

## Relationship Between Demographic Variables, Social Supports and Intention to Leave: A Survey about Nurses in I.R. Iran

<sup>1</sup>Amir hossein Amirkhany and <sup>2</sup>Monireh Askarinejad

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. of Public Management.

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D. Student of Human Resource Management.

Department of Public Management, Payame Noor University, 19395-4697, Tehran, I.R. Iran

**Abstract:** In many societies, the nurses turnover is one of the main issues. On the other hand, social support has been recognized as a factor affecting on the job satisfaction. This survey is aimed to examine the relationship between some variables such as demographic and social supports; and finally the relationship between social supports and the intention to leave. This survey is a descriptive-correlative one. Its population includes female nurses of two hospitals in Tehran capital of I.R. Iran. The questionnaire was used to gather the needed data. The data was analyzed using structural transactions model and path analysis using Lisrel 8.50 software. According to the results, in comparison with the young nurses the older ones were strongly supported by their own close colleagues; and the supports of the head-nurses increased under the supports of their close colleagues. Also, in comparison with the unmarried nurses, the married ones received less supports from behalf of the head-nurses and their close colleagues. Therefore, the demographic differences affect on the received support and the intention to leave. The social support has also an indirect relationship with the intention to leave and it can affect on the decrease of the intention, by increasing job satisfaction. Regarding to the differences between the persons and supports such as creating suitable working shifts and teams, it seems that the managers can positively affect on their employees' job satisfactions.

**Key words:** Social support • Nurse • Intention to leave

### INTRODUCTION

One of the main issues related to nursing is the intention to leave of the staffs [1]. This issue causes some expenses, such as expenses of employment and training, to increase. Also, it causes the increase of work of remained staffs which decreases their satisfactions. Finally, it affects negatively on the quality of taking care of the patients [2].

Fletcher believes that dissatisfactions of the nurses are resulted from patients' number, nonsupport of the managers and negative attitudes of coworkers, while those nurses who should support the patients need support [3]. In his survey, Abualrub (2006) has reported the rate of supporting nurses as average. In a survey about 373 nurses, indicated that most of nurses, in different ages, are averagely supported by society [4]. One of the main reasons by which the nurses decide to remain on their jobs, is social support [5]. Due to a research by Chiu (2009), it was cleared that social

support can decrease the intention to leave the job; so that the support of head-nurse can decrease the job-stress and the support of close colleagues can also decrease the job- exchange [6].

Due to research about the nurses of Taiwan, Chena *et al.*, reported that some issues, such as distributional justice, work volume, lack of resources, family support and job satisfaction, are closely related to the intention to continue the job [7].

A survey on 17524 nurses of 10 European countries revealed that the factors of social support (Direct supervisor and close colleagues) are closely related to job satisfaction. It was also cleared that when the nurses suppose the work environment more positive, they would think about leaving their jobs lesser than before. Also, the supports of close colleagues are more than the support of head-nurse. The support of direct supervisor was relatively less and the supports of close colleagues were indirectly related to the age of nurses. In other word, the younger persons received more support [8].

Without regarding some strategies to keep the staffs, lack of nurses not only continues, but also would be more than before. The responsible persons of health organizations who spend much time and use human and financial resources to employ the nurses should attend that it is necessary to do the same efforts in order to employ their staffs. The supportive work-area could help the nurses to take care of the patients suitably. It also increases the job-satisfaction and decreases the need expenses [9].

### **Theoretical Framework**

**Importance of Social Support Factors:** There are many theoretical models to describe the turn over of the staffs. Although most of them focus on personal characteristics such as job satisfaction and organizational obligation as the key factors affecting on the turnover, some of researchers have suggested that the organizations, characteristics and the relationships between persons may play main roles in this area [10]. For example, Lambert et al believe that some factors related to the work environment affect on job satisfaction, conflict role, variety of duties, the relationship between the close colleagues and person independence [11]. According to the surveys based on two models, job demand-control and job demand-control-support models, it was cleared that in comparison with other factors, social support has the main influence on the health-based grievances, stress and job satisfaction [12].

Regarding job satisfaction, age, experience and marriage, this survey examines the affect of social support on nurses' intention to leave from two different points. In next chapters, two categories of social support which play main roles in our survey will be discussed. These categories are support of direct supervisor and supports of close colleagues [13].

**The Social Support of Head-Nurses:** one of the main issues which worries the staffs, is the issue related to their direct supervisor. The suitable feedback and creative relationship between two sides cause the capabilities of the staffs to improve. The support of supervisor causes the job satisfaction and development [14].

Cobb believes that social support is related to love feeling, being favored by others, being honorable, being a member of a relational network and having two-sided obligation in it. From his view point, social support causes persons to achieve encouragement, confirmation and reliability from behalf of their friends and families which make them more powerful facing to tensions. But in recent

surveys, the meaning of social support, which has been presented by House (1981) and confirmed by others, is used. He divided the social support into four structures: 1- emotional support that includes emotional experiences, encouragements, respects and being loved; 2- tool support that includes presenting explicit help, tools and serving persons; 3- informational support that includes presenting the needed information during the tension period and 4- evaluating support which means confirming by the acts of others [15]. When the staffs find their supervisor as a supporter who perceives their emotional worries and needs, they should know that they are reliable [16]. Hobfoll's Model, named "conservation of resources", indicates that the staffs rely on the exciting resources to complete their works. The nurses, who don't receive the efficient support and motivation, could not have the needed energy to do their works. The nurses will develop the new opportunities and skills when they receive the creative motivation about their performance [17]. Based on the "conservation of resources" model, the result of this survey refers to the positive affect of consultation and the interaction between the staffs, the nurses and the doctors [18]. The head-nurses could prepare a situation in which the staffs are encouraged to recognize the stressful factors of work environment. Since the working support has positive relationship with job-satisfaction, job security and job-dissatisfaction, it may be possible that availability of social support on behalf of person's direct supervisor affects on the staffs' intention to leave the job [19].

**Social Supports of Close Colleagues:** As the affect of head-nurses' supports, it is expected that the supports of the close colleagues have a negative relationship with the turnover the nurses because the nursing profession has an emotional work place [20]. Therefore, the quality of group work and the support of coworkers are seriously important. When the cooperators prepare a creative feedback for their works, they are interested in evaluating their works and the achieved result. Finally, those staffs who receive more supports on behalf of their cooperators mention the work place as a suitable environment by which they can reach various opportunities to learn better. They have co-workers who support and take care of them [21].

**The Relationship Between Age, Marriage, Experience and Social Support:** Recent surveys revealed that most of head-nurses have neglected the support of their employees and their performance [22]. Since the age of

the staffs is regarded as a main predicting factor to the behaviors of head nurses with their supervisor, it is assumed that in comparison with the young nurses, the older ones receive less support from behalf of their supervisors. About the support of the cooperators, it is expected that there is a negative relationship between age and social support. On the other hand, previous researches revealed that those nurses who had more than 10 years of service had more job-satisfaction. Also there is a relationship between marriage and job burnout [23].

It seems that the nurses who have many years of service, have less motivation to leave their job and those who have married receive less social support. In short, there are some hypothesizes:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a negative relationship between the nurses' ages and the social supports of close colleagues.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a negative relationship between the nurses' ages and the social supports of head-nurses.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a negative relationship between marriage and the supports of close colleagues.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is a negative relationship between marriage and the social supports of head-nurses.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a negative relationship between years of service and intention to leave.

**Hypothesis 6:** There is a meaningful relationship between the the social supports of close colleagues and nurses' intention to leave.

**Hypothesis 7:** There is a meaningful relationship between the social supports of head-nurses and nurses' intention to leave.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Sample and Procedure:** Research method and sample of this survey is based on descriptive goal and identity of a descriptive research and it is a correlative one. The population is 250 female nurses working in different parts of two big hospitals in 2011. The sample is estimated 89 persons. Sampling was randomly and based on the related ratio in each hospital. Due to this, 100 questionnaires were distributed at all day times from which 89 were completely gathered and analyzed.

**Measures:** The used tool to gather data is a questionnaire which is divided into two parts. The first part is related to the personal, social and job characteristics of the nurses and the second one includes 8 questions to examine the social support and it has been regulated due to the likret's spectrum (never, rarely, sometimes, relatively high and more times). Four questions are designed to measure the support of the head-nurse and four others are designed to examine the social support of the close colleagues. In this regard, the social support questionnaire, designed by Vander Heijden (2010), was used for the head nurse support, Cronbach's alpha ranged 0/67, for the close colleague support, Cronbach's alpha ranged 0/71 and for job satisfaction Cronbach's alpha ranged 0/69. The Christensen questionnaire (2000) was used to measure the job satisfaction. This questionnaire contains four questions based on these scales: Completely disagree, disagree, senseless, agree and completely agree). The nurses' intention to leave the job was examined by this question:

When do you decide to leave your job? It was measured by these choices: never, several times in year, several times in month, several times in week and everyday And also, the questionnaire was considered by some of skilful masters to examine the currency and then it was confirmed by them. The questionnaires were preliminarily distributed among some of correspondents and their view points were used to remove the ambiguities.

The data was analyzed by use of structural equations and path analyses of Lisrel's software.

## RESULTS

In order to analyze the findings, the structural equations was used by way of path analyses method. The basic model (Figure 1) of correlation between social support and the intention to leave the job was analyzed after being assured about the normality of examined variables, being linearity and compatible of variances for 2 by 2 relationships of variables.

Then the estimated quantities of direct relationship between variables, which have not the meaningful statistical quantity ( $P > 0/05$ ), were omitted to estimate the quantities of final model. Figure (2)<sup>1</sup> shows the final standard path after omitting meaningless relationship.

<sup>1</sup>The names of Variables in model: h:co-worker support, s:head nurse support, r: job satisfaction, t:intention to leave, experience:experience, age, marriage

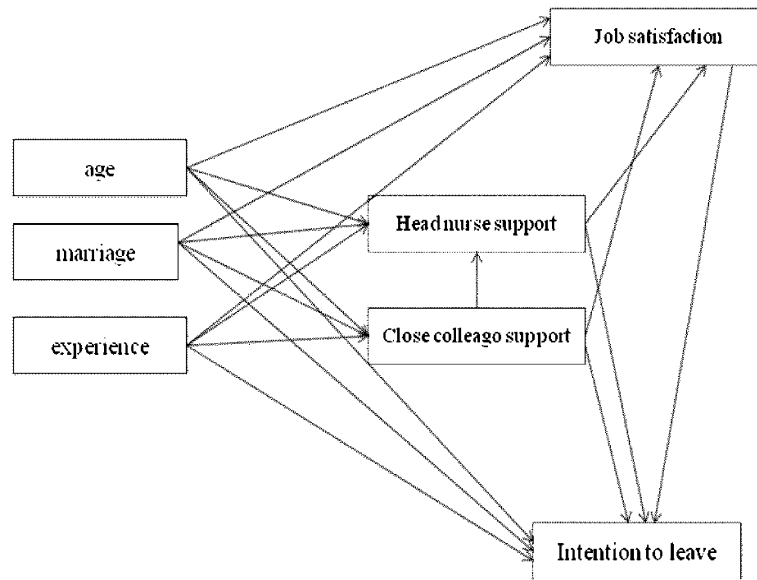


Fig. 1: Initial Conceptual model for analysing the relationship between social support and intention to leave the job.

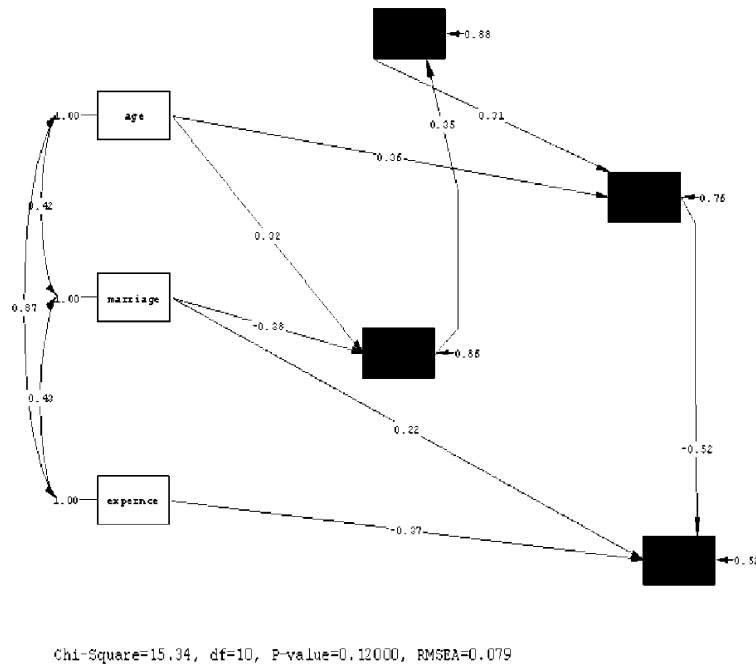


Fig. 2: Final model of the relationship between social support and intention to leave

Table 1 shows The quantities of direct, indirect and total relationships variables in the final model of the relationship between social support and the intension to leave the job.

Finally, the indexes related to the Goodness of Fit Statistics of final path model are shown in Table 2. All of these indexes show the accepted Goodness of Fit Statistics of the model.

**Age and Social Support:** As shown in Table 1, it is the estimated quantity of the relationship between age and close colleagues support (0/32,  $P < 0/05$  ). It shows that there is a direct and positive relationship between age and co-worker support. On the other hand, age affects indirectly on the supervisor support (0/11,  $P < 0/05$  ). Therefore the Hypothesizes 1 and 2 were not confirmed. Also this variable has an indirect and positive relationship with the job-satisfaction (0/03,  $P < 0/05$  ).

Table 1: The direct ,indirect and total relationships between variables in sochial support and intention to leave final model

Direct relations ship					
Relationships	Estimate value	Standardvalue	Standarderror	T value	p value
Close colleagues support×head nurse support	0.34	0.35	0.10	3.41	p>0.05
Head nurse support×job satisfaction	0.31	0.31	0.09	3.29	p>0.05
Age × job satisfaction	0.36	0.36	0.09	3.85	p>0.05
Age × close colleagues support	0.32	0.32	0.11	2.90	p>0.05
Marriage × close colleagues support	-0.38	-0.38	0.11	-3.44	p>0.05
Job satisfaction×intention to leave	-0.51	-0.52	0.08	-6.26	p>0.05
Marriage × intention to leave	0.21	0.22	0.08	2.50	p>0.05
Years of services× intention to leave	0.37-	-0.37	0.09	-4.08	p>0.05
Indirect relationships					
Age×head nurse support	0.11	0.11	0.05	2.21	p>0.05
Marriage× head nurse support	-0.13	-0.13	0.05	-2.42	p>0.05
Age×job satisfaction	0.03	0.03	0.02	1.83	p>0.05
Marriage× job satisfaction	-0.04	-0.04	0.02	-1.95	p>0.05
Age ×intention to leave	-0.20	-0.21	0.06	-3.46	p>0.05
Marriage × intention to leave	0.02	0.02	0.01	1.86	p>0.05
Close colleagues ×job satisfaction	0.11	0.11	0.05	2.37	p>0.05
Head nurse support × intention to leave	-0.16	-0.16	0.06	-2.91	p>0.05
Close colleagues × intention to leave	-0.06	-0.06	0.02	-2.21	p>0.05
Total (direct and indirect) relationships					
Close colleagues support×head nurse support	0.34	0.35	0.10	3.41	p>0.05
Head nurse support× job satisfaction	0.31	0.31	0.10	3.29	p>0.05
Close colleagues support×job satisfaction	0.11	0.11	0.05	2.37	p>0.05
Head nurse support ×intention to leave	-0.16	-0.16	0.06	-2.91	p>0.05
Close colleagues support ×intention to leave	-0.06	-0.06	0.02	-2.21	p>0.05
Job satisfaction×intention to leave	-0.51	-0.52	0.08	-6.26	p>0.05

Table 2: Fit measures from path analyses

Fit measures	Recommended values	value	Comment
NNFI	NNFI>0.90	0.95	Fitted
IFI	IFI>0.90	0.98	Fitted
NFI	NFI>0.90	0.94	Fitted
CFI	CFI>0.90	0.98	Fitted

**Marriage and Social Support:** Marriage is one of demographic variables which has a negative and direct relationship with close colleagues support (-%38,  $P<0/05$ ), but affects on head-nurse support indirectly. Therefore, the Hypothesis 3 and 4 were confirmed. On the other hand, marriage has an indirect and negative relationship with job-satisfaction (-%74,  $P<0/05$ ) and intention to leave (%2,  $P<0/05$ ).

**Experience and Intention to Leave the Job:** The nurses'experience has a direct and negative relationship with their intentions to leave the job (0/37,  $P<0/05$ ). Hypotheses 5 was confirmed.

**Social Support and the Intention to Leave the Job:** Because the headnurse support and close colleagues support are negatively related to the intention to leave, (-0/16,  $P<0/05$ ) and (-0/06,  $P<0/05$ ) respectively, Hypothesizes 6 and 7 were confirmed. Also, it can be said that the following hypothesizes are correct:

There is a direct and positive relationship between close colleagues support and headnurse support (0/34,  $P<0/05$ ), There is a direct and positive relationship between headnurse support and job satisfaction (0/31,  $P<0/05$ ) and There is a direct and negative relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave (-0/51,  $P<0/05$ ).

Based on Figure 2 and R- Squer quantity, it was cleared that 0/52 of intention to leave changes is related to external variables and 0/42 is related to the available variables. About o/o24 of job-satisfaction is resulted from the affect of recent variables and 0/076 is resulted from external factors.

## DISCUSSION

**Interpretation of the Study Results and Practical Implications:** This survey is aimed to examine the relationship between demographic variables (age, marriage and experience), Social support variables (head nurse support and close colleagues supports), job-satisfaction and the intention to leave the job. On the other hand, the relationship between social support, job satisfaction and intention to leave will be also discussed.

According to the findings, the older nurses receive more support from behalf of their close colleagues and head nurses. Therefore Hypothesizes 1 and 2 were not accepted. The result shows that the close colleagues supports in the work environment have an important affect on the positive attitude and the support of head nurse and also this result is in contrast with the result of vender Hijden's survey (2010). He observed that in most of European countries, the younger nurses receive more support from behalf of their close colleagues and head nurse.

It refers to various cultural environments which are very important in some countries as Iran.

Hypothesizes 3 and 4 were emphasized. The results indicated that the married nurses receive less support from behalf of their close colleagues and head nurses. Also, marriage is an effective factor which affects on decrease of job-satisfaction and increase of intention to leave. Mean while, these nurses face with some problems such as taking care of their children, keeping house and etc. therefore, they need more attention to do their duties.

Hypothesis 5 was also confirmed, because the increase of records of service causes the intention to leave to decrease. Related to Hypothesize 6 and 7, the relationship between social support (head nurse support and close colleagues support) and staffs' intention to leave was confirmed. This result is as the results of previous researches (Vender Hijden, 2010) in which the social support is regarded as a main factor affecting on the staffs' intention to leave. If the nurses receive their supervisor support in the work environment, they work better and their absences will be lesser. Finally, the patients receive more cares from behalf of the nurses.

Based on the results of this survey, close colleagues and headnurse non-support doesn't directly affect on the intention to leave the job, but it causes the decrease of the job satisfaction and the increase of the intention to leave the job.

According to this research, it can be said that the intention to leave the job is mainly resulted from the decrease of job satisfaction, marriage, age, head-nurses support and close colleagues support. Therefore, regarding the needs and the differences between persons is an important factor. The nurses who are working may face with some emotional challenges, stresses and work limits and they need talking to their close colleagues and supervisors. During mental

pressures, close colleagues are the main supportive resources. Individual differences should be clearly regarded as the necessities to support which may be different in terms of age and family conditions. Most of nurses receive supportive mechanism from behalf of organizations and clinics insufficiently. The challenge between nurses' needs and what they receive may make some problems. The managers who don't succeed to recognize such differences will face with their staffs' dissatisfaction and causes the staffs to leave their jobs. For example, the absence in work place could be main criteria to decrease the job dissatisfaction and moralities of the staffs. Finally, it can negatively affect on the growth, development and permanent performance of the organization.

#### **Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for**

**Further Research:** One of the limitations related to this research is the low number of the sample. Regarded this issue that all data were gathered by use of questionnaire, there may be some incompatibilities in responses. It seems that these results present some challenges for future researches. It is suggested that the affects of some factors such as family condition, nurses risking to face with intention to leave and etc, should be analyzed. According to the future findings, we can estimate that how the lack of some characteristics can cause the intention to leave the job and how it can be related to the nurses capabilities, family conditions, personal characteristics, the affects of work market and job decision-making.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Beth, M.C., *et al.*, 1991. Relationship of management style and anticipated turn over, Dimension of Critical Care Nursing, 10: 65-9.
2. Hayes, L.J., L. O'Brien-Pallas, C. Duffield, J. Shamian, J. Buchan, F. Huges, H.K. Spence Laschinger, N./ North and P.W. Stone, 2006. Nurse turnover a literature review. International J. Nursing Studies, 43(2): 237-263.
3. Abualrub, R.F., 2004. Job stress, job performance and social support among hospital nurses, J. Nurse Scholarsh, 36(1): 73-8.
4. Rezaei, Nasrin and Gholche Mahnaz, 2008. Sochial support in Iran medical science university hospitals nurses, Journal Hayat, 3: 91-100.

5. Hayhurst, A., C. Saylor and D. Stuenkel, 2005. Work environmental factors and retention of nurses. *J. Nurs Care Qual.*, 20(3): 283-8.
6. Chiu, Y., R. Chung, C. Wu and C. Ho, 2009. The effects of job demands, control and social support on hospital clinical nurses' intention to turn over *Applied Nursing Res.*, 22: 258-263.
7. Chena, H., C. Chuc, Y. Wange and L. Lin, 2008. Turnover factors revisited: A longitudinal study of Taiwan-based staff nurses, *International J. Nursing Studies*, 45: 277-285.
8. Van Der Heijden, B.I.J.M., 'immerling, A. Ku Van Dame, K. Van Der Schoot, M. Estryne-Be'har and H.M. Hasselhorn, 2010. The impact of social support upon intention to leave among female nurses in Europe: Secondary analysis of data from the NEXT survey § *International J. Nursing Studies* 47: 434-445.
9. Coomber, B. and K. Barriball, 2007. Impact of job satisfaction components on intent to leave and turnover for hospital-based nurses: a review of the research literature. *International J. Nursing Studies*, 44(2): 297-314.
10. Lambert, E., N. Hogan and S. Barton, 2001. The impact of job satisfaction on turnover intent: a test of a structural measurement model using a national sample of workers. *Social Sci. J.*, 38(2): 233-250.
11. Karasek, R.A., 1979. Job demands, job decision latitude and mental strain: implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24: 285-308.
12. Johnson, J.V. and E.M. Hall, 1988. Job strain, work place social support and cardiovascular disease: a cross-sectional study of a random sample of the Swedish working population. *American J. Public Health*, 78: 1336-1342.
13. Blancero, D., J. Boroski and L. Dyer, 1996. Key competencies for a transformed Human resource Organization: results of a field study. *Human Resource Management*, 35(3): 383-403.
14. Peterson, S. and T. Bredow, 2004. Middle range theories: Application to nursing research. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams and Wilkins., pp: 180-182.
15. Kristensen, T.S., 2000. A New Tool for Assessing Psychosocial Factors at Work: The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire. National Institute of Health, Copenhagen.
16. House, J.S., 1981. *Work Stress and Social Support*. Addison Wesley Longman Publishing Co, Boston.
17. Hobfoll, S.E. and A. Shirom, 2000. Conservation of resources theory: applications to stress and management in the workplace. In: R.T. Golembiewski, (Ed.), *Handbook of Organizational Behavior*. Dekker, New York, pp: 57-81.
18. Debray, Q., M. Estryne-Be'har, E. Guilibert, S. Azoulay and N. Bonnet, 1988. Travail fe'minin en milieu hospitalier: Un facteur de de' pression: une'e'tude pilote [Female work in a hospital environment: a factor of depression: a pilot study]. *Psychiatrie and Psychobiol.*, 3: 389-399.
19. Rhoades, L. and R. Eisenberger, 2002. Perceived organizational support: a review of the literature. *J. Appl. Psychol.*, 87(4): 698-714.
20. Van Der Heijden, B.I.J.M., E. Demerouti, A.B. Bakker and H.M. Hasselhorn, 2008. Work-home interference among nurses: reciprocal relationships with job demands and health. *J. Advanced Nursing*, 62(5): 572-584.
21. Van Der Heijden, B.I.J.M., De Lange, E. Demerouti and C.M. Van Der Heijde, 2009. Employability and career success across the life-span. Age effects on the employability-career success relationship. *J. Vocational Behavior*, 74: 156-164.
22. Cesim, Demir, 2002. Determining the level of job satisfaction of Nurses working at Turkish military forces hospitals military medicine. Retrieved may 3: (2004); from [Http: w.w.w.find Articles. com / Healt and fitness / military Medicine](http://www.findArticles.com/Healthandfitness/militaryMedicine).
23. Philian, Emad, 1991. Examination Relationship Between Job Burnout and Defend Mechanism in Tehran City Educational Hospitals Nurses, Thesis M.s Nursing, Tarbiat Modaress University.