

Determining the Key Factors Affecting the Success of Nurse Retention Strategies in Hospital Setting: Basis for Policy Enhancement

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ABSTRACT

This study determined key factors affecting the success of nurse retention strategies in a hospital setting and served as the basis for policy enhancement. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, the study assessed nurse retention strategies currently implemented in the hospital and the perceived effectiveness of these strategies among 92 nurses. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire with good to excellent internal consistency, as reflected by Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.843 for implemented nurse retention strategies and 0.974 for perceived effectiveness. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation were used to analyze the data. Findings showed that nurse retention strategies were generally perceived as insufficiently implemented, with an overall mean of 2.361, interpreted as Disagree. Financial and compensation-based strategies, work environment and well-being strategies, leadership and organizational support, and professional development and advancement strategies were all perceived as inadequately implemented. However, respondents agreed that retention strategies were effective when properly implemented, with an overall mean of 3.209. Workload management was identified as the most effective retention factor, followed by compensation and benefits, professional development opportunities, work environment, and leadership support. A significant moderate positive relationship was found between the implementation of nurse retention strategies and their perceived effectiveness ($r = 0.560$, $p < .001$). The study was limited to nurses from one hospital; therefore, the findings may not generalize to all healthcare institutions. The findings support the development of a comprehensive nurse retention policy that prioritizes fair compensation, adequate staffing, manageable workloads, supportive leadership, employee wellness, career advancement, and continuing professional development. This study provides hospital administrators, nursing leaders, and human resource managers with evidence to strengthen retention initiatives and promote a stable, motivated, and professionally fulfilled nursing workforce.

Keywords: Nurse retention; hospital setting; nurse retention strategies; workload management; nursing leadership; professional development; policy enhancement

INTRODUCTION

A stable nursing workforce is essential to patient safety, continuity of care, and organizational performance. Nurse retention has become a critical healthcare priority to prevent staffing shortages, heavy workloads, high recruitment costs, and low morale associated with turnover. To address this, this study explored the factors affecting retention by assessing currently implemented hospital strategies, determining nurses' perceived effectiveness of these

initiatives, and examining the relationship between implementation and effectiveness. Ultimately, the findings provide evidence-based guidance for hospital administrators, nursing leaders, and human resource managers to enhance retention policies that promote nurse satisfaction, professional growth, organizational commitment, and long-term workforce stability.

Statement of the Problem

This study evaluated the factors that affect the effectiveness of nurse retention strategies in a hospital setting to inform policy enhancement. Specifically, it sought to determine the demographic profile of nurse respondents in terms of age, sex, length of service, and area of assignment; identify nurse retention strategies currently implemented in the hospital; assess the perceived effectiveness of these strategies in terms of compensation and benefits, work environment, leadership support, professional development opportunities, and workload management; determine the relationship between implemented nurse retention strategies and their perceived effectiveness; and propose policy recommendations to enhance nurse retention strategies in the hospital setting.

Scope and Delimitations

This study evaluated nurse retention strategies at a selected hospital and examined their perceived effectiveness to inform policy enhancement. It focused on organizational dimensions related to compensation and benefits, work environment, leadership support, professional development opportunities, and workload management. The respondents were registered nurses employed in the selected hospital during Academic Year 2025–2026.

Review of Related Literature

Addressing critical workforce shortages and burnout, successful nurse retention relies on integrated, nurse-centered hospital policies that reduce turnover, improve job satisfaction, strengthen organizational commitment, and ultimately enhance patient safety (Mauricio et al., 2025). The literature emphasizes that comprehensive interventions are far more effective than isolated ones, highlighting key factors such as career development, flexible scheduling, wellness initiatives, and specialized mentoring or residency programs for early-career nurses (de Vries et al., 2023; Vázquez-Calatayud et al., 2023). Furthermore, workforce stability is driven by strong social and organizational support from leadership and colleagues, safe staffing conditions, adequate resources, and positive interprofessional relationships (Chen et al., 2024; Lasater et al., 2024; Figueiredo et al., 2025). To navigate modern, post-pandemic healthcare demands, hospitals must actively prioritize mental health support, manageable workloads, resilience programs, and professional flexibility (Buckley et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework

By integrating three foundational nursing frameworks, organizations can create comprehensive strategies to improve nurse retention through interpersonal alignment, stress reduction, and professional resilience. First, Imogene King's Goal Attainment Theory (1981) emphasizes interpersonal relationships, communication, and mutual goal-setting, asserting that nurses are more likely to stay when supported by participative management, recognition

programs, and a direct voice in organizational goals. Second, Betty Neuman's Systems Model (1972) views nurses as open systems that respond to internal and external workplace stressors, such as heavy workloads and staffing shortages, highlighting the need for protective interventions—such as mental health support and safe staffing policies—to combat burnout and preserve systemic stability. Finally, Sister Callista Roy's Adaptation Theory (1976) conceptualizes nurses as adaptive systems constantly responding to environmental challenges, underscoring that fostering long-term job satisfaction and professional resilience requires active investments in continuous training, mentorship, and work-life balance initiatives.

Conceptual Framework

This study examined the relationship between the implementation of nurse retention strategies (the independent variable—comprising financial, work environment, leadership, and professional development strategies) and nurses' perceived effectiveness of these strategies (the dependent variable—assessed across compensation, workload, and overall retention impact). Operating on the assumption that more consistent, responsive strategies correlate with higher perceived effectiveness, the framework also accounted for demographic characteristics (such as age, sex, length of service, assignment area, and employment status) as contextual influences on nurses' experiences. Ultimately, the findings provided the foundation for a proposed policy enhancement to strengthen nurse retention in the hospital setting.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to examine nurse retention strategies in a hospital setting. The descriptive component summarized the respondents' demographic characteristics and the retention strategies currently implemented in the hospital. The correlational component determined the relationship between the implementation of nurse retention strategies and their perceived effectiveness. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation. The findings served as the basis for proposed policy enhancement.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to determine the demographic profile of the nurse respondents and assess the nurse retention strategies currently implemented in the hospital. The correlational component examined the relationship between the implementation of nurse retention strategies and their perceived effectiveness. This design was appropriate because it enabled the study to quantify nurses' perceptions and determine whether implementing retention strategies was significantly associated with their effectiveness.

Research Steps

This study followed a systematic process beginning with a literature review to identify key nurse retention variables—including compensation, work environment, leadership, development, and workload—which informed the creation of a validated, reliability-tested questionnaire. After securing the necessary hospital and ethical approvals, eligible registered

nurses were informed of their rights and provided with the option to consent voluntarily before completing the survey. Finally, the collected data were coded and statistically analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations, with the resulting findings serving as the foundation for a proposed policy enhancement to nurse retention strategies within the hospital setting.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

This study involved 92 registered nurses selected for their direct experience with hospital policies, working conditions, and retention initiatives, all of whom provided written informed consent after being briefed on confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data from the participants were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using Cronbach's alpha to assess instrument reliability, along with descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to profile demographics and assess the implementation and perceived effectiveness of the retention strategies. Finally, a Pearson product-moment correlation was utilized to examine the relationship between strategy implementation and perceived effectiveness, with statistical significance tested at the 0.05 level.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

To evaluate the relationship between currently implemented nurse retention strategies and their perceived effectiveness, this study tested a null hypothesis of no significant relationship using Pearson product-moment correlation at the 0.05 significance level. Before data collection, the structured questionnaire underwent expert content validation for clarity and relevance, followed by a pilot test to establish internal consistency. The instrument demonstrated high reliability, yielding a good Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the strategy implementation scale ($\alpha = 0.843$) and an excellent coefficient for the perceived effectiveness scale ($\alpha = 0.974$), thereby validating its use for the study.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

While this study is limited by a small sample size of 92 registered nurses from a single hospital and relies on self-reported perceptions that exclude broader external factors such as migration or labor market conditions, it strictly adhered to robust ethical standards. Rigorous ethical approval and hospital permissions were secured prior to data collection, ensuring that participation was entirely voluntary and protected by written informed consent. Furthermore, complete participant confidentiality was maintained through anonymous reporting, with all data securely stored and analyzed exclusively in aggregate form to prevent the disclosure of any identifying information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although current nurse retention strategies were generally perceived as inadequately implemented ($M = 2.361$), nurses strongly agreed that these strategies are highly effective when properly implemented ($M = 3.209$), with workload management and compensation identified as the most impactful factors. A significant, moderate positive relationship was found between strategy implementation and perceived effectiveness ($r = 0.560$, $p < .001$), indicating that more consistent initiatives drive stronger perceptions of success. Consequently, hospitals must

prioritize fair compensation, manageable workloads, supportive leadership, employee wellness, and clear career development pathways to enhance retention.

SUMMARY

This study examined the relationship between the implementation and perceived effectiveness of nurse retention strategies among 92 primarily young, female, and permanent registered nurses across key hospital units. Using a highly reliable survey instrument ($\alpha = 0.843$ for implementation; $\alpha = 0.974$ for effectiveness), the findings revealed that current retention strategies are generally perceived as inadequately implemented ($M = 2.361$), with financial and compensation-based strategies receiving the lowest rating. Despite these gaps, nurses strongly agreed that such initiatives are highly effective when properly implemented ($M = 3.209$), with workload management and compensation identified as the most impactful areas. Ultimately, a significant moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.560$, $p < .001$) rejected the null hypothesis, demonstrating that stronger, more consistent strategy implementation directly drives higher perceived effectiveness and workforce stability.

CONCLUSIONS

Although current hospital nurse retention strategies—such as continuing education and leadership guidance—are perceived as insufficiently implemented, nurses strongly recognize their potential effectiveness when executed consistently. Major implementation gaps were identified across compensation, staffing, wellness support, and career advancement, with workload management emerging as the most critical factor in preventing burnout. Because a significant positive relationship exists between daily, consistent implementation and perceived effectiveness, hospitals must institutionalize comprehensive, nurse-centered retention policies that actively address compensation, manageable workloads, supportive leadership, and professional growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To optimize nurse retention, hospitals must implement and regularly review comprehensive, responsive retention policies addressing fair compensation, safe staffing, manageable workloads, and robust career advancement. Key recommendations include establishing periodic salary evaluations, prioritizing equitable patient assignments in high-acuity units, and fostering supportive leadership through open communication, recognition, and mentorship. Additionally, institutions should expand mental health and burnout prevention programs, ensure equitable access to professional development, and consider forming a multidisciplinary nurse retention committee to monitor employee satisfaction and turnover trends. Finally, future research should expand to larger, multi-hospital samples to investigate deeper behavioral factors such as burnout, job satisfaction, and leadership styles.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted tools were used solely to support language editing, grammar checking, organization of written content, and improvement of the manuscript's clarity. AI tools were not used to generate, fabricate, manipulate, or alter research data, statistical results, participant responses, references, or study findings.

All research procedures, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, conclusions, and recommendations were conducted and verified by the authors. The authors accept full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, ethical integrity, and final content of this manuscript.

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