

Nursing Career Towards Financial Independence

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Abstract

In the Philippines, nurses serve as the backbone of the healthcare system, yet many of them continue to experience financial struggles that hinder their ability to achieve stability and independence. This study explored nursing as a pathway to financial independence among Filipino nurses working domestically by examining their demographic characteristics, perceptions of financial independence, financial status, and strategies for improving economic resilience. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed to capture nurses' lived experiences. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 28 nurses using a validated semi-structured interview guide. The instrument underwent expert review and content validation, yielding Aiken's V values ranging from 0.8 to 1.0. Findings show that the nursing workforce is predominantly female, largely young to middle-aged, and employed across various government salary grades. Most participants held bachelor's or master's degrees, were married or had family responsibilities, and served as primary household earners or lived independently. Nurses perceived financial independence as crucial for personal security, job satisfaction, professional motivation, fulfillment of family obligations, stress reduction, autonomy in decision-making, and preparation for the future. Financial analysis revealed a clear mismatch between income and expenses. While monthly salaries were relatively standardized, living costs varied considerably and often exceeded earnings. Only a few nurses reported modest savings, whereas the majority experienced monthly deficits, indicating limited capacity for savings and long-term financial planning. Single nurses living independently were generally able to meet basic needs but struggled to save, while family breadwinners faced greater financial strain and psychological stress. To address these challenges, participants emphasized the need for structured financial literacy programs, supplementary income opportunities, fair compensation and incentives, and access to affordable financial services. These insights informed the proposed Nurse Financial Empowerment and Resilience Program (N-FERP). Overall, the findings highlight the need for coordinated efforts among government agencies, healthcare institutions, and professional organizations to strengthen financial support systems and enhance the economic stability and retention of nurses in the Philippines.

Keywords: healthcare system, financial struggles, financial independence, financial analysis