Beyond Burnout: Exploring the Factors That Sustain Acute Care Nurses Who Remain on the Same Unit for Five Years or Longer

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JOINT NURSING SCIENCE PHD PROGRAM

Background Information and Target Population

- Nurse burnout and turnover contribute to the ongoing global nursing shortage.
- WHO projects a shortage of approximately 4.5 million nurses by 2030.
- Retention of experienced nurses is essential to strengthening healthcare systems (WHO, 2025).
- U.S. nurse turnover averages approximately 18.4% annually (Roush, 2024).
- Perceived organizational support (POS) has been associated with lower turnover intentions.
- Limited research examines nurses who remain on the same acute care unit for ≥5 years.
- Target population: Registered nurses providing direct bedside care in acute care hospitals who have continuously worked on the same unit for ≥5 years.

Study Questions with Hypothesis

Research Question

Is perceived organizational support associated with organizational commitment among registered nurses who have remained on the same acute care unit for at least 5 years?

Null Hypothesis (H_0)

There is no significant association between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1)

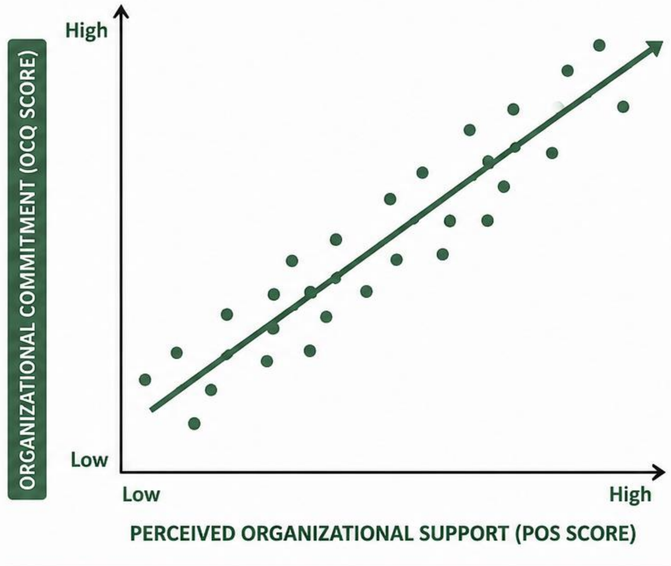
Higher perceived organizational support is positively associated with higher organizational commitment.

Methods

- Design: Quantitative, cross-sectional correlational study
- Sampling: Purposive sampling
- Recruitment: Hospital email announcements, Flyers, Nursing leadership
- Inclusion criteria: Licensed RN, ≥18 years of age, Direct bedside care in acute care, ≥5 consecutive years on the same nursing unit
- Exclusion criteria: Non-acute care nurses, Nurse managers, <5 years on current unit
- Measures: Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS), Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)
- Data collection: Anonymous electronic survey
- Sample size: A priori power analysis will determine minimum required sample

ANTICIPATED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES

Higher perceived organizational support is expected to be positively associated with higher organizational commitment.



Anticipated Outcome: A positive linear relationship is expected between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment.

Data Analysis Plan

- Descriptive statistics: Participant demographics and Study variables
- Pearson's correlation: Examine association between POS and organizational commitment
- Multiple linear regression: Determine whether POS predicts organizational commitment
- Control for potential confounding variables: (Age, Education, Years of nursing experience, Employment status, Shift worked, Unit specialty)
- Statistical significance: $p < 0.05$
- Software: JASP or comparable statistical software

ANTICIPATED PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Higher levels of organizational support and positive work environment factors are expected to contribute to long-term nurse retention.



Illustrative only – not actual study results.

Expected Outcomes

Higher perceived organizational support is expected to be associated with:

- Greater organizational commitment
- Increased long-term retention
- Stronger workforce engagement

Additional protective factors may include:

- Supportive leadership
- Professional recognition
- Positive workplace relationships
- Professional autonomy

Implications

- Understanding what keeps experienced nurses committed will help organizations move beyond reacting to turnover toward proactively creating environments where nurses want to stay.
- Identify organizational factors associated with long-term commitment.
- Inform evidence-based leadership practices.
- Support strategic workforce planning.
- Strengthen nurse retention initiatives.
- Preserve experienced bedside nursing expertise.
- Reduce nurse turnover and workforce instability.
- Improve continuity of patient care.
- Provide a foundation for future interventions supporting nurse well-being and retention.