



The Mediating Role of Organization Engagement on Perceived Supervisor Support and Intention to Leave (Case study: Faghihi Hospital in Shiraz)

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Abstract

Introduction: Regarding the importance of health care providers such as nurses who have always been in stressful environment, it is clearly important for the hospital administration to employ supportive behaviors and create much more supportive atmosphere for the nurses who are reportedly sensitive and responsive to the situation in which they work. Thus, the conclusions are particularly useful for hospitals. The aim of this study is to test an exploratory model by investigating the mediating effect of organization engagement in relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave.

Methods: This is a cross-sectional quantitative study. A random sample of nurses working at Faghihi Hospital (n=179) completed a standard survey questionnaire consisting of questions about the perceived supervisor support, intention to leave as well as organization engagement. For testing the hypotheses of the study, the results were analyzed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using LISREL 8.8 based on t-value significant levels of higher or lower than +1.96 and -1.96, respectively.

Results: The data revealed the high reliability and validity (based on Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validities) which were suitable for further analyses. SEM revealed that supervisor support was indirectly and negatively related to intention to leave through organization engagement. The proposed direct link between the supervisor support and intention to leave was not found to be significant ($-1.96 \leq t\text{-value} \leq +1.96$).

Conclusion: This article contributes to the literature by being the first to study the mediating effect of organization engagement on perceived supervisor support and intention to leave in the context of a Hospital in Shiraz.

Keywords: Perceived Supervisors Support, Intention to Leave, Organization Engagement, Faghihi Hospital, Iran.

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Introduction

Nurses play an important role in the hospitals and their performance has a great impact on the quality of services. In order to be able to provide desirable services, nurses, as healthcare providers, should be considered attentively by the administration. In a modern organization with high productivity, staff has reported feelings of isolation, dehumanization, and exploitation (1). Among the employees, nurses are more likely to face depression over time because of cheerless workplace, high patients' expectations, high interpersonal conflicts, and bad behaviors of their relatives. Consequently, health care organizations have reported a high level of

dissatisfaction of nurses (2). While many factors have been investigated regarding the nurses as important predictors of organizational outcomes, such as the level of nurses' job satisfaction, there remains a high level of knowledge gap. Increasing knowledge about the nurses' organization engagement and perceived supervisor support may help to bridge this gap. Employee engagement including job engagement and organization engagement (3) have become one of the most important employee performance and organizational management topics. Better understanding of the nurse engagement is needed in order to achieve the aim of better nurse performance. Organization engagement can also have an

influence on the employees' intention to leave. Many researchers, from different perspectives, have tried to find the reasons of nurses for high intention to leave in hospitality industry (4). Many variables influence the intention to stay in the organization, including job satisfaction, engagement, perceived organizational support, and perceived supervisor support (5). According to a comprehensive literature review, it seems that research on the mediating role of organization engagement in the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave has not been conducted yet. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether organization engagement mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave. This study may provide a better understanding of the importance of perceived supervisor support of nurses in Iranian hospitals and may also help the hospitals to prevent the nurses' burnout.

Methods

We took a positivist approach to study deductively in testing a theory in the specific context of Faghihi hospital. Thus, the hypotheses were tested quantitatively through random sampling and the survey questionnaire. At Faghihi hospital, which is among the top 10 hospitals in Iran, around 300 nurses are working. All these nurses were asked to participate in the survey and complete the questionnaire. Eventually, 179 participants completed the questionnaires and returned them, which is considered suitable for the sampling process according to Morgan table of sampling. 90% of the respondents were female. Around 25 percent had more than 6 years of work experience, 26% had less than one year and the rest had worked at Faghihi hospital for 1 to 6 years. All nurses were informed about the purpose and design of this research and gave signed written informed consents. In order to collect the data, three types of questionnaires all designed by Alan M. Saks (2006) were used (3): 1. Organization engagement 2. Intention to leave 3. Perceived supervisor support. Nonetheless, all the questionnaires were standard; the reliability of all variables was checked using Cronbach's method. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales that are listed in Table 1 evidently reveal that the measures are internally consistent and, therefore, fully reliable for the study.

Kahn (1990) proved that trustful interpersonal relationships and supportive managers increased the psychological safety. Supportive workplace allows the employees to try new things and even fail

Table 1: Cronbach Alpha Reliabilities of the Measurement Scales (Acceptable over 0.70)

Variable	Alpha
Organization engagement	0.859
Intention to leave	0.779
Perceived supervisor support	0.732

with no fear of the results (6). May et al. (2004) also showed that supportive supervisor was positively related to psychological safety (7). The theory of Job Characteristics (8) gives us a context to think about how perceived supervisor support increases job engagement. Supervisor support is a characteristic of the workplace which affects the psychological state of engagement. From this view, good relationship between the staff and managers is vital to enhance the employee's motivation. Swanberg et al. (2011), in a qualitative study, proved that individual store managers' responsiveness to the employees' scheduling needs contributes to staff engagement (9). Employee engagement is the extent of dedication in three criteria of employee's cognitive, behavioral and effectiveness dimensions in the organization (3). Employee engagement is very essential for any system. The engaged staff will enhance the quality of services and, by doing so, they are helping to generate more customer's loyalty (10). In this research, workers' engagement was considered by incorporating the two types. This was the Saks' idea (2006) who mentioned the employee engagement as both job engagement and organization engagement for strategic understanding of the construct. Job engagement is the extent of the staff's commitment and dedication to their job, and organizational engagement is the extent of the staff's commitment to their company (3). Based on discussions and justifications provided so far, the first hypothesis of the study is as follows:

H1. Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) is Positively Related to Organization Engagement.

Perceived supervisor support is perceptions of the workers regarding the level supervisors value their work or input and care about their welfare (11) because workers view the actions of organizational agents as the activities of the company itself (12). Studies on perceived supervisor support and its relationship with intention to leave result in contradictory findings. Moore (2002) proved that perceived supervisor support decreased the level of the nurses' burnout and reduced their intention to quit (13). Kalliath and Beck (2001) reached the same result: after testing the effect of social support on two elements of burnout (depersonalization and emotional exhaustion), they

found that supervisory support decreased both symptoms of burnout and nurses' intention to quit (14). Organizational support theory shows that supportive behavior from managers causes high perceived organization support (POS), which makes the staff help the organization meet its purposes with high levels of commitment, consequently leading to decreased turnover (15). Eisenberger et al. (2002) did not get a direct relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to quit (11); nevertheless, perceived supervisor support had a significant relationship with intention to quit only with the mediating effect of perceived organizational support. Some other researches who studied this subject found contradictory results. For example, Kalliath and Beck (2001) indicated that an indirect relationship between supervisor support and intention to quit through reduced burnout levels. Also, a direct relationship between supervisor social support and reduced intention to leave was found. However, some studies did not get a significant effect of supervisor social support on reducing intention to quit (14). Based on what has been mentioned, we need further investigation, so H2 is proposed:

H2. Perceived Supervisor Support is Negatively Related to Intention to Leave.

Nowadays organizations are facing some challenges as they tend to stay competitive. These challenges contain the latest technology, financial turbulence, diverse workforce, etc. In this condition, organizations need to find motivated employees for obtaining good performance. Recent intentions to increase organizational performance started to emphasize positive emotions and positive organizational behavior rather than negative concepts. Organization engagement has risen as the most important positive organizational idea, notably among organizational members (16). Organization engagement is described as the way through which an organization increases the contribution and commitment of its employees to obtain better

outcomes. There are some reasons to expect the relationship between engagement and work outcomes. The topic of engagement as a positive experience has been considered to be related to positive work effect and good health (3). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that the engaged staff has greater dependence on their company and lower intention to quit (17).

Taking the evidence into consideration, we are expected to find that:

H3. Organization Engagement is Negatively Related to Intention to Leave.

According to the aforementioned hypotheses, the conceptual framework of this study is depicted in Figure 1.

Results

In this article, two steps including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) were used. In the first phase, assessment of measures in terms of discriminant and convergent validity was done. In the second phase, by using goodness of fit indices, a comparison was made between fully mediated model and partially mediated model. To assess the model fit, the overall X^2 measure, we used mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), non-normed fit index (NNFI), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and incremental fit index (IFI). As mentioned before, the sample size of this article was 179. Although it is consistent with many suggestions that pertain to the minimum sample size of 100 for SEM (18), composite reliabilities were also calculated. The above-mentioned analyses were made using LISREL 8.8. Finally, for reporting the means, standard deviations, and correlations, composite scores were generated for the dependent and independent variables.

Measurement Model

One item from *perceived supervisor support* and

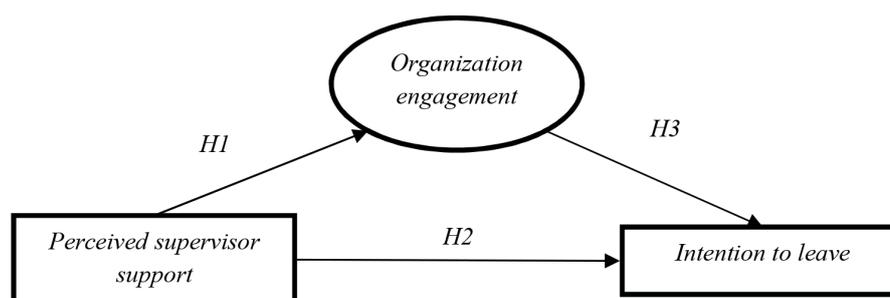


Figure 1: The mediating effect of organization engagement on the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave

one from *organizational engagement* were omitted during CFA in order to improve the validity and composite reliability of the variables. The results indicated that the suggested measurement model is suitable for the data acceptably, as shown in Table 2.

All factor loadings were acceptably high as well as significant. Average variance extracted (AVE) for the scales showed acceptable convergent validity, while Composite Reliability (CR) of all variables was greater than 0.70. All the results of CFA are shown in Table 3. Discriminant validities of the scales were tested by comparison between AVE of each item and R^2 of the item with other items. The results show that AVE for each item is greater than R^2 of the relationships with other items (e.g. $AVE_{(supervisor\ support)} = 0.78 \geq R^2_{(supervisor\ support - organizational\ engagement)} = 0.20$). Moreover, standard deviations, means and correlations of the study variables are displayed in Table 4. The descriptive data in Table 4 indicate no multi-correlation.

Structural Model

The structural model of the study was tested in two different forms. First, the relationship between the supervisor support and intention to leave was fully proposed through the mediating role of organizational engagement (full mediation model). Second, the aforementioned relationship was controlled by adding a direct line between supervisor support and intention to leave (partial mediation model). In other words, in the first model the direct effect of perceived supervisor support on intention to leave was not included, and then in the second model it was added. According to the results of fit measurements shown in Table 5, both models are assumed to be fit. However, the fit indices related to full mediation model is a little better. Therefore, the full mediation model (P=0.00) is proposed as the final model which is depicted in Figure 2, while neglecting

Table 2: The goodness of fit indices and the results of the measurement of model fitness

	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	IFI
Good range	Lower the better	-	Less than 3	Less than 0.1	Lower the better	Over 0.95	Over 0.95
Measurement model	155.59	62	2.50	0.093	0.10	0.95	0.95

Table 3: Scale items and the Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) results (including validity and reliability test of the constructs)

Scale Items	Factor Loadings	t-value	AVE	CR
Perceived supervisor support			0.78	0.91
My supervisor cares about my opinions	0.84	13.53		
My work supervisor really cares about my well-being	0.93	15.64		
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values	0.87	14.26		
My supervisor shows very little concern form me (R)*	-	-		
Organization engagement			0.55	0.97
Being a member of this organization is very captivating	0.77	12		
One of the most exciting things for me is getting involved with things happening in this organization	0.64	9.34		
I am really not into the “goings-on” in this organization (R)	0.92	15.75		
Being a member of this organization make me come “alive.”	0.94	16.46		
Being a member of this organization is exhilarating for me	0.75	11.40		
I am highly engaged in this organization*	-	-		
Intention to leave			0.48	0.71
I frequently think of quitting my job	0.86	7.76		
I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months	0.76	7.32		
If I have my own way, I will be working for this organization one year from now (R)	0.35	4.21		

Model fit statistics: $\chi^2=155.59$, $df=62$; $\chi^2/df=2.5$; RMSEA=0.093; ECVI=1.21; SRMR=0.10; CFI=0.95; IFI=0.95; NFI=0.92; NNFI=0.94; * Dropped during CFA

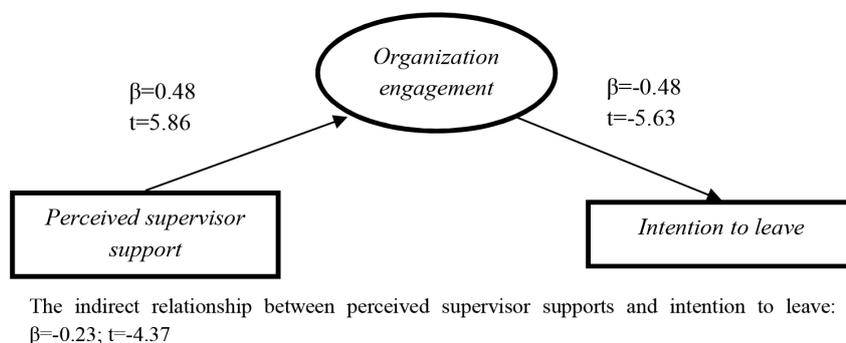
Table 4: Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the study variables

Scales	M	SD	1	2	M
1. Perceived supervisor support	3.18	0.8912	-		3.18
2. Organization engagement	2.98	0.8647	0.40*	-	2.98
3. Intent to quit	2.79	1.0315	-0.33*	-0.41*	2.79

* Significant at 0.01 level

Table 5: Fit Index Measures of the Full Mediation and Partial Mediation Models

Models	X ²	Df	X ² /df	RMSEA	ECVI	SRMR	CFI	IFI	NFI	NNFI
Full Mediation	154.76	63	2.46	0.091	1.20	0.10	0.95	0.95	0.92	0.94
Partial Mediation	155.59	62	2.50	0.093	1.21	0.10	0.95	0.95	0.92	0.94

**Figure 2:** The final model (full mediation model)

the other model which was lower in fit indices.

This article presented and assessed a research model that examined whether organizational engagement acted as a mediator of the impact of perceived supervisor support and intention to leave. These relationships were evaluated through data gathered from healthcare providers at Faghihi hospital. The results showed that the model was practical and the main hypothesis received empirical support. Results of SEM (Figure 2) indicate that the relationship between supervisor support and intention to leave is fully mediated through organization engagement (indirect relationship: $\beta=-0.23$, $t=-4.37$), i.e. the more perceived supervisor support, the less intention to quit among the members of an organization proposed through the mediating role of organization engagement.

Discussion

Overall, the results of this study contribute to better understanding of the relationships among the organization engagement and intention to leave, perceived supervisor support and intention to quit and also the relationship between the organization engagement and perceived supervisor support. For implementing interventions targeted toward better nurse performance, patient's satisfaction and other outcomes, more focus is on the mediating role of organization engagement on perceived supervisor support and intention to quit because evidence shows that, because of open atmosphere of the hospital, high frequency of conflict, high expectations of the patients and their relatives, nurses are more often experiencing stressful time at work. Thus, by investigating whether organization engagement mediates the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave, this study made an attempt to present a better understanding of the importance of perceived supervisor support of nurses in Iran's hospitals and may also help the hospitals to keep nurses apart from probable leaves. As seen in the literature on previous research, many variables, such as job involvement, perceived organizational support, reward and motivation systems creating job satisfaction affect the nurses' intention to leave. In this study, we examined two variables, perceived supervisor support and organization engagement and showed that intention to leave of nurses in Faghihi Hospital was affected only through the mediation effect of the organization engagement in the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to leave ($\beta=-0.23$; $t=-4.37$). Therefore, the main finding of this paper is highlighting perceived supervisor support and its effect on involving the nurses with their work environment. Research has shown that recent graduate nurses who have greater job satisfaction are less likely to quit their job. Other variables that influence burnout are organizational commitment and opportunities for promotion. Several authors have shown that the lack of support and not being assigned to the unit of choice were negatively related to turnover intentions. Thus, the importance of organizational support emerges. Organizational support theory shows that beneficial treatment from managers results in enhanced perceived organization support, which makes the staff feel more committed, consequently resulting in reduced intention to leave. Finally, the authors suggest that future research is needed on the area of other variables that can affect intention to leave, for example job engagement, perceived organization support and job satisfaction. Although engagement has become a hot topic among practitioners, there has been very little empirical research, especially in the context of nursing. This study attempted to bridge the empirical gap in the literature by considering the mediating role

of organizational engagement in the relationship between perceived supervisor support and intention to quit. The results suggest the following:

- Perceived supervisor support enhances the organizational engagement.
- Organizational engagement decreases significantly the possibility of leaves by nurses.
- The direct link between the supervisor support and intention to quit is not meaningful.
- Organizational engagement fully mediates the relationship between the supervisor support and intention to quit,
- Mediation process is the most important mechanism in the link between supervisor support and intention to quit.

According to the above-mentioned points, organizations which benefit from supportive leadership styles are more likely to have employees with high levels of job satisfaction, engagement, empowerment, and lower levels of intention to quit. In the context of nurses who often work in stressful situations, it is clearly important for the hospital administration to employ supportive behaviors and create much more supportive atmosphere for the nurses who are reportedly sensitive and responsive to the situation in which they work. It is recommended that the hospital managers should:

- consider personal feelings of the nurses before acting,
- behave in a manner which is thoughtful of their personal needs,
- work hard to ease the tensions whenever they arise at the hospital,
- encourage the nurses to talk to them about personal problems,
- recognize their achievements at work,
- frequently demonstrate concerns for the nurses,
- Avoid being too directive.

In addition, it has been reported that staff engagement is on the decline and there is a deepening disengagement among the staff (Saks, 2006). This is crucially important in the current and worsening nurse shortage to increase the nurses' engagement in order to avoid possible leaves. Therefore, it is also recommended that the hospital managers should recognize and support the nurses, establish favorable communication among them, formulate a thorough system of job development for them, and finally enhance justice at hospitals.

The research model evaluated in this study aimed to delineate a mechanism through which the nurses' intention to quit is determined. However, supervisor support and organizational engagement were the

only two variables which were tested in the model due to some research limitations. Therefore, it is recommended that the researchers in the field of organizational behavior should take other potentially important variables into consideration in order to establish a thorough structural model. Some studies have shown the role of some variables such as job satisfaction, commitment, stress, support, self-esteem, and locus of control (19). It is also recommended considering the mediation processes in the relationships between different variables and turnover since it was found in this study that the effect of supervisor support on intention to quit is not direct. Therefore, some variables which are considered to be correlated to intention to quit might have indirect relations through some other variables, such as the afore-mentioned mediating role of organizational engagement in the relationship between support and turnover.

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Ethical Considerations: All nurses were informed about the purpose and design of this research after obtaining signed written informed consents.

Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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