

# The Influence of Future Time Perspective on Registered Nurses' Behaviors toward Delegation, and Thriving at Work

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## ABSTRACT

**Context:** Nurses with a high future time perspective talented at setting a goal in the distant future and make every effort to achieve through developing their plan and priorities tasks.

**Aim:** The study aimed to identify how future time perspectives (FTP) influence registered nurses' behaviors toward delegation and their thriving at work.

**Methods:** A descriptive correlational design was used. The study was conducted at Basyoun Central Hospital, affiliated to the ministry of health and population at El-Gharbia Governorate, on all available (N=108) registered nurses who had bachelor degrees or higher nursing qualification. Three tools were used to collect data: Future time perspectives assessment questionnaire, delegation behaviors assessment questionnaire, and thriving at work assessment scale.

**Results:** Results revealed that 45.4%, 49.1% of registered nurses had a high level of future time perspectives and highly used the inspector style of delegation, respectively. In total more than half of nurses had a high level of thriving at work. There was a significant positive correlation between future time perspectives and inspector style of delegation and their thriving at work.

**Conclusion:** Results found that future time perspectives had a vital role in registered nurses' delegation behavior and their thriving at work. Health care organizations have to attract nursing staff with strong FTP and develop training programs for nursing staff to have a more future-oriented viewpoint.

**Keywords:** Behavior toward delegation, future time perspectives, registered nurse, thriving at work

## 1. Introduction

Frequent changes and challenges in health sectors require registered nurses to forestall and engage in proactive behaviors at work to experience high levels of well-being and performance (Kooij *et al.*, 2017). Future time perspective can be seen as one characteristic that can improve registered nurses' competence and confidence to face their problems because nurses with a high future time perspective are talented at setting goals in the distant future and making every effort to achieve by developing their plan, and priorities tasks. They become more motivated to expand their knowledge and pursue ways to help them feel recognition and vitality in their work. Thus, their satisfaction and commitment to work increased, and their need for leaving the organization will decline (Sims *et al.*, 2016; Kooij *et al.*, 2017; Henry *et al.*, 2017).

Zimbardo and Boyd (1999) classified time perspective into Past-negative and positive, present-hedonistic and fatalistic, and future-focused. Future time perspective, which belongs to the future-focused category defined as a personality characteristic that reflects registered nurses' judgments, feelings, and behaviors toward futures (Lyu & Huang, 2016). Registered nurses with high future time perspective experience less work pressure and take more positive coping styles so, they become proactive personality seek methods that are helping them to thrive at work, to make

decisions that improve their career adaptability and maturity (Rong, 2015; Jiang, 2017; Cheng *et al.*, 2016). Adding to that, they display attentiveness in their behaviors by considering everything before they take actions, delaying indulgence, become more organized, and control their time more effectively (Bajec, 2019; Indirasari, 2019; Simons *et al.*, 2004; Cheng *et al.*, 2016). They become talented to deal effectively with problems of time pressure, increase learning demands, workload, and nursing shortage that they face in health care and become motivated to work with others who will assist them in their work (Prem *et al.*, 2017; Cipriano, 2010; McDonald, 2010)

Registered nurses begin to use delegation as an energetic tool to devote their time to more critical tasks (Hughes, 2017; Saccomano, 2008; Stonehouse, 2015). However, delegation is still a misunderstood technique, and registered nurses behave toward it in diverse styles. Huber (2017); Magnusson *et al.* (2017) classified delegation styles into five styles; do it all, justifier, buddy, role model, and inspector. Nurses may prefer to do all activities by themselves to decrease risks or avoid mistakes done by assistants. Other registered nurses are justifiers uncomfortable with the delegation and continuously explain why they delegate tasks to health care assistance. Buddy nurses are not confident in their abilities and feared assuming authority, so trying to be friends with everyone. Registered nurses also may behave as role models

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begin to set professional standards through their performance, and, to depend on that, others will copy their best practice by observation. Lastly, the inspector style registered nurses were highly alert to their accountability. They repetitively monitored and supervised the delegated tasks (Lebitso, 2014; Baged, 2008; Huber, 2017; Magnusson et al., 2017).

Registered nurses need to understand which style be inclined to practice most often and impact their performance because ineffective delegation harms nurses and organization as it deters registered nurses' professional development and hinders safety and quality of care (Leatherman, 2008; Bittner & Gravlin, 2009; Yoon et al., 2016). The nurse manager should support registered nurses to manage delegation through creating a learning environment that helps registered nurses seeking thriving, through looking for opportunities to innovate, so they can learn something new or grow a new capability (Gassas et al., 2017; Kleine et al., 2019; Zhai et al., 2017).

Thriving is a continuum process in which registered nurses jointly experience both learning and vitality at work (Spreitzer et al., 2005; Riaz et al., 2018). Learning is a cognitive dimension of thriving denotes the growth of registered nurses that comes from acquiring different knowledge and skills and its application to build their competence and self-reliance. In comparison, vitality is the affective dimension and refers to a sense of being alive, fervent, motivated, and have an enthusiasm and energy for work (Walt, 2018). Spreitzer et al. (2005) established a theoretic model of thriving at work and clarified how individual characteristics, contextual features, and agentic work behaviors lead to thriving.

Thriving at work energizes registered nurses with a positive feeling, energy, and sense of self-efficacy to direct and change their work contexts to improve their performance, health, and well-being. Thriving is an essential factor that can influence organizational outcomes as it is infectious because if one nurse is energized, the infection will spread to others and become more energized and satisfied with their job (Porath et al., 2011; Jiang et al., 2020). Thriving individuals are self-learners who usually seek out opportunities to learn new things to develop their carrier (Spreitzer et al., 2012). Thus, a better understanding of factors that enhance registered nurses thriving in the organization helps eliminate the unfavorable outcomes and enhance behavior (Mushtaq et al., 2017).

## **2. Significance of the Study**

The nursing profession is a strenuous job; nurses feel that they continuously work under pressure that can affect their emotions and quality of care (Sarafis et al., 2016; Najimi et al., 2012). Park and Jung (2015) revealed that individuals with high levels of future time perspective value their job even if the job is challenging and tend to suppress their negative emotions when they think about their job's positive outcomes. These characteristics make them work harder to develop their competencies in order to achieve goals. So, emphasis on future time perspectives is essential

to the well-being and optimistic work. However, scarce studies were found that search for the future time perspective in the nursing domain. So, it is imperative to study future time perspectives for nurses and how they influence their behaviors and thrive at work.

## **3. Aim of the study**

This study aimed to assess the influence of future time perspectives on registered nurses' behaviors toward delegation and their thriving at work.

### **3.1. Research questions**

- What are the levels of registered nurses' future time perspectives?
- What is the most behavior or style used by registered nurses in the delegation?
- What are the levels of registered nurses thriving at work?
- Can the registered nurses' future time perspectives affect nurses' behavior toward delegation and their thriving at work?

## **4. Subjects & Methods**

### **4.1. Research design**

A descriptive correlational design was used to describe variables and examine relationships among these variables (Rentala, 2019).

### **4.2. Research Setting**

This study was conducted at Basyoun Central Hospital, affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Population at El-Gharbia Governorate, Egypt. This hospital contains 200 beds and 300 nurses. The hospital contains ICU, neonate, dialysis, gynecological, operating departments.

### **4.3. Subjects**

The study involved all available (N=108) registered nurses who had a bachelor's degree or higher qualification in nursing.

### **4.4. Tools of the study**

Data for the present study were collected using the following three tools:

#### **4.4.1. Future Time Perspectives Assessment Questionnaire**

It was developed by the researcher to assess future time perspectives of registered nurse dependent on Carstensen and Lang, (1996); Lyu & Huang (2016). It consisted of two parts: The first part about socio-demographic characteristics of the registered nurse as age, gender, marital status, department, educational level, years of experience, and attending of previous training.

The second part used to assess FTP and consisted of ten statements as "many opportunities wait for me in my occupational future," "I expected that I would set many new goals in my occupational future," and "I make lists of things to do in future." Five points measured the subject response Likert Scale ranging from (1) mean strongly disagree to (5)

mean strongly agree. Strongly agree, agree was calculated to agree. Strongly disagree and disagree was calculated to disagree. Future time perspectives levels based on the cut of value as  $\geq 75\%$  had a high level;  $< 75\%$  -60% had a moderate level, and  $< 60\%$  had low levels.

#### 4.4.2 Delegation Behaviors Assessment Questionnaire

It was established by the researcher based on Magnusson *et al.* (2017); Huber (2017) to assess behavior (styles) of delegations used by the registered nurse. It consisted of 22 statements in five styles as follows; Do it all (6 items), justifier (4 items), the buddy (4 items), role model (4 items), inspector (4 items). Registered nurses' response was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = totally disagree to 5 = agree to show the extent to which an element labels them. Levels' classification based on the cut of value as  $\geq 75\%$  had a high level;  $< 75\%$  -60% had a moderate level, and  $< 60\%$  had low levels.

#### 4.4.3. Thriving at Work Assessment Scale

It was settled by Porath *et al.* (2011) and adjusted by the researcher by omitting two items that had the same meaning to assess registered nurses thriving at work. It consisted of two dimensions (learning and vitality). Each one included four items. Registered nurses' response was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The total scores were calculated based on the cut of value, where a high level of thriving at work  $\geq 75\%$ , moderate level of thriving at work  $< 75\%$  -60%, and low level of thriving  $< 60\%$ .

#### 4.5. Procedures

The three tools were given to five nursing administration experts to assess its content validity. The changes were done based on the experts' opinions. A pilot study was conducted on 10% ( $n=11$ ) of registered nurses selected from different departments and not included in the sample (as the tools were modified according to panel opinion) to identify if any instruments or questions are objectionable or offensive for the participant and test the research process's feasibility. Cronbach Alpha test was computed to determine tool reliability. It was 0.90, 0.85, and 0.79 for the tool I, II, III, respectively.

**Ethical considerations:** Before data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the responsible authority. Each registered nurse was informed about the study's purpose and benefits; then, oral consent was obtained before starting the data collection. Confidentiality was confirmed throughout the study. All subjects assured that all data were used only for research purposes and rights to withdraw from the study at any time.

**Fieldwork:** All tools were disseminated to all registered nurses in their working departments at the end of their work hours. The subjects answer questions in the presence of the researcher. Adequate time was provided to complete the questionnaires (30-40 min). Data collection lasted three months started from September to November 2019.

#### 4.6. Data analysis

Information was nourished to the computer and examined using IBM SPSS software package version 20.0. (Armonk, NY: IBM Corp). Numbers and percentages were used to describe qualitative data, while range, mean, standard deviation, and median were used for quantitative data. The significance of the obtained results was judged at the 5% level. The used tests were the Chi-square test: for categorical variables, to compare between different groups, Fisher's Exact or Monte Carlo correction: correction for chi-square when more than 20% of the cells have expected count less than 5, and Pearson coefficient to correlate between two normally distributed quantitative variables.

#### 5. Results

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the registered nurses according to their demographic characteristics. Registered nurses' age ranged from 23-50, with a mean age of  $30.81 \pm 5.59$ . The highest percent (69.4%) at age group 25-35. The overwhelming amount of the sample (96.3%) were females, and most of them (74.1%) were married. Equal percent (27.8%) worked in ICUs, neonate, and dialysis units, while 13.9%, 2.8% working in operating and gynecological units. Nearly three quarters (74.1%) had a baccalaureate degree, and little percent, 22.2%, 3.7%, had a diploma and master's degree, respectively. More than seventy percent (70.4%) had  $< 10$  years of experience, and 68.5% did not attend previous delegation skills training.

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of registered nurses according to future time perspectives. The table shows that 70.4% agreed that they could complete challenging tasks to help them get ahead in their job. Also, more than sixty percent of registered nurse agreed on all FTP items; especially they can make lists of things to do in their occupational future (69.4%), there is plenty of time in their occupational life to make new plans (66.7%). Besides, they think that every day should be planned ahead of time, and thought that they could accomplish many things in the future (65.8%), and many opportunities await them in their occupational future (64.9%).

Figure 1 displays the percentage distribution of registered nurses' levels of future time perspectives. The figure shows that 45.4% of registered nurses had a high level of future time perspectives, while 28.7%, 25.9% had a low and moderate level of future time perspectives.

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the studied nurses according to their levels and mean percentage score of delegation style. The table shows that nearly half (49.1%) of registered nurses highly use inspector style followed by 34.3%, 32.4% use do it all, and role model while more than seventy (71.3%) had a low level in using buddy style followed by 62.0% for justifier style. Regarding the mean percentage score, the highest mean percent ( $65.28 \pm 24.17$ ) for inspector style while the lowest mean percent ( $46.41 \pm 23.42$ ) for buddy style.

Table 4 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the registered nurses according to their levels and the mean percentage score of thriving at work. More than half of registered nurses (55.6%) had a high level of thriving at work, 63.9% with a high learning level, and 57.4% in vitality dimension. The overall thriving mean percentage score was  $72.74 \pm 15.88$ .

Table 5 shows the correlation between overall future time perspectives and percentage score of delegation styles.

The table shows a significant positive correlation between future time perspectives and inspector style of delegation.

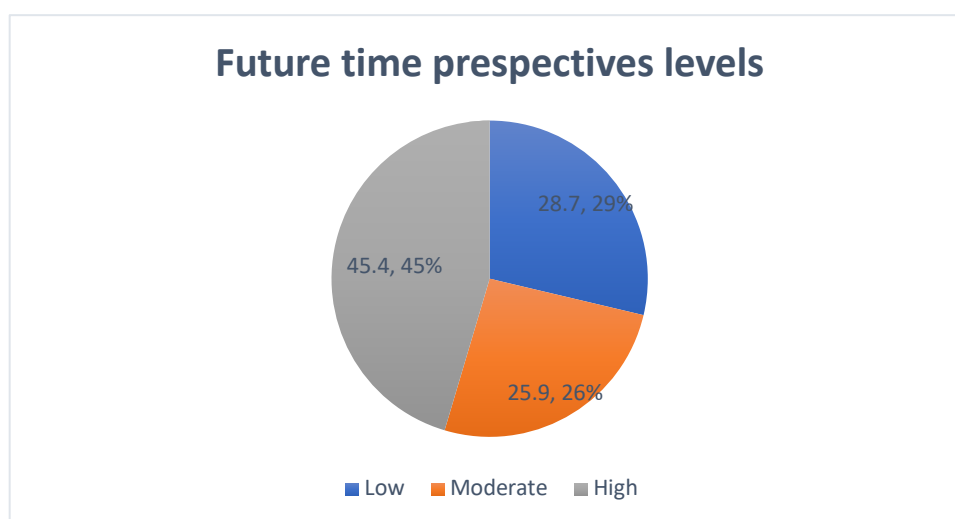
Table 6 shows the correlation between overall future time perspectives and thriving at work. The table shows a significant positive correlation between overall future time perspectives and thriving at work in total and in both dimensions.

**Table (1): Frequency and percentage distribution of registered nurses' demographic characteristics (n=108).**

<b>Demographic data</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>		
<25	10	9.3
25 – 35	75	69.4
35 – 45	19	17.6
≥45 – 50	4	3.7
Min. – Max.	23.0 – 50.0	
Mean ± SD.	30.81 ± 5.59	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	4	3.7
Female	104	96.3
<b>Marital state</b>		
Single	23	21.3
Married	80	74.1
Others	5	4.6
<b>Department</b>		
ICU	30	27.8
Neonate	30	27.8
Dialysis	30	27.8
Gynecological	3	2.8
Operating	15	13.9
<b>Qualification</b>		
Baccalaureate	80	74.1
Diploma	24	22.2
Master	4	3.7
<b>Years of experience</b>		
<10	76	70.4
10 – 15	20	18.5
≥15	12	11.1
Min. – Max.	1.0 – 27.0	
Mean ± SD.	8.06 ± 5.36	
<b>Attend previous training on delegation skill</b>		
Yes	34	31.5
No	74	68.5

**Table (2): Frequency and percentage distribution of registered nurses according to future time perspectives (n=108).**

Future time perspectives	Strongly disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
"I have many opportunities waiting for me in my occupational future."	15	13.9	23	21.3	70	64.9
"I expected that I would set many new goals in my occupational future."	16	14.8	24	22.2	68	63
"I make lists of things to do in my occupational future."	13	12.1	20	18.5	75	69.4
"Before making a decision, I weigh the cost against the benefits."	14	13.0	25	23.1	69	63.9
"I think I can accomplish many things in the future."	7	6.6	30	27.8	71	65.8
"There is plenty of time in my occupational life to make new plans."	9	8.4	27	25.0	72	66.7
"I am capable of controlling my own future through my effort."	11	10.2	28	25.9	69	63.9
"I can complete difficult tasks that will help me get ahead in my job."	10	9.2	22	20.4	76	70.4
"Thinking about my occupational future always pleases me."	10	9.3	29	26.9	69	63.9
"I think every day should be planned ahead of time."	9	8.3	28	25.9	71	65.8



**Figure (1): Percentages distribution of registered nurses' future time perspectives levels (n=108).**

**Table (3): Frequency and percentage distribution of registered nurses according to levels and mean percentage score of delegation style (n=108).**

Delegation style	Low <60%		Moderate (60 –<75)		High ≥75		% Score
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Mean ± SD.
Do it all	48	44.4	23	21.3	37	34.3	63.73±17.22
Justifier	67	62.0	16	14.8	25	23.1	50.23±22.85
The buddy	77	71.3	9	8.3	22	20.4	46.41±23.42
Role model	51	47.2	22	20.4	35	32.4	57.18±24.07
Inspector	38	35.2	17	15.7	53	49.1	65.28± 4.17
<b>Overall</b>	61	56.5	35	32.4	12	11.1	57.22±13.70

**Table (4): Frequency and percentage distribution of the registered nurses according to their levels and mean percentage score of thriving at work (n=108)**

Thriving at work	Low <60%		Moderate (60 –<75)		High ≥75		% Score
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Mean ± SD
Learning	23	21.3	16	14.8	69	63.9	73.84 ± 16.96
Vitality	29	26.9	17	15.7	62	57.4	71.64 ± 18.90
<b>Overall Thriving at work</b>	25	23.1	23	21.3	60	55.6	72.74 ± 15.88

**Table (5): Correlation between overall future time perspectives and percentage score of delegation styles (n=108).**

Delegation style	Overall future time perspectives	
	R	P
Do it all	0.127	0.191
Justifier	-0.042	0.667
The buddy	-0.113	0.246
Role model	0.142	0.144
Inspector	0.390	<0.001*
Overall delegation style	0.166	0.086

**Table (6): Correlation between overall future time perspectives and thriving at work (n=108).**

Thriving at work	Overall future time perspectives	
	R	P
Learning	0.497	<0.001*
Vitality	0.550	<0.001*
Overall thriving at work	0.593	<0.001*

## 6. Discussion

Registered nurses work in a very restrictive and challenging environment with a very diverse patient population with complex healthcare needs (Knox, 2014). They must master art of delegation and apply it in their nursing practice to provide safe and high-quality nursing care (Yoder-Wise, 2019). Future time perspective increases registered nurses' confidence and undercuts their anxiety when facing work difficulties, creating them to behave positively and searching for methods that help them thrive (Park, 2018; Jiang, 2017). Registered nurse attitudes and behaviors can be identified when they know their FTP (Andre et al., 2018). The present study aimed to assess the influence of future time perspectives on registered nurses' behaviors toward delegation and their thriving at work.

The future time perspective is a challenging practice that can be influenced by the registered nurse's maturity (Yousef, 2020). The study results revealed that nearly half of the registered nurses had a high level of future time perspectives. More than seventy percentage can complete challenging tasks to help them get ahead in their job. Also, more than sixty percent of registered nurse agreed on all items of FTP; especially they can make lists of things to do in their occupational future, there is plenty of time in their occupational life to make new plans, they think that every day should be planned ahead of time, and thought that they could accomplish many things in the future. Many opportunities await them in their occupational future.

This result was attributed to registered nurses' age, where the highest group was 25-35 and the lower percent ≥45. The result is compatible with the study of Matthew (2013); Lang and Cartensen (2002), who found a negative correlation between future time perspective and age, and Kessler and Staudinger (2009), who revealed that older adults had a shorter perspective on their future than younger adults. Also, Desmyter and De Raedt (2012) clarified to caregivers the importance of giving attention to older persons and giving them the chance to forestall and plan their future to sense control of their lives. The result also agreed

with McDonald's (2010) results, who found that most participants were more hopeful about their futures in nursing and midwifery and ready to deal with workplace challenges.

The present study results attested that nearly half of registered nurses highly use inspector style with the higher mean score in the delegation, followed by an above third use do it all and role model. This result due to the little experience of registered nurses in the delegation as a small percent of them attended training in the delegation, as evidenced by the current study findings, so they prefer to check the delegated task or do it by themselves continuously. Registered nurses need to understand delegation principles and know how to delegate effectively to decrease the risks and mistakes that may occur and harm the patient (Catalano, 2020). Also, consider the probable effects and outcomes when deciding what task to delegate to which person.

This result is compatible with the Magnusson et al. (2017) result, who found that each nurse uses various delegation styles according to their experience. Also, Kærnedst and Bragadttir (2012) founded that nearly quadrant staff lacks the necessary experience to delegate tasks and prefer to do the task themselves. Baddar et al. (2016) found that most participants lack trust and self-confidence in their delegation, mostly young nurses and those with little experience. Also, Abd-Elmoghith (2019) found a significant positive correlation between experience and delegation.

Optimistic thriving occurs when both learning and vitality levels are high (Spreitzer et al., 2012). This statement is congruent with the result of the current study found that more than half of registered nurses had a high level of overall thriving at work, significantly more than sixty percent had a high level in learning and above fifty in vitality dimensions. This result may be due to those RNs having confidence in their ability to master difficult and different tasks and control their work through their effort to acquire and apply valuable knowledge and skills and feel that they are thriving and vital.

This result agrees with Kleine et al. (2019), who stated that subjects are more likely to thrive when they have confidence in their ability to master different tasks. Also,

congruent with *Porath et al. (2011)*, who explore that persons are engaged in tasks that enhance their vitality and learning when had self-efficacy and become more confident in their potential success. *Walumbwa et al. (2017)* found that the personality trait of self-evaluation enriches thriving at work and explains that when persons feel competent and proficient in doing the task, they begin to focus on every activity that helps them reach thriving at work. This finding is similar to *Zhao et al. (2018)*, who stated that nurses usually try to find ways to help them reach their full potential in their job. *Walt (2018)* result disagreed with our findings and found low scores in both vitality and learning.

The result of the study shows a significant positive correlation between future time perspective and inspector style. This result may be due to those registered nurses who work for the goal proactively, be keen on its success, pay close attention to their work surroundings, and not take any risk to achieve success. The registered nurses supervise the assistant nurses and provide direction and support to accomplish the delegated nursing task (*Yoder-Wise, 2019*). The result is well-matched with *Stanescu and Iorga (2015)*, who revealed that future goals prove individuals to be better at managing their behavior, so FTP plays a crucial role in guiding people's ongoing actions. *Zimbardo and Boyd (1999)* also found that a person with a high future time perspective had more self-control and not risk-taking behavior. This finding agrees with *Kwon and Seo (2020)*, who found that a future-oriented time perspective positively affects self-efficacy. *Dreves and Blackhart (2019)* indicated that individuals higher in the future time perspective report both more significant motivations to pursue distal goals and higher self-control. Also, *Sekścińska et al. (2018)* found that individuals with FTP did not prefer to risk.

The result of the study shows a significant positive correlation between future time perspectives and thriving at work. This finding, due to future time perspective (FTP), acts as a motive guiding registered nurses in selecting their goals and changing their perceptions and behavior in order to reach thriving at work. This finding is congruent with *Li et al. (2018)*; *Walker and Tracey (2012)* revealed that people with a high future time perspective valued future goals and work harder to develop their knowledge and skills. *Yang et al. (2019)* confirmed that future work plays critical roles regarding higher levels of thriving; thus, a higher level of creativity. Therefore, nurse managers can use the future time perspective to stimulate nurses' thriving and creativity in their job. The result also agreed with *Kooij et al. (2017)*, who found that employees with open-ended FTP had more knowledge acquisition opportunities. Also, *Froehlich et al. (2015)* supported this result and find that concentration on chances in the future explains the reasons for engagement in learning from others. Contrary, *Andre et al. (2018)* meta-analysis found medium-to-large associations between FTP and perceived behavioral control in education and work.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study confirmed the importance of future time perspectives on registered nurses' delegation behavior and their thriving at work. There was a significant positive correlation between future time perspective and the inspector style of delegation and a significant positive correlation between future time perspective and thriving at work.

## 8. Recommendations

For hospital administration

- Attracting nursing staff with strong FTP is beneficial for organizations, as those nursing staff will show more significant commitment to their job, and their turnover intention will be lower.
- Develop training programs for nursing staff to have a more future-oriented viewpoint.
- Establish a learning environment that encourages participation in continuing education.

For nurse manager

- Empower nursing staff to take a long-term perspective about their job and career.
- Deliver training sessions for registered nurses to delegate effectively and provide opportunities to gain experience with delegation.
- Monitor nursing staff thriving and increase opportunities for their learning and development.

Further research is required on future time perspectives in the field of nursing and factors that enrich it.

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