

Newly Licensed Registered Nurse Job Turnover and Turnover Intent



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Through survey data, this study examines job leaving behaviors of newly licensed registered nurses and identifies educational and managerial issues that need to be addressed to retain them. Within 1.5–2.5 years of graduating, one third of all respondents had left their first job, most for work-related reasons. Predictors of job leaving or intentions to leave included not having had a good orientation, information issues, having difficulties doing a good job, not being rewarded fairly, and low job satisfaction.

Job turnover among registered nurses (RNs) remains high, despite a slower economy since 2009, which has reduced demand for nurses and increased supply. In 2013, nursing turnover in hospitals was close to 15%, up from 13.5% in 2012 and nearly back up to where it was in 2010 (Colosi, 2013). RN job turnover is problematic because it contributes to short staffing, which could lead to negative patient outcomes (McHugh, Kutney-Lee, Cimiotti, Slane, & Aiken, 2011) and is an added labor expense (Jones, 2005).

Among those leaving jobs are newly licensed RNs (NLRNs). Two studies found that within 1–2 years of graduating, job turnover rates were between 30% and 60% (Beecroft, Kunzman, & Krozek, 2001; Bowles & Candela, 2005). In a 2006 survey, 13% of NLRNs had changed jobs within their first year, and 37% were ready to change jobs (Kovner et al., 2007). A 2012 study found that 15% of NLRNs had left their first job within 1 year (Brewer, Kovner, Greene, Tukoy-Shuser, & Djukic, 2012).

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Job turnover among NLRNs could be a sign of job stress and dissatisfaction or even professional discontent and thoughts of leaving nursing (Brewer et al., 2012; McCarthy, Tyrrell, & Lehane, 2007). Given that NLRNs are the future nursing workforce, it is important that they remain satisfied in their jobs and profession. Yet to our knowledge, only one study has examined factors related to job turnover among NLRNs.

This study examines the job turnover and job leaving intentions of NLRNs in Florida. The study describes the workplace characteristics of the nurses, their attitude toward work and intent to leave their current job, actual turnover within 1.5–2.5 years of graduating, and their reasons for leaving their first job. This study also explores predictors of NLRNs leaving a job and intending to leave their current job.

THEORY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Actual job turnover is understudied because of the difficulty of collecting information from RNs who have left a particular organization. To capture job turnover information, RNs must be surveyed after leaving a job, or, even better, the same RN should be surveyed over time to capture job attitudes and job characteristics that contribute to turnover versus staying in the job during this period. Because this is difficult to do, there are few studies on the actual job turnover of RNs and even fewer on the job turnover of NLRNs. An alternative measure that correlates strongly with actual turnover is the intent to leave (or stay at) the job (Brewer, Kovner, Greene, & Cheng, 2009). Intent to leave can be measured while RNs are still working at the given job, thereby facilitating data collection. In what follows, we review the literature on predictors of turnover and turnover intent among NLRNs and RNs and develop a conceptual framework for NLRN turnover.

NLRN and RN Job Turnover

Job turnover is defined by Price (2001) as the movement of employees across the boundary of an organization. Actual turnover is measured by whether an individual left or stayed at the job. This can be aggregated and turned into rates for analysis at the unit or hospital level. The opposite can also be measured—retention of nurses over a period of time.

To our knowledge, only one study has examined predictors of NLRN turnover in hospitals (Brewer et al., 2012). The authors of this study found that full-time employment and

job injuries were related to higher turnover, whereas higher intent to stay, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, more hours of voluntary overtime, and more than one job resulted in lower turnover. Positive work environment has also been found to be a predictor of 3-year retention of NLRNs (Kramer, Halfer, Maguire, & Schmalenberg, 2012).

Regarding RNs in general, interviews with nurses who left a hospital system found that reasons for leaving (in the order of frequency) were work hours, job opportunities, family reasons, unsatisfactory pay or benefits, understaffing, unsupportive management, poor work environment, stress from understaffing, lack of advancement opportunities, returning to school, personal health problems, or moving away (Strachota, Normandin, O'Brien, Clary, & Krukow, 2003). This study also found higher turnover rates with nurses who had less professional tenure. A 2008 study looked at the organizational turnover rate in Canada and found that labor market mobility was positively related to job turnover (Rondeau, Williams, & Wagar, 2008).

NLRN and RN Intent to Leave the Job

Intent to leave one's job (turnover intent) has been measured as a single item, with a question such as "Do you plan to leave your current position in the coming year?" usually with Likert scale responses (Liu et al., 2011; Ma, Lee, Yang, & Chang, 2009; Stone et al., 2007). It has also been measured as a composite score of responses to Likert scale questions (Price, 2001).

A few studies have looked at factors influencing NLRNs' intent to leave or stay at their jobs. Older age and being male are related to greater intent to stay (Kovner, Brewer, Greene, & Fairchild, 2009). Lack of autonomy or empowerment, effort-reward imbalance, few promotional opportunities, high workload, job stress, and low job satisfaction are factors influencing intent to leave (Kovner et al., 2009; Laschinger, 2012; Lavoie-Tremblay, O'Brien-Pallas, Gelinias, Desforges, & Marchionni, 2008; Ulrich et al., 2010; Yeh & Yu, 2009).

Studies of RNs usually find that greater intent to leave the job is associated with younger nurses (De Gieter, Hofmans, & Pepermans, 2011; Hayes et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2011; Ma et al., 2009) and those with fewer years of tenure (De Gieter et al., 2011; Tourangeau & Cranley, 2006). RNs of color are more likely to intend to leave (Cottingham, Erickson, Diefendorff, & Bromley, 2013), whereas married RNs are less so (Liu et al., 2011). A greater number of children and younger children in the home also predict less intent to leave (Brewer et al., 2009; Hayes et al., 2012). RNs with diplomas or associate degrees have less intent to leave compared to those with bachelor's or master's degrees (Brewer et al., 2009; Tourangeau & Cranley, 2006). Experienced RNs are more likely to stay in an organization than newer nurses (Cottingham et al., 2013; Hayes et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2011; Stone et al., 2007).

A better work environment predicts less intent to leave the job among RNs (Kutney-Lee, Wu, Sloane, & Aiken, 2013; Stone et al., 2007). Specifically, higher salary, promotional opportunities, and more autonomy relate to less intent to leave (Brewer et al., 2009; Gormley, 2011; Hayes et al., 2012; Laschinger, Leiter, Day, & Gilin, 2009; Stone et al., 2007). On the other hand, high work demands accompanied by low job control contribute to job leaving intentions (Chiu, Chung, Wu, & Ho, 2009). Inadequate resources; poor communication; role ambiguity; and unsupportive, exclusionary, or uncivil management or coworkers are also related to greater intent to leave (Cottingham et al., 2013; Galletta, Portoghese, Battistelli, & Leiter, 2013; Hayes et al., 2012; Hino, Partanen, & Vehviläinen-Julkunen, 2012; Laschinger et al., 2009; O'Brien-Pallas, Murphy, Shamian, Xiaoqiang, & Hayes, 2010).

Many studies have found that higher RN job satisfaction predicts less intent to leave or a greater intent to stay at the job (Brewer et al., 2009; Cai & Zhou, 2009; De Gieter et al., 2011; Hayes et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2011; Ma, Lee, Yang, & Chang, 2009; O'Brien-Pallas et al., 2010; Tourangeau & Cranley, 2006). Job enjoyment has also been linked to lower turnover intent (Gormley, 2011).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual model for this study is provided in Figure 1. The dotted lines indicate the hypothesized relationships between factors that contribute to turnover of NLRNs. The solid lines indicate the relationships examined in this study (see Methods section). We theorize that certain NLRN personal characteristics, expectations of work, and work characteristics influence NLRN job satisfaction and commitment. This, along with job opportunities, influences their intent to stay or leave their job, which may lead to their actual turnover. In the Price (2001, 2004) conceptual model, a person's age, gender, marital status, and kinship responsibilities (e.g., children in the home) affect his or her job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In addition, employees bring certain expectations to the workplace. If working conditions allow the employees' expectations to be met, they will be satisfied with and committed to the job. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment, in turn, affect search behavior, which, depending upon their job opportunities, impacts intent to stay or leave. Intent to leave a job precedes and predicts actual turnover. Job satisfaction and intent to stay or leave a job are intervening variables between demographic and work characteristics on the one hand and job turnover on the other hand.

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

Names and addresses of Florida RNs who received their first RN license between January 1 and December 31,

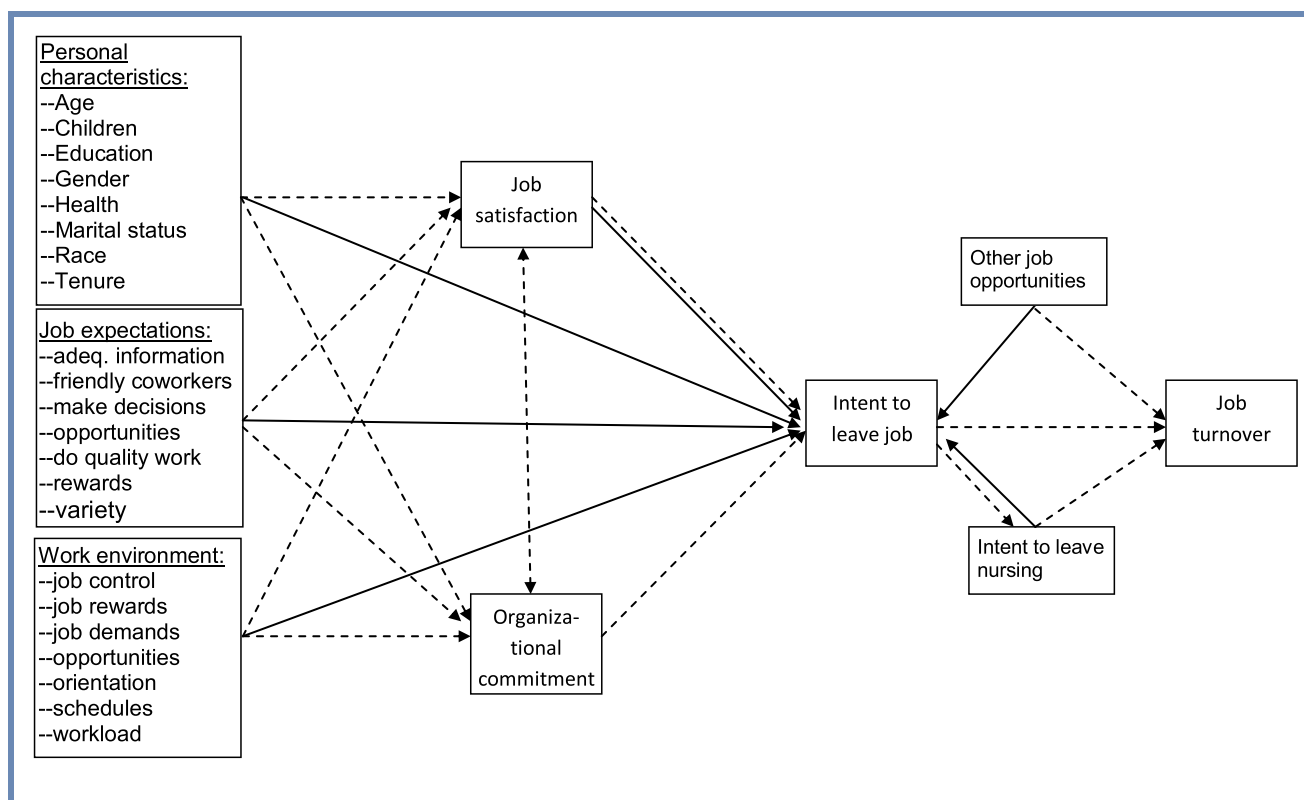


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model of newly licensed registered nurse turnover.

2006, were obtained from the Florida Board of Nursing. Forty percent of the NLRNs ($n = 3,027$) were randomly sampled and sent a survey in August 2008 via U.S. mail. We sampled a large percentage of the population in order to ensure high power for our analyses (Davern et al., 2010). Using Dillman's (2000) Tailored Design Method, we assigned each survey a tracking number and sent postcard reminders to nonrespondents after 3 weeks and a second survey to the remaining nonrespondents 3 weeks after that. Between August and the end of October 2008, 533 completed surveys were returned and 32 surveys were returned because of incorrect addresses. The response rate was 18%.

In order to assess whether the 18% response rate could have introduced response bias, we followed the recommendation of Halbesleben and Whitman (2013) and conducted a nonresponse bias analysis. We performed this analysis by comparing the demographics and geographical location of our respondents with the population of all NLRNs in Florida in the same year. This information for the NLRN population was obtained from Florida's Board of Health licensure database. The licensure data contain basic demographic information and addresses of all RNs. The bias analysis showed that this study's sample was demographically and geographically representative of the entire NLRN population in Florida in terms of age, gender,

and ethnicity. Our sample had slightly higher proportions of White respondents and respondents with an associate degree than are present in the entire NLRN population. The percentage of respondents in each county was very similar to the percentage in the population.

Survey Instrument and Validity and Reliability of Scales and Measures

The survey asked questions regarding the NLRN's personal and work characteristics, their job satisfaction and job values, their intent to stay in nursing, and their feelings of intent to leave or stay in the current organization. It also asked for dates of starting and leaving up to three prior jobs and reasons for leaving the first job.

The instrument was constructed by Kovner et al. (2007) as a collection of survey questions and subscales from prior studies: Price (2001) developed and tested the intent to leave subscale and the job opportunity measure. Karasek (1979) and Spector and Jex (1998) developed and tested the job demand subscale, whereas Karasek (1979) and Gurney, Mueller, and Price (1997) developed and tested the job control subscale. The job satisfaction single item measure came from Quinn and Staines (1979). Kovner and colleagues (2007) also tested the subscales and reported that most scales had Cronbach's alpha values of $>.8$. Unruh and Nooney (2011) tested the job demand and job control

scales and found Cronbach's alpha of $>.8$. We tested the validity of the job demand and control scales using principal component analysis. Items for both constructs loaded strongly (>0.50) on two separate factors. We also retested reliability using Cronbach's alpha, which was $.88$ for job demand and $.86$ for job control.

In addition to the items in the instrument by Kovner and colleagues, we added questions regarding the intent to leave nursing obtained from instruments developed and tested by Blau, Tatum, and Ward-Cook (2003) and retested by Unruh & Zhang (2013). We found strong validity of the construct (>0.71 loading of items on the factor) and Cronbach's alpha of $.84$.

Measures

We used many of the variables in our conceptual model of intent to stay at the job and job turnover. Dependent variables were turnover from any job and intent to leave the current job. A nurse was considered to have left a job if he or she reported an end date to a first, second, or third job. Intent to leave the current job was measured through a composite scale based on four Likert scale questions: would like to leave present employer; plan to leave present employer; plan to stay with employer as long as possible; and will not voluntarily leave present employer. There were five response categories for each question, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Response categories for the two questions regarding staying at the job were reverse coded for the composite scale. The composite scale was created by summing the values of the individual items and dividing by the number of items.

Independent variables included demographic and workplace characteristics, job opportunities, and work and professional attitudes and values. Demographic variables are listed in Table 1, and workplace characteristics and job opportunities are listed in Table 2. The job demand scale in Table 2 was composed of four 6-point Likert scale items that indicated how frequently the individual experienced pressures in the work environment, such as time pressure, heavy workload, high work pace, or difficult and mentally exacting work (Karasek, 1979; Price, 2001; Spector & Jex, 1998). The composite score was an average of item scores obtained by summing the values of the individual items and dividing by the number of items. The job control scale listed in Table 2 was composed of three 5-point Likert scale items that indicated how frequently the respondent was able to act independently of the supervisor, make decisions and carry them out, and act independently of others (Gurney et al., 1997; Karasek, 1979).

Work and professional attitudes, listed in Table 3, were job satisfaction, a set of values about what the NLRN is looking for in a job, and the intent of the NLRN to stay in nursing. Job satisfaction was a 7-point Likert scale item measuring the degree to which the individual was very

TABLE 1 Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Personal Demographics <i>n</i> = 533		
	Mean	SD
Average age (years)	35.09	10.51
Professional tenure (months)	26.79	5.93
	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	48	9.43
Female	461	90.57
Ethnicity		
Hispanic/Latino	75	15.03
Not Hispanic/Latino	424	84.97
Race		
Black	40	7.62
White	411	78.29
Other	74	14.09
Marital status		
Married	326	61.74
Not married	202	38.25
Children in home		
No children in the home	284	53.99
Children in the home	242	46.01
Health		
Poor	2	0.38
Fair	23	4.36
Good	145	27.51
Very good	226	42.88
Excellent	131	24.86
Basic nursing degree		
Diploma	33	6.32
Associate	336	64.37
Bachelor's	148	28.35
Master's (and higher)	1	0.19

Continued

TABLE 1 Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Personal Demographics *n* = 533, Continued

	Frequency	Percent
Prior work experience in health care (yes)	298	56.65
Planned to stay at first job		
<1 year	24	5.36
1 to <2 years	104	23.21
2 to <3 years	101	22.54
3 or more years	78	17.41
Indefinite	141	31.47

dissatisfied to very satisfied with his or her current job. The values about a job were a set of nine aspects of a job that NLRNs might value. NLRNs' intent to leave nursing was a scaled variable composed of four items, two of which were about leaving nursing and two were about staying in nursing. There were five response categories for each question, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Response categories for the questions regarding staying in nursing were reverse coded for the composite scale. The composite scale was an average of item scores.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analyses were performed on the personal and work characteristics of the NLRNs, their work and professional attitudes, their intent to leave their current job, and their actual turnover in up to three jobs. For those NLRNs who left their first job, we described the personal and work environment reasons they gave for why they left that job.

To explore the predictors of job turnover and intent to leave the job, we used two separate models: one where the dependent variable was job turnover from any of three jobs and the other where the dependent variable was intent to leave the current job. For the job turnover analysis, the explanatory variables were NLRN personal characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, marital status, whether there were children in the home, self-perceived health, educational level, and months since becoming RNs, whether they had worked in health care before, and whether they planned to stay at their first job. We also used work and professional characteristics and work attitudes that were not dependent on the current job, such as their first orientation adequacy and length, whether they planned to leave nursing, and to what degree they valued nine identified job characteristics. For the analysis of intent to leave the current job, the explanatory variables were all of those used in the turnover analysis, plus whether the NLRN currently worked

in a hospital setting, perceptions of job demand and control in the current job, satisfaction with the current job, the ability to find as good a job as the current one, the number of patients in the most recent shift, and current wages.

TABLE 2 Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Workplace Characteristics and Job Opportunities

	Frequency	Percent
Works in a hospital (yes)	430	80.68
Orientation preparation was		
Extremely inadequate	20	3.85
Inadequate	60	11.54
Adequate	138	26.54
Fairly good	149	28.65
Extremely good	153	29.42
Orientation length		
None	25	4.82
1 month	101	19.46
2 months	119	22.93
3 months	181	34.87
4 months	47	9.06
5 months	10	1.93
6 months	29	5.59
>6 months	7	1.35
Ability to find a local job as good as current		
Very difficult	26	5.13
Quite difficult	58	11.44
Somewhat difficult	117	23.08
Somewhat easy	147	28.99
Quite easy	104	20.51
Very easy	55	10.85
	Mean	<i>SD</i>
No. of patients in recent shift	5.50	2.65
Hourly wage (dollars per hour)	24.25	5.24
Job demand (scale, range 1–6)	4.07	1.11
Job control (scale, range 1–5)	4.05	0.78

TABLE 3 Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Work and Professional Expectations and Attitudes

Satisfaction With Current Job:					
	Frequency	Percent			
Very dissatisfied	12	2.36			
Dissatisfied	34	6.68			
Somewhat dissatisfied	66	12.27			
Neither	27	5.30			
Somewhat satisfied	146	28.68			
Satisfied	157	30.84			
Very satisfied	67	13.16			
What Newly Licensed Registered Nurses Are Looking for in a Job:					
Percentage of Respondents Who Valued a Job for:	Not Important	Little Importance	Some Importance	Quite Important	Very Important
Being varied	1.4	4.6	39.2	40.5	14.3
Receiving good pay	0.6	0.2	4.8	29.1	65.3
Receiving good benefits	0.2	2.3	9.6	34.4	53.5
Ability to get ahead	0.6	4.1	19.1	34.7	41.6
Having friends	2.5	7.5	37.5	28.1	24.4
Being informed	0.2	1.2	6.2	40.6	51.9
Making decisions	0.2	0.6	6.3	46.4	46.6
Being rewarded fairly	0.6	0.4	4.8	32.0	62.3
Being able to do job well	0.2	0.6	0.6	17.1	81.5
Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Intent to Leave Nursing:					
Percentage of Newly Licensed Registered Nurses Who:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Are thinking about leaving nursing	41.6	37.2	12.6	5.9	2.7
Intend to look for a new profession	40.8	36.7	16.0	4.6	1.9
Intend to stay in nursing for a long time ^a	2.5	2.9	11.9	54.7	28.0
Plan to have a job requiring registered nurse license ^a	3.7	1.4	9.8	42.1	42.9
				Mean	SD
Intent to leave nursing composite scale:				1.9	0.8

^aReverse coded in scale.

A logistic regression was run for the NLRN turnover model. Power analysis indicated that with 533 observations there was over 80% power to test 7% variance of the dependent variable based on the odds ratios of independent variables. An ordinary least squares regression was run for the intent to leave model. With 533 observations and 14 variables, this model had over 99% power to test a 10% variance of the dependent variable (R^2) of the model at a .05 significance level.

Analyses were performed using Statistical Analysis Software (SAS Institute, Inc., Cary, NC) Version 9.3.2. Statistical significance for interpreting the strength of relationships was set at an alpha level of .05.

FINDINGS

As Table 1 indicates, NLRN mean age was 35 years, and 91% of respondents were female. Most were White (78%), whereas 15% were Hispanic/Latino and 8% were Black. Nearly two thirds were married, and close to one-half had children in the home. Nearly all listed their health as good to excellent. Only 6% had a diploma for their basic nursing education, but close to two-thirds had an associate degree, and 28% had a bachelor's degree. Over one-half had prior work in health care. At the time of the survey, the respondents had been RNs for 26 months on average.

NLRN workplace characteristics and job opportunities described in Table 2 reveal that 80% of respondents were working in a hospital. For 75% of NLRNs, the length of orientation was 1–3 months, and 85% thought that their orientation preparation was adequate to extremely good. Sixty percent felt that they would be able to get a job in the area somewhat easily to very easily. NLRNs had 5.5 patients on the average in a recent shift. Their average hourly wage was \$24. On a scale of 1–6, job demands were at the level of 4 on average, whereas on a scale of 1–5, job control was at a level of 4.

NLRN work attitudes are presented in Table 3. Seventy-four percent were somewhat to very satisfied with their current job. NLRNs valued a job particularly for the pay, benefits, being informed, being able to make decisions, being rewarded fairly, and, most of all, being able to do the job well. Most NLRNs intended to stay in nursing, and less than 10% were thinking about leaving nursing.

Actual NLRN turnover is presented in Table 4. Within 1.5–2.5 years of graduating, one third of all respondents had left their first job, 15% had left their second job, and 2% had left their third job. Thirty-five percent had left at least one job. Eighteen percent were at their first job only 1 year or less, whereas 28% were at their second job only 1 year or less.

NLRNs' intent to leave the current job, shown in Table 4, indicates that 23% would like to leave their present employer and 14% plan to do so. This is in contrast to 42% who plan to stay with their current employer and 19% who would not voluntarily leave their current employer.

Of 27 reasons for leaving the first job, listed in Table 5, work-related reasons were cited most often. Of the 20 work-related reasons for leaving the first job, the top four were high workload (15%), poor management (13%), too stressful (12%), and difficulty providing good care (10%). Unspecified reasons for leaving were the most cited personal reason for leaving the first job (9.6%), followed by moving to another geographical area (7%) .

Table 6 presents the results of the analysis of predictors of turnover and intent to leave a job. Significant predictors of having left a job were being White, having a higher degree, wanting to be informed at the job, and wanting to do a good job. Predictors of not having left the job were perceptions of having had a good orientation, planning to stay for a long time at the first job, and valuing being rewarded fairly. Factors that were related to a higher intent to leave the job were having a higher degree, a longer orientation at the first job, having the ability to find as good a job in the area as the current one, and planning to leave nursing. Factors that were related to less intent to leave a job were being older, having expectations of staying longer at the first job, and higher job satisfaction. Other demographic characteristics, workplace characteristics, and attitudes toward work were not predictors of turnover or intent to leave the job.

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

The demographics of age, gender, race, and educational level in the study sample were similar to that of other studies of NLRNs (Bowles & Candela, 2005; Brewer et al., 2012; Kovner et al., 2009). A greater percentage of NLRNs in our sample were of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity than in other studies (Kovner et al., 2009), but this difference is explained by the higher concentration of Hispanics in Florida than in the nation on average.

The percentage of NLRNs who intended to leave their current job or who had already left a job was notable: 14% had definite plans to leave, and another 23% were thinking about it, whereas 18% had left their first job within 1 year. Other studies of NLRNs have indicated a similar proportion of NLRNs who intend to leave (Kovner et al., 2007, 2009). The NLRN turnover of 18% in this study was more than the 13% turnover in Kovner et al. (2007) and the 15% turnover in Brewer et al. (2012), but slightly less than the 20% one-year turnover of NLRNs in the study by Bowles and Candela (2005). Our data and that of these comparison studies were conducted prior to the 2009 recession, so NLRN turnover may be lower after that date. However, these studies provide a good indicator of turnover without economic pressure. Our turnover rates among NLRNs are slightly higher than those of RNs in general, which were 15% in 2010 and again in 2013.

Despite the fact that NLRNs in our study were generally satisfied with their jobs, most of those who left their jobs

TABLE 4 Newly Licensed Registered Nurse Actual Turnover From a Job and Intent to Leave Current Job

Newly Licensed Registered Nurses Who Left a Job					
	Frequency	Percent			
First job	173	32.46			
Second job	83	15.57			
Third job	11	2.06			
Any job	188	35.27			
Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Length of Employment at Jobs					
	First Job		Second Job		
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
1 year or less	93	18.23	54	28.27	
>1–2 years	64	12.54	23	12.04	
>2–2.5 years	12	2.35	1	0.52	
Stayed in job	341	66.86	113	59.16	
Newly Licensed Registered Nurse Intent to Leave Current Job Percentage of Respondents Who:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Would like to leave present employer	22.5	30.8	19.0	16.7	6.2
Plan to leave present employer	29.8	33.0	18.4	8.6	5.4
Plan to stay with employer as long as possible	8.4	18.0	26.1	30.4	11.8
Will not voluntarily leave present employer	18.4	28.1	29.5	12.0	6.8

reported that heavy workload, stressful work, poor management, and inability to provide good care were top reasons for leaving. In addition, in the predictive model, several important work environment factors were associated with intending to leave or leaving the job: length and adequacy of orientation; expectations of being well informed, of doing a good job, and of being rewarded fairly; and job satisfaction.

Workload and stress are important concerns about the work environment mentioned by NLRNs in prior surveys (Bowles & Candela, 2005). Educators can help reduce workload and stress by teaching RNs how to manage heavy patient loads and how to handle stress. Learning how to manage workload and stress only goes so far, however, and managers need to do their utmost to maintain reasonable staffing levels and provide needed resources so that workload and stress do not become overwhelming.

Educators should particularly take note of the results regarding NLRN orientation as the quality of orientation was a significant predictor of turnover. In prior studies, good

orientation programs are valued by NLRNs (Bowell, Lowry, & Wilhoit, 2004) and have been found to improve job satisfaction and help retain them (Almada, Carafoli, Flattery, French, & McNamara, 2004; Park & Jones, 2010). Our results support those findings, but questions remain as to what exactly makes a “good” orientation program. In order to improve the orientation process, future research should be conducted on the impacts of specific types of orientation programs.

Meeting expectations also appears to be important to retaining NLRNs. Clarifying roles, providing clear instructions, and promoting good communication may help meet the need of NLRNs to be well informed. Role clarification is important in the orientation period but is also an ongoing process as the RN matures in the job and roles change. Educators and managers can help improve instructions by making sure that guidelines are clear, up to date, and easily accessible. Communication skills should be a part of all orientation programs and should be assessed and reinforced on a regular basis.

TABLE 5 Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Reasons for Leaving First Job

	Frequency	Percent
Personal reasons		
Other personal reasons	51	9.57
Moved to another geographical area	38	7.13
Compatible school schedule	10	1.88
Partner took another job	9	1.69
Care for family member	7	1.31
Did not need income	4	0.75
Poor health or disability	1	0.19
Work environment reasons		
Workload too heavy	82	15.38
Poor management	70	13.13
Work too stressful	64	12.01
Pay was poor	57	10.69
Impossible to do quality work	56	10.51
Experience another clinical area	54	10.13
Not enough mentor support	46	8.63
Not enough peer support	40	7.50
Not enough opportunity to get ahead	33	6.19
Poor orientation	32	6.00
Poor registered nurse–physician relationship	25	4.69
Not fairly rewarded	24	4.50
No opportunity to learn new skills	24	4.50
No chance to make decisions	22	4.13
Misinformation about were inadequate	20	3.75
Constraints made work hard	19	3.56
Recruitment incentive	17	3.19
Not enough variety	12	2.25
Not enough autonomy	0	0

TABLE 6 Predictors of Newly Licensed Registered Nurses' Intent to Leave and Leaving Job

	Left a Job <i>OR</i>	Intend to Leave Current Job (Scale) β
Age	<i>ns</i>	−.09*
Race, White	2.530**	<i>ns</i>
Basic degree	1.894***	.12**
Hospital setting current job	NA	<i>ns</i>
Orientation adequacy first job	0.803**	<i>ns</i>
Orientation length first job	<i>ns</i>	.09*
How long planned to stay at first job	0.764***	−.10**
Job satisfaction current job	NA	−.57*****
Ability to find as good a job as present one	NA	.12***
Plan to leave nursing	<i>ns</i>	.10**
Being informed at job	1.885**	<i>ns</i>
Being rewarded fairly at job	0.448***	<i>ns</i>
Being able to do the job well	2.960***	<i>ns</i>

Note: Variables that were not significant in either regression were gender, ethnicity, health, marital status, children in home, prior work in health care, professional tenure, and several job attitudes (job being varied, receiving good pay and benefits for the job, being able to get ahead at the job, having friends at the job, and making decisions in the job). Job demands current job, job control current job, number of patients recent shift, wages current job were not applicable to the "left a job" regression and were not significant in the "intent to leave" regression.

* $p < .1$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$. **** $p < .001$. ***** $p < .0001$.

Expectations of being rewarded fairly were linked to job leaving. These expectations could include material rewards, such as pay and benefits, as well as nonmaterial ones, such as praise from supervisors, feelings of accomplishment, and satisfaction for a job well done. Indeed, in their reasons for why they left a job, many NLRNs listed poor pay and benefits. Even more said that it had been impossible to do a quality job. It is important that NLRNs be rewarded well and fairly for their work, both in terms of material and nonmaterial benefits.

The last expectation that contributed to NLRNs leaving the job was that they wanted to do a good job. Not being able to provide good nursing care may cause dissatisfaction and lead to leaving a job. Reasons for NLRNs not being able to do a good job could include the other issues already discussed such as workload, job stress, managerial issues, information problems, inadequate orientation, and other work issues. Therefore, this expectation will more likely be realized if these other issues are improved.

The correlation between NLRNs intending to leave their job and intending to leave nursing is a concern. With a large cohort of older nurses entering retirement, the nursing shortage will worsen unless ways are found to increase new recruits into nursing and keep them there. This finding makes it even more imperative that nursing workplaces be made less stressful and more rewarding for new nurses so they remain in the workforce.

The strong correlation between job satisfaction and lower intent to leave the job is not surprising. As discussed in the theory section, this finding is consistent across prior studies of both NLRNs and RNs in general. This correlation supports the theory that job dissatisfaction is a precursor to intending to leave a job. Because in other studies job satisfaction is related to work environment issues (e.g., Brewer et al., 2009), this also suggests that it is a mediating factor between work environment and intent to leave or leaving the job, as our conceptual model indicated. It is a limitation of our study that we did not examine this mediating relationship, which requires a structural equation model or path analysis in order to test these complex relationships.

Another limitation of this study is the low response rate, which could raise the possibility of response bias and therefore affect the validity of results. However, recent evidence indicates that studies with lower response rates do not have more response bias or different estimates than the same studies with higher response rates (Davern et al., 2010; Groves, 2006; Keeter, Kennedy, Dimock, Best, & Craighill, 2006). On the basis of our bias analysis reported in the Methods section, we are confident that the sample was demographically and geographically representative of Florida NLRNs and even NLRNs nationally, because the RN population in Florida is demographically representative of the RN population in the entire United States (Florida Center for Nursing, 2010). In addition, our descriptive statistics were similar to other studies, including ones with national sampling.

In conclusion, this study finds that NLRN demographics play a small role in NLRN turnover. Working conditions, job expectations, and job satisfaction play a stronger role. Ways to improve retention include providing a good orientation, adequate information, and sufficient rewards and ensuring that NLRNs can do a good job and are satisfied with their work. Further research should explore specific ways to retain NLRNs and should include multivariate analyses of the many factors that interact to contribute to retention.

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