



## Enhancing nurse retention in private hospitals in the new normal: A comprehensive approach for post-pandemic healthcare stability

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### ABSTRACT

Nurse shortages are a global issue, with various factors influencing nurses' decisions to stay or leave their positions. This study explores the specific factors affecting nurse retention in private hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic and the new normal in Bukidnon, Philippines. The research aimed to identify why nurses chose to work or discontinue working in private hospitals, examine incentives that could improve retention, and propose strategies for hospital administrations. Using thematic analysis, insights from nurses were collected through focus group discussions and analyzed with Colaizzi's method. Findings showed that nurses chose private hospitals for personal comfort and ease of job opportunities. However, low salaries, burnout, stigma, fear of infecting loved ones, and lack of benefits led many to leave. Strategies for retention included maintaining an ideal nurse-patient ratio, regular evaluations, counseling, professional development, and salary increases. This study emphasizes the need for supportive work environments in private hospitals, highlighting the importance of addressing salary disparities, reducing burnout, and providing comprehensive benefits. In response, the STRIVE (Sustainable Talent Retention and Incentive for Valued Employees) program was developed, offering a holistic approach to enhancing nurse retention through competitive compensation, professional growth, and fostering a positive workplace culture. STRIVE provides solutions tailored to the challenges faced by private hospitals, positioning itself as a vital initiative to improve nurse retention in both the current climate and future healthcare challenges.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Healthcare, nurse retention, private hospitals, STRIVE program

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## INTRODUCTION

Nurses are in limited supply worldwide. The International Council of Nurses (2015) reported nurse shortages, maldistribution, and underutilization in the majority of WHO member nations. In some countries, both the public and private sectors are struggling to attract and retain trained, experienced nurses. This issue is compounded by a disparity between public perception of nurses' roles and the reality of their work, as well as systemic challenges such as inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, and a lack of respect for the profession (Potira et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, particularly in Bukidnon, the problem is magnified in private hospitals. Here, nurses frequently cite low pay, limited career progression, and inadequate benefits as reasons for leaving their positions (Potira et al., 2019; Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). However, to comprehensively address nurse retention, it is critical to explore beyond economic incentives. As in other professions—such as fisheries—motivation to remain in a profession often stems from intrinsic factors. Fishers, for instance, may continue their craft not solely for monetary gain but also because of their love for the work, a sense of identity, and years of training and commitment (Béné et al., 2016). Similarly, nurses may derive satisfaction and motivation from professional growth, alignment with personal values, and emotional fulfillment (Amanda et al., 2021; Gkorezis et al., 2016).

This study draws on the Job Embeddedness Theory (Mitchell et al., 2001) to examine nurse retention. The theory's three dimensions—links, fit, and sacrifice—provide a framework for understanding nurses' attachment to their organizations. Links refer to professional and personal relationships that foster belonging; fit reflects alignment between personal values and organizational culture; and sacrifice considers the perceived costs of leaving. These dimensions offer insights into both incentives and disincentives for nurse retention in private hospitals.

Incentives and disincentives for nurse retention are multifaceted and influenced by individual, organizational, and systemic factors. Nurses are motivated to remain in their roles when provided opportunities for growth and skill enhancement. Gkorezis et al. (2016) found that access to continuing education and career advancement significantly impacts nurse retention. Similarly, Tabali et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of professional growth programs in fostering job satisfaction among nurses.

A positive and inclusive workplace culture is a critical incentive. Hoffart et al. (2018) highlighted that supportive work environments enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. In the Philippines, private hospitals must address workplace dynamics to create a culture of respect and collaboration. Nurses who feel recognized for their contributions and are granted autonomy in decision-making are more likely to stay in their roles. Potira et al. (2019) noted that recognition and empowerment are vital in retaining healthcare professionals. While non-monetary factors are significant, fair remuneration remains essential. Al-Qahtani et al. (2020) identified competitive pay as a baseline requirement for retention, particularly in sectors competing with public institutions. As in other professions, nurses often find fulfillment in their work due to intrinsic factors. Amanda et al. (2021) explored how a sense of purpose and alignment with personal values motivate nurses to continue their practice, even in challenging environments.

Burnout is a pervasive issue in the nursing profession, exacerbated by staffing shortages and increased workload. Sharma (2022), linked burnout to high attrition rates, emphasizing the need for workload management strategies. The disparity in salaries between public and private hospitals is a significant disincentive. Gatti et al. (2017) highlighted that inadequate compensation undermines job satisfaction and retention efforts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, fear of infecting loved ones emerged as a critical disincentive for

nurses. Giarelli et al. (2016) explored the psychological stress associated with caregiving roles and its impact on retention. Limited opportunities for advancement can lead to dissatisfaction. Moloney et al. (2018), noted that career stagnation is a key factor driving nurses to leave their roles. Broader systemic issues, such as inadequate funding and resource limitations, further exacerbate retention challenges. Halter et al. (2017), emphasized the need for systemic reforms to address the root causes of nurse shortages.

According to a study, nurses are drawn to and remain in employment because they can advance professionally, develop autonomy, and participate in decision-making while being rewarded fairly (Gkorezis et al., 2016; Al-Qahtani et al., 2020). Workplace characteristics can be significant, and there is some evidence that a decentralized management style, flexible employment options, and access to continuous professional development can help boost nursing staff retention and quality of care.

Nursing shortages are typically a symptom of more significant systemic or cultural problems. In many countries, nursing is still viewed as “women’s work,” and nurses have limited access to tools that might enable them to be more productive in their tasks and professions. Additional treatments will be necessary to provide long-term solutions. Specific individuals must concentrate on the supply side. These should be founded on recognizing that health care is labor demanding and that nursing resources must be efficiently utilized. The issue is not only a question of numbers; it is also a matter of how the healthcare system functions to ensure that nurses can utilize their knowledge properly (World Health Organization, 2015).

In Bukidnon, these factors are compounded by regional disparities in healthcare infrastructure and resources (Halter et al., 2017). Nurses in private hospitals often face unique challenges,

such as limited access to professional development and support systems (Moloney et al., 2018). However, intrinsic motivators, such as a sense of community and personal commitment, remain strong among many nurses in the region (Lambrou et al., 2014). Addressing both systemic and individual factors is critical to improving nurse retention in Bukidnon’s private hospitals. Even prior to the epidemic, the worldwide nursing shortage was well documented (International Council of Nurses, 2017). The pandemic outbreak exacerbated this deficit (Sharma, 2022). Although study on this topic has been undertaken in other parts of the country, none has been conducted in the province of Bukidnon, particularly on private hospitals.

Analytically, the “nursing shortage” can be viewed as a series of interconnected and overlapping events (Evans et al., 2017). Of course, at its most basic level, the scarcity is a lack of educated practicing nurses, as is the case in most countries today. However, it may be useful to investigate the unique nature of the “shortage” that the world is currently experiencing. Nursing shortages are a global issue, affecting countries like the UK, the US, and Germany. In the UK, the National Health Service (NHS) has faced significant nurse shortages, with estimates suggesting a shortfall of 51,000 nurses by 2021 (Buchan et al., 2021). In the US, the demand for nurses continues to rise, with predictions of a global shortage of 9 million nurses and midwives by 2030 (Haddad et al., 2022). Similarly, Germany faces challenges in attracting and retaining nursing staff, with hospitals struggling to fill vacancies due to demographic changes and workforce shortages (Schmidt et al., 2023). These shortages are influenced by various factors, including barriers to policy and planning, insufficient training capacity, high turnover rates, and stress and burnout among nurses. Investigating the unique nature of the “shortage” that the world is currently experiencing can provide insights into addressing this critical global healthcare challenge. Nursing shortages are a public health issue because they disrupt the

system's operation and necessitate healthcare interventions. Until this is understood and we make better use of current evidence, we will be trapped in an ongoing cycle of ineffective, disconnected, outmoded, and frequently incorrect policy responses.

Exploring incentives such as professional development, workplace culture, and personal satisfaction, alongside disincentives like burnout and fear of family exposure to infection, allows a deeper understanding of nurse retention. By contextualizing these findings within broader literature, including insights from fisheries, management, and leadership, the study seeks to develop tailored interventions for private hospitals in Bukidnon.

The study's main objective was to identify the factors that influence the decisions of the nurses to work or stop working in private hospitals in Bukidnon during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study results would provide baseline information on the nurses working in Private hospitals during the pandemic.

The study findings would give insights and guide the hospital administrators in addressing the factors identified in the study. It would also provide information that can be used to craft policy/ guidelines on the nurses' welfare. Specific interventions would be formulated.

### Research objectives

1. To determine the factors that influence nurses' decisions to work or discontinue working in private hospitals in Bukidnon during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To explore the specific reasons why nurses choose to leave their employment in private hospitals during the pandemic.
3. To evaluate potential incentives that can effectively retain nurses in private hospitals.

## METHODOLOGY

### Data collection

The study utilized the descriptive qualitative research design in phase one. With descriptive data, a focus group is a qualitative research tool used to get extensive insight into attitudes and behaviors to comprehend and meaningfully explain particular communication phenomena.

The study included 10 nurses from three private hospitals in Bukidnon, specifically located in Don Carlos and Valencia City. To ensure the participants were representative of the study population, the researchers applied specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. Nurses with at least five years of work experience, currently employed full-time in private hospitals, and willing to participate in focus group discussions (FGDs) were included in the study. Conversely, part-time nurses, those with less than five years of work experience, or those unwilling to provide consent were excluded.

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who could provide in-depth insights into the factors influencing nurse retention in private hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. This sampling method was deemed appropriate as it ensured that the selected participants had sufficient experience and knowledge relevant to the study's objectives. The recruitment process began with a formal letter sent to the chief administrators of the hospitals, seeking approval to conduct the study and permission to recruit participants. Once approval was granted, eligible nurses were approached directly, provided with detailed information about the study, and invited to participate in the FGDs.

The researcher utilized guided grand tour questions to elicit responses needed in the present study. The questions focused on the factors affecting the nurses' decision to work in private hospitals amidst this pandemic. This was used as a

guide in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) The method of analysis used in the aforementioned study is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within a dataset. It allows for a systematic and comprehensive exploration of participants' perspectives, experiences, and opinions.

### Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before their involvement, ensuring they fully understood the study's purpose, their role, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants were assured of confidentiality and their rights were protected in accordance with ethical research protocols. By adhering to these procedures, the study maintained rigor and respect for its participants.

### RESULTS

Nursing shortages in private hospitals have many factors. Nurses were influenced by different reasons they opted to stay or leave their careers as nurses. The qualitative data collection took place during the exploratory phase, which included multi-media interactive conversation. Only ten nurses could participate in the research due to an increase in COVID cases in Bukidnon. The qualitative data collection took place during the exploratory phase, which included multi-media interactive conversation. The researcher coded the responses axially until significant themes emerged. Thematic descriptions were converted into descriptive statements to assess the factors influencing nurses' decisions to stay or leave private hospitals.

#### *Profile of the participants*

The study included 10 nurses from three private hospitals in Bukidnon,

specifically located in Don Carlos and Valencia City. The majority of participants had worked as nurses for 6 to 13 years. Their perspectives were gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs) to understand the factors influencing their retention or decision to leave private hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### *Influence to work in private hospitals.*

Most of the respondents responded that it is their personal choice to work in a private hospital. They are more comfortable working in a private environment than in a public hospital.

*Respondent 8 responded, "For me, it is only myself, and since working in a private hospital is the easiest way to look for a job opportunity as a nurse."*

*Respondent 2 verbalized, "It is my personal choice . it is difficult to leave this institution since I have worked here eight years now".*

*Respondent 3 stated, " I worked in this institution before the pandemic started. I opted to stay because I am now comfortable in my working environment".*

Nurses work in private hospitals for personal reasons and for a comfortable working environment.

#### *Essential themes:*

**Personal choice and preference:** Nurses expressed their personal preference to work in private hospitals over public hospitals due to factors such as comfort, ease of job opportunities, and familiarity with the working environment.

**Comfortable working environment:** Nurses highlighted the importance of feeling comfortable in their working environment as a significant factor in their decision to stay in private hospitals.

The findings from the focus group discussion (FGD) indicate that personal

choice and the desire for a comfortable working environment strongly influence nurses to work in private hospitals. Respondents mentioned that they preferred the private sector due to factors such as ease of finding job opportunities and familiarity with the institution. Additionally, nurses who have spent a significant amount of time working in a private hospital expressed reluctance to leave due to their comfort and familiarity with the work environment.

The identified themes and findings have several implications for the retention enhancement program for nurses in private hospitals in the Philippines. These implications include:

**Understanding individual preferences:**

Recognizing that nurses have personal choices and preferences in their career decisions is crucial. The retention program should consider individual needs and provide opportunities for nurses to voice their preferences and concerns.

**Enhancing comfort and satisfaction:**

Creating a comfortable and supportive work environment is vital to retain nurses in private hospitals. The program should focus on initiatives that enhance job satisfaction, foster positive relationships among healthcare teams, and address any issues that may hinder nurses' comfort at work.

**Tailoring recruitment strategies:**

Understanding that many nurses choose to work in private hospitals, recruitment strategies should align with this preference. The program can explore targeted recruitment efforts to attract nurses who are inclined towards the private sector.

*Influences to discontinue working during this pandemic*

Low salary compared to public hospitals is the primary reason nurses stop working in private hospitals, followed by burnout/ exhaustion, stigma and fear of infecting loved ones, and lack of benefits and underpaid.

*It is because primarily of the salary differential, the difference between the private and public hospital salaries is enormous. Some of us in the private institutions yearn to have such remuneration for our services (Respondent 4).*

*I have observed some of the reasons nurses stop working in a private hospital for being overworked but underpaid. Nurses today demand compensation for the work they are giving because many of us now are burnout with the work (respondent 3).*

*Because of the stigma linked with working in the hospital nowadays, their relatives, immediate family, and even themselves do not want to bring home COVID. The reason for spreading it and becoming a reason for spreading it to the loved ones. Another is the meager salary. Though there is work security, nurses' salary is not enough for their family expenses, significantly when PPEs and other protective materials burden the nurses' pocket, despite the salary remaining the same as before.*

*Wala pa ko na kita na kita or nahibal.an. isa lang akong nailhan na colleague na mi resign xa kai mahadlok xa na matakdan niya iyang family (7). Financial considerations. I resigned to protect my family from COVID infection (9).*

**Essential themes:**

**Low salary compared to public hospitals:** The primary reason nurses discontinue working in private hospitals during the pandemic is the significant salary differential compared to public hospitals. Nurses express a desire for higher remuneration for their services.

**Burnout and exhaustion:** Nurses cite burnout and exhaustion as a contributing factor to their decision to discontinue working in private hospitals during the pandemic.

**Stigma and fear of infecting loved Ones:** The stigma associated with working in hospitals during the pandemic, as well as the fear of infecting their loved ones, influences nurses to stop working in private hospitals.

**Lack of benefits and underpayment:** Nurses express dissatisfaction with the lack of benefits and feeling underpaid in private hospitals, further contributing to their decision to discontinue their employment.

The findings from the provided statements indicate that the low salary compared to public hospitals is a significant factor leading to nurses discontinuing their work in private hospitals during the pandemic. Nurses express their desire for higher compensation for their services, particularly considering the increased workload and financial burdens related to the pandemic. Burnout and exhaustion are also mentioned as reasons for leaving. Additionally, the stigma associated with working in a hospital during the pandemic, coupled with the fear of infecting their loved ones, plays a role in their decision-making. The lack of benefits and feelings of being underpaid further contribute to nurses' dissatisfaction and decision to discontinue working in private hospitals.

The identified themes and findings have several implications for the retention enhancement program for nurses in private hospitals during the pandemic. These implications include:

**Addressing salary disparity:** Recognizing and addressing the significant salary differential between private and public hospitals is crucial to retain nurses. The retention program should advocate for fair and competitive compensation packages to attract and retain skilled nurses.

**Mitigating burnout and exhaustion:** Implementing strategies to address burnout and exhaustion is essential. This can

include workload management, providing resources for mental health support, and promoting self-care practices.

**Ensuring safety and reducing stigma:** Implementing robust infection control measures, providing adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), and educating the public about the safety measures undertaken by healthcare workers can help alleviate the stigma associated with working in hospitals during the pandemic.

**Enhancing benefits and recognizing value:** The retention program should aim to provide comprehensive benefits packages and recognize the value of nurses' work. This can include additional incentives, professional development opportunities, and support for their families.

Factors that help retain the nurses in their present employment in private hospitals in Bukidnon. Hire more staff to achieve an ideal nurse-patient ratio to avoid exhaustion and overwork for nurses. Nevertheless, they are only a few nurses available. So limit the patients' admission based on the ideal nurse patients ratio so that care will not be hindered. At the time, nurses will not be exhausted. Have a monthly evaluation so that concerns will be addressed immediately, and conduct regular counseling to help manage the stress level of the nurses (2).

**Essential themes:**

**Ideal nurse-patient ratio and workload:** Ensuring an ideal nurse-patient ratio and limiting patient admissions based on this ratio to prevent exhaustion and overwork for nurses.

**Regular evaluation and counseling:** Conducting monthly evaluations and providing regular counseling to address concerns and manage stress levels of nurses.

**Regularization and professional development:** Offering regularization for

nurses, supporting continuing professional education, and providing opportunities for career growth.

**Salary increase and benefits:**

Increasing salary based on the law, providing retirement benefits, scholarship opportunities for family members, hospitalization benefits, life insurance, and paid vacation leave.

**Job Satisfaction:** Surveying nurses' job satisfaction to understand their needs and address any concerns.

The findings from the provided statement indicate that several factors help retain nurses in their present employment in private hospitals in Bukidnon. These include ensuring an ideal nurse-patient ratio and limiting patient admissions accordingly to prevent exhaustion and overwork. Regular evaluations and counseling are mentioned as important strategies to address concerns and manage stress levels. The regularization of nurses, support for continuing professional education, increased salary based on the law, and a range of benefits are also highlighted. Surveying nurses' job satisfaction is mentioned as a means to understand their needs and improve retention efforts.

The identified themes and findings have several implications for the retention enhancement program for nurses in private hospitals in Bukidnon. These implications include:

**Staffing and workload management:**

Emphasizing the importance of achieving an ideal nurse-patient ratio and addressing workload concerns through patient admission limitations and adequate staffing.

**Continuous evaluation and support:**

Implementing regular evaluations and counseling sessions to address nurses' concerns promptly and provide support in managing stress levels.

**Professional development opportunities:**

Prioritizing the regularization of nurses and providing support for their continuing professional education and career growth.

**Competitive compensation and benefits:** Ensuring compliance with salary regulations, providing retirement benefits, scholarships, hospitalization benefits, life insurance, and paid vacation leave to enhance job satisfaction and attract and retain nurses.

**Job satisfaction assessment:**

Conducting regular surveys to assess nurses' job satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and tailor retention strategies accordingly.

Regularization of nurses, Support for continuing professional education, Increased salary SG15 based on the law, Less workload, Surveying nurses' job satisfaction, Retirement benefits, Scholarship for family members, Hospitalization benefits, Life insurance, and Paid vacation leave are the common strategies to help the management retain nurses in their respective hospitals.

The findings revealed that frontline healthcare practitioners in Bukidnon experienced an increased workload during the crisis and a possible healthcare system breakdown. The excessive workload was caused by a lack of healthcare staff, a lack of understanding of the virus, and a lack of basic training, which resulted in psychological stress.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings reveal that nurses' decisions to stay in private hospitals are deeply influenced by personal preferences and workplace comfort. However, looking beyond these factors uncovers intrinsic motivations and a strong sense of identity that closely resemble those seen in labor-intensive fields, like fishing (Béné et al., 2016). For many nurses, their profession is more than just a job—it is a



calling. They see themselves as caregivers, driven by a profound sense of purpose and the desire to make a difference in the lives of their patients. Often, this deep-rooted commitment surpasses the lure of financial incentives, reflecting years of dedication and personal growth in the field (Galletta et al., 2019). For many nurses, staying in the profession is tied to their personal values and the sense of belonging they find in their roles. The emotional satisfaction of seeing a patient recover or receiving heartfelt gratitude can be incredibly rewarding. As one nurse put it, “Knowing I helped save a life or made someone’s pain a little more bearable keeps me going.” This aligns with research by Gkorezis et al. (2016), which highlights the importance of emotional connections in building long-term career commitment. Nurses often describe their work as a “calling,” a vocation they feel uniquely suited for, which drives their sense of duty and pride (Henson et al., 2021).

Interestingly, these motivations don’t remain static. Over time, many nurses find new sources of fulfillment—whether it’s mentoring junior colleagues, contributing to innovative practices, or becoming a leader in their field. These evolving motivations provide a sense of growth and accomplishment that goes far beyond financial rewards (Holland et al., 2020). In close-knit communities like those in Bukidnon, cultural and social ties play a significant role in nurses’ decisions to stay. Many nurses see their profession as a way to give back to their community. Being recognized as a “pillar of health” within their towns or barangays is a source of pride that reinforces their identity as caregivers (Lambrou et al., 2014). The bonds nurses share with their colleagues also matter greatly. Many respondents described the camaraderie in their workplace as a source of strength, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. “It felt like we were in the trenches together,” one nurse shared. This sense of community, where colleagues support one another emotionally and professionally, acts as a shield against

burnout and dissatisfaction (Laschinger and Read, 2016).

While better pay and benefits are important, they aren’t the sole answer to nurse retention. Many nurses shared that although competitive salaries ease financial burdens, they don’t necessarily guarantee long-term commitment. Instead, they emphasized the value of non-monetary benefits, such as professional development opportunities and career advancement pathways (Aiken et al., 2018; Galletta et al., 2019). Nurses often approach their work with what can only be described as a “sacrificial mindset.” They enter the profession knowing full well the challenges it entails but remain because they find profound meaning in enduring those hardships (Tuckett et al., 2017). One respondent reflected, “I know this work is tough, but I can’t imagine doing anything else. It’s who I am.” This mindset mirrors that of workers in other demanding fields, like small-scale fishing, where people continue despite systemic challenges because their identity is so entwined with their craft (Béné et al., 2016).

The reasons nurses leave often extend beyond inadequate pay. Emotional exhaustion, moral distress, and systemic inequities weigh heavily on their willingness to stay. Many shared stories of frustration caused by insufficient staffing, lack of resources, and minimal institutional support during crises. Moral distress significantly contributes to burnout among healthcare workers, which in turn leads to higher turnover intentions (Oh et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, introducing additional stressors such as fear of transmitting the virus to family members. Compassion fatigue and moral distress have been found to influence nurses’ decisions to leave their roles (Garcia et al., 2024). Another concern that surfaced was the lack of societal recognition for nurses’ contributions. When nurses feel undervalued, their morale and dedication to patient care decrease, leading to higher turnover rates (Verve College, 2023). Addressing this

undervaluation is crucial to improving both job satisfaction and retention. By implementing support systems, fostering a positive work environment, and ensuring recognition for nurses' contributions, healthcare organizations can significantly improve nurse retention.

Nurse retention in private hospitals is a complex issue influenced by a combination of intrinsic motivations, cultural and social factors, and systemic challenges. Financial incentives, while important, must be complemented by efforts to foster a supportive work environment, provide professional growth opportunities, and address emotional and psychological needs. By implementing holistic and context-sensitive interventions, private hospitals can create an environment where nurses feel valued, fulfilled, and committed to their roles, ultimately leading to improved retention and better healthcare outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

Nurse retention in private hospitals emerges as a multifaceted issue shaped by a delicate interplay of intrinsic motivations, cultural and social factors, and systemic challenges. Nurses stay not merely because of economic incentives but due to a profound sense of purpose, professional alignment, and emotional fulfillment derived from their work. Cultural pride, workplace camaraderie, and a strong sense of identity as caregivers further anchor their commitment.

However, challenges such as emotional fatigue, moral distress, inadequate staffing, and insufficient institutional support, particularly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, continue to erode their resilience. Economic incentives alone are insufficient to address these challenges. Instead, a comprehensive approach that integrates professional development opportunities, recognition of contributions, and robust support systems is essential.

By addressing these deeper and often overlooked factors, private hospitals can create environments where nurses feel valued, supported, and motivated. This ensures not only improved retention but also enhanced patient care and long-term sustainability in the healthcare sector. Through holistic interventions, the healthcare industry can foster a resilient and committed nursing workforce capable of meeting the evolving demands of the profession.

To retain nurses in private hospitals, this study advocates for a multi-faceted strategy that encompasses both structural and interpersonal interventions. Key recommendations include maintaining an ideal nurse-patient ratio to prevent overwork, implementing regular evaluations and counseling to address concerns and manage stress, and offering professional development opportunities to support career growth. Regularization and competitive compensation packages, inclusive of increased salaries and robust benefits, are crucial to enhancing nurses' job security and overall satisfaction.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of fostering a culture of continuous improvement and support within private hospitals. By prioritizing these strategies, healthcare institutions in Bukidnon and similar settings can address the pressing issue of nurse retention, ensuring both staff well-being and the sustainability of healthcare services. These findings contribute valuable insights to the global discourse on nurse retention, emphasizing the need for context-specific, evidence-based solutions tailored to the unique challenges faced by private healthcare providers.

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