RESEARCH ARTICLE

# THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON NURSING DEVELOPMENT IN SAUDI ARABIAN: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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## ARTICLE DETAILS

## ABSTRACT

The healthcare sector in Saudi Arabia is undergoing significant transformation under Vision 2030, with nursing development playing a pivotal role in achieving the nation's goals of improved healthcare quality and accessibility. This systematic review explores the role of organizational support in fostering nursing development, focusing on its impact on self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and patient outcomes. Through a PRISMA-guided analysis of literature published between 2010 and 2024, this study identifies key themes, including the importance of training programs, mentorship systems, leadership support, and workplace resources. Findings reveal that organizational support significantly enhances nurses' professional growth, reduces burnout, and improves retention rates. However, challenges such as workforce shortages, cultural perceptions, and inadequate regulatory frameworks persist. The review concludes that strategic investments in organizational support mechanisms are essential for building a resilient nursing workforce capable of meeting the demands of Saudi Arabia's evolving healthcare system. Recommendations include expanding professional development opportunities, implementing mentorship programs, fostering supportive leadership, and establishing robust regulatory standards to ensure high-quality nursing care aligned with Vision 2030 objectives.

### KEYWORDS

## Introduction

The healthcare sector in Saudi Arabia has experienced significant transformation, particularly under the framework of Vision 2030, which aims to enhance the quality of care and accessibility across the nation (Mani & Geniewicz, 2024). Nurses, as essential components of healthcare delivery, are pivotal in this transformation, with their professional development being influenced by various factors including training availability, self-efficacy, and organizational support. Nurses are often described as the backbone of healthcare systems due to their direct interaction with patients and their involvement in care delivery. In Saudi Arabia, the Quality of Nursing Care (QNC) has been a focal point during this transformation era. A study utilizing Donabedian's model found that while nurses generally held a positive perception of QNC, there is a need for a shift towards more outcome-

oriented practices to align with the broader goals of healthcare reform (Alkorashy & Al-Hothaly, 2022). This indicates that enhancing nurses' roles in patient outcomes is critical for meeting the objectives set forth by Vision 2030.

Continuous professional development is essential for nurses to improve their skills and adapt to new healthcare practices. The Saudi government has initiated training programs aimed at enhancing patient-centered care, emphasizing the importance of spending quality time with patients. This focus on training availability is crucial for fostering a skilled nursing workforce capable of meeting the evolving demands of the healthcare sector. Furthermore, the confidence that nurses have in their abilities significantly impacts their performance and job satisfaction. Studies have shown that higher job satisfaction among healthcare providers correlates with better quality of care delivered (Deshmukh, Raj, Chide, Borkar, Velhal & Chopade, 2023). When nurses believe in their skills, they are more likely to provide exceptional care and contribute positively to patient outcomes. Organizational factors also play a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to professional growth. Leadership and resource availability are vital components that can enhance nurses' job satisfaction. Effective support from management not only boosts morale but also leads to improved patient care outcomes, creating a more effective healthcare system overall (Althumairi, Bukhari, Awary & Aljabri, 2023). The collective impact of these factors on nurses directly influences the overall effectiveness of healthcare institutions in Saudi Arabia (Alasiri & Mohammed, 2022). As the country moves towards privatization and public-private partnerships as part of its healthcare strategy, it is imperative for nursing leaders to advocate for policies that support nurse development and retention. This approach will not only benefit individual nurses but will also contribute to achieving national goals of improved healthcare access and quality.

The Saudi Arabian healthcare system, particularly in nursing, has encountered several challenges in recent years, including shortages of trained professionals and the necessity for continuous skill enhancement (Alsadaan, Jones, Kimptom & DaCosta, 2021; Alluhidan et al., 2020). Organizational support is crucial in addressing these challenges by fostering an environment that promotes learning, confidence, and professional development among nurses. Previous studies have indicated that adequate organizational support, such as training programs, mentoring systems, and workplace resources has a direct impact on nurses' self-efficacy and overall performance (Xu & Zhao, 2024; Zheng, Feng, Gao, Gong, Ji, Li, Wang & Xue, 2024). Training programs play a vital role in equipping nurses with the necessary skills to adapt to evolving healthcare practices. The implementation of structured mentorship systems further enhances this development by providing guidance and support from experienced professionals (Mlambo, Silen & McGrath, 2021). These initiatives not only improve individual competencies but also contribute to a more effective healthcare delivery system. Moreover, the organizational environment significantly influences nurses' confidence levels. When nurses receive robust support from their institutions, they are more likely to feel empowered in their roles, leading to higher job satisfaction and improved patient care outcomes (Saleh, Eshah & Rayan, 2022). This positive correlation underscores the importance of a supportive organizational culture that prioritizes professional growth. As Saudi Arabia continues its efforts to transform its healthcare sector, addressing these challenges through enhanced organizational support will be essential.

Self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute necessary actions, is particularly significant in the nursing profession. In this field, confidence in decision-making and skill application is vital for providing quality patient care. Training programs play a crucial role in strengthening this self-efficacy by equipping nurses with the skills and knowledge they need to perform effectively (Ibrahim, Ahmed & El-Shahat, 2022). However, the effectiveness of these training initiatives is greatly enhanced when they are supported by robust organizational structures. In Saudi Arabia, understanding how self-efficacy and organizational support intersect is critical, especially in light of the country's ongoing healthcare reforms under Vision 2030. The government has recognized the importance of investing in training and development programs to improve the quality of healthcare services (Al-Hanawi, Khan & Al-Borie, 2019). This includes initiatives aimed at enhancing the competencies of healthcare professionals, particularly nurses. Research indicates that adequate organizational support—such as mentoring systems, workplace resources, and structured training programs—directly impacts nurses' self-efficacy and overall performance (Alshammari & Alenezi, 2023). For instance, organizations that foster a supportive environment enable nurses to feel more confident in their roles, leading to improved job satisfaction and better patient outcomes. As Saudi Arabia continues to evolve its healthcare system, aligning training programs with strong organizational support will be essential for developing a skilled nursing workforce capable of meeting the demands of modern healthcare. This alignment not only benefits individual nurses but also contributes to the broader goals of enhanced healthcare access and quality within the nation.

This study aims to systematically review the literature on the role of organizational support in nursing development within Saudi Arabian healthcare settings. In doing so, it explores how organizational structures, policies, and initiatives foster professional growth, improve nursing efficacy, and enhance patient outcomes. Through a systematic review of existing literature, this study identifies the key drivers of nursing development, with a particular focus on organizational support as a cornerstone for nurturing nursing talent. This systematic review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) methodology to examine the existing literature on organizational support, self-efficacy, and training in Saudi Arabian nursing. This review will provide insights into best practices and policy recommendations for healthcare institutions aiming to improve nurse development through organizational support.

## The Importance of Nursing Development in Saudi Arabia

The importance of nursing development in Saudi Arabia is underscored by the critical role nurses play in the healthcare system, particularly as the country undergoes significant reforms aligned with Vision 2030. This national transformation program aims to enhance healthcare services, improve quality, and increase accessibility for all citizens. As the largest group of health professionals in the Kingdom, nurses are essential to delivering comprehensive patient care and ensuring positive health outcomes (Alsufyani, Alforihidi, Almalki, Aljuaid, Alamri & Alghamdi, 2020). Their roles extend beyond basic care provision; they are increasingly involved in specialized clinical services, patient education, health promotion, and leadership within healthcare teams. The ability of nurses to meet these expanding responsibilities is highly dependent on continuous professional development, which includes ongoing education, training, and the fostering of leadership skills. Moreover, nursing development is critical for ensuring the successful implementation of patient-centered care models, which are a central component of Saudi Arabia's healthcare reforms. These models require nurses to be adept at critical thinking, clinical decision-making, and the application of advanced technologies in healthcare settings. As the healthcare sector in Saudi Arabia strives to meet international standards, developing the nursing workforce through strategic investment in training, education, and organizational support will be essential for maintaining high-quality patient care and ensuring positive health outcomes across the nation.

One of the primary challenges facing nursing development in Saudi Arabia is the shortage of qualified Saudi nurses. Despite having a reasonable number of nurses per capita compared to OECD averages, a significant portion of the nursing workforce consists of expatriates (Alsadaan, Jones, Kimptom & DaCosta, 2021). In 2018, approximately 38% of the total 184,565 nurses were Saudi citizens, indicating a heavy reliance on foreign professionals. This dependency not only affects the stability and continuity of care but also raises concerns regarding cultural competency and alignment with national healthcare values (Alluhidan et al., 2020). The reliance on expatriate nurses has created various challenges within the healthcare system. Many expatriate nurses come from countries such as India and the Philippines, bringing with them different cultural norms and values that may not align with those prevalent in Saudi Arabia. This cultural disconnect can lead to communication barriers and misunderstandings in patient care, particularly in a country where Islamic values play a significant role in healthcare practices. Moreover, expatriate nurses often face difficulties adapting to their new environment, which can adversely affect their job satisfaction and retention rates (Al-Turki, 2018).

The Saudi government has recognized these challenges and has initiated policies aimed at increasing the number of trained Saudi nurses through programs such as Saudization. This policy seeks to gradually replace expatriate nurses with local talent, thereby enhancing the stability of the workforce and improving patient care quality (Albejaidi & Nair, 2021). However, despite some progress, such as an increase from 9% Saudi nurses in 1997 to 38% in 2018, more needs to be done to attract and retain Saudi nationals in nursing roles. Increasing the number of trained Saudi nurses is vital for building a sustainable healthcare system that meets the needs of the population. This can be achieved through several strategies, including improving nursing education and training programs to ensure that they are accessible and appealing to potential students. Additionally, creating favorable working conditions, offering competitive salaries, and providing opportunities for career advancement can help retain qualified nurses within the profession.

Furthermore, addressing issues related to work-life balance is essential for both expatriate and local nurses in Saudi Arabia. Many nurses report dissatisfaction due to long working hours and high workloads, which can lead to burnout and increased turnover rates (Al Mutair, Al Bazroun, Almusalami, Aljarameez, Alhasawi, Alahmed, Saha, Alharbi & Ahmed, 2022). Research indicates that approximately 54% of nurses experience moderate levels of burnout, with emotional exhaustion significantly impacting their decision to leave their positions. Specifically, a 12% increase in emotional exhaustion correlates with a higher likelihood of organizational turnover, emphasizing the need for healthcare institutions to prioritize nurse well-being (Kelly, Gee & Butler, 2021). Healthcare organizations can improve job satisfaction and ultimately enhance patient care by fostering a supportive work environment that prioritizes the well-being of nurses. This includes implementing strategies such as flexible scheduling, manageable workloads, and adequate staffing levels. Studies have shown that when nurses feel supported in their roles, they are more likely to remain in their positions and provide high-quality care (Sodeify, Vanaki & Mohammadi, 2013). For instance, hospitals that employ burnout reduction strategies, such as professional development opportunities, stress reduction initiatives, and recognition programs experience lower turnover rates and improved nurse retention.

Moreover, creating a culture that values professional development is crucial for addressing burnout and enhancing job satisfaction. Nurses who have access to ongoing education and training feel more competent and confident in their abilities. This not only boosts their morale but also translates into better patient outcomes (Alshammari & Alenezi, 2023). Organizations should measure the effectiveness of professional development programs by tracking metrics such as nurse job satisfaction, retention rates, and clinical outcomes. Furthermore, addressing the economic implications of nurse turnover is vital for healthcare institutions. The cost associated with replacing a nurse can range from $46,100 to as much as $9 million for an average hospital due to lost productivity and the expenses related to hiring new staff (Peng, Ye, Ding & Chandrasekaren, 2023). Healthcare facilities can significantly lower these costs while improving overall organizational performance by investing in programs that reduce burnout and foster a supportive work environment. To address these shortages, it is crucial to enhance nursing education and training programs. Current research indicates that low enrollment rates in nursing colleges, particularly among Saudi nationals, are influenced by socio-economic factors and cultural perceptions of nursing as a profession (Elmorshedy, Al Amrani, Hassan, Fayed & Albrecht, 2020). Initiatives aimed at making nursing more attractive such as improving compensation packages,

offering flexible working conditions, and promoting career advancement opportunities are essential for encouraging more Saudis to pursue nursing careers. Additionally, creating pathways for continuous professional development through postgraduate education and specialization can help retain nurses within the profession and enhance their skills.

Organizational support plays a pivotal role in the development and performance of nurses, particularly in enhancing their self-efficacy and job satisfaction. This support can manifest through various means, such as mentoring programs, access to resources, and opportunities for professional growth. Buttressing this was Xu and Zhao (2024) that pinpointed that organizational support can lead to greater work-family enrichment among nurses by reducing burnout and promoting decent work conditions. This balance is crucial for maintaining personal and professional well-being. Organizational support, including social support, positively impacts nursing workforce competence and job satisfaction. Nurses with high levels of social support report better competence and satisfaction compared to those with low support (Alshammari & Alenezi, 2023). Moreover, perceived organizational support is linked to lower levels of burnout and turnover among nurses. It helps mitigate job stresses and promotes organizational commitment and loyalty (Abdel-Azize, Abed & Bayoumy, 2023). In addition, Wang, Wang and Lu (2023) stressed that organizational support enhance nurses' sense of professional benefits, including improved self-esteem and psychological well-being. This support can also alleviate negative emotions like depression. In essence, organizational support is essential for nurses' career planning and development. It provides opportunities for growth, which are critical for effective performance and high-quality patient care (Kallio, Liljeroos, Koivunen, Kuusisto, Hult & Kangasniemi, 2024).

In Saudi Arabia, the regulatory framework for nursing is primarily overseen by the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCFHS), which sets standards for education, licensure, and practice to ensure that nurses meet specific criteria to practice in the country. Under the SCFHS, the Nursing and Midwifery Professional Council (NMPC) plays a crucial role in defining the scope of nursing and midwifery practice, developing standards for practice, job descriptions, policies, and educational curricula. Additionally, the Saudi Nurses Association (SNA) supports professional development by promoting educational opportunities and conducting conferences to advance nursing practices, while also advocating for safe working environments for nurses (Hamadi, Aboshaiqah & Alanazi, 2024; SCFHS, 2023).

Conclusively, the introduction of robust regulatory frameworks for nursing practice is crucial for establishing professional standards and ensuring quality care in Saudi Arabia. These frameworks help standardize processes such as licensure, accreditation of educational programs, and ongoing professional development requirements. Implementing a kingdom-wide system for nurse regulation can standardize licensure processes, ensuring that all nurses meet consistent standards. This standardization enhances the credibility of the nursing profession by ensuring that all practitioners have the necessary qualifications and competencies. Also, ensuring that nurses are well-trained and adhere to high standards, regulatory frameworks contribute to building public trust in healthcare services. This trust is essential for effective healthcare delivery, as it encourages patients to seek medical care when needed.

## Methodology

This systematic review adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure a transparent and comprehensive analysis of the literature. A systematic search was conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, Scopus, CINAHL, and Google Scholar, using keywords such as "organizational support," "nursing development," "self-efficacy," "Saudi Arabia," and "Vision 2030." Studies published between 2010 and 2024 were included to capture the most recent developments in the field. Inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and grey literature that addressed organizational support mechanisms and their impact on nursing development in Saudi Arabia. Data extraction and synthesis were performed to identify recurring themes, gaps, and best practices.

## Findings and Discussion

The review identified several key themes related to organizational support and its role in nursing development in Saudi Arabia. These themes include the impact of training programs, mentorship systems, leadership support, and workplace resources on nurses' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and patient outcomes. Training programs were found to be a cornerstone of nursing development, equipping nurses with the skills needed to adapt to evolving healthcare practices. Studies highlighted the importance of continuous professional development in enhancing clinical competencies and fostering a culture of lifelong learning (Ibrahim, Ahmed & El-Shahat, 2022). However, the effectiveness of these programs was significantly enhanced when supported by organizational resources and leadership commitment. Moreover, mentorship systems emerged as a critical factor in fostering professional growth among nurses. Structured mentorship programs, where experienced nurses guide less experienced colleagues, were shown to improve confidence, reduce burnout, and enhance job satisfaction (Mlambo, Silen & McGrath, 2021). These systems also facilitated knowledge transfer and the development of leadership skills, which are essential for advancing nursing roles in Saudi Arabia.

Supportive leadership was identified as a key driver of nursing development. Leaders who prioritize nurse well-being, provide clear communication, and offer opportunities for career advancement were found to create a positive work environment that enhances job satisfaction and retention (Althumairi, Bukhari, Awary & Aljabri, 2023). Additionally, organizations that foster a culture of recognition and appreciation for nurses' contributions were more likely to retain skilled professionals. Furthermore, access to adequate workplace resources, including modern medical equipment, staffing levels, and administrative support, was shown to directly impact

nurses' ability to perform their duties effectively. Studies emphasized the need for healthcare institutions to invest in infrastructure that supports efficient care delivery and reduces unnecessary workload burdens (Saleh, Eshah & Rayan, 2022).

Despite the progress made, several challenges persist in Saudi Arabia's nursing sector. These include cultural perceptions of nursing as a less prestigious profession, high turnover rates among expatriate nurses, and the need for more robust regulatory frameworks to standardize nursing practices (Alsadaan, Jones, Kimptom & DaCosta, 2021). Addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach that involves policy changes, public awareness campaigns, and targeted interventions to improve working conditions.

## Conclusion

The findings of this systematic review underscore the critical role of organizational support in fostering nursing development in Saudi Arabia. As the country continues to implement healthcare reforms under Vision 2030, investing in training programs, mentorship systems, leadership development, and workplace resources will be essential for building a skilled and resilient nursing workforce. Organizational support not only enhances nurses' self-efficacy and job satisfaction but also contributes to improved patient outcomes and the overall effectiveness of the healthcare system. Saudi Arabia can achieve its goal of providing high-quality, accessible healthcare for all citizens by addressing existing challenges and leveraging best practices.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this review, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance nursing development in Saudi Arabia:

1. Expand access to continuous professional development opportunities, including online courses and specialized training programs.
2. Align training curricula with international standards to ensure nurses are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge.
3. Develop formal mentorship programs that pair experienced nurses with newcomers to facilitate knowledge transfer and professional growth.
4. Provide training for mentors to ensure they are equipped to offer effective guidance and support.
5. Train healthcare leaders in effective management practices that prioritize nurse well-being and professional development.
6. Foster a culture of recognition and appreciation to boost morale and job satisfaction.
7. Allocate funding for modern medical equipment and infrastructure to support efficient care delivery.
8. Address staffing shortages by recruiting and retaining qualified nurses through competitive salaries and benefits.
9. Launch public awareness campaigns to change perceptions of nursing as a profession and highlight its importance in healthcare.
10. Establish a kingdom-wide regulatory framework to standardize nursing practices, licensure, and professional development requirements.
11. Implement policies that support flexible working hours and manageable workloads to reduce burnout and turnover rates.
12. Provide access to mental health resources and stress reduction programs for nurses.

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