

Conflict Management in Nursing: A Short Review Paper

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Abstract

Nurses experience conflict as a regular event in their work. This study aimed to review prior research to explore conflict management styles used by nurses in the workplace. The searching was conducted in different Electronic databases: CINAHL, Google Scholar, ASCOs and EBSCO. This review paper illustrated that nurses and managers used different styles of conflict management in their workplace. There are a variety of factors that played a role in the nurse's decision to adopt the style of choice for conflict management. Skills training for conflict management is needed. Future studies need to address all the complex and multifaceted circumstances of the individual personal qualities, type of work relationships, the specifics of the work environment that may influence the occurrence of conflicts in hospital.

Keywords: Conflict; Conflict Management; Conflict Resolution; Nursing Manger

Introduction

The conflict is a difference within oneself or differences or disagreement among individuals that has potential to cause harm [1]. Usually, there are four kinds of conflicts: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup [1].

The sources of conflict among nurses in hospitals and nurse managers include the nurses' perceptions and reactions of nurse to conflict, structure of the organization, management style in hospital, nature and circumstances of work assignment, personal characteristics and reciprocal understanding and interaction [2].

There are many negative consequences of conflict. Conflict if not directed appropriately may disrupts collective efforts [3]; cause unprofessional performances [4]; weaken the workers loyalty toward the organization [5]; increase level of stress [6]; cause patients negligence [7].

Aim of the Study

The aim of this paper is to explore conflict management styles used by nurses in the workplace through reviewing of prior studies.

Method

Search methods

The searching was conducted in different Electronic databases: CINAHL, Google Scholar, ASCOs, and EBSCO. Searching was based on Key search terms: 'conflict', 'conflict management', 'conflict resolution' and 'nursing manger'.

Inclusion criteria were studies (a) discuss the conflict and conflict management (b) published between 2015 and 2020, (c) published in English. While, review articles, editorials, letters, comments, books and thesis were excluded.

Search outcome

Searching of literature yield 52 studies for review, 15 excluded when reviewed the title, 20 when reading the abstract and 17 studies met the inclusion criteria.

Results and Discussion

Nurses experience conflict as a regular event in their job [2,8]. The data showed that about 77.8% of the nurses experienced moderate conflicts and 16.5% of them had high conflicts at workplace [9]. The greater part of nurses reported conflict with other professions, frequently doctors, and this kind of conflict was generally reported by the more experienced nurses and who in managerial positions [10]. Also, nurses may have conflict with patients' family members several times per month [8].

Effective management of conflict include using of a variety of styles rely on the conflict circumstances [11]. Many studies have assessed the conflict management styles used by nurses and managers [9,10,12-14]. In Greece, the nurses reported that the most frequent style for management of conflict was avoidance, then collaboration and as well in significantly smaller percentages compromise, competition, mediation and accommodation [10]. Nurses in different unit in Iran used controlling conflict, avoiding conflict and resolving conflict styles correspondingly to deal with it in their hospitals [9]. In Jordan, the nurse managers used integrating style, compromising, obliging, dominating and avoiding styles of conflict management [12]. Medical-surgical nurses in United States used compromising and accommodation, followed by avoidance and collaboration styles of conflict management, and competition was not used in any way [13]. In comparison, nurse managers work in inpatient organizations in Turkey favored to use collaborating, compromising, avoiding, competing, and accommodating [14]. On the whole, a integrative review summarized that nurses used constructive methods of conflict management rather than destructive methods of conflict management [15]. In general, management of conflict effectively promote eagerness, enhance morale, and motivates person and organizational growth; while ineffective management of conflict generate further conflict and destructively outcomes the entire organization [16-20].

Though, there are various factors that played a role in the nurse's decision to adopt the style of choice for conflict management. Factors such as age, educational background, length of service, and managerial experience were significant in conflict management [14,21-23]. For example: younger nurses, with less responsibilities and no preceding conflict management education adopt avoidance as their main choice for conflict management; while, more educated nurses adopt collaboration and supervisor was the mainly suitable person for management of conflict [10,24-27].

Conclusion

The purpose of the current paper was to explore conflict management styles used by nurses in the workplace. Conflict management is particularly important for the effective performance of organizations and for the individual development. It was concluded that nurses and managers used a variety of conflict management styles, and overall, nurses used constructive methods of conflict management. There

are a range of variables played a role in the nurse's decision to adopt the style of choice for conflict management. It is obvious that conflict has negative effects on the productivity and patient health care, which might lead to failure in achieving organizations goals, increase work stress and decrease quality of patient care. Thus, the nurses and nursing managers ought to understand the effective factors on work conflict and reduce its level in workplace. The hospital managers must give skills training for conflict management as a result nurses will become familiar with different conflict management styles. Because of the importance of issue, there is a necessity to future studies that take into account all the complex and multifaceted circumstances of the individual personal qualities, type of work relationships, the specifics of the work environment that may influence the occurrence of conflicts in hospital.

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