Human Resource Policies with NABH Standards and Staff Retention

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between Human Resource (HR) policies aligned with National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) standards and staff retention outcomes at, a newly incorporated healthcare organization based in Pallavaram, Tamil Nadu. Using a descriptive research design and structured questionnaire administered to 102 healthcare employees, the study evaluates employee perceptions across key HR dimensions including recruitment, training, performance appraisal, compensation, grievance management, and workplace safety. The findings reveal a moderately positive perception of NABH-aligned HR practices, with significant neutrality indicating gaps in awareness and implementation. The study concludes by recommending improvements in communication, transparency, career development, and participative management to strengthen workforce stability and organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Human Resource Policies, NABH Standards, Staff Retention, Healthcare Management, Employee Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource (HR) policies are central to maintaining discipline, ensuring employee satisfaction, delivering quality healthcare services, and sustaining organizational growth. In hospital settings, these policies govern critical functions such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, employee safety, and workplace conduct. When thoughtfully designed, they cultivate a constructive work environment and improve inter-departmental coordination across clinical and non-clinical teams.

The National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) provides a structured framework that aligns HR practices with patient safety mandates, staff competency benchmarks, and quality improvement protocols. By embedding NABH standards into HR processes, hospitals can ensure systematic credential verification, infection control training, and continuous employee development—all of which contribute to superior patient outcomes and institutional credibility.

Staff retention is an equally pressing concern in healthcare, where the loss of experienced personnel translates directly into diminished service quality, increased recruitment expenditures, and disrupted continuity of care. Retention strategies that address fair compensation, career growth pathways, recognition mechanisms, and psychological well-being can significantly reduce turnover and foster long-term organizational stability. This study is therefore motivated by the need to understand how NABH-aligned HR policies influence employee satisfaction and retention in a private healthcare setting.

Scope of the Study

The study broadly encompasses HR policies and practices adopted in healthcare organizations, with particular emphasis on improving workforce management and ensuring high-quality patient care. It covers core HR functions—recruitment and selection, onboarding, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation management, employee engagement, and welfare measures—that collectively shape a stable and efficient healthcare workforce.

A dedicated focus is placed on the implementation of NABH standards within HR management, specifically examining how accreditation guidelines influence hospital policies related to staffing norms, documentation processes, employee safety, and quality assurance. The study further explores the link between NABH-compliant HR practices and employee retention, investigating how structured compliance frameworks reduce turnover and enhance workforce stability over time.

Research Gap

While existing literature has independently examined HR policies and NABH standards, limited empirical research has integrated both domains to assess their combined effect on staff retention. Most studies treat NABH standards primarily through the lens of patient safety and quality care, with comparatively little attention given to their influence on employee outcomes. This study attempts to address this gap by directly examining how NABH-based HR practices affect retention rates and employee perceptions in a private healthcare institution.

Objectives of the Study

Primary Objective: To examine human resource policies related to staff retention in a healthcare organization in alignment with NABH standards.

Secondary Objectives:

- To study NABH human resource management standards applicable to employee recruitment, retention, and welfare.
- To assess the effectiveness of existing HR policies and practices in retaining healthcare staff in a NABH-accredited hospital.
- To identify retention factors such as training, career development, performance appraisal, and employee engagement as prescribed by NABH.
- To evaluate the role of continuous training, competency assessment, and skill development in staff retention.
- To analyse the impact of work environment, safety, and employee well-being on retention as per NABH guidelines.

Industry Profile

The healthcare industry is among the most critical sectors globally, encompassing prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation services. In India, rapid population growth, rising health awareness, technological advancements, and government-led initiatives have collectively fuelled significant expansion in this sector. Hospitals, diagnostic laboratories, pharmaceutical companies, medical equipment manufacturers, and health insurance providers constitute the diverse ecosystem of healthcare in India, working together to deliver accessible, affordable, and high-quality care.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical foundations of this study draw from several seminal works in human resource management, motivation theory, and organizational behaviour. Together, they offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how HR policies influence employee retention in healthcare settings.

Armstrong (2014) established that structured HR practices—including workforce planning, systematic recruitment, continuous training, and performance appraisal—are pivotal in developing employee competencies, enhancing job satisfaction, and reducing turnover. Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory complemented this view by

distinguishing intrinsic motivators (achievement, recognition, growth) from extrinsic hygiene factors (salary, working conditions), arguing that both dimensions must be addressed to sustain employee morale in high-pressure healthcare environments.

Price (2001) identified compensation systems, career advancement, and working conditions as major determinants of turnover, while Shields (2001) underscored the critical role of supportive leadership and transparent communication in retention. Hayes (2012) drew attention to occupational stress and emotional exhaustion as key drivers of nurse attrition, emphasizing the importance of workload management and mental health support.

From a strategic HR perspective, Mathis and Jackson (2011) argued that aligning employee goals with organizational objectives strengthens commitment, while Dessler (2013) emphasized the centrality of fair compensation and competitive benefit structures. Robbins (2012) contributed insights into how leadership style, workplace culture, and interpersonal relationships shape retention decisions, and Luthans (2011) introduced the concept of psychological capital—optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy—as a predictor of employee engagement and reduced turnover.

Lockwood (2007) reinforced that employee engagement, driven by recognition programs, career development, and inclusive organizational culture, is a key modern retention strategy. Cascio (2010) further highlighted the significant financial and operational costs of high turnover, making retention a strategic imperative.

In the healthcare-specific literature, Aiken (2002) demonstrated that adequate staffing and supportive work environments improve both patient outcomes and nurse retention, while Stone and Laschinger (2006) found that empowerment and participative decision-making significantly reduce burnout and turnover. Allen (2006) identified work-life balance as a critical retention factor, especially in demanding clinical environments.

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for systematically describing the current state of HR policies, employee satisfaction, and retention practices within the organization without manipulating any variables. The design allows for the identification of patterns and relationships between HR practices and employee perceptions, providing a factual and accurate representation of the existing situation.

Data Collection Methods

Both primary and secondary data were collected to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research objectives. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered directly to healthcare employees—including doctors, nurses, and administrative staff—to capture their firsthand views on HR practices, job satisfaction, and retention factors. Secondary data were obtained from hospital records, NABH guidelines, research publications, and organizational annual reports to contextualize and validate primary findings.

Sampling Method and Size

A combination of simple random and convenience sampling was employed to select 102 hospital staff members as respondents. Random sampling ensured each eligible employee had an equal chance of participation, while convenience sampling accommodated the operational realities of a busy hospital environment. The resulting sample provides a representative cross-section of the workforce, enabling meaningful generalization of findings within the study context.

FINDINGS

The demographic profile of respondents reveals a predominantly young, female workforce in the early stages of their careers, which aligns with national trends in healthcare employment. This composition has important implications for retention strategy design, as younger employees tend to prioritise career advancement, learning opportunities, and organisational culture over short-term monetary rewards.

With respect to HR policy alignment with NABH standards, the study found that employees hold a moderately positive perception. Approximately 41% of respondents agreed that NABH-aligned policies govern recruitment, while similar proportions endorsed the fairness of compensation packages and the effectiveness of orientation programmes. These

findings suggest that the organisation has established a functional HR framework, even if implementation and awareness remain inconsistent.

Employee development emerged as an area requiring focused attention. Training and competency assessment attracted the highest neutral and negative responses across all questionnaire items, indicating that employees are either unaware of the training activities in place or do not perceive them as adequately frequent or relevant. Career advancement opportunities were also viewed with mixed sentiment, with nearly one-third of respondents expressing dissatisfaction—a particularly concerning finding given that career growth is among the most powerful retention levers in healthcare (Ranjit Kumar, 2013; Neha Gupta, 2015).

The work environment was generally perceived as safe and supportive, with over 50% of respondents agreeing. However, workload fairness and strict implementation of safety protocols received more ambivalent responses, suggesting that operational pressures may occasionally override policy intent. Grievance handling and employee feedback mechanisms were viewed positively by a majority, though improvements in transparency and responsiveness are recommended.

Overall, 46.07% of respondents agreed that the hospital environment encourages long-term retention, while 31.36% disagreed. This polarised distribution underscores that while the organisation is making progress, significant gaps remain in creating a consistently compelling environment for long-term employment commitment.

Suggestions

The hospital should prioritise strengthening communication around HR policies and NABH standards through regular awareness sessions, orientation programmes, and easily accessible policy documentation. Greater transparency in recruitment, performance appraisal, and grievance resolution would help build employee trust and reduce the uncertainty reflected in high neutral response rates.

Employee development should be elevated as a strategic priority. This includes conducting regular, role-specific training sessions that are visibly aligned with NABH competency requirements, implementing structured career pathways and mentorship programmes, and ensuring that competency assessments are conducted periodically with clear communication of their outcomes and purpose.

To address retention at a systemic level, the management should invest in participative decision-making mechanisms that actively incorporate employee feedback into policy formulation. Fair workload distribution, enhanced workplace safety measures, and structured wellness initiatives would address the physical and psychological dimensions of retention identified in the literature.

Finally, the organisation should develop a dedicated employee engagement framework—encompassing recognition programmes, team-building activities, and inclusive cultural initiatives—to foster affective commitment which is the most durable predictor of long-term retention.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence that ahas established a foundational HR framework broadly aligned with NABH standards, with employees holding moderately positive perceptions across recruitment, compensation, orientation, grievance handling, and workplace safety. However, the consistent presence of high neutral responses across multiple dimensions reveals a significant implementation gap—employees are aware that policies exist but are not fully experiencing their benefits in practice.

The area most urgently requiring attention are training and development, career advancement, competency assessment, and long-term retention strategy. Addressing these through structured, visible, and consistently communicated HR initiatives would not only improve individual employee satisfaction but also strengthen the organisation's capacity to deliver quality healthcare services over time.

In conclusion, the integration of NABH-compliant HR policies with targeted retention strategies represents a powerful lever for organisational effectiveness in the healthcare sector. For, investing in these areas at this early stage of its

institutional development would lay the foundation for a motivated, skilled, and committed workforce capable of delivering excellent patient care well into the future.

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