



THE IMPACT OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON NURSE TURNOVER INTENTION IN ACUTE CARE HOSPITALS

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ABSTRACT

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Acute care hospital nurse turnover is an important problem that affects patient care, operational efficiency and the overall healthcare outcome. Factors like work engagement and occupational stress can often cause high turnover rates. Previous research in the western context has shown that work engagement is negatively associated with turnover intention and occupational stress is positively related to it, but research in developing countries is scant. Work engagement and occupational stress are investigated as antecedents of turnover intention among nurses in acute care hospitals in Pakistan. Data were collected from 100 nurses using a quantitative approach via a structured survey. Here we analyse the results using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), and find that work engagement significantly decreases turnover intention and occupational stress significantly increases it. These findings are relevant to the importance of creating a work engaged environment and management of occupational stress in order to increase nurse retention. The results are also useful for healthcare administrators developing retention strategies that will create a supportive work environment that will increase engagement and reduce stress.

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INTRODUCTION

Acute care hospitals experience persistent and significant nurse turnover, which affects healthcare delivery, hospital efficiency, and patient outcomes. High turnover rates among nurses impose a considerable financial burden on healthcare organizations due to the costs associated with recruitment, training, and overtime pay required to fill staffing gaps. More critically, frequent turnover disrupts continuity of care, negatively impacts patient experiences, and can compromise patient outcomes. Understanding the key drivers of nurse turnover is essential for developing targeted retention strategies that enhance healthcare quality and operational efficiency.

Work engagement and occupational stress have been consistently identified as important factors influencing turnover intention, which measures an employee's desire to leave their position. Work engagement, a positive and fulfilling work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, serves as a protective factor against turnover. Nurses who are engaged tend to exhibit higher organizational commitment, greater job satisfaction, and stronger motivation to contribute positively to patient care. Previous studies have demonstrated an inverse relationship between work engagement and turnover intention. For example, Li et al. (2019) found that higher levels of work engagement were significantly associated with lower turnover intention among nurses. Similarly, Tao (2023) highlighted that work engagement strengthens nurses' commitment to their organizations

and reduces their intent to leave. In a study conducted in Sweden, Pennbrant and Dåderman (2021) examined the influence of job demands, work engagement, and work-family private life interference on turnover intention among registered nurses. Their findings emphasized that higher job demands and work-life conflict significantly increased turnover intention, whereas work engagement played a mitigating role. These insights provide a comparative perspective on how work engagement and occupational stress impact turnover intention in both developed and developing healthcare systems.

Conversely, occupational stress is a significant predictor of turnover intention. Nurses working in high-pressure environments face heavy workloads, emotional strain, and the responsibility of handling life-or-death situations, all of which contribute to occupational stress. Excessive stress diminishes job satisfaction and increases burnout, leading nurses to consider leaving their jobs. Koon and Tee (2020) noted that workplace ostracism, a form of occupational stress, directly increases turnover intention by fostering a negative work environment. Additionally, Hwang et al. (2014) identified unfair treatment, task-related difficulties, and lack of support as key stressors that drive nurses toward alternative employment opportunities.

While extensive research on nurse turnover has been conducted in Western contexts, there is comparatively limited understanding of these issues in developing countries. However, prior research has indicated that factors such as

staff shortages, inadequate resources, and weak support systems exacerbate occupational stress and influence work engagement in these settings. For instance, Khamisa et al. (2015) examined the relationship between stress, burnout, and job satisfaction among nurses in South Africa and found that high occupational stress led to increased turnover intentions. Ayalew et al. (2022) explored nurse retention in Ethiopia and highlighted that inadequate work engagement and high stress levels were primary reasons for nurse turnover. Similarly, Tariq et al. (2023) found that occupational stress in Pakistan's healthcare sector significantly contributed to turnover intention among nurses, emphasizing the need for effective nursing management strategies. Despite these findings, gaps remain regarding the specific mechanisms through which work engagement and occupational stress interact to influence turnover intention in the context of Pakistani acute care hospitals. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the relationships between work engagement, occupational stress, and turnover intention among nurses in acute care hospitals in Pakistan.

Research Objectives

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the impact of work engagement and occupational stress on nurse turnover in acute care hospitals, this study aims to:

Measure the levels of work engagement, occupational stress, and turnover intention among nurses in acute care hospitals in Pakistan.

Examine the relationship between work engagement and turnover intention.

Investigate the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge on nurse turnover intention, particularly in acute care settings in developing countries, by examining these relationships in the Pakistani context. By explicitly comparing previous research findings and identifying gaps in the literature, this study provides a clearer understanding of the factors contributing to nurse turnover in Pakistan. The findings will provide healthcare administrators and policymakers with evidence-based insights to design targeted interventions that reduce occupational stress, enhance work engagement, and improve nurse retention. Ultimately, this study aims to inform strategies for creating a supportive work environment that fosters engagement, mitigates stress, and leads to higher retention rates, lower costs, and improved patient care outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Acute Care Hospital nurse turnover is a significant problem with wide ranging repercussions for patient care, organizational efficiency and healthcare costs. Results from a growing body of research indicate that work engagement and occupational stress are important influences on nurses' decisions to leave their jobs. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the intricate involvement of these

variables with nurse turnover intention.

Work Engagement

Work engagement, defined by its constituent dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption, represents a critical construct impacting both employee performance and well-being (Nešić et al., 2020). Within the context of developing nations, systemic impediments, including insufficient staffing levels, restricted opportunities for career advancement, and prevailing socio-cultural expectations, significantly modulate the manifestation of work engagement. For example, empirical evidence from Indonesia demonstrates a positive correlation between heightened work engagement among nurses and enhanced commitment to patient care, notwithstanding the constraints imposed by resource-limited settings (Islamy et al., 2023). Analogously, research conducted in Ghana elucidates the substantial influence of employee engagement on task performance within state-owned enterprises, underscoring the pivotal role of leadership in cultivating an engaged workforce (Ohemeng et al., 2019). In the Pakistani context, ethical leadership has been identified as a salient antecedent of work engagement, exerting a positive effect on employee well-being and job performance across diverse industry sectors (Sarwar et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies indicate that attitudes toward smart working serve as a moderating variable in the relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction, thereby highlighting the dynamic evolution of work engagement in

contemporary organizational environments (Zammitti et al., 2022). These findings collectively illustrate the intricate interplay among leadership paradigms, organizational support structures, and contextual determinants in shaping work engagement within developing economies.

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological responses to adverse work conditions. It negatively affects employee performance and can lead to anxiety, tension, and various physical health issues (Narban et al., 2016). Occupational stress arises when there is a mismatch between job demands and an individual's ability to cope (Pendharkar & Vaishnav, 2016). Research conducted in Bangladesh further highlights that nurses working under challenging conditions face significant occupational stress, which negatively impacts their job satisfaction and retention (Islam et al., 2022). Additionally, in Pakistan ethical leadership has been found to play a crucial role in managing occupational stress and fostering a work environment that encourages innovative behaviors, which can mitigate the negative impact of stress on employees (Haque & Yamoah, 2021).

Turnover Intention

Turnover intention refers to employees' plans or thoughts about leaving their current job or organization. It serves as an early indicator of actual turnover, leading to significant costs related to

recruitment, selection, and training of new employees (Mitra Uktutias et al., 2021). The concept is often implicit and challenging to measure directly (Ak, 2018). Research in Malaysia's banking industry suggests that turnover intention is influenced by job satisfaction, career opportunities, and organizational commitment, highlighting the need for targeted retention strategies in service sectors (Falahat et al., 2019). Similarly, in Indonesia, compensation and career development opportunities play crucial roles in shaping employees' turnover intentions, emphasizing the economic and career growth factors in developing nations (Vizano et al., 2021).

H1: Work engagement (WE) negatively affects turnover intention, meaning that higher engagement is related to lower turnover intentions.

The relationship between Work Engagement and Turnover Intention

Work engagement refers to an employee's enthusiasm and commitment to their work and organization, characterized by a positive and fulfilling state of mind. Research consistently highlights the negative relationship between work engagement and turnover intention, where higher engagement corresponds to a reduced likelihood of employees considering leaving their jobs (Savira et al., 2024; Kissi et al., 2023; Memon et al., 2021). Engaged employees tend to develop stronger emotional ties with their organizations, fostering commitment and decreasing turnover intentions (Xiong & Wen, 2020). This relationship is attributed to the positive work outcomes and job

satisfaction associated with high engagement, which reduce employees' desire to quit (Khan & Batool, 2018).

Several studies reinforce this negative correlation. Memon et al. (2017) and Kim & Hyun (2017) found that engaged employees exhibit lower turnover intentions due to their commitment and reduced job-search behaviors. Similarly, Li et al. (2019) and Zhang et al. (2015) demonstrated that vigor, dedication, and absorption—core dimensions of work engagement—play a significant role in employee retention. However, Rafiq et al. (2019) highlighted the moderating effect of job embeddedness, noting that in highly embedded employees, the impact of engagement on turnover intention is weaker, suggesting that contextual factors influence this relationship.

Beyond this general trend, some studies indicate a more complex dynamic. Caesens et al. (2016) found an inverse quadratic relationship, showing that while moderate-to-high engagement reduces turnover intention, excessive engagement can increase it due to unmet expectations of organizational reciprocity. Lu et al. (2016) further emphasized the role of supervisors, noting that managerial engagement strengthens the negative relationship between engagement and turnover, indicating the importance of leadership support in employee retention.

In developing economies, this relationship remains strong but is shaped by specific socio-organizational factors. Savira et al. (2024) reported that in Indonesia, despite resource constraints, engaged healthcare employees

exhibited lower turnover intentions. Similarly, Kissi et al. (2023) found that in Ghana, higher engagement levels led to improved work outcomes and reduced job termination considerations, supporting the cross-contextual validity of this relationship. Within Pakistan, Memon et al. (2021) demonstrated that training and performance appraisal satisfaction enhance engagement and mitigate turnover intentions. However, Rafiq et al. (2019) noted that job embeddedness moderates this relationship, emphasizing that employees deeply rooted in their organizational and social contexts are less likely to leave, regardless of their engagement levels.

Furthermore, workplace environment factors contribute to engagement's effect on turnover. Tricahyadinata et al. (2020) in Indonesia found that workplace incivility reduces engagement, subsequently increasing turnover intentions. This highlights the importance of a supportive and respectful work environment in sustaining employee engagement and reducing attrition in developing economies.

Overall, while work engagement generally leads to lower turnover intentions, the strength and nature of this relationship are influenced by contextual and moderating factors such as job embeddedness, workplace culture, and perceived organizational support. Understanding these nuances is essential for designing effective employee retention strategies.

H2: Occupational stress(OS) is positively impacted by turnover intention (TI), that is, more stress leads to more turnover.

The relationship between Occupational Stress and Turnover Intention

Occupational stress is a critical factor influencing employee well-being, productivity, and organizational commitment. High stress levels often result in adverse outcomes such as job dissatisfaction, burnout, absenteeism, and ultimately, increased turnover intentions. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates a significant positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention, indicating that employees experiencing heightened stress are more likely to consider leaving their jobs (Makwana & Elizabeth, 2024).

Several studies conducted in developing countries highlight the severity of this relationship. In Indonesia, Yanto et al. (2024) found that occupational stress significantly affects employee turnover intentions, particularly in industries with demanding work environments. Similarly, in India, Bajaj (2023) reported that occupational stress in the hospitality sector—stemming from excessive workload, role ambiguity, and limited career growth—positively correlates with turnover intention, emphasizing the need for stress management interventions. In Pakistan, Gautam & Gautam (2022) found that factors such as workload pressure and insufficient career progression opportunities exacerbate turnover intentions among employees, reinforcing the necessity for organizational policies addressing job stress.

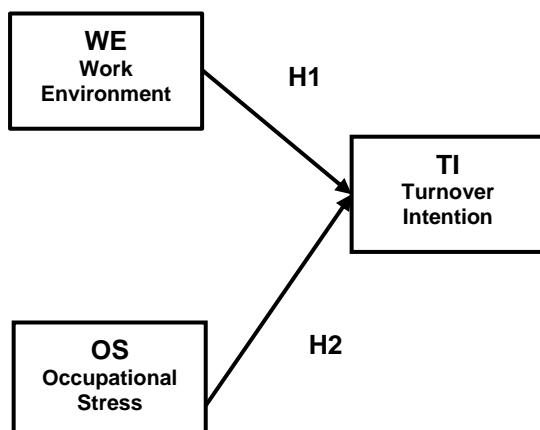
Economic and organizational contexts further shape this relationship. Bhat et al. (2021) in

India emphasized that organizations must recognize the profound impact of occupational stress on employee retention, particularly in economically volatile environments where job security concerns amplify stress-related turnover. Similarly, Urieși (2019) in Romania highlighted that excessive workload, inadequate incentives, and over commitment diminish managerial credibility, thereby intensifying employees' intentions to leave.

Additionally, workplace structure plays a moderating role in the stress-turnover link. Hakim (2018) in Indonesia found that heightened occupational stress significantly increases the likelihood of turnover, underscoring the necessity of effective stress management strategies in improving employee retention. In South Korea, Shin et al. (2015) reported that employees facing high job demands and limited autonomy exhibit stronger turnover intentions. Sheraz et al. (2014) in Pakistan also confirmed a positive association between occupational stress and turnover intention, particularly in high-pressure work settings, further reinforcing the importance of stress mitigation strategies in developing economies.

The author proposes the following theoretical framework (refer to Figure 1) in light of the previously indicated hypothesis

Figure 1. Initial Research Model



Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

Novelty

This study is distinctive because it examines the complex link between occupational stress, job engagement, and nurse turnover intention in the demanding setting of acute care hospitals. This study intends to discover important elements that lead to nurse turnover by exploring the unique obstacles that nurses experience, such as long hours, high-pressure circumstances, and emotional labor. The results of this study might give healthcare organizations important information to help them create strategies that would increase nurse retention and, eventually, enhance patient care.

RESEARCH METHODS

Questionnaire Design and Data Collection

For this study, a custom-designed questionnaire was developed to assess key variables: work engagement, turnover intention, and occupational stress among nurses in acute care hospitals. This approach, rather than adapting an existing questionnaire, was chosen to ensure the items were precisely tailored to the acute care setting and directly addressed the research objectives.

To facilitate efficient data collection from a diverse sample of nurses, the questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms. Participants were able to complete the survey at their convenience. The questionnaire was structured to elicit clear and consistent feedback regarding their experiences and perceptions related to work engagement, turnover intention, and occupational stress.

A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was utilized for most items to ensure high reliability and consistency in responses, allowing respondents to express the degree of their agreement or disagreement with various statements.

Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was employed to recruit participants. This method involved distributing the online survey link to nurses working in acute care hospitals through professional networks and social media platforms. While convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings, it allowed for efficient data collection within the constraints of the study. Future research could benefit from employing probability sampling techniques to enhance representativeness.

The final dataset comprised 101 valid responses, carefully screened for completeness and consistency. These responses were then analyzed to explore the relationships between work engagement, turnover intention, and occupational stress, as well as the potential mediating effects of organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

The decision to create an original questionnaire allowed for items specifically aligned with the acute care context and the unique challenges faced by nurses. This approach provided the flexibility to incorporate items particularly relevant to the research questions and objectives, offering a more nuanced understanding of the variables under investigation. This is expected to yield more reliable and

contextually appropriate data, contributing to the understanding of factors influencing job satisfaction and retention in the nursing profession.

SPSS for Demographic Analysis

Demographic data will be analyzed using SPSS. This software facilitates data handling and descriptive statistics, providing a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' backgrounds and contextualizing the correlations examined in this study.

Data Analysis with SmartPLS 4.0

In order to analyse structural models (like causal links and hypothesis testing) and measurement models (like the reliability and validity of constructs), SmartPLS Version 4.0 will be used for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). This method works especially well for exploratory studies that look at how occupational stress and work engagement affect nurses' intentions to leave acute care hospitals

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model ensures that constructs are **reliable** and **valid** before testing structural relationships. This study will assess:

Reliability

Indicator Reliability: Outer loadings of individual items should exceed 0.70 to confirm that items effectively measure their respective constructs.

Internal Consistency Reliability: Measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), both of which should be above 0.70 to confirm the scale's consistency.

Validity

Convergent Validity: Assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which should be greater than 0.50, indicating that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance in its indicators.

Discriminant Validity:

Fornell-Larcker Criterion: The square root of AVE for each construct must be greater than its correlations with other constructs.

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT): Values should be below 0.85 to ensure distinct constructs.

Structural Model Assessment

Once the measurement model confirms reliability and validity, the structural model is analyzed using:

Path Coefficients (β -values): Show the strength and direction of relationships.

T-Statistics & P-Values: Generated via bootstrapping (5,000 resamples) to test hypotheses (significance at $p < 0.05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics Analysis

Demographic analysis, a systematic examination of population characteristics, provides crucial context for interpreting our study's findings. Table I presents the demographic profile of our sample, including gender, age, marital status, work tenure, and organizational type.

Table 1. Demographics Analysis.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	44	43.6
Female	57	56.4
Age		
21 -30 years	55	54.5
31 - 40 years	25	24.8
Above 40 years	21	20.8
Material Status		
Married	44	43.6
Non married	57	56.4
Work Tenure		
< 5 years	35	34.7
1 - 5 years	40	39.6
>5 years	26	25.7
Type of Organization		
Private	52	51.5
Public	49	48.5

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)

Gender Distribution: The sample shows a relatively balanced gender distribution, with a slight majority of female nurses (56.4%). This mirrors the general demographic trend in nursing, which is predominantly female.

Age Distribution: A significant proportion (54.5%) of the respondents are in the 21-30 age group, indicating a younger workforce. This suggests that younger nurses are a critical demographic for understanding turnover intentions.

Organizational Type: The sample is nearly evenly split between private (51,5%) and public (48,5%) hospitals, allowing for comparative insights between these sectors.

Measurement Model

The table presents the results of a structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis focusing on three latent constructs: Work Engagement, Turnover Intention, and Occupational Stress. The results show a strong relationship between Work Engagement and the indicator, high outer loadings for Turnover Intention, and good construct validity for Occupational Stress. The table suggests that the measurement

model for these constructs is reasonably good, with high reliability and validity. However, the lower AVE value for Occupational Stress might require further investigation. The interpretation of the table should be done in conjunction with other model fit indices and statistical measures to ensure the overall quality of the SEM model.

Table 2. Construct Validity and Reliability Test.

Construct	Indicators	Outer Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Work Engagement	WE1	0.968	0.982	0.983	0.986	0.932
	WE2	0.969				
	WE3	0.932				
	WE4	0.973				
	WE5	0.984				
Turnover Intention	TI1	0.965	0.987	0.987	0.991	0.963
	TI2	0.988				
	TI3	0.984				
	TI4	0.989				
Occupational Stress	OS1	0.857	0.909	0.964	0.925	0.714
	OS2	0.884				
	OS3	0.711				
	OS4	0.823				
	OS5	0.933				

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)

Discriminant Validity

The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) matrix is a statistical technique used to assess discriminant validity in structural equation modeling (SEM). HTMT values below 0.90 are considered to indicate sufficient distinctness and discriminant validity. In the table provided, the HTMT between OS and TI is 0.807, OS and WE (Work Engagement) are 0.805, and TI and WE are 0.885. The HTMT matrix suggests that the constructs of OS, TI, and WE have reasonable

discriminant validity, meaning they are distinct from each other.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio.

	OS	TI	WE
OS			
TI	0.807		
WE	0.805	0.885	

WE (Work Engagement), TI (Turnover Intention), OS (Occupational Stress)

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)

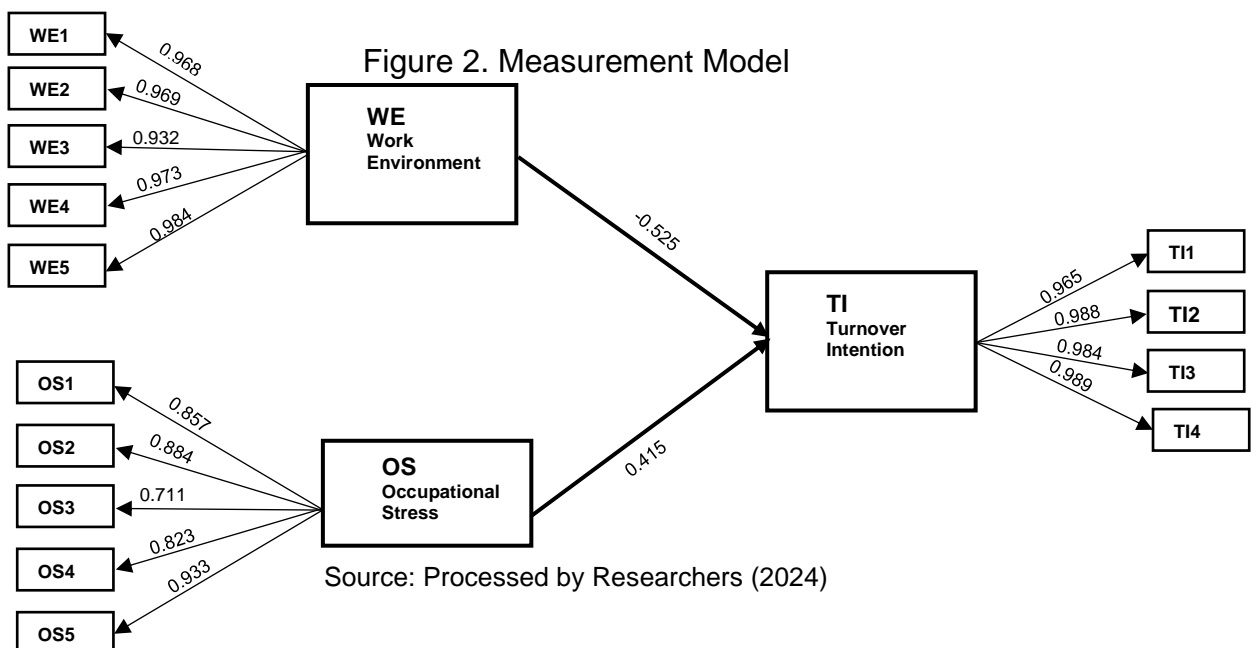
The Fornell-Larcker criterion is a statistical test used to evaluate discriminant validity in structural equation modeling (SEM). It ensures distinct latent constructs are not overlapping. The criterion compares the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with its correlations to other constructs. If the square root of AVE for a construct is greater than its correlation with any other construct, it indicates its distinctness and discriminant validity. In the table provided, the square root of AVE for OS (0.845) is greater than its correlations with TI (0.855) and WE (-0.839), indicating its discriminant validity.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

	OS	TI	WE
OS	0.845		
TI	0.855	0.981	
WE	-0.839	-0.872	0.966

WE (Work Engagement), TI (Turnover Intention), OS (Occupational Stress)

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)



Structural Model

The structural equation model (SEM) with two paths—OS → TI and WE → TI – demonstrates significant relationships. The path coefficient indicates a strong relationship between OS and TI, with a 0.417-unit increase in OS leading to a 0.417-unit increase in TI. The standard deviation is 0.056, and the t-statistic is 7.439, indicating a strong effect size. The p-value is 0.000, confirming the statistical significance of this relationship. The result aligns with Jiang et al. (2022), who found that occupational stress significantly increases turnover intention among emergency physicians, reinforcing the notion that higher stress levels contribute to employees' intent to leave their jobs. Additionally, the path coefficient for Work Engagement (WE) is -0.524,

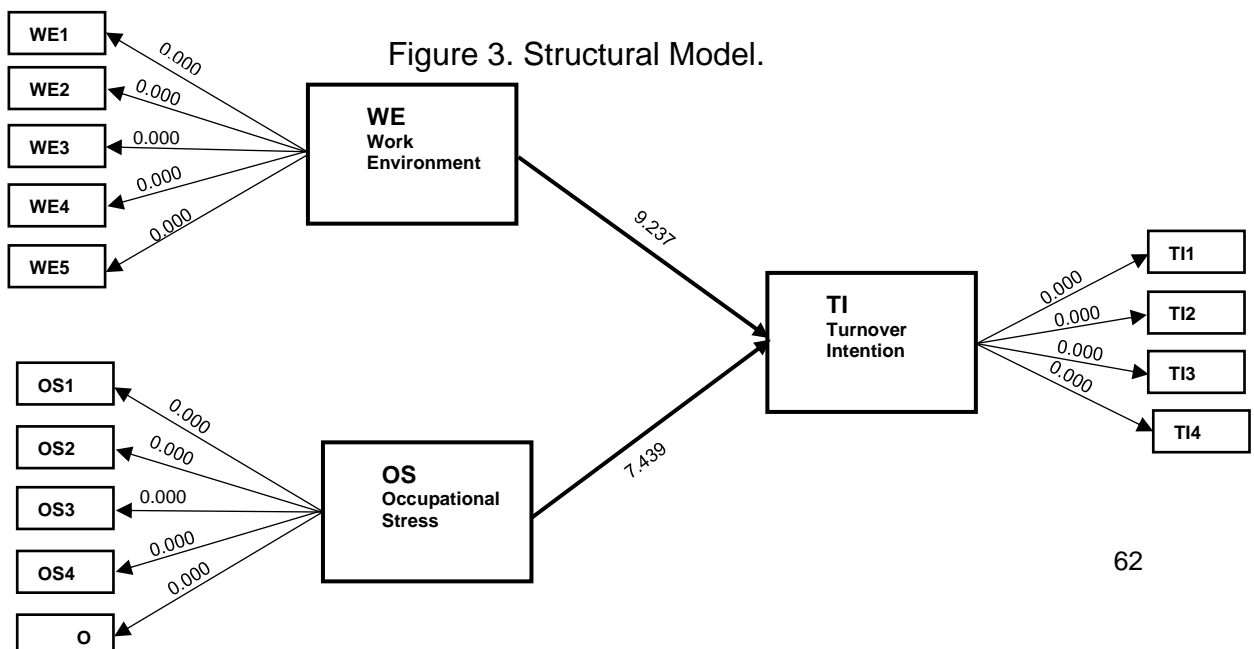
indicating an inverse relationship. The standard deviation is 0.057, and the t-statistic is 9.237, demonstrating a strong and statistically significant negative relationship between WE and TI. This finding is further supported by Rafiq et al. (2019), who identified that higher work engagement reduces turnover intention, emphasizing the role of engagement in retaining employees. The model suggests that while Occupational Stress (OS) positively impacts Turnover Intention (TI), Work Engagement (WE) mitigates this effect by reducing TI. Both relationships are statistically significant, highlighting the importance of reducing workplace stress and fostering engagement to improve employee retention.

Table 5. Hypothesis.

Relationship Between Construct	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Verdict
OS → TI	0.415	0.417	0.056	7.439	0.000	Significant
WE → TI	-0.525	-0.524	0.057	9.237	0.000	Significant

WE (Work Engagement), TI (Turnover Intention), OS (Occupational Stress)

Source: Processed by Researchers (2024)



Source: Data Processed by Author (2024)

Occupational Stress and Turnover Intention (OS → TI):

The study reveals a significant positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with previous research indicating that high levels of occupational stress, including role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload, significantly increase nurses' intentions to leave their jobs (Salahudin et al., 2016; Gerungan, 2022).

This is consistent with the understanding that sustained occupational stress leads to burnout, frustration, and dissatisfaction, prompting nurses to seek alternative employment to mitigate these negative experiences.

In the context of Pakistani healthcare, where resources may be limited and workloads high, this finding underscores the urgent need for interventions to reduce occupational stress among nurses.

Work Engagement and Turnover Intention (WE → TI):

A significant negative relationship was observed between work engagement and turnover intention ($\beta = -0.525$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that nurses with higher levels of work engagement are less likely to intend to leave their positions.

This finding is consistent with studies demonstrating that work engagement acts as a protective factor against turnover (Indriyani & Meria, 2022; Yücel et al., 2021). Engaged nurses experience greater

fulfillment, motivation, and commitment to their organizations, fostering a sense of loyalty and reducing their propensity to seek alternative employment.

This finding highlights the importance of fostering a positive and supportive work environment that promotes work engagement among nurses. Kundu and Lata (2017) emphasize that a supportive work environment enhances employee retention by fostering organizational engagement. Their study highlights how organizational support positively influences employees' commitment and involvement, ultimately leading to higher engagement and lower turnover. Similarly, in the nursing context, creating a work environment that encourages support and engagement can contribute to improved job satisfaction and retention.

Comparative Analysis and Strengthening External Validation

The findings of this study reinforce established theories on the relationships between occupational stress, work engagement, and turnover intention, while also providing context-specific insights within the Pakistani healthcare setting.

While previous studies have shown similar relationships, this research adds to the existing knowledge by quantifying the impact of these variables in a developing nation context.

The strength of the relationships found in this study, strengthens the

external validation of the theory being tested. The T values being very high, and the P values being very low, strengthens the findings.

Future research should explore the moderating effects of cultural factors and organizational policies on these relationships, to further refine our understanding of nurse turnover in diverse healthcare settings.

CONCLUSION

The primary objectives of this study were to investigate the influence of work engagement and occupational stress on nurse turnover intention within acute care hospitals in Pakistan. Employing a quantitative research methodology, data was collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS and SmartPLS 4.

Key Findings

Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis reveals a nearly balanced gender distribution (Male: 43.6%, Female: 56.4%) and a predominantly young workforce (54.5% aged 21-30). Additionally, most respondents are unmarried (56.4%), with a majority having work experience of 1-5 years (39.6%) and working in private organizations (51.5%).

Measurement Model

The study confirmed the reliability and validity of the measurement model, indicating that the constructs of work engagement, turnover intention, and occupational stress were accurately measured.

Structural Model

Occupational stress exhibited a significant positive relationship with turnover intention, highlighting that increased stress correlates with a higher likelihood of nurses intending to leave their positions.

Work engagement demonstrated a significant negative relationship with turnover intention, suggesting that higher engagement levels are associated with reduced intentions to quit.

Implications

The findings of this study provide actionable insights for healthcare organizations aiming to reduce nurse turnover. To translate these findings into specific strategies, organizations should:

Implement Targeted Stress Reduction Interventions

Beyond general workload management, introduce specific programs like mindfulness training, stress debriefing sessions following critical incidents, and peer support groups.

Enhance Work Engagement Through Job Crafting and Autonomy

Empower nurses to customize aspects of their roles, such as scheduling or task allocation, to better align with their preferences and strengths.

Develop Structured Mentorship and Career Development Pathways

Create formal mentorship programs pairing experienced nurses with newer staff and offer clear career advancement opportunities with defined progression paths.

Establish Regular Feedback and Recognition Systems

Implement a system of regular performance feedback, including both formal evaluations and informal appreciation, and establish a transparent reward system that acknowledges and values nurses' contributions.

Optimize Staffing Ratios and Resource Allocation

Conduct regular assessments of staffing levels and resource availability to ensure adequate support for nurses, particularly during periods of high patient acuity.

Academic Contribution

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the specific relationships between work engagement, occupational stress, and turnover intention within the unique context of acute care hospitals in Pakistan. Unlike many studies conducted in Western healthcare settings, this research highlights the cultural and contextual factors influencing nurse retention in a developing country. Furthermore, the use of PLS-SEM allows for a robust analysis of complex relationships between these variables, providing a more nuanced understanding of their interplay. This study adds to the discussion by supplying a model that other researchers can use when looking at similar issues in other developing nations. This research also validates the usefulness of established theories, when applied to a new cultural context.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights, it acknowledges limitations such as the relatively small sample size and the specific context of Pakistani acute care hospitals. Future research should consider:

Expanding the sample size and employing probability sampling techniques to enhance generalizability.

Investigating the influence of organizational culture, leadership styles, and patient acuity on nurse turnover intention.

Conducting longitudinal studies to explore the long-term effects of work engagement and occupational stress on turnover.

This study underscores the critical importance of addressing work engagement and occupational stress to mitigate nurse turnover in acute care hospitals. By implementing targeted strategies, healthcare organizations can foster a more positive work environment, improve employee satisfaction, and ultimately enhance patient care.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Occupational Stress

1. The workload I've taken on is above what I can handle.
2. I don't know what tasks or roles I am supposed to carry out.
3. I don't get opportunities to the career.
4. I have a bad relationship with my co-workers.
5. I don't have enough authority to do my job.

Employee Turnover Intention

1. I'm thinking about quitting my job.
2. I'm not happy with my current work.
3. I have a job out there that I would rather be doing.
4. Regardless of the pay out, I'll switch workplace.

Work Engagement

1. I get energy from my work.
2. I gave my job my best effort.
3. I'm focused on my work.
4. I'm proud of what I do.
5. My work gives me a sense of accomplishment.

Source: Developed by Researchers