

NURSES RETURNING TO SCHOOL: MOTIVATORS, INHIBITORS AND JOB SATISFACTION



PATRICK W. HARRIS, MS* AND MARY E. BURMAN, PhD†

Health care employers and national nursing organizations are placing increased emphasis on nurses earning a baccalaureate degree or higher. This study examines the impact of motivators (professional and personal motivation), inhibitors (time constraints and employer discouragement), and job satisfaction on intent to return to school. Approximately half of the employed nurses in Wyoming were surveyed using a mailed questionnaire in the summer of 2013. Perceived employer discouragement and time constraints continued to play a direct role on intent to return to school regardless of nurse motivation or job satisfaction. However, motivation and job satisfaction also contributed to a nurse's intent to return to school. These results suggest that motivation and job satisfaction are significant regarding intent to return to school but can be limited by both perceived discouragement of one's employer and perceived time constraints. In order to meet the increasing demands of a better-educated nursing workforce, a shift in workplace dynamics may be warranted. (Index words: Return to school; Motivators; Inhibitors; Job satisfaction) *J Prof Nurs* 32:85–93, 2016. © 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

THE INSTITUTE OF Medicine (2010), in their *Future of Nursing* report, recommends that 80% of nurses have a baccalaureate degree or higher by 2020 given studies documenting the impact of nursing education on patient outcomes (e.g., surgical complications and mortality rates). The Institute of Medicine also recommends that the number of nurses with doctoral degrees doubles by 2020 for advanced practice nursing and nursing education. Consequently, many nurses are returning to school for a baccalaureate degree or higher. Although an increasing amount of emphasis has been placed on nurses obtaining baccalaureate and higher degrees, our understanding of the impact of motivators and inhibitors is still relatively limited. Moreover, the impact of job satisfaction on return to school has received only scant attention.

This study examines the impact of motivators (professional and personal motivation), inhibitors (time constraints and employer discouragement), and job satisfaction on intent to return to school. As the demand for registered

nurses (RNs) with baccalaureate education continues to increase, understanding factors that motivate or inhibit returning to school is critical to development of streamlined processes for academic progression, one of the key priorities of the Institute of Medicine *Future of Nursing* report. Moreover, examining the impact of work-related factors, such as job satisfaction, will provide more understanding of the impact of complex interplay of the nurse and employer in decisions to return to school.

Literature Review

RNs returning to school report a variety of motivators including personal and professional growth, desire for graduate education, improved self-esteem, timing, “user-friendly” programs, colleague/peer/family encouragement, employer incentives, lack of credibility without a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), and increased salary (Altmann, 2011; Broussard & White, 2014; Delaney & Piscopo, 2004; Duffy et al., 2014; Gillespie & Langston, 2014; Landry, Orsolini-Hain, Renwanz-Boyle, Alameida, & Holpit, 2012; Megginson, 2008; Murphy, Cross, & McGuire, 2006; Ritchie, Macneil, Evans, & Micsinszki, 2005; Romp et al., 2014; Rush, Waldrop, Mitchell, & Dyches, 2005). Alternatively, RNs returning to school confront a number of inhibitors and barriers. Multiple personal and professional role demands, limited resources and educational costs, fear

*Principal Economist, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Casper, WY.

†Dean and Professor, Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY.

Address correspondence to Mary E. Burman: Dean, Fay W. Whitney School of Nursing, University of Wyoming. E-mail: mburman@uwyo.edu 8755-7223

and lack of confidence, lack of recognition of past accomplishments and education, negative previous educational experiences, no reward for continuing education (e.g., increased pay), lack of knowledge of benefits and opportunities associated with obtaining a BSN, lack of employer support, proximity to retirement age, and educational program-related barriers (e.g., class schedule) can be barriers (Altmann, 2011; Broussard & White, 2014; Delaney & Piscopo, 2004; Gillespie & Langston, 2014; Duffy et al., 2014; Landry et al., 2012; Megginson, 2008; Munkvold, Tanner, & Herinckx, 2012; Murphy et al., 2006; Romp et al., 2014; Sportman & Allen, 2011; Villarruel, Canales, & Torres, 2001).

Motivators and barriers to continuing education have been primarily examined individually and descriptively, although there is evidence that they are multidimensional. Using a sample of working nurses in Ireland, Murphy et al. (2006) developed a questionnaire consisting of both potential motivators and inhibitors to continuing education. The authors found numerous factors among the set of questions. For the motivators, two factors were identified: job related and personal. The job-related construct is thought to tap into how returning to school would increase a person's professional development in the field of nursing. The personal motivator's construct is the motivation necessary to feel an increased sense of competence and importance as a nurse. For the inhibitors, three factors were identified: time related, outcome related, and employer related. The time-related construct is believed to tap into the inhibitors associated with the amount of time available for both work and personal obligations if one returned to school. The employer-related construct taps the perception of a lack of support from employers when deciding to return to school.

While a variety of motivators and inhibitors have been found to impact nurses decisions to return to school, the impact of job satisfaction on likelihood of returning to school has not been systematically examined. Only one study was located that addressed job satisfaction and returning to school. Ritchie et al. (2005) found that dissatisfaction with work environment did motivate some nurses to further their education.

Given the preponderance of evidence focused on motivators and inhibitors, this study examined the impact of the motivators (personal and professional motivation) and inhibitors (time constraints and employer discouragement) on nurses' likelihood of continuing their education. Moreover, given the dearth of evidence regarding the relationship of job satisfaction to nurses' likelihood of returning to school, this study also included job satisfaction.

The hypothesized relationships among motivators, inhibitors, job satisfaction, and likelihood of returning to school are shown in Figure 1. We expected that higher levels of inhibitive forces would create higher levels of personal and professional motivation and a lower level of job satisfaction. Because of consistent evidence that nurses find that time commitment (employer support [or lack thereof], and personal and professional motivation) are significant factors when deciding to return to

school, the key hypothesis was that as individuals feel they have less time to devote to school and perceive their employers as not supportive, personal and professional motivation would mediate the relationship between the inhibitors and intent to return to school. Job satisfaction was expected to have a negative relationship with the intent of returning to school (Zurmehly, 2008).

Method

Sample and Procedure

The university Institutional Review Board approved the study prior to initiation of data collection. This analysis is part of a larger study focusing on educational background and mobility of nurses. In the original study, a stratified random sample of RNs based on six regions of a sparsely populated western state was selected for a survey sample of 2,086. Each of the selected participants was mailed a questionnaire to their home address. Participants were instructed to return their completed questionnaires by mail, fax, or to call and give their responses over the telephone. Two hundred and ninety-eight participants (14.2%) did not have a forwarding address and were not sent another questionnaire packet. Four participants asked not to be included in the study. Seven hundred ninety-six nurses completed the questionnaire for a response rate of 38.2%. The response waves for the 796 nurses were as follows: 50.6% of participants completed the packet during the first mailing, 35.2% completed the packet during the second mailing, and 14.3% completed the packet during the third mailing. The vast majority (99.5%) returned their completed packet by mail. The 796 nurses in the original study represent 15.3% of the 5,212 RNs working in Wyoming in 2014 when the survey was done.

For this analysis, only those nurses employed full time or part time (35 hours or less) in health care were included in this analysis, which resulted in 142 participants being excluded. One hundred fifty-nine participants were removed from the analysis because they indicated that they did not know if they planned to return to school or did not respond to the question. Because of the low response rate of the first and second waves of mailings, a shorter questionnaire was used in the third mailing in the larger study. Because this shorter version excluded questions used in this analysis, 94 participants who completed the shorter version were excluded for this analysis. Finally, missing data on the questionnaire led to the removal of 96 participants. After all exclusion criteria were imposed, the sample for this analysis comprised 305 participants (see Table 1 for sample reduction methodology).

Measures

Demographic information was collected on current employment, occupation, marital status, annual household income, and educational attainment. The motivators' and inhibitors' questions from Murphy et al. (2006) were included in the questionnaire. Participants answered the questions based on the following instructions: "Using a scale from 1 to 3 where 1 means 'Not at all

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2668141>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2668141>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)