

Challenges in Healthcare Hiring and HR perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the human resource (HR) challenges associated with healthcare hiring, emphasizing the strategic role of HR in addressing workforce shortages, skills mismatches, burnout, and diversity gaps. As healthcare systems worldwide grapple with increasing service demands and evolving workforce dynamics, effective recruitment and retention practices have become critical. Using a qualitative case study approach focused on a mid-sized HR consultancy firm, the research explores real-world hiring challenges and HR interventions tailored to the healthcare sector. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, with findings analysed thematically. Key themes include talent scarcity, regulatory and compliance hurdles, limited adoption of recruitment technologies, and underdeveloped employer branding. The study proposes HR-centric strategies such as leveraging AI-based tools, enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and aligning employer branding with workforce expectations. These findings offer practical insights for HR professionals and healthcare leaders aiming to build resilient and sustainable healthcare workforces.

Keywords: Diversify, Equity and Inclusiveness

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Human Resources (HR) management plays a pivotal role in shaping the capacity and effectiveness of healthcare systems worldwide. As the global demand for healthcare services grows fuelled by aging populations, rising chronic disease burdens, and technological advancements does the critical need for qualified healthcare professionals across all disciplines. However, healthcare organizations face persistent challenges in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the right talent, creating bottlenecks in service delivery and straining operational capacities. (WHO, 2020; OECD, 2021).

From an HR perspective, healthcare hiring is a complex and high-stakes process. It involves navigating regulatory frameworks, balancing workforce supply and demand, ensuring diversity and inclusion, and managing workforce planning under budgetary constraints. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these challenges, exposing weaknesses in traditional

recruitment models and highlighting the need for agile, data-driven HR strategies to build resilient workforces.

This study explores the HR-specific challenges in healthcare hiring, including talent acquisition bottlenecks, high turnover rates, burnout-related attrition, skills mismatches, and inequities in workforce distribution. It also examines how HR practices can be optimized to attract, develop, and retain a diverse and sustainable healthcare workforce.

Problem Statement

Healthcare organizations are increasingly unable to meet their staffing needs due to a confluence of factors: global workforce shortages, evolving skill requirements, employee burnout, and systemic barriers in HR practices such as outdated recruitment methods, limited employer branding, and inequities in hiring processes. While the healthcare sector acknowledges these challenges, there is a lack of HR-focused strategies tailored to the unique demands of healthcare hiring.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Talent Management Theory

Talent Management Theory (Collings & Mellahi, 2009) emphasizes identifying, developing, and retaining high-potential employees to sustain organizational success. In healthcare, this approach is crucial for addressing skill shortages and ensuring continuity of care. However, healthcare organizations often lack structured talent pipelines and succession plans, leading to reactive rather than strategic hiring.

Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)

SHRM frameworks (Wright & McMahan, 1992) advocate for aligning HR strategies with organizational goals. In healthcare, strategic alignment is essential to address fluctuating service demands, regulatory constraints, and workforce diversity needs. The absence of SHRM in many healthcare settings leads to fragmented hiring processes and inadequate workforce planning.

Employer Branding and Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Employer branding theory (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) posits that a strong, authentic brand attracts top talent, while a compelling EVP (Minchington, 2010) helps retain employees. In healthcare, employer branding is often underutilized, with many organizations failing to differentiate themselves in a competitive talent market.

Burnout and Retention

Employee burnout is a major retention issue, especially among clinical staff. HR teams face challenges in designing wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and career progression opportunities to combat high turnover rates (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, methodology, and approach employed in the study of challenges in healthcare hiring from the perspective of an HR consultancy firm. The objective of the research is to explore the complex dynamics of healthcare hiring, uncover key challenges, and provide insights into effective HR strategies. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach to ensure a comprehensive understanding, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. This chapter also details the sampling techniques, data collection methods, ethical considerations, and limitations of the study.

Research Problem

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Research Objectives

- Identify HR-specific barriers to effective healthcare hiring, such as recruitment inefficiencies, skills shortages, and DEI challenges.
- Examine the impact of HR policies, practices, and systems on recruitment, selection, and retention in healthcare organizations.
- Analyse how technological advancements and data-driven HR tools can improve hiring outcomes.
- Propose HR-centric strategies to build sustainable talent pipelines and reduce turnover.

Research Design

Qualitative and exploratory study with descriptive analysis of work-life balance and mental health.

Data Collection Methods

Surveys

A structured questionnaire was designed using a Likert-scale format and distributed online via email and LinkedIn to HR professionals and healthcare managers. The survey covered topics such as:

Recruitment challenges (e.g., time-to-fill, candidate shortages)
Impact of hiring issues on operations
Effectiveness of HR strategies and technologies

The survey instrument was pilot-tested with 5 HR professionals for clarity and relevance, and revisions were made based on their feedback.

A total of 150 respondents completed the survey, comprising 80 HR professionals from the consultancy firm and 70 hiring managers from healthcare organizations.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants (6 HR consultants, 4 healthcare hiring managers) via Zoom. An interview guide was used, covering topics such as: Personal experiences with hiring challenges Perceptions of candidate expectations Strategies for improving recruitment outcomes. Interviews were recorded (with consent), transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores) and cross-tabulation to identify relationships between variables (e.g., impact of candidate shortages on turnover rates). The analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

The analysis is divided into three parts:

1. Quantitative Analysis of Survey Data
2. Qualitative Analysis of Interviews
3. Triangulation of Data and Discussion of Keytheme

The most significant challenge is the shortage of qualified candidates (82%), followed closely by high turnover rates (76%). Issues related to compensation, compliance, and cultural fit also contribute to hiring difficulties, highlighting the complex landscape faced by healthcare recruiters.

By cross-referencing quantitative and qualitative data, several consistent themes emerged:

- Candidate Shortage: Both survey data (82% agreement) and interviews highlighted a significant lack of qualified candidates.
- High Turnover: Supported by survey (76% agreement) and interview insights, particularly in nursing roles.
- Regulatory Barriers: Identified in both data sets as a significant obstacle to international recruitment.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Shortage of Qualified Healthcare Professionals

The data indicates a significant deficit in qualified healthcare personnel, particularly in rural and underserved regions. Notably, 74% of doctors are concentrated in urban areas, serving only 28% of the population, leaving rural communities with inadequate medical care (Wikipedia, 2025).

This urban-rural disparity is exacerbated by the reluctance of healthcare professionals to serve in remote areas due to factors such as insufficient infrastructure,

lack of educational opportunities for their children, and limited career advancement prospects (IndiaMedToday, 2025).

High Attrition Rates Among Healthcare Workers

High turnover rates, especially among nursing staff, pose a critical challenge. For instance, Medanta reported a 51% attrition rate among nurses in FY22, while Yatharth Hospital experienced a 74% attrition rate in FY23 (Hospihands, 2025). Contributing factors include workplace stress, limited career progression, and inadequate support systems.

Compensation Disparities

Compensation remains a contentious issue, with public sector salaries often lagging behind private sector offerings. In Punjab, for example, the entry-level salary for medical officers is

₹53,100, which is lower than both the central government and neighbouring Haryana, making state service less appealing (Times of India, 2025).

VI. CONCLUSION

This research investigation into the challenges of healthcare hiring from a human resource management perspective has yielded critical insights with both theoretical depth and practical significance. The comprehensive exploration of HR practices, recruitment barriers, and organizational dynamics within healthcare settings underscores the strategic importance of human capital planning in this vital sector. The findings contribute substantively to existing HR literature while offering actionable solutions for talent acquisition and workforce stability in healthcare organizations.

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