

Research Article**WORK ENGAGEMENT OF NURSE EDUCATORS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM****Nguyen Thi Thu Thuy, Tran Thi Thuan and *Nguyen Thi Anh**

Faculty of Nursing – Midwifery, Hong Bang International University, Ho Chi Minh City - 700000, Vietnam

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Abstract

Aim: The objective of the study is to study work engagement and identify associated factors among nurse educators in selected universities in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. **Methodology:** A descriptive – correlational research design was carried out of 207 nurse’s educators. Three self – administered questionnaires: The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) were used to collect data. Data analysis was performed Jamovie software, descriptive and analytical statistics. **Results:** Most nurses were female (94.7%); the mean of nurses’ age was 41.3 years. Almost of nurse educators have attained master’s degree (93.2%), while the rate of nurse educators who have doctoral degrees was only 2.4%. The nurse respondents had 1–24 years of teaching experience with the mean year experience of 13.0 years. The study also indicated that 95.7% of nurse educators are lecturer position. The overall competency, emotional quotient and work engagement scores of nurse educators were 3.26, 3.28; 4.49 respectively which are classified as a moderate level. The multiple linear regression analysis result showed that current position ($\beta = 0.17, t = 8.15, p < .001$) and years of teaching experience ($\beta = -0.62, t = -5.89, p < 0.001$) were statistically significant predictors. **Conclusion:** These findings suggest that fostering competency and emotional quotient among nurse educators is critical to enhancing their work engagement, which in turn can improve the quality of education and patient care. Additionally, targeting professional development interventions to improve these areas could be beneficial for both educators and their institutions.

Keywords: Nurse educators, work engagement, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES).**INTRODUCTION**

Nurse educators are the cornerstone of the healthcare system, responsible for shaping the knowledge, skills, and values of the next generation of nurses. The effectiveness of nurse educators is crucial in healthcare education, particularly in nursing, as they play a key role in shaping the future workforce of healthcare professionals (Gutierrez, 2020). Work engagement has emerged as a key concept in organizational and educational settings, defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption.” (Turjuman & Alilyyani, 2023). It describes employees’ energy, enthusiasm, and full involvement in their work tasks. In the context of nursing education, high levels of work engagement among nurse educators are crucial; engaged educators are more likely to bring vitality, commitment and deep focus to teaching, which in turn strengthens educational quality and supports student outcomes. According to Wei et al. (2023), work engagement is associated with their job satisfaction, perceived quality of care, and intent to leave. For nurse educators, higher level of work engagement brings people to become more productive, vigorous, dedicated and enthusiastic to perform duties and responsibilities as part of the dynamic academic institution (Bautista *et al.*, 2023). In Vietnam, the nursing education sector has undergone substantial development to align with global healthcare demands. However, nurse educators in this environment may face role overload, limited professional advancement, and evolving curricular expectations factors that could influence their work engagement.

Research in Vietnamese nursing contexts has shown moderate levels of engagement and a positive relationship between job resources and engagement (Minh *et al.*, 2019). Yet, there remains limited evidence specifically addressing work engagement among nurse educators in Vietnamese universities, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City. For the above discussion, I decided to conduct the study which aims to assess work engagement among nurse educators in Ho Chi Minh City which specific objectives:

Objective of the study

- To investigate the level of work engagement among nurse educators in Ho Chi Minh City
- To evaluate associated factor of nurse educators’ engagement at work.

METHODOLOGY**Research Design**

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from January to March 2025 at five selected universities in Vietnam.

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Population: Population of this study are nurse educators who are at 05 universities in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.

Sample size: The sample size is determined based on G power software. The sample size was estimated using the G Power software, version 3.1.9.2. Considering the effect size to be

*Corresponding Author: *Nguyen Thi Anh*

Faculty of Nursing – Midwifery, Hong Bang International University, Ho Chi Minh City - 700000, Vietnam.

measured (ρ) at 20%, power of the study at 90%, and margin of error at 5%, the total sample size was estimated to be 207.

Sampling Technique: A stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. The stratified random sampling was used to divide into five universities.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of two parts.

Part I of the questionnaire pertains to the demographics of the profile consisting of 5 questions for participant's age, gender, current position, educational level, years of teaching experience.

Part II of the questionnaire pertains to work engagement of nurse educators in term of 3 sub - scales: vigor; dedication; absorption. The clinical competence among ability among nursing students was measured by "Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)" for nursing educators which developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). The questionnaire consists of 17 items across three sub-scales which include vigor (06 items); dedication (06items); absorption (05 items). The instrument uses a 7 - point Likert scale, with item response scores ranging from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always/ every day"). The Cronbach's alpha for UWES was 0.87 for vigor, 0.92 for dedication, and 0.88 for absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Data Collection

The data collection using the research instrument through self-administered surveys. Participants were interviewed face to face after they agreed for participants and signed in consent form. Participants were directly interviewed by researchers and answer the questions in the prepared questionnaire. Face-to-face interviews will be carried out about 30 minutes for interviewing process.

Statistical Analysis

Data was analyzed by using Jamovie version 2.4.14. For categorical variables, we used descriptive statistics which performed with frequencies and percentages. The multiple regression analysis was used to determine associated factors between work engagement and demographic profiles among nurse educators in selected universities in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. All the significant differences in variables were considered if the p-value showed <0.05

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Baseline Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile characteristics of the respondents. A total of 207 nurse educators from five universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam were recruited to the study. The result showed that most nurses were female (94.7%); the mean of nurses' age was 41.3 years (SD: 6.97). Almost of nurse educators have attained master's degree (93.2%), while the rate of nurse educators has doctoral was only 2.4%. The nurse respondents had 1–24 years of teaching experience with the mean year experience of 13.0 years (SD: 6.64). The study also indicated that 95.7% of nurse educators are lecturer position while assistant position accounted for 4.3%.

Table 1. Baseline demographic profile of the participants (n=151)

Profile	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age (in years)	41.3	6.97	24	59
Years of teaching experience (in years)	13.0	3.52	1	24
Sex	Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
	Female	196	94.7 %	
Current position	Male	11	5.3 %	
	Lecturer	198	95.7 %	
Educational Level	Assistant lecturer	9	4.3 %	
	Bachelor	9	4.3 %	
	Master	193	93.2 %	
Total	Doctoral	5	2.4 %	
		207	100%	

This finding is in line with previous studies. A study in our European countries among a total of 329 nurse educators participated in the study. Their mean age was 47.7 years. They had an average of 15.4 years working experience in a clinical field and 12.30 years working experience as nurse educators. Almost all (97%, n = 317) of them held a degree in nursing and were registered as nurses (95%, n = 310) (Elonen et al., 2023). However, most of the educators (n = 299, 91%) had a PhD (n = 153, 47%) or a master's degree (n = 146, 44%) which are higher than this research findings (Elonen et al., 2023). Moreover, a study among 127 nursing educators in Oman indicated that the mean age of participants was 43.9 (SD = 6.9) years with a range of 30–60 years. Most participants (78%, n = 99) were female, had academic experience of more than 10 years (70.1%), had a master's degree (68.5%) (Al-Rawajfah et al., 2022). The study highlights the predominance of female, well-educated, and experienced nurse educators in Ho Chi Minh City. However, there appears to be a lack of doctoral-level qualifications and higher academic ranks, which could hinder academic leadership and the growth of nursing education at a higher level. There is a potential need for more support and opportunities for educators to pursue advanced studies and career advancement to enhance the academic development of nursing education in the region.

Work engagement among nurse educator respondents

Table 2 displays the level work engagement among nurse educators on three three work engagement's dimensions. participants were moderately engaged across all dimensions of work engagement. Vigor had a mean score of 4.35 (SD = 0.67), dedication scored 4.40 (SD = 0.63), and Absorption showed the highest mean of 4.73 (SD = 0.70). The overall mean of 4.49 (SD = 0.66) indicates a moderate level of engagement, suggesting that while respondents demonstrated a fair degree of enthusiasm, commitment, and focus in their work, there is still room for improvement toward a higher engagement level. The finding regarding work engagement among nurse educator in selected universities in Ho Chi Minh in this study is lower than another report in study in Philippines. The study revealed that nurse-educators have high work engagement as to vigor (Mean=4.44), absorption (Mean=4.77), and dedication (Mean=4.84) (Bautista et al., 2023). Additionally, a study among nurse managers and nurses working in Saudi Arabian hospitals using Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) for evaluating nurses' work engagement. The study revealed that nurse managers have better work engagement with mean of vigor, dedication, absorption dimensions of work engagement were 4.02, 4.39, 4.26 respectively. Meanwhile, the mean score of work engagement among nurses was lower with 3.21, 3.53, 3.48 respectively (Al-Ahmari et al., 2024).

Table 2. Summary of the mean scores and level of work engagement of participants

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	SD
Vigor	4.35	Moderately Engaged	0.67
Dedication	4.40	Moderately Engaged	0.63
Absorption	4.73	Moderately Engaged	0.70
Overall rating	4.49	Moderately Engaged	0.66

Table 3. Analysis of associated between work engagement and characteristics profile of participants

Predictors	R ²	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval		t	p
				Lower	Upper		
Intercept ^a	0.48	5.40	0.59	1.02	3.36	3.68	<0.001**
Age		-0.02	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.18	0.061
Sex: Male-Female		0.09	0.15	-0.28	0.31	-0.13	0.924
Current position		2.36	0.29	1.03	2.17	3.57	<0.001**
Educational level		-0.38	0.20	-0.67	0.12	-0.18	0.057
Years of teaching experience		-0.12	0.02	-0.10	-0.02	-0.62	<0.001**

The moderately engaged status of nurse educators in Vietnam, particularly with lower scores in vigor and dedication, implies that interventions to improve motivation, energy levels, and commitment are necessary. These interventions could include targeted professional development, workload management, and stress reduction programs to boost engagement in these specific areas.

Associated Factors between Characteristic of Participants and Self – Direct Learning

A multiple linear regression test was used to identify any relationship between the nurse educators' work engagement and their characteristics profile. The study findings revealed that the model explained 48% of the variance in work engagement ($R^2 = 0.48$). Among the predictors, current position ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 8.15$, $p < 0.001$) and years of teaching experience ($\beta = -0.62$, $t = -5.89$, $p < 0.001$) were statistically significant predictors. Specifically, participants holding higher positions tended to report higher levels of work engagement, whereas those with more years of teaching experience demonstrated lower engagement. Other variables, including age ($\beta = -.18$, $p = .061$), educational level ($\beta = -0.18$, $p = 0.057$), and sex ($\beta = -0.13$, $p = 0.924$), were not significantly associated with work engagement.

The research findings illustrate that the strong positive effect for position suggests that career advancement or role elevation may boost engagement among nurse educators—possibly via enhanced recognition, increased decision-making power or enriched tasks. Institutions may thus consider designing clear career-path frameworks and leadership opportunities to foster engagement. Beside the negative effect for years of teaching is somewhat counterintuitive: we might expect more experience to yield greater mastery and thus higher engagement. However, the finding aligns with literature showing that longer tenure, without renewed challenge or professional renewal, can lead to disengagement or stagnation. It signals the need for interventions such as refreshment of roles, continuous professional development, mentoring or rotational assignments to maintain engagement. These findings suggest that years of teaching experience, current position are key predictors of work engagement among nurse educators. Many studies in nursing and education find that job-resources (autonomy, support, recognition) positively relate to work engagement. For example, Forster et al.'s study on nurse managers found that job demands and resources influence work engagement (Forster & Koob 2023).

Besides another study on specialist nurses in China used regression and found that professional title/job role predicted engagement (career satisfaction, job title emerged as significant predictors) (Xu *et al.*, 2024).

Conclusion

The study revealed that nurse educators in selected universities in Ho Chi Minh City demonstrated a moderate level of work engagement, competency, and emotional intelligence. Most respondents were middle-aged females holding lecturer positions with considerable teaching experience and predominantly master's-level education. Among the factors examined, current position and years of teaching experience were found to be significant predictors of work engagement. These findings highlight the importance of professional development opportunities and supportive institutional environments to enhance engagement and sustain motivation among nurse educators.

Competing interests: The authors state no conflict of interest

Ethical approval: Respondents' right to privacy, anonymity and right to withdraw from the study were fully ensured. Students signed an informed consent when agreeing to participate in the study. The ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Trinity University of Asia, Philippine (Protocol Code: 2025-2nd-CNU-Nguyen-V1).

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