

Paper 2: The influence of engagement in Portuguese nurses' burnout

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Day after day, nurses are facing new demands in their work and are becoming a potentially vulnerable group to experience burnout. The Burnout syndrome emerges when professionals feel that their individual resources are insufficient to face the demands of work activity, such as a variety of functions, being overworked and the workplace conditions (Maslach, 1976). Nurses are considered to be particularly susceptible to burnout due to the stressful nature of their work (Mann & Cowburn, 2005; Van Bogaert et al., 2009).

In their review of 15 years of burnout research, Enzmann and Kleiber (1990) identified 144 studies of nurses' burnout. Although it is not easy to reduce the labor demand within the nursing profession, it appears that some characteristics of their work should be reinforced as they seem to promote well-being and satisfaction, even in situations of being overworked. Engagement can protect individuals from burnout, since it helps professionals to efficiently cope with stressful situations (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Thus, professionals feel more vigorous, energetic, dedicated, and identified at work by adopting positive attitudes by increasing their intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, reducing emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

This study aims to identify the influence of engagement in burnout among 1216 nurses in the district of Porto (Portugal) through the application of the MBI-HSS (Maslach & Jackson, 1997) and UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) Portuguese versions (Marques-Pinto, 2009). Results show that engagement is a significant predictor of burnout. In particular, nurses engaged in their work have more personal accomplishment and less emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. We found that vigor ($\beta = -.377, p < .001$); and dedication ($\beta = -.131, p < .001$) negatively predict emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, vigor ($\beta = -.336, p < .001$) and dedication ($\beta = -.316, p < .001$) negatively predict depersonalization. Finally, vigor ($\beta = .613, p < .001$) and dedication ($\beta = .294, p < .001$) are significant predictors of personal accomplishment.

In conclusion, engagement is crucial in the performance of nurses and appears to be an essential element for health and mental well-being, helping them overcome the high demands at work and allowing them to grow up in adverse environments. Thus, engagement contributes indirectly in a positive way to the health and quality of life of patients.