Determinants of Turnover Intention in the Public Healthcare Sectors Malaysia: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

This study investigates several factors that influence nurses' intentions to depart from their professions in the Malaysian public healthcare system. The research explores the complex interplay of determinants contributing to turnover intention among nurses in the public healthcare sectors. This academic inquiry seeks to contribute deeper understanding of the underlying explanations caused nurse retention in public healthcare sectors in Malaysia. Various factors impact nurse turnover intention in Malaysia, including work-related, personal, and organizational aspects. These factors have been identified in several studies and can impact the retention of nurses in the healthcare industry. Understanding and addressing these factors are crucial for public healthcare sectors to improve nurse retention and provide better quality of care. Hence, the main concern of this research is to examine the association between job demand, work-life balance and turnover intention among nurses in public healthcare sectors. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on factors influencing turnover intention among nurses in public healthcare sectors in the context of Malaysian nurses. The findings underscore the need of addressing the causes of work-life balance concerns, such as workload, working hours, and workplace quality, in order to increase nurse retention and, ultimately, nursing care quality. By understanding the relationship between job demand, work-life balance and turnover intention, Malaysian public healthcare sectors can create a favorable work environment to encourage nurse retention and improve patient outcomes.

Keyword: *Turnover Intention, Job Demand, Work-life Balance, Workload, Working Hours, Public Healthcare Sector.*

1. Introduction

Turnover can result in insufficient staffing, increased workloads, and stress on remaining staff members, leading to a decline in the quality of work and patient care. This is particularly concerning in the nursing profession, where turnover may set off a cycle of unhappiness and bad morale among remaining employees, adding to turnover and negatively influencing the whole work environment. Employee turnover basically can be separated into two groups namely voluntary and involuntary departure (Watrous et. al., 2006). Voluntary departure can be explained as "a process in which employees decide to stay or leave the firm" (McPherson, 1976). According to research carried out by CompData Survey (2013), the voluntary turnover rate shows the percentage of 10.4%. Conversely, involuntary turnover was recorded to be by a percentage of 4.7%. Likewise, Malaysia also experienced a high rate of turnover more than 50% from year of 2010 to 2014 (Department of Labor Malaysia, Ministry of Human Resources). This phenomenon shows that voluntary turnover intentions need to be managed efficiently to reduce immediate signs of employees' turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Porter & Steers, 1973; Rizwan et al., 2013).

It is widely known that employees are the backbone of any organization. However, if an organization has a high turnover rate, it may result in higher costs in many areas. In the case of hospitals, the expenses associated with staff turnover are quite significant and estimated to be at least double the salary of a regular nurse. These costs can be both direct and indirect, with direct costs ranging from recruitment and orientation to training and termination of workers. Indirect costs are also significant and can include a poor work environment, reduced productivity, higher staff turnover, and poorer health outcomes. According to experts, employee turnover costs can account for up to 5% of the national annual operating budget. Additionally, it takes considerable time and effort for management and human resources personnel to train and assimilate new hires into the organization. Therefore, many studies have shown that the intention to leave is a critical indicator and one of the primary predictors of employee turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000; Porter & Steers, 1973; Rizwan et al., 2013).

The intention to leave among nurses is a significant issue within the healthcare industry. Many studies have shown that nurses who feel dissatisfied with their jobs or who experience high levels of burnout are more likely to express an intention to leave their current position. Factors that contribute to this include long working hours, inadequate staffing, lack of recognition and support from supervisors, and low job satisfaction. It has been found that nurses who perceive their workload to be high are at a greater risk of leaving their jobs, and many nurses who leave cite the desire for better working conditions or higher pay as the primary reason for doing so. In summary, studying and addressing intention to leave among nurses is vital to ensure the stability of the nursing workforce, maintain quality patient care, reduce costs, and promote the well-being of nurses. It also helps preserve the valuable experience of nursing staff, protect the reputation of healthcare institutions, ensure regulatory compliance, and address the broader issue of nursing shortages.

This study examines the impact of workplace demands, such as work hours and work-life balance, on turnover intention, which has a substantial impact on organizations. There has been many researchers conducted on turnover intentions factors which show the significant

relationship between turnover intention. Job pressures exacerbated nurses' work-life imbalance, but job control improved work/personal life balance (Chen et al., 2017). According to the study, lowering workplace expectations and maintaining appropriate job control are critical to nurses' work-life balance. Work-life balance is the balance between work-related tasks and personal life. When nurses experience an imbalance, they may be more likely to develop turnover intentions. High workload, long hours, and inadequate time for personal life can contribute to dissatisfaction and intentions to leave their jobs.

At first, there is limited literature on the relationship between quality of life at work and intention to leave (Korunka, Hoonakker, & Crayon, 2008). Recently the majority of research have been based on data collected in Western nations and confined to health care workers. In contrast to Western cultures, Malaysian culture is more collectivist, respectful of hierarchy and elders, relationship-oriented, and cooperative rather than competitive (Merriam & Mohamad 2000; Smith 2003; Schermerhorn & Bond 1997; Triandis, Brislin & Hui 1993). A country's cultures can have a significant impact on an organization's work culture and practices (Abdullah 1992; Hassi & Storti 2011; Hofstede 1984; Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo 1990), including human resource management methods (Vadivelu & Klein 2011). Because there is a lack of research on this contextual problem, this study is intended to fill this gap by gathering data basically from the Malaysia public healthcare sectors.

Table 1 below shows the total number of nurses according to states in Malaysia attached to public healthcare sectors as at 31 December 2021. Selangor has the highest numbers of nurses working in public healthcare sectors and will be the selected location for the research. The questionnaires will be sent to 12 public healthcare located around Selangor, Malaysia.

1.1 Research Question

What are the elements that impact turnover intentions among nurses in Malaysia's public healthcare sectors through work-life balance?

Table 1: **As of December 31, 2021, number of nurses by state and the ratio of nurses to population in Malaysia.**

State	Number of Nurses (MOH)	Nurse to Population Ratio
Johor	7,087	1:349
Kedah	4,997	1:343
Kelantan	3,834	1:330
Melaka	2,320	1:225
Negeri Sembilan	3,014	1:261
Pahang	4,227	1:281
Perak	6,576	1:286
Perlis	1,003	1:234
Pulau Pinang	3,755	1:210
Sabah	8,111	1:410
Sarawak	6,437	1:342
Selangor	9,455	1:334
Terengganu	3,104	1:347
W.P. Kuala Lumpur	5,128	1:106
W.P. Labuan	280	1:333
W.P. Putrajaya	1,469	1:72
MALAYSIA	**70,797**	**1:283**

Source: Planning Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH)

2. Literature Review
2.1 Turnover Intention (TI)

An employee's tendency or desire to voluntarily leave their position or firm is referred to as turnover intention. It is the urge to move or quit a company in order to take a position that pays higher. It is the intention to shuffle or leave an organization to search for more suitable employment. In academic literature, turnover intention has been outlined in different ways. One of the early thoughts of turnover intention was introduced by Hinshaw and Atwood (1984). According to the authors, turnover intention is a characteristic that indicates how individuals view their employment connection at their present company ending in the future. One might experience voluntary or involuntary turnover. Voluntary turnover occurs when an employee chooses to depart the workplace on their personal terms, whilst involuntary turnover arises when an employee is driven out by the company they work for. Both types of turnover result in financial and detrimental implications for the organization. It may be indicated that intention is a mental process or activity that serves as the basis for future actions (Salanterä, 2015).

High turnover rates can be costly for healthcare organizations, as they incur expenses for recruitment, training, and on-boarding of new employees (Ahmad Saufi et al. 2023). Healthcare businesses can lower the expenses associated with recruiting and training new employees by addressing the variables that contribute to turnover intention. Overall, planned turnover can have major consequences for healthcare companies, including the quality of care provided, retention rates, work environment, and costs. By addressing factors that contribute to turnover intention, healthcare organizations can improve retention rates, maintain a skilled and experienced workforce, and provide better care for patients.

2.2 Work-life Balance (WLB)

The phrase "work-life balance" signifies an individual's ability to balance the needs of their personal and professional lives, giving equal weight to each (Wright et al., 2022). Having work-life balance is vital for preserving physical, emotional, and mental health. Work-life balance is a major concern for healthcare companies, especially for nurses, and has been a topic of debate for decades. The nurses' enormous burden of workload creates an inequality between their professional and personal life, leading to burnout and turnover intention. Therefore, healthcare companies should prioritize promoting work-life balance in order to minimize turnover and increase nurse retention rates (Moustaq et al., 2023).

Improving work-life balance may benefit healthcare businesses in a variety of ways, including increased retention rates, higher quality of care, and lower costs associated with hiring and training new employees. Healthcare businesses may foster a healthy and productive work environment by employing techniques to enhance work-life balance, resulting in improved patient outcomes and higher quality treatment.

2.3 Job Demand Resources Theory (JD-R Theory)

According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational characteristics of a job that need continuous effort or skills and are connected with physiological and/or psychological consequences. The JD-R model believes that each occupation has unique working characteristics, which may be

categorized into two distinct groups: job demands and job resources. Thus, the purpose of this study is to evaluate workplace demands that may have an impact on nurses' work-life balance. The JD-R Theory, which provides an alternative to traditional models of employee well-being such as the demand-control and effort-reward imbalance models, will be used. The JD-R model's author claims that these models "have been limited to a given and limited set of predictor variables that may not be relevant for all job positions" (p. 309) (Bakker, 2007). As a result, JD-R takes into account a broad range of working conditions when analyzing organizations and employees. Furthermore, the JD-R model considers both negative and positive signs and outcomes of employee well-being, rather than focusing exclusively on negative repercussions such as burnout, illness, and repeated strain.

3. Material and Method

Approximately about 170 nurses will be the respondents for the study. Data collection will be carried out through a questionnaire designed to assess one dimension of turnover intention that is nurses' job demands mediated by work-life balance. Inspired by Allen and Kiburz in 2012 (to measure work-life balance among nurses), and using Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian's in 1996 (to measure job demands among nurses), the questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed through Whatsapp application. Data analysis will be conducted using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS), with responses rated on a 6-point Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree).
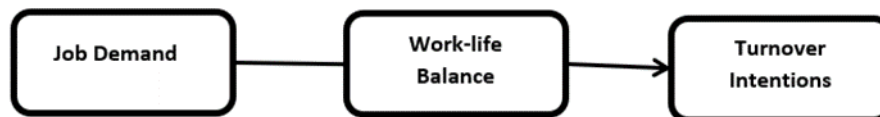
3.1 Research Framework

Figure 1. Research Model

4. Conclusion

High turnover intention can have several negative effects on an organization. When highly competent employees leave, it can affect organizational reputation, profitability, and performance. High turnover can cause instability and unhappiness among remaining workers, resulting in a bad corporate culture. This can, in turn, affect employee morale, engagement, and job satisfaction, potentially leading to a higher turnover rate. The departure of highly skilled people has an influence on the organization's performance, profitability, and reputation (Muzaffar and Javed, 2021; Kakar et al., 2023).

Organizations incur high costs from employee turnover in terms of hiring, training, and lost productivity (Maria et al., 2020). Furthermore, losing competent staff members may force the company to hire outside consultants or resources to close the knowledge gap, which would

raise expenses even more. To mitigate the negative effects of turnover intention, organizations should focus on increasing job satisfaction, providing opportunities for growth and development, and establishing a positive work environment that encourages work-life balance.

5. Implication

The findings could have substantial ramifications for decision-makers, particularly Malaysia healthcare sector administrators and human resource managers. In order for stakeholders to promote good perceptions of the company, managers need to make sure that the public healthcare sectors are operating effectively. Nurses who decide on to work for organizations that assist families are socially conscious, known for their dedication to employee well-being, and create a pleasant work environment. As a consequence, they can strengthen their reputations with stakeholders through preservation of work-life balance while building a supportive work environment that promotes social responsibility, employee well-being, and a family-friendly environment, which may significantly contribute to reducing excellent customer service in the public healthcare sectors. Moreover, cultivating a positive perception of academic services may be facilitated by treating staff members with consideration, respect, and regard for their ideas and viewpoints. Putting initiatives into place to lessen workloads, enhance working conditions, and grant discretion and flexibility may help a manager's credibility at work.   .

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