

Effect of Perceived Organisational Support, Perceived Co-Worker Support, and Work-Family Conflict on Turnover Intention among Nurses in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Nurses are the largest occupational group responsible for delivering high-quality patient care. However, a higher nurses' turnover rate negatively affects nurses' morale and quality of care and increases the workload of the remaining nurses, resulting in further turnover. In Bangladesh, hospitals lack sufficient nurses. The nurses' turnover rate (15-18%) will lead to substantial financial and service-quality losses. The nurses' turnover rate in Bangladesh is approximately 17%. Therefore, this study aims to identify how to mitigate turnover intention among nurses in the healthcare sector in Bangladesh. Still, very little research has been conducted to date on the linkages between perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support, and turnover intention. The findings of these variables are inconclusive, necessitating further research. Moreover, most research to date has been conducted in Western settings. However, the relationship has yet to be thoroughly examined in the emerging Asian context, especially in Bangladesh. In addition, previous studies have overlooked the mediating effect of work-family conflict in the relationship between perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support and turnover intention. The proposed research framework is supported by social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory.

Keywords: *Perceived Organizational and Co-Worker Support, Work-family Conflict, Turnover Intention, Social Exchange Theory, Conservation Resources Theory*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nurses are the heart of healthcare and an essential pillar of society on which health standards heavily rely (Al-Haroon & Al-Qahtani, 2020). Gebregkziabher et al. (2020) stated that nurses are the largest occupational group responsible for delivering high-quality patient care. However, globally, nurses' turnover adversely affects hospital operations (Huang et al., 2021). Consequently, Alshareef et al. (2020) recommended that reducing nurses' turnover is a key priority. Nurses' actual turnover has a profound effect on patients and organizational outcomes (Labrague, 2020). High nurse turnover leads to a high nurse-to-patient ratio, resulting in increased workload and lower-quality patient care (Shin et al., 2019). Therefore, Huang et al. (2019) stated that researchers should focus on factors influencing nurses' turnover intention to uncover the causes of nurse turnover and alleviate the problem. Hom et al. (2017) strongly believed that turnover intention is a proxy for turnover and a reliable predictor of actual turnover. Ilyas et al. (2020) acknowledged that researchers should study turnover intention rather than actual turnover, as employees are less likely to disclose genuine reasons for leaving their organization. Therefore, the concept of turnover intention can be adopted to represent actual turnover (Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2020).

Wong and Wong (2017) reported that most studies on perceived organizational support (POS) and turnover intention (TI) have been conducted in Western countries. Moreover, perceived co-worker support (PCS) is an overlooked predictor of turnover intention (Ghosh et al., 2019). Therefore, a systematic investigation of these variables (POS, PCS, and turnover intention) is necessary to assess the generalizability of the findings across settings, particularly in Bangladesh. In addition, there is some ambiguity regarding the relationship among perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support, and turnover intention. Therefore, the mixed findings warrant further investigation.

In Bangladesh, most nurses are female (Akter et al., 2019). According to Shen-Miller and Smiler (2015), nurses experience high levels of work-family conflict because women dominate the profession. Yildiz et al. (2021) found that research on work-family conflict (WFC) in the health sector remains relatively limited. In addition, work-family conflict has been used as a mediator by several researchers in various contexts. However, prior research has ignored the mediating effect of WFC in the relationship between POS, PCS and turnover intention. Therefore, this study determines the role of WFC as a mediator in the link between POS, PCS, and turnover intention.

In Bangladesh, according to the Bangladesh Nursing & Midwifery Council (2021), the total number of registered nurses is 67529. Siddiqui (2020) pointed out that Bangladesh has only 24% of the nurses it needs. In addition, according to the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (2020, as cited in Joarder et al., 2021), Bangladesh has only 4.11 nurses per 10,000 populations. Moreover, Joarder et al. (2021) pointed out that there are more doctors than nurses in Bangladesh. Joarder (2021) also confirmed that hospitals in Bangladesh lack sufficient nurses. Therefore, Joarder et al. (2021) recommended that a favorable policy environment is necessary to attract and retain nurses to fulfil population needs in Bangladesh. The nurses' turnover rate (15-18%) will lead to substantial financial and service-quality losses (Dewanto & Wardhani, 2018). Kabir et al. (2022) reported a 17% turnover rate among female nurses in Bangladesh. Therefore, this study emphasizes nurses' turnover intention to mitigate actual turnover in Bangladesh's healthcare sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Turnover Intention

The research on turnover first appeared around 1920 (Hom et al., 2017). Dwivedi (2015) defined turnover intention as "the aim of employees to search for alternative jobs or leave the organization in the future" (p.453). Rasheed et al. (2018) argued that employees who have turnover intention are mentally leaving but physically staying in the organization. Hence, the relative significance of turnover intention studies is greater than that of administrative and organizational behaviors (Kim et al., 2017), since turnover intention ultimately leads to actual turnover, which increases organizational expenses by requiring the recruitment, selection, and training of new employees (Arshad, 2016). Thus, turnover intention is an important and widely studied topic in human resource management (Jabeen et al., 2020). Perceived support from the hospital motivates nurses to devote themselves to their work and care about the organization's development (Li et al., 2020). As a result, Liu and Liu (2016) argued that nurses likely do not seek other employment opportunities and instead decide to remain in their current organization. On the other hand, De Clercq et al. (2020) indicated that co-worker support diminishes turnover

intention because it assists individuals to feel less stressed about their organizational functioning. Moreover, Zhang et al. (2019) found that work-family conflict is a significant predictor of turnover intention among professional nurses. Therefore, this study will also consider the mediating effect of work-family conflict.

2.2 Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger et al. (1986) coined the term “Perceived Organizational Support”. The researchers defined POS as “the employees’ belief that organizations value their continued contributions and genuinely care for their well-being” (p.501). Loi et al. (2006) stated that employees with high POS report stronger feelings of attachment and loyalty to their organization. Besides, Jones-Carmack (2019) explained that employees’ feelings about the organization are affected by POS and, consequently, their behavior at work. As a result, an organization’s dedication to its employees enhances employees’ dedication to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to Engelbrecht and Samuel (2019), Employees who lack enough care and support from their organization will seek alternative employment, increasing their turnover intention. Li et al. (2020) contended that perceived organizational support in hospitals motivates nurses to devote themselves to their work and care about the organization’s development. Therefore, Liu and Liu (2016) argued that nurses are unlikely to seek other employment opportunities and instead choose to remain with their current organization. Therefore, this study considers POS as a predictor of turnover intention.

2.3 Perceived Co-Worker Support

Desrosiers (2001) indicated that the perceived co-worker support (PCS) construct was proposed by Ladd and Henry (2000) and, from the concept of Ladd and Henry, Desrosiers (2001) defined PCS as “a global belief formed by the employee concerning how their co-workers treat them, and whether their co-workers value their contributions and care about their well-being” (p.60). Previous researchers investigated several factors that might decrease employees’ intention to quit their organization (De Clercq et al., 2020). Supportive employee-colleague interactions in the workplace foster professional development and discourage employees from leaving their current organizations (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). Some researchers found that co-worker support reduces the desire to leave their organization (Nazir et al., 2016). Also, co-worker support reduces job stress, diminishing turnover intention (Mazzetti et al., 2016). However, Tews et al. (2013) argued that additional research is warranted given the limited research on co-worker support and turnover intention. Singh et al. (2019) posited that perceived co-worker support improves the work climate and boosts good moods and self-esteem. Consequently, employees are more pleased with their jobs and have a lower propensity to leave their employment (De Clercq et al., 2020). Therefore, this study will explore the effect of PCS on nurses’ turnover intention in Bangladesh.

2.4 Work-Family Conflict

The concept of work-family conflict was first defined by Kahn et al. (1964). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) described work-family conflict as a “form of inter-role conflict on which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (p. 77). Ghislieri et al. (2017) indicated that WFC is increasing due to working conditions and gender roles, and that an individual (mainly female) faces WFC in fulfilling various roles, including spouse, daughter-in-law, employee, and mother (Hussain, 2008). Rasheed et al. (2018) further indicated that women fulfil economic and social needs by entering the workforce in the South Asian subcontinent. However, as women dominate the nursing profession, they have quit intentions, mainly due to family responsibilities (Nooney et al., 2010). Yildirim and Aycan (2008) articulated that the role of WFC in the nursing profession is relevant. Accordingly, researchers have suggested that WFC influences turnover intentions, performance, and nurses’ health and well-being (Chen et al., 2015). Labrague (2020) asserted that research on WFC and nurse managers’ turnover intention is scarce. However, many studies have found that WFC is a significant predictor of turnover intention among professional nurses (Zhang et al., 2019). Williams et al. (2016) also argued that additional research is required on the negative outcome of work-family conflicts, such as increased turnover rates. High WFC leads to high turnover intention, whereas low WFC leads to low turnover intention (Noor & Maad, 2009). Nikkhah-Farkhani & Piotrowski (2020) found WFC’s positive and significant influence on the Iranian nurses’ turnover intention. On the other hand, no relationships were found between these constructs for Polish nurses. Therefore, further investigation is needed. From the above discussion, it is clear that WFC is a significant factor in turnover intention. However, there is a paucity of research on the mediating effect of WFC. Therefore, this study uses WFC as a mediator.

2.5 Perceived Organisational Support and Turnover Intention

According to Eisenberger et al. (1986), POS emerged from Blau's (1964) social exchange theory (SET). Herachwati et al. (2018) stated that POS is a social exchange relationship between the organization and its employees. Based on SET, Rathi and Lee (2017) claimed that employees may feel obligated to the company when an organization facilitates the satisfaction of various employees' fundamental needs. Huang et al. (2019) also indicated that employees would feel obligated to serve their organization if they received fair and supportive treatment, and were less likely to quit. Eisenberger et al. (2019) described the norm of reciprocity as employees placing a high level of effort to fulfil organizational goals in exchange for a high degree of support. In addition, Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) noted that members of supportive, caring organizations are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and behavioral intentions. As a result, these organizations are likely to develop positive employee outcomes (Maningo-Salinas, 2010). Based on this idea, previous empirical studies have found that POS is associated with outcomes such as turnover intention (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Researchers also agree that reciprocity can develop feelings of obligation, enhance positive outcomes (Kim & Qu, 2020), and reduce turnover intentions (Gupta, 2019).

However, few scholars have reported an inverse relationship between POS and turnover intention; some studies have reported a direct effect of POS on turnover intention. Ghosh et al. (2019) confirmed that POS has an indirect impact on turnover intention, mediated by affective commitment, and the direct effect of POS on turnover intention is insignificant. According to researchers, if employees' contributions exceed inducements, they are more likely to quit the organization (including support at work). In addition, some researchers found no relationship between POS and turnover intention. Buhari et al. (2020) revealed that POS has no impact on turnover intention. As a result, IT companies should reconsider what it means to provide organizational support to IT professionals. This result was supported by Herachwati et al. (2018) and AlHashmi et al. (2019). Therefore, the empirical landscape of the association between PSS and TI shows inconsistent findings, making it impossible to draw conclusions or generalize about the relationship. Reaching a satisfactory solution to this issue requires further research among nurses in Bangladesh.

2.6 Perceived Co-Worker Support and Turnover Intention

Social exchange theory has been considered one of the most important theoretical foundations for reciprocity among co-workers and superior behavioral relationships in work organizations (Abugre, 2017). According to social exchange theory, co-workers' support helps employees feel obliged to reciprocate by engaging in positive work behaviors that will eventually increase organizational effectiveness (Kim et al., 2018). Previous scholars have found that perceived co-worker support and positive work attitudes are positively related to, and negatively related to, withdrawal behaviors (Parker et al., 2013). In addition, perceived supervisor support, perceived co-worker support, and credible social exchange relationships will yield various resources, stable energy, and a sense of achieving significant goals (Kim et al., 2018). Pinna et al. (2020) found a negative association between perceived co-worker support and turnover intention. The researchers indicated that social support (i.e., PCS) is significant in fostering positive attitudes among employees and leading to higher levels of satisfaction and engagement at work, thereby reducing turnover intention. However, Ghosh et al. (2019) found no significant relationship between perceived co-worker support and turnover intention. In addition, the results demonstrated a full mediation effect on the paths from perceived co-worker support to turnover intention. The above discussion indicates that the findings appeared mixed or inconclusive. While most results reveal a significant negative relationship between perceived co-worker support and turnover intention, others show that it is not significantly associated with turnover intention. Therefore, based on these arguments, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between perceived co-worker support and turnover intention among nurses in Bangladesh.

2.7 Work-Family Conflict as A Mediator

According to the conservation of resources (COR) theory developed by Hobfoll (1989), people often aim to conserve their resources, and possible threats to significant resources can generate psychological stress. Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) proposed COR theory as a heuristic model describing the etiology of the interaction between work and family. Zhang et al. (2019) conceptualized WFC as a stressor. According to the COR theory, occupational stress causes WFC because their valuable resources are threatened and depleted (Hobfoll, 1998). Hobfoll (1989) also conceptualized WFC as a type of stress in COR theory. Employees may experience the loss of resources, such as time and energy, when balancing work and family demands, resulting in stress, a type of WFC (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999).

The COR theory is an appropriate framework for the relationship between supervisor support and WFC (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008). In addition, COR theory posited that supervisor and co-worker support help employees balance work and family responsibilities and reduce WFC (Jansen et al., 2003). COR theory states that a supportive supervisor fulfils employees' family needs, which are assumed to mitigate WFC (Glavelia et al., 2013). Zhang et al. (2019) reported that supervisor support (resource gain) could mitigate the negative influence of resource loss on nurses facing WFC.

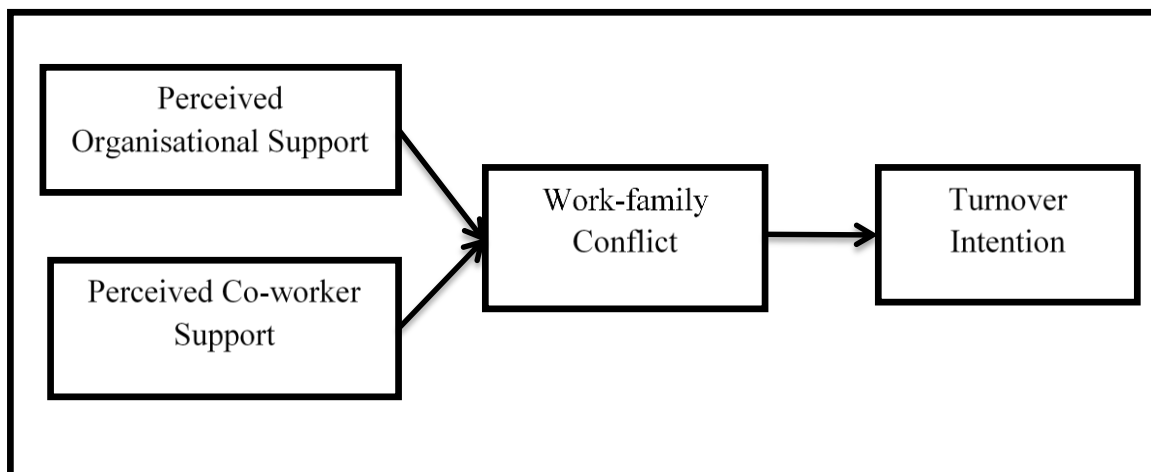
According to COR theory, the experience of inter-role conflict is associated with negative outcomes, such as quitting the organization (Hammer et al., 2003), because valued resources are lost in both domains (Singh et al., 2018). As resources are connected, losses of primary resources leave the employee with inadequate resources to be replenished (Singh et al., 2018). This creates further losses and the potential for a "loss spiral" (Hobfoll & Shirom, 1993). In this situation, Singh et al. (2018) argued that employees might need to take stringent actions, such as changing careers, to defend against further resource loss. Individuals who lack adequate resources to cope with problems resulting from WFC report negative consequences, such as family distress, job distress, poor job performance, and plans to leave the organization (Karatepe & Kilic, 2007). In addition, COR theory posits that the loss of resources is the basis of employee stress, resulting in adverse outcomes. As a result, Zhang et al. (2019) found that WFC is a significant stressor for nurses, causing them to deplete their psychological resources and eventually leave their professions. The authors also posited that nurses might consider quitting their current job to better deal with the WFC. In addition, nurses' positive resources, such as physical and psychological health, are threatened by WFC; nurses' well-being tends to be protected by turnover intention (Yildiz et al., 2021). From the above discussion, it can be deduced that COR theory could serve as a bridge linking perceived organizational and co-worker support to work-family conflict and, in turn, to turnover intention.

2.8 Research Framework

The proposed research model depicted in Figure 1.0 below was developed to illustrate the relationship among perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support, and turnover intention. In addition, this study will examine the mediating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support, and turnover intention. This research framework is supported by social exchange theory (SET) and conservation of resources (COR) theory.

Figure 1.0

Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support, Perceived Co-worker Support and Turnover Intention, Mediated by Work-family Conflict



3. CONCLUSION

Based on the investigation, it can be concluded that the perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support and work-family conflict affect turnover intention. However, inconsistencies in the relationships among perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support, and turnover intention warrant further investigation. In addition, past studies have ignored the mediating effect of work-family conflict in the relationship between perceived organizational support, perceived co-worker support and turnover intention. Therefore, this study would contribute to the existing literature. The research framework is supported by social exchange theory and conservation of resources theory, confirming the study's validity. Besides, a better understanding of nurses' turnover intentions can assist policymakers in taking measures to reduce turnover before it occurs (Moore, 2021). In addition, researchers can develop strategies by examining factors influencing turnover intention among valuable healthcare professionals (Alameddine et al., 2017). Also, industry leaders can use this study to understand nurses' attitudes and predict future turnover intentions. Therefore, this study focuses on nurses' turnover intention in Bangladesh.

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