



Healthcare Entrepreneurship as a Sustainable Strategy for Retaining Health Professionals

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ABSTRACT

The healthcare systems in Africa struggle with brain drain, and experience a persistent shortage of skilled health professionals, due to the migration of doctors, nurses, and allied health workers to developed countries. This study explored healthcare entrepreneurship as a sustainable strategy for retaining health professionals and reducing brain drain in Nigeria, using case studies of 50 selected private medical centres in Ilorin metropolis. The study adopts a qualitative multiple-case study research design, and the data were collected through in-depth interviews with 220 healthcare professionals. The participants comprised 62 medical doctors, 75 nurses, 35 pharmacists, 40 laboratory scientists, and 8 other allied health professionals. The interview guide is designed to explore participants' motivations for engaging in healthcare entrepreneurship, experiences within private medical centres, perceived benefits, and challenges related to retention and migration decisions. The findings reveal that engagement in healthcare entrepreneurship enhances professional autonomy, provides economic stability, offers opportunities for innovation, and improves working conditions. However, the study also identified structural challenges hindering the effectiveness of healthcare entrepreneurship. Despite these challenges, private medical centres provide viable alternative career pathways that contribute to workforce retention. The study concludes that strengthening healthcare entrepreneurship can serve as a sustainable strategy for retaining health professionals, mitigating brain drain, and improving healthcare

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1. INTRODUCTION

The retention of health professionals has become a critical issue in many low- and middle-income countries. Nigeria's healthcare system continues to face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and a shortage of skilled health professionals (Balogun, 2022). One of the most pressing concerns, according to Witter et al. (2020), is the continuous migration of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other allied health workers to developed countries in search of better working conditions, remuneration, modern facilities, and career development opportunities. This phenomenon, commonly referred to as brain drain, has weakened healthcare service delivery and increased the burden on the remaining workforce, as reported by Akinwale et al. (2024). In response to these challenges, healthcare entrepreneurship has emerged as an alternative pathway for health professionals to practice, innovate, and achieve professional fulfilment within Nigeria. Healthcare entrepreneurship involves the establishment and management of private medical centres such as hospitals, diagnostic centres, specialist clinics, pharmaceutical services, and telemedicine platforms (Tariq, 2023). Through these

ventures, health professionals can exercise professional autonomy, generate sustainable income, and contribute to healthcare delivery. Hirose et al. (2018) maintain that private medical centres play a vital role in Nigeria's healthcare system by complementing public health services and expanding access to quality care. Many of these centres are founded and managed by health professionals who choose to remain in the country despite systemic challenges. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how healthcare entrepreneurship within private medical centres influences the retention of health professionals and reduces their intention to migrate. This study, therefore, explores healthcare entrepreneurship as a strategic response to brain drain through case studies of 50 selected private medical centres in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite increased investment in medical education and training, Nigeria continues to lose a significant proportion of its healthcare workforce to migration (Oyedokun et al., 2025). Existing retention strategies have focused on public sector reforms, salary reviews, and bonding policies, with limited

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attention given to entrepreneurial opportunities within the healthcare sector. The absence of supportive entrepreneurial ecosystems, inadequate access to finance, regulatory constraints, and weak institutional support have further hindered the growth of entrepreneurship in developing countries (Guerrero et al., 2021; Wahab et al., 2026). Although private medical centres are expanding across the country, there is limited empirical and case-based evidence on their role in retaining health professionals and discouraging migration. There is a lack of in-depth, practice-based evidence showing whether involvement in healthcare entrepreneurship improves job satisfaction, income stability, and long-term commitment to practising in Nigeria. This gap in knowledge necessitates a focused investigation into how healthcare entrepreneurship, as practised within private medical centres, can serve as a sustainable strategy for retaining health professionals and reducing migration intention.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study aims to explore healthcare entrepreneurship as a strategy for retaining health professionals in Nigeria through case studies of 50 selected private medical centres in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specific objectives are:

1. To explore the motivations of health professionals for engaging in healthcare entrepreneurship within private medical centres in Nigeria.
2. To analyse how involvement in healthcare entrepreneurship influences the retention of health professionals and their intention to continue practising in Nigeria.
3. To identify the key challenges affecting the effectiveness of healthcare entrepreneurship in private medical centres as a retention strategy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To achieve the stated objectives, this study is grounded in two well-established theoretical perspectives that explain the relationship between healthcare entrepreneurship and retention of health professionals. These are the human capital theory and push-pull theory of migration.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The human capital theory, advanced by Gary Becker, posits that individuals invest in education, training and skills acquisition with the expectation of obtaining future returns in the form of economic stability, job satisfaction, and career growth. Within the healthcare sector, professionals acquire specialised competencies that enhance their productivity and value in the labour market. However, when the local healthcare system fails to provide adequate returns such as competitive remuneration, professional autonomy, and opportunities for career advancement, these professionals may seek better opportunities outside the country. Healthcare entrepreneurship provides a viable mechanism for enhancing the returns on human capital within the domestic context. Through private practice and innovative healthcare ventures, health professionals can improve their income levels, exercise greater control over clinical decisions, and adopt modern approaches to service delivery. This not only increases job satisfaction but also strengthens professional commitment to the local health system.

The push-pull theory of migration proposed by Everett Lee offers further insight into the factors that influence the movement of health professionals across borders. The theory categorises migration drivers into push factors which compel individuals to leave their home countries and pull factors that attract them to other destinations. In the Nigerian healthcare context, push factors include inadequate infrastructure, poor working conditions, limited career progression, and low remuneration. In contrast, developed countries present strong pull factors such as better working environments, higher wages, and access to advanced medical technologies. Healthcare entrepreneurship has the potential to mitigate these migration pressures by addressing key push factors within the local system. Entrepreneurial healthcare settings, such as privately owned clinics and specialised centres, often provide improved working conditions, better resource availability, and performance-based incentives.

2.2 Healthcare Entrepreneurship and Health Workforce Retention

Healthcare entrepreneurship refers to the application of entrepreneurial principles and practices within the healthcare sector to create, manage, and expand health-related enterprises such as private clinics, diagnostic centres, telemedicine platforms, pharmaceutical ventures, and health technology start-ups (Raimi et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2024). It involves health professionals identifying opportunities to deliver medical services while generating economic value. Unlike traditional public health employment, healthcare entrepreneurship allows practitioners to exercise autonomy, introduce innovations, and respond flexibly to local health needs (Benhammou, 2020). In developing countries such as Nigeria, healthcare entrepreneurship has gained increasing attention as a mechanism for strengthening healthcare delivery and retaining skilled health professionals.

2.3 Brain Drain in the Nigerian Health Sector

Brain drain in the health sector refers to the large-scale migration of trained health professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and laboratory scientists, from Nigeria to developed countries in search of better working conditions, higher remuneration, and improved quality of life (Okafor & Chimereze, 2020; Iruo & Okolo, 2021; Kenneth, 2023). The phenomenon has weakened Nigeria's healthcare system, resulting in staff shortages, increased workload for remaining personnel, and reduced quality of healthcare services. Studies such as Oke (2025), Onuoha & Etiebet (2023), Leitão et al. (2024), Omiyi (2025), and Akinwale and George (2025) consistently identify poor infrastructure, limited career growth opportunities, inadequate remuneration, and unfavourable working environment as key drivers of health professionals' migration in Nigeria.

2.4 Retention of Health Professionals

Retention of health professionals is influenced by financial and non-financial factors. Financial incentives such as competitive salaries and access to funding are important. Non-financial factors including job satisfaction, professional autonomy, work-life balance, access to modern equipment, and opportunities for career growth are also important. The study by De Vries et al. (2023) suggests that environments that allow health professionals to exercise control over their practice, engage in innovation, and achieve professional fulfilment are more likely to retain skilled personnel.

2.5 Healthcare Entrepreneurship as a Strategy for Retaining Health Professionals

Healthcare entrepreneurship has been identified as a viable strategy for retaining health professionals by providing opportunities for income diversification, professional independence, and career advancement (Elo & Emmanuel, 2022). Through private practice ownership or participation in health-related enterprises, medical professionals can improve their earning capacity while remaining within the country. The study by Kulkov et al. (2023) affirms that entrepreneurial engagement enhances job satisfaction by allowing practitioners to implement innovative healthcare solutions, adopt modern technologies, and tailor services to community needs. Empirical studies indicate that health professionals who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities are less likely to migrate, as they develop long-term investments and professional commitments within their local environments.

2.6 Role of Private Medical Centres in Nigeria

Private medical centres play a critical role in the Nigerian healthcare system by complementing public health services and filling gaps in service delivery (Oniyire et al., 2025). These centres are often established and managed by medical entrepreneurs who invest in infrastructure, modern equipment, and specialised services. Private medical centres tend to offer better working conditions, flexible schedules, and performance-based incentives, making them attractive to health professionals. Case-based evidence suggests that such centres contribute to retaining skilled practitioners who might otherwise seek opportunities abroad (Thi Nguyen et al., 2021).

2.7 Challenges to Healthcare Entrepreneurship in Nigeria

Despite its potential benefits, healthcare entrepreneurship in Nigeria faces several challenges. These include limited access to finance, high start-up costs, regulatory bottlenecks, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent government policies (Yusuf et al., 2023). Many health professionals lack formal entrepreneurial training, which limits their capacity to establish and manage medical enterprises. Furthermore, high operational cost and limited health insurance coverage reduce profitability and sustainability.

2.8 Empirical Review

Empirical studies from developing economies indicate a strong relationship between entrepreneurial opportunities in the healthcare system and reduced health workers' migration. Studies from Nigerian and comparable countries show that health professionals who own or co-own healthcare enterprises are more likely to remain in their home countries (Mishra & Pandey, 2023; Alenezi et al., 2023; Lidströmer et al., 2025). For instance, survey-based studies among medical doctors and nurses reveal that access to start-up capital, business training, and a supportive regulatory environment influence their decisions to establish private practices rather than migrate abroad. Studies of private hospitals and diagnostic centres reveal that entrepreneurial success creates economic incentives and professional fulfilment that counteract the push factors associated with brain drain (Bassey et al., 2025; Nkgapele, 2025; Adzei & Sakyi, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research exploring the lived experiences of health workers shows that healthcare entrepreneurship enhances autonomy, income diversification, and professional independence (Jakobsen et al., 2021). The study revealed that owning or co-owning healthcare ventures allows them to

overcome systemic challenges such as delayed salaries, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources in public hospitals (Sangwa & Mutabazi, 2025). The sense of control over their environment contributes to increased motivation and long-term commitment to practising within the country. In addition, empirical evidence from Kearney et al. (2020); Gillin & Hazelton (2021); and other case studies of successful healthcare enterprises suggests that entrepreneurial engagement can create employment opportunities for health professionals particularly the youth in the medical field, thereby strengthening the overall health system.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative multiple case study research design to explore healthcare entrepreneurship as a sustainable strategy for retaining health professionals in Nigeria. The case study approach was appropriate because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of real-life experiences, practices, and perceptions of health professionals who were engaged in healthcare entrepreneurship within private medical centres.

3.2 Study Area and Case Selection

The study focused on 50 selected private medical centres in Ilorin, Kwara State that were owned or managed by health professionals. The centres were purposively selected to reflect diversity in size, location, and medical specialisation. The selection criteria included years of operation, level of entrepreneurial involvement by health professionals, and the contribution of private medical centres to the healthcare service delivery.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised health professionals involved in healthcare entrepreneurship, including medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory scientists and allied health professionals who owned, co-owned, or managed private medical centres in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. A total of 220 healthcare professionals participated in the interviews. The participants comprised 62 medical doctors, 75 nurses, 35 pharmacists, 40 laboratory scientists, and 8 other allied health professionals.

Table 1. Profile of Participants

Participant Identifiers	Professional Role	Number of Participants	Centre Type
P01–P62	Medical doctors	62	Private Medical Centre
P63–P137	Nurses	75	Private Medical Centre
P138–P172	Pharmacists	35	Private Medical Centre
P173–P212	Laboratory scientists	40	Private Medical Centre
P213–P220	Other allied health professionals	8	Private Medical Centre
Total	All Participants	220 Participants	50 private medical centres

3.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 220 participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experience related to healthcare entrepreneurship and health workforce retention. This approach enabled the selection of information-rich cases and respondents who could provide in-depth and meaningful insights into the study objectives.

3.5 Sources of Data and Data Collection Methods

Data for the study were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists, laboratory scientists, founders and administrators, and other health professionals working in private medical centres. The interview guide explored participants' motivations for engaging in healthcare entrepreneurship, experiences within private medical centres, perceived benefits, and challenges related to retention and migration decisions. Secondary data comprised organisational documents, policy records, staffing structures, and relevant reports. These documents provided contextual and supportive information for interpreting the interview findings and understanding the organisational and policy environment in which the private medical centres operated.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded and categorised into themes that reflect the study objectives and research questions. The analysis involved identifying recurring patterns, similarities, and differences across the case studies.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, data triangulation and thick description were used. Data triangulation involved comparing information obtained from the interviews with organisational documents, policy records, staffing structures, and relevant reports. Thick description was used to provide sufficient contextual detail about participants' experiences and the private medical centres.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were observed throughout this study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and all information provided was used solely for academic purposes.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses findings from in-depth interviews conducted across 50 selected private medical centres in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. A total of 220 healthcare professionals participated in the interviews. The participants comprised 62 medical doctors, 75 nurses, 35 pharmacists, 40 laboratory scientists, and 8 other allied health professionals. The results are organised in line with the study objectives. Quotations are used to illustrate key themes, while tables summarise the reported findings across the case studies.

4.1 Motivations for Engaging in Healthcare Entrepreneurship

Analysis of the interview data revealed that health professionals' involvement in medical entrepreneurship was

motivated by a combination of economic pressures, professional dissatisfaction, and the desire for autonomy and quality practice.

Many participants expressed frustration with public-sector healthcare employment, particularly poor infrastructure and limited career progression. One medical doctor who owned a private clinic stated:

"After several years in government service, I realised that healthcare entrepreneurship is the best. Establishing my own medical centre gave me the freedom to practise medicine the way it should be practice." (P10, Medical Doctor, Private Medical Centre)

Income stability emerged as a major motivation factor. Participants reported that healthcare entrepreneurship provided more predictable and diversified income streams compared with salaried employment alone:

"Depending solely on salary was no longer sustainable. Running a diagnostic centre has helped me stabilise my income." (P215, Healthcare Entrepreneur, Private Medical Centre).

In addition, several participants highlighted the desire to deliver quality healthcare using modern equipment and innovative approaches:

"Healthcare entrepreneurship is not just about money; it is about creating a system where patients receive better care without unnecessary delays." (P18, Hospital Founder, Private Medical Centre).

The findings from the qualitative analysis revealed several key motivations driving healthcare entrepreneurship among participants. Economic stability, professional autonomy, quality healthcare delivery, and career development emerged as the dominant motivations. Many participants emphasised the need for income diversification and greater control over clinical decisions, while also highlighting the importance of improving service quality through innovation.

4.2 Influence of Healthcare Entrepreneurship on Retention and Migration Intentions

The finding indicates that involvement in healthcare entrepreneurship enhanced health professionals' willingness to remain in Nigeria and reduced migration intentions. Participants consistently reported that owning or managing private medical centres increased their long-term commitment to local practice.

One participant stated:

"Once you have invested your time, money, and reputation into a medical centre here, the idea of leaving the country becomes less attractive." (P220, Healthcare Professional, Private Medical Centre).

Higher job satisfaction was also reported among entrepreneurial health professionals, particularly due to flexible work schedules and improved working environments:

"I now have better work-life balance and professional satisfaction. These are things I never had while working full-time in the public hospital" (P20, Medical Doctor, Private Medical Centre).

Some participants explicitly linked their entrepreneurial engagement to a reduced desire to migrate abroad:

“Before starting my pharmacy, I considered relocating abroad. Now, I see a future for myself here.” (P140, Chief Executive Officer, Private Pharmacy Venture).

These findings reinforce the argument that healthcare entrepreneurship can mitigate push factors associated with brain drain by improving local professional conditions. Healthcare entrepreneurship was found to have notable implications for the retention of health professionals.

Table 2. Perceived Effects of Healthcare Entrepreneurship on Retention

Retention Factors	Frequency n/N	Percentage	Reported Outcome
Job satisfaction	182 of 220	82.7%	Increased
Migration intention	35 of 220	15.9%	Reduced
Professional commitment	172 of 220	78.2%	Strengthened
Long-term investment	150 of 220	68.2%	Encouraged

The results summarised in Table 2 indicate that job satisfaction among practitioners increased, while migration intentions were reduced. Participants also reported strengthened professional commitment and a greater willingness to make long-term investments in their practice.

4.3 Role of Private Medical Centres in Health Workforce Retention

The case studies revealed that private medical centres played a crucial role in retaining healthcare professionals by offering better working conditions and professional opportunities. Participants noted access to modern equipment and supportive management as key advantages.

As one laboratory scientist noted:

“Working in a private diagnostics centre exposes you to better facilities and encourages you to stay because you can actually do your job effectively.” (P175, Laboratory Scientist, Private Diagnostic Centre).

Private medical centres were also found to provide employment opportunities for multiple cadres of health professionals, thereby reducing the unemployment rate:

“Our centre employs doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and technicians. Most of them have no plans of leaving because they are comfortable here.” (P50, Senior Medical Doctor, Private Medical Centre).

These findings align with existing studies which suggest that favourable organisational environment enhances workforce retention.

4.4 Challenges Limiting the Effectiveness of Healthcare Entrepreneurship

Despite its benefits, several challenges were identified across the case studies. Limited access to finance was the most frequently mentioned constraint:

“Getting loans from commercial banks is very difficult. Most of us rely on personal savings to run these centres.” (P218, Founder, Private Medical Centre).

Regulatory barriers and inconsistent policies were also highlighted:

“The licensing process is stressful and expensive. Sometimes policies change without proper communication.” (P215, Founder, Private Medical Centre).

Infrastructure challenges, particularly unreliable electricity supply, were reported to increase operational costs:

“Power supply is a major issue. Running generators daily affects our profit and sustainability.” (P213, Centre Manager, Pharmacy Stores).

Table 3. Key Challenges to Healthcare Entrepreneurship Identified by Participants

Challenges	Frequencies		Implications
Limited access to finance	205 of 220	93.2%	Hinders start-up and expansion
Regulatory bottlenecks	125 of 220	56.8%	Increases operational burden
Poor infrastructure	213 of 220	96.8%	Increases operating costs
Limited insurance coverage	147 of 220	66.8%	Reduces patient affordability

Despite the benefits of private medical centres, several challenges were identified as constraints to healthcare entrepreneurship. As shown in Table 3, limited access to finance, regulatory bottlenecks, poor infrastructure, and limited insurance coverage were the major barriers. These challenges not only hinder the establishment and expansion of healthcare ventures but also increase operational costs.

4.5 Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that involvement in entrepreneurial activities provided health workers with improved economic stability. It offered greater professional autonomy, allowing practitioners to make independent clinical and managerial decisions. In addition, participants reported that better working conditions in private facilities include more organised systems and access to essential resources. This aligns with the previous studies (Hoang & Perkmann, 2023; World Health Organization, 2020; Paunović et al., 2024), which highlight that healthcare entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in retaining health professionals. These factors address key reasons for migration such as low income, limited career growth, and unfavourable working environment in the public sector. This supports the findings of Najib et al. (2019), who investigated the brain-drain phenomenon among healthcare workers. Entrepreneurial healthcare settings provide a dynamic environment that fosters innovation and continuous professional development. Unlike many public healthcare institutions that are constrained by bureaucratic procedures and limited resources, private medical centres tend to be more flexible and responsive to change. This flexibility enables health professionals to introduce new entrepreneurial ideas, adopt emerging technologies, and implement innovative approaches to patient care. Participants in this study highlighted that healthcare entrepreneurship creates avenues for experimenting with improved service delivery models, such as patient-centred care, telemedicine, and efficient appointment systems. These innovations not only enhance the quality of care but also contribute to operational efficiency. Health professionals in private medical centres, in line with

the study of Recker et al. (2023), have greater access to skill development opportunities, which include hands-on experience in diverse clinical procedures, exposure to modern medical equipment, and participation in training workshops. This finding is consistent with Firmanda & Wahyuningsih (2025), which indicate that private medical centres cultivate a positive work environment characterised by mutual respect, open communication, and shared goals. Such environments enable health professionals to feel valued and supported, which strengthens their commitment to the organisation. A key feature of these settings is the emphasis on collaboration and teamwork. Participants reported that smaller team sizes in private medical centres facilitate closer working relationships among staff. This proximity enhances trust, improves communication, and promotes collective problem-solving. As a result, healthcare delivery becomes more coordinated and efficient. Recognition and appreciation were also identified as important elements of organisational culture. Many respondents noted that their contributions were acknowledged by management, either through formal rewards or informal feedback. This supports the findings of Imran & Firmansyah (2025), who demonstrated that sense of recognition fosters motivation and reinforces job satisfaction. Moreover, leadership style within private medical centres tends to be more participatory and inclusive. Founders and managers engage directly with staff, creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. However, the study finds that the effectiveness and sustainability of healthcare entrepreneurship as a retention strategy depends on the availability of supportive structures (Exton, 2010). Access to finance remains a major challenge, as many health professionals face difficulties in obtaining funds to establish or expand their practices. This finding is consistent with Dixon et al. (2004), which revealed the challenges of healthcare financing. Infrastructure issues, particularly unreliable electricity and limited access to modern equipment, also affect the smooth activities of healthcare entrepreneurship, as reported by Vinci et al. (2025) and Mabunda (2021). Furthermore, regulatory and administrative processes can be complex and time-consuming, which may discourage potential entrepreneurs. These challenges suggest that without adequate institutional and policy support, the benefits of healthcare entrepreneurship may not be fully realised.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

5.1 Strengthening Financial Support Mechanisms

Access to finance remains a major challenge for healthcare entrepreneurs, particularly in resource-constrained settings. The findings of this study suggest that strengthening financial support mechanisms is essential for sustaining private medical centres and enhancing their capacity to retain skilled professionals. Government and financial institutions should develop targeted funding tailored to the needs of healthcare entrepreneurs. These may include low-interest loans, grants, and credit facilities with flexible repayment terms.

5.2 Regulatory Reforms

The regulatory environment influences the growth and sustainability of private medical centres. Complex and time-consuming licensing procedures, multiple regulatory agencies, and inconsistent policies can discourage potential

entrepreneurs and hinder existing operations. Simplifying regulatory processes is therefore crucial. This may involve streamlining registration procedures, reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, and ensuring transparency in regulatory requirements.

5.3 Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) offer a strategic avenue for strengthening the healthcare system and improving workforce retention. Collaboration between government agencies and private medical centres can facilitate the sharing of resources, expertise, and infrastructure. Through PPPs, private healthcare providers can gain access to government support in areas such as training, funding, and technology. In return, public institutions can benefit from the efficiency, innovation, and flexibility of private sector practices.

5.4 Capacity Building

Capacity building is essential for ensuring the long-term success of healthcare entrepreneurship. The study highlights the need to integrate entrepreneurship and business management training into medical and nursing education. This integration will prepare health professionals to navigate the complexities and challenges of running healthcare enterprises. Training programmes should cover areas such as financial management, leadership, strategic planning, and healthcare innovation. Continuous professional development initiatives, including workshops, seminars, and mentorship programmes, should also be promoted.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study explored healthcare entrepreneurship as a strategy for retaining health professionals and reducing brain drain in Nigeria. The findings show that healthcare entrepreneurship provides an alternative pathway for health professionals to remain and practise within the country. Through ownership or active involvement in private medical centres, health professionals can achieve professional autonomy, improved job satisfaction, income stability, and better working conditions. The study further reveals that healthcare entrepreneurship reduces migration intentions by creating long-term professional and financial commitments within the local healthcare system. Private medical centres play a complementary role in public healthcare facilities by improving access to quality medical services and offering employment opportunities for diverse categories of health professionals. However, despite these benefits, the effectiveness of healthcare entrepreneurship as a retention strategy is constrained by challenges such as limited access to finance, regulatory bottlenecks, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient entrepreneurial training for health professionals. The study concludes that healthcare entrepreneurship has the potential to contribute to health workforce retention and the reduction of brain drain in Nigeria.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Governments at all levels and relevant regulatory agencies should develop and implement supportive policies that encourage healthcare entrepreneurship.

2. Financial institutions, in collaboration with government and development partners, should design tailored financing schemes for health professionals engaged in healthcare entrepreneurship.
3. Entrepreneurship and business management training should be incorporated into medical and health professional education programmes.
4. Investments in basic infrastructure, particularly reliable electricity supply and expanded health insurance coverage, are essential to reduce operational costs and improve the sustainability of private medical centres.

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