



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i6/4268>

DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i6/4268

Received: 14 May 2018, **Revised:** 07 June 2018, **Accepted:** 15 June 2018

Published Online: 28 June 2018

In-Text Citation: (Abuseif & Ayaad, 2018)

To Cite this Article: Abuseif, S., & Ayaad, O. (2018). The Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Nurses' Turnover Intention Behavior at Tertiary Private Hospitals in Najran, KSA. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(6), 764–772.

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Vol. 8, No. 6, June 2018, Pg. 764 - 772

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The Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Nurses' Turnover Intention Behavior at Tertiary Private Hospitals in Najran, KSA

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Abstract:

Nurses' turnover intention has the potential to have devastating consequences on their lives, healthcare agencies and communities as a whole. It seems to be the main issue faced by many organizations due to the higher costs and losses that may occur as a result of turnover intention. Most countries are facing a shortage of nurses. Organizational commitment is one of the factors most related to the turnover intention among nurses. This study investigates the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention. This study utilizes a survey questionnaire distributed to 250 nurses working at three tertiary private hospitals in Najran, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The current study shows a significantly negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention among nurses. The present study contributes by providing assistance to the human resource department to determine the root causes of turnover intention. Overall, this study contributes to nurses' turnover intention literature in the context of the Middle East, specifically, since the nurses are an essential part of the healthcare industry, ultimately improving the quality of healthcare services provided to patients.

Keywords: *Turnover Intention, Organizational Commitment*

Introduction

Turnover intention is considered as among the most important problems faced by many institutions as it may lead to increase losses and costs. These costs may be direct or indirect and both are critical and complicated. Direct costs may come in the form of things like replacement or hiring temporary staff; while indirect costs may be more problematic, such as the cost of training (Morrell, Clarke, & Wilkinson, 2004). Based on statistics, the staff turnover cost in the United States alone is about \$5 trillion yearly (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004). In 2007, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the working conditions of nurses can be described as a crisis as a result of the shortage of nurses; additionally, the long-run supply of nurses cannot compensate this shortage. Also, majority of nursing education programs conducted by nursing colleges around the world are described as facing a scarcity (Darawad, 2009). The shortage of nurses was described by Scott (2001) as a universal shortage phenomenon, causing high morbidity and mortality rates among patients, poor productivity and failure to alleviate pain of patients. Based on prior studies, many factors are related to voluntary turnover intention. These factors may be categorized into individual, structural, environmental and job-related factors (Maertz, 2001). Organizational commitment is the variable most related to turnover intention of the workforce (Griffeth&Hom, 1995; Igharia&Greenhaus, 1992). Prior studies have focused on the phenomenon of the increasing rate of nurses' turnover intention, which has become an emerging issue worth considering. However, most studies on nurses' turnover intention have been carried out in the western countries with only a few studies in the Middle East region. Aiken et al. (2002) indicated that 32.9% and 41% of the Canadian nurses and nurses in the USA, respectively, feel dissatisfied with their jobs. Additionally, the nurses' turnover rate differs globally from one year to another. In the USA, it was 41% in 2002, while in the UK, it was 22%, and in KSA it was 38%, indicating it is a critical issue in Saudi Arabia as well as all over the world. According to Hayajneh et al. (2008), the turnover intention rate among Saudian nurses was 36.6%. Despite turnover intention being an important phenomenon for Saudi hospitals, rarely have studies been done to examine this problem in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), while the size of this problem keeps getting bigger and bigger in Saudian hospitals. Moreover, this issue covers the entire health sector of the country. Therefore, researchers should examine this issue in depth, conduct further studies to prove the results of prior studies and provide better illustrations of the determinants of nurses' turnover intention in KSA. Theoretically, researchers have focused on the effect of intention to leave on real turnover and its antecedents (Richer, Blanchard, &Vallerandi, 2002). What is more, turnover intentions has been studied by previous scholars more than actual turnover (Awang, Amir, & Osman, 2013). The current study assesses the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention among nurses at private hospitals in Najran, KSA.

Literature Review

- Turnover Intention can be defined as the precursor to the behavior of quitting one's job (Maertz& Campion, 1998). Turnover intention influences the efficiency of the organization (Erat, Erdil, Kitapci, &Comlek, 2012). Scholars have argued that turnover

intention is the best antecedent of actual turnover and it is commonly utilized as a proxy for turnover by researchers who have examined this relationship (Robertson, 2013).

- Organizational commitment is “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979, p.226). Employees tend to be committed to their organizations if they feel their efforts are recognized (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) argued that workers who are committed to their organization tend to strongly accept goals and values of the organization and exert more effort in their work to continue to remain in the organization. Therefore, organizational commitment affects the intentions of employees to stay in the organization besides motivating staff to exert more effort for the organization.

- Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intention

Turnover models has been widely examined and researchers have strongly supported the suggestion that behavioral intention to leave is the most direct factor affecting actual turnover behavior (Lee &Mowday, 1987). Researchers have recommended the study of attitude toward turnover intention more than actual quitting behavior as the cost of collection of data for turnover intention is lower than for actual turnover (Udo, Guimaraes, &Igharia, 1997). Furthermore, employees and employers are cautious about their decision prior to actually quitting their work and to execute an appropriate protection policy (Awan et al., 2013). Moreover, prior studies have indicated a direct and positive relationship between turnover intention and actual turnover (Udo et al., 1997).

As mentioned earlier, previous scholars have extensively studied organizational commitment (Meyer& Allen, 1984; 1987; 1991) and they have conceptualized it in different ways, but it is common for all conceptualizations that highly committed employees are less likely to quit their jobs (Tett& Meyer, 1993). Many studies have emphasized on the role of organizational commitment in mitigating turnover intention behavior (Igharia&Greenhaus, 1992; Loi, Hang-yue, & Foley, 2006; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Research Framework and Hypotheses

This study selects turnover intention as the dependent variable and organizational commitment as the independent variable.

The following hypothesis is proposed for testing the study’s objective:

H1: Organizational commitment is negatively related to turnover intention.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design refers to the fundamental methods, techniques, and procedures of data collection and analysis (Zikmund, 2010). Thus, a cross-sectional survey is utilized. As a result of restrictions on the information and randomization of the respondents not being possible in this study, a convenience sampling was employed to select 250 nurses from three tertiary private hospitals in Najran, KSA. The questionnaires were left with the head nurse of each department to be distributed to the nurses. The respondents were given one week to answer the questionnaire. After one week, the researcher collected the

questionnaires from the head nurse of each department. The nurses were asked to answer the items in the questionnaire by using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The survey was designed in order to measure two instruments adopted from previous studies; organizational commitment which employed 16 items adopted from Allen and Meyer (1990); and turnover intention with five items from Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) and five items from Lum et al. (1998). With regards to the reliability score of the instruments, Cronbach's alpha in prior studies is as follows: organizational commitment, .87 (Allen & Meyer, 1990) and turnover intention, .89 (Wayne et al., 1997).

Response Rate

A total of 250 nurses were included to complete the questionnaire. Of these, 87 questionnaires were not usable because the main questions related to the factors had not been properly completed. Owing to the hospital's heavy work load, especially in the intensive care unit and emergency unit, some of nurses did not have enough time to contribute to the research. However, from the 250 distributed questionnaires, 163 were considered appropriate for data analysis (representing a 65% response rate).

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 program was applied in order to analyze the data. Each variable was coded prior to being keyed into the program, involving a total of 16 items on organizational commitment and ten items on turnover intention.

Findings

Demographics of Respondents

Table (1) shows that the majority of the respondents are female (55.8%). Most of the respondents fall within the age group of 18 – 28 years (57.7%), followed by those aged from 29-38 years (36.8%). A total of 54.6% are married; while the rest are single (43.6%) and divorced (1.8%). In terms of education, majority of the respondents have a Bachelor's degree (71.8%), and most of the respondents are registered nurses (71.2%) followed by licensed practical nurses (27.6%). Finally, a fair distribution of them have working experience from 1-5 years (59.5%).

Table (1): Distribution of sample according to demographic data

N= 163	Frequency	Percentage
Job title		
Registered nurse	116	71.2%
Licensed practical nurses	45	27.6%
Assistant nurse	2	1.2%
Gender		
Male	72	44.2%
Female	91	55.8%
Age		

18-28 years	94	57.7%
29-38 Years	60	36.8%
39-48 Years	9	5.5%
> 48 Years	0	0.0%
Educational level		
Secondary school	1	0.6%
Diploma	45	27.6%
Bachelor's degree	117	71.8%
Marital status		
Married	89	54.6%
Single	71	43.6%
Divorced/widowed	3	1.8%
Working experience		
1-5 Years	97	59.5%
6-10 Years	56	34.4%
11-15 Years	6	3.7%
16-20 Years	2	1.2%
> 20 Years	2	1.2%

Hypotheses Testing

Pearson correlation coefficient analysis:

The Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was utilized to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Table (2) shows the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = -0.965$ (P -value < 0.01)) indicates a significant and negative correlation between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Table (2): Pearson correlation coefficient between organizational commitment and turnover intention

	Turnover intention
Organization commitment	-0.965*
P-value	0.000

Linear regression analysis:

Linear regression test were conducted, the organization commitment was entered as the independent variable (control variable) and the turnover intention was included as the predictor variable.

Based on table (3), the value of R^2 for the control variable is 0.931, which means that the organization commitment contributed 93.1% of the total variation associated with turnover intention. The regression results revealed that the organization commitment had a negative effect on turnover intention ($Beta = -0.965$), it's significant in predicting a participant's turnover intention.

Table (3): Regression results of organization commitment on turnover intention

	Beta	R²	F	t	P-value
Organization commitment	-0.965	0.931	0.000	46.639	0.000

Discussion

The present study presumes that organizational commitment is negatively related to turnover intention. Organizational commitment is an essential variable that may drive the workers to achieve organizational goals and enhance its competitive edge over its competitors (Mowday et al., 1982). In this study, nurses' commitment is investigated in terms of its importance level and its relationship with turnover intention. The study's findings show that organizational commitment is negatively and significantly related to turnover intention, indicating that nurses who are highly committed to the organization will be less prone to experience turnover intention. The studies of Samad (2006) and Allen and Meyer (1990) also reported a significantly negative relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

In addition, organizational commitment has been reported to be associated with employees' turnover intention in different institutions, including hospitals. A significant and direct relationship has been found between organizational commitment and turnover intention in the context of nurses (i.e., Lum et al., 1998).

Conclusion

The present study conducted an investigation of organizational commitment as a predictor of turnover intention among nurses. In this study, organizational commitment is shown to be associated with nurses' turnover intention. This result can provide assistance to the hospital management and human resource department to determine the root causes of turnover intention and actual turnover. Particularly, workers with low organizational commitment are more prone to negative behavior, like turnover intention. With a high turnover rate, many hospitals are faced that high qualified nurses deciding to leave for better opportunities elsewhere. The hospital invests significant amount of resources in its skilled nurses through training and other benefits. Thus, hospital will loose if its valued nurses leave. Pare and Tremblay (2007) do suggest that by understanding the relationship between commitment and turnover intention, the organization will be able to increase employee's level of commitment and reduce turnover intention. This will result in a competitive and productive organisation.

It is recommended to the hospital management to pursue a retention strategy highlighting commitment to obtain a committed nurses through application of suitable human resource policies such as training, career planning, and employee participation to reduce employee turnover intention (Rahman et al., 2008). By building hospital's business model around organisational commitment, morale and commitment can be strengthened. When nurses are committed to their hospitals, they do not have the need to look for work elsewhere, which will lead to a successful and competitive hospital.

In theory, the intention of turnover is a subject has been extensively studied in the Western countries but its study is somewhat neglected in the region of the Middle East. Therefore, the current study adds to the literature on turnover intention in the context of the Middle East, specifically, in KSA as well as it provides an illustration of the intention of turnover among nurses working in private hospitals. It can be said that the healthcare field relies heavily on nurses in enhancing the quality of health services offered to individuals and in promoting the industry in general. Furthermore, studies devoted to the examination of organizational commitment have been neglected in KSA prior to the present study, which makes a significant contribution theoretically.

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