

## Rewards Satisfaction, Perception about Social Status and Commitment of Nurses in Pakistan

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### Abstract

This research is undertaken to approve or reject the general perception of masses about commitment of employees and to identify those factors, which effect commitment of employees in general and of nurses in particular. In previous research of Allen and Myere (1990), the factor of social status was not addressed. In this study target audience is nurses. Whereas, it is a proven fact that psychological perception effects individual's attitudes and behaviors, so to see that how satisfaction with rewards/ benefits and perception about social status effect commitment of employees, this research was undertaken. Satisfaction level varies from person to person. The empirical results have proved that commitment of employees is affected due to satisfaction with rewards/ benefits and perception about social Status.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, Rewards, Social Status Nurses, Pakistan

### Introduction

Pakistan is a developing country and it is facing different challenges from last few years. The actual unemployment rate in the country is quite higher than officially claimed 6 percent and 22.3% of the total population is living below the poverty line (The World Fact Book, 2013). The political and economic landscape of the country is also unpredictable and marked with inconsistent policies, which further reduces the investment and job opportunities. Due to these uneven and fragile environments the Public sector is the only secure source of employment, absorbing large portion of working class of the country.

Despite the fact that public sector organizations follow rigid hierarchical structures and bureaucratic policies, yet in Pakistan, due to high poverty level, limited job opportunities, job security, post-retirement benefits, social status, authority and perceived social security associated with them, working class prefers to serve in public sector organizations more willingly than in private sector. No doubt due to limited job opportunities outside public sector organizations ,and other associated benefits ,people in Pakistan prefer to join public sector more willingly, but their commitment with organizations and profession is , yet questionable. Though job security and availability of a continued source of earning are good motives to opt for serving in public sector in Pakistan, yet we have to see whether these benefits suffice expectations of the employees and up to what level their commitment is affected due to the rewards/Benefits and perceived social status associated with their profession.

In Health services, nursing and medical care is a highly professional job and requires high degree of professional competence and commitment with job by employees of the profession to achieve customer satisfaction. According to economic survey of Pakistan (2011-2012), there are 149,201 Doctors, 10,958 dentists, and 76,244 nurses in the country. Of this total population associated with medical field 30 % is employed in public sector, which include District hospitals, Tehsil HQ hospitals, Teaching Hospitals, Heart centers, rural health centers, Basic Health centers and LHVs.

Though due to poverty and weak economic conditions of the country overall employment opportunity in public as well as private sectors are very limited, yet due to basic human need of health servicing, demand of doctors and nurses in the country is very high unlike other professions, more professional opportunities for this profession exist in the private sector as well. However, due to psychological contract of job security, comparative secure environments for female workers and social status associated with government jobs in a power hungry society, most of the female as well as male medical professionals prefer to work in public sector hospitals, but we will have to weigh that whether this preference for working in public sector is due to higher satisfaction of these professionals or due to some other reasons, moreover preference for serving in any of the organization cannot assure commitment of the employees as well. There is a general perception that due to lack of employment opportunities, social status associated with government jobs and appointments, job security and post-retirement benefits people prefer to join public sector organizations, so commitment and satisfaction of professionals is also quite high in public sector due to above mentioned factors. The foremost requirement of any human being is to meet his needs of hunger, thirst, clothing, shelter and security (Maslow, 1954), so in contemporary world to meet these requirements adults seek to secure some source of permanent earning, may that be in the shape of some business, job or any other method, but after securing a source of earning, people tend to weigh that is their earning sufficient enough to meet their day to requirements (Heneman and Schwab, 1985), which is termed as pay satisfaction.

Nursing is a profession which is predominantly occupied by the female gender, and in a conservative society like Pakistan where working by ladies is otherwise considered not good, here the ladies associated with nursing profession have to face many hurdles in the fulfillment of their needs, desires and professional duties. Ladies willing to join this profession have to encounter family and social opposition in the shape of disrespectful attitude. We assume that negative attitude of patients, their male accomplices, Doctors and society as a whole generates feeling of not being socially respected, which ultimately leads to lower commitment towards job, organization and profession.

Objective of this research is to prove or undo the perception through hypothetic deductive method, that in Pakistan, where there is a high poverty level, limited job opportunities, mere possession of job in government sector will not ensure the commitment of employees towards their profession, rather satisfaction with rewards/ benefits and perception about the social status are the important variables, which effect the commitment of employees.

After going through the overview and literature review, following research questions emerge:

- Does, mere possession of a job ensures commitment of the employees with their organization and profession?
- Does Satisfaction with Reward and benefits affect commitment of Nurses in a country like Pakistan, where otherwise job opportunities are very limited, and mere possession of a job is generally considered sufficient to invoke commitment among employees of nursing profession?

- Does Perception about Social status/ Respect; has some significance in developing commitment of employees?

### **Literature review**

*Rewards/benefits satisfaction:* In today's competitive business environments, Rewards and Benefits is one of the important aspects to develop the loyalty, dedication, and motivation in employees to bind them in an organization, in such a way that they remain committed towards the betterment of the organization (Mottaz, 1988, Wright, Dunford and Snell, 2001). According to expectation theory of Vroom (1964), people work, in expectation of some material or spiritual reward, and the exchange theory states that employees display their commitment for the rewards being offered by the organization (Cohen and Gattiker, 1994), so we can say that once people are rewarded, their commitment to work increases.

According to Bratton and Gold (1994), 'Reward refers to all forms of financial returns, tangible services and benefits which an employee receives as part of an employment relationship'. Rewards can be divided into two types, i.e. extrinsic and intrinsic rewards (Porter and Lawler 1968). Extrinsic rewards mainly consist of material rewards, e.g. Salary, fringe benefits, wages, interpersonal rewards for distinguished performance or achievement and promotions, whereas intrinsic rewards are those which help in personal grooming of an employee, e.g. Training, autonomy, and achievement certificate for recognition, challenging tasks etcetera (Ivancevich, 2005). To keep the employees motivated and committed organizations take care of their employees financially as well as psychologically. No doubt to meet its basic needs of food, shelter, dressing and protection (Maslow, 1954), the foremost priority goes to financial rewards, as only with stable financial position, an individual can meet, these basic needs, once these needs have been met, only then individuals look for other needs, so we can say that extrinsic rewards are the foremost priority, whereas intrinsic rewards come to next stage. However, some of the scholars are of the view that intrinsic rewards, have more pronounced effect on commitment of employees than extrinsic rewards (O'Reilly and Caldwell, 1980).

Equity theory states that employees assess their perceived inputs in organization and outcome (reward), with that of another employee. If employees perceive that they are not being treated with equity, their motivation, commitment and performance may decline (Mellow, 2011). As a result of this perception, they may intentionally reduce their input (effort), start taking long breaks, late arrivals and early leaving or resigning from the job. At times they get involved in coercive politics and pilferage activities. Equity system must incorporate three types of equity system i.e. internal equity, External equity and individual equity. According to Jaffrey A. Mellow (2011), "Internal equity means that employees perceive fairness of reward differentials among different jobs within an organization, whereas external equity involves perception of fairness of their compensation relative to those outside the organization. Individual equity considers employee perception of pay differentials among individuals who hold identical jobs in the same organization".

Investment theory given by Farrell & Rusbult (1981), explains that commitment of employees increases with increase in Rewards, decrease in costs, increase in investment and decrease in alternative quality. According to this theory, satisfaction of employees results in their commitment with the job and organization, whereas, satisfaction depends upon high rewards and low costs. (Cost is the time and effort put in by the employee, deadlines to meet targets and unfair promotions etc, whereas investment refers to number of years spent in job, training and non vested portion of retirement programmers). According to this theory, commitment depends on rewards and in turn commitment has direct relation with employee's intention of turnover.

A study conducted by Hafiza, Shah and Jamshed (2011), on motivation of nonprofit organizations of Pakistan revealed that extrinsic rewards have significant effect on motivation of employees, whereas effect of intrinsic rewards was found to be insignificant. As Motivation and Continuation are the outcome of commitment ( Klein , Molloy and Brinsfield, 2012), so we can draw an inference from the study conducted by Hafiza et al(2011), that Extrinsic rewards have more significant effect on the commitment of employees than intrinsic rewards , which lead to corresponding motivation. However, these findings cannot be accepted cross the board as a universal truth, as extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have different value for different people , as it is contextual construct in nature. In a society , where poverty level is high , earnings are limited , family responsibilities are high , job opportunities are limited , there may be the highest value placed on extrinsic rewards than another society where people are relatively financially stable , have enough opportunities for employment , reasonable earnings , lesser family responsibilities , here the highest value may be placed on autonomy , appreciation and other intrinsic rewards. According to Bratton and Gold (2003), rewards can be divided into three types,i.e. monetary rewards, non-monetary rewards and psychological payments. De Gaiter et al (2008) have discussed the concept of psychological rewards and according to them, “psychological rewards are supportive and positively evaluated outcomes of the professional interpersonal relationships an employee develops with his/her supervisor, colleagues and/or clients’ e.g. compliments and recognition”. We here in this study will include psychological rewards as well in to intrinsic rewards. In this study we will see that how much importance is placed by public service nurses on extrinsic rewards and how much on intrinsic rewards with respect to their commitment. For multidimensional nature of rewards and benefits satisfaction we will be using the 12 items scale developed by Heneman and Schwab (1985), which is the most cited questionnaire (Vandenberghe and Tremblay, 2008).

*Social status:* Social status is a complex construct, as some of the scholars have defined it, in terms of an individual’s financial strength, authority, political influence which one employee enjoys as compared to other fellow employees.. Social status is a relationship which a society makes with an individual and it not only depends upon the characteristics with which an employee is born with (race, inherited wealth, family name etc), but also depends upon, ‘ employee’s occupation, personality, job complexity , responsibility and attitude of people in society regarding the employee’s status’ (Parcel and Mueller, 1983;Walsh, 1982). Social status is a unit of the social system (Wan, Wong and Kong, 2013) .An individual obtains it within a group (Vecchio, 1992).).To some other scholars Social status not only depends upon the characteristics with which an employee is born, but can be acquired through education, occupation, job title, and nature of work (Rostamy, Hosseini, Azar,KhaefElahi and Hassanzada 2008).

Social Status of any profession is relative standing of any profession in hierarchy of professions; it depends upon the prestige, wealth and authority enjoyed by the employees of particular profession (Biddle, 1995; Fwuand Wang, 2002). Social status too has two dimensions, one relates to public image and other self image of any profession (Takase, Maude, and Manias, 2006). Self image mostly depends upon the public image. Work behavior of employees is positively related with positive self and public image of any profession. Once self and public image of a profession is high, the outcome in the shape of turnovers will be low. As many scholars have already concluded, that turnover and turnover intentions are inversely related with high commitment, so we can draw the inference that positive public and self image ,increases commitment and reduces turnovers and turnover intensions.

To measure the social status of professions many scales were developed by different scholars, e.g. Duncan’s Socio Economic Index, Nam Power’s Occupational Status Score, Petter Rossi’s House Hold Prestige (1974). The most cited measure of occupational status is the one

devised by Hollingshead (1975), in which four factors have been identified to measure the occupational status, which are; Education, Occupation, Sex and marital status. All of these measures may be good enough to be applied in western world, where very little importance is paid on the family background of the individual (race, tribe), and the political influence and the power which one can exert over his/her fellow citizens. However, as Pakistan is a high masculine and higher power distance society, here financial heritage, race, tribe and political influence are considered strong indicators of social status (Hofstede, 1971).

*Perception about social status of nurses:* In different societies different stereotyped opinions are held about Nursing, in western world over a long period of time, Nurses were being perceived as Angel of mercy, Girl Friday or mother/wife , these all images had portrayed them as service provider, fulfilling the wishes of others, none was portraying them with autonomous and prestigious professionals (Wallace,2007).As nursing is predominantly occupied by females in Pakistan, so before we discuss about the perception about social status of Nurses in Pakistan, there is a need to understand the perception about the social status of Women in Pakistan. Pakistani Society is a patriarchal and male dominating society; women are considered secondary citizens and their role are well defined and limited in all walks of life. This perception of lower status gender about ladies has been adopted from Hindu religion and continued to be followed by many locals even after conversion to Islam (Shah, 1986). Due to the restriction of Pardah ,in majority of Islamic Countries working by ladies in mixed working environments is not considered ethical (alireza,2006), which has been wrongly interpreted by Mullah clergy in the interest of male dominance .

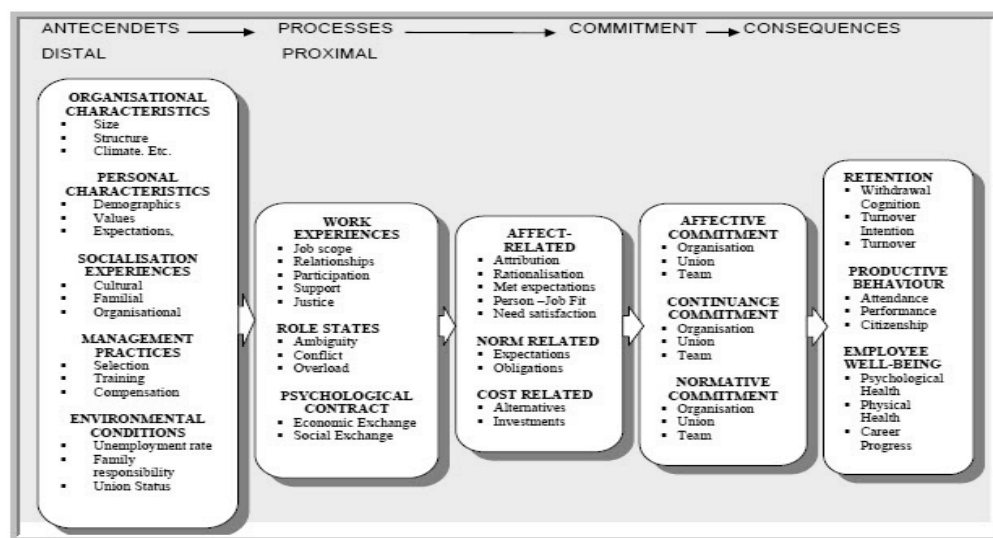
Due to little academic education, prolonged working hours, low salary and sexual biased attitudes of society, in most of the Islamic countries traditional image about nursing is negative, however due to improved government policies towards recruitment and laying down academic qualification restrictions, this impression is improving now and result of improved image is reflected in their improved work behavior and commitment (Gazzaz,2009).In Pakistan women are considered as productive and reproductive beings (Amber 2002), with this mindset when nurses go to professional market they face many hurdles and have to face the issues ,like, perception about their lower ethical standards, inferior labor, menial work performers, low salary accepters etc (Alireza,2003).Public image (perceived social status), effects job behavior, poor public image, not only affects recruitment of Nurses, but also affects their attitude towards work (Takase et al 2002). Perceived image of the job is related with work environments, and it is perceived that Nurses are hand maidens of Doctors (Alireza, 2003).

*Commitment:* Meanings of word, “Commitment” have been by and large explained by various English dictionaries in almost similar context. According to Merriam Webster dictionary (2005), commitment is an agreement, resolve or pledge to do something in future. Oxford Dictionary online (2012), defines it as; “pledge, undertaking to do something”. Cambridge On line Dictionary (2013), defines it as; “an agreement or obligation to do something”. In management research literature this construct was for the first time defined by Becker (1960), in the light of his side Bet theory, according to which commitment is a relationship between the employee and the organization basing upon the exchange of benefits. Employees spend their time, energy and skills in the better interest of Organizations, and organizations take care of financial needs of employees, employee would remain loyal to an organization until he does not get a better alternative. This mutual dependence creates a sense of obligation, undertaking between employee and the organization.

Till 1990, when Allan and Myer defined Commitment as a multidimensional construct, it was being defined by various scholars as a one-dimensional construct. Porter, Steers, Mowday&Boulian (1974), had defined Commitment in terms of attitudinal perspective. According

to them, it refers to Psychological attachment of an employee with his/her organization in relation to identification and involvement. From this definition we can find out that they had considered it as a one-dimensional construct, involving affective dimension only. According to them organizational commitment represents an employee's (a) strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership.

Allen and Myere (1984), initially defined commitment as two dimensional construct, having affective and Continuance constructs. Affective commitment (AC) was the psychological dimension of positive affect and identification with organization, whereas Continuance commitment (CC), was calculative in nature and based on the calculation of cost ,an employee will have to bear , incase he/she decides to quit. They defined Affective commitment (AC) as; 'the Psychological state of an employee through which he/ she desires to remain with an organization, it reflects emotional attachment of employees with an organization'. Regardless of its focus, Normative Commitment (NC) is characterized by a mind-set of obligation (e.g., obligation to remain with the organization or support a change initiative and continuous commitment (CC), has been defined as the awareness regarding cost of leaving an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991 Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010).



**Figure 1: Allen and Myere's Organizational Commitment Model**

### Research hypotheses

In a country like Pakistan, where job opportunities are limited and poverty level is high, mere possession of a job in government sector will not be a sufficient factor to ensure medical employee's commitment and good job performance, keeping this premise and literature review given above, in mind following hypothesis have been contemplated:

H1: Satisfaction with rewards and benefits will have a positive effect on Affective commitment of employees.

H2: Satisfaction with rewards and benefits will have a positive effect on normative commitment of employees.

Hypothesis3: Satisfaction with rewards and benefits will have a positive effect on continuance commitment of employees.

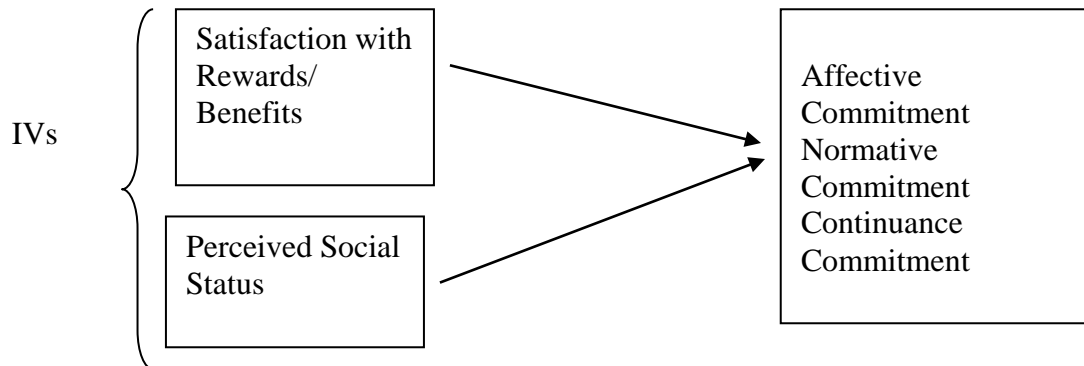
Hypothesis 4: Perception about social status of a profession will affect commitment of employees accordingly.

H4a: Positive perception about social status, will affect the affective commitment of employees with their job and organization positively.

H4b: Positive perception about social status will affects the normative commitment of employees with their job and organization positively.

H4c: Positive perception about social status will affect the Continuance commitment of employees with their job and organization positively.

#### **Research model**



**Figure 2: Effect of rewards and benefits and Perceived Social Status (independent variables) on Commitment (Dependent Variable) of employees.**

#### **Methodology**

A written questionnaire comprising three parts was administered to Nurses of public sector Hospitals through medical superintendents and Chief Matrons of these hospitals located in Punjab. Response/ data were received from Nurses in the shape of their opinion out of given choices on the questionnaire after few days. Urdu Version was not translated from English to Urdu from an accredited translator and responses received were again got translated in English, for recording the data. A total of 900 questionnaire forms were delivered and 790 were received back, out of these 790 forms, 32 were rejected on the basis of being incomplete.

#### **Population, Sample selection**

As the purpose of the research is to measure the effects of satisfaction with rewards/ Benefits and Perception about social status on the commitment of Public sector Nurses, so the population comprised of all public sector Nurses serving in Pakistan. However, due to research limitation of time and resources, it was not possible to reach out to large number of nurses serving in different parts of the country, thus randomly selected 900 nurses from four public sector hospitals of Punjab were taken as representative sample for this research, however, on the basis of response received and completeness of the data final sample size came to 768.

#### **Descriptive statistics**

Table 1 represents, Demographic variables of gender, age, education, salary, service years, number of children indicate that mean age of the sample comes to 2.42 with a SD of 1.29; mean service of employees also comes to 2.20 with a SD of 1.35. Mean for marital status comes to 1.46, with a SD of 0.657. Mean for Education Standard of respondents is 4.48 with a SD of 0.657; mean for salary of employees comes to 4.64 with SD of .88. Mean and SD is given at table 2, frequency and percentages are given at table 1.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
18-25 years	240	31.5
26-33	182	24
34-41	188	24.8
42-49	74	9.8
>49	74	9.8
<b>Service</b>		
1-5 years	323	42.6
6-10 years	173	22.8
11-15 years	135	17.8
16-20 years	37	5
> 20 years	90	11.9
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	465	61.3
Unmarried	248	32.7
Widow	30	4
Divorced	15	2
<b>Education</b>		
Primary	0	0
Middle	0	0
Matriculate	23	3
Intermediate	389	51.5
Graduate	301	39.6
Others	45	5.9
<b>Salary(Rs)</b>		
50000-10000	22	3
11000-15000	22	3
16000-20000	8	1
21000-25000	98	12.9
>250000	608	80.2
<b>Children</b>		
0	338	44.6
1	45	5.9
2	135	17.8
3	135	17.8
4	82	10.9
> than 4	23	3

The reliabilities have been reported in the parenthesis along the diagonal. The reliabilities were all above the conventional standard. Reliabilities for Satisfaction with rewards and benefits were .877, Perception about social status were .827, affective commitment .932, continuance commitment were .771 and normative commitment were .728 respectively.



**Table 2: Correlations and Reliabilities**

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Age	2.42	1.29										
Service	2.2	1.35	.896**									
M-Status	1.46	.67	-.023	.013								
Education	4.48	.65	-.139	-.170	.004							
Salary	4.64	.88	.228*	.343**	-.054	-.112						
Children	2.53	1.59	.542**	.489**	-	-.327**	.178*					
SWRB	2.32	.62	.042	.068	-.030	.079	-.026*	.068**				
PSS	2.42	.97	.171	.082	.067	-.053	.030*	.308	.490			
AC	2.45	1.30	.112	.071	-.102	.003	-.035*	-.154	.552	.628		
CC	2.80	1.03	.342**	.288**	.076	.032	.184*	-.250**	-.217**	.148	.276*	
NC	2.27	.66	.184*	.116*	-.048*	.160*	.024*	.166*	.444*	.337*	.499*	.079**

Values of correlations and reliabilities of variables is mentioned in table 2.

### Regression analysis

Regression analysis in table 3, indicating regression results for AC(affective commitment),PSS(perception about social status) and SWRB(satisfaction with rewards/Benefits) , Regression analysis table indicates that our hypothesis 1,2,3,4a,4b and 4 c have been accepted, as the values of Beta, adjusted R square and significance are within the laid out limits .

**Table 3: Results of main effect regression**

Variable	AC			CC			NC		
	$\beta$	sig	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	sig	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	Sig	$\Delta R^2$
Control Variables									
SWRB	0.541	0.000 4.6***	0.295	0.244	0.010	0.140 .13	.435	.000	.183
PSS	0.669	0.000	0.400	.260	0.010	0.140	.37	.000	.12

**Table 4: Summary of results of the hypotheses**

S/NO	HYPOTHESES	RESULT
1	Satisfaction with rewards and benefits will have a positive effect on Affective commitment of employees.	Accepted
2	Satisfaction with rewards/benefits will have a positive effect on Continuance commitment of employees.	Accepted
3	Satisfaction with rewards and benefits will have a positive effect on normative commitment of employees.	Accepted
4a	Positive Perception about social status will have a positive effect on affective commitment of employees.	Accepted
4b	Positive Perception about social status will have a positive effect on continuance commitment of employees.	Accepted
4c	Positive Perception about social status will have a positive effect on Normative commitment of employees	Accepted

### Conclusion

Since inception, the political and economic condition of our country has been unstable, the unemployment rate is quite high and job opportunities are very limited. The major source of

employment is public sector service (world fact book 2013) organizations. With such a gloomy economic condition, it is generally perceived by masses that mere possession of job should be considered as a blessing in disguise and this alone should guarantee commitment of employees. However, actually, it is observed that people do not pay much concentration on their official obligations, absents, short breaks, lower standard of service and indifferent attitudes towards customers are a routine matter. Besides this in rural areas of Pakistan yet working ladies are not considered as part of respected families and nurses are generally considered bold ladies with lower moral characters and values (Durrant and Sathar 2000; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001) .

This research was undertaken to approve or reject the general perception of masses about commitment of employees and to identify those factors, which effect commitment of employees in general and of nurses in particular. I had based my research on antecedents of commitment given by Allen and Myere (1990), and found out that they had not addressed the aspect of perception about social status, in the antecedents of commitment. Whereas, it is a proven fact that psychological perception effects individual's attitudes and behaviors , so to see that how satisfaction with rewards/benefits and perception about social status effect commitment of employees, this research was undertaken.

The empirical results have proved that commitment of employees is affected due to satisfaction with rewards/ Benefits and perception about social Status; however, it is recommended that future researches may be undertaken to evaluate the extent, up to which extent positive or negative perception about social status affects commitment of employees. Moreover, perception about social status was taken as a one-dimensional construct (respect), in accordance with Kulsuvan and Kulsuvan's (2008) , measurement of the construct. There is need to exploit the antecedents of perception about social status as well, because so far no much of work has been found on this construct. While measuring the perception about social status of nurses, factors like (limited autonomy, shift work, overloading of work, bossing attitude of administration, effects of married life, and gender biased attitudes of society, perceived negative moral standards of ladies associated with this profession) can also be researched upon

### **Recommendations**

Perception about social status has been taken as a unidimensional construct, as reflected in terms of perceived respect (in accordance with Kulsuvan and Kulsuvan 2008), there is a need to undertake further research on this construct and so many other aspects which contribute to perception about social status e.g. (authority, autonomy, political influence, and gender biases) be included, Meanwhile Perception about social status of working women varies in rural and urban areas, so separate research for perception about nurses in rural and urban areas be carried out, or for comparison a comparative study is recommended. To measure the commitment of employees with their job and profession, some scale other than Allen and Meyer's commitment scale be used and separate research be undertaken to measure these foci of commitment. As satisfaction with rewards and benefits depends upon cost of living as well , so separate research for measuring commitment of employees of cities with higher, moderate and low cost of living is recommended and relationship between satisfaction with rewards / benefits and cost of living be explored. Social status is a Psychological reward, which society accords to someone basing upon, society's standards, so it is recommended that a separate study be conducted to determine the effects of various types of psychological rewards given by society on the commitment of employees. A longitudinal research will be more suitable to measure the satisfaction with rewards/benefits and perception about social status and their effect on commitment of employees.

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