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# Challenges faced by hospital managers in the face of a shortage of qualified human resources: a descriptive study at the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, Lubango.

*Challenges faced by hospital managers in the context of a shortage of qualified human resources: a descriptive study at Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, Lubango*

*Challenges of hospital managers facing the deficit of qualified human resources: descriptive study at the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, Lubango*

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**Summary:**

This article aims to describe the challenges faced by hospital managers regarding the shortage of qualified human resources at the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital in Lubango. The study is justified by the growing relevance of human resource management in hospital units with limited resources, where the scarcity of qualified professionals directly compromises the quality and continuity of care provided to the population. From a methodological point of view, this is a descriptive investigation in terms of its objectives, with a quantitative and qualitative approach, using the questionnaire survey technique applied to a non-probabilistic intentional sample of 12 individuals. The results show that all respondents recognize the existence of a shortage of qualified human resources in the unit, that 91.67% consider this shortage one of the main challenges of hospital management, and that 58.33% state that this shortage frequently compromises the planning, organization, and supervision of services. Lack of continuous training (41.67%) and migration of professionals (33.33%) emerge as the main causes cited, while budgetary limitations (75%) constitute the greatest difficulty in retaining and training personnel.

It is concluded that the shortage of qualified human resources represents a structural challenge for the management of the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, requiring adjustments to the staffing levels, investment in continuous training, and improvements in working conditions and remuneration.

**Keywords:** challenges; hospital manager; deficit; qualified human resources

**Abstract:**

This article aims to describe the challenges faced by hospital managers in addressing the shortage of qualified human resources at Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital in Lubango. The study is justified by the growing importance of human resource management in hospital facilities operating with limited resources, where the shortage of qualified professionals directly compromises the quality and continuity of healthcare provided to the population. From a methodological perspective, this is a descriptive study in terms of its objectives, adopting a quantitative and qualitative approach. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey administered to a purposive, non-probability sample of 12 individuals. The results show that all respondents acknowledge the existence of a shortage of qualified human resources at the hospital, while 91.67% consider this shortage one of the main challenges facing hospital management, and 58.33% state that it frequently compromises the planning, organization and supervision of services. The lack of continuous professional training (41.67%) and the migration of healthcare professionals (33.33%) were identified as the main causes, while budgetary constraints (75%) constitute the greatest obstacle to staff retention and capacity-building. It is concluded that the shortage of qualified human resources represents a structural

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challenge for the management of Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, requiring adjustments to staffing levels, investment in continuous professional training, and improvements in working conditions and remuneration.

**Keywords:** challenges; hospital manager; shortage; qualified human resources.

**Summary:**

This article aims to describe the challenges faced by the hospital manager in the face of the deficit of qualified human resources at the Hospital Municipal Olga Chaves, in Lubango. The study is justified by the growing relevance of the management of people in hospital units with limited resources, where the scarcity of qualified professionals directly compromises the quality and continuity of care provided to the population.

Methodologically, it is a descriptive investigation regarding its objectives, with a quantitative and qualitative approach, which uses a questionnaire survey applied to an intentional non-probabilistic sample of 12 people. The results show that all respondents recognize the existence of a deficit in qualified human resources in the unit, with 91.67% considering this deficit as one of the main challenges of hospital management and that 58.33% state that this shortage often compromises planning, organization and supervision of services. The lack of training continues (41.67 %) and the migration of professionals (33.33 %) are seen as the main causes, even though the presupposed limitations (75 %) constitute the greatest difficulty for the retention and training of personnel. It is concluded that the deficit of qualified human resources represents a structural challenge for the management of the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, which requires adapting the staff, investing in continuous training and improving working conditions and remuneration.

**Keywords:** challenges; hospital manager; deficit; qualified human resources.

## Introduction

Hospital management is one of the fundamental pillars for effective operation.
of health services, especially in contexts where available resources are limited. A
The presence of qualified healthcare professionals in sufficient numbers is essential to ensure
the quality and humanization of the service provided to the population, since it is about the
It is people—and not just the infrastructure or technology available—that bear the brunt of this.
Ultimately, the ability to transform resources into effective healthcare.

The origin of this problem dates back to the increasingly documented observation at the level
internationally, many health systems face a growing imbalance between the
The search for care and the availability of qualified professionals to provide it.
In Angola, and particularly at the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital in Lubango, this
Reality is no exception: there is a significant shortage of qualified human resources.
This situation compromises organizational performance and poses significant challenges for managers.
In this scenario, hospital managers assume a central role, as they need to find

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Strategies to address the shortage of skilled personnel and reconcile this with increasing demand. of users with staff shortages and, simultaneously, maintain acceptable standards of Quality and efficiency in the services provided.

The importance of studying the challenges faced by hospital managers in the context of resource shortages. The availability of qualified personnel at the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital lies in the possibility of to understand how this limitation impacts the quality of care, to identify the main management difficulties faced and to point out strategies that can contribute to Improving the functioning of the institution and the local health system. In the specific context this unit, located in a densely populated area and which receives daily a demand for patients that it cannot always satisfy, few are observed. healthcare professionals, equipment shortages, and recurring complaints about the quality of customer service — factors that, together, have been challenging for the management of that unit. hospital.

Given this scenario, the general objective of this article is to describe the challenges. challenges faced by hospital managers regarding the shortage of qualified human resources in Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital, in Lubango, unfolding into the following objectives Specifics: identify the challenges faced by hospital managers and section heads regarding the shortage of qualified professionals; assess the causes of the human resources shortage. qualified; examine the strategies used by hospital management to address this shortage; and to investigate the difficulties faced by managers and section heads in retaining and training of health professionals. The following problem was thus formulated:

Investigation: What are the challenges faced by hospital managers when dealing with a shortage of human resources? Are there qualified professionals at the Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital in Lubango?

## Literature review

### Hospital management: concept, evolution and organizational complexity

Hospital management comprises a set of processes designed to organize, coordinate and guide human, material, financial and technological resources to ensure the Efficient functioning of healthcare institutions and the provision of quality care. In this sense, there is a widely shared understanding that good management contributes to improve organizational performance. However, hospitals are distinguished from other

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organizations due to the high complexity of their structures and the diversity of professionals.
involved and by the specialized nature of the services provided. Therefore, the relationship between the
Management practices and healthcare outcomes are not linear. A systematic review
global, based on quantitative evidence from different countries and levels of
Performance demonstrated that the adoption of hospital management practices is positively impacting performance.
associated with the structural and clinical quality of services in most of the studies analyzed,
although the relationship with user satisfaction is less consistent (Ward et al., 2025).

The complexity of hospital management is not limited to administrative aspects and
technical aspects, also encompassing the relationships established between the different actors.
organizational. Hospitals depend on the coordination between managers, doctors, nurses,
technicians, administrative staff and other professionals, making the relational dimension
fundamental to its functioning. From this perspective, trust among professionals is essential.
Health and its respective leadership are particularly relevant, as they influence the way...
How teams interpret and respond to management decisions. A systematic review of
The study of trust relationships in hospital management revealed that the quality of relationships between...
Professionals and their hierarchical superiors constitute an important element for the
The functioning of health organizations, especially in situations characterized by scarcity.
of resources (Varga et al., 2023).

Beyond organizing resources and managing professional relationships, management
The contemporary hospital environment demands strategic planning capabilities and the ability to adapt to new needs.
Transformations in the institutional environment. Healthcare systems are marked by increasing
Complexity, dynamism, and uncertainty are factors that hinder the adoption of solutions.
exclusively focused on immediate results. In this context, hospital managers need
to develop a long-term vision and systemic thinking, capable of relating the
different organizational problems and anticipate their effects on the provision of care.
This perspective becomes particularly important in the face of challenges such as scarcity.
qualified personnel, limited resources, and the ongoing need to ensure
continuity and quality of services (Huebner & Flessa, 2022).

Thus, the evolution of hospital management demonstrates a shift from one perspective...
predominantly administrative towards a more integrated, strategic and
relational. The hospital should be understood as a complex organization, in which the
administrative efficiency, quality of care, trust among professionals,
Resource availability and planning capacity are interconnected.
Consequently, effective hospital management depends not only on the availability of resources,

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but also the institutional capacity to organize, coordinate and use them effectively.
strategic to respond to the needs of users and the challenges of the health system.

**Management models and skills in a hospital setting.**

There is no single or universally ideal hospital management model; it is common
The coexistence of different management frameworks within healthcare institutions. One of them is...
a quality management model, the practical application of which was demonstrated in a study carried out
in Ethiopian public hospitals, which used the Donabedian framework — structure, process and
result — to assess the quality of care, highlighting how the availability of
The structure and availability of adequate professionals directly influence healthcare outcomes.
(Guta, 2022).

Another relevant model is that of participatory management, which presupposes the active inclusion of
Professionals themselves in identifying organizational problems and solutions. A review
A systematic review of participatory approaches to empower health professionals in countries of
low and middle income shows that interventions involving health teams in
analysis of their own challenges — instead of simply being given guidelines to
unilateral approach — produces more consistent changes in organizational behavior and
in the motivation of professionals (Olude et al., 2023).

From the perspective of the skills required of a manager, a scope review of the
Leadership in healthcare identifies that contemporary hospital leaders need to navigate
increasing complexity — disruptive technologies, aging populations and
Teams under pressure—requiring skills that go beyond traditional management, such as
ability to manage uncertainty, communicate effectively and continuously adapt their roles
(Spanos et al., 2024).

**Human resources in health: strategic importance and global distribution**

Human resources are the central element of any health system, being
key determinants for the efficiency, accessibility, and quality of services provided. According to
According to the most recent assessment of the global health workforce, the global workforce...
The number of healthcare professionals exceeded 65 million in 2020, but their distribution...
remains profoundly unequal, with a difference of about 6.5 times in density.

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professionals between high-income countries and low-income countries (Boniol et al., 2022).

This inequality hits the African region particularly hard. The report monitoring the Organization's Global Human Resources for Health Strategy The World Health Organization acknowledges that, despite the global number of health workers having... Although growth has slowed, the pace of progress has masked considerable differences between regions, with an upward revision of the global deficit projection to 11 million. professionals by 2030, with the African region being one of those showing the least progress in reducing this deficit (Abu-Agla et al., 2024).

This global scenario demands that the manager himself assume an active role in the management of available human resources. The literature on hospital management competencies identifies Specifically, people management — recruitment, allocation, and team development — as one of the manager's central areas of activity, especially relevant in contexts of structural shortage of professionals (Ndayishimiye et al., 2023).

**Shortage of qualified human resources: causes and determinants**

The causes of the shortage of qualified human resources in the health sector are multifactorial. Among the main determinants documented in the literature, the following stands out: Migration of skilled professionals. The study by Onah et al. (2022), conducted in Nigeria, It identifies dissatisfaction with the emigration of doctors as the main factor associated with this situation. remuneration, the lack of career advancement prospects, and the perception of better opportunities for professional development abroad, warning that this phenomenon It directly compromises the capacity of health systems in developing countries. to ensure a stable and qualified workforce.

Regarding the lack of continuous training, also cited as one of the main causes of skills deficit, the review by Deprez et al. (2023) on the Continuous professional development in low- and middle-income countries demonstrates that the fragility of training systems — resulting from a scarcity of financial resources, limited supply of training programs and lack of institutional mechanisms for monitoring — compromises the updating and retention of skills of healthcare professionals.

A third, less visible but equally relevant determining factor relates to... Motivation of professionals. A scope review of organizational contexts and

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The sociocultural factors that shape the motivation of healthcare professionals in Africa conclude that... Reforms based solely on financial incentives have limited effects, and factors such as The work environment, institutional recognition, and sense of belonging to the institution are... equally important determinants for explaining the permanence — or departure — of qualified professionals (Diallo et al., 2025).

**Impacts of human resource shortages on hospital management and performance.**

The shortage of qualified human resources has impacts that go beyond the physical dimension. administrative aspects of hospital management, directly impacting safety and quality of care. assistance provided. A recent systematic review and meta-analysis, which compiled data from nearly A study of 290,000 nurses in 32 countries demonstrates that professional burnout... often associated with teams overburdened by staff shortages, is consistently associated with lower quality and safety of care, as well as a lower patient satisfaction (Li et al., 2024).

From the perspective of employee retention, the application of the so-called Root Stem Models in low-income contexts demonstrate that workforce retention in health depends on an interconnected set of factors — adequate remuneration, conditions of secure jobs, career advancement opportunities, and professional recognition—and Weakness in any of these dimensions compromises the team's sustainability. and widens the skills deficit over time (Makuku & Mosadeghrad, 2022).

These impacts are also reflected in the relationship between professionals and management. When teams realize that management is failing to consistently respond to Due to staffing limitations, trust in leadership tends to weaken, which, according to the review... A systematic approach to trust management in a hospital setting compromises collaboration between professionals and supervisors, and reduces the effectiveness of the management measures adopted for them. mitigate the deficit (Varga et al., 2023).

**Methodology**

This investigation, in terms of its objectives, is descriptive in nature, having sought to record and describe the facts observed regarding the manager's challenges. hospital without interfering in them, characterizing the reality of human resource management in Olga Chaves Municipal Hospital. Regarding the approach, the research is simultaneously

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quantitative and qualitative: quantitative insofar as it translated opinions into numbers and information collected using descriptive statistical techniques (percentages and frequencies) for its analysis; and qualitative in the interpretation of the meaning attributed by those questioned about the phenomena studied, a typical characteristic of mixed-methods research designs, which combine systematic numerical analysis with a contextual understanding of phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

To achieve the stated objectives, a coordinated set of strategies was employed. Methods: the historical-logical method, to understand the evolution of the problem over time; the deductive method, to proceed from the general theoretical foundation to the concrete analysis of The reality of the Olga Chaves Hospital; the inductive method, to generalize from the data. particular data collected, conclusions about the phenomenon under study; the statistical method, for the processing and handling of information obtained through the survey; the review method. from bibliographic sources, for the construction of the theoretical framework; the method of analysis and synthesis; and the triangulation method, used to cross-reference information obtained from different sources. Section heads, along with the consulted literature, reinforce the credibility of the results.

As a data collection instrument, a questionnaire survey was used. closed-ended questions and one open-ended question, complemented by the direct observation technique. in the hospital setting. The sample, of a non-probabilistic intentional type — appropriate when The researcher selects the most representative cases in relation to the study's objectives (Ahmed, (2024) —, was made up of 12 individuals: 11 section heads from different areas of the hospital. (Emergency Room, Human Resources, six supervisors, Pharmacy, Patient Services Office and Planning and Finance) and 1 hospital manager.

The inclusion criteria considered were: being affiliated with the Municipal Hospital. Olga Chaves; possess a minimum of six months of experience at the institution; perform management, supervisory or leadership roles; willingness to participate voluntarily in Data collection and the ability to communicate in Portuguese were excluded. Professionals were excluded. that did not cumulatively meet these criteria. With regard to ethical aspects, the Participation in the study was voluntary and duly explained, with guarantees to those involved. The anonymity of responses and the confidentiality of information processing were questioned. collected, conditions which, moreover, constituted one of the very criteria for inclusion of participants in the sample.

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## Discussion of the results

### Sociodemographic characterization of the sample

The sample consisted of 12 individuals, of whom 5 (41.67%) were male and 7 (58.33%) are female. Regarding age range, 8.33% are between 20 and 30 years old. 33.33% between the ages of 30 and 40, 25% between the ages of 40 and 50, and 33.33% between the ages of 50 and 60. years. Regarding their role, 11 respondents (91.67%) are section heads — from the Emergency Department, Human Resources, Pharmacy, Patient Services Office, Planning and Finance, and six supervisors — and 1 (8.33%) is a hospital manager.

The sample profile reveals a predominantly mature group of professionals and experienced, with more than half of those surveyed over 40 years of age, and a concentration intentional in leadership and management positions, ensuring that the data collected reflects directly from the perspective of those who deal daily with people management in institution.

This methodological option is consistent with the literature on hospital management, which It recommends that managers develop specific resource management skills. Humans — recruitment, allocation and team development — are skills that They can only be reliably assessed through samples composed of those who actually... performs these functions at the institution (Ndayishimiye et al., 2023).

### Existence of a shortage of qualified human resources.

Regarding the question of whether there is a shortage of qualified human resources at the Hospital. At the Olga Chaves Municipal School, all 12 respondents (100%) answered affirmatively.

This unanimous result reveals an absolute consensus between the section heads and the manager. hospitals are aware of the existence of the problem, reinforcing the internal validity of the investigated topic.

This result is consistent with the international trend, according to which distribution The distribution of the health workforce remains deeply unequal across regions, with countries Lower-income countries — among which Angola is included — are showing the highest professional gaps in relation to their needs (Boniol et al., 2022).

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**Deficit as a central challenge for hospital management.**

Regarding the assertion that the shortage of qualified professionals constitutes a Regarding the main challenges for hospital management, 91.67% of respondents agree, and 8.33% They fully agree — that is, the entire sample recognizes, to some degree, this. condition as challenging.

This result demonstrates that virtually the entire sample recognizes the scarcity. of qualified human resources as a central problem for hospital administration, capable of hindering service planning and compromising organizational efficiency.

The high level of agreement confirms what recent literature identifies as one of the main challenges faced by contemporary health leaders: the need for navigating increasing organizational complexity, resulting, among other factors, from Teams under constant pressure due to staff shortages (Spanos et al., 2024).

**Impact of the deficit on planning, organization and supervision.**

Regarding the impact of the shortage of qualified human resources on planning, Regarding the organization and supervision of services, 58.33% of respondents stated that this happens. frequently, 25% said it always happens, and 16.67% said it rarely happens — or That is, 83.33% of the sample recognizes a recurring or permanent impact.

The results show that the shortage of qualified professionals affects directly involved in essential administrative functions — planning, organizing, and supervising —, The problem is structural and recurring, not merely isolated, within the institutional reality. analyzed.

This result is consistent with the evidence that the adoption of management practices Effectiveness depends, to a large extent, on the availability of personnel in terms of both number and qualifications. suitable, with this availability being one of the main predictors identified in the literature. for the structural and organizational quality of hospital services (Ward et al., 2025).

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**Causes of the shortage of qualified human resources**

Regarding the causes of the deficit, 41.67% of respondents pointed to a lack of training. continuous, 33.33% the migration of professionals, 8.33% inadequate working conditions, 8.33% cited low pay and 8.33% selected all of the above options together.

The lack of continuous training and the migration of professionals thus stand out as the most influential causes of the lack of competitiveness of human resources at the Municipal Hospital Olga Chaves, noting that part of the workforce is located in certain Sometimes absent because he is in the process of training, he does not always return. subsequently to the same unit.

This pattern of causes is in line with the literature: on the one hand, the fragility of Continuous professional development systems in low and middle income contexts compromises the updating and retention of the skills of health professionals (Deprez et al., 2023); on the other hand, the migration of qualified professionals — motivated by the search for better salary, career and working conditions — has been identified as one of the main factors contributing to the depletion of health systems in developing countries (Onah et al., 2022).

**Strategies implemented by management and their perceived effectiveness.**

Regarding the implementation of specific strategies to address the deficit of qualified human resources: 75% of respondents stated that hospital management has 25% said they had not implemented such strategies, while 25% said they had not. Regarding the effectiveness of these Strategies for deficit reduction and improvement of institutional performance, again 75% 25% of those surveyed considered them effective, and 25% considered them not to be.

The results indicate that the majority of respondents acknowledge both the existence and the relative effectiveness of the strategies adopted by management. However, the existence of a minority A significant percentage (25%) who do not recognize these strategies, or their effectiveness, suggests possible asymmetries in the implementation or communication of measures adopted between different hospital sections.

This divergence of perceptions is consistent with the finding that the retention of The health workforce depends on an interconnected set of dimensions — compensation, working conditions and career progression—and that when these are not addressed...

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Although the approach is uniform across departments, some professionals tend not to recognize advancements. in institutional policies, even when these exist (Makuku & Mosadeghrad, 2022).

**Difficulties in retaining, training, and motivating professionals.**

Regarding the main difficulties faced by management in retention, training and Regarding the motivation of healthcare professionals, 75% of those surveyed cited budgetary limitations. 8.33% cited a lack of financial and non-financial incentives, and 8.33% cited the absence of career plans. structured, and 8.33% selected all of the above options together.

This result highlights that financial constraints are perceived as the most critical factor, directly influencing management's ability to implement policies effective human resources management, including continuous training, career progression and The creation of motivational incentives.

However, these data should be interpreted with some caution: recent evidence on the motivation of healthcare professionals in Africa shows that incentives exclusively... Financial factors have a limited effect when isolated from other dimensions — such as Institutional recognition and the quality of the work environment—which suggests that the The response from the management of the Olga Chaves Hospital to the budgetary constraints needs to be supplemented. through non-financial measures to value professionals (Diallo et al., 2025).

**Strategies suggested by respondents**

Regarding the strategies that should be prioritized by hospital management, the respondents They indicated, in a qualitative way, the adequacy of the number of employees to the real need for staffing plan, investment in continuous training, creation of working conditions favorable and acceptable remuneration, and increasing the skilled workforce as a way to ensure the quality of medical care provided at the hospital unit.

These suggestions are directly related to the causes and difficulties identified in... Throughout the inquiry, a coherent vision was reflected on the part of the section heads and the manager. hospital, regarding the necessary intervention priorities.

This consistency between the respondents' diagnosis and international priorities is notorious: the monitoring of the Global Human Resources Strategy for Health of The World Health Organization specifically recommends sustained investment in personnel planning, training and working conditions as a way to reduce staff shortages

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workforce, especially in regions where progress has been slower, such as Africa (Abu-Agla et al., 2024).

## Conclusion

This investigation has allowed us to describe the challenges faced by the manager. Hospital staff facing a shortage of qualified human resources at the Olga Municipal Hospital Chaves, Lubango, in light of the objectives set. It was confirmed that there is a shortage of professionals. Qualified staffing is one of the main challenges recognized by all respondents. repeatedly compromising the planning, organization, and supervision of services. Its main causes are the lack of continuous training and the migration of professionals. supported by inadequate working conditions and low pay. Management The hospital has implemented strategies recognized as effective by most of the those surveyed, although a significant portion still lacks this perception, and the limitations Budgetary constraints stand out as the main obstacle to retention, training, and motivation. of professionals. Therefore, it is recommended to adjust the staffing levels and invest in Continuous training and the improvement of working conditions and incentive mechanisms.

One limitation of the study is the small sample size, which came from a single institution. For future investigations, it is suggested that the sample be expanded to other Angolan hospitals. comparative studies.

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