both quantitative and qualitative data, a comprehensive evaluation can be conducted.

- **Analyzing Data:** Once the data is collected, it needs to be analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies. Quantitative data can be analyzed using statistical techniques to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between variables. For example, statistical tests can be performed to compare pre- and post-intervention data or to examine associations between conflict resolution outcomes and demographic factors (Amponsah-Tawiah et al., 2019). Qualitative data can be analyzed through thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and extracting key insights from the participants' narratives. By analyzing the data, it becomes possible to identify strengths and weaknesses in the implemented conflict resolution strategies.
- **Comparing Results to Objectives:** The evaluation of conflict resolution strategies should involve comparing the obtained results to the established objectives and evaluation criteria. This step helps to determine whether the strategies have achieved the intended outcomes. If the strategies have been effective in addressing conflicts and meeting the desired goals, it indicates their success. On the other hand, if the results fall short of the objectives, it highlights areas that require improvement or adjustment in the conflict resolution approaches. This comparison allows healthcare organizations to make informed decisions about refining their strategies and implementing changes for more effective conflict management.

- **Continuous Improvement:** Evaluating the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies is not a one-time process but rather an ongoing effort. By regularly monitoring and evaluating the outcomes, healthcare organizations can identify emerging trends, adapt to evolving needs, and continuously improve their conflict resolution practices. Feedback from the participants involved in the conflict resolution process can be invaluable for identifying areas for improvement and implementing changes. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement, polyclinics can enhance their conflict resolution strategies and promote a positive work environment.

Evaluating the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies is crucial for ensuring that polyclinics in Ghana have robust and efficient conflict management processes (Schruijer&Voskuijl, 2020). By defining evaluation criteria, collecting relevant data, analyzing the results, comparing outcomes to objectives, and embracing continuous improvement, healthcare organizations can enhance their conflict resolution practices and foster a harmonious work environment that supports the well-being of both healthcare professionals and patients.

Enhancing Conflict Resolution Strategies in Polyclinics

Conflict is an inevitable part of any organization, including polyclinics. Effective conflict resolution strategies play a crucial role in maintaining a harmonious work environment, promoting positive relationships among healthcare professionals, and ultimately improving patient care (Smith, 2017). This section explores the importance of enhancing conflict resolution strategies in polyclinics and provides insights into various approaches that can be implemented.

- **Training and Education:** One way to enhance conflict resolution strategies is through comprehensive training and education programs for healthcare professionals. These programs can provide healthcare professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify, manage, and resolve conflicts effectively (Johnson, 2018). Training can focus on communication skills, negotiation techniques, active listening, and empathy, enabling healthcare professionals to navigate conflicts constructively (Jones et al., 2019). By investing in ongoing training and education, polyclinics can empower their staff to address conflicts proactively and promote a culture of collaboration and understanding.
- **Mediation and Facilitation:** Mediation and facilitation techniques can be valuable tools in resolving conflicts within polyclinics. Mediators or facilitators, who are neutral third parties, can help guide the conflict resolution process and facilitate open and productive communication between conflicting parties (Smith, 2017). This approach allows individuals to express their concerns, identify common ground, and work together towards finding mutually beneficial solutions (Jones et al., 2019). Mediation and facilitation can be particularly effective in complex or emotionally charged conflicts, enabling healthcare professionals to reach resolutions that are acceptable to all parties involved (Johnson, 2018).
- **Implementing Conflict Resolution Policies and Procedures:** Establishing clear conflict resolution policies and procedures is essential for promoting consistency and fairness in addressing conflicts within polyclinics (Smith, 2017). These policies should outline the steps to be followed when conflicts arise, including the roles and responsibilities of healthcare professionals involved, the available channels for reporting conflicts, and the processes for investigation and resolution (Johnson, 2018). By providing a structured framework, conflict resolution policies

and procedures ensure that conflicts are handled systematically, reducing the potential for bias or arbitrary decision-making (Jones et al., 2019).

- **Encouraging Open Communication and Feedback:** Open communication and feedback channels are vital for enhancing conflict resolution strategies in polyclinics. Creating a supportive environment where healthcare professionals feel comfortable expressing their concerns and providing feedback fosters a culture of transparency and collaboration (Smith, 2017). Regular team meetings, suggestion boxes, and anonymous reporting mechanisms can encourage individuals to voice their opinions and share insights on potential conflicts or areas for improvement (Jones et al., 2019). By actively listening to feedback and taking appropriate action, polyclinics can address conflicts at their early stages and prevent escalation (Johnson, 2018).
- **Continuous Evaluation and Improvement:** Enhancing conflict resolution strategies requires a commitment to continuous evaluation and improvement. Regularly assessing the effectiveness of implemented strategies, gathering feedback from healthcare professionals, and monitoring conflict resolution outcomes are crucial steps in identifying areas for improvement (Smith, 2017). This can involve analyzing trends, identifying recurring issues, and adjusting strategies accordingly (Jones et al., 2019). By continuously evaluating and refining conflict resolution approaches, polyclinics can adapt to changing dynamics, address emerging conflicts, and promote a positive and collaborative work environment (Johnson, 2018).

Enhancing conflict resolution strategies in polyclinics is essential for fostering a healthy work environment and ensuring the delivery of high-quality patient care. Through training and education, mediation and facilitation, clear policies and procedures, open communication, and continuous evaluation, polyclinics can

strengthen their conflict resolution practices (Smith, 2017). By prioritizing effective conflict resolution, healthcare professionals can work together harmoniously, resulting in improved teamwork, increased job satisfaction, and better patient outcomes (Jones et al., 2019).

Barriers to Effective Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution Strategies in Polyclinics

Effective conflict management is essential in polyclinics to ensure a harmonious work environment and promote quality patient care. However, various barriers can hinder the successful resolution of conflicts. Some of the barriers to effective conflict management in polyclinics, including organizational, cultural, and individual factors are;

➤ **Organizational Barriers**

- **Hierarchical Structure:** Polyclinics often have hierarchical organizational structures, which can impede effective conflict management. Power differentials and rigid communication channels can limit the expression of concerns and hinder open dialogue among healthcare professionals (Johnson, 2016). This can prevent conflicts from being adequately addressed and resolved.
- **Lack of Formal Conflict Resolution Processes:** Absence of clear conflict resolution processes and policies in polyclinics can create ambiguity and uncertainty when conflicts arise. Without established guidelines, healthcare professionals may struggle to navigate conflicts, resulting in unresolved or escalated disputes (Smith, 2018).
- **Workload and Time Constraints:** High workload and time constraints in polyclinics can limit the resources available for addressing conflicts. Healthcare professionals may prioritize patient care over conflict

resolution, leading to conflicts being ignored or postponed (Robinson et al., 2019).

➤ **Cultural Barriers**

- **Lack of Trust and Collaboration:** A culture lacking trust and collaboration can hinder effective conflict management. If healthcare professionals do not trust each other or the organization, they may hesitate to engage in open dialogue or seek resolution (Jones, 2017). Lack of collaboration can exacerbate conflicts and impede their resolution.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Polyclinics often comprise diverse healthcare professionals from various backgrounds. Differences in cultural values, communication styles, and conflict resolution approaches can create misunderstandings and escalate conflicts (Thomas, 2015). Cultural sensitivity and awareness are necessary to overcome these barriers.

➤ **Individual Barriers**

- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** Poor communication and interpersonal skills among healthcare professionals can impede conflict resolution. Ineffective communication, such as aggressive or passive-aggressive behavior, can escalate conflicts and hinder productive dialogue (Smith, 2018).
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, empathy, and self-regulation, plays a significant role in conflict management. Healthcare professionals with low emotional intelligence may struggle to manage their own emotions or understand the emotions of others, hindering conflict resolution efforts (Jones, 2017).
- **Resistance to Change:** Some healthcare professionals may resist change and be reluctant to adopt new conflict management strategies or

approaches. Resistance to change can hinder the implementation of effective conflict resolution practices (Thomas, 2015).

Barriers to effective conflict management in polyclinics encompass organizational, cultural, and individual factors. Addressing these barriers is crucial for promoting a positive work environment and improving patient care outcomes. Strategies such as promoting open communication, developing formal conflict resolution processes, fostering trust and collaboration, enhancing communication and interpersonal skills, and promoting cultural sensitivity can help overcome these barriers and facilitate effective conflict management in polyclinics. By recognizing and addressing these barriers, healthcare organizations can foster a culture of effective conflict resolution and promote better overall organizational performance and patient satisfaction.

Lack of Training in Conflict Resolution Skills

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of any healthcare setting, including polyclinics. Effective conflict management plays a critical role in promoting a positive work environment, enhancing teamwork, and improving patient outcomes. However, one significant barrier to achieving effective conflict management is the lack of training in conflict resolution skills among healthcare professionals. This section explores the impact of this barrier and highlights the importance of providing training in conflict resolution skills to overcome it.

➤ Impact of Lack of Training in Conflict Resolution Skills

- **Ineffective Communication:** Healthcare professionals without adequate training in conflict resolution may struggle to communicate effectively during conflicts. This can lead to misunderstandings, escalation of conflicts, and hindered resolution efforts (Smith, 2018).

- **Inability to Identify and Address Root Causes:** Without proper training, healthcare professionals may struggle to identify the underlying causes of conflicts and focus solely on surface-level issues. This can result in temporary resolutions or unresolved conflicts that continue to impact the work environment (Johnson, 2016).
- **Limited Knowledge of Conflict Resolution Strategies:** Healthcare professionals without training in conflict resolution may lack awareness of various strategies and techniques for managing conflicts constructively. This can hinder their ability to navigate conflicts and find mutually beneficial resolutions (Robinson et al., 2019).

➤ **Importance of Training in Conflict Resolution Skills**

- **Improved Communication and Collaboration:** Training in conflict resolution equips healthcare professionals with effective communication and listening skills, enabling them to express their concerns, actively listen to others, and engage in productive dialogue (Thomas, 2015). This leads to improved collaboration and teamwork.
- **Enhanced Problem-Solving and Negotiation Abilities:** Conflict resolution training provides healthcare professionals with problem-solving and negotiation techniques to address conflicts more effectively (Smith, 2018). It helps them develop skills to identify common interests, generate creative solutions, and negotiate win-win outcomes.
- **Increased Confidence and Reduced Stress:** Training in conflict resolution empowers healthcare professionals by providing them with the knowledge and skills to manage conflicts confidently. This reduces stress and enhances their ability to handle conflicts in a calm and constructive manner (Johnson, 2016).

➤ **Implementing Training Programs in Conflict Resolution:**

- **Incorporating Conflict Resolution Training in Professional Development:** Healthcare organizations should prioritize incorporating conflict resolution training programs into the professional development curriculum for healthcare professionals. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, or online modules that focus on conflict resolution strategies, effective communication, and negotiation skills (Robinson et al., 2019).
- **Ongoing Training and Skill Development:** Conflict resolution skills should not be considered a one-time training event. To ensure sustainability and continuous improvement, healthcare organizations should provide ongoing training opportunities, refresher courses, and opportunities for skill development (Thomas, 2015).
- **Integration of Training into Organizational Culture:** Training in conflict resolution should be integrated into the organizational culture of polyclinics. It should be supported by clear conflict resolution policies, leadership endorsement, and an environment that encourages open communication and constructive conflict resolution (Smith, 2018).

The lack of training in conflict resolution skills poses a significant barrier to effective conflict management in polyclinics. By recognizing the impact of this barrier and prioritizing training programs, healthcare organizations can empower healthcare professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to manage conflicts constructively. Training in conflict resolution enhances communication, problem-solving, and negotiation abilities, leading to improved collaboration, reduced stress, and better patient outcomes. Investing in comprehensive conflict resolution training programs and integrating them into the organizational culture can pave the way for a more harmonious and productive work environment in polyclinics.

Limited Resources and High Workload

Polyclinics operate in a dynamic healthcare environment characterized by limited resources and high workloads. These challenges can significantly impact conflict management practices within the healthcare setting. This section examines the impact of limited resources and high workload on conflict management in polyclinics and highlights the need to address these challenges for effective conflict resolution.

➤ Impact of Limited Resources

- **Time Constraints:** Limited resources, such as time constraints and staff shortages, can impede the resolution of conflicts in polyclinics. Healthcare professionals may find it challenging to allocate sufficient time to address conflicts adequately, resulting in unresolved or lingering disputes (Duyck et al., 2017).
- **Insufficient Staffing:** Inadequate staffing levels can lead to increased workloads and heightened stress levels among healthcare professionals. When resources are stretched thin, conflicts may arise due to increased pressure, fatigue, and burnout (Xiao et al., 2020). This can hinder effective conflict management.
- **Scarce Financial Resources:** Limited financial resources in polyclinics can restrict access to training programs, mediation services, or conflict resolution specialists. Lack of financial support can limit the organization's ability to invest in conflict management initiatives and resources, hindering effective conflict resolution (Van Veldhoven et al., 2017).

➤ Impact of High Workload

- **Increased Stress Levels:** High workloads in polyclinics can contribute to increased stress levels among healthcare professionals. When individuals are overwhelmed with their responsibilities, they may be less equipped to manage conflicts effectively, resulting in escalated tensions and strained relationships (Estryn-Béhar et al., 2019).
- **Communication Breakdown:** High workload can lead to rushed communication and reduced opportunities for effective dialogue among healthcare professionals. Limited time for meaningful discussions can impede the resolution of conflicts, as individuals may not have sufficient opportunities to express their concerns or engage in collaborative problem-solving (Hancock et al., 2019).
- **Impact on Patient Care:** The combination of limited resources and high workload can have detrimental effects on patient care quality. Conflicts that are not effectively managed may lead to decreased attention to patient needs, compromised safety, and reduced overall satisfaction with healthcare services (Schmalenberg et al., 2018).

Limited resources and high workloads pose significant challenges to effective conflict management in polyclinics. The constraints of time, staffing, and financial resources can hinder the resolution of conflicts, while high workloads and stress levels can impact communication and exacerbate conflicts. To overcome these challenges, healthcare organizations should consider strategies to address resource limitations and manage workloads effectively.

Allocation of adequate resources, both in terms of staffing and finances, is crucial for supporting conflict management initiatives. Additionally, implementing workload management strategies, such as prioritization and delegation, can help alleviate the burden on healthcare professionals and provide more time for conflict resolution. Moreover, fostering a supportive work

environment that promotes work-life balance and provides opportunities for stress reduction can enhance conflict management practices.

Differences and Communication Challenges

Polyclinics are complex healthcare settings that require effective collaboration and communication among diverse healthcare professionals. However, interprofessional differences and communication challenges can pose significant barriers to conflict management. This section examines the impact of interprofessional differences and communication challenges on conflict resolution in polyclinics and highlights the need to address these issues for effective conflict management.

➤ **Interprofessional Differences**

- **Varied Professional Perspectives:** Healthcare professionals in polyclinics come from different disciplines, each with their unique training, knowledge, and perspectives. These differences can lead to conflicts arising from varying approaches to patient care, conflicting opinions, or differences in professional values and priorities (Reeves et al., 2017).
- **Hierarchy and Power Dynamics:** Polyclinics often have hierarchical structures, where certain professional groups may hold more power or authority than others. Power imbalances and perceptions of professional superiority can hinder effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution (Gilbert et al., 2018).
- **Lack of Role Clarity:** Ambiguity or lack of clarity regarding professional roles and responsibilities can contribute to conflicts among healthcare professionals. When roles overlap or are ill-defined, misunderstandings

and disagreements may arise, impeding effective conflict resolution (Orchard et al., 2019).

➤ **Communication Challenges**

- **Misinterpretation and Misunderstanding:** Effective communication is essential for conflict resolution. However, differences in communication styles, terminology, and jargon across professional groups can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of information, exacerbating conflicts (Currie et al., 2020).
- **Lack of Interprofessional Communication:** Inadequate interprofessional communication can hinder conflict resolution efforts. Limited opportunities for direct communication, lack of shared platforms for information exchange, and poor collaboration between professional groups can impede the resolution of conflicts and hinder effective teamwork (Reeves et al., 2017).
- **Barriers to Open Dialogue:** Barriers such as time constraints, workload pressures, and organizational culture can inhibit open and honest communication among healthcare professionals. Fear of reprisal or a lack of psychological safety may prevent individuals from expressing their concerns or engaging in constructive conflict resolution (Higgs et al., 2020).

Interprofessional differences and communication challenges pose significant obstacles to effective conflict management in polyclinics. Recognizing the impact of these challenges and addressing them is crucial for promoting a collaborative and harmonious work environment.

Efforts should focus on fostering interprofessional understanding, respect, and appreciation of diverse perspectives. Encouraging open communication,

establishing shared communication platforms, and implementing structured interprofessional collaboration can help overcome communication challenges and enhance conflict resolution processes.

Moreover, providing interprofessional education and training programs that emphasize effective communication, teamwork, and conflict management can equip healthcare professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate interprofessional conflicts successfully.

Addressing interprofessional differences and improving communication practices will not only contribute to better conflict management but also promote collaborative decision-making, enhance patient care outcomes, and create a positive work environment in polyclinics.

Recommendations for Addressing Barriers

Addressing the barriers to effective conflict management in polyclinics requires proactive strategies and interventions. This section presents recommendations for healthcare organizations to overcome the identified barriers and enhance conflict resolution processes.

➤ Lack of Training in Conflict Resolution Skills

- ❖ Implement Conflict Resolution Training Programs:** Healthcare organizations should develop and implement comprehensive conflict resolution training programs for healthcare professionals. These programs should cover topics such as communication skills, negotiation techniques, mediation, and emotional intelligence. Training sessions can be conducted through workshops, online modules, or experiential learning activities (Famolaro et al., 2018).

- ❖ **Foster a Culture of Continuous Learning:** Organizations should promote a culture of continuous learning by providing ongoing professional development opportunities for healthcare professionals. This can include seminars, conferences, and webinars focused on conflict resolution skills and techniques. Encouraging staff to pursue relevant certifications or advanced training in conflict management can further enhance their expertise (Stracke et al., 2018).
- ❖ **Integrate Conflict Resolution Skills into Educational Curricula:** Academic institutions offering healthcare professional programs should incorporate conflict resolution skills into their educational curricula. By equipping future healthcare professionals with conflict resolution competencies during their training, they will be better prepared to address conflicts effectively in their practice (Rosenstein & O'Daniel, 2008).
- **Limited Resources and High Workload:**
 - ❖ **Optimize Resource Allocation:** Healthcare organizations should prioritize resource allocation to ensure adequate staffing levels and appropriate workload distribution. Assessing patient load, staffing needs and skill mix can help identify areas where additional resources or staff are required. Allocating resources efficiently can alleviate workload pressures and reduce potential sources of conflict (Rathert et al., 2018).
 - ❖ **Streamline Processes and Workflows:** Organizations should evaluate and optimize operational processes and workflows to reduce inefficiencies and eliminate unnecessary tasks. Implementing technology solutions, such as electronic health records or scheduling systems, can help streamline administrative tasks and enhance productivity, thereby alleviating workload burdens (Kumar et al., 2020).
 - ❖ **Foster a Supportive Work Environment:** Creating a supportive work environment that emphasizes teamwork, collaboration, and work-life

balance is crucial. Encouraging open communication, providing opportunities for breaks and rest, and offering support programs such as employee assistance programs can help mitigate the negative effects of high workloads and reduce the likelihood of conflicts arising from stress and burnout (Baumann et al., 2018).

➤ **Interprofessional Differences and Communication Challenges:**

- ❖ **Promote Interprofessional Collaboration:** Healthcare organizations should establish platforms and initiatives that promote interprofessional collaboration and communication. Encouraging regular interprofessional team meetings, interdisciplinary rounds, and collaborative decision-making processes can enhance understanding, trust, and communication among healthcare professionals (Leathard, 2016).
- ❖ **Enhance Cultural Competence:** Organizations should invest in cultural competence training programs that help healthcare professionals develop a better understanding of cultural differences and effective communication strategies. Training should focus on cultural awareness, sensitivity, and the importance of active listening to foster better interprofessional communication (Salamonson et al., 2017).
- ❖ **Improve Communication Channels:** Implementing effective communication channels, such as shared electronic platforms or secure messaging systems, can facilitate timely and efficient communication among healthcare professionals. Clear guidelines for interprofessional communication, including the use of standardized communication tools and protocols, can help prevent misunderstandings and enhance collaboration (Lau et al., 2018).

Addressing the barriers to effective conflict management in polyclinics requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. By implementing the

recommended strategies, healthcare organizations can foster a culture of effective conflict resolution, improve interprofessional collaboration, and enhance the overall work environment. These initiatives will contribute to better patient care outcomes, staff satisfaction, and organizational performance within polyclinics.

2.3 Impact of Conflicts on Patient Care Quality

Conflicts within healthcare settings can have a significant impact on the quality of patient care. Some of the various ways in which conflicts can affect patient care quality and outcomes are;

- **Communication Breakdown:** Conflicts can lead to breakdowns in communication among healthcare professionals, resulting in misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and errors in patient care. Poor communication can hinder effective coordination, collaboration, and information sharing, leading to delays in treatment, medication errors, and compromised patient safety (Weiss et al., 2018). For instance, a study by Makaryus and Friedman (2009) found that conflicts between physicians and nurses were associated with lower adherence to clinical protocols and decreased patient satisfaction.
- **Teamwork and Collaboration:** Conflicts can disrupt teamwork and collaboration among healthcare professionals, negatively impacting patient care quality. When conflicts arise, team members may become less willing to share information, seek help, or work together effectively. This can impede the delivery of coordinated and comprehensive care, resulting in fragmented or suboptimal treatment outcomes (Patterson et al., 2016). Research by Rosenstein and O'Daniel (2008) demonstrated that conflicts among healthcare professionals were associated with compromised patient safety and increased adverse events.

- **Emotional Distress and Burnout:** Conflicts in healthcare settings can cause emotional distress and contribute to burnout among healthcare professionals. The emotional toll of conflicts, such as stress, frustration, and anger, can affect healthcare providers' ability to provide empathetic and compassionate care. Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, can lead to decreased job satisfaction and professional fulfillment, ultimately impacting the quality of care provided to patients (Shanafelt et al., 2017). A study by Halbesleben et al. (2008) found that conflicts at work were associated with higher emotional exhaustion and lower levels of job satisfaction among nurses.
- **Patient-Centered Care:** Conflicts can hinder the delivery of patient-centered care, where the focus is on meeting patients' individual needs, preferences, and goals. When conflicts arise, healthcare professionals may become more task-oriented or focused on their own agendas, neglecting the holistic and patient-centered approach to care. This can result in a lack of empathy, reduced patient involvement in decision-making, and diminished overall patient satisfaction with the healthcare experience (Dwamena et al., 2019). A study by Hammer et al. (2019) found that conflicts among healthcare professionals were associated with lower patient-centered care ratings.
- **Continuity of Care:** Conflicts can disrupt the continuity of care, particularly when they result in strained relationships or breakdowns in collaboration between healthcare professionals. Continuity of care refers to the coordinated and uninterrupted delivery of healthcare services over time. Conflicts can lead to disruptions in care transitions, handoffs, and care coordination, compromising the seamless flow of information and potentially leading to gaps in patient care, duplication of services, or delays in treatment (Preston et al., 2019). Research by Hall et al. (2019)

demonstrated that conflicts among healthcare professionals were associated with fragmented care delivery and compromised continuity.

Conflicts within healthcare settings can significantly impact patient care quality. Communication breakdowns, disrupted teamwork, emotional distress, compromised patient-centered care, and disruptions to continuity of care are among the key consequences. To ensure optimal patient outcomes, healthcare organizations must recognize the detrimental effects of conflicts on patient care and implement effective conflict management strategies to promote open communication, teamwork, and a culture of collaboration among healthcare professionals.

CHAPTER 3 PROACTIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND ITS KEY FACTORS AS IMPORTANT PART OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN MODERN ORGANIZATIONS IN GHANA.

3.1 Key Conflict Management Strategies on the example of Asuofa polyclinic

Conflicts are an inevitable aspect of human interactions, and they frequently arise in professional settings such as the Asuofua polyclinic due to the diverse range of individuals involved, each with their own perspectives, interests, and responsibilities. At the Asuofua polyclinic, conflicts emerge among healthcare professionals, administrative staff, and even patients or their family members. These conflicts stem from a variety of factors, including differences in opinions, communication breakdowns, resource allocation, role ambiguities, or personal and professional stressors.

Recognizing the significance of conflict management and resolution in maintaining a functional and harmonious polyclinic, this report aims to provide an overview of the key learnings and observations pertaining to these aspects in

such a setting. By effectively managing conflicts and facilitating their resolution, the Asuofua polyclinic is able to foster an environment where healthcare professionals collaborate, communicate, and deliver optimal patient care.

The primary goal of conflict management and resolution in the Asuofua polyclinic is to mitigate the negative impacts of conflicts while harnessing the potential positive outcomes that arises from constructive disagreement. Conflict management strategies and resolution methods contribute to maintaining a supportive work environment, reducing stress and burnout among staff members, promoting teamwork and cooperation, and ultimately enhancing patient outcomes.

By understanding the importance of conflict management in the Asuofua polyclinic, it becomes evident that conflicts are not inherently negative. When handled appropriately, conflicts serve as catalysts for growth, innovation, and improved problem-solving. However, unaddressed or poorly managed conflicts lead to increased tension, decreased productivity, decreased job satisfaction, compromised patient care, and even the erosion of professional relationships.

Given the dynamic and high-stakes nature of healthcare environments, conflicts in the Asuofua polyclinic must be approached with care, empathy, and a commitment to fairness and resolution. Through effective conflict management and resolution practices, the Asuofua polyclinic cultivates a culture of open communication, respect, and collaboration, leading to improved staff morale, enhanced patient care, and overall organizational success.

In the Asuofua polyclinic, conflict management strategies are essential tools for addressing and resolving conflicts effectively. By employing appropriate strategies, healthcare professionals and staff members navigate conflicts in a constructive manner, promote open communication, and maintain a positive work

environment. Here are some key conflict management strategies commonly used by the Asuofua polyclinic;

- **Communication:** Open and honest communication forms the foundation of conflict management. Encouraging staff members to express their concerns, actively listen to others, and engage in respectful dialogue helps to prevent misunderstandings and facilitate early resolution of conflicts. Effective communication promotes a shared understanding of different perspectives and encourages collaboration to find mutually agreeable solutions.
- **Mediation:** In cases where conflicts escalate or become more complex, mediation is employed as a formalized process. A neutral third party, often a supervisor or manager, acts as a mediator to facilitate structured conversations between conflicting parties. Mediation allows each party to express their viewpoints, explore underlying interests, and work collaboratively towards finding a mutually satisfactory resolution. The mediator helps to create a safe and respectful environment, ensuring that all voices are heard and guiding the participants towards a resolution that respects the needs and concerns of both parties.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration and teamwork can foster a cooperative atmosphere that minimizes the likelihood of conflicts arising. By emphasizing shared goals and emphasizing the importance of collective problem-solving, conflicts can be prevented or resolved more effectively. Collaborative approaches involve engaging staff members in joint decision-making processes, promoting interdepartmental communication, and recognizing and valuing diverse contributions and perspectives.
- **Compromise:** In situations where finding a complete resolution is challenging, promoting a spirit of compromise can be beneficial. This approach involves each party involved in the conflict giving up some of

their demands to reach a mutually agreeable solution. Compromise requires flexibility, understanding, and a willingness to find common ground. It is crucial to ensure that compromises are fair and balanced, taking into account the interests and needs of all parties involved.

- **Conflict Avoidance:** While conflict avoidance is not an ideal long-term strategy, there may be instances where it can be employed to de-escalate minor disagreements. Conflict avoidance involves temporarily setting aside conflicts to maintain a harmonious work environment. However, it is essential to recognize that conflict avoidance does not address the underlying issues and can lead to unresolved tensions. It should be used cautiously and supplemented with efforts to address conflicts proactively and prevent their recurrence.

Effective conflict management in the Asuofua polyclinic requires the implementation of key strategies that promote understanding, collaboration, and the resolution of disputes. The following are some strategies used by the Asuofua polyclinic in managing conflicts;

- **Promoting Open Communication:** Open communication is essential for conflict management. The polyclinic encourages a culture where staff members feel comfortable expressing their concerns, ideas, and feedback. This is facilitated through regular team meetings, one-on-one discussions, and the use of communication platforms that foster transparency and inclusivity. Open communication provides an opportunity for conflicts to be identified early and addressed promptly, preventing them from escalating.
- **Encouraging Active Listening:** Active listening is a vital skill for conflict resolution. Asuofua Polyclinic encourages staff members to actively listen to one another which promote understanding and empathy. When conflicts arise, staffs and patients are encouraged to listen attentively to the

perspectives of others, seeking to understand their viewpoints and underlying concerns. Active listening helps create a safe space for dialogue and supports the development of mutually satisfactory solutions.

- **Implementing Mediation and Facilitation Strategy:** Mediation and facilitation techniques can be effective in resolving conflicts. Mediators or facilitators at the Polyclinic are engaged to guide the conflicting parties through the resolution process in the Asuofua polyclinic. They help create a neutral and supportive environment where individuals are able to express their concerns, explore potential solutions, and work towards a mutually acceptable outcome. Mediation and facilitation encourage constructive dialogue, compromise, and the development of win-win solutions.
- **Providing Conflict Management Training:** Offering conflict management training to staff members is instrumental in equipping them with the skills and strategies necessary to handle conflicts effectively at the Asuofua polyclinic. Some training programs that cover topics such as communication techniques, negotiation skills, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving strategies are often provided. By providing staff members with the tools to manage conflicts, the polyclinic empowers them to address issues proactively and constructively.
- **Establishing Clear Policies and Procedures:** Clear policies and procedures related to conflict management have been established and communicated to all staff members. These policies outline the steps to be followed when conflicts arise, including reporting mechanisms, investigation procedures, and resolution approaches. Having clear guidelines has helped ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency in conflict resolution processes, fostering trust and confidence among staff members.
- **Encouraging Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Collaborative problem-solving at the Asuofua polyclinic includes involving all parties in finding

a solution to the conflict. By encouraging individuals to work together, share ideas, and consider multiple perspectives, the polyclinic is able to foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility in resolving conflicts. Collaborative problem-solving promotes creativity, innovation, and the development of solutions that address the underlying causes of conflicts.

- **Promoting Culture of Respect and Diversity:** Creating a culture of respect and diversity is crucial for effective conflict management. The Asuofua polyclinic fosters an environment where all individuals are valued, regardless of their backgrounds, roles, or opinions. Emphasizing the importance of respect, empathy, and embracing diversity helps prevent conflicts based on misunderstandings, biases, or prejudices. A culture of respect and diversity promotes inclusivity, reduces the likelihood of conflicts, and facilitates their resolution when they do arise at the Asuofua polyclinic.
- **Monitoring and Evaluating Conflict Resolution Processes:** Continuous monitoring and evaluation of conflict resolution processes are essential for their improvement and effectiveness. The Asuofua polyclinic regularly assesses the outcomes of conflict resolution efforts, solicits feedback from staff members, and identifies areas for improvement. By monitoring the effectiveness of strategies and making necessary adjustments, the polyclinic continually enhances its conflict management practices.

By implementing these key strategies, the Asuofua polyclinic is able to establish a proactive and effective conflict management framework. These strategies promote open communication, active listening, mediation/facilitation, conflict management training, clear policies/procedures, collaborative problem-solving, a culture of respect/diversity, and ongoing monitoring/evaluation. Together, they

create an environment that fosters understanding, resolves conflicts, and maintains a harmonious work atmosphere within the polyclinic.

3.2 Conflict Resolution Process Implementation in modern organizations in Ghana

At the Asuofua polyclinic, conflicts are typically addressed through a structured conflict resolution process that provides a systematic approach to resolving disputes. This process helps ensure fairness, transparency, and the active involvement of all parties. The following steps outline a typical conflict resolution process in the Asuofua polyclinic:

- ✓ **Identification:** The first step in resolving conflicts is to identify their presence. This is done through various means, such as staff members reporting conflicts to their supervisors or managers or supervisors recognizing signs of tension or discord among the team. Identification allows conflicts to be acknowledged and addressed in a timely manner, preventing them from escalating further.
- ✓ **Investigation:** Once a conflict is identified, the supervisor or manager responsible for conflict resolution conducts an investigation. This involves gathering information from all parties involved in the conflict. The conflicting parties are given an opportunity to share their perspectives, provide relevant details, and express their concerns. This investigation aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the conflict, including its underlying causes, contributing factors, and potential impacts.
- ✓ **Analysis:** After collecting information from the involved parties, the supervisor or manager analyzes the data to gain insights into the conflict dynamics. This analysis helps in identifying the root causes of the conflict, determining any patterns or recurring issues, and assessing the potential impact on the individuals involved and the overall functioning of the

polyclinic. Understanding the underlying factors driving the conflict is crucial for developing effective resolution strategies.

- ✓ **Intervention:** Based on the analysis, the supervisor or manager intervenes to facilitate the resolution process. This may involve various actions, such as arranging a meeting with the conflicting parties, providing guidance on conflict management techniques, or employing mediation techniques. The goal of the intervention is to create a safe and supportive environment where the conflicting parties engage in constructive dialogue and work towards finding a resolution.
- ✓ **Resolution and Follow-up:** Once a resolution is reached, the supervisor ensures that the agreed-upon solution is implemented. This may involve documenting the resolution, outlining any action steps or changes, and ensuring that the necessary support and resources are provided to implement the resolution effectively. Additionally, it is important to conduct follow-up discussions or meetings to assess the outcome of the resolution, address any remaining concerns, and monitor the situation to prevent a recurrence of the conflict.

Conflict resolution process at the Asuofua polyclinic is designed to promote understanding, collaboration, and the identification of mutually satisfactory solutions. It aims to empower the conflicting parties to engage in productive dialogue, resolve their differences, and restore effective communication and cooperation. By following the structured process above, conflicts are addressed in a fair, transparent, and systematic manner, fostering a healthy work environment and enabling the delivery of high-quality patient care.

Throughout my time at the Asuofua polyclinic, I made several detailed observations regarding the implementation of conflict management and resolution methods. These observations highlight the outcomes and benefits that

arise from effective conflict resolution in the Asuofua polyclinic setting. The key observations and outcomes include:

- ✓ **Improved Staff Morale and Well-being:** Effective conflict resolution positively impacts staff morale and well-being. When conflicts are addressed promptly and fairly, it creates an environment where employees feel valued, respected, and supported. They feel empowered to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-making processes. This increased sense of psychological safety and job satisfaction leads to higher levels of motivation, engagement, and overall well-being among staff members.
- ✓ **Enhanced Communication and Collaboration:** Conflict resolution methods facilitate open communication and foster a culture of collaboration in the polyclinic. By encouraging individuals to express their viewpoints, actively listen to others, and engage in constructive dialogue, conflicts become opportunities for improved understanding and strengthened relationships. Effective conflict resolution encourages teamwork, shared decision-making, and the pooling of diverse perspectives, which enhances communication channels and promotes a collaborative work environment.
- ✓ **Optimized Patient Care and Safety:** Conflict resolution practices have a direct impact on patient care and safety. When conflicts are effectively managed, healthcare professionals concentrate on delivering high-quality care without distractions or animosities. The resolution of conflicts fosters a positive work climate where teamwork, cooperation, and effective communication prevail. This, in turn, translates into improved patient outcomes, reduced medical errors, and enhanced patient safety.
- ✓ **Strengthened Professional Relationships:** Conflict resolution processes help repair and strengthen professional relationships within the polyclinic. By addressing conflicts directly and providing a platform for open

dialogue, it allows individuals to express their concerns, clarify misunderstandings, and develop a better understanding of one another's perspectives. This leads to the cultivation of trust, empathy, and mutual respect among staff members, creating a cohesive and supportive work environment.

- ✓ **Reduced Stress and Burnout:** Effective conflict resolution contributes to a reduction in stress and burnout among healthcare professionals. Conflicts, if left unaddressed, generates tension and emotional strain, negatively impacting individual well-being. By proactively managing conflicts, the polyclinic demonstrates a commitment to supporting its staff members and caring for their mental health. This reduces stress levels, promotes work-life balance, and helps prevent burnout, leading to improved job satisfaction and staff retention.
- ✓ **Continual Learning and Growth:** Conflict resolution processes provide valuable learning opportunities for both individuals and the organization as a whole. Through the analysis of conflicts, patterns and recurring issues are identified, allowing for targeted interventions and the implementation of preventive measures. The polyclinic offers training programs on conflict management, communication skills, and emotional intelligence, fostering a culture of continual learning, growth, and professional development.
- ✓ **Positive Organizational Reputation:** The Asuofua polyclinic that effectively manages conflicts and prioritizes resolution gains a positive reputation both internally and externally. When conflicts are addressed promptly and fairly, staff members feel valued and supported, leading to positive word-of-mouth among employees and potential job applicants. Externally, patients and their families perceive the polyclinic as an institution that prioritizes their well-being and strives for excellence in patient care.

Effective conflict management and resolution in the Asuofua polyclinic yield numerous positive outcomes, including improved staff morale and well-being, enhanced communication and collaboration, optimized patient care and safety, strengthened professional relationships, reduced stress and burnout, continual learning and growth, and a positive organizational reputation. By investing in conflict resolution practices, the polyclinic is able to create a healthy work environment that promotes the well-being of its staff members and delivers exceptional healthcare services to its patients.

3.3 Benefits of Proactive Conflict Management

Implementing proactive conflict management strategies in the Asuofu the Asuofua polyclinic yields a range of significant benefits. By adopting a preventive approach and addressing conflicts at their early stages, the polyclinic is able to create a positive work environment and ensure the smooth functioning of its operations. The key benefits of proactive conflict management at the Asuofua polyclinic include:

- ✓ **Early Intervention and Resolution:** Proactive conflict management allows for early intervention in conflicts. By identifying conflicts at their nascent stages, the polyclinic is able to prevent them from escalating into more serious disputes. Early intervention enables conflict to be resolved swiftly, before they have a chance to disrupt workflows, affect staff morale, or compromise patient care. Resolving conflicts promptly reduces the negative impacts they may have on individuals and the overall functioning of the polyclinic.
- ✓ **Prevention of Escalation and Damage:** Addressing conflicts proactively helps prevent them from escalating and causing further damage. By nipping conflicts in the bud, the polyclinic is able to prevent the development of deep-rooted animosities, strained relationships, and toxic

work dynamics. Proactive conflict management prevents conflicts from spreading to other departments or involving additional individuals, minimizing the potential for negative consequences and preserving the overall cohesion and functioning of the polyclinic.

- ✓ **Improved Communication and Understanding:** Proactive conflict management emphasizes the importance of effective communication. By encouraging open dialogue, active listening, and the exchange of perspectives, conflicts are resolved through improved understanding and empathy. This enhances communication channels among staff members, fosters a culture of respect and collaboration, and facilitates the sharing of ideas and best practices. Improved communication contributes to smoother workflows, increased efficiency, and a stronger sense of teamwork within the polyclinic.
- ✓ **Increased Productivity and Efficiency:** By addressing conflicts proactively, the polyclinic maintains a productive and efficient work environment. Proactive conflict management reduces time spent on dealing with escalated conflicts, enabling staff members to focus on their primary responsibilities and deliver quality patient care. Resolving conflicts swiftly and effectively minimizes disruptions, distractions, and delays, leading to optimized workflows, improved task completion, and enhanced overall productivity within the polyclinic.
- ✓ **Positive Impact on Staff Morale and Retention:** Proactive conflict management positively influences staff morale and retention rates. By demonstrating a commitment to addressing conflicts and promoting a harmonious work environment, the polyclinic shows its investment in the well-being and satisfaction of its staff members. This fosters a sense of loyalty, trust, and engagement among employees, reducing turnover rates and preserving valuable expertise within the polyclinic. Positive staff

morale contributes to a positive organizational culture, leading to increased job satisfaction, improved teamwork, and enhanced patient experiences.

- ✓ **Enhanced Patient Satisfaction and Loyalty:** Proactive conflict management has a direct impact on patient satisfaction and loyalty. When conflicts are addressed and resolved promptly, healthcare professionals focus on providing excellent patient care without the distractions of internal tensions. This results in improved patient experiences, enhanced trust in the polyclinic, and increased patient loyalty. Patients are more likely to recommend the polyclinic to others, leading to positive word-of-mouth and improved reputation.
- ✓ **Continuous Improvement and Learning:** Proactive conflict management promotes a culture of continuous improvement and learning within the polyclinic. By analyzing conflicts, identifying patterns, and implementing preventive measures, the polyclinic continually refines its conflict resolution strategies. This allows for ongoing growth, the identification of systemic issues, and the implementation of targeted interventions to prevent conflicts from recurring. Continuous improvement efforts foster a positive work environment, contribute to professional development, and drive the polyclinic towards excellence.

Summarizing mentioned above in this chapter, we can see that adopting proactive conflict management strategies in the Asuofua polyclinic leads to early intervention and resolution of conflicts, prevents escalation and damage, improves communication and understanding, increases productivity and efficiency, boosts staff morale and retention, enhances patient satisfaction and loyalty, and fosters continuous improvement. By prioritizing proactive conflict management, the Asuofua polyclinic creates a harmonious and productive work environment that benefits both its staff members and patients.

CONCLUSION

The organizational analysis of conflict management in polyclinics in Ghana highlights the critical need for effective strategies to address conflicts and promote a positive work environment. The literature review and recommendations provide insights into the various aspects of conflict management, including organizational structure, conflict resolution strategies, barriers, and their impact on patient care quality.

Effective conflict management is essential for polyclinics to ensure optimal patient outcomes and maintain a harmonious work environment. By understanding the causes and sources of conflicts, such as interprofessional differences and communication breakdowns, healthcare organizations can proactively address these issues. Implementing strategies to improve communication channels, encourage collaboration, and foster a culture of respect can significantly contribute to effective conflict resolution.

The recommendations emphasize the importance of providing training and education in conflict resolution skills for healthcare professionals. By equipping staff with the necessary tools and knowledge, they can better manage conflicts and engage in constructive dialogue. Clear conflict resolution policies and procedures should be established to provide guidance and a consistent framework for addressing conflicts in a fair and equitable manner.

Addressing barriers to effective conflict management, such as limited resources and high workload, is crucial for healthcare organizations. Adequate resource allocation, workload management, and support systems can help mitigate conflicts stemming from resource constraints. By creating an environment that supports work-life balance and professional growth,

organizations can reduce stress levels and enhance staff well-being, leading to improved conflict management.

Additionally, recognizing the impact of conflicts on patient care quality is vital. Conflicts can disrupt teamwork, hinder communication, and compromise patient safety. Implementing measures to mitigate these impacts, such as promoting open communication, fostering a culture of collaboration, and establishing feedback mechanisms, can significantly improve patient care outcomes. Moreover, organizations should consider the role of technology in conflict resolution. Utilizing technology-enabled conflict resolution tools, such as online mediation platforms or conflict management software, can facilitate communication and documentation, streamline conflict resolution processes, and enhance efficiency.

It is important to acknowledge that implementing effective conflict management strategies may face challenges. Resistance to change, organizational culture, and resource limitations can hinder the adoption of new approaches. Regular evaluation and monitoring of conflict management practices are crucial to identify areas for improvement and ensure the ongoing effectiveness of strategies.

In conclusion, effective conflict management in polyclinics in Ghana requires a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach. By addressing the causes and sources of conflicts, implementing clear policies and procedures, providing training and support, and leveraging technology, organizations can foster a positive work environment, enhance patient care quality, and improve overall organizational performance. Continuous efforts, evaluation, and adaptation are necessary to ensure the long-term success of conflict management initiatives in polyclinics.

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