



Research Article

**THE EFFECT OF NURSES' PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION, JOB STRESS AND INTENTION TO LEAVE**

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**Abstract:** *To maintain quality service in healthcare services, the perceived organizational support is believed to affect the conditions such as nurses feeling whole with their job, keeping the stressors related to the work environment under control, and reducing the number of personnel leaving the job. This descriptive and correlational study investigates the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support on organizational identification, job stress, and intention to leave. The study sample consisted of 226 nurses in Türkiye. Data were collected by 'Personal Information Form', 'Survey of Perceived Organizational Support', 'Organizational Identification Scale' 'A Job Stress Scale-20', and 'Turnover Intention Scale'. Descriptive data, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression were used to analyze the research data. Perceived organizational support was determined to have a positive moderate relationship with organizational identification ( $r=0.437$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), a strong negative relationship with job stress ( $r=-0.636$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and a moderate negative relationship with intention to leave ( $r=-0.517$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Perceived organizational support explained 19% of organizational identification, 23% of the job stress, and 17% of the intention to leave ( $p<0.05$ ). For employees to be able to provide the desired performance following the vision and mission of the organization, it is very important to determine the organizational factors affecting the individual performance of the employees.*

**Keywords:** *Intention to leave, job stress, nurses, organizational support, organizational identification*

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## 1. Introduction

The changes in the provision of healthcare services today require the existence of healthcare organizations that are suitable for global conditions, open to change, following technological developments, trying to keep the service quality at the top, and keeping qualified manpower in the organization. It is obvious that healthcare organizations also need employees who would increase the quality of the service, as well as the technological infrastructure they use to maintain their strength with all the changes that occur in the global, social, and political aspects. Therefore, it has become a priority for managers to support their employees and meet their expectations to increase the efficiency of the organizations [1, 2]. For employees to be able to provide the desired performance following the vision and mission of the organization, it is very important to determine the organizational factors affecting the individual performance of the employees. Besides being the majority in numbers as one of the occupational groups involved in the delivery of healthcare services, nurses might be more affected by the events that occur in the work environment due to patient care or many systemic problems in this process because they constantly work in close contact with the patients. The nurses need to be supported by their organizations to make sure that their decisions are adopted by other team members and that the

solution is permanent for them to solve the problems they face in the work environment in the desired way [3].

Eisenberger et al. [4] defined organizational support as the fact that organizational values consider employees and have a quality that increases their happiness. Organizational support reflects the support, interest, commitment, and belief that the organization provides to the employee as a result of the employee's contribution to the organization [5]. The development of perceived organizational support is based on basic socio-emotional needs such as social status, self-esteem, and meaning, as well as the personalization of the organization [6]. A good sense of organizational support creates a strong sense of security and belonging by enabling nurses to perceive the respect, concern, and attention of the organization [7]. The fact that managers provide support to employees and demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviors towards them enables the employees to have organizational identification and increase their performance [1].

Organizational identification plays an important role in shaping attitudes and behaviors toward the job and is considered one of the main conditions for the efficiency of the organization [1, 8]. Organizational identification refers to the identification of employees as part of the organization [8]. Employees with high organizational identification have a lower perception of workload [9] while they are less likely to leave their organizations [10] and more likely to work in line with the goals of their organizations [11]. On the other hand, nurses might likely be exposed to many different stressors due to factors related to the continuous provision of services in healthcare organizations, the nature of the job, working conditions, and the environment. The stress experienced in the work environment may cause the employees to leave their jobs by leading to undesirable effects on their identification and performance [12, 13]. Occupational stress is considered a risk that leads to increased tension in the individual with the deterioration of the supply-demand balance in the work environment [14]. Studies show that the job stress of employees and their intention to leave is reduced when they have a positive perception of organizational support. [2, 6, 15-17]

Previous studies show that organizational support significantly affects nurses [1, 2, 18]. To maintain quality service in healthcare services, the perceived organizational support is believed to affect the conditions like nurses feeling whole with their job, keeping the stressors related to the work environment under control, and reducing the number of personnel leaving the job. Therefore, the findings to be obtained from this research will reveal the level of this effect from the Türkiye perspective; at the same time, it will guide the determination of employee retention strategies in terms of institutional and managerial. This study sought to investigate the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support level on organizational identification, job stress, and intention to leave.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1. Research design and objective**

This is a descriptive and correlational study. It was conducted to investigate the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support on organizational identification, job stress, and intention to leave Türkiye. The STROBE guideline was carried out to ensure quality reporting in the study.

### **2.2. Participants and sample size**

The study population consisted of nurses working in public and university hospitals of different sizes in Turkey. The A-priori Sample Size Calculator for Multiple Regression program was used for the sample size estimation of the study and the minimum number of samples to be included in the study for 9 variables was determined as 167 with an effect size of 0.15, a power of 0.95 and a margin of error of 0.05 [19]. Considering the possibility of missing data, it was aimed to reach 217 participants, 30% more

than the minimum sample number. The study sample consisted of 226 nurses who volunteered to participate in the study and completed the data collection forms fully.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

A personal information form was created by the researchers and three different scales were used for the data collection.

**Personal information form:** A 9-question form, created by the researchers, includes questions about the socio-demographic and professional life information of the participants.

**Perceived Organizational Support Survey:** The form, developed by Eisenberger et al. [4], whose Turkish validity and reliability studies were conducted by Türe and Yıldırım [20], is used to determine the level of organizational support perceived by the employees. The Turkish version of the unidimensional survey consists of nine items. The score of the five-point Likert-type survey is calculated by dividing the total score by the number of items. The score that can be obtained from the scale varies between 1-5. An increase in the score obtained from the survey indicates that the level of perceived organizational support increases [20]. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the survey was found to be 0.88 in Türe and Yıldırım's study, while it was 0.81 in this study.

**Organizational Identification Scale:** The scale, developed by Mael and Ashford [21] and adapted into Turkish by Tak and Aydemir [22], is used to determine the organizational identification level of adults. The unidimensional five-point Likert-type scale consists of six items. The scale is evaluated over the average score and there is no cutoff point on the scale. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 1, and the highest score is 5. As the score obtained from the scale increases, organizational identification also increases [22]. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.88 in Tak and Aydemir's study, while it was 0.87 in this study.

**A Job Stress Scale-20:** The scale, developed as the Perceived Stress Scale by Cohen et al.[23], was adapted to Turkish culture by Tatar [24]. It is a unidimensional scale named "A Job Stress Scale-20" and consists of a total of 20 items. The scale, which does not have an opposite item, is applied with a five-point Likert-type evaluation ranging from not at all appropriate (1) to completely appropriate (5). The scale measures the stress levels of employees in their organizations [24]. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.91 in the study of Tatar, and it was 0.90 in this study.

**Turnover Intention Scale:** The scale, developed by Mobley et al.[25] and adapted into Turkish by Örucü and Özafşarlıoğlu [26], is used to measure the intention to leave the job in adults. The unidimensional five-point Likert-type scale consists of three items. There is no reverse-scored item in the scale. The scale is evaluated according to the total score, with the lowest score being 3 and the highest score being 15. While a high score indicates that the intention to leave the job increases, a low score indicates that it decreases [26]. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.90 in the study of Örucü and Özafşarlıoğlu (2013), while it was 0.84 in this study.

### 2.4. Data Collection Process

The study data were collected through the online form (Google Forms), prepared by the researchers, which was sent to nurses through social media between March 4 and May 15, 2022, after obtaining permission from the Ethics Committee and the Ministry of Health. The first page of the online data collection form included an informed consent form which contained detailed information about the purpose of the study, by whom it would be conducted, how long it would take, how the confidentiality of the data would be ensured, and a statement informing them that they could end their participation in the study whenever they wanted. Only the participants who read this form and agreed to participate in the study were allowed to move on to the next stage and fill out the data collection tools. The average time the participants spent completing the data collection form was about 12 minutes.

## 2.5. Data analysis

The study data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 22.0 statistical software program on a total of 226 data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to test whether the data showed normal distribution and it was found that the data were normally distributed. Number and percentage in the evaluation of descriptive data, the Pearson correlation analysis to evaluate whether there was a relationship between variables, and simple linear regression analysis to examine the effect of numerical variables were used. In all analyses,  $p < 0.05$  was accepted as the statistical significance value.

## 2.6. Ethical considerations

The necessary permissions were obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Adiyaman University on (24.01.2022-198) and the Scientific Research Platform of the Ministry of Health (29.12.2021-T00-08-28) to carry out the study. Necessary permissions were obtained by e-mail from the authors who conducted validity and reliability studies of the measurement tools to be able to use them in this study. Before the start of the study, information about the purpose, content, and duration of the study was shared with the participants and their informed consent was obtained.

## 3. Results and Discussion

76.5% of the nurses participating in the study were female, 58.4% were between the ages of 20-30, 56.6% were found to reside in the city and 79.2% had an undergraduate degree. 53.5% of them had an experience between 1 to 5 years, 43.4% were working at public hospitals, 68.6% worked in shifts and 80.5% were staff nurses (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Nurses Socio-Demographic Characteristics (n:226)

Features	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Woman	173	76.5
Male	53	23.5
<b>Age</b>		
20-30	132	58.4
31-40	64	28.3
41 and above	30	13.3
<b>Characteristics of the Living Area</b>		
County	28	12.4
City	128	56.6
Big city	70	31.0
<b>Education Background</b>		
High school/Associate degree	18	8.0
Bachelors degree	179	79.2
Postgraduate	29	12.8
<b>Professional experience</b>		
Less than one year	22	9.7
1-5 years	121	53.5
6-10 years	32	14.2
11-15 years	34	15.1
16 years and above	17	7.5

Table 1. Continued

Features	n	%
<b>Working Institution</b>		
Public Hospital	98	43.4
Training and Research Hospital	86	38.1
University Hospital	42	18.5
<b>Working Unit</b>		
Emergency	53	23.5
Intensive care	47	20.7
Internal Services	55	24.3
Surgical Services	46	20.4
Polyclinics	25	11.1
<b>Work Schedule</b>		
Continuous Daytime	54	23.9
Continuous Night	17	7.5
Shift	155	68.6
<b>Status</b>		
Nurse Manager	9	4.0
Staff Nurse	182	80.5
Polyclinic Nurse	24	10.6
Training Nurse	11	4.9

In this study, nurses' Perceived Organizational Support Questionnaire, Organizational Identification Scale, A Job Stress Scale-20 total score average was  $2.89 \pm 0.84$ ;  $3.39 \pm 0.99$ ;  $2.94 \pm 0.75$ . The total score of the nurses from the Intention to Leave Scale was  $7.47 \pm 3.61$ . (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Identification, Job Stress, and Turnover Intention Scales Mean Scores

Scales	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	Min	Max
Perceived Organizational Support Scale	$2.89 \pm 0.84$	1	4.78
Organizational Identification Scale	$3.39 \pm 0.99$	1	5
Job Stress Scale	$2.94 \pm 0.75$	1.15	4.70
Turnover Intention Scale	$7.47 \pm 3.61$	3.00	15.00

When the relationship between nurses' perceived organizational support, organizational identification, job stress, and intention to leave, perceived organizational support was determined to have a positive moderate relationship with the organizational identification ( $r=.437$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), a strong negative relationship with the job stress ( $r=-.636$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and a moderate negative relationship with intention to leave ( $r=-.517$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). There was a weak negative relationship between organizational identification and job stress and intention to leave ( $r=-.334$ ;  $r=-.263$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, a moderate positive relationship was found between job stress and intention to leave ( $r=.515$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Correlation between Nurses' Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Identification, Job Stress and Intention to Leave

		Perceived Organizational Support Scale	Organizational Identification Scale	Job Stress Scale	Turnover Intention Scale
Perceived Organizational Support Scale	r	1			
	p				
Organizational Identification Scale	r	.437**	1		
	p	0.000			
Job Stress Scale	r	-.636**	-.334**	1	
	p	0,000	0,000		
Turnover Intention Scale	r	-.517**	-.263**	.515**	1
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000	

\*\* p<0.001, \* p<0.05

The simple linear regression model analysis established to investigate the effect of organizational support perceived by nurses on organizational identification was determined to be a statistically significant model (F=54.016, p=0.000), and perceived organizational support explained 19% of organizational identification (p<0.05). The analysis of the simple linear regression model established to investigate the effect of the organizational support perceived by nurses on job stress was a statistically significant model (F=69.102, p=0.000) and the perceived organizational support explained 23% of the job stress (p<0.05). The simple linear regression model analysis established to investigate the effect of the organizational support perceived by nurses on the intention to leave was also a statistically significant model (F=49.046, p=0.000), and the perceived organizational support explained 17% of the intention to leave (p<0.05) (Table 4).

**Table 4.** The Effect of Nurses' Perceived Organizational Support on Organizational Identification, Job Stress, and Intention to Leave

Dependent Variable	Independent variable	β	Std. Error	t	p	F	Model (p)	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Organizational Identification	Constant	7.865	1.741	4.519	0.000	54.016	0.000	0.191
	Perceived Organizational Support	0.497	0.068	7.350	0.000			
Job Stress	Constant	93.600	4.270	21.922	0.000	69.102	0.000	0.232
	Perceived Organizational Support	-1.379	0.166	-8.313	0.000			
Intention to Leave	Constant	14.772	1.064	13.882	0.000	49.046	0.000	0.176
	Perceived Organizational Support	-0.290	0.041	-7.003	0.000			

β: Regression Coefficient \*p<0.05 DW: Durbin Watson St β: Standardized Regression

In this study, the effect of organizational support perceived by nurses on organizational identification, job stress, and intention to leave was investigated.

The level of organizational support perceived by nurses was determined to be above the average in this study (Table 2). Supportive work environments are the most important factor in creating job satisfaction for nurses and keeping them in the organization, which positively affects the retention and maintenance of manpower in the organization [27]. In addition, organizational support is an important factor that positively affects the organizational identity, cooperation, and emotional commitment of

employees [28]. Therefore, perceived organizational support is believed to have a regulatory and improving effect on the relationship of employees with their organizations.

The level of organizational identification of nurses was determined to be above the average in this study (Table 2). A moderate positive relationship was found between the perceived organizational support of nurses and their organizational identification levels (Table 3) and perceived organizational support explained 19% of organizational identification (Table 4). In line with this finding, it can be said that as the level of organizational support perceived by nurses increases, the level of organizational identification also increases. There are a limited number of studies examining the relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational identification levels in nurses. When these limited studies on the subject were examined, they were found to have similar results to our results and the organizational identification levels of the employees with a high perception of organizational support were also high [1, 29]. In the study conducted by Sevinç Altaş (2021) [30], the organizational support perceived by healthcare professionals was found to have a positive significant effect on organizational identification. When the organizational identification level of the employees is high and strong, they would certainly continue to stay in the organization and contribute to organizational success by making the most appropriate decisions in the best interests of the organization [31, 32]. Qualified manpower is very important in healthcare environments. Therefore, organizations should give importance to the happiness of their employees, make them feel happy to be together, meet their needs for respect and recognition, and strengthen their feelings of identification by being aware of their contributions and providing organizational support. In line with this, it should be ensured that organizations focus on positive work attitudes that would keep qualified manpower in the organization, improve working conditions, create a positive work environment and creation of an environment of trust towards the organization and the manager [30].

The job stress level of nurses was determined to be above the average in this study (Table 2). A strong negative relationship was found between the level of organizational support perceived by nurses and their job stress (Table 3) and perceived organizational support explained 23% of job stress (Table 4). This finding suggests that as the level of perceived organizational support increases, the job stress level decreases. When the results of the studies examining the relationship between perceived organizational support and job stress in nurses were reviewed, there are results revealing a negative relationship between organizational support and job stress [16-18]. In the study conducted by Higazee et al. (2016) [18] found a negative relationship between nurses' job stress and organizational support. As a result of the study conducted by Al-Homayan et al. (2013) [15] determined that organizational support might reduce the negative consequences of job stress on nurses' performance. According to the results of another study conducted by Labrague et al. (2018) [33] to examine the effect of nurses' perceptions of organizational support on job outcomes (organizational commitment, job autonomy, job performance, job satisfaction, job stress, and intention to leave), perceived organizational support was determined not to affect any of the six outcomes in nurses. Although the literature reveals that job stress can be reduced by organizational support, it has been also stated that other demographic and clinical variables that may be related to job stress should be investigated to determine the correct relationship between organizational support and job stress [18]. Making arrangements to improve perceived organizational support, such as developing strategies that would include employee-centered practices in organizations, improving working conditions, making arrangements to reduce workload, strengthening teamwork, providing autonomy, and offering development opportunities [16, 33] can contribute to the reduction of nurses' job stress levels. Since the nurses would feel better in such a work environment, their stress levels would decrease and their relationship with their organizations would be strengthened.

The mean score of the nurses' intention to leave was determined to be at a moderate level in this study (Table 2). A strong negative relationship was found between the level of organizational support

perceived by nurses and their intention to leave (Table 3) and perceived organizational support explained 17% of the intention to leave (Table 4). This finding suggests that as the perceived organizational support level increases, the intention to leave the job decreases. When the studies on the subject were examined, there were results of studies showing a negative relationship between perceived organizational support and intention to leave, and that perceived organizational support explains the intention to leave [17, 34]. In the study conducted by Liu et al. (2018) [2] organizational support explained 13% of the overall variance in intention to leave and was found to be the most important predictor of intention to leave. Also, in the study conducted by Abou Hashish (2017) [17], job satisfaction and intention to leave, perceived organizational support constituted approximately 23% of the explained variance of intention to leave. The results of the studies show that perceived organizational support is one of the important antecedents of intention to leave. It is thought that the fact that nurses observe attitudes and behaviors that increase their perceptions of organizational support such as the effort they spend in the work environment being recognized and their personal development being considered would decrease their intention to leave their jobs by causing them to gain a sense of belonging, increase their commitment to the organization and have more motivation to contribute.

There are some limitations to the research conducted. Since the data of this study, the first of which were collected in a certain period, the data obtained are limited to evaluating the longitudinal effects and the causality of the relationships. Another limitation is the online collection of research data. Although it was tried to reach the nurses working in institutions with different characteristics throughout Turkey, no comment could be made about this because the geographical region was not asked in the data collection form. Another limitation is geographic context. These findings cannot be generalized to other countries since the data collection forms used in the research include questions about the perceptions of the organizational structure and working conditions, which may be affected by social, cultural, and political changes.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The perceived organizational support, organizational identification, and job stress scores were found to be above the average, and the intention to leave was found to be close to the average value in this study conducted to examine the effect of nurses' perceived organizational support on organizational identification, job stress and intention to leave. Perceived organizational support has been determined to have a positive relationship with organizational identification and a negative relationship with job stress and intention to leave, and perceived organizational support has significant effects on the explanation of all these three variables.

Considering the increase in the nurse job turnover rate all over the world, retention of qualified manpower in the organization, and the undeniable contributions of the employees in the competition of the organizations, it becomes imperative for organizations that provide healthcare services to consider the factors affecting nurses' work performance and make the necessary improvements. Therefore, developing strategies that would increase perceived organizational support, improve working conditions, establish good governance systems, and allow employees to participate in management would reduce job stress and increase their intention to stay at their current jobs by increasing the level of organizational identification. It is recommended to identify and eliminate the stressors arising from the work environment, strengthen teamwork and communication, and offer training and personal development opportunities for nurses to reveal their potential in the best way.

#### **Ethical statement**

The necessary permissions were obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Adiyaman University on (24.01.2022-198)



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### Conflict of Interest

The authors report no actual or potential conflicts of interest.

### Authors contributions

G. E. K.: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Supervision, Validation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing.

Y. Ç.: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Validation, Writing - original draft.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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