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Protecting healthcare through organizational support to reduce turnover intention

Abstract:

Purpose - Nursing profession is facing the problem of turnover across the globe. The focus of this study is to identify the mechanism through which organizational support helps nurses to reduce their turnover intention.

Design/methodology/approach - Data from 324 nurses was collected using a questionnaire based survey on the basis of convenience sampling technique.

Findings - The results generated using structural equation modeling has confirmed the mediating role of organizational commitment and citizenship behavior between POS and turnover intention. In addition, psychological contract breach was found to weaken the positive association between POS and citizenship behavior.

Originality/value - This study adds to the previous studies by incorporating organizational citizenship behavior as a mediator between POS and turnover intention and psychological contract breach as a moderator between POS and citizenship behavior using social exchange and job-demand-resource theories.

Key Words: Nursing Shortage, Turnover Intention, Perceived Organiational Support, Psychological Contract Breach, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Affective Commitment,

Introduction:

The importance of health care sector is essential in improving health related outcomes. This requires improvement in quality as well as quantity of health care providers (Zhang et al., 2016). In terms of quality, scarcity of the qualified health care professional (Wong et al., 2015) and in terms of quantity the shortage of the nurses (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013) is the main obstacle in

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achieving improved health care outcomes. According to the statistics provided by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2006), there is a shortage of 4.3 million nurses across globe. While, as per the statistics provided by European Commission and United States, this figure would become worse in 2020, i.e. 590,000 and 340,000 respectively (Sermeus & Bruyneel, 2010; Auerbach, Buerhaus & Staiger, 2007).

In Pakistan, the number of nurses rose from 25000 in 1997 to 90,276 in 2015 (Economic survey of pakistan, 2014-15). However, the problem of nurse shortage is still the same as the government of Pakistan has reported a shortage of 60,000 nurses (Khawaja, 2013). There are a number of reasons behind the shortage of nurses in Pakistan i.e. less institutions, brain drain, bullying, monetary incentives and turnover (Islam, Ahmed & Ali, 2017; Khowaja, 2009; Khawaja, 2013). Amongst these, the issue of turnover among Pakistani nurses is at a higher level (Shehzad and Malik, 2014; Somani & Khowaja, 2012), which has become a challenge for the health care professionals. Despite ample literature, researchers are still unable to identify the actual reasons of nurse turnover, therefore, they have suggested study turnover intention (Tett and Meyer, 1993; Miller et al., 1979). According to Islam et al., (2013), "...turnover intention is the last cognitive step employees make in voluntary turnover".

Employees' intention to leave the organization may be reduced by increasing their level of organizational commitment (OC) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Gupta et al., 2016; Islam, Khan & Bukhari, 2016). OCB is the " individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization (Organ 1988, p. 4)". While OC is the, "employee's mental connection with his/her present organization, and is related to their behavioral investment with the organization, and the coincidence of individual and

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organizational goals (Mowday et al., 1982)." Researchers have suggested rewards, recognitions and salary as antecedents of OC and OCB, however, perceived organizational support (POS) has not been shed light on a frequent basis (Battistelli et al., 2016; Liu & Liu, 2016;).

According to Eisenberger et al., (1986, p.501) POS is "employees global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being". Employees believe of their care consequent positive outcomes (Bolino et al. 2015; Bailey et al. 2015). Although the association between POS and OCB is well documented in the field of organizational behavior, however, there is a lack of empirical investigation of the same in the health care sector (Trybou et al. 2014; Islam et al., 2017). In addition, literature has confirmed the direct consequent of POS and left room for the researchers to identify the mechanism through which POS influence outcomes (Islam et al., 2017; Trybou et al. 2014; Gupta et al., 2016). According to Riggoti (2009), employee reactions to job are dependent on specific situations, conditions and expectations (psychological contract in this study). A psychological contract (PC) is "an implicit contract between an individual and his organization which specifies what each expects to give and receive from each other in their relationship" (Kotter, 1973). Organizations, when fail to meet employees psychological contracts, results breach of the psychological contract that may reduce the intensity of employee-employer relationship (Islam et al., 2017). Therefore, following the existing voids in literature and using job-demand-resource (JDR) and social exchange theory (SET), this study considered psychological contract breach (PCB) as a moderator between POS and OCB.

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Hypotheses Development

The Mediating role of AC and OCB:

The literature on POS is well documented, but the mechanism between POS and its outcomes are limited (Shacklock et al. 2014; Antoinette Bargagliotti, 2012). This study proposed that, the presence of adequate resources at job (i.e. POS) enhances employees emotional attachment towards their organization and in turn they willing to be with their organization. More specifically, a high supportive environment of the hospitals attracts nurses and they not only get emotionally attached and ready to perform beyond their formal job descriptions, but also show their willingness to be a part of it. This proposition can further be explained with the help of JDR and social exchange theories that, employees reciprocate the job resources in terms of emotional attachment which ultimately lead employees towards positive behaviors and attitudes (Blau, 1964; Bakker et al., 2007).

As the literature on POS and direct outcomes is well documented such as POS positively associated with employees' emotional attachment (Battistelli et al. 2016; Sharma & Dhar 2016; Kim et al. 2016) as well as extra role behaviors (Perreira & Berta, 2015; Jain, Giga & Cooper, 2013), and reduced intention to leave the organization (Paillé, 2015; Islam, Ahmed & Ahmad, 2015; Nuhn & Wald, 2016), while emotionally attached employees tends to show less intention to leave the organization (Nazir et al., 2016; Yousaf, Sanders & Abbas, 2015). Therefore, this study assumes that affective commitment may perform the role of mediator between POS and turnover intention (TI). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: AC mediates the association between POS and TI.

H2: OCB mediates the association between POS and TI.

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Moderating role of PCB:

According to Lind and Tyler (1988), organizational resources in isolation are not enough for the employees to shape their positive job related outcomes. The importance of fulfillment of promissory expectations is equally important as this define the effect and magnitude of the outcomes. "Psychological contract (PC) is an implicit contract between an individual and his organization which specifies what each expects to give and receive from each other in their relationship" (Kotter, 1973). Employees when feel that their organizations remained unable to fulfill a few of their expectations, results breach of PCB, and this may affect the social exchange relationship (Rigotti, 2009).

According to Moorman et al., (1998), fairness from the organizational side is always seen as organizational discretionary control and employees consider it to evaluate organizational support. Nurses evaluation of unfair treatment and unfulfilled promises by their organization affect their social exchange relations (Colquitt et al. 2013) and this feeling enhance the stress level (Robinson & Morrison, 1995). According to Colquitt et al. (2013), such stress (e.g. incur with the perceptions of PCB) reduced their eagerness to perform beyond their formal job descriptions. A number of other studies have documented the direct associations among POS, commitment, turnover and OCB (Zhao et al. 2007). However, this study extends the previous studies by arguing the indirect impact of PCB on POS-outcome relationships. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H3: PCB moderate the association between POS and OCB. [Insert Figure 1 here]

Methods:

Participants and sample and measures:

This study collected data from 14 large hospitals of Pakistan between June- 2016 to January-

2017. As per the economic survey, there are 90276 registered nurses in Pakistan. The study

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selected a sample of 385 using the formula given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), of which 324 responded back. The study used questionnaire based survey on the basis of convenience sampling. First, the permission was obtained from the respective heads and than questionnaire was given to the respondents with the note that their responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purpose.

On the basis of demographics, 53.7 percent of the nurses were female (N= 174), belonging to private hospitals (i.e. N=213, 65.7%) with less than 5-years of experience (i.e. N=147, 45.4%) and having age between 25-30 years (i.e. N=139, 42.9%).

The study evaluated respondents responses on a five point Likert scale ranging from "1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree". All the measures were adapted from the previous studies as they have already examined regarding their validity and reliability (see table 1).

Variable	Author(s)	No. of items used (Cronbach Alpha)	Sample Items
POS	Eisenberger et al., (1986)	6 (0.92)	"My organization shows concern for me"
Turnover Intention	Farrell and Rusbult (1992)	3 (0.94)	"I frequently think of leaving this organization"
OCB	Lee and Allen (2002)	8 (0.88)	"I take the time to listen to my co- workers' problems and worries"
Affective Commitment	Allen and Meyer (1990)	6 (0.94)	"I really feel as if organizational problems are my own"
РСВ	Robbins and Morison (2000)	5 (0.90)	"I have not received everything promised to me in exchange for my contributions"

Table 1: Measures of the Study

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Results:

Preliminary data analysis:

The data first, was conducted regarding the missing values, normality and multivariate outliers because this may affect the results generated using AMOS (Kline, 2005; Byrne, 2010; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The presence of missing values is a common issue in the data, however, the data of this study was free from missing values. One of the reasons for this might be the personal attention in collecting data. The study than examined data normality through the values of Kurtosis and Skewness (i.e. $\pm 3 \& \pm 1$ respectively) and data was found to be normally distributed. However, twelve responses were excluded from the final analysis because of the multivariate outliers.

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Variables	Mean	2									
Gender	1		I								
Sector	ł	1	.151**								
Experience	ł	1	.015	-191**	ı						
Age	ł		.040	103	.879**	·					
POS	2.98	0.89	163	.024	.122*	.198**	(0.92)				
OCB	3.05	09.0	174	059	.050	.135**	.526**	(0.88)			
II	3.22	1.19	.217**	.161**	258**	271**	548**	596**	(0.94)		
AC	2.55	0.89	243**	.047	.086	.152**	**909.	.511**	584**	(0.94)	
PCB	3.59	0.84	.223**	030	.012	078	628**	614**	.586**	566**	(06.0)

Table 2: Mean, Standard deviation, internal consistency and correlation e

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Second, the data was examined regarding confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The values of model fit were assured through the values of NFI (i.e. ≥ 0.90), GFI (i.e. ≥ 0.90), CFI (i.e. ≥ 0.90), RMSEA (i.e. ≤ 0.08). The initial values of the model fit were not as per the standardized values i.e. $x^2/df=3.98$, NFI=0.84, GFI=0.88, CFI=0.89, RMSEA=0.09. After making some modifications in the error terms and residuals the values of the model fit were founded as: $x^2/df=2.87$, NFI=0.95, GFI=0.96, CFI=0.97, RMSEA=0.03.

The study then conducted mean, standard deviation, cronbach alpha values and correlation among all the variables. The mean values of the variables range between 2.55 to 3.59 and the values of standard deviation ranges between 0.60 to 1.19 (see table 2). In addition, POS is found to positively correlate with OCB (β =0.5236, P<0.01) and AC (β =0.606, P<0.01), while negatively correlate with TI (β =-0.271, P<0.01). Similarly, OCB and AC were found to have a negative relationship with turnover intention (β =-0.596 & -0.584, P<0.01) respectively.

Hypotheses Testing:

The study applied structure equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses. The values of the model fit regarding structural model were found to be good i.e. x^2/df =2.93, NFI=0.93, GFI=0.93, CFI=0.96, RMSEA=0.039. The standardized path estimates of the proposed model are presented in figure 2. The values of the figure show that the indirect path between POS and TI through OCB is lesser (path coefficient=-0.25, P=0.00) comparing direct path (path coefficient=-0.44, P=0.00) but still significant (i.e. partial mediation). This result support suggested hypothesis H1. In addition, the indirect path between POS and TI through AC is lesser (path coefficient=-0.30,

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P=0.00) comparing direct path (path coefficient=-0.44, P=0.00) but still significant (i.e. partial mediation). This result supports suggested hypothesis H2.

[Insert Figure 2]

The study applied hierarchal regression to test the moderating effect of PCB on the association between POS and OCB. In the first step the main effect of PCB (-0.38**), POS (0.46**) and demographical variables (all insignificant) were examined with OCB, whereas, in the second step the interactional term (POS*PCB) was regressed with OCB and found a significant association between the same i.e. -0.25 with the total variance of 23 percent (Aiken and West, 1991). In addition, Figure 3 also determine that in the presence of low psychological contract breach the association between POS and organizational citizenship behavior is strong. This result supports suggested hypothesis H3.

Variablas	Organizational citizenship behavior		
Variables	Step 1	Step 2	
Gender	0.06	0.02	
Age	0.05	0.06	
Qualification	0.08	0.07	
Tenure	0.04	0.03	
POS	0.46**	0.49**	
PCB	-0.38**	-0.33**	
POS*PCB		-0.25**	
R^2	.28	.51	
ΔR^2		0.23	

Table 3: Regression analysis for Moderation

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Discussion and Implications

The core aim of the study was to identify the ways using which the problem of nurses turnover intention may be reduced. Based on JDR and social exchange theories, this study examined the role of POS, OCB, AC and PCB in reducing turnover intention among nurses. The study found that AC performs a partial mediating role between POS and TI. This means that, the presence of organizational support enhances nurses perception about the resources at job to create emotional bonds between nurses and organization, in turn nurses reciprocate by reducing their intention to leave the organziation. In a most recent study Fazio et al., (2017) also noted that, employees with the perceptions of support from hospitals are more attached and tends to stay.

One of the important, but least investigated is the mediating role of OCB. This study found OCB as partial mediator between POS and TI. As per the social exchange theory, employees when perceive a supportive work environment tends to perform beyond their formal job descriptions and try to be with their current organziation. This study (perhaps the first time) empirically investigates the moderating role of PCB between POS and OCB. The study found that the strength of the relationship between POS and OCB weakens in the presence of PCB. This means that in the absence of psychological contracts, nurses feel stress, which restricts them to perform beyond their formal job descriptions (Robinson & Morrison, 1995).

Theoretically, this study has contributed to the existing literature on turnover intention and identify that the association between POS and TI may further be explained via AC and OCB. Employees when belief that the reward for the reduced turnover would be the desired resources at the job (i.e. organizational support in this study), can behave accordingly for the reinforcement. Employees with the greater perception of support tends to perform more on the basis of norms of reciprocity. According to Trybou et al. (2014), norms of reciprocity not only

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based on straightforward relationships, however, most of the past studies have focused on the direct outcomes of POS. This study noted that, nurses perception of breach of psychological contracts weakens their psychological bonds with the hospitals and negatively impact their self-protective mechanism. This result increased the levels of stress and reduced intention to work extra for their organization and other colleagues.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study has a number of limitations. First, the study collected data from the hospitals, therefore, the results of the study can not be generalized on other dynamic environments. It is therefore, suggested to the future researchers to collect data from different organizations and cultural contexts as individuals responses varies in different cultural (Zhao et al. 2007). Second, the implications of this study are limitized by cross-sectional data. Future researchers should conduct longitudinal studies to understand cause-and-effect relationship. Finally, the model of the study should be extended by the future researchers by incorporating psychological contract breach as a moderation on POS and TI relationship.

Practical Implications

This study has practical implications for the policy makers of health care. The increased competitive environment of healthcare demands more from the nurses (Gillet et al. 2013). In addition, retaining nurses has become a major challenge for the policy makers of healthcare (Fazio et al., 2017). This study suggests to the policy makers that, building a supportive work environment is an effective way to generate employees' positive work outcomes and to develop psychological bonds. Organizations, by not focusing on supportive environment, may involuntarily fail to meet the employees' expectations (i.e. psychological contracts). In such

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situations, employees tend to show reduced extra-role behaviors, emotional bonds with their organization and tends to show more intention to leave the organization.

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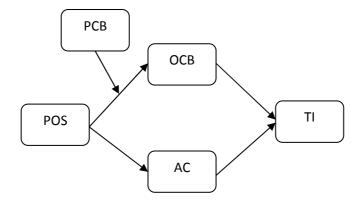
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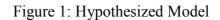
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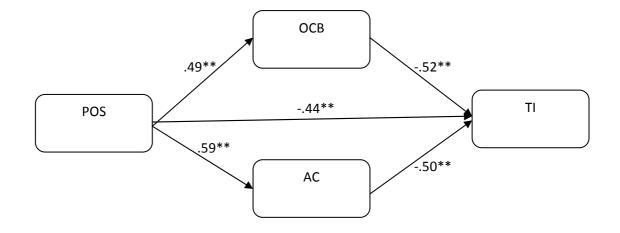


Figure 2: Stansardized Estimates

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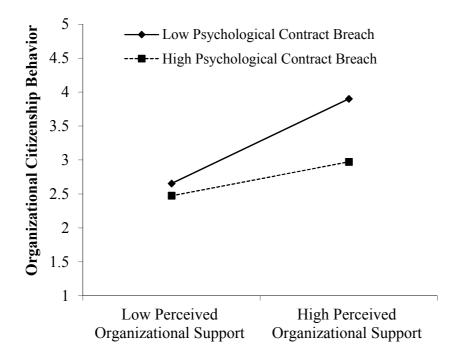


Figure 3: Moderating role of PCB

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