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Nurses' organizational trust and intention to continue working at hospitals in Turkey

Gülden Basit*, Sergül Duygulu

Faculty of Nursing, Hacettepe University, 06410, Sıhhiye, Ankara, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nurses are important staff members and a key occupational group with fundamental responsibilities in meeting changing health care needs and realizing organisational objectives. Increasing nurses' trust in their institutions and their willingness to work there in the long-term should therefore be a priority for health care managers.

Purpose: The aim of this descriptive study was to investigate nurses' organisational trust and intention to stay.

Method: The sample comprised 265 nurses working at three general acute care hospitals in Turkey. Data collection instruments were a Nurses' Data Sheet and the Organisational Trust Scale. Percentage, min-max, and median were computed, and the chi square test, Mann Whitney *U* test, and Kruskal Wallis test were used for the analysis.

Findings: Nurses' trust in their current institution was low and their trust in their colleagues was high. The trust levels of nurses who were satisfied with their current institution and who intended to continue there was high.

Discussion and conclusions: These results demonstrate the importance of gaining the trust of the institution's nurses and retaining them to ensure that they provide effective and safe care. Interventions are therefore needed to increase nurses' and all other employees' trust in the manager, colleagues, and institution, and to improve their satisfaction with the institution, to ensure they continue to work in the same institution.

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What is already known

- Many studies have reported the favourable impact of employees' trust in their institution on patient care, on the organisational behaviour of nurses, and for the institution itself.
- Hospitals should build an environment in which nurses trust in their organisation, to achieve positive outcomes for patients, employees, and the organisation.

What this paper adds

- This study revealed that the participating nurses exhibited low trust in their institution and high trust in their colleagues.
- Nurses who were satisfied with their current institution scored significantly higher on the 'trust in the manager' sub-scale of the

Organisational Trust Scale as compared to nurses who were not satisfied.

- Nurses who intended to continue to work in the same institution scored significantly higher on the 'trust in the manager' sub-scale of the Organisational Trust Scale as compared to nurses who did not.

1. Introduction

Within the context of the health care transformation process, important changes have occurred in the finance, delivery, and management of health care services in Turkey since 2003 (Ministry of Health, 2012). This transformation has also resulted in changes in hospitals. Specifically, for institutions providing health care, there an even stronger emphasis is placed on providing high-quality, cost effective, and easily accessible health care services for all, to meet the health care needs of the community. Simultaneously, it has become more important to make sure that institutional staff trust their hospital and are willing to work there long-term. Previous studies have examined the association between intention to stay

* Corresponding author
E-mail address: guldenbasit@gmail.com (G. Basit).

and trust in the organisation, and they reported that trust in the organisation is a decisive factor in the intention to leave the job. In their study in a state hospital in Italy, [Bobbio and Manganelli \(2015\)](#) reported a negative relationship between trust in the organisation and intent to leave the job. In another study that examined the relationship between organisational policies, organisational trust, human resource management, and nurses' intention to leave work, it was found that increasing the trust of the participants toward the institution led to a decrease in their turnover intention ([Abubakar, Chauhan, & Kura, 2014](#)). It has also been found that organisational trust plays a mediating role in relationship between security culture and turnover intention ([Kath, Magley, & Marmet, 2010](#)).

Nurses are important staff members in health care organisations, and they comprise a key occupational group with fundamental responsibilities in meeting changing health care needs and realizing organisational objectives. Increasing nurses' trust in their institutions and their willingness to work there in the long-term should therefore be a priority for health care managers.

1.1. Organisational trust

The literature on organisational trust describe it as a three-dimensional construct ([Altuntas & Baykal, 2010b](#); [Yucel, 2006](#)) consisting of trust in colleagues, in the manager, and in the organisation. Trust in colleagues is defined as a person's willingness of to be defenceless against the actions of colleagues, whose behaviour and actions he/she cannot control ([Tan & Lim, 2009, p. 46](#)). Trust in the manager is defined as employees' willingness to be defenceless in their expectations based on their trust in the objectives, words, or actions of their managers ([Poon, Rahid, & Othman, 2006, p. 37](#)). Trust in the institution is defined as employees' willingness to be defenceless against the actions and behaviour of the organisation, which they cannot control ([Tan & Lim, 2009, p. 46](#)).

Trust is an abstract ([Asunakutlu, 2002](#)) concept and a social phenomenon that is both professionally and organisationally confrontational as well as important in interpersonal relations ([Dinc & Gastmans, 2012](#)). It is also difficult to define clearly ([Bussing, 2002](#)) because of its complexity and multi-dimensional nature ([Lewis & Weigert, 1985](#)).

[Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman \(1995, p. 712\)](#) defined trust as 'the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party'. [Gill and Sypher's \(2009\)](#) definition of organisational trust is the belief or commitment in the honesty, strength, ability, and confidence of the organisation's members, managers, and institutions. [Cummings and Bromiley \(1996\)](#) defined organisational trust as the individual or general group belief that a person or an organisation will try, in a well-intentioned manner, to behave according to their promises, that they will be honest because of the promises made in the relationships experienced, and that they will not take advantage of others even if there is an opportunity to do so.

Organisational trust is known to have positive effects on patient care ([Carayon, 2011](#)) and on institutions ([Mey, Werner, & Theron, 2014](#)), and it is known to help prevent employee turnover. Employees need to work with mutual trust with their colleagues and managers, and their institutions, so that high-quality, efficient, and safe health care services can be provided. Many studies have reported favourable results of employees' trust in their institution on patient care ([Firth-Cozens, 2004](#)), the organisational behaviour of nurses ([Chen, Wang, Chang, & Hu, 2008](#)), and for the institution itself ([Robbins, Judge, & Millett, 2013](#); [Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007](#)). Studies have revealed that organisational trust increases the staff's perception of justice ([Iscan & Sayin, 2010](#)), job satisfaction ([Iscan & Sayin, 2010](#); [Tallman, 2007](#); [Velez & Strom, 2012](#)), and organi-

sational engagement ([Akgunduz & Guzel, 2014](#); [Ozyilmaz, 2010](#)), while facilitating information sharing ([Robbins et al., 2013](#)) and decreasing both feelings of alienation in the workplace ([Isci, Tastan, & Akyol, 2013](#)) and the intention to quit ([Ozyilmaz, 2010](#)).

Managers are known to play a key role in cultivating organisational trust. Studies show that trust in the manager facilitates creative behaviour by the staff, supports satisfaction ([Ozyilmaz, 2010](#)), and empowers employees ([Mullarkey, Duffy, & Timmins, 2011](#)). Nurses' awareness of the trustworthy characteristics of their managers also ensures organisational identification ([Tseng, Chen, & Chen, 2005](#)).

Development and maintenance of trust in colleagues, another dimension of the organisational trust concept, stimulates team members to cooperate and it facilitates communication. Within this context, trust in colleagues has a major effect on the attitudes of employees towards their work and it acts as a kind of monitor ([Balkan, Serin, & Soran, 2014](#)). Once trust in team members develops, nurses start to take extra responsibilities ([Chen et al., 2008](#)). It is emphasised that trust in colleagues is essential, especially in critical situations, to provide a supportive and caring clinical environment, and to ensure effective teamwork ([Mullarkey et al., 2011](#)).

Studies on the organisational confidence of nurses in Turkey are limited. [Durukan, Akyurek, and Coskun \(2010\)](#) found that nurses trust the aims and actions of their peers/colleagues more than those of their managers. [Altuntas and Baykal \(2010a\)](#) reported that nurses trust their manager and team members more than they trust their institutions. Within this context, nurses who trust their institutions and managers have been reported to show kindness, honesty, and integrity most often ([Altuntas & Baykal, 2010a](#)).

1.2. Intention to stay

Teamwork is essential in the health care sector, and high organisational trust in nurses, the central actors of health care, has a favourable effect on patients, employees, and institutions. Nurses with high organisational trust take responsibility for patient care and make important contributions for the realisation of the hospital's objectives, and creating an environment of organisational trust may therefore be vital for keeping nurses employed at the institution. Nurses with negative interactions with their colleagues ([Chan & Morrison, 2000](#); [Dawson, Stasa, Roche, Homer, & Duffield, 2014](#); [Hunt, 2009](#); [Yin & Yang, 2002](#)) or who are unhappy with their manager's attitude ([El Dahshan & Keshk, 2014](#); [Mokoka, Ehlers, & Oosthuizen, 2011](#); [Yin & Yang, 2002](#)) and manager's leadership ([Chan & Morrison, 2000](#)) may wish to resign. Together, other factors also affect nurses' decision to stay or leave; salary ([Al-Momani, 2008](#); [Mokoka et al., 2011](#)) flexible working hours ([Mokoka et al., 2011](#)), job security and working environment ([Mokoka et al., 2011](#); [Oyetunde & Ayeni, 2014](#)), receiving rewards for taking up more work and opportunities such as a pension ([Mokoka et al., 2011](#)), fair implementation of policies/procedures related to discipline ([Al-Momani, 2008](#); [Mokoka et al., 2011](#)), liking the job ([Chan & Morrison, 2000](#)), job definition and recognition of work ([Al-Momani, 2008](#)), ability to apply nursing skills and autonomy ([Al-Momani, 2008](#); [Chan & Morrison, 2000](#)), working in the field that is preferred and patient care standards ([Chan & Morrison, 2000](#)), individual development opportunities ([Al-Momani, 2008](#); [Oyetunde & Ayeni, 2014](#)) and workload ([Al-Momani, 2008](#)).

Institutions must retain their employees considering these factors so that they can realise their organisational targets and therefore increase efficiency, which are of vital importance for continuing their existence.

The intent to stay at an institution is the intent of the employees to stay with their current employers and to sustain the current work relationship in the long term ([Johari, Yean, Adnan, Yahya, & Ahmad, 2012](#)). The number of nurses is thought to be low in Turkey

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