



## ปัจจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความตั้งใจคงอยู่ในงาน ของอาจารย์ในวิทยาลัยพยาบาลประเทศไทยสาขาวิชานาลาร์

### Factors Related to Intent to Stay Among Faculty Members in Nursing Colleges, The Republic of Malawi

เชาวา-มาเซนเจรา	พย.ม.*	Jane Chirwa-Mazengera	M.S.N. *
รัตนวดี ชอนตะวัน	พย.ด.**	Ratanawadee Chontawan	Ph.D.**
ธิตินันต์ อัคคเดชอนันต์	พย.ด.***	Thitinut Akkadechanunt	Ph.D.***

#### Abstract

The shortage and high turnover among faculty members of nursing institutions make it necessary to explore their intent to stay in the organization. This descriptive correlation study aimed at describing intent to stay (ITS) and exploring the relationship between ITS and related factors, including organizational commitment, faculty-administrator relationship, pay satisfaction and job opportunity. The sample consisted of 113 faculty members from 13 nursing colleges in the Republic of Malawi. The research instruments were the Measure of Organizational Commitment (MOC), the Leader-member Exchange Instrument (LMX-7), the Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ), the Job Opportunity Scale (JOS), and the Intent to Stay Scale (ITSS). Validity of the instruments was tested by original authors. The reliability coefficients of the MOC, LMX-7, PSQ, JOS and ITSS were .84, .82, .81, .71 and .73, respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's product moment correlation, and Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient.

The results of the study revealed that:

1. The overall mean score of intent to stay was at a low level. Most of the subjects (62.83%) reported low intent to stay.
2. There was a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between organizational commitment and intent to stay.

There was a statistically significant weak positive relationship between faculty-administrator relationship and intent to stay.

3. There was no significant relationship between pay satisfaction and intent to stay.

\* Lecturer, Nursing Education, Malawi College of Health Sciences, Lilongwe

\* รองศาสตราจารย์, คณะพยาบาลมหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

\*\* Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University

\*\*\* ผู้ช่วยศาสตราจารย์, คณะพยาบาลมหาวิทยาลัยเชียงใหม่

\*\*\*\* Assistant Professor, Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University



4. There was a statistically significant negative relationship between job opportunity and intent to stay.

The results of this study could be used by administrators of nursing institutions as baseline information in developing strategies that enhance intent to stay among faculty members, by considering related factors.

**Key words:** Intent To Stay, Malawi, Faculty Turnover

### Background and significance

The existing nursing shortage is partly due to a lack of faculty members in nursing schools. Shortage of nursing faculty members has a significant impact on the potential for admitting and graduating sufficient numbers of nursing students to address the shortage of prepared nurses (Gyurko & Nardi, 2013). In Malawi, an increase in the student-to-teacher ratios was reported between 2004 and 2010 among the nursing education institutions, as a result of a 22% increase in annual intake of student nurses and midwives (International Center for AIDS care and Treatment Programs [ICAP], 2013). The recommended nursing faculty-student ratio by Malawian standards is 1:10 and 1:50 for clinical and classroom teaching, respectively (Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi [NMCM], 2013). However, most nursing colleges have failed to meet this standard due to shortages of faculty members. St. Johns nursing college in the northern region for instance, had 12 nursing faculty members against 111 students by 2010 (Wheatley, 2010). By April 2013, the Vice Principal of this same college reported that four more nursing faculty members had left the college and the student population had increased from 111 to 156, giving a faculty-

student ratio of 1:19. Shortage of faculty members is reported to be originating partly from turnover (Gyurko & Nardi, 2013). Turnover can be anticipated and controlled by enhancing intent to stay (Price & Mueller, 1981). Intent to stay is defined as the perception to continue working as a faculty member in an institution (Markowitz, 2012). Factors related to intent to stay in the Markowitz (2012) model, grounded in expectancy theory, included organizational commitment, faculty-administrator relationship, and pay satisfaction. Other models included job opportunity (Al-Omari, Qablan, & Khasawneh, 2008; Daly & Dee, 2006; Iverson & Roy, 1994) and found inconsistent results. In this study, related factors included organizational commitment, faculty-administrator relationship, pay satisfaction and job opportunity.

Studies done in the US among various sample groups and academic disciplines have demonstrated that when faculty members' commitment to the college was strong, there was acceptance of goals and values of the college and a desire to remain a member of the institution (Al-Omari *et al.*, 2008; Garbee & Killacky, 2008; Markowitz, 2012). In addition, perception of higher quality faculty-administrator relationships contributed to positive leader-



member exchange relationships (Hwa, Jantani, & Ansari, 2009) and faculty members' intent to remain employed with the institution (Markowitz, 2012). Studies have equally demonstrated that higher salaries increased average intent to stay than leave scores among pharmacy faculty members in the Philippines (Loquias & Sana, 2012). It has also been demonstrated that when faculty members' expectations for fair rewards were met, intent to stay perceptions increased in the US (Al-Omari et al., 2008; Daly & Dee, 2006). Moreover, literature review has revealed that job opportunity negatively related to intent to stay among faculty members from various groups. When the college failed to meet their expectations and they perceived alternative jobs within the college's environment to be better, faculty members were unlikely to stay (Al-Omari et al., 2008; Iverson & Roy, 1994; Paillé & Dufour, 2013). In contrast, Zhou and Volkwein (2004) indicated that outside institution, teaching and research opportunities, as well as family considerations had no influence on intent to leave perceptions among faculty and instructional staff in the US.

This current study involved thirteen nursing colleges from the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) and Malawi College of Health Sciences (MCHS). All these colleges offered the Nursing and Midwifery Technician (NMT) program in Malawi. There were several issues in these nursing colleges: shortage of qualified nursing faculty members (Wheatley, 2010), nursing faculty members' lack of motivation in the teaching job (NMCM, 2013), disparities in pay and benefits (Muula & Maseko, 2005; Indeed, 2013), concerns for lack of

recognition and lack of supportive leadership structures to offer challenging tasks.

From the reviewed studies, inconsistent findings were reported. Moreover, consistent findings reflected mostly the developed countries, especially the US; where socio-cultural, economic and collegial context were not similar to Malawi. Thus, it was not possible to generalize those results. In addition, more studies reflected various sample groups and disciplines unlike a subgroup of nursing faculty.

### Objectives

The objectives of this study were to describe ITS and to explore the relationships between ITS and its related factors, including organizational commitment, faculty-administrator relationship, pay satisfaction and job opportunity as perceived by faculty members in nursing colleges in the Republic of Malawi.

### Conceptual framework

This study was based on the conceptual model for intent to stay by Markowitz (2012), as well as literature review. The model by Markowitz (2012) explained a stronger variance in intent to stay among those reviewed, its framework reflected graduate and under graduate faculty members, and the factors studied can easily be manipulated. The factors relating to intent to stay included 1) organizational commitment, 2) pay satisfaction, 3) faculty-administrator relationship, and 4) job opportunity. From review of literature, when faculty members' commitment to the college is strong, there is acceptance of goals and values of the college



and a desire to remain a member of the college. Moreover, when they perceive that their pay is fair and equitable, faculty members are likely to remain employed with the college. In addition, when they perceive a higher quality faculty-administrator relationship, faculty members are likely to remain employed with the college. However, when the college fails to meet their expectations and they perceive alternative jobs within the college's environment to be better, faculty members are unlikely to stay. In this study, the relationships between intent to stay and related factors were explored.

## Methodology

### Population and sampling

This descriptive correlation study was designed to study a population of 195 nursing faculty members who worked in thirteen nursing colleges in Malawi. The sample size was 131 nursing faculty members, calculated based on the Yamane (1967) formula. In consideration of loss of subjects, 157 questionnaires were distributed to collect data, among which 137 were returned with a valid response rate of 87.26%. Only 113 questionnaires (82.48%) were complete and used for data analysis and 17.52% had missing data. Proportional random sampling was used to determine the number of nursing faculty members from each college, while subjects were selected by simple random sampling from each college, using a sampling frame. Nursing faculty members that had worked for six months or more and were willing to participate were included in the study.

### Research instruments

Instruments used in this study included

the following : 1) the Demographic Data Form, which was developed by the researcher and comprised the name of college, type of department, number of faculty members in that department, gender, marital status, academic position, educational level, years of working as a faculty member, years spent at current institution, age, and present monthly salary. 2) The Leader-member Exchange Instrument (LMX-7), adopted from Makorwitz (2012), measured faculty-administrator relationship. It comprised seven items measured on a five-point Likert-type scale. The responses ranged from 1 (negative response) to 5 (strong response), with total scores ranging from 7-35. A higher score meant the faculty member's perception of faculty-administrator relationship was higher. 3) Measure of Organizational Commitment (MOC), as used by Makorwitz (2012), assessed the faculty member's perception of OC. It was a seven-item construct with the second, sixth and seventh items scored in reverse. A higher score meant the faculty member's perceptions of attachment, identification, and involvement with the college, were higher. 4) Pay Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ), developed by Makorwitz (2012), measured the faculty member's perception of satisfaction with pay. It had three items. A higher score indicated the faculty member's perception of satisfaction with pay was higher. 5) Job Opportunity Scale (JOS), developed by Al-Omari et al. (2008), was used to assess faculty member's perception of availability of alternative jobs in the environment. It had six items. The third and fourth items were reverse scored. A higher score indicated the faculty member's perception of availability of



alternative job in their environment was higher (Al-Omari et al., 2008). 6) The Intent to Stay Scale (ITSS), developed by Makorwitz (2012), was used to measure faculty member's intentions to remain employed at the institution. The scale had four. The first item was reverse scored. A high level of ITS within this scale was defined as scores greater than or equal to 14 ( $\geq 14.00$ ) whereas a score less than 14 ( $< 14.00$ ) meant low perception of intent to stay. The items for MOC, LMX, PSQ, JO and ITSS were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The construct validity of all these instruments was proven in previous studies (Al-Omari et al., 2008; Makorwitz, 2012). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of LMX-7, MOC, PSQ, JOS and ITSS were 0.82, 0.84, 0.81, 0.71 and 0.73, respectively.

#### Data Collection and Protection of Rights

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Chiang Mai University, in Thailand. Permission to collect data was obtained from the National Health Sciences Research Committee (NHSRC), CHAM, and respective college principals in Malawi. Data collection was carried out in two months from 5 February to 5 April 2014; using a structured questionnaire. The assigned coordinator distributed the data collection package that contained an information sheet, consent form and the questionnaire, with an envelope; to the sampled faculty members in each college. The participants responded to the questionnaires within two weeks and returned it sealed in the given envelope, to the

coordinator. The coordinator collected the sealed envelopes to the lockable agreed place. Wherever the researcher could not go back for collection, the coordinator sent the questionnaires to the researcher by post. Subjects were informed of purpose of the study and methods of data collection; and voluntary participation was assured through a consent form. Anonymity and confidentiality of all the information was maintained by using numerical codes in the questionnaires instead of using subjects' names.

#### Data Analysis

Data analysis was done after data collection, using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 13.0). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed from the completed questionnaires only, at a 0.05 level of statistical significance. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse demographic characteristics and levels of ITS. The Kolmogorov Smirnov test for normal distribution as an assumption of correlation analysis was computed for all variables. Only PS violated the assumption of normality. Therefore, relationships between OC and ITS; LMX and ITS; and JO and ITS were explored using Pearson's product moment correlation test, and the relationship between ITS and PS followed Spearman's rank-order correlation test. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient and direction of the relationship were interpreted according to Burns and Grove (2005).

#### Results

1. Demographic characteristics of the subjects



Among the 113 subjects that participated in this study, 67.26% were females. Most faculty members (52.21%) were in the age range of 36-45 years, with 3.55% above the retirement age of 55. The majority of the subjects worked as lecturers (68.14%) and held bachelors degree qualifications (69.91%). Most faculty members (63.72%) had worked at the institution for less than five years. Their salary ranged from 60,000 - 320,000 Malawi Kwacha (approximately 150-800 USD).

### 2. Intent to stay

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the subjects (62.83%) perceived a low intent to stay. Overall scores for intent to stay as perceived by the subjects ranged from 4-20, with a mean average score of 11.85 (SD = 3.53), within the low level (<14) of intent to stay.

### 3. Relationship between ITS and related factors

In Table 2, the results of Pearson correlation test showed that there was significant moderate positive correlation between organizational commitment and intent to stay ( $r = .421$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Faculty-administrator relationship had a significant weak positive correlation with intent to stay ( $r = .267$ ;  $p < .01$ ) whereas job opportunity was found to be weakly and negatively correlated to intent to stay ( $r = -.207$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Spearman's rank-order correlation test demonstrated that pay satisfaction was not significantly correlated to intent to stay ( $r = .129$ ;  $p > .05$ ).

## Discussion

### Intent to stay

This study found that the perception of

intent to stay among nursing faculty members was at a low level ( $\bar{x} = 11.85$ ;  $SD = 3.53$ ). The majority of the respondents (62.83%) perceived a low intent to stay (Table 1), indicating that most nursing faculty members were not willing to continue working in the nursing colleges. This is contrary to previous studies where nursing faculty members (Garbee & Killacky, 2008) and pharmacy faculty members (Loquias & Sana, 2012) were likely to stay, and faculty members from undefined disciplines perceived high (Makorwitz, 2012) and moderate levels (Al-Omari et.al, 2008; Dee & Daly, 2006) of intent to stay. Findings in this study revealed that colleges that are located in the hard to reach areas of Malawi yielded 75-100% levels of low intent to stay. Housing, transportation and education for children in the rural areas of this developing country are generally not favorable (US Global Health Initiative, 2010), a challenge that most faculty members, especially those that were married (72.57%) and raising families, may find difficult to stand. Schools for children are below standard, and hence, may not meet the faculty members' needs. Institutional houses are generally few, with some faculty members commuting from nearby cities, making transportation to be costly. Faculty members may thus develop a low desire and unwillingness to continue working in the college. Garbee and Killacky (2008) also found long commuting as a theme of dissatisfaction contributing to perception of low intent to stay among nursing faculty members in the US. In addition, heavy workloads that originate from shortage of qualified nursing faculty members and increased student-to-teacher ratios (ICAP, 2013; Wheatley,



2010) could have led to faculty members' loss of interest and unwillingness to continue teaching at the nursing colleges. Because of this shortage and increased student numbers, nursing faculty members were exposed to heavy workloads, including assignments to teach large classes and scheduling of evening and weekend classes to meet the demand for faculty members. In all colleges, faculty members combined both classroom and clinical teaching due to shortages of clinical instructors (CHAM, 2008; Wheatley, 2010). Garbee and Killacky (2008) found that scores for intent to stay were

significantly higher for nursing faculty members working 40 hours a week than those working 60 hours a week in the US. Johnsrud and Rosser (2002) also found that work load led to stress, loss of desire, and hostility toward the organization, thereby provoking intentions to leave the institution.

Relationship between intent to stay and related factors

This study was based on the conceptual model for intent to stay by Makorwitz (2012) and studies in expectancy theory. Findings partly supported the explanations from the model.

Table 1 Frequency and Percentages of Levels of Intent to Stay as Perceived by the Subjects (n = 113)

Levels of Intent to Stay	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
High ( $\geq 14$ )	42	37.17
Low ( $< 14$ )	71	62.83

The results showed that there was a moderate positive relationship between overall OC and ITS perceptions among nursing faculty members ( $r = .421$ ;  $p < .01$ ) (Table 2). This means that as faculty members got less attached to the college, their commitment and dedication to the college decreased, so they were likely to perceive low levels of ITS. Similarly, OC was found to be positively correlated to ITS in previous studies (Al-Omari et al., 2008; Dee & Daly, 2006; Markowitz, 2012), but with a strong relationship. Study findings have revealed that 71.8% of the faculty members that perceived a

low intent to stay held bachelor degree qualifications. With low educational qualification, faculty members could have difficulties in exerting maximum effort in their teaching job, thus affecting their performance. It is said that institutions that work towards meeting effort-to-performance expectancy not only make it clear to employees what is expected of them, but also help them to attain that level of performance (Lunenburg, 2011). In addition, academic positions differed among nursing faculty members, despite similar educational qualifications. Some faculty members may not



have benefitted from the incentives and benefits that go along with higher positions. Certainly, their performance-to-reward expectancy might not have been met, leading to faculty members' loss of feeling of identification and recognition, thus affecting their strength of attachment.

In support of the Makorwitz (2012) model, faculty-administrator relationship (FAR) was found to be weakly and positively associated with ITS ( $r = .267$ ;  $p < .01$ ) (Table 2). This simply means that whenever faculty members perceived a low quality FAR, they were unlikely to stay. It is said that FAR is affected in institutions where collaborative relationships are lacking. Collaborative relationships are important in effective FAR and are characterized by the sharing of information integral to decision making (shared governance) (Del Favero, 2002). Both CHAM colleges and MCHS are characterized by hierarchical structures and centralized type of governance (MCHS, 2012; CHAM, 2008) which are likely to hinder collaborative relationships. Similarly, hierarchical structures and centralization hindered autonomy (Al-Omari et al., 2008; Dee & Daly, 2006) and supervisory support (Iverson & Roy, 1994), and they negatively affected faculty members' ITS perceptions in previous studies. This study has also demonstrated that immediate supervisors could not fully recognize faculty members' potentials. Only 12.39% of the faculty members in this study perceived that their immediate supervisors could fully recognize their potentials. Assigning challenging and desirable work assignments increased trust, interest, and ITS among employees (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2009) whereas routine work led to nursing faculty

members' dissatisfaction and low perception of ITS (Garbee & Killacky, 2008) in previous studies.

Surprisingly, pay satisfaction was found to be not significantly correlated to ITS ( $r = .129$ ;  $p > .05$ ) (Table 2). It means that faculty members' perception of ITS was not influenced by pay in this study. This finding is inconsistent with that from previous study (Makorwitz, 2012) where the relationship was found to be significant. Firstly, since performance is not attached to pay in this study setting, dissimilar to Makorwitz (2012), it failed to explain behavioral outcome like ITS. The Malawian study setting was also collegially and economically different from this previous study in the US, with faculty members from different specialties assuming different roles and obligations. Secondly, since information on individual pay is genuinely confidential, most faculty members may not have been aware of fellow faculty members' individual earnings, let alone pay across colleges. This could have affected their rating of pay relative to other members at department and college levels. Moreover, the descriptive analysis on salary demonstrated a wider dispersion; suggesting some element of wage inequality across the four levels of academic positions. It could have been difficult for faculty members on lower position to compare themselves against others in senior positions at the departmental level, in accordance with Pfeffer and Langton (1993) findings on effects of wage inequality on pay satisfaction. Thirdly, the average monthly salary for nursing faculty members in this study was \$358, which is much more than the monthly average wage (\$171) of a skilled worker in Malawi and above the minimum wage of \$56 (Labour



Office/ Focus to Future Council [LO/FTF Council], 2013). However, this minimum wage has been undermined if the devaluation and fluctuation of the currency from 2012 is to be considered. Cost of living for every Malawian has increased. Prices of food and fuel have almost doubled, and wages have not followed (LO/FTF

Council, 2013). It is possible that no matter how faculty members' expectations on individual and structure levels could have been, the nursing faculty members in this study perceived the circumstances in the country as costly to live, whether they stayed in the colleges or not.

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Table 2 Correlation Coefficient of Factors Related to Intent to Stay as Perceived by the Subjects (n = 113)

Variables	FAR	OC	PS	JO	ITS
FAR	1.00				
OC	.364**	1.00			
PS	.250**	.178	1.00		
JO	.090	.034	-.093	1.00	
ITS	.267**	.421**	.129	-.207*	1.00

Note. FAR = Faculty-administrator relationship, OC = Organizational Commitment, PS = Pay Satisfaction, JO = Job Opportunity, ITS = Intent to Stay.

\*p = < .05. \*\* p = < .01

Job opportunity (JO) was found to be negatively correlated to ITS ( $r = -.207$ ;  $p < .05$ ), indicating that the more the faculty members

perceived an availability of jobs in their college environment, the more they were unlikely to stay. This finding is contrary to Zhou and



Volkwein (2004), who found that JO has no influence on ITS perceptions among faculty members but consistent with Daly and Dee (2006), Iverson and Roy (1994) and Paille and Dufour (2013), who all found the relationship to be significant. It has been reported that some nursing faculty members from these study settings, move to university nursing schools for recognition, better pay and professional growth, as well as guaranteed career advancement while others move to other colleges in order to meet their expectations. In other circumstances, some faculty members have preferred to move to locations closer to spouse and family (Muula & Maseko, 2005). In addition, the availability of several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and projects that aim to assist in combating both communicable and non-communicable diseases in Malawi (US Global Health Initiative, 2010), made faculty members to perceive a number of nursing jobs in their environment. Nursing faculty members that leave to NGOs mostly take senior positions like that of project coordinator or country director. This becomes a greener pasture for them considering not only the pay but the benefits and recognition, too. On the other hand, just like some nursing faculty members are leaving from training institutions to government hospitals within the country, others are still moving to the United Kingdom for bed-side nursing that pays better and for better living conditions (Muula & Maseko, 2005; NMCM, 2012). Academic administrators have also indicated that it is mostly those faculty members that are employed by government that move from training institutions to hospitals to work directly under the primary employer for a

feeling of belonging, support for further studies, and career advancement.

## Conclusions

The level of intent to stay as perceived by nursing faculty members in this study was significantly low. The study revealed statistical significant relationships between organizational commitment and intent to stay; faculty-administrator relationship and intent to stay; and job opportunity and intent to stay. The relationship between pay satisfaction and intent to stay was insignificant.

## Study Limitations

Since 17.52% of the collected questionnaires had missing data, the analyzed sample size (113 nursing faculty members) was smaller than the calculated sample size (131 nursing faculty members). Due to time and financial constraints, the researcher could not re-sample and redistribute the questionnaires. Implications

The findings of this study can provide valuable information to academic administrators in order to improve organizational commitment and faculty-administrator relationship. Heads of departments should work towards relieving faculty members from those responsibilities that do not solely depend on faculty members' skills (non-direct activities). For instance, the heads of departments or course coordinators can initiate preceptor-ship in clinical teaching with the aim to reduce faculty members' workload.

College principals should work towards meeting faculty members' expectations for further studies and career advancement to



broaden faculty members' level of knowledge and strengthen commitment. In addition, academic deans and course coordinators should allow for collaborative working relationships that enhance faculty-administrator relationship like mentorship.

### Recommendations

A qualitative study on lived experiences of nursing faculty members may elicit an

in-depth analysis of what contributes to findings in this study. On the other hand, a predictive study on factors related to intent to stay may be done in the future. This study may also be replicated in other Malawian academic institutions, thereby conducting a comparative study reflecting different institutions, age groups, and different academic positions.

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