

Motivators for Nurse Educators to Persist in their Profession: A Phenomenological Study

Virginia Tufano, EdD, MSN, RN & Emily J. Summers, EdD
St. David's School of Nursing, College of Education - Texas State University

Introduction

The nurse faculty shortage has impacted the nursing workforce that is available to fulfill societal healthcare needs.

- ❖ Studies reveal that many qualified nursing school candidates are turned away each year due to faculty shortages.
- Nursing academia has an increasing challenge of recruiting and retaining nurse educators.
- ❖ Reasons for leaving academia are well-documented.
- ❖ Understanding which factors motivate nurse educators to remain in the teaching profession can improve strategies for retention.

Purpose

The aim of this phenomenological qualitative study was to explore nurse educators' motivating factors that influence their decision to remain in academia.

- ❖ Understanding nurse educators' motivators to remain in academia may assist in promoting nursing education climates and practices that are shown to retain these educators within the field.

Methods

The lived experiences of seasoned nurse educators from three purposefully selected BSN programs were explored. A qualitative, semi-structured interview approach was used to solicit key information from participants.

Sample: Sixteen (16) nurse educators were purposefully selected from three schools of nursing in midwestern and southern areas of the U.S.

- ❖ Currently employed as full-time nurse educator in a BSN program
- ❖ At least 5 concurrent years of teaching experience in nursing

Procedure: Self-determination theory was used as a framework to develop semi-structured interview questions that discovered the motivators to persist in nursing education.

- ❖ Six (6) open-ended questions guided the interviews
- ❖ Data was gathered using criterion sampling, digital recordings of interviews, and verbatim transcription.
- ❖ Transcripts were hand-coded; researchers triangulated data; Excel spreadsheet tracking was used to facilitate validation of data processes.

Data Analysis: Open coding, theming, and horizontalization were used to extract rich data from transcripts for analysis

- ❖ Methodological rigor was established utilizing data saturation, audit trails, member checking, triangulation, reflexivity, and thick descriptions.



Results

Findings emerged as intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influencing participants' persistence as nurse educators:

- ❖ **Intrinsic motivators:** 'love of teaching', 'desire to learn more', 'satisfaction from service to the nursing profession', and 'seeking professional challenges'
- ❖ **Extrinsic motivators:** 'flexibility' and 'opportunities for professional advancement'



Conclusions

This study identified aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that strongly influenced nurse educators' persistence in the field.

- ❖ Participants experienced more intrinsic than extrinsic motivators to persist as educators
- ❖ Nurse educators were attracted to and remained in academic settings that provided them with opportunities for work-life balance, mentoring, and advancement of their formal education
- ❖ A better understanding of motivators can help nursing academia enhance academic climates and strategies that help recruit and retain nurse educators

Implications for Future Research

Implementation of retention motivators identified in this study may determine their influence on nurse educator retention and recruitment.

Interview Questions

1. What events in your life do you see as significant in shaping your decision to enter the nursing profession?
2. Describe significant persons or events in your personal life that you think contributed to your choice of pursuing your current profession as a nurse educator.
3. What factors influenced your decision to become a nurse educator?
4. Describe your experience in your role transition from a nurse to a nurse educator.
5. What personal motivating factors do you believe contribute to continuing in your role as a nurse educator?
6. What external factors keep you motivated, at this point, to continue in your role as a nurse educator?