

A perspective on taking strategies for the shortfall of nursing workforce

Prabashanie M^{1*}

¹Department of Nursing & Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

*prabashani96@gmail.com

Health and wellbeing are constituting crucial facets in a country's development, representing the third pillar of the sustainable development goals. Nurses play a vital role in delivering patient care to ensure optimal health and wellbeing outcomes. The estimated global nursing workforce is 27.9 million. Currently, there is a shortage of 5.9 million nurses globally while nearly 89% of shortages were reported from low and lower middle-income countries ^[1]. As estimated by World Health Organization (WHO), an additional 9 million nurses are needed globally by 2030^[2]. With the existing global shortage of nurses, the worldwide demand for nurses is increasing day by day. However, it is essential to inquire into the real causes of the global nursing shortfall and device solutions as it affects the quality of patient care provided by nurses.

Despite increasing recruitment efforts for nurses, the shortage in nursing personnel remains unaddressed. A certain number of nurses retire from their jobs every year due to aging while some of them tend to retire early. On the other hand, the global migration of nurses is increasing ^[3] and further contributes to the regional nursing shortage. Accordingly, insufficient enrolment in nursing, migration, and reduced retention rates are key contributors to the shortage of nurses.

Among numerous influencing factors, job satisfaction stands out as a pivotal element impacting the retention rate and migration patterns of nurses. It indicates the extent to which a person is interested in his/her job. If one is satisfied and happy with his/her job, he/she tends to stay there and the possibility of turning out can be expected to be very low. Therefore, seeking out the factors which affect job satisfaction is very important when taking strategies against the shortage of nurses. In terms of factors that affect job satisfaction, socio-political climate, administrative and managerial support, autonomy and responsibility, salary, supervision and working condition, recognition and achievement, advancement, and promotion were reported by a previous study ^[4]. When reviewing the above-mentioned factors, it is apparent that most of the factors arise from the working environment. Therefore, nurses should have a good working environment to create job satisfaction. The extent of job satisfaction can be measured by the degree of presence of a good work environment ^[5].

A good working environment should be supportive and friendly. This plays true when freshers begin to adjust to the new environment and culture. Newly appointed nurses tend to be anxious due to lack of confidence, unfamiliarity with work pace and working environment in addition to the insufficient time for patient care ^[6]. High degrees of anxiety and stress may cause

them to leave their jobs. Research can unveil the extent to which novice nurses are offered a supportive environment and shed light on the barriers they encounter during their transition phase, potentially informing effective strategies. Apart from that, the implementation of socialization strategies like orientation programs, mentorship programs, provision of feedback, staff development activities, and open communication ^[7] can facilitate the transition period of nurses. Several studies reported that socialization strategies assist nurses in overcoming barriers successfully. Orientation programs and mentorship programs are helpful for nurses to improve their confidence, competency, retention, and to take full responsibility as a nurse ^[8,9,10]. Staff development activities include induction training, job orientation, in-service education, provision of opportunities to continue education and training for specialties in nursing. All of which are important for the improvement of the profession. Education can be considered as the best investment in nursing. If someone's profession is well recognized by society, it also contributes to the retention of the job. To improve the public image of nursing, education is essential. It is also important to increase enrolment opportunities in nursing. Nursing education in the world has spread from the certificate level to the bachelor level. In my point of view, if relevant authorities can focus on providing bachelor-level education for all nurses it will be helpful for the development of the nursing profession.

When addressing the global shortage of nurses and formulating effective strategies, the application of evidence-based practises become essential. Combining action with substained evidence enhances the likelihood of achieving desired objectives within the healthcare system. Consequently, it becomes imperative to conduct research at the national level, exploring factors influencing nursing shortages and diminishing retention rates, while also evaluating the efficacy of authorities' implemented strategies.

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