LABOUR SHORTAGES AND NURSE RETENTION IN AKWA IBOM STATE GENERAL HOSPITALS

By
Ededem Asuakak EDEM[1]
Doctor of Philosophy
asuakakededem@uniuyo.edu.ng

Isaac Udofia INWANG[2]
Doctor of Philosophy
isaacinwang.pgs.phd@uniuyo.edu.ng

Francis Effiong OTUNG[3]
Doctor of Philosophy
francis.otung63@gmail.com

[1-3]Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT
This study investigated the impact of labour shortages on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. The objective of the study was to examine the impact of excessive workload and turnover rate on nurses' retention in the general hospitals in the state. A survey research design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 183 nurses, drawn from a population of 349 across ten (10) general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) technique. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression techniques. The findings revealed that excessive workload has a negative and significant relationship with nurses' retention; and turnover rate has a negative and significant impact on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. Thus, concluded that labour shortages have significantly adverse impact on the retention of nurses in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. Based on findings,it is recommended that the government of Akwa Ibom state employ more nurses into the public health system to reduce excessive workload and enhance retention. Furthermore, general hospitals in the state should implement target employee retention strategies such as offering competitive compensation, improving working conditions, and providing professional development opportunities to effectively reduce turnover rate and strengthened nurse retention.
Keywords: *Labour Shortages, Excessive Workload, Turnover Rate, Nurse Retention*

INTRODUCTION
Healthcare systems across the globe are increasingly confronted with the dual challenge of maintaining high quality service delivery while contending with persistent workforce shortages. In Nigeria, this crisis has become particularly acute, with labour shortages in the healthcare sector emerging as a critical issue that compromises service delivery, patient outcomes, and the well-being of health professionals. This situation is further exacerbated by the mass migration of healthcare workers especially nurses, leading to severe understaffing and a decline in the quality of care (Oye *et al.,* 2024; Akinwale & George, 2023).

Nurses, who constitute the backbone of hospital-based care, are among the most affected. Chronic understaffing has resulted in increased workloads, elevated stress levels, burnout, and

reduced job satisfaction. Nursing is inherently demanding, physically, emotionally, and psychologically, given the nature of continuous patient care. As Ahamad and Patil (2024) observe, the global nursing workforce is experiencing a critical shortfall, with an estimated need for an additional 9 to 13 million nurses by 2030 to meet growing healthcare demands.

In Nigeria, this shortage is intensified by factors such as poor remuneration, limited opportunities for career progression, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and the increasing emigration of qualified nurses, a phenomenon popularly referred to as the "Japa Syndrome" (Oye *et al.,* 2024; Olorunfemi *et al.,* 2024). These challenges are not unique to the country at large; Akwa Ibom State similarly experiences significant attrition rates among nurses in public hospitals, reflecting the broader national trend.

Labour shortages in hospitals do not occur in isolation; they have both direct and indirect effects on workforce sustainability, compromise the delivery of quality care, and place vulnerable populations at heightened risk (Oparanma & Chinedum, 2022). Nurse retention is therefore critical, not only for ensuring continuity of care but also for preserving institutional knowledge and maintaining healthcare system stability.

However, retaining nurses remains a formidable challenge, particularly in resource constrained settings such as Nigeria. Contributing factors to nurse attrition include unfavourable working conditions, inadequate pay, limited career development opportunities, and the lure of better prospects abroad (Olorunfemi *et al.,* 2024; Okech *et al.,* 2021). This ongoing exodus continues to exacerbate the healthcare workforce crisis and negatively impacts the overall quality of care.

Studies suggest that improving the work environment, offering competitive remuneration, ensuring job security, fostering a supportive organisational culture, and promoting ongoing professional development are effective strategies for improving nurse retention (Olorunfemi *et al.,* 2024; Aliyu *et al.,* 2014; Zöllner & Szabó, 2023).

Given the critical role of nurses in the healthcare system and the alarming rate of attrition, particularly in regions like Akwa Ibom State, this study is imperative. It seeks to investigate the underlying causes of nurse shortages and explore evidence-based strategies to improve nurse retention, thereby contributing to the sustainability and quality of healthcare delivery in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The healthcare system in Akwa Ibom State, like many others in Nigeria, is grappling with persistent labour shortages that significantly affect the retention of nurses in general hospitals. These shortages have led to a critically low nurse to patient ratio, which in turn places an excessive workload on the limited nursing staff. This overstretching of human resources not only undermines the quality of patient care but also contributes to high levels of job dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and burnout among nurses. Consequently, many nurses are leaving their positions, either through resignation, transfers to less demanding roles, or migration abroad, thereby intensifying the already existing workforce gap.

Despite government efforts to recruit more healthcare workers, progress remains hindered by structural inefficiencies, inadequate staffing policies, and insufficient investment in staff

welfare and career development. Delays in replacing departing personnel further exacerbate the problem, creating a vicious cycle in which increased workload leads to burnout, subsequently resulting in higher turnover rates. This dynamic is particularly evident in general hospitals across Akwa Ibom State, where nurses are frequently overburdened, undervalued, and emotionally strained. While several studies have examined the impact of labour shortages on service quality, productivity, innovation, and the increased use of automation, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding frameworks that simultaneously consider excessive workload and turnover rates in relation to nurse retention. This gap has motivated the present study to investigate the impact of labour shortages on nurse retention in general hospitals within Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to analyse the impact of labour shortages on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were to:

i. ascertain the impact of excessive workload on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State.

ii. examine the impact of turnover rate on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypotheses of the study

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between excessive workload and nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State.

H_{02}: Turnover rate has no significant impact on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Labour Shortages

Labour shortages occur when there are not enough qualified workers to fill available jobs. In healthcare, particularly in general hospitals, such shortages present significant challenges to patient care and the overall efficiency of the health system. These shortages affect various roles, including nurses, doctors and support staff. Contributing factors include an ageing workforce, high levels of burnout, limited training capacity and the migration of healthcare professionals to other sectors or countries (Alshahrani, 2022; Sousa *et al.,* 2013). The consequences include increased workloads, longer patient waiting times and potentially lower standards of care (Gruson, 2024). Addressing this issue is essential to ensure hospitals can continue to provide effective and timely patient care. Research indicates that a multifaceted approach is needed, which may include a strategic review of fee structures, expanding the scope of practise for nurses and other care providers, implementing team-based care models and improving communication between specialists and front-line staff to mitigate these shortages (Wyonch, 2021).

Excessive workload

Excessive workload arises when job demands consistently surpass an individual's capacity or the available time to address them effectively. This imbalance can lead to increased stress, burnout, reduced productivity, and a higher likelihood of errors. Over time, these effects compromise both individual well-being and organizational performance (Welp, 2015).

Research identifies excessive workload as a pervasive issue, particularly within the healthcare sector. Professionals such as physicians, nurses, and support staff frequently encounter high patient volumes, extended work shifts, staffing shortages, and the pressure of making rapid, high-stakes decisions. These factors collectively intensify work-related stress (Källberg *et al.,* 2017; Welp, 2015). The resulting fatigue and emotional exhaustion can contribute to medical errors, diminished quality of care, and increased risks to both healthcare workers and patient safety (Rosenberg, 2014).

Turnover rate

Turnover rate, defined as the percentage of employees who leave an organisation during a specific period, typically measured annually, can involve either voluntary or involuntary resignations (Uford, 2017; Duh & Uford, 2019). The nature of the turnover, whether voluntary or involuntary, can significantly impact organisational performance (Sulastri *et al.,* 2025). A high turnover rate often signals underlying workplace issues such as employee dissatisfaction, burnout, poor management, or limited opportunities for career advancement. In contrast, a low turnover rate may indicate a stable and satisfied workforce (Park, 2013; Dwivedi *et al.,* 2017). In the healthcare sector, employee turnover, particularly among nurses, is a critical concern. High turnover rates in hospitals are associated with increased operational and personnel costs per patient admission (Alexander *et al.,* 1994). Contributing factors include a lack of professional challenge, better employment opportunities elsewhere, inadequate compensation, poor supervision, and an imbalanced work-life dynamic (Dwivedi, 2017; Sulastri *et al.,* 2025).

Nurse Retention

Retention describes an organisation's ability to retain staff over time. High retention indicates long-term employee commitment, whereas low retention, often called high turnover, may signal dissatisfaction, poor working conditions, or more attractive opportunities elsewhere. Strong retention is typically associated with job satisfaction, effective leadership, competitive pay, and a supportive work environment (India, 2016; Sorn *et al.,* 2023).

In healthcare settings, nurse retention is particularly critical. Nurses play a vital role in patient care, and high turnover can lead to staff shortages, increased workloads for remaining staff, reduced quality of care, and elevated recruitment and training costs (Tamata & Mohammadnezhad, 2023).Factors contributing to nurse turnover include job dissatisfaction, workplace stress, long shifts, inadequate staffing levels, ineffective leadership, and insufficient pay (Marufu *et al.,* 2021; Alzahrani, 2022).Studies indicate that addressing factors such as burnout, staff scheduling, professional development, and organisational culture is essential for improving nurse retention. Strengthening these areas helps build a stable and experienced workforce, which is vital for both patient outcomes and operational efficiency (Marufu *et al.,* 2021; Alzahrani, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in Human Capital Theory, developed by economists Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz in the 1960s. This theory views employees as valuable assets whose productivity can be enhanced through deliberate investment in education, training, skills development, and health. It links labour shortages to a lack of sufficient investment in human development, arguing that when organisations or economies fail to equip individuals with the necessary competencies, a skills gap emerges, leading to shortages of qualified labour in critical sectors (Becker, 1964; Awu *et al.,* 2025). Furthermore, the human capital theory emphasises that employees are more likely to remain with employers who actively invest in their growth, provide continuous learning opportunities, and recognise their contributions. By treating

employees as long-term assets rather than short-term expenses, organisations can reduce turnover, enhance workforce capability, and foster greater employee commitment (Bae & Patterson, 2014; Onyebuchi, 2018). Human Capital Theory thus provides a valuable framework for understanding how strategic investment in people can address labour market challenges and drive sustainable organisational success.

Empirical Review

Yusoff et al. (2021) examined the effects of skilled labour shortages on the performance of construction projects, adopting a survey research design and targeting Group Seven (G7) construction organisations registered with the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Malaysia. Their findings revealed that project-related and human capital factors contribute to skilled labour shortages in construction projects. Furthermore, these shortages were found to negatively impact project performance. The authors recommended that both human capital and project-related factors be given significant attention during the planning and management of skilled labour in the construction industry.

In Matai, Ahmed *et al.* (2023) evaluated the factors contributing to the nursing shortage and their relationship to organisational commitment in General Central Hospital, employing a descriptive correlational research design. Their findings indicated that most staff nurses reported a moderate level of the overall factors contributing to the nursing shortage, while a smaller proportion reported a high level. Regarding organisational commitment, nearly half of the staff nurses demonstrated a moderate level, with a slightly smaller number showing a high level of commitment. The authors concluded that there was a positive correlation between the factors contributing to the nursing shortage and the level of organisational commitment among nurses. They recommended that the Nursing Director, Human Resources personnel, and Chief Executive Officers develop and implement strategies to enhance the organisational commitment of nursing staff.

Ezikwere and Agbaeze (2023) assessed the effect of employee turnover on the productivity of government hospitals in South-East Nigeria, using a descriptive survey design. Their findings revealed a significant negative relationship between employee turnover and the productivity of government hospitals in the region. High turnover rates were found to adversely affect staff morale, service quality, customer relationships, and the financial sustainability of hospitals. The researchers concluded that employee turnover has a substantial impact on hospital productivity and recommended, among other measures, that management implement motivational strategies to reduce turnover. They also suggested that hospitals should prioritise efforts aimed at minimising employee turnover due to its detrimental effects on performance.

Further, research by Suresh *et al.* (2024) in the United States investigated the impact of workload factors on mental health and the intention to leave employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Focusing on healthcare workers managing mass fatalities, the researchers employed a cross-sectional, validated survey to collect self-reported data from 206 healthcare professionals between April and May 2023. Their results revealed significant associations between mental, physical, and temporal workload demands, frustration, and elevated psychological distress. This distress, in turn, was strongly linked to an increased intention to leave one's job. The authors recommended targeted interventions to reduce workload pressures, particularly physical exertion and psychological strain associated with the handling of deceased individuals. Such support may enhance the mental well-being and retention of healthcare workers, thereby strengthening the resilience of healthcare systems during crises.

Another study by Rajan (2013) analysed the impact of nurse turnover on organisational performance in private multispecialty hospitals in Tirunelveli City, Tamil Nadu, India, using a descriptive survey research design. The study found that high nurse turnover resulted in excessive workload for remaining staff, delays in routine procedures, and reduced patient satisfaction. To address this, the author recommended that recruitment and supervision processes be strengthened, with preference given to more experienced applicants who are likely to remain longer and require less training, among other measures.

METHODOLOGY

A survey design was adopted for this study, as it allows for efficient collection of standardised data from a wide and diverse population. This approach enables the researcher to generalise findings, identify patterns, and draw conclusions about the target group ' attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, or attributes. The study population consisted of 349 nurses, drawn from selected general hospitals (see Table 3.1). These figures were obtained from the official nominal rolls of the respective hospitals. The hospitals were chosen strategically based on their functional capability and geographic distribution within the senatorial district, ensuring that facilities that serve a large patient population are represented. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's formula given as:

$$S = \frac{X^2 . N . P . (1-P)}{d^2 . (N-1) + X^2 . P . (1-P)}$$

Where:

S = required sample size

N = population size (349)

P = population proportion (assumed to be 0.5)

d = margin of error (0.05)

X^2 = the chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841 for 95%)

Substituting the values:

N = 349

P = 0.5

d = 0.05

X^2 = 3.841

$$S = \frac{3.841 . 349 . 0.5 . 0.5}{0.05^2 . (349-1) + 3.841 . 0.5 . 0.5}$$

$$S = \frac{3.841 . 349 . 0.25}{0.0025 . 348 + 3.841 . 0.25}$$

$S = \frac{335.73125}{0.87+0.96025} = 183$

Given that the population of study was drawn from different hospitals, a proportional allocation formula was employed to ensure fair distribution of the sample across the selected institutions. The formula is as follows:

$n = \frac{W \times S}{N}$

Where:

n = Proportional allocation

W = Number of nurses in each hospital

S = Total sample size

N = Total population

Table 1: Distribution of Nurses and Sample

S/N	General Hospital	Population of Nurses	Proportional Sample
1.	General Hospital, Ikot Ekpene	49	26
2.	Immanuel General Hospital, Eket	48	25
3.	General Hospital, Ituk Mbang	45	24
4.	General Hospital, Iquita Oron	42	22
5.	General Hospital, Etinan	38	20
6.	General Hospital, Ikot Okoro	33	17
7.	General Hospital, Ikono	28	15
8.	General Hospital, Ikot Abasi	24	13
9.	General Hospital, Itu	22	11
10.	General Hospital, Ikpe Annang	20	10
	Total	**349**	**183**

Source: Researcher's compilation,2025

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through a questionnaire, while secondary data were gathered from the Internet and peer-reviewed journals. The questionnaire, which served as the main instrument for data collection, sought respondents' opinions on labour shortages and nurse retention. It consisted of closed-ended questions and used a modified five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

To assess the reliability of the instrument, the test–retest method was used. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was employed to examine the internal consistency of the questionnaire, yielding a coefficient greater than 0.7, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability. The study hypotheses were tested using simple linear regression analysis with the aid of SPSS (Version 27). The empirical model was developed for the two objectives/hypotheses in this study as follows:

$NR = f(WL) + \mu_1$ ……(1)

$NR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 WL + \mu_1$ ……(2)

$NR = f(TR) + \mu_1$ ……..(3)

$NR = \beta_0 + \beta_2 TR + \mu_1$ ……..(4)

Where:

NR = Nurses' Retention

WL = Excessive Workload

TR = Turnover Rate

β_0 = intercept or regression constant term

β_1- β_2 = Regression coefficient

μ_1 is the error term

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

One hundred and seventy-four (174) or 95.1% out of the one hundred and eighty-three (183) of the research questionnaires were retrieved and pre-processed for data reporting, cleaning and analysis. The data was analysed using descriptive techniques, bivariate Pearson's correlation and simple linear regression technique.

Descriptive Data Analysis of Variables

Table 2: Results of Descriptive Data Analysis of Variables

Statistic	WL	TR	NR
Mean	3.755	3.864	4.046
Standard Deviation	0.441	0.431	0.533
Minimum	2.25	2.50	2.00
Maximum	4.89	5.00	5.00
N	174	174	174

Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Table 2 shows that the level of variability among the variables in the study is minimal. The range between the obtained minimal and maximum values for excess workload (WL), turnover rate (TR) and nurses' retention (NR) appears close, an indication that there is less fluctuation in the perceptions of the respondents on excess workload, turnover rate and nurses' retention. On average, WL, TR and NR are on the same level, an indication of the similarity in the experiences of nurses in all the general hospitals studied.

Correlational Analysis of Variables

Table 3: Results of Pearson's Correlation Analysis of Variables

Variables	WL	TR	NR
WL	1.000		
TR	0.337	1.000	
NR	0.369	0.432	1.000

Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Table 3 shows that the correlation between the variables were all positive, an indication of positive association among them. The correlation between WL and TR was 0.337 and between WL and NL was 0.369. This indicates moderate level of positive correlation. Also, the correlation coefficient between NR and TR was 0.432, another moderate positive association between TR and NR. The obtained correlation coefficients indicate the absence of multicollinearity among these variables.

Relationship Analysis

The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression results obtained were used in the testing of the stated hypotheses in the study. Each obtained OLS regression result is presented with key result parameters that were used in examining the relationship between the dependent and independent variables and testing the significance of this relationship at 5% significance level.

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between excessive workload and nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State.

The OLS regression result for this hypothesis is presented in Table 4

Table 4: OLS Regression Results for Hypothesis One

	Coeff.	Std. Error	t-stat	p-value
Constant	2.369	0.324	7.314	0.000
WL	-0.446	0.086	-5.211	0.000
R2 = 0.136				
F-stat.= 27.156				
Prob.(F-stat) = 0.000				
DW-stat.= 2.014				
VIF= 1.00				

Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Table 4 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the effect of excessive workload (WL) on nurse retention (NR) in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. The regression model indicates that, holding excessive workload constant at zero, the estimated nurse retention is 2.37 units, representing the model's intercept and suggesting a positive baseline level of retention. A unit increase in excessive workload is associated with a decrease of 0.446 units in nurse retention, indicating a statistically significant negative relationship between workload and retention. This relationship is confirmed by a computed t-statistic of -5.211 and a p-value less than 0.05, providing sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that excessive workload has no effect on nurse retention. The R-squared (R^2) value of 0.136 implies that excessive workload explains approximately 13.6% of the variation in nurse retention across the hospitals studied, while the remaining 86.4% of the variation is attributed to other factors not captured by the model. Additionally, the overall model is statistically significant, as indicated by an F-statistic of 27.156 and a corresponding p-value below the 5% significance level. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded that excessive workload has a significant negative impact on the retention of nurses in general hospitals within Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: Turnover rate has no significant impact on nurses' retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State

The OLS regression result for this hypothesis is presented in Table 5

Table 5: OLS Regression Results for Hypothesis Two

	Coeff.	Std. Error	t-stat	p-value
Constant	1.981	0.331	5.989	0.000
TR	-0.534	0.085	-6.282	0.000
R2 = 0.187				
F-stat.= 39.459				
Prob.(F-stat) = 0.000				
DW-stat.= 2.007				
VIF= 1.00				

Source: Authors Computation (2025)

Table 5 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the impact of employee turnover rate (TR) on nurse retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. The regression intercept indicates that, when turnover rate is held constant at zero, the estimated nurse retention is 1.98 units, representing a positive baseline level of retention. However, a unit increase in the turnover rate is associated with a 0.534-unit decrease in nurse retention. This indicates a statistically significant negative relationship between turnover rate and nurse retention. The significance of this relationship is supported by a t-statistic of -6.282 and a p-value less than 0.05, providing strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis that turnover rate has no effect on nurse retention. The R-squared (R^2) value of 0.187 suggests that turnover rate explains approximately 18.7% of the variation in nurse retention across the hospitals studied. The remaining 81.3% of the variation is attributable to other factors not captured in the model and is accounted for by the error term. The overall statistical significance of the model is confirmed by an F-statistic of 39.459 and a corresponding p-value below the 5% threshold. Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that the turnover rate has a significant negative impact on nurse retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that excessive workload and high turnover rates have a negative and statistically significant impact on the retention of nurses in the selected general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. This suggests that the addition of excessive workload to the responsibilities of the existing nursing workforce, stemming from persistent job shortages, alongside the increasing exodus of professional nurses seeking better employment conditions outside the state, contributes to a declining capacity of these hospitals to retain skilled nursing personnel. This situation highlights a growing deficit in the number of qualified nurses employed in general hospitals within Akwa Ibom State. Notably, the results further show that, based on the magnitude of the regression coefficients obtained, turnover rate exerts a greater negative influence on nurses' retention than excessive workload. This may be attributed to more attractive employment opportunities available to nurses either in other states or abroad. Nevertheless, the shortage of healthcare personnel is exacerbated by excessive workload, which is itself a consequence of persistent understaffing and high turnover among healthcare professionals in these institutions.

These findings align with the central tenets of Human Capital Theory, which posits that employees are likely to leave their employment if they perceive insufficient value or investment in their professional growth. In the case of nurses in Akwa Ibom State, the excessive workload resulting from staff shortages, coupled with a lack of meaningful investment by employers in skills development and professional advancement, reflects this reality. Furthermore, the results are consistent with the a priori expectations of this study, as well as the empirical findings of Yusoff et al. (2021), Ahmed et al. (2023), and Ezikwere and Agbaeze (2023). These studies similarly established that both excessive workload and high turnover rates have significant adverse effects on employee retention and pose serious challenges to the sustainability of healthcare systems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings from the analyses clearly demonstrate that both excessive workload and employee turnover rate have significant negative effects on nurse retention in general hospitals in Akwa Ibom State. The results indicate that as workload and turnover increase, the likelihood of retaining nurses decreases correspondingly. These relationships are statistically significant and suggest that both factors are critical determinants of nurse retention.

Although other variables not captured in the models also contribute to variations in nurse retention, the analyses confirm that excessive workload and turnover rate are key issues that must be addressed. The overall significance of both models reinforces the reliability of these findings. The study provides strong evidence that reducing excessive workload and addressing the causes of high turnover are essential strategies for improving nurse retention. These insights should inform policy decisions and human resource practices aimed at strengthening the healthcare workforce and enhancing the quality of care in general hospitals across Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. To improve nurse retention in general hospitals within Akwa Ibom State, the state healthcare management should implement a workload redistribution policy by hiring additional qualified nursing staff and optimizing shift schedules to reduce excessive workload among existing nurses, thereby increasing retention

2. General hospitals in Akwa Ibom State should implement targeted employee retention strategies such as competitive compensation, improved working conditions, and professional development opportunities to actively reduce turnover rates, thereby strengthening nurse retention and enhancing the overall stability and performance of healthcare delivery.

Suggestions for Future Study

Future research should expand beyond workload and turnover to include other key factors influencing nurse retention, such as job satisfaction, leadership style, compensation, career advancement opportunities, and work-life balance. A mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights from interviews or focus groups, can provide a deeper understanding of the motivations behind nurses' decisions to stay or leave. Additionally, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the long-term impact of interventions aimed at reducing workload and turnover. Comparative studies across different hospital types (public and private) and regions within Akwa Ibom State could reveal context-specific challenges and

tailored solutions. Evaluating the effectiveness of policy reforms and support systems, such as mentoring, training, and mental health programs, can offer actionable insights for strengthening nurse retention strategies and improving healthcare delivery outcomes.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, A. M., Elrhmaan, S. M. A., Mohamed, E. A., & El-said, H. D. A. (2023). Factors Affecting on Nursing Shortage and its Relation to Organizational Commitment at Matai General Central Hospital. *Minia Scientific Nursing Journal,13*(3),17-25

Akinwale, O. E., & George, O. J. (2023). Personnel brain-drain syndrome and quality healthcare delivery among public healthcare workforce in Nigeria. *Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research,41*(1),18-39.

Alexander, J. A., Bloom, J. R., & Nuchols, B. A. (1994). Nursing Turnover and Hospital Efficiency: An Organization-Level Analysis. Industrial Relations: *A Journal of Economy and Society,33*(4),505-520

Alshahrani, S. H. (2022). Reasons, consequences, and suggested solutions for nursing workforce shortage: A review of literature. International Journal of Health Sciences, 6(S5), 1557–1568. https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS5.9004

Duh, H. I., & Uford, I. C. (2019). Examining contributions of customer-based and employee-based brand equity to a retail bank's market performance using resource-based theory. *The Retail and Marketing Review*, *15*(1), 27-38.

Dwivedi, P., Basuthakur, Y., Polineni, S., Paruchuri, S., & Joshi, A. (2024). A Stakeholder Perspective on Diversity Within Organizations. *Journal of Management, 51*(1), 383-426. https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063241280718

Ezikwere, C., & Agbaeze, E. K. (2023). Employee turnover on productivity of government hospitals in South East, Nigeria. *Interdisciplinary Research Journal of Management and Social Sciences (IRJMSS), 10*(3), 89–118. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10091040

Gruson, D. (2024). Understanding and Addressing Healthcare Workforce Shortages. APFCB News, 3(1), 89-91. DOI: https://doi.org/10.62772/APFCB-News.2024.1.3

Källberg, A. S., Ehrenberg, A., Florin, J., Östergren, J., & Göransson, K. E. (2017). Physicians' and nurses' perceptions of patient safety risks in the emergency department. *International emergency nursing, 33*, 14–19. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ienj.2017.01.002

Okech, M., Okoroafor, S. C., Ojo, O., & Mohammed, B. (2021). Causes of attrition among frontline health workers in rural areas of Bauchi and Cross River States of Nigeria. *Journal of public health (Oxford, England), 43(Suppl1)*, i20–i26. https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdaa234

Oparanma F. U., & Chinedum I. A. (2022), The Importance of Nursing Staff Satisfaction: Nigerian Context. *African Journal of Health, Nursing and Midwifery 5*(3), 146-152. DOI: 10.52589/AJHNM-Q1KYGNTB.

Oye, O., Oyeyipp, E. J., Ajide, O., Salako, O. P., Onyenwenyi, A. C., & Jolayemi, K. I. (2024). Implication of Brain Drain in the Nursing Profession on Quality Healthcare Delivery in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), 8*(10), 488-493. https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.8100041

Park, T. (2013). Turnover Rates and Organizational Performance: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. *American Psychological Association,98*(2),268 –309

Rosenberg K. (2014). The joint commission addresses health care worker fatigue. The American journal of nursing, 114(7), 17. https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NAJ.0000451665.31008.61

Sousa, A., Scheffler, R. M., Nyoni, J., & Boerma, T. (2013). A comprehensive health labour market framework for universal health coverage. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 91(11), 892–894. https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.13.118927

Sulastri, D. A., Zainal, V. R., & Hakim, A. (2025). Key Success Factors for Organizations in Controlling Employee Turnover. *Journal Indonesia Sosial Sains, 6*(4), 1169–1177. https://doi.org/10.59141/jiss.v6i4.1698

Suresh, V., Nimbarte, A. D., & Choudhury, A. (2024). Workload Factors Influencing Mental Health and the Intent to Leave Job During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Survey Analysis of Healthcare Workers Handling Mass Fatalities in the United States. *Safety, 10*(4), 103. https://doi.org/10.3390/safety10040103

Uford, I. C. (2017). Customer and Employee-based Brand Equity Driving United Bank for Africa's Market Performance (Doctoral dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, School of Economic & Business Sciences).

Wyonch, R. (2021). Help Wanted: Help Wanted: How to Address Labour Shortages in Healthcare and Improve Patient Access. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. DOI: https://cdhowe.org/publication/help- wanted-how-address-labour-shortages-healthcare-and-improve-patient-access/

Yusoff, N. S. M., Mohd-Rahim, F. A., & Loo, S. C. (2021). The relationship of skilled labour shortages and project performance in construction industry: a conceptual framework. *Journal of Project Management Practice 1*(1),1-21. DOI: 10.22452/jpmp.vol1no1.1