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# FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER OF DOCTORS AND NURSES IN AN EMERGING ECONOMY: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA

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## Abstract

Although employee turnover has been widely researched in business circles, most researchers focused on the causes of employee turnover in various sectors but little work has been conducted regarding the sources of employee turnover in health sector specifically paying attention to doctors and nurses. The health sector institutions continue to lose health professionals on a regular basis resulting in compromised service delivery of the patients' health. Employee turnover is expensive, disruptive and damaging to organisational success. Hence, the purpose of this paper was to examine the factors affecting employee turnover of doctors and professional nurses. A qualitative case-study design was adopted in which semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the sampled participants. The key findings revealed that lack of training, staff shortage, meagre salary, poor conditions of work, inadequate medical support, poor management, long supply chain management and poor promotional opportunities were the major intrinsic factors influencing employee turnover. The external work environment was the only extrinsic factor that influence the employee turnover. The importance of retaining healthcare professionals in public healthcare facilities cannot be over-emphasised. The paper suggests that

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managers need to acknowledge the factors when addressing the issues of employee voluntary turnover and turnover intentions.

**Key words:** employee turnover, employee retention, brain drain, doctors, nurses.

## **Introduction**

Employee turnover has taken the health sector by a storm. The exiting of doctors and nurses has become a major challenge that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency in developing economies. In South Africa, the Department of Public Administration (DPSA), through the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Chamber (PSCBC), introduced a new salary dispensation called the Occupational Specific Dispensation (OSD) with the intention to recruit and retain doctors within public sector institutions in 2007 (South African Government, 2007: 1). The introduction of this package, effective from the 1st of July 2007, proves to be a failure in the entire public service sector, as doctors and nurses continue to resign and left public sector institutions thus causing excessive shortages in this category of employees. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 stipulates that all the people living in South Africa have the right to life (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 1). For this objective to be accomplished, South Africa needs doctors, nurses and other related healthcare practitioners. The public sector institutions are losing many healthcare professionals on a regular basis (Zanoni, Sibaya, Cairns & Haberer, 2019: 957). Thus, healthcare service delivery is compromised. When patients visit public sector healthcare facilities, they expect to be treated by doctors and nurses. In the end, the government of the day is to blame for the lack of provision of professional healthcare services to its communities (Alam & Asim, 2019: 163). It would be interesting to interrogate the underlying factors influencing doctors and professional nurses to leave these rural-urban institutions. Currently, when the authority to fill a critical clinical post has been obtained, the post is advertised, only to find that there are sometimes no applicants. Sometimes the post will be re-advertised, and the suitable candidate fills the post (Tiwari, Mash, Karangwa & Chikte, 2021:88). Thus, the situation needs to be attended urgently, as it is crippling the smooth provision of healthcare services.

Both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that cause doctors and nurses to leave are interrogated in this paper. Ultimately, the researcher makes some conclusions in terms of the possible solutions that may be employed to address the challenge in question. Staff turnover is a major problem in South Africa, but the rate could be reduced if the factors influencing doctors and professional nurses to leave an organisation are investigated. South African healthcare hospitals are adversely affected by the high turnover, and it became difficult for the healthcare facilities to operate effectively and efficiently (Zihindula, Andrew-John, Gumede & Richard-Gavin, 2019:16). According to Ayodele, Chang-Richards & Gonzalez (2020:3), the human resources department is one of the key elements of ensuring the smooth running of any institution. There could be no hospitals or clinics without doctors and nurses. The wide assumption for their leaving is that they emigrate due to better opportunities abroad or simply switch to private sector healthcare facilities within the Republic of South Africa. This is what this study sought to interrogate further to draw a conclusion. An in-depth investigation into intrinsic and extrinsic factors around the issue of doctors and nurses leaving the South African hospitals is required. Therefore, the objectives of the study were to: to determine the intrinsic factors influencing the turnover rate of doctors and professional nurses; and to assess the extrinsic factors influencing the turnover rates of doctors and professional nurses.

### **Literature review**

According to Dwesini (2019:1), employee turnover rate as the term used to describe the percentage of workers that leave a company and need to be replaced within a certain period. This supports forecasting the future human resource planning and utilisation for the sustenance of service delivery. People join and leave organisations. This is not a foreign occurrence. Vacancies always open and the process of advertising such vacancies would commence (Zimmerman, Swider & Boswell, 2019: 99). People join and leave organisations which is not something new. There are many reasons why someone would leave an organisation. Some reasons are nothing to be concerned about, as they are unavoidable. High employee turnover is taxing. Stamolampros, Korfiatis, Chalvatzis and Buhalis (2019:130) state that it costs precious time and money, and can result in the loss of staff morale. Some employee turnover is inevitable. For instance, retirement, relocation and leaving for

schooling cannot be avoided. Li, Lourie, Nekrasov and Shevlin (2022:667) identify the following as the main causes of employee turnover, namely a lack of growth and progression, being overworked, a lack of feedback and recognition, little hope for decision-making and poor employee selection. From the aforementioned factors, one may realise the importance of recognising the work performance of employees. Employees need to be involved in some matters of decision-making in order for them to inform decisions of the management.

Due to the shortage of staff, nurses often end up working long hours under very stressful conditions which can result in fatigue, injury and job dissatisfaction (Tiwari et al., 2021). Nurses suffering in these environments are more prone to making mistakes and medical errors. The factors contributing to the nursing shortage are multifaceted. The biggest challenges facing healthcare are demographic changes that are pushing the expansion of the workforce and the time that it takes to educate and train the new healthcare workers to fill those needs (Ramlawati, Trisnawati, Yasin & Kurniawaty, 2021:511). If an employee is being bullied or harassed by someone at work, they may quit the job as they cannot afford to continue work in an unpleasant environment (Salleh, Omar, Aburumman, Mat & Almhairat, 2020:218). Some factors are unavoidable. However, if workers exit the system because of unhappiness at the workplace and employers constantly fire underperforming employees it becomes a matter for concern (Oruh, Mordi, Ajonbadi, Mojeed-Sanni, Nwagbara & Rahman, 2020:52). High employee turnover is taxing and expensive. It is expensive because organisations find themselves paying huge sums of money to the exiting staff. This includes some pertinent benefits attached to exits and embarking on an immediate process of recruitment and selection. According to Haldorai, Kim, Pillai, Park and Balasubramanian (2019:46), recruitment is a long, tedious and draining exercise which involves high costs, inter alia, time to advertise, the advertisement of a post or posts, inviting candidates from afar and providing them with comfortable accommodation and flights. It costs precious time and money and could result in a loss of staff morale which leaves the workforce demotivated. In some cases, employee turnover is inevitable. For instance, retirement and relocation cannot be avoided.

## Factors affecting the employee turnover

Engelbrecht and Samuel (2019:1) state that workplace turnover is increasing, and that the employee-driven marketplace demands managers to concentrate more on employee retention. They need to take employee turnover seriously, as it does affect the organisation negatively but also detrimental to the economy of the country. The consequences of the turnover are very serious. According to Work institute (2018:1), about 42 million employees left their jobs in the year 2018. Management must first understand and comprehend the root causes of the high turnover as the first step (Tamengkel & Rumawas, 2020:32). Reports offer insights to assist employers to understand how to curb the retention within their organisations going forward. While Kim (2005:137) reports that most employees exit their current jobs for better paying job opportunities, Friar and Mulyani (2018:55) indicate that career development opportunities, a better work-life balance and poor management are consistently the real issues that spur employees to leave their jobs. Some industries and businesses seem to naturally have a higher turnover rate than others. The following are identified as key factors of high turnover rate of employees.

**Lack of growth and progression:** The opportunity for growth and development is very important for retaining efficient employees within an organisation (Tews, Michel & Stafford, 2019:413). If an employee feels trapped in a dead-end position, they are likely to look towards different organisations for the chance to improve their status and income. Most nurses remain in the same lower medical and nursing post for a long time. They do not progress in terms of rank promotion or the compensation of employees. They become demotivated and resistant to management decisions. They suffer from burnouts which result in quitting, hence service delivery suffers. Sometimes succession planning is non-existent, therefore, employees decide to exit the system to look for 'greener pastures' elsewhere (Tamengkel & Rumawas, 2020:32).

**Being overworked:** It might seem natural that, in periods of economic pressure, staff is asked to take on extra responsibilities (Al-Suraihi, Samikon, Al-Suraihi & Ibrahim, 2021:1). Staff might need to be let go and the remaining employees would have to 'pick up the slack' by working longer hours, over weekends or overtime. However, providing workers options to choose between their work life and

personal life can never sit well with them. Instead, it may contribute to a higher turnover as employees grow frustrated. Generally, Ratnasari and Lestari (2020:201) state that when employees leave the organisation for whatever reason, the workload increases. The increased workload should then be performed and executed by the few remaining employees. This becomes a burden and the employees become overloaded and overworked. They are sometimes forced by circumstances to compromise their leave days and lunch times. According to Stritch, Molina and Favero (2020: 272), the reason for this is to compensate for the employees who have left the service for various reasons. An employee would find himself or herself compelled to perform the work that was supposed to be executed by two or three people. This is carried out in the interest of service delivery by management. Employees would become frustrated and dehumanised in rendering the services to the community hence permanently leave the organisation (Jaharuddin and Zainol, 2019:7).

Lack of feedback and recognition: If feedback is not given, employees become discouraged. According to Paul and Kee (2020:23), feedback is the first step to ensuring that employees succeed, thus avoiding this process can be detrimental to said success. If an employee is struggling, honest feedback can help them to manage their workload and refocus. Ignoring the opportunity for feedback, or providing unhelpful feedback, will leave employees floundering which disheartens them as they struggle. This can cause them to eventually give up. Generally, the tool of assessing the work performance of public servants is called the employee performance management development system (EPMDS). If there is no work performance management system in an organisation, employees will become demotivated, frustrated and unhappy (Zafar, Abid, Rehmat, Ali, Hassan & Asif, 2022:614). At the beginning of the financial year, the employer and employee enter into a performance agreement which is signed by both parties. It is measured on a regular basis, usually on a quarterly basis. It is when the employer gives feedback to every employee in terms of how they were performing their normal day-to-day duties. When an employee gets three points, he or she automatically qualifies for a pay progression. To the employees already on maximum salary notches, they do not benefit in terms of monetary compensation. They become less productive and frustrated in the following years. They then leave the public service because there is no grade progression (Li, Sawhney & Tortorella, 2019:1).

Poor employee selection: Finding the perfect employee is difficult but forcing a match with an employee is clearly not right for the company's culture or values will never end well (Shahzad, Shah, Waseem & Bilal, 2020: 781). Even though an organisation may be desperate to fill a position, picking a poorly matched, incompatible employee is detrimental for both the company or organisation and the employee. No one does their best work when they are unhappy, and an incompatible employee is unlikely to be content with their new position. If the recruitment and selection process is not followed and adhered to, one might end up with the wrong employee or candidate (Tews, Michel & Stafford, 2019:413). This could be because of employing 'cronies' or applying nepotism to the selection process.

Poor Management: Full-time employees spend the majority of their working hours at work. They want and deserve to feel safe, secure and respected in their position (Dwesini, 2019:1). This is impossible when poor management is in place. According to Zimmerman et al. (2019:99), 'poor management' can mean a lot of things, from illegal activities to maddening issues like micromanagement. Managing managers becomes increasingly challenging the larger a company is which is why it is important to bring in third party consultants to ensure that the company's managerial techniques are suitable and effective (Stamolampros et al., 2019:130).

Employees want their work to make a difference: Increasingly, younger workers want more than just a job (Al-Suraihi, 2021:1). They want a job and a career that they are proud of and that makes a difference. Younger workers see their workmates as a second family. They are frustrated with a corporate culture filled with non-stop meetings that leave them feeling like they are not making a difference in the world. Some may call it idealism, but if an employer does not offer a more holistic job opportunity that clearly shows workers how their daily activities are making a difference, they may look elsewhere (Stritch et al., 2020:272). Fortunately, this is a relatively easy fix that is completely within the employer's control. Ensuring that employees feel heard and are part of decision-making processes, and that the work culture encourages positive relationships are critical. Offer ways for employees to connect, both within the business and the community, to satisfy their need to give back and feel part of the world (Ratnasari and Lestari, 2020:201).

## Theoretical framework

This study is guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation-Hygiene Theory. This theory reveals that there are two sets of factors in organisations: those that contribute to job satisfaction, also known as 'motivation factors or motivators', and those that contribute to job dissatisfaction, the 'hygiene factors' (Mehrad, 2020:157). Motivation factors include experience achievement, recognition, interesting work, increased responsibility, advancement and learning. The hygiene factors include unfair company policies, incompetent or unfair supervisors, unpleasant working conditions, unfair salaries, threats and job insecurity (Bhatt, Chitranshi & Mehta, 2022: 231). The two-factor theory claims that motivation and hygiene factors are not simply opposites of each other. This suggests that doctors and nurses who are dissatisfied because of unpleasant working conditions will not necessarily become satisfied if their working conditions suddenly become pleasant. According to this theory, doctors and nurses start to respond to their turnover intention appeals when the factors that are contributing to their overall satisfaction begin to become negatively affected. Therefore, retention strategies should seek to optimise motivation factors in order to inhibit employees' turnover intentions and actual turnover of doctors and professional nurses.

## Methodology

In this study, the target population comprised of the Head of Departments of Medicine, doctors and professional nurses at King Edward VIII and Prince Mshiyeni Memorial hospitals. The researcher chose to apply the qualitative method when embarking on the study in question. The target population of doctors and professional nurses in the eThekweni health district equals one thousand and six hundred. The researcher focused on the doctors and professional nurses working at King Edward VIII and Prince Mshiyeni Memorial hospitals under the eThekweni health district. There were five doctors and ten professional nurses interviewed on different dates. Therefore, the total number of participants will be 15 healthcare practitioners in the eThekweni health district. The rationale behind being to find out the factors that cause doctors and professional nurses to leave. In other words, the study is trying to assess the factors causing doctors and nurses to leave the eThekweni health district. In this research, purposive or judgemental sampling was used which is a non-

probability sampling technique in which, according to Zhang (2022:51), a researcher chooses participants for their unique characteristics, experiences, attitudes or perceptions. Bairagi and Munot (2019:34) state the strength of the purposive sampling technique to its ability to enable the researcher to select cases that are most suited to answer the research questions. Al-Ababneh (2020:75) argues that purposive sampling addresses the real purpose of objectives of discovering and gaining insight and understanding into a phenomenon. Eligible for this research were the doctors and professional nurses working at King Edward VIII and Prince Mshiyeni Memorial hospitals under the eThekweni health district. For qualitative research, trustworthiness and credibility are observed. Qualitative data was gathered using the structured interview schedule that was analysed through thematic content analysis. The researcher informed the participants that audio tape would be used for the interviews to be able to focus on the interview without taking notes.

## **Results**

The responses from the structured interview questions were cited verbatim. This means that they were crafted as such without any alterations of the original statements from the participants. They were written in italics to avoid plagiarism. Concordant and corresponding material or responses have been consolidated and then analysed. Patel and Patel (2019:45) posit that it is difficult to interpret data until the data is organised as well. Part of the data organisation process is to synthesise contradictory and dissimilar information into their different themes. The process of coding assists to clearly highlight or identify themes that emanate from the responses. In this study, the gathered extracts from the respondents' responses were collated and analysed. The themes arose from the thematic analysis which include staff shortage, incentives, poor infrastructure, poor personal growth, poor management and supervision, meagre salary, no medical equipment, long supply chain management, lack of training, lack of promotion opportunities and negative external publicity about the work environment.

In terms of staff shortage, the results indicated that both the doctors and professional nurses complained about the staff shortages. The hospital management and head office were blamed for their lack of support and the introduction of a moratorium on the filling of vacant

posts. The attrition rate was high and people leaving were never replaced because of the inadequate budget by the Department of Health. All the participants felt they did not receive full support from either hospital management or head office. The non-replacement of people leaving was cited as the most extrinsic factor influencing the turnover rate of doctors and professional nurses. Some doctors and professional nurses would resort to exiting the public sector system to look for better opportunities elsewhere. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *the moratorium on the filling of posts is a challenge to nursing staff because they end up being depressed, overworked and experiencing burnouts, no adequate medical equipment, financeé department would always tell us about the supply chain management processes that are long, you have medical problem now but one can't fix it now because of the SCM procedures, lack of modern infrastructure etc*

In line with incentives, the results indicated that few participants attribute the high turnover rate of doctors and professional nurses to the lack of job satisfaction. There are no incentives to recruit and retain the new staff. In other words, they felt that there were no recruitment and retention strategies even though they knew they were on paper. That was one of the intrinsic factors influencing the high turnover rate of doctors and professional nurses in the eThekweni health district. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *poor salaries, working under difficult working conditions, no incentives paid to the hardworking staff, everybody is just treated the same come pay progression system effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July of each, loafers also get the average scoring, that demotivates the hard working class, working conditions appalling, nurses' salaries are low and that is why nursing leave, posts are not filled which results in the remaining staff be overworked, etc.*

In terms of the negative external publicity about the work environment, The participants indicated that work environment cause them to leave the organisation. The doctors do not want to be associated with the place labelled bad by the community. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *Communities complain every day, there is negative publicity in most of the newspapers about the healthcare falling down in the public hospitals, number of litigation cases begin to increase, the department of health budget skewed further making difficult for the healthcare facilities to*

*function, nursing profession is tarnished, communities lose confidence and trust on public sector institutions.*

In terms of poor infrastructure, the participants blamed the high turnover rate of doctors and nurses on the poor infrastructure indicating that it was too old to attract and keep them within the system. This is why some of them exited the system. The buildings needed to be revamped or modernised to cater for modern patients or society. The buildings were too old to work in. *no medical equipment, staff shortages, poor infrastructure, no career path, favouritism when promoting staff, supply chain management processes are frustrating to procure a medical equipment.*

In line with poor personal growth, poor management and supervision, the participants attributed the high turnover to personal growth and career progression or pathing saying that one becomes a professional nurse until retirement and that there was no personal growth. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *personal development, poor salaries are a problem, the price of commodities grow up all the time and the cost of living is not consistent with the cost of living, I don't feel motivated to pursue my nursing profession in the light of the poor working conditions we work under, poor management, one tries to report to management and management fails to reason with the nursing staff.*

On the issue of meagre salary, the participants attributed the turnover rate to meagre salaries being paid to them by the government despite the introduction of the occupation specific dispensation (OSD) introduced in 2007. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *Poor salaries that are not attractive, conditions of service were not of the expected quality like the one in the private sector hospitals, there is always shortage of staff, no adequate incentives, overworked which kills the morale and oomph to commitment to work.*

Another issue is of medical equipment, the respondents indicate that the unavailability of medical equipment as a major setback and turnover extrinsic factor influencing doctors and professional nurses to leave the public service. They mentioned that it was very challenging and demeaning to find that there was no medical equipment to execute particular medical treatments. It was frustrating to borrow the medical equipment from neighbouring health facilities.

This was blamed on management. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *no adequate medical equipment, every time we are told by management there is no money, it is boring to hear that story year after year's like a buzzword now to say no budget for training or to do this or that in the department of health, supply management processes leave much to be desired, political decisions that makes life difficult to work, etc.*

In terms of long supply chain management, the respondents attributed the supply chain management processes as too tedious and cumbersome to procure medical resources. Doctors and nurses got frustrated and leave the work. One participant waited for a long time to procure medical equipment which was frustrating for doctors and nurses alike. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *supply chain management processes make it hard to procure medical equipment or resources, one would wait for a long time for a medical instrument to arrive, infrastructural problems, working conditions not appeasing, high risk or danger allowance not paid to nurses etc.*

Of concern again is the issue of poor training, The results indicated that participants indicated that the turnover rate of doctors and nurses is caused by lack of training. Every time they applied to attend workshops or courses, they were told that there was not a skills development budget. This forced some doctors and professional nurses to exit the system. Some provinces were encouraging their staff to attend courses or workshop related to their professions, but KwaZulu-Natal had no skills development budget to do that according to the participants or respondents. This was frustrating for nurses and doctors alike. The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *it is boring to hear that story year after year's like a buzzword now to say no budget for training or to do this or that in the department of health, supply management processes leave much to be desired, political decisions that makes life difficult to work, etc.*

Another issue needs attention is lack of promotion opportunities, the respondents indicated a lack of promotion opportunities as the cause for the turnover of some doctors and professional nurses in the public service. They stated that when posts are advertised, they are 'earmarked' for certain individuals. The process is followed but it is just a formality. Some staff, when they notice this kind of practice, are demotivated and demoralised and decide to leave the public service.

The most noticed response was quoted verbatim as follows: *scarce promotion opportunities, limited career path, salaries are not attractive to recruit and retain more staff, working conditions are appalling, no enough budget all the time, performance appraisal fails to retain nurses to stay within the public service, not enough incentives, poor management because they fail to understand what happens in the coalface of things, the future of the public service is bleak regarding the nursing profession, etc.*

## **Discussion**

The intrinsic factors emerged from this study includes lack of training, staff shortage, meagre salary, poor conditions of work, inadequate medical support, poor management, long supply chain management and poor promotional opportunities. Only work environment emerged as an extrinsic factor influencing the employee turnover in this study.

**Lack of training** -A lack of training and development for doctors and professional nurses was indicated as one of the causes for the high turnover rate. There is no skills development budget for the healthcare institutions to train and develop their staff. When staff applies to attend courses or workshops elsewhere, their application is not supported or approved because of the lack of a skills budget which destroys staff morale and they, in turn, leave the service. Thus, crippling service delivery and increasing the high turnover rate. The results of this study align to Kim (2012) who studied the impact of human resource management on state government IT employee turnover intentions and the results of showed that training and development, supervisory communications and family-friendly policies were significant variables influencing turnover intentions.

**Staff shortage** -Due to the shortage of medical or clinical staff, they ended up making mistakes when performing their duties which resulted in litigation or medico-legal costs. They are sued by the affected families and the department loses money in medico-legal cases since they lose the cases in court. Doctors become discouraged and leave the public service. Thus, causing the high turnover rate amongst doctors and professional nurses. Medico-legal costs are counted in billions paid by the Department of Health. A study carried out by Qiu, Haobin-Ye, Hung and York (2015) on antecedents of employee turnover intention–Evidence of China's

hotel industry found that community fit is a new category for explaining the turnover intention employees.

**Meagre salary** - Some doctors and nurses express their concern regarding the meagre salaries that they were earning despite the long hours of work. The non-payment of pay progression bonuses to employees after being assessed on their work performance in the Department of Health was identified as one of the causes of the high turnover rate of doctors and nurses. This happens despite the legal provision or authority to pay performance bonuses to employees that would have performed their duties outstandingly. The findings of this study concur with Shatila and Alozian (2019) who studied the factors affecting employee turnover found that absence of motivation and compensation benefits were some of the strategies which led to a high turnover rate. The findings of this study also aligns with Kariuki (2015) who studied factors affecting employee turnover in the banking industry in Kenya and found that both salaries and bonuses had an influence on employee turnover.

**No medical equipment**- Some doctors and nurses are frustrated by inadequate medical equipment for them to execute or their responsibilities hence they leave. It takes too long to procure the medical equipment because of tedious and cumbersome chain management processes. The system is frustrating. The results aligned to Ronra and Chaisawat (2010) conducted a study on factors affecting employee turnover and job satisfaction and found that the highest influencing factor affecting employees' turnover was the insufficient tools and resources to perform the job.

**Poor management** – The findings indicated that poor management was one of the causes of the staff turnover rate increase. Some managers did not have a clue of how to manage people in terms of the allocation of staff, especially the nursing personnel. The results are in connection with Mosadeghrad (2013) who studied quality of working life - an antecedent to employee turnover intention in Iran and found that most important predictor of employee turnover was management support.

**Long supply chain management** -The results indicated that long supply chain management processes as too tedious and cumbersome to procure medical resources. This causes frustrations for doctors and nurses, hence they eventually leave. The budget by

head office is not allocated according to the needs of each healthcare facility as laid out in the strategic plans. The results Sajjad (2014) studied the factors affecting employee turnover in an organization and found that the financial crises, job security and retirement benefits have a significant impact on the employee turnover.

Lack of promotion opportunities - The findings indicated a lack of promotion opportunities as the cause for the turnover of some doctors and professional nurses in the public service. The results showed that all the stipulated processes are not being followed. The participants stated that when posts are advertised, they are 'earmarked' for certain individuals. Sattar and Ahmed (2014) studied factors effecting employee turnover in banking sector and found that career growth and compensation have less influence on employees turnover. However, a study conducted by Kim (2005) on factors affecting state government information technology employee turnover intentions using quantitative research approach revealed that advancement opportunities as key variable affecting turnover.

Poor work environment- The findings indicated that health organisation situated in a bad environment cause doctors and nurses to leave. The doctors and nurses do not want to be associated with the place in the community labelled bad. The results are aligned with Zeffane (1994) who carried a study on understanding employee turnover and found that voluntary employee turnover is contingent on the amount of fit or misfit between employee and the environment of the organisation. The results of this study are in congruent with a study conducted by Hossain, Roy and Das (2017) on factors affecting employee's turnover Intention in Banking Sector of Bangladesh revealed that the working environment factor and career development factor have a significant impact on employee turnover intention.

### **Implications of the study**

For managers to reduce the employee turnover and increase retention, they should consider offering more competitive salaries and benefit packages. The managers should offer promotional opportunities to doctors and nurses inside the organisation not hiring outsiders. The managers should ensure that a positive work environment is created by being open and transparent to every

employee about the current situation of the organisation. The managers must ensure that adequate medical equipment is made available to all the doctors and nurses to avoid any potential stress that may arise as a result of unavailability of materials to discharge their duties. Regular training and development should be provided to doctors and nurses to ensure that they keep abreast with new knowledge in the health industry. There is a need for retention strategies to be developed in order to address the contemporary impasse of the scarcity of the doctors and nurses in South Africa.

### **Contribution of the study**

The study uncovered factors that influence the doctors and professional nurses to leave the organisation. The findings provide the developing or improving the retention policies or strategies in the department that ensure that doctors and nurses remain within the public sector for a very long time or until their retirement. The research might develop better skills development policies complemented by sound monetary incentives to help retain skilled employees. The findings of this study might be implemented by the relevant department and be a future reference to academics. The findings of this study are of great value to the community at large, as students aspiring to become doctors and nurses will have access to the research report. The researcher contributed immensely towards community development.

### **Conclusion**

From the employees' perspective, it can be concluded that employee turnover is not a natural phenomenon. There are reasons which lead to the increase in attrition. It is observed that both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors are responsible for employee turnover. The intrinsic factors emerged from this study includes lack of training, staff shortage, meagre salary, poor conditions of work, inadequate medical support, poor management, long supply chain management and poor promotional opportunities. The work environment is the only external factor influence the employee retention. From management's perspective, it can be concluded that the factors that lead to an increase in employee turnover are mainly in the intrinsic factors of the organisation. Although the external factor also influence, management does not have any control over them, and can only focus on modifying the internal factors to enhance the

retention of the employees in the organisation. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge in the resource planning literature on employee retention programmes and educate health employers on the organisational benefits associated with a loyal, committed workforce. The high turnover rate of healthcare professionals might be reduced, and thus productivity improved.

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