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JOB SATISFACTION AND RETENTION OF NURSES IN RURAL HEALTH FACILITIES: ITS IMPLICATION TO THE FUTURE OF NURSING PRACTICE

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Abstract

Nurses constitute the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and play a critical role in the delivery of healthcare services, particularly in rural health facilities where access to healthcare professionals is often limited. However, healthcare systems globally, including Nigeria, continue to experience challenges related to nurse shortages and workforce instability, largely influenced by poor job satisfaction and retention challenges. This paper examined job satisfaction and retention of nurses in rural health facilities and explored its implications for the future of nursing practice. The study adopted a narrative literature review approach to analyze scholarly evidence regarding factors influencing job satisfaction among nurses, the relationship between job satisfaction and nurse retention, and the implications for healthcare delivery and nursing practice. The review revealed that job satisfaction among nurses is influenced by several organizational and individual factors, including remuneration, staffing levels, leadership style, work environment, professional development opportunities, interpersonal relationships, and organizational support. Findings further indicated that job satisfaction significantly influences nurses' organizational commitment, turnover intention, and retention. Nurses who experience higher levels of job satisfaction tend to demonstrate stronger professional commitment, increased motivation, and greater willingness to remain in their organizations, whereas dissatisfaction often leads to burnout, migration, and workforce shortages. The study also revealed that nurse retention is particularly important in rural healthcare settings where shortages of healthcare personnel may significantly affect healthcare accessibility and patient outcomes. The study concludes that improving job satisfaction among nurses is essential for strengthening healthcare systems and ensuring sustainable nursing practice. It recommends improved remuneration, supportive leadership, better working conditions, continuous professional development opportunities, and targeted retention strategies for nurses working in rural health facilities.

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Introduction:-

Healthcare systems across the world rely heavily on human resources for health to deliver quality care and maintain population health. Among all healthcare professionals, nurses constitute the largest proportion of the healthcare workforce and provide a significant percentage of direct patient care services in healthcare institutions. In many healthcare settings, nurses deliver between 50% and 80% of healthcare services and play essential roles in health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of patients [1]. Job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that refers to the degree to which employees feel positively about their work and work environment. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and professional perceptions regarding work responsibilities, compensation, work environment, interpersonal relationships, and opportunities for professional growth. In nursing practice, several intrinsic influence job satisfaction and extrinsic factors including salary, workload, staffing levels, management support, leadership style, work-life balance, and access to professional development opportunities. These factors collectively determine whether nurses feel fulfilled and motivated within their workplace [2].

Globally, the issue of nurse job satisfaction has become increasingly important due to the persistent shortage of nurses in many healthcare systems. The World Health Organization (WHO) has repeatedly emphasized the need for countries to invest in nursing education, leadership, and employment conditions to address the global nursing shortage. Poor job satisfaction among nurses has been associated with workforce attrition, turnover intentions, and migration, thereby exacerbating shortages of skilled healthcare professionals in many countries [3-4]. The problem of nurse retention is particularly pronounced in rural health facilities. Rural communities often experience significant health disparities compared to urban settings because of inadequate healthcare infrastructure, shortages of skilled professionals, and geographical barriers to accessing care. Nurses working in rural areas frequently assume expanded responsibilities due to shortages of physicians and specialists and often provide primary healthcare, maternal and child health services, health education, and community outreach. Consequently, the sustainability of rural healthcare systems depends heavily on the attraction and retention of competent nursing professionals [5-6].

In Nigeria, the issue of nurse retention has become increasingly concerning in recent years. The Nigerian healthcare system has experienced a growing shortage of nurses due to migration, retirement, and dissatisfaction with working conditions. Reports indicate that thousands of Nigerian nurses migrate annually to other countries in search of better remuneration and improved working conditions. Recent reports indicate that more than 42,000 Nigerian nurses migrated abroad within a three-year period because of poor remuneration, excessive workload, and unfavorable working conditions [7-8]. This large-scale migration of nurses has created significant challenges for the Nigerian healthcare system, particularly in rural health facilities where healthcare resources are already limited. Rural health facilities often struggle to attract and retain qualified nurses because many healthcare professionals prefer working in urban settings where professional growth opportunities, improved welfare, and better working conditions are more available [7].

The concept of job satisfaction among nurses has therefore become an important area of research in healthcare management and nursing practice. Studies conducted in Nigeria have shown that several factors influence job satisfaction among nurses, including remuneration, workload, leadership style, organizational support, and work environment. For instance, a study conducted in Federal Medical Centre Yenagoa revealed that a large proportion of nurses were dissatisfied with their jobs and expressed intentions to leave their current employment. The study further identified salary, working conditions, inadequate staffing, and poor management support as major factors influencing job dissatisfaction among nurses [9]. The issue of nurse retention in rural health facilities has broader implications for healthcare accessibility and equity. Rural populations often face limited access to healthcare services due to geographical barriers and shortages of healthcare professionals. When nurses leave rural healthcare facilities due to dissatisfaction, these communities may experience severe shortages of skilled healthcare providers. Consequently, patients may be forced to travel long distances to access healthcare services, which may delay treatment and worsen health outcomes [5]. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the level of job satisfaction among nurses working in rural health facilities, identify the factors influencing their job satisfaction, examine the relationship between job satisfaction and retention of nurses in rural healthcare settings, and assess the implications of these factors for the future of nursing practice.

Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction among Nurses in Rural Health Facilities

Job satisfaction among nurses has been widely studied because of its strong relationship with healthcare quality, employee productivity, and workforce retention. Job satisfaction refers to the positive emotional state resulting from an individual's appraisal of their job or job experiences. In nursing practice, job satisfaction reflects the extent to which nurses feel fulfilled, motivated, and valued within their professional roles. High levels of job satisfaction among nurses are associated with improved patient outcomes, enhanced organizational commitment, and lower turnover intentions. Conversely, job dissatisfaction often leads to burnout, absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased migration of nurses to other institutions or countries [10].

In rural health facilities, job satisfaction among nurses becomes particularly important because these settings often experience shortages of healthcare personnel and limited healthcare infrastructure. Nurses working in rural communities frequently serve as the primary healthcare providers, are responsible for a wide range of clinical, and community health services. However, the challenges associated with rural healthcare practice may significantly influence their level of job satisfaction. These challenges include inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, heavy workload, limited professional development opportunities, and professional isolation. Consequently, understanding the factors influencing job satisfaction among nurses in rural healthcare facilities is essential for improving retention and ensuring sustainable healthcare delivery.

Remuneration and Financial Incentives

Remuneration is widely recognized as one of the most important determinants of job satisfaction among nurses. Salary structures, allowances, and other financial incentives significantly influence the motivation and commitment of healthcare workers. Adequate remuneration provides nurses with economic security and recognition for their professional contributions; thereby enhancing their job satisfaction. Several studies conducted in Nigeria have identified salary and financial incentives as critical predictors of job satisfaction among nurses. Research examining job satisfaction among nurses in tertiary hospitals found that many nurses expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries and financial benefits, which negatively affected their motivation and commitment to their work [1].

Similarly, Olaniyan [10] reported that pay and financial rewards significantly influence nurses' level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Nurses who perceive their salaries as inadequate are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction and may develop intentions to leave their current employment. In rural healthcare facilities, financial incentives become even more important because nurses often face additional economic challenges such as transportation difficulties, limited housing facilities, and poor access to social amenities. Without adequate financial compensation, nurses may prefer to work in urban hospitals where salaries and incentives are generally more attractive. Therefore, providing rural allowances and other financial incentives can play a crucial role in improving job satisfaction among nurses working in rural healthcare settings.

Work Environment and Working Conditions

The work environment is another significant factor influencing job satisfaction among nurses. The work environment includes the physical infrastructure of healthcare facilities, availability of medical equipment, organizational policies, and the overall workplace atmosphere. A supportive work environment enables nurses to perform their duties effectively and enhances their professional satisfaction. In contrast, poor working conditions may create frustration, stress, and dissatisfaction among healthcare workers. Studies have shown that nurses working in healthcare facilities with adequate infrastructure, supportive management, and sufficient medical resources tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Research on nurses' quality of work life in Nigeria revealed that work environment factors such as resource availability, management support, and workplace relationships significantly influence nurses' job satisfaction and motivation [11]. Improving the physical work environment in rural healthcare facilities through adequate funding, infrastructure development, and provision of modern medical equipment is therefore essential for enhancing job satisfaction among nurses.

Staffing Levels and Workload

Staffing adequacy and workload are critical determinants of job satisfaction among nurses. In many healthcare systems, shortages of nursing personnel often result in excessive workload for available staff. Nurses working in understaffed healthcare facilities are frequently required to handle multiple responsibilities simultaneously, which may lead to fatigue, stress, and burnout.

Studies conducted among nurses in Nigerian hospitals have shown that heavy workload and insufficient staffing significantly contribute to job dissatisfaction. In healthcare institutions where nurse-patient ratios are high, nurses often experience increased stress levels and reduced job satisfaction. In rural healthcare settings, the problem of inadequate staffing is often more severe because healthcare professionals are unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas. As a result, nurses working in rural health facilities frequently perform tasks that would normally be handled by multiple healthcare professionals in urban hospitals. This situation can lead to physical exhaustion, emotional stress, and reduced job satisfaction.

Leadership Style and Management Support

Leadership style plays a significant role in determining job satisfaction among nurses. Effective leadership promotes communication, teamwork, and professional recognition within healthcare organizations. Studies have shown that supportive leadership practices significantly enhance nurses' job satisfaction. Nurse managers who provide encouragement, recognize staff contributions, and involve nurses in decision-making processes create a positive work environment that improves staff morale. Research examining the influence of organizational culture on job satisfaction among nurses found that participation in hospital affairs and adequate staffing support were strong predictors of job satisfaction among nursing staff [12]. On the other hand, poor leadership practices characterized by lack of communication, unfair treatment, and inadequate supervision may lead to dissatisfaction among nurses. Healthcare organizations must therefore adopt leadership styles that encourage teamwork, respect, and professional autonomy to improve job satisfaction among nursing staff.

Professional Development and Career Advancement

Professional development opportunities are also important determinants of job satisfaction among nurses. Continuous training and educational opportunities allow nurses to improve their clinical skills, enhance their knowledge, and advance their professional careers. Studies have shown that nurses who have access to continuing education programs, workshops, and training opportunities tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction. Professional development opportunities not only improve clinical competence but also increase nurses' confidence and professional identity. However, nurses working in rural healthcare facilities often face limited opportunities for professional development due to geographical isolation and lack of training resources. Without access to educational opportunities, rural nurses may feel professionally stagnated, which may reduce their job satisfaction. Healthcare organizations should therefore implement policies that promote continuous professional development for nurses, including training programs, scholarship opportunities, and career advancement pathways.

Interpersonal Relationships and Teamwork

Interpersonal relationships among healthcare professionals also influence job satisfaction among nurses. Positive relationships between nurses, physicians, and other healthcare workers promote teamwork, collaboration, and effective communication. Studies have shown that supportive relationships among healthcare professionals significantly improve job satisfaction among nurses. Nurses who work in collaborative environments where colleagues support one another tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. Research conducted among nurses in Nigeria revealed that teamwork and effective communication among healthcare professionals significantly influence nurses' job satisfaction [1]. Conversely, workplace conflicts, poor communication, and lack of cooperation among healthcare workers may reduce job satisfaction and increase stress among nurses.

Burnout, Stress, and Psychological Well-being

Burnout and occupational stress are major factors affecting job satisfaction among nurses. Burnout is a psychological condition characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Research conducted among nurses in Nigerian healthcare institutions found that high levels of occupational stress significantly affect nurses' psychological wellbeing and job satisfaction [13]. Similarly, workplace bullying, emotional stress, and job pressure have been identified as important predictors of job dissatisfaction among nurses [14]. In rural healthcare settings, nurses may experience additional stress due to professional isolation, limited resources, and heavy workload. Addressing these stressors through supportive management practices and mental health interventions is therefore essential for improving job satisfaction.

Organizational Policies and Health System Factors

Organizational policies and national healthcare systems also influence job satisfaction among nurses. Policies related to staffing, remuneration, training, and career development determine the working conditions within healthcare institutions. Healthcare financing systems and institutional policies significantly affect healthcare

workers' perceptions of job satisfaction. In Nigeria, many healthcare professionals have expressed dissatisfaction with healthcare financing systems due to inadequate funding and limited resources [15]. Government policies aimed at improving healthcare funding, strengthening health systems, and enhancing working conditions for nurses can therefore contribute to higher job satisfaction among nursing professionals.

Socio-Demographic Factors

Socio-demographic characteristics may also influence nurses' job satisfaction. Factors such as age, marital status, educational level, and years of professional experience may shape nurses' perceptions of their work environment. Studies have shown that experienced nurses tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction than newly employed nurses. This may be due to increased professional competence, job security, and career stability. Additionally, nurses who have strong social connections within rural communities may experience greater job satisfaction due to their sense of belonging and community support.

Relationship Between Job Satisfaction And Retention Of Nurses In Rural Health Facilities

The sustainability of healthcare systems largely depends on the availability, competence, and stability of the healthcare workforce. Among healthcare professionals, nurses constitute the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and play a critical role in delivering patient-centered care across all levels of healthcare systems. However, healthcare institutions worldwide continue to face serious challenges related to nurse shortages and workforce turnover. One of the most important factors influencing nurse retention is job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is widely recognized as a significant predictor of employees' commitment to their organizations and their willingness to remain in their profession [10].

Job satisfaction refers to the degree to which employees experience positive feelings toward their work, work environment, and professional responsibilities. It reflects an individual's emotional response to various aspects of their job, including salary, work conditions, leadership support, professional recognition, and opportunities for career advancement. When nurses perceive their working conditions as favorable, they are more likely to experience high levels of job satisfaction and remain committed to their profession. Conversely, dissatisfaction with job conditions may lead to decreased motivation, burnout, and ultimately turnover.

Retention of nurses refers to the ability of healthcare organizations to maintain a stable nursing workforce by encouraging nurses to remain in their employment for extended periods. Retention is essential because experienced nurses contribute significantly to healthcare quality, patient safety, and organizational efficiency. High turnover rates among nurses can disrupt continuity of care, increase workload for remaining staff, and impose significant financial burdens on healthcare institutions due to the costs associated with recruitment and training of new staff.

The relationship between job satisfaction and retention of nurses has become increasingly important in healthcare management research due to persistent shortages of nursing professionals. The World Health Organization has consistently emphasized the need for countries to invest in strategies that improve nurses' working conditions in order to address global nursing shortages [16]. Job satisfaction has therefore been identified as a key factor influencing the retention of nurses within healthcare systems.

In rural healthcare settings, the relationship between job satisfaction and nurse retention becomes even more significant. Rural communities often experience limited access to healthcare services due to shortages of healthcare professionals, poor infrastructure, and geographical barriers. Nurses working in rural health facilities frequently assume expanded roles because physicians and specialists may be scarce. As a result, retaining nurses in rural healthcare settings is essential for ensuring sustainable healthcare delivery [17].

However, nurses working in rural areas often face numerous challenges that may influence their job satisfaction and retention. These challenges include professional isolation, limited career advancement opportunities, heavy workload, inadequate remuneration, and insufficient healthcare resources. In many rural healthcare settings, shortages of staff and poor infrastructure may increase work pressure and reduce professional support, thereby negatively affecting nurses' perceptions of their work environment and increasing their likelihood of leaving rural healthcare facilities [18-(MacLeod et al., 2021; 20)].

The relationship between job satisfaction and employee retention is well established in organizational psychology and human resource management literature. According to organizational behavior theory, employees who

experience high levels of job satisfaction are more likely to demonstrate organizational commitment and remain loyal to their organizations. Job satisfaction influences employees' attitudes toward their work and determines their level of motivation, engagement, and productivity.

In the context of nursing practice, job satisfaction plays a critical role in shaping nurses' decisions regarding whether to remain in their current employment or seek alternative career opportunities. Nurses who experience satisfaction with their work environment, remuneration, professional relationships, and leadership support tend to develop stronger emotional attachment to their organizations. This attachment enhances their commitment and reduces their likelihood of leaving their jobs.

Several scholars have emphasized that job satisfaction is one of the strongest predictors of workforce retention in healthcare organizations. Olaniyan [10] reported that nurses who expressed high levels of job satisfaction were significantly more likely to remain in their employment compared to nurses who experienced dissatisfaction with their work environment. Similarly, Ezenwaji et al. [11] found that job satisfaction positively influences nurses' intention to stay within their organizations. The relationship between job satisfaction and retention can therefore be explained through the concept of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment refers to the psychological bond between employees and their organizations. When nurses feel valued, supported, and satisfied with their work environment, they are more likely to develop strong commitment to their organizations and continue working within their institutions [21]. Conversely, when nurses experience dissatisfaction with their working conditions, they may develop negative attitudes toward their organizations. These negative perceptions may increase their intention to leave their jobs, which ultimately contributes to workforce turnover.

Influence of Job Satisfaction on Turnover Intention among Nurses

Job satisfaction has been widely recognized as a crucial determinant of employee attitudes and behavior within organizations. In the nursing profession, job satisfaction plays a particularly significant role because nurses form the backbone of healthcare delivery systems and are responsible for a substantial proportion of patient care services. Turnover intention, defined as the conscious and deliberate willingness of employees to leave their current employment, has become a major concern in healthcare institutions worldwide. Numerous studies have established that job satisfaction is one of the strongest predictors of turnover intention among nurses. When nurses experience dissatisfaction with their work environment, remuneration, leadership support, and professional opportunities, they are more likely to develop intentions to leave their organizations, which eventually contributes to workforce instability and shortages of healthcare personnel [22-23]. Turnover intention refers to an employee's conscious decision or plan to leave their current employment. It is often considered the most immediate predictor of actual employee turnover. Numerous studies have demonstrated that job dissatisfaction is one of the primary factors influencing turnover intention among nurses.

Turnover intention is often considered the immediate predictor of actual employee turnover. It reflects an employee's psychological withdrawal from their organization and their contemplation of leaving the job in the near future. In nursing practice, turnover intention has serious implications for healthcare delivery because it can lead to staff shortages, increased workload for remaining staff, reduced continuity of care, and increased operational costs for healthcare institutions. Studies have shown that job satisfaction significantly influences nurses' decisions to remain in their employment or seek alternative job opportunities. Nurses who perceive their work environment as supportive and rewarding tend to demonstrate lower turnover intention and greater commitment to their organizations [23-24].

The relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention is generally characterized by an inverse relationship. This means that when job satisfaction increases, turnover intention decreases. Conversely, when job satisfaction decreases, turnover intention tends to increase. Research across different healthcare settings consistently supports this relationship. For instance, studies among hospital nurses revealed that increasing job satisfaction significantly reduces turnover intention, highlighting the importance of improving nurses' work experiences in order to retain skilled professionals within healthcare institutions [25-26].

One of the key mechanisms through which job satisfaction influences turnover intention is organizational commitment. Organizational commitment refers to the emotional attachment employees develop toward their organizations and their willingness to remain loyal members of the workforce. Nurses who experience high levels of job satisfaction tend to develop stronger affective commitment to their organizations, which reduces their desire to

leave their employment. Conversely, dissatisfaction with work conditions weakens organizational commitment and increases the likelihood of turnover intention. Empirical evidence from nursing studies indicates that job satisfaction and pay significantly influence affective commitment, and both variables are negatively associated with turnover intention among nursing professionals [22].

Work environment also plays a crucial role in shaping the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among nurses. The work environment in healthcare settings includes factors such as leadership practices, staffing levels, workplace relationships, organizational culture, and the availability of medical resources. Supportive work environments enhance nurses' job satisfaction by promoting collaboration, professional autonomy, and effective communication. When nurses feel supported by their colleagues and supervisors, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and remain committed to their organizations. On the other hand, unfavorable work environments characterized by heavy workload, poor management practices, and lack of professional support may reduce job satisfaction and increase turnover intention among nurses [23-24].

Another important factor linking job satisfaction and turnover intention is workplace stress and burnout. Nursing is widely recognized as one of the most stressful professions due to the demanding nature of healthcare work, which often involves long working hours, emotional strain, and exposure to life-threatening situations. When nurses experience chronic stress and burnout, their level of job satisfaction may decline significantly, which increases their likelihood of considering leaving their employment. Research has shown that burnout, job stress, and organizational support are major determinants of nurses' turnover intention. Job satisfaction often acts as a mediating variable between workplace stress and turnover intention, meaning that improving job satisfaction can help mitigate the negative effects of stress on nurses' intention to leave their jobs [27].

Employee engagement is another important variable associated with job satisfaction and turnover intention. Employee engagement refers to the level of emotional and psychological commitment employees have toward their work and their organizations. Nurses who are actively engaged in their work tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. Engagement fosters a sense of purpose and belonging among nurses, which encourages them to remain committed to their organizations. Studies examining engagement among nurses have demonstrated that engaged nurses are more likely to remain in their employment, whereas disengaged nurses tend to experience dissatisfaction and develop intentions to leave their jobs [22].

Leadership style is also a significant factor influencing the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention among nurses. Transformational leadership, which involves motivating employees, encouraging innovation, and recognizing staff contributions, has been shown to improve job satisfaction among nurses and reduce turnover intention. Leaders who provide supportive supervision and opportunities for professional development create positive work environments that enhance nurses' morale and commitment. Conversely, poor leadership practices may lead to dissatisfaction and increase nurses' intention to leave their organizations. Evidence from nursing studies indicates that transformational leadership positively correlates with increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions among nurses [28].

The influence of job satisfaction on turnover intention also has significant implications for the quality of healthcare delivery. Nurses are responsible for a large proportion of direct patient care activities, and their level of job satisfaction can affect their motivation, productivity, and commitment to patient care. When nurses are satisfied with their jobs, they tend to demonstrate greater dedication to their work, which contributes to improved patient outcomes and higher quality healthcare services. Conversely, dissatisfaction among nurses may result in decreased motivation, reduced productivity, and compromised patient safety. Studies have emphasized that improving job satisfaction among nurses can reduce turnover rates, improve workforce stability, and enhance the quality and safety of patient care [26].

Another dimension of the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention relates to workplace relationships and professional collaboration. Positive interactions among nurses and other healthcare professionals contribute to a supportive work environment that enhances job satisfaction. Collaborative teamwork allows nurses to share responsibilities, solve problems collectively, and provide better patient care. Studies have shown that nurse-to-nurse collaboration significantly increases job satisfaction and reduces turnover intention among nurses. In such environments, nurses feel valued and supported, which encourages them to remain in their organizations rather than seeking alternative employment opportunities [26].

Workplace incivility and negative organizational behaviors also influence job satisfaction and turnover intention among nurses. Workplace incivility includes behaviors such as disrespect, bullying, and lack of professional courtesy among colleagues or supervisors. Such behaviors create hostile work environments that reduce job satisfaction and increase employees' intention to leave their jobs. Research examining workplace incivility in healthcare institutions has shown that exposure to negative workplace behaviors significantly increases turnover intention among nurses. Addressing workplace incivility through supportive policies and organizational interventions is therefore essential for improving job satisfaction and reducing turnover intention in healthcare settings [26].

Work-life balance is another important factor influencing job satisfaction and turnover intention among nurses. Nurses often face challenges balancing their professional responsibilities with personal and family obligations due to irregular work schedules and shift duties. Poor work-life balance may reduce job satisfaction and increase nurses' desire to leave their employment. Studies have shown that job satisfaction often mediates the relationship between work-life balance and turnover intention among nurses, indicating that improving work-life balance can enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention [29].

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are two closely related concepts that have received considerable attention in organizational behavior and human resource management literature. In the healthcare sector, particularly in the nursing profession, these two constructs play a vital role in determining employee productivity, retention, and quality of healthcare delivery. Job satisfaction refers to the degree to which employees feel positively about their jobs and work environment, while organizational commitment refers to the psychological attachment and loyalty employees have toward their organization. Nurses who experience higher levels of job satisfaction tend to develop stronger organizational commitment, which ultimately influences their willingness to remain within their organizations and contribute effectively to healthcare delivery [30].

Organizational commitment is generally described as the emotional, psychological, and behavioral bond that employees develop toward their organizations. According to Meyer and Allen [31], organizational commitment consists of three major components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment employees feel toward their organization, continuance commitment refers to employees' awareness of the costs associated with leaving their organization, and normative commitment refers to the sense of obligation employees feel to remain with their organization. Among these components, affective commitment has been identified as the most strongly influenced by job satisfaction. Nurses who feel satisfied with their work environment, relationships with colleagues, and professional recognition are more likely to develop emotional attachment to their healthcare institutions [31].

The relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment has been widely supported by empirical research in the nursing profession. Job satisfaction influences how employees perceive their organizations and determines their level of loyalty and engagement. Nurses who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to identify with organizational goals and demonstrate a willingness to exert extra effort to achieve those goals. Conversely, dissatisfaction with job conditions such as poor remuneration, excessive workload, inadequate leadership support, and limited professional development opportunities may weaken organizational commitment and increase the likelihood of turnover among nurses [30].

Research conducted in various healthcare settings has consistently shown that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of organizational commitment among nurses. For example, studies examining nursing workforce dynamics have found that nurses who report higher levels of job satisfaction tend to demonstrate stronger commitment to their organizations and greater willingness to remain in their employment. Job satisfaction enhances nurses' sense of belonging within their organizations and strengthens their motivation to contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives [28].

One important mechanism through which job satisfaction influences organizational commitment is the perception of organizational support. Perceived organizational support refers to employees' beliefs that their organization values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing. When nurses perceive that their organizations provide adequate resources, recognize their professional efforts, and support their career development, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and develop stronger organizational commitment. Supportive organizational

environments encourage nurses to remain loyal to their institutions and invest their professional skills in improving healthcare delivery [11].

Leadership style is another important factor that influences both job satisfaction and organizational commitment among nurses. Effective leadership practices create a positive work environment that promotes employee engagement, teamwork, and professional growth. Transformational leadership, which focuses on motivating employees, recognizing their contributions, and encouraging professional development, has been associated with increased job satisfaction and stronger organizational commitment among nurses. Leaders who provide supportive supervision and foster open communication create work environments where nurses feel valued and motivated to remain within their organizations [32].

The work environment within healthcare institutions also plays a significant role in shaping the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Work environments characterized by adequate staffing, access to necessary medical equipment, supportive colleagues, and fair organizational policies tend to promote higher levels of job satisfaction among nurses. When nurses work in such environments, they are more likely to develop a strong sense of attachment to their organizations and demonstrate higher organizational commitment. Conversely, poor work environments characterized by inadequate resources, heavy workload, and ineffective management practices may lead to job dissatisfaction and reduced commitment among nursing staff [30].

Organizational commitment among nurses also contributes significantly to healthcare quality and patient outcomes. Nurses who are committed to their organizations tend to demonstrate higher levels of dedication, responsibility, and professionalism in their work. Such nurses are more likely to adhere to clinical guidelines, maintain accurate documentation, and provide patient-centered care. Studies have shown that healthcare institutions with highly committed nursing staff often achieve better patient outcomes, higher patient satisfaction, and improved healthcare quality compared to institutions with low levels of organizational commitment among employees [33].

In addition, organizational commitment plays an important role in reducing turnover intention among nurses. Nurses who are highly committed to their organizations are less likely to consider leaving their employment, even when faced with challenges such as workload or job stress. Job satisfaction strengthens this commitment by creating positive work experiences that reinforce nurses' attachment to their organizations. As a result, healthcare institutions that prioritize improving nurses' job satisfaction are more likely to achieve higher levels of organizational commitment and lower turnover rates among their workforce [28].

Professional development opportunities also influence the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment among nurses. Access to training programs, continuing education, and career advancement opportunities allows nurses to enhance their professional skills and achieve career goals. Nurses who perceive that their organizations invest in their professional growth are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs and demonstrate stronger commitment to their organizations. Such opportunities not only improve nurses' competencies but also reinforce their sense of value and belonging within the healthcare institution [11].

Furthermore, interpersonal relationships within healthcare institutions significantly affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment among nurses. Positive relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and other healthcare professionals create supportive work environments that enhance nurses' emotional wellbeing and professional satisfaction. Nurses who work in collaborative environments where teamwork and mutual respect are encouraged tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and stronger organizational commitment. On the other hand, workplace conflicts, poor communication, and lack of cooperation among staff may reduce job satisfaction and weaken organizational commitment [32].

In many developing countries, including Nigeria, challenges such as inadequate healthcare funding, poor working conditions, and limited professional opportunities often affect nurses' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Studies conducted in Nigerian healthcare institutions have revealed that many nurses experience dissatisfaction due to inadequate remuneration, insufficient staffing levels, and limited access to professional development opportunities. These challenges can weaken nurses' attachment to their organizations and increase their likelihood of seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Addressing these issues through improved healthcare policies and better working conditions is therefore essential for strengthening organizational commitment among nurses [1].

Job Satisfaction and Nurse Migration

Another important dimension of the relationship between job satisfaction and nurse retention is nurse migration. Migration of nurses from developing countries to developed countries has become a major global healthcare challenge. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, poor job satisfaction has contributed significantly to the migration of nurses to countries with better employment opportunities. Factors such as low salaries, poor working conditions, and limited career advancement opportunities have been identified as major drivers of nurse migration. Recent reports indicate that thousands of Nigerian nurses migrate abroad each year in search of better working conditions and higher salaries. This phenomenon, often referred to as “brain drain,” has serious implications for healthcare systems in developing countries because it leads to shortages of skilled healthcare professionals.

Improving job satisfaction among nurses may therefore help reduce migration and enhance workforce retention within national healthcare systems. Healthcare policymakers must therefore implement policies aimed at improving nurses’ working conditions in order to discourage migration and retain skilled professionals within the country [32].

Job Satisfaction and Quality of Healthcare Delivery

Job satisfaction among nurses has been widely recognized as a critical factor influencing the quality of healthcare delivery. Nurses constitute the largest proportion of the healthcare workforce and are directly involved in patient care activities across all levels of healthcare systems. Because of their central role in healthcare delivery, the level of job satisfaction experienced by nurses significantly affects patient outcomes, safety, and overall healthcare quality. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which individuals feel positively about their work environment, responsibilities, and professional achievements. When nurses experience high levels of job satisfaction, they tend to demonstrate greater motivation, commitment, and productivity, which ultimately enhances the quality of healthcare services provided to patients [32].

Healthcare delivery involves the provision of timely, effective, and patient-centered healthcare services that improve health outcomes. Quality healthcare delivery depends on several factors including adequate staffing levels, availability of resources, effective communication among healthcare professionals, and the competence and motivation of healthcare workers. Among these factors, the satisfaction of healthcare workers—particularly nurses—plays a crucial role in determining how effectively healthcare services are delivered. Research has shown that satisfied nurses are more likely to provide compassionate and patient-centered care, adhere to clinical guidelines, and demonstrate greater attention to patient safety compared to nurses who experience dissatisfaction with their work environment [34].

The relationship between job satisfaction and quality of healthcare delivery is often explained through the concept of employee motivation. According to organizational behavior theories, employees who feel satisfied with their work are more likely to exhibit positive work attitudes, increased engagement, and improved job performance. In the nursing profession, these positive attitudes translate into improved patient care practices such as effective communication with patients, timely administration of medications, accurate documentation, and adherence to infection control measures. Studies have demonstrated that nurses who report high levels of job satisfaction are more likely to deliver higher quality patient care and maintain professional standards in clinical practice [33].

One of the key mechanisms through which job satisfaction influences healthcare quality is through its impact on nurses’ work performance. Nurses who are satisfied with their jobs tend to demonstrate higher levels of productivity, attentiveness, and dedication to their responsibilities. These positive work behaviors contribute to improved healthcare outcomes such as reduced patient mortality, fewer medical errors, and higher patient satisfaction. Conversely, job dissatisfaction among nurses may lead to reduced motivation, absenteeism, and decreased work performance, which can compromise the quality of healthcare services [34].

Job satisfaction also influences healthcare quality through its relationship with staff retention and workforce stability. High turnover rates among nurses can disrupt the continuity of patient care and increase workload for remaining staff. When experienced nurses leave healthcare institutions due to dissatisfaction, healthcare organizations often face challenges in maintaining consistent quality of care. The recruitment and training of new

staff require time and resources, and newly recruited nurses may need time to adapt to organizational procedures and clinical practices. Therefore, maintaining high levels of job satisfaction among nurses is essential for improving staff retention and ensuring stable healthcare delivery systems [32].

Furthermore, job satisfaction among nurses is closely related to patient safety outcomes. Patient safety is a fundamental component of healthcare quality, and nurses play a central role in monitoring patients' conditions, identifying potential complications, and preventing medical errors. Studies have shown that nurses who experience job satisfaction are more attentive to patient needs and more likely to comply with safety protocols. In contrast, dissatisfied nurses may experience emotional exhaustion and reduced concentration, which can increase the likelihood of medical errors and compromise patient safety [33].

Another important aspect of the relationship between job satisfaction and healthcare quality is patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is widely used as an indicator of healthcare quality because it reflects patients' perceptions of the care they receive. Nurses often serve as the primary point of contact between patients and healthcare institutions, and their interactions with patients significantly influence patients' overall healthcare experiences. Research has demonstrated that patients treated by satisfied and motivated nurses tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with healthcare services compared to patients treated by dissatisfied healthcare staff [34].

The work environment within healthcare institutions also plays a crucial role in shaping the relationship between job satisfaction and healthcare quality. Work environments characterized by supportive leadership, adequate staffing levels, effective teamwork, and availability of resources tend to promote job satisfaction among nurses. Such environments enable nurses to perform their duties efficiently and provide high-quality patient care. Conversely, poor work environments characterized by inadequate staffing, limited resources, and ineffective management practices may contribute to job dissatisfaction and reduced healthcare quality [32].

Professional development opportunities also influence nurses' job satisfaction and their ability to deliver quality healthcare services. Continuous education and training programs enable nurses to update their clinical knowledge and improve their professional competencies. Nurses who have access to professional development opportunities often feel more confident in their clinical skills and more motivated to provide high-quality care to patients. Healthcare institutions that invest in staff training and career development are therefore more likely to achieve improved healthcare outcomes and higher patient satisfaction [33].

In addition, leadership practices within healthcare organizations significantly influence nurses' job satisfaction and healthcare quality. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes support, recognition, and professional empowerment, has been associated with increased job satisfaction among nurses and improved healthcare outcomes. Leaders who create supportive work environments and encourage teamwork enable nurses to perform their roles effectively and maintain high standards of patient care [34].

In many developing countries, including Nigeria, challenges such as inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited staffing, and poor remuneration often affect nurses' job satisfaction and consequently the quality of healthcare delivery. Studies conducted in Nigerian healthcare institutions have shown that nurses' dissatisfaction with working conditions and salaries can negatively affect their motivation and performance, thereby reducing the quality of patient care. Addressing these challenges through improved healthcare policies and better working conditions is therefore essential for enhancing job satisfaction among nurses and improving healthcare delivery systems [1].

Job Satisfaction and Professional Fulfillment

Professional fulfillment is another factor that strengthens the relationship between job satisfaction and retention of nurses. Professional fulfillment refers to the sense of accomplishment and purpose that individuals derive from their professional roles. Nurses who feel fulfilled in their professional roles are more likely to remain committed to their profession and continue working in their current employment. Professional fulfillment may result from factors such as recognition of professional contributions, opportunities for career advancement, and the ability to positively impact patients' lives.

In rural healthcare settings, nurses often develop close relationships with community members and have opportunities to provide holistic healthcare services. These experiences may contribute to professional fulfillment and encourage nurses to remain in rural practice. However, when nurses experience lack of recognition, limited

career opportunities, and inadequate professional support, their level of job satisfaction may decline. This decline in job satisfaction may ultimately influence their decision to leave their employment.

Implications for Rural Healthcare Systems

The relationship between job satisfaction and retention of nurses has significant implications for rural healthcare systems. Rural healthcare facilities often face greater challenges in attracting and retaining healthcare professionals compared to urban hospitals. When nurses leave rural healthcare facilities due to dissatisfaction, these communities may experience severe shortages of healthcare providers. This situation can limit access to healthcare services and negatively affect health outcomes among rural populations. Improving job satisfaction among nurses working in rural healthcare facilities is therefore essential for strengthening rural healthcare systems. Strategies such as providing rural allowances, improving working conditions, enhancing professional development opportunities, and promoting supportive leadership can help increase job satisfaction and encourage nurses to remain in rural practice.

Implications Of Nurses' Job Satisfaction And Retention For The Future Of Nursing Practice

Job satisfaction and retention among nurses have become increasingly important issues in contemporary healthcare systems due to the rising demand for healthcare services and the global shortage of nursing professionals. Nurses play a fundamental role in healthcare delivery as they constitute the largest proportion of healthcare workers and are directly involved in patient care. The level of satisfaction nurses experience in their professional roles significantly influences their willingness to remain in their jobs, their productivity, and their overall contribution to healthcare delivery. Consequently, job satisfaction and retention among nurses have far-reaching implications for the future of nursing practice, healthcare system sustainability, and the overall quality of healthcare services provided to patients [35].

One of the major implications of nurses' job satisfaction and retention for the future of nursing practice is the sustainability of the nursing workforce. Healthcare systems around the world are currently facing significant shortages of nurses due to increasing healthcare demands, aging populations, and migration of healthcare professionals. Retaining experienced nurses within healthcare institutions is therefore essential for ensuring that healthcare systems can meet future health needs. When nurses experience high levels of job satisfaction, they are more likely to remain in their profession and continue contributing to healthcare delivery. Conversely, dissatisfaction with working conditions, remuneration, or organizational support may lead to increased turnover and migration of nurses to other countries or professions. Such workforce instability threatens the sustainability of nursing practice and may weaken healthcare systems in the long term [36].

Another important implication of job satisfaction and retention among nurses relates to the quality and safety of healthcare delivery. Nurses are responsible for numerous clinical activities including patient monitoring, medication administration, health education, and coordination of care among healthcare professionals. Their level of motivation and engagement in these activities significantly affects patient outcomes. Research has shown that healthcare institutions with satisfied nursing staff tend to achieve better patient outcomes, including lower rates of complications, reduced mortality rates, and higher patient satisfaction. In contrast, when nurses experience dissatisfaction and leave their organizations frequently, continuity of care is disrupted, which may negatively affect patient safety and healthcare quality [37].

Job satisfaction and retention also have implications for the advancement of professional nursing practice. As healthcare systems evolve and new technologies emerge, nurses are expected to continuously update their clinical knowledge and adapt to new healthcare delivery models. Satisfied nurses are more likely to participate in continuing education programs, pursue advanced degrees, and engage in professional development activities that enhance their clinical competencies. These activities contribute to the advancement of nursing knowledge and improve the overall effectiveness of nursing practice. On the other hand, high turnover rates among nurses may reduce opportunities for professional development and hinder the growth of nursing expertise within healthcare institutions [38].

Another significant implication concerns leadership development and mentorship within the nursing profession. Experienced nurses play a crucial role in mentoring newly recruited nurses and guiding them through the complexities of clinical practice. Through mentorship and supervision, experienced nurses transfer practical knowledge, professional values, and ethical standards to younger nurses entering the profession. However, when experienced nurses leave healthcare institutions due to dissatisfaction, valuable institutional knowledge and

leadership capacity are lost. Retaining experienced nurses through improved job satisfaction is therefore essential for maintaining strong leadership structures and mentorship programs that support the professional growth of future nurses [39].

The retention of satisfied nurses also contributes to improved organizational performance and healthcare system efficiency. Healthcare institutions invest significant financial resources in recruiting, training, and orienting nursing staff. High turnover rates among nurses increase operational costs because healthcare organizations must continually recruit and train new staff to replace those who leave. In addition, workforce instability may lead to staff shortages, which can increase the workload of remaining nurses and reduce organizational productivity. Studies have shown that healthcare institutions with stable nursing workforces experience improved operational efficiency, reduced staffing costs, and better organizational outcomes compared to institutions with high turnover rates [35].

Another implication of nurses' job satisfaction and retention relates to healthcare accessibility, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Rural healthcare facilities often experience difficulty attracting and retaining qualified healthcare professionals due to limited infrastructure, professional isolation, and inadequate resources. Nurses working in rural areas frequently face challenging working conditions, which may reduce their job satisfaction and increase turnover rates. When nurses leave rural healthcare facilities, these communities may experience severe shortages of healthcare providers, limiting access to healthcare services. Improving job satisfaction among rural nurses through supportive policies, better working conditions, and professional development opportunities is therefore essential for ensuring equitable healthcare access and strengthening rural healthcare systems [40].

Job satisfaction and retention among nurses also have implications for healthcare innovation and evidence-based practice. Evidence-based practice involves integrating the best available research evidence with clinical expertise and patient preferences to guide healthcare decisions. Nurses play a critical role in implementing evidence-based practices because they are directly involved in patient care. However, the successful adoption of evidence-based practice requires a stable workforce that is committed to continuous learning and professional improvement. Nurses who are satisfied with their work environment are more likely to engage in research activities, adopt new clinical guidelines, and participate in quality improvement initiatives. These activities contribute to the advancement of nursing practice and the improvement of healthcare outcomes [41].

In addition, job satisfaction among nurses contributes to improved teamwork and interprofessional collaboration within healthcare organizations. Healthcare delivery requires collaboration among various professionals including physicians, pharmacists, laboratory scientists, and nurses. Effective communication and teamwork among healthcare professionals are essential for providing comprehensive patient care. Nurses who experience job satisfaction tend to maintain positive relationships with colleagues and actively participate in team-based healthcare delivery. Such collaboration enhances patient safety, improves clinical decision-making, and promotes a culture of shared responsibility within healthcare organizations [38].

The level of job satisfaction experienced by nurses also influences the public perception and attractiveness of the nursing profession. A profession characterized by high job satisfaction and professional fulfillment is more likely to attract new entrants and encourage young individuals to pursue careers in nursing. Conversely, widespread dissatisfaction and high turnover rates may create negative perceptions of the profession and discourage potential candidates from entering the nursing workforce. Ensuring job satisfaction among nurses is therefore essential for maintaining the attractiveness of the nursing profession and securing the future supply of nursing professionals [36].

Furthermore, job satisfaction and retention among nurses contribute to the resilience of healthcare systems, particularly during public health emergencies and crises. Events such as disease outbreaks, pandemics, and natural disasters place significant pressure on healthcare systems and require a dedicated and stable healthcare workforce. Nurses often serve on the front lines during such emergencies, providing essential healthcare services and supporting affected populations. A satisfied and committed nursing workforce enhances the ability of healthcare systems to respond effectively to such crises. In contrast, workforce instability caused by dissatisfaction and high turnover may weaken the capacity of healthcare systems to manage emergencies and maintain essential healthcare services [37].

In conclusion, nurses' job satisfaction and retention have profound implications for the future of nursing practice and healthcare delivery. They influence workforce sustainability, healthcare quality, professional development, leadership capacity, healthcare accessibility, and the overall resilience of healthcare systems. Ensuring that nurses experience high levels of job satisfaction is therefore essential for strengthening healthcare systems and promoting the advancement of nursing practice. Healthcare policymakers, administrators, and professional organizations must prioritize strategies aimed at improving working conditions, promoting professional development, and creating supportive work environments for nurses. By addressing the factors that influence job satisfaction and retention, healthcare systems can ensure a stable and motivated nursing workforce capable of meeting the healthcare challenges of the future.

Conclusion:-

This study examined the relationship between job satisfaction and retention of nurses in rural health facilities and its implications for the future of nursing practice. Nurses play a vital role in healthcare delivery as they constitute the largest segment of the healthcare workforce and are directly involved in patient care. The effectiveness of healthcare systems therefore depends largely on the availability, commitment, and stability of the nursing workforce. However, many healthcare institutions, particularly those located in rural areas, continue to experience significant challenges in retaining qualified nurses due to various factors that influence their job satisfaction.

The review of literature revealed that job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept influenced by several factors including remuneration, working conditions, leadership style, staffing levels, professional development opportunities, interpersonal relationships, and organizational support. These factors significantly affect nurses' attitudes toward their work and their willingness to remain in their employment. When nurses experience high levels of job satisfaction, they tend to demonstrate stronger organizational commitment, improved job performance, and greater willingness to remain in their organizations. Conversely, dissatisfaction among nurses may lead to increased turnover intention, migration to other healthcare institutions or countries, and reduced commitment to their professional responsibilities.

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