

Leader Member Exchange and Intention to Quit among Staff Nurses

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Abstract: Leader member exchange is the quality of the exchange relationship between supervisors and their employees of an organization. It has a great effect for employees and organization itself. **Aim:** This study aimed to investigate the relationship between leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses. **Design:** A descriptive, correlational design was used. **Setting:** This study was conducted at Ain Shams University Hospital. **Subjects:** 170 staff nurses were included in the study. **Tools of data collection:** Two tools used namely Leader Member Exchange Questionnaire and Staying or Leaving Index. **Results:** More than two thirds of staff nurses had moderate perception level regarding leader member exchange, while less than one quarter of staff nurses had high intention to quit their jobs. **Conclusion:** There was statistical significant negative correlation between leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses. **Recommendations:** Hospital managers have to establish staff retention strategies to minimize intention to quit. Supervisors have to develop respectful, friendship relation with their staff.

Keywords: Intention to quit, Leader member exchange, Staff nurses.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is not only a need for each organization towards its success. However it also considered as an asset for the agency they belong to. Nursing, being a dynamic career and the biggest team of workers in healthcare organization, it takes a vital function in health leadership and policy making, while retaining their traditional caring skills. Such an effective leadership is vital in making sure high quality of care, patient safety and facilitating tremendous staff improvement (*Cherian & Karkada, 2017*).

Leadership defined as a relational, ethical, continuous, and dynamic process among people who desire a positive change as a group (*Komives & Wendy, 2017*). One challenge for workplace leadership in the twenty-first century is that leaders need to suitable arrange place of work experiences for employees (*Graen & Canedo, 2017*). A large part of employees' work experiences hinges on the fantastic leader-follower role relationships, on which leaders have a great impact. Leadership is a relational phenomenon and leader-follower role relationships are crucial for leadership effectiveness (*Gottfredson & Aguinis, 2017*). Leader member exchange is the quality of the exchange relationship between supervisor and the employees of an agency (*Randolph Seng et al., 2016*).

The theory of the Leader Member Exchange (LMX), discussed for the first time by Dansereau, Graen and Haga in 1975. It is centered on theory of leadership. The theory rests on the vertical dyad linkages (or relationships) between leader and followers which argued to take place on a dyadic basis. Follower or member is a subordinate and leader is an immediate superior whom the follower must formally report to. Leaders create in-groups and out-groups, and subordinates with in-group status will have higher performance's ratings, less turnover, and greater satisfaction with their superior. Besides, in group subordinates get more information, influence, confidence, and concern from leader and they are more reliable, highly involved and speak more than out-group who are less friendly with a leader, and they usually come to work and do their jobs (*Erdogan & Bauer, 2015*).

According to this theory, the supervisor and subordinate who share a high-quality LMX relationship experience “mutual trust, liking, loyalty, professional respect, and reciprocal behaviours that benefit their supervisor” (*Rosen, Harris, & Kacmar, 2011*). Moreover, a high-quality relationship is associated with several positive work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, less conflict with colleagues, low employees turnover intention, more positive performance evaluation, greater organizational commitment (*Martin et al., 2016*). Conversely, when LMX is at a low level, employees would be less motivated to innovate since they are afraid that they may not be able to garner the materials and psychological resources necessary to complete the tasks ahead; they are intimidated by the risks and uncertainty associated with creative activities (*Zhao et al., 2018*).

Leader member exchange can affect employee's intention to leave either positively or negatively. If supervisors did not promote the relationship with employees, employees felt no supportive guidelines for them, and they will tend to perform work in a minimal acceptance level. On the other hand, high level of LMX involved higher trust between both parties, support from an emotional aspect, and benefits to in-group members. High quality of LMX relationship will prevent the employees from leaving the organization (*Adil & Awais, 2016*).

One of the reasons clarify why organizations are able to sustain in this competitive era is because they know the importance of retaining skilled employees. Employees are important assets of an organization that contribute the success of an organization and they can be termed as the life-blood of an organization (*Kossivi, Xu & Kalgora, 2016*). Human capital is essential to influence an organization's growth and development. However, there is a great increase in the recent turnover trend which becomes a serious concern to managers (*Lim, 2015*).

The desire is to stop working for an organization is what literature refers to as turnover intention or intention to quit (ITQ) (*Treglow et al., 2018*). When someone wished to quit the organization and seek a new job alternative, this condition can also be defined as the turnover intention (*Suarthana & Riana, 2016*). Additionally, it also defined as an employees' attempt to exchange to another organization that can suit their demands (*Saraih et al., 2017*). Turnover intention (the intention to leave or stay) has continuously been the most important problem for leaders since high it can substantially impact employee's morale and prevent everyone from developing any type of commitment towards their organization (*Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2016*).

There are potential factors associated with turnover intention among nurses; personal characteristics, hospital healthcare system, support, relationships with patients/coworkers/supervisors, autonomy and responsibility (*Nowrouzi et al., 2016*). Additionally, the following various factors in the nurses' working environment have been demonstrated to contribute to the intention to leave their present job: long working hours, unsuitable shifts, working nights, highly demanding work, number of patients per nurse (*De Oliveira et al., 2017*).

High turnover rate makes huge problems in the healthcare system and quality of care. It imposes an additional burden on healthcare organizations (*Takase, Teraoka & Yabase, 2016*). Nurse turnover has a negative impact on the ability to meet patient needs and provide a high quality of care, which may create more stress on other staff due to increased workloads. This can lead to critical changes in the behavior of nurses towards their jobs resulting in low work satisfaction, low productivity, and leaving the organization (*Kaddourah, Abu-Shaheen & Al-Tannir, 2018*).

Hence, it is essential to notice that when organizations recruit people with the suitable skills, they develop and implement retention strategies to prevent them from leaving the agency (*Smit, Stanz, & Bussin, 2015*). Retention strategies include actions taken by the organization to keep employees. Organizations can obtain a competitive advantage by being proactive in terms of introducing innovative human resource practices that can be used as strategies to retain employees, namely, offering a suitable work environment that is safe and healthy, competitive compensation and benefit packages, allowing employees freedom to make choices on how they will perform their duties. These strategies may finally result in low turnover intention and led the organization to be more productive and efficient (*Atef, Leithy, & Al-Kalyoubi, 2017*).

Significance of the study:

The problem that encounters health care organization nowadays is retaining skilled, empowered staff. Intention to quit has a negative impact on the ability to encounter the patient needs and deliver high standards of care. One of the factors which

may have a great effect on employee's intention to quit namely leader member exchange. When employees feel comfortable with their leader, they tend to stay in the organization; whereas, when their leader become the source of their discomfort then the employee's intention to quit will increase. It also lead to costs associated with the replacement of the employee and intellectual capital, costs for training, loss of effectiveness and productivity. Furthermore, (*Abu Elanain, 2014*) concluded that further empirical exploration is needed to understand the impact of LMX as it affects the turnover decisions of employees. Also, there are few Egyptian researches which studying leader member exchange and its relation to intention to quit and it was done in other field not in nursing. So, the researcher interested to investigate leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses.

Aim of the Study:

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between leader member exchange as perceived by staff nurses and their intention to quit

Research hypothesis:

There is relationship between leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses.

2. SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Research design

A descriptive - Correlational design was used in this study.

Setting

This study was conducted at Ain Shams University Hospital which affiliated to Ain Shams University Hospitals. It provides care for medicine patients in different medical specialties. Its total capacity is 618 beds. It contains one main building consists of fifth floors. It offers medical care in various specialties as G.I.T, Pulmonology, cardiology dermatology, hematology, hemo-dialysis, geriatric, neurology, dermatology, tropical medicine and ophthalmology.

Subjects

The sample size included 170 out of 303 staff nurses, working in the above mentioned setting. Sample size was calculated using Open Epi, Version 3, open source calculator and taking into consideration that sample size was calculated with 5% standard error at 95% confidence level and a power of 80%. Simple random sample was used.

Sample size $n = [DEFF * N p(1-p)] / [(d2/Z21-\alpha/2*(N-1)+p*(1-p)]$

(*Dean & Sullivan, 2013*)

Tools of data collection

Two tools were used for data collection namely; Leader Member Exchange Questionnaire; Staying or Leaving Index.

1- Leader Member Exchange Questionnaire: It developed by *Liden & Maslyn, (1998)* and was modified by the researcher. It consists of 39 items measure staff nurses' perception about leader member exchange. The items are clustered into four main dimensions namely: Affect (10 items), loyalty (10 items), contribution (9 items) and professional respect (10 items).

Scoring system:

Responses were measured on a five point likert scale as follow: Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 2, strongly disagree = 1. The score of the items of subscales were summed- up and the total score divided by the number of the items, giving a mean score for the part. These scores were converted in to a percent score. The staff nurses perception about leader member exchange is considered low if score is less than (46 %), the participant has moderate perception if the score ranges from (46.0- 63.9%) and considered to be high if the score ranges from (64- 100 %).

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Tool validity:

Tool was validated by jury group consists of seven experts. One Assistant professor from Ain Shams University, (3) Assistant professors from Cairo University and (3) Assistant professors from Menoufia University. Jury group reviewed the tools to judge its clarity, comprehensiveness and accuracy.

Tool reliability:

Internal consistency was done by Cornbach Alpha was (0.78.) for leader member exchange questionnaire.

Staying or Leaving Index:

This tool was developed by *Jourdain & Chenevert, (2010)* and adopted from *Abed El Salam, (2018)*. It aimed to assess to what extent the staff nurses intent to quit their work. It contains 12 items divided into 5 items regarding staying intention and 7 items regarding to leaving intention.

Scoring system:

Response for each item was scored on 5 point Likert scale (1=Never, 2= rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4=Often, and 5=Always). The scoring system was reversed in the negative items. The score of the items of subscales were summed- up and the total score divided by the number of the items, giving a mean score for the part. These scores were converted in to a percent score. Then the total intention to quit was considered low if the percent score was less than 60%, moderate from 60% - <75% and high if 75% or more.

Pilot study:

Prior for field work a pilot study was conducted on 16 staff nurses. They represent 10% of study subjects to examine the feasibility, practicability and clarity of the language. It also used to estimate time needed to fill the sheets which ranged between 25-35 minutes. Staff nurses who participate in the pilot study excluded from the main study sample.

Fieldwork

The field work for this study extended through four months. It is started at the beginning of November 2018, and was completed by the end of February 2019. The researcher introducing herself to staff nurses and simply explained the purpose of the study to who agree to participate in the study. The researchers collected the data in two days per week in different shifts. Through meeting staff nurses either individually or in groups at their work units after explaining the aim of the study. Approval of hospital director was taken first also suitable time for data collection was determined with each staff nurse of the participated units.

Ethical considerations:

Official permission to conduct the study was secured. The researchers clarified to staff nurses that participation was voluntary and anonymity was assured. Approval of hospital director was taken first also suitable time for data collection was determined with each head nurse of the participated units and oral approval was taken from each participant. The participants were informed their right to withdraw from the study at any time and notified that data were collected only for the purpose of scientific research.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data was revised, coded, tabulated and introduced to a PC using statistical package for social sciences (IBM SPSS 20.0). Data was presented and suitable analysis was done according to the type of data obtained for each parameter. Mean, Standard deviation (+ SD) and range for parametric numerical data, Frequency and percentage of non-numerical data, Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the interrelationship among variables .Statistical significance was considered at p-value <0.05 and considered highly significance at p-value <0.001.

3. RESULTS

Table (1): Demographic characteristics of staff nurses in the study sample (n=170)

	Frequency	Percent
Age:		
< 30	76	44.7
30-40	64	37.6
>40	30	17.6
Mean± SD 33.65 ±6.86		
Gender:		
Male	20	11.8
Female	150	88.2
Nursing qualification:		
Diploma	80	47.0
Above average diploma	66	38.8
Bachelor degree	24	14.2
Experience years:		
<10	30	17.6
10-20	120	70.6
>20	20	11.8
Mean± SD 12.2 ± 7.23		
Marital status:		
Single	50	29.4
Married	120	70.6

Table (1) demonstrates that less than half of staff nurses (44.7%) had age less than 30 years, The Majority of studied staff nurses (88.2%) were female. Less than half the study participants (47.0%) had diploma degree of nursing. Regarding Years of experience, more than two third of staff nurses (70.6%) had age ranged from 10-20 years. Moreover, more than two third of staff nurses (70.6%) were married.

Table (2): Leader Member Exchange Level among staff nurses (n=170)

Dimensions	Low <46.0%		Moderate 46.0%-63.9%		High 64.0%-100.0%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Affect	55	31.7%	112	57.8%	3	1.7%
Loyalty	40	23.1%	120	69.3%	10	5.7%
Contribution	80	46.2 %	84	48.5 %	6	3.4%
Professional Respect	50	28.9%	111	64.1%	9	5.2%
Total Leader Member Exchange Level	54	31.8%	109	64.1%	7	4.1%

Table (2) illustrates that less than half of staff nurses (46.2%) had low level of leader member exchange related to contribution dimension. On the other hand, only (5.7%) of staff nurses had high level of leader member exchange related to loyalty. Moreover, more than two thirds of staff nurses (64.1%) had moderate perception level regarding leader member exchange.

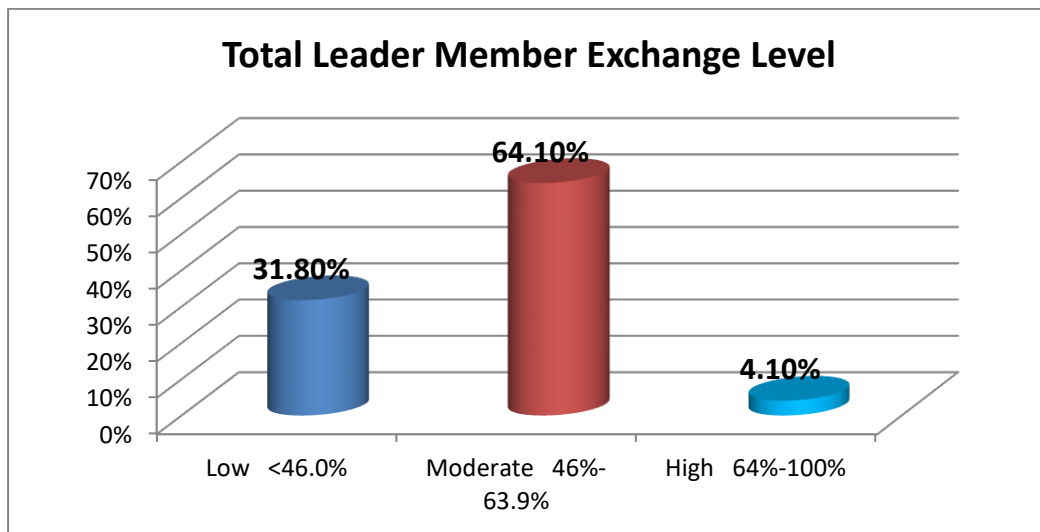


Fig. (1): Leader Member Exchange Level among staff nurses.

Table (3): Intention to quit level among staff nurses (n=170)

Intention to quit	Low <60%		Moderate 60.0%-<75%		High 75.0%-100.0%	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. I think for leaving my current job	42	24.7%	56	33.0%	72	42.3%
2. I scan newspapers and other forms of social media for job opportunities	49	28.8%	31	18.2%	90	53.0%
3. My current job satisfies my personal needs*	59	34.7 %	62	36.5 %	49	28.8%
4. My workplace are jeopardized(high risk for infectious disease)	66	38.8%	51	30.0%	53	31.2%
5. My most important needs at work are compromised as training	35	20.6%	49	28.8%	86	50.6%
6. The probability that I will leave my current job, if I get another suitable offer is	63	37.0%	48	28.3%	59	34.7%
7. I Look forward to another day at this work*	44	25.8%	70	41.2%	56	33.0%
8. Family responsibilities prevent me from leaving my current job*	39	23.0%	76	44.7%	55	32.3%
9. My current job affects my personal wellbeing	56	33.0%	79	46.4%	35	20.6%
10. The trouble of relocating prevents me from leaving mu current work*	38	22.3%	59	34.7%	73	43.0%
11. I prefer to stay in my work if i have freedom to choose*	28	16.5%	88	51.8%	54	31.7%
12. Generally, I have intention to turnover the work	45	26.4%	85	50.0%	40	24.7%
Total intention to quit	58	34,1	78	45.8	34	20.0

(*)Items related staying intention

Table (3) Clarifies that more than half of staff nurses (53.0%) had high level of intention to quit related to I scan newspapers and other forms of social media for job opportunities item. On the other hand, more than one third of staff nurses (37.0%) had low level intention to quit related to the probability that I will leave my current job, if I get another suitable offer is. In addition, less than half of studied nurses (45.8%) had moderate intention to quit while less than one quarter of studied nurses had high intention to quit their jobs.

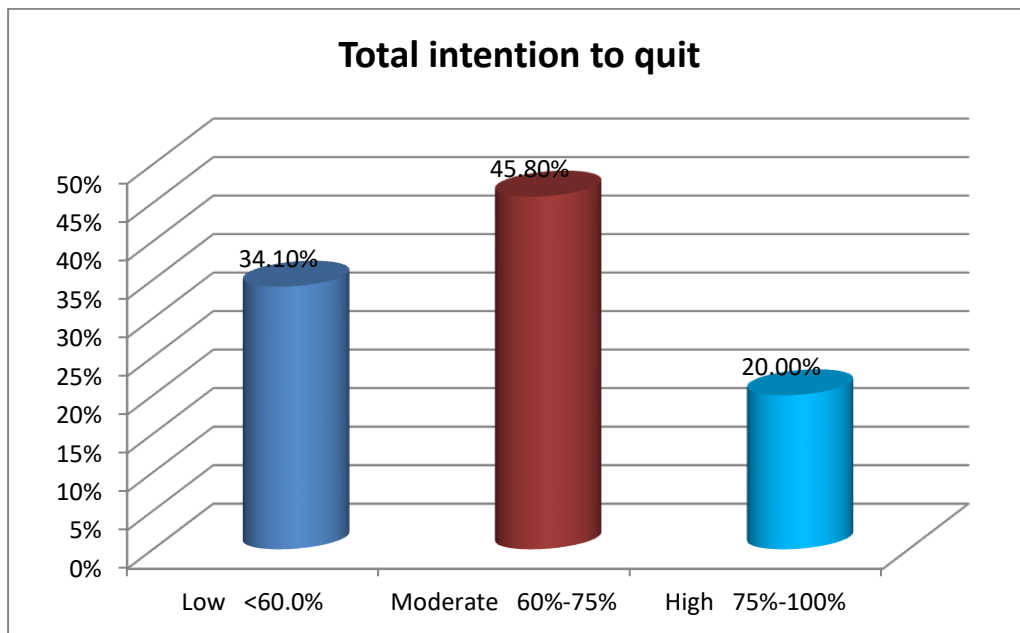


Fig. (2): Intention to quit level among staff nurses (n=170)

Table (4): Correlation matrix among leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses

Leader Member Exchange	Intention to quit	
	R	p value
Affect	-.25	0.000**
Loyalty	-.35	0.000**
Contribution	-.34	0.000**
Professional Respect	-.24	0.000**

(**) Highly statistical significant at $p < 0.001$

Table (4) identifies that there was a highly statistical negative correlation between leader member exchange dimensions and intention to quit among staff nurses.

Table (5): Correlation between total staff nurses leader member exchange and their total intention to quit

R	P-value
-.36	0.000**

(**) high statistically significant at $p < 0.001$.

Table (5) illustrates that there were statistically significant negative correlation between leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses.

4. DISCUSSION

Organizations continue to have concerns with turnover because valued employees will become more challenging to recruit and expensive to replace. Healthy and productive relationships in an organization prove most important to facilitate feelings of trust, obligation, and commitment (Brien, Thomas, & Hussein, 2015). Top reasons why employees leave include dissatisfaction with leaders and inability to get along with coworkers (Rose, 2016). High-quality relationships lead to increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, engagement and lower turnover intentions (Burch & Guarana, 2014).

The present study finding shows that less than half of staff nurses had low level of leader member exchange related to contribution dimension. This may be due to presence of cooperation and participation among staff and their leaders in professional tasks and there is a chance for exchange advice and meaningful guidance with leaders and colleagues at work. This finding agreed with *Brandon et al. (2016)* who found that contribution had the highest mean. This finding was in disagreed with *Vukonjanski et al. (2015)* who found that all leader member exchange dimensions have similar mean values except loyalty, which is considerably lower. The finding was contradicted with *Peterson & Aikens, (2017)* who discovered affect has the highest mean score.

More than two thirds of the present study subjects had a moderate perception level regarding leader member exchange. This may be due to higher level of trust between parties, emotional support and higher-order benefits in-group members. The leadership practices can make a significant affect individuals and workgroups perceptions of the workplaces. Hence, leaders, and followers need to focus on nurturing the quality of their relationships to further promote employees' perceptions of a fair distribution of resources, interpersonal treatment, and enactment of procedures both at the individual- and group-level. In line with this, *Megheirkouni, (2017)* who found that a moderate level of leader member exchange among studied subjects. This finding was in disagreed with by *Park & Jo, (2018)*, who indicated that the participants reported a high leader member exchange.

The present study clarified that more than half of the staff nurses had high intention to quit related to I scan newspapers and other forms of social media for job opportunities item. However, more than one third of staff nurses had low level intention to quit related to the probability that I will leave my current job, if I get another suitable offer is. This result may be due to that staff nurses search about the best opportunity for a better workplace. This result congruent with *Abed El Salam, (2018)* who indicated that more than half of staff nurses had high intention to quit related to I scan newspapers and other forms of social media for job opportunities item. While, *Dhanpatetal, (2018)* concluded that less than half of respondents reported that they are not likely to have plans to remain with the organization, and 21.4% indicated that they are likely to quit the agency voluntarily in the near.

As the present study findings revealed that less than half of studied nurses had moderate intention to quit while less than one quarter of studied nurses had high intention to quit their jobs. This result may be due to many reasons as work overload, excessive work hours that affect their personal and family life, shortage of nurses and improper work environment. This result agreed with *El Sakka, (2016)* who indicated that the intention to withdraw from workplace could be a result of excessive job demands, excessive and long working hours without adequate benefits and several sources of work stress and may initiate their decision to leave their job. This finding disagreed with *Kaddourah Abu-Shaheen & Al-Tannir, (2018)* who found that almost studied nurses indicated a turnover intention from their current hospital. This finding was contradicted with *Hassan & El Hosany, (2017)* who emphasized that, less than three quarters of staff nurses intended to go away their job. Also, *Ahmed, Abd Elwahabb & Elguindy, (2017)* who revealed that staff nurses had a higher intention to leave their hospital and the profession in Beni-Suef General Hospital, which means that nurses had a high level of intention to leave.

According to the current study, the results indicated that there was a statistical negative correlation between leader member exchange dimensions and intention to quit among the study sample. This means that members who possess low LMX they may have weak relationship with their leader so they may have greater turnover intention than those with higher LMX. This result could be attributed to; high-quality LMX relationship makes an attempt to eradicate power distance between leaders and subordinates. This is due to their high-quality relationship which permits to earn more privileges, priorities, recommendations, and preferences. Consequently, subordinates enjoy to remain in the agency as long as they are supervised by the same leadership thus they have a tendency to avoid leaving the organization. Also, when subordinates are better supported and integrated them feel obliged to help organizations to achieve their goals while being committed, and that they are also less intent to leave. In agreement with this, *Yildiz, (2018)* clarified that there was a negative correlation was obtained between leader-member exchange dimensions and turnover intentions.

Finally, the present study revealed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between leader member exchange and intention to quit among staff nurses and that confirm a research hypothesis. This finding was matched with *Adil & Awais (2016)* who indicated that leader member exchange is found negatively related with turnover intention. This result congruent with *Al Hashmi, Jabeen & Papastathopoulos, (2019)*, who revealed that LMX had a direct negative effect on turnover intention among study subjects.

5. CONCLUSION

The results indicated that more than two third of the present study subjects had moderate perception level regarding leader member exchange. Less than half of studied nurses had moderate intention to quit while less than one quarter of staff nurses had high intention to quit their jobs. Finally, there was a statistical negative correlation between leader member exchange dimensions and intention to quit among the study sample.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. Nurse managers have to concentrate on the nurses' needs and improve working conditions in order to enhance organizational effectiveness.
2. Nurse managers have to offer support for staff nurses to express their feelings and problems related to work issues.
3. Nurse managers should formulate some strategies to minimize intention to quit and retain their employees.
4. Supervisors have to develop respectful, friendship relation with their staff.

5. Further researches are suggested as:

- a) Assess factors affecting employee's turnover.
- b) Investigate leadership style of nurse managers and its influence on staff nurses' turnover intention.
- c) Relationship between Person-Organization Fit and turnover Intention among staff nurses.
- d) Relationship between leader member exchange and organizational citizenship behaviors.

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