

Original Research

The Relationship Between Coworker Social Support and Burnout Among Inpatient Nurses

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nurses bear significant responsibility in caring for patients, often leading to high workloads, stress, or burnout. One factor that can help reduce burnout is social support from coworkers. This support serves as a source of assistance within the workplace environment, enabling nurses with high levels of social support to better manage burnout. This study aims to investigate the relationship between coworker social support and burnout among nurses working in the inpatient wards of PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital.

Methods: This study employed correlational research design with cross-sectional approach. The participants included 60 nurses working in the inpatient wards, selected using non-probability sampling technique.

Results: The Spearman-Rank test showed a significant relationship between coworker social support and burnout among inpatient ward nurses ($p\text{-value } 0.000 < 0.05$). The strength of the relationship was very high, with a correlation coefficient of $\tau = -0.840$ (very strong negative correlation).

Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between coworker social support and burnout among inpatient ward nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital. This study provides valuable insights for fostering coworker social support as a preventive measure against burnout among inpatient ward nurses.

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Introduction

Nursing is a profession that carries 24-hour responsibility in delivering care services to patients. Compared to other healthcare professionals, nurses are often tasked with relatively more responsibilities, as their roles not only support medical services but also involve providing direct nursing care (Rosmiati et al., 2021). The high demands and responsibilities of the job often lead to excessive workloads, sometimes beyond standard expectations, which can result in mental exhaustion commonly referred to as burnout (Rachel et al., 2023). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), burnout is a psychological process that results from prolonged exposure to work-related stress, characterized by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced motivation and functionality.

Leiber and Ensmann, through a bibliography of 2,496 publications on burnout in Europe, reported that 90% of burnout cases occurred among healthcare and social workers, particularly nurses (Wirati dkk., 2020). In Andalusia, Spain, it was reported that 80% (674) of the nurses studied experienced high levels of burnout (Pujiarti et al., 2023). These findings indicate that nurses are highly vulnerable to occupational burnout. In Indonesia, a survey conducted by the Indonesian National Nurses Association (PPNI) in 2016 revealed that 50.9% of nurses experienced work-related stress (Wardhani et al., 2020).

A study by Irawan et al., (2022) at Dr. Soeradji Tirtonegoro General Hospital in Klaten found that 86% of nurses experienced moderate burnout, 12% experienced low burnout, and 2% experienced severe burnout. Similarly, research by Elfa Chusnani (2023) conducted at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital in Yogyakarta revealed that 58.1% of nurses experienced mild burnout. These findings highlight the need for increased attention toward hospital nurses who experience burnout. According to Indonesian Law No. 36 of 2009, health includes physical, mental, spiritual, and social well-being, which are necessary for social and economic productivity. This policy provides a foundation for nurses to maintain their health and well-being to deliver optimal care. Burnout among nurses can be detrimental not only to the nurses themselves but also to hospital performance and patient care (Saputeri et al., 2023). Thus, it is essential to identify and address factors contributing to burnout, one of which is social support (Matussilmiyuliyani et al., 2022).

Lazarus defines social support as a form of social interaction where individuals provide tangible assistance, information, and emotional support that fosters comfort (Siswandi et al., 2021). Hodson (1997) notes that workplace social support enhances productivity and well-being, especially when dealing with challenges. Nursing is a profession that greatly benefits from positive support from supervisors, coworkers, and family members in order to reduce anxiety and emotional stress caused by demanding workloads. Coworker support provides both physical and psychological comfort by fostering a sense of being valued, cared for, and included in a group with shared goals (Riyadi & Sarsono, 2019). Nurses who receive support from coworkers or supervisors tend to perform their duties more effectively, which in turn improves job performance. In contrast, a lack of support at work may hinder their ability to cope with conflicts and challenges (Puspitasari et al., 2023). The absence of social support can negatively impact nurses and contribute to burnout. According to Agustinus Chrissang Maha Putra & Darmawan (2020), the amount and effectiveness of social support received are significantly related to the occurrence of burnout (Asri et al., 2023).

Preventing burnout in nurses can be effectively addressed through coworker social support, which encompasses emotional engagement, informational support, instrumental assistance, and positive feedback in handling work-related problems. Therefore, coworker support may serve as a protective factor against burnout. A study conducted by Adhetya & Kusmiati (2024) found a significant negative relationship between social support and burnout. This indicates that the higher the level of support received from family, friends, and significant others, the lower the level of burnout experienced by nurses. Conversely, lower levels of social support are associated with higher levels of burnout.

A preliminary study conducted at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital on June 6, 2024, identified a total population of 117 inpatient ward nurses. Interviews carried out by the researcher in the Al-Kautsar ward with the head nurse revealed that nurses often experience feelings of monotony due to the repetitive nature of patient care each day. Meanwhile, interviews in the At-Tin ward indicated that many nurses experience fatigue, particularly during night shifts, as the number of hospitalized patients is not proportional to the number of nurses on duty. Additionally, the head nurse emphasized that coworker social support is highly necessary due to the heavy workload, which creates a need for emotional and practical support from colleagues.

Method

His study was conducted at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital during October–November 2024. It employed a quantitative research design with a correlational method using a cross-sectional approach (Sugiyono, 2013). The population in this study consisted of nurses working in the inpatient wards of PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital, totaling 60 individuals. Sampling was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique.

The data collection instruments included a coworker social support questionnaire comprising 19 items to assess the level of social support, and the Indonesian version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), consisting of 22 items to measure burnout levels. Inclusion criteria for participants were: nurses who had been working for at least three years, those assigned to inpatient wards, and those willing to participate in the study. Data analysis involved both univariate and bivariate methods. Univariate analysis was conducted to describe the frequency distribution and percentages of each variable. Bivariate analysis was performed to examine the relationship between the two main variables using the Spearman Rank correlation test.

Results

This study involved 60 respondents. The characteristics of these respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Nurses' Characteristics by Age, Gender, Years of Service, and Educational Background

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
25-30	22	36,7%
31-40	35	58,3%
41-50	2	3,3%
>50	1	1,7%
Total (N)	60	100%
Gender		
Male	14	23,3%
Female	46	76,7%
Total (N)	60	100%
Years of Service		
3-8	37	61,7%
9-14	20	33,3%

15-20	2	3,3%
>21	1	1,7%
Total (N)	60	100%
Education		
Diploma (D3)	21	35%
Bachelor Degreee (Ners)	39	65%
Total (N)	60	100%

Based on Table 1, the majority of nurses are aged 31–40 years (35 respondents, 58.3%). Female nurses constitute the largest gender group with 46 individuals (76.7%). The most common length of service among nurses is 3–8 years (37 respondents, 61.7%). Regarding education, most nurses hold a Bachelor's degree in Nursing (Ners), totaling 39 respondents (65%).

Tabel 2. Coworker Social Support

Coworker Social Support		
Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	0	00,0%
Moderate	11	18,3%
High	49	81,7%
Total (N)	60	100%

As shown in Table 2, the majority of inpatient nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital report high levels of coworker social support, accounting for 81.7%. Meanwhile, 18.3% fall into the moderate category, and none reported low social support.

This finding is consistent with Oktarina (2023), who reported that most inpatient nurses (55.9%) experienced high social support in her study “The Effect of Social Support on Job Satisfaction among Inpatient Nurses at Ganesha General Hospital.” Similarly, Wiffida et al. (2022) in their study on the relationship between coworker social support and self-compassion among nurses found that 61.5% of subjects reported high and 38.5% very high coworker social support. Riyadi and Sarsono (2019) emphasized that coworker social support plays a crucial role in creating physical and psychological comfort, enhancing feelings of acceptance and appreciation, and supporting mental and emotional well-being.

The high level of coworker social support among respondents in this study may be attributed to their extensive work experience, with most having 3–8 years (61.7%) and 9–14 years (33.3%) of service. This aligns with Sahay and Wei (2022), who noted that nurses with longer tenure tend to have stronger social support networks and more effective coping strategies. Additionally, positive interpersonal relationships among coworkers significantly influence social support, as supported by Hutahaean and Sri Wahyuni (2023), who found that positive work relationships enable nurses to provide emotional and instrumental support to each other, thereby reducing work-related stress and fostering a collaborative and productive work environment. Thus, fostering good communication, mutual respect, and teamwork are essential strategies to enhance coworker social support.

Tabel 3. Burnout

Burnout		
Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	45	75,0%
Moderate	11	18,3%
High	4	6,7%

Total (N)	60	100%
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As presented in Table 3, most inpatient nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital experienced low levels of burnout (75%). Moderate burnout accounted for 18.3%, and high burnout for 6.7%.

This result aligns with prior studies such as Injilia and Reagen (2023) who found that the majority of practicing nurses experienced low burnout levels (45%), followed by moderate (27.9%) and high (0.8%) burnout. Similarly, Wiwid Setiyanika (2023) reported the highest percentage of nurses with low burnout (56.8%) in her study on burnout, stress levels, and nurse performance at Ajibarang General Hospital. Despite the predominance of low burnout, these figures indicate a considerable amount of work-related stress, potentially affecting the quality of care and nurses' mental well-being.

Burnout is defined as a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged workplace stress. It is a psychological condition marked by prolonged fatigue, emotional and cognitive disturbances, and symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and insomnia. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes burnout as an occupational phenomenon and classifies it as an international health concern (Bunga et al., 2022; Rohman et al., 2023).

According to Leiter and Maslach, burnout occurs when individuals experience emotional exhaustion, feeling emotionally drained due to excessive job demands, impairing their ability to provide optimal care. Burnout among nurses not only harms the nurses themselves but also negatively affects patients and hospital performance. Heavy workloads trigger psychological symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, decreasing care quality and impacting nurses' job performance and healthcare service effectiveness.

In this study, low burnout levels may be influenced by factors such as productive age and longer work tenure. This is supported by Juniarta and Candra (2016), who stated that low burnout in nurses is influenced by internal factors (age, gender, educational background, and years of service) that affect coping with job stress, as well as external factors such as work environment, policies, and social support. The researchers also suggest that the supportive work environment at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital creates a balance between job demands and comfort, which contributes to low burnout levels. This is consistent with Pradana et al. (2017), who concluded that a conducive work environment significantly reduces nurse burnout. Key factors include adequate facilities, harmonious work relationships, and management support, all of which enhance comfort, motivation, and job satisfaction. Ultimately, these elements reduce burnout risk and promote improved healthcare quality for patients.

Tabel 4. Spearman Rank Test Results

The Relationship Between Coworker Social Support and Burnout										
Coworker Social Support	Burnout						Total	p-value	τ	
	Low		Moderate		High					
	F	%	F	%	F	%				
Moderate	0	0,0%	7	63,6%	4	36,4%	11	100%	0,000	-0,840
High	45	91,8%	4	8,2%	0	0,0%	49	100%		
Total	45	75,0%	11	18,3%	4	6,7%	60	100%		

Based on Table 4, bivariate analysis using Spearman Rank test yielded a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a statistically significant relationship between coworker social support and burnout among inpatient nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital. The strength of the relationship is very strong, with a correlation coefficient (τ) of -0.840, indicating a strong negative association. This means that higher levels of coworker social support are associated with lower levels of burnout. This finding aligns with the study by Asri et al. (2023), titled "The Role of Coworker Social Support on Burnout among Nurses,"

which found a negative effect of various types of social support—including emotional, tangible, informational, and companionship support—on nurse burnout.

Discussion

This study found a negative correlation, meaning that the relationship between coworker social support and burnout is inversely proportional. In other words, the higher the level of social support from coworkers, the lower the level of burnout experienced by nurses, and vice versa. The correlation coefficient of -0.840 indicates a strong inverse relationship between coworker social support and burnout among inpatient nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital.

The results show that inpatient nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping have a high level of coworker social support and a low level of burnout. The researchers suggest that this may be influenced by the respondents' age, as most are within the productive age range. This is consistent with the findings of Awaliyah Ulfa Ayudytha Ezdha & Desta Asherti Putri (2019), who reported that age influences the level of stress experienced in performing work tasks.

Social support is a vital element in human life, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral interactions, all of which assist individuals in adapting and coping with various situations. According to House (1987), as cited in Siswadi et al. (2021), coworker social support provides both physical and psychological comfort. Nurses receiving high coworker social support tend to cope better with job stress and improve their performance. Conversely, nurses with low social support are more vulnerable to burnout, which negatively affects work quality, mental health, and overall well-being.

This finding is related to the study by Adhetya & Kusmiati (2024), entitled “Social Support and Burnout among Nurses at Hospital X,” which reported a significant negative relationship between social support and burnout, with a Pearson correlation of $r = -0.872$ and a significance level of 0.01. This suggests that higher levels of social support from family, friends, and significant others are associated with lower levels of burnout. Their study further showed that 5% of respondents reported low social support, 66% moderate, and 29% high, while burnout levels were 29% low, 70% moderate, and 1% high. Similarly, Wynona Christie Ong et al. (2020), in their study “Burnout in Relation to Social Support among Nurses at Permata Bunda General Hospital, Medan,” demonstrated a negative relationship between social support and burnout, with a product-moment correlation coefficient of $r = -0.581$ and $p = 0.000$, indicating that higher social support corresponds to lower burnout.

Conclusion

The majority of inpatient nurses at PKU Muhammadiyah Gamping Hospital in 2024 reported high levels of coworker social support (81.7%). Most nurses experienced low levels of burnout (75%). There is a significant and strong negative relationship between coworker social support and burnout among inpatient nurses, with a correlation coefficient of $\tau = -0.840$.

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