Predictors of Newly Licensed Nurses’ Perception of Orientation

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Sigma Theta Tau 2014
Introduction

- Nursing turnover is a global issue in healthcare → impacts health system financial performance, quality and safety outcomes
- Retention of newly licensed registered nurses (NLRNs) is essential to assure adequate replacement and expansion of the long term supply of nurses to meet future demands
- Transition to practice is difficult → high rates of NLRN turnover
Background and Significance

• Significant organizational resources are expended on NLRNs post-hire orientation
• Critical to NLRNs competency development
• Educational support for nurses a key characteristic of healthy work environments → higher retention rates (Kramer & Halfer 2012).
• NLRNs often feel their preceptor-guided orientation period is terminated prematurely (Pelico et al. 2009)
• Turnover rates were higher for nurses who had shorter orientations and were perceived to be inadequate (Scott et al. 2008)
Background and Significance

• Satisfaction with orientation influences:
  • Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress, and turnover (Beecroft et al., 2008; Scott et al., 2008; Unruh & Nooney, 2011)
Building on Past Research

• Satisfaction with orientation influenced perceptions of the work environment for over one year post-hire (Bratt & Pinekenstein, 2013)

• Participants who perceived an adequate orientation had better outcomes → higher mean scores of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and lowest mean scores of job stress

• Limited research identifying factors influencing NLRNs’ perception of post-hire orientation practices
Question

• What features of orientation are important?
  – Is it the amount of formal education/classes?
  – Is it the amount of time spent in orientation?
  – Is it about preceptorship?
  – Is it based on pre-hire factors such as previous work or pre-licensure experiences?
Study Purpose

• To investigate characteristics and experiences that NLRNs bring to their initial job (anticipatory socialization factors) and features of orientation programs and how these are related to their perception of orientation
Conceptual Framework

- Professional role socialization theory
- Staged process → academic separation, role transition and integration
- Adaptation of *New Graduate Nurse Transition to the Workplace* (Scott et al. 2008)
- Build upon research of Duchscher 2008 & Kramer et al. 2011
New Graduate Nurse Transition into the Workplace
Adapted from: Scott, Engelke, & Swanson, 2008

Anticipatory Socialization → Organizational Socialization → Socialization Outcomes

Student Novice → Advanced Beginner → Competent

First Year of Nursing Practice
Research Question

• What are the predictive relationships among pre-hire anticipatory socialization factors, post-hire orientation characteristics and NLRNs orientation satisfaction?
Study Design

- Extension of a larger quasi-experimental study that examined new nurses’ perceptions of the practice environment in the first year of practice (Bratt & Felzer, 2011)
Sample

• Convenience sample NLRNs enrolled in a nurse residency program (N = 468)
• Participants were predominantly ADNs (55%), female (94%), Caucasian (92%), and with a mean age of 30
• Participants primarily worked on medical-surgical units (57%) in urban (82%) vs. rural hospitals (18%)
Study Model

Anticipatory Socialization

Pre-Hire Characteristics
- Age
- Degree
- Prior Degree
- Previous HC Experience
- Pre-licensure Socialization Course
- Pre-licensure Preceptorship

Organizational Socialization

Post-Hire Characteristics
- Unit Type
- Preferred Position
- Weeks in Preceptorship
- Number of Preceptors
- Classroom Education Hours Characteristics

Orientation Satisfaction
Data Collection and Instruments

• Assessed pre-hire/ and post-hire characteristics and orientation satisfaction with a survey

• Orientation satisfaction: “Do you feel that your orientation period was adequate to meet your needs?”
  – Responded “yes” (n = 363)
  – Responded “no” (n = 45)
Post-hire Orientation Characteristics

- Classroom orientation hours: $M=50.7$ (SD=69.5)
- Weeks in preceptorship: $M = 9.5$ (SD = 5.5)
- Number of preceptors: $M = 4.7$ (SD = 3.0)
- In preferred position ($n = 332$)
- Not in preferred position ($n = 91$)
Data Analysis

• Logistic regression → assessed impact of independent variables on the likelihood that participants would report having an adequate orientation

• Blocks of variables related to pre-hire characteristics entered first; post-hire characteristics entered second
Results

• None of the pre-hire anticipatory socialization variables were found to be significant in predicting NLRN’s satisfaction with orientation.

• Number of preceptors NLRNs had during orientation was the only variable having a significant effect on satisfaction with orientation (OR = 0.87, 95% CI: 0.79-0.96, p < .01).

• For each increase of one preceptor the probability of NLRNs reporting having an adequate orientation decreases by 13%.
Conclusions

• Time spent in orientation or breadth of formal classes did not contribute to NLRN’s satisfaction with orientation
• Preceptors have an extremely influential role relative to the onboarding experience
• Number of preceptors that NLRNs are exposed to has significant impact on their perception of orientation → ultimately influence job satisfaction and retention
• Increasing the number of preceptors assigned to NLRNs increases the likelihood of dissatisfaction with orientation
Practice Implications

• Placement of NLRNs on units that foster learning
• NLRNs need to be assessed regarding satisfaction with orientation
• Onboarding experience should be tailored to individual needs and progress
Practice Implications

• Preceptors
  – Recruit
  – Educate
  – Reward
  – Retain

• Nurse managers need to support efforts that limit the number of preceptors NLRNs are exposed to
Future Research

• Determine the threshold for number of preceptors
Limitations

• Data relative to satisfaction with orientation only collected at baseline → did perceptions change over time?
• Findings are limited to newly licensed nurses in hospital settings
• Convenience sample → self-selection bias
References

Acknowledgement

• This study was supported by funds from the Division of Nursing, Bureau of Health Professions, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services under grants D64HP03092 (2004-2007) and D11HP08384 (2007-2011).