

# Assessment Of The Influence Of Professional Development On The Retention Of Registered Nurses In Public Hospitals In Kiambu County, Kenya.

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## Abstract

Employee retention demands strategic categorization of influential elements and the professional application of essential rules to retain the workforce. This research specifically examines the impact of motivational strategies on the retention of registered nurses in public hospitals within Kiambu County, Kenya. The primary objective is to determine the relationship between working conditions, professional development, remuneration, interpersonal relationships, and the retention of registered nurses in this context. Motivational strategies and retention serve as the key variables, drawing from Herzberg's two-factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The study, utilizing a correlational research design, targets a population of 450 registered nurses and 11 human resource officers from selected public hospitals in Kiambu County. The sample comprises 211 registered nurses and 11 human resource officers. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews, with quantitative analysis employing descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlations, linear and stepwise regression, and Chi-square at a 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis. Key findings indicate a statistically significant influence of working conditions ( $p = 0.032$ ) and remuneration ( $p = 0.025$ ) on nurse retention. Additionally, interpersonal relationships significantly impacted retention ( $p = 0.0086$ ,  $F = 4.430$ ). Thematic analysis revealed that job satisfaction, workload, working hours, professional development, and remuneration are critical factors influencing nurse retention. Recommendations include the establishment of motivational packages, incentives, and opportunities for professional development to retain registered nurses in public hospitals in Kiambu County. Strategies to curb nurse migration and the formulation of institutional policies for rewarding healthcare workers are also emphasized. The study underscores the importance of communicative engagements and the fulfillment of agreements in fostering positive attitudes and behaviors among healthcare professionals.

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## I. Introduction

### Background to the Study

Over the past two decades, there has been a notable surge in the migration of registered nurses, moving from public hospitals to private institutions, shifting from rural to urban facilities, crossing international borders, and even transitioning to other professions due to a lack of motivation. This trend, as identified by Manongi, Marchant, and Bygbjerg (2006), leads to several adverse outcomes, including staff shortages, increased overtime hours, heightened job stress, elevated burnout rates, and extended patients' waiting lists.

This migration of registered nurses not only results in increased recruitment and orientation costs, as highlighted by Lehasa (2008), but also underscores the importance of understanding the factors influencing the motivation of registered nurses and implementing appropriate interventions.

According to a 2010 report by the World Health Organization (WHO), achieving quality healthcare outcomes necessitates addressing a global shortage of 4 million health workers. Unfortunately, records from WHO and the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) in 2014 indicate that the shortage has risen to 7.2 million and is projected to reach 8 million by 2030 and a staggering 12.9 million by the year 2035 (Misenda et al., 2017). The persistent shortage of registered nurses poses a significant threat to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The WHO and the World Bank estimate that approximately 400 million people worldwide lack access to healthcare services and affordable medicine, and the International Labour Organization reports that 80% of the population in 44 countries are without any health protection, depriving them of their right to health.

Motivation, as defined by Poonam-Jasleen (2015), is a process driven by physiological or psychological deficiencies or needs that trigger behavior aimed at achieving a goal. It encompasses elements that ignite desire and energy in individuals to act autonomously, serving as a driving force for innovation and increased

productivity. Herzberg's dual-factor theory categorizes motivation into hygiene and motivational factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic, playing crucial roles in employee engagement, achievement, and recognition.

According to Azar and Shafiqhi (2013), any deficiency in motivation can result in organizational challenges, as motivation is both an extrinsic and intrinsic process. Huczynski and Buchanan (2013) argue that motivation is the driving energy behind working towards stated goals, and Peters (2015) emphasizes that it underlies the concept of working toward the achievement of these goals. Ultimately, motivational processes are intended to propel individuals toward the realization of their goals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Over the last two decades, the healthcare sector has grappled with a significant challenge as registered nurses increasingly migrate from their current workstations to more promising environments. This trend has resulted in a shortage of healthcare workers within hospitals. According to the Kenya Healthcare Workforce report, there is a notable deficit of nurses, with a current ratio of only 8.3 practicing nurses per 10,000 population. This falls far short of the World Health Organization's recommended ratio of 25 nurses per 10,000 patients.

Kenya confronts a dual challenge, with nurses migrating not only from rural to urban areas but also from the public to private healthcare sectors. The Kenya Health Workforce Information System (KHWIS) reveals that there are 19,591 registered nurses deployed across 4,187 healthcare facilities, encompassing private and faith-based institutions. However, the number of registered nurses working in private hospitals is not officially reported to the Ministry of Health.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Professional Development and Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals**

Professional career growth are factors that determine job retention and promotion chances that boost employees desire to stay in a job according to Hong, Heng, and Quazi, (2003) through, Enticing, inspiring and re-collecting knowledge of workers.

In Pakistan, Khowaja et al., (2005) established that a large number of participants pointed out that there was no appreciation of the good work registered nurses have performed by the facilities' administrator, no nurse professional development value and respect which could lead to improved self-confidence. However, at home there are factors that continue to stretch registered nurses' performance limiting their output which includes poor pay, lack of job satisfaction, poor working environment and weak functioning health system. (WHO 2006) While the international migration is high and appears to be increasing, internal migrations also is a big problem. The shortage has not only constrained the country's expectation to achieve health related-development goals but also hinders progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and has considerably constrained the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDG's).

Strachot (2003) established that registered nurses appreciated credit which would motivate nurses and make them upgrade their professional status to work longer in a certain institution. According to Campbell, Fowles and Weber (2004), participants required appreciation to satisfy their professional development status needs which elevated their confidence. Shader (2001) established that institutional policies to reduce nurses' frustrations were very vital such as relationship with co-workers, work environment, relationship with managers, institutional support, practice and formal appreciation of achievements.

A publication by Warshawsky & Sullivan of (2011) covering twelve European countries, established that one among five registered nurses (11-15% in various nations) were dissatisfied with their jobs due to low wages, lack of academic and career advancement opportunities, Aiken & Sloane (2013). A lack of promotion through the ranks of health workers is another problem. According to Duffield (2003) health workers are reluctant to work in rural areas because opportunities for career development are typically less than in the urban areas. It is admissible that registered nurses like any other from any public facility take pride and feel motivated when they realize that they have opportunities to progress (Gardener, 2004). Through training, workers are enabled to take on more demanding assignments and achieve personal goals on professional advancement as well, allowing them to cope better with work requirements and be better positioned when promotions chances are advertised Mathauer et al., (2007). According to Mackenzie and Buchan (2001) investing in human resource is vital for the growth of health care facilities. Registered Nurses should set their own goals in line with the institution's goals.

A study carried out by Cowin (2002) in Australia showed that registered nurses were not well remunerated, neither were their qualifications and experience considered for review of their salary. A study in Taiwan done by Yin and Yang (2002) established that remuneration and privileges mostly affected registered nurses' turnover. According to a report released in 2014 by Nursing Solutions Inc. (NSI) the national average turnover rate for bedside registered nurses rose from 13.1% in 2012 to 14.2% in 2013. Nursing practice takes place in a context of on-going advances in research and technology, this means that basic registered nursing education alone is not enough for a lifetime nursing career, though participation in continuing professional development in many African countries remains low, majority of the registered nurses participate in continuous

professional development in order to; obtain additional qualifications, improve their curriculum profile, to be updated with new developments, for career progression and networking with other registered nursing colleagues and to be prepared for mentoring new registered nurses and students (AACN.2020).

At the outbreak of Covid-19 the registered nurses require more professional knowledge to reduce gaps in critical areas of handling and treating patients, as the previous knowledge is not sufficient to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. During the outbreaks of recognised contagious diseases like Covia-19, there is a high risk of safety problems for health care providers and may cause man power shortages (Duffield et al., 2003). Together with basic and clinical studies, conducting studies on frontline disease spread prevention staff and the experience of supporting patients physically and psychologically is crucial. A further effort is necessary to develop strategic recommendations and to integrate knew knowledge through education where immediate efforts are on-going to control and prevent Covid-19. (WHO 2020a) A report by National Statistics from South African Nursing Council (NSSANC) revealed that between 1996 and 2005, there was a massive drop of 42.0% in the number of registered nurses who completed their training in South Africa. South Africa has a high rate of registered nurses moving from public to private sectors, immigration to developed countries in Europe and America. Health experts estimate that 25% of registered nurses per year leave South Africa for private employment and 7% migrate to other countries. While international migration is high and indicates to continue increasing, internal migration remains a serious problem to the developing and underdeveloped countries. This migration causes shortage of registered in rural and remote areas that at the same time have challenges of an equitable healthcare delivery (WHO, WHR, 2003, Wilson et al., 2009). The distribution of health workers is unequal between urban and the rural settings around the world. According to Araujo and Maenda (2011) it is reported that urban areas are better staffed in comparison to rural areas because of availability of resources, wealthy population against rural areas with experiences of poor health care related issues with diverse income levels. This shortage is blamed on the insufficient production of health professionals with required skills, the migration of registered nurses from low to higher income locations and the inability of the management to retain the nurses at the facilities where their services are required. The unequal deployment of registered nurses finally becomes a concern across the globe, especially in East and Southern Africa where needs of the poor population and the policy commitments for a balanced distribution and universal health coverage cannot be achieved without adequate health workforce (WHO, 2006).

A cross-sectional survey study done in Tanzania among primary level health facilities found that registered nurses with non-dependents had the lowest motivation level, gender and social status also being factors affecting registered nurses' motivation where some of them plan to leave the health facility (TN1, 2011). Nurses' retention has been a major challenge being experienced by most health facilities globally (Sinha-Sinha, 2012). In Tanzania registered nurses are often asked to perform tasks beyond their scope of practice, without adequate training, leading to frustration and demotivation, pre-empting them to plan to leave (TNMC, 2017). Another publication Heinen (2013) in a survey of 23,000 participants, reported that 9% of the registered nurses had an intention of leaving their nursing careers, varying between 5-17%. The reasons given were; poor work relationship, poor leadership, and lack of involvement in hospital affairs, old age, gender discrimination and work burnout (Hein, 2013). Training of health professionals in Kenya is provided by colleges and schools both of public and private sectors, without a common regulatory authority that registers and regulates all health training institutions, hence, comprehensive information on training, registration and regulation is not available as the professional bodies are reluctant to disclose information. Human Resources Management journals, 13:23-44. Study conducted by (Rakuom, 2010) human resource in Kenya showed that the registered nursing population in Kenya is aging and a number of counties have inherited aging registered nursing workforce many of whom will soon reach the civil service retirement age of 60 years. Like any other country in the African region, in Kenya nurses are required to attain continuous professional development which is linked to their renewal of practicing license.

Factors such as training and development, interpersonal relationships, autonomy among other indicators are less explored. During the global outbreak, active participation of the registered nursing on critical care, education and information sharing and implementation of public health policy is highly expected. Registered clinical nurses are supposed to have time for updated learning and education on specific risks in relevance to their area of practice. This education should be extended to nursing students, who might be brought during pandemic to support their colleagues Choi et al., (2020). Motivational strategies should approach the registered nurses complains by providing opportunities for career development, make effort to ensure adequate compensations, and promote work environments. The program of short continuous learning during a prolonged pandemic similar to Covid-19 would ensure the best control of any registered nurses' human factor deterioration. To ensure effective registered nursing education during the pandemics, health care facilities employing nurses must ensure consistent availability of resources (ANA, 2020). These small shortages and lots of pressure are what make many registered nurses get infected, lose their lives, decide to leave, resign despite being trained on such crisis. According to Choi et al., (2020), further research to equip institutions with essential knowledge to increase their retention ability is

required. This study will therefore be carried out to find investigate the influence of professional development on the retention of registered nurses in Kiambu County, Kenya

### III. Research Methodology

The research design employed in this study is correlational, and the investigation was carried out in Kiambu County, Kenya, situated in the former Central Province. Kiambu County shares borders with Machakos to the East, Murang'a to the North, Nyandarua to the North, and Kajiado and Nairobi to the South. Its strategic location places it adjacent to Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. Kiambu County boasts a dense population, estimated at 2,489,179 individuals.

The study focuses on a target population of 1800 registered nurses and 11 human resource officers selected from various public hospitals in Kiambu County, spanning across 110 health facilities. To gather data, a combination of a questionnaire and an interview schedule was utilized. The assistant researcher collected completed questionnaires, ensuring their completeness before submitting them for final verification by the principal researcher.

### IV. Results and Discussions

#### Descriptive analysis on the influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya

The findings are as reported in Table 1.

**Table 1: Respondent Rating on Professional Development and Retention of Nurses**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Skill trainings do not contribute to the retention of registered nurses.	69 (23.0%)	142 (47.7%)	24 (8.0%)	39 (13.2%)	24 (8.0%)
Accreditation and promotion have no influence on the retention of registered nurses.	99 (33.3%)	111 (37.4%)	26 (8.6%)	32 (10.9%)	30 (9.8%)
There is non-well-drawn program for registered nurses' appraisal in the organizations that has influenced the retention of nurses	14 (4.6%)	43 (14.4%)	24 (8.0%)	111 (37.4%)	106 (35.6%)
Opportunities for continuing with education have not contributed to the retention of registered nurses.	34 (11.5%)	111 (37.4%)	34 (11.5%)	72 (24.1%)	47 (15.5%)
Good work is done when the registered nurses cannot relate and communicate effectively.	146 (48.9%)	89 (29.9%)	19 (6.3%)	26 (8.6%)	19 (6.3%)
Registered nurses are not facilitated to attend health conferences	29 (9.8%)	65 (21.8%)	47 (15.5%)	49 (28.2%)	74 (24.7%)

Source: Research Data (2022)

Skill trainings do not contribute to the retention of registered nurses, this is not true since most of the respondent disagreed at a rate of 142(47.7%) and 69(23.0%) strongly disagreed. Next were respondent that agreed at a rate of 39(13.2%) and those that strongly agreed and were neutral were 24(8.0%) each. Accreditation and promotion have no influence on the retention of registered nurses, most of the respondent disagreed at a rate 111(37.4%) and 99(33.3%) strongly disagreed. Next were respondent that agreed at a rate of 32(10.9%) and 30(9.8%) strongly agreed. Respondent that were neutral were 26(8.6%).

There is non-well-drawn program for registered nurses' appraisal in the organizations that has influenced the retention of nurses, this is true since most of the respondent were 111(37.4%) and 106(35.6%) strongly agreed. Next were respondent that disagreed at a rate of 43(14.4%), followed by those that were neutral at a rate of 24(8.0%) and only 14(4.6%) strongly disagreed. Opportunities for continuing with education have not contributed to the retention of registered nurses, majority of the respondent disagreed at a rate of 111(37.4%) followed that agreed at a rate of 72(24.1%), followed by respondent that strongly agreed at a rate of 7(15.5%) and finally those who strongly disagreed and those that were neutral were 34(11.5%) each. Good work is done when the registered nurses cannot relate and communicate effectively, this is not true since most of the respondent strongly disagreed at a rate of 146(48.9%) and 89(29.9%) disagreed. 26(8.6%) of the respondent agreed and respondent that were neutral and strongly agreed were 19(6.3%) each.

Registered nurses are not facilitated to attend health conferences,

#### Inferential Analysis on the Influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya

The study further conducted on the second objective to determine if there is any statistically significant influence of personal development on retention of registered nurses in public hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya

and the results obtained were presented on their tables which composed of model summary, ANOVA summary and regression analysis on table 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

**Table 2: Model Summary on the influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.576 <sup>a</sup>	.532	-.671	1.39903610

Source: Research Data (2022)

According to results obtained on table 10 there was clear indication that there existed a statistical relationship between the dependent and independent variable since the value of R was 0.576 hence 57.6% correlation while the value of R squared was 0.532 which is greater than 0.5 hence indicating goodness in model fitting.

**Table 3: Two-way ANOVA Summary on the influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.886	298	4.648	2.331	.098 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	7.829	6	1.957		
	Total	11.715	304			

Source: Research Data (2022)

Hypothesis testing was conducted and the study found out that there existed a statistical relationship between the Retention of registered nurses in public hospitals in Kiambu County and the influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses since the sig value obtained was 0.098 which was less than 0.05 at 95% confidence interval hence accept the null hypothesis. The study indicated an F value of 2.331 which was greater than 1 this indicated that model was viable for the study.

**Table 4: Regression analysis on the influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.869	4.516		.192	.857
	Skill trainings do not contribute to the retention of registered nurses.	.657	1.172	-.227	-.305	.776
	Accreditation and promotion have no influence on the retention of registered nurses.	.163	2.541	.124	.064	.952
	There is non-well-drawn program for registered nurses' appraisal in the organizations that has influenced the retention of nurses	.738	.819	.596	.901	.418
	Opportunities for continuing with education have not contributed to the retention of registered nurses.	-.284	.521	-.265	-.546	.614
	Good work is done when the registered nurses cannot relate and communicate effectively.	.221	1.613	.137	.137	.898
	Registered nurses are not facilitated to attend health conferences	.307	3.966	.183	.077	.942

Source: Research Data (2022)

A multiple linear regression was formulated and presented as below;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \beta_6x_6 + \epsilon$$

$$Y = 0.869 + 0.657x_1 + 0.163x_2 + 0.738x_3 - 0.284x_4 + 0.221x_5 + 0.307x_6 + \epsilon$$

From the equation above the study concluded that “*There is non-well-drawn program for registered nurses' appraisal in the organizations that has influenced the retention of nurses*” had the highest correlation of 0.738 followed by “*Skill trainings do not contribute to the retention of registered nurses*” with a correlation of 0.657 this indicates there is need for study to put those two factors under high consideration to find how they impact the of professional development on retention of registered nurses in public hospitals. “*Opportunities for continuing with education have not contributed to the retention of registered nurses*” had the least correlation of -0.284.

### **Thematic Analysis on the Influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya**

The study determined the influence of Professional Development on Retention of Registered Nurses in Public Hospitals in Kiambu County, Kenya and the following were some of the aspects highlighted by respondents in interview schedule;

Does the health management pay for the registered nurse's professional supervision on new and young professionals who join the health facilities and the following aspects were indicated by the medics;

*This supervision may be provided by senior nurses, mentors, or other healthcare professionals who are trained to provide guidance, support, and feedback to new nurses."*

*"There is need or professional supervision can take many forms, such as one-on-one mentoring, group meetings, or formal training sessions. The cost of providing professional supervision is typically covered by the healthcare organization as part of its commitment to supporting the professional development of its staff."*

*"The new and young nurses, professional supervision can also benefit the healthcare organization as a whole. By providing high-quality supervision and training, the organization can improve the skills and knowledge of its nurses, which can lead to improved patient outcomes, increased job satisfaction, and higher retention rates."*

The study overall indicted that the, professional supervision is an essential aspect of the training and development of new and young nurses, and it is common for healthcare organizations to cover the cost of this supervision as part of their commitment to supporting the professional development of their staff.

The following were some of the major issues highlighted by nurses on the facilitation of the registered nurses as they attend seminars or workshops;

*"Make sure that nurses have all the necessary information about the seminar or workshop, such as the date, time, location, and agenda. This information can help them prepare for the event and ensure that they arrive on time."*

*"Healthcare organizations can cover the cost of attending seminars or workshops, including registration fees, travel expenses, and accommodation. This can make it easier for nurses to attend and can show them that their organization values their professional development."*

*"Offer nurses support as they prepare for the seminar or workshop. This can include providing resources or study materials, answering any questions they may have, and offering guidance on how to get the most out of the experience."*

Availability of the programs on registered nurses' professional development for nurses and the some of the major aspects indicated by the nurses included;

*"There is need for healthcare organizations offer continuing education programs for nurses, which can include workshops, seminars, webinars, and online courses. These programs can cover a wide range of topics, from clinical practice to leadership and management."*

*"Provision of certification programs can provide nurses with additional credentials in a specific area of practice, such as critical care, pediatrics, or oncology. These programs can require additional coursework, training, and testing, and can demonstrate a nurse's expertise in a particular area."*

*"Leadership development programs should be developed this can help nurses develop the skills and knowledge needed to take on leadership roles in healthcare organizations. These programs can cover topics such as communication, team building, strategic planning, and change management."*

*"Membership in a professional association can provide nurses with access to a wide range of resources, including educational opportunities, networking events, and publications."*

This indicates that the facilitating registered nurses as they attend seminars or workshops can help them get the most out of the experience and apply what they learn to their work. By providing information, covering the cost, offering support, encouraging networking, and providing follow-up, healthcare organizations can support the professional development of their nurses and improve the quality of patient care.

## **V. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Summary**

Based on most respondents (close to seven tenths), skills training and accreditation have an influence on retention of registered nurses. The findings also demonstrated that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that appraisal programs are not well drawn thus influencing retention of nurses. Khowaja et al., (2005) established that a large number of participants pointed out that there was no appreciation of the good work registered nurses have performed by the facilities' administrator, no nurse professional development value and respect which could lead to improved self-confidence. However, at home there are factors that continue to stretch registered nurses' performance limiting their output which includes poor pay, lack of job satisfaction, poor working environment and weak functioning health system. Further, marginally more than half of the respondents agreed that registered nurses are not facilitated to attend conferences. Loan-Clarke (2010) says that flexibility of managers plays a vital role, in the retention of health workers. In regards to moral distress, nurses continue to witness triaging of

equipment to those who has a chance to live, patients dying without family able to be with them, due to visit restrictions, experience cumulative loss, suffer from exhaustion due to workload and schedule changes, struggle with the worry about their own health and exposure to family while balancing professional obligations Gardener (2004). Aggregation results showed that majority of the responses pointed towards personal development being not effectively present in public hospitals in Kiambu County.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded the following:

- i. That professional development such as presence of training for intellectual growth, and promotion opportunities significantly influences retention of registered nurses.
- ii. That remuneration has a statistically significant influence on retention of registered nurses.
- iii. That inter-personal relationship has the most statistically significant influences on the retention of registered nurses.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends the following:

- i. Trend of the effects of loss of health services as a result of external migration of the registered nurses
- ii. Health care institutions needs to expedite development of institutional policies on rewarding the registered nurses
- iii. Keeping of a large proportion of the Kenyan population in the vicious circle of poverty and ill health
- iv. There is need to develop programs on psychological counselling in the training programs and service centres for the nurses.

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