

Why do we enter and why do we stay?

A study of registered nurses' motivation for entering the profession and occupational commitment



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Background

- ❖ Low retention rates contribute to the nursing shortage
- ❖ Motivation for entry and occupational commitment may be important predictors of intent to remain with an employer until retirement

Purpose

- ❖ To examine relationship of registered nurses' (RN) motivation for entering the profession, occupational commitment, select demographic variables and intent to remain with an employer

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES:

Age, marital status, number of children, education, full or part-time work status, length of time in profession and in current position

Method

- ❖ Descriptive survey design
- ❖ Convenience sample of RNs enrolled in a school of nursing and/or employed at the associated university medical center
- ❖ Blau's 4 dimensional measure of occupational commitment
 - ~24 item Likert scale measured affective, normative, accumulated costs and limited alternatives commitment (modified version)
 - ~11 items added to measure motivation for entry

Conceptual Framework



Conceptual Definitions

- ❖ **Altruistic motivation** - calling or desire to help others
- ❖ **Analytical motivation** - job security, salary, benefits
- ❖ **Affective commitment** - emotional attachment
- ❖ **Normative commitment** - feeling of obligation and loyalty
- ❖ **Accumulated costs commitment** - concern for losses associated with leaving
- ❖ **Limited alternatives commitment** - available options in pursuing another occupation



Results

- ❖ Sample (N = 150)
 - ~Mean age 46 years
 - ~Education: N (%)

✓ Diploma	4 (3)	✓ BS	53 (35)	✓ Doctorate	4 (3)
✓ AD	34 (23)	✓ MS	54 (36)		
 - ❖ Length of time in profession: 89 (59%) had >10 years
 - ❖ Time in current position: 83 (55%) 4 years or more
 - ❖ Number of children: 104 (69%) had children

Major Findings

- ❖ Long-term commitment:
 - ~Normative commitment and age were the strongest predictors of intent to remain with employer until retirement
 - ~Normative commitment, age, length of time in profession and in current position, and number of children correlated with intent to remain

Implications for Educators

- ❖ Teach importance of obligation and loyalty to profession as it relates to normative commitment
- ❖ Recognize that older adults are likely to be more committed to remain in nursing as an occupation

Implications for Administrators

- ❖ Encourage loyalty and obligation in RNs through transformational changes in healthcare environments (e.g., open communication, participatory decision-making)
- ❖ Accommodate older nurses to maximize retention
- ❖ Explore retention strategies aimed at accommodating younger nurses