

## An Exploratory Study of Licensed Nursing Home Administrators (Lnha) Levels of Organizational Commitment

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*This study of the Levels of Organizational Commitment of Licensed Nursing Home Administrators (LNHA) analyzed participant survey responses to better understand the factors which reinforce or deter from organizational commitment in this population. An exploratory factor analysis was used to consider the title, age, levels of education, size of facility, change over in ownership, as well as other various organizational traits. The findings of this study identified the following seven factors (latent variables) as underling the survey responses: 1) Familial Nature of the Organization, 2) Individual Investment in the Organization, 3) Nature of the Facility, 4) Vision of the Organization, 5) Organizational Work Environment, 6) Educational Attainment of the Administration, and 7) Adherence to Company Procedures. The authors propose that these seven latent variables are important considerations in retaining Nursing Home Administrators and should be utilized to guide future research and practice.*

**Keywords:** nursing home administrator; organizational commitment, job satisfaction

### Introduction

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has projected the need for License Nursing Home Administrators (LNHA) to grow exponential industries wide. Employment for LNHA is projected to increase by 32 percent between 2020 and 2030 (Career Builder 2024, Nursing Home Administrators career spotlight). These statistics suggest that credentialed Licensed Nursing Home Administrators may experience a demand for their talents and glean increase career opportunities for employment over the next decade (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2024). Data suggest that many individuals do not enter the field of nursing home administrators until later in their careers, consequently, high turnover is anticipated as administration age and retire out of the system over the next twenty years. This creates new job opportunities for younger professionals who have obtained the necessary experience and education.

Past studies have shown that 40% of facilities change administrators every year and 80% of those who leave; go in search of better opportunities (Singh & Schwab 2000). Average tenure rates of 32 months, were identified in earlier studies conducted during the mid-eighties (Castle et al. 2007). Sadly, later studies

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found turnover rates as high as 140 percent during a two-year period (Castle et al. 2007).

Additionally, other studies have found that LNHA feel as if they are only left with the opportunity to react to policy makers, rather than collaborate with city, state and federal policy makers (Gadbois et al. 2023). Not surprisingly, job burnout in LNHA is high (Wilson 2018). A study from 2018, highlighted that 46% of LNHA reported that they felt emotionally drained from their work. Those who remained in the field for as little as 1.3 years were often able to find promotional opportunities within the industry (Singh & Schwab 2000). Sadly, other studies found voluntary departures from the industry to be as high as 81% in some cases (Singh & Schwab 2000).

Replenishment rates for LNHA has failed to be considered directly in most of the studies recently conducted. Yet the average age of a LNHA is 46 which suggest that replacement rates will be a major concern within the next 15 to 20 years. This exploratory study of the Levels of Organizational Commitment of LNHA considers the basic age and education level of LNHA as well as other factors which contribute to lower levels of Organizational Commitment within this population (Castle et al. 2007). The utilization of traditional educational pathways has been left out of many of the discussions with regard to the emerging generation of LNHA. University and Colleges with programs accredited by the Association of the Long-term Care Administrator Boards (NAB) although not the only pathway to licensure; has only been established in 15 universities or colleges throughout the United States as of the academic year of 2023-2024. This study's findings support the development of more university and college based educational programming to support and foster the anticipated need of future LNHA. Disappointingly, the education levels and experiences crucial to the success of most LNHA is also overlooked by most studies broaching this subject as educational levels were never a factor specific to the development of federal nor state licensing requirement.

The evolution of the licensing requirements by state and the federal government transpired over multiple years the earliest of which was 1965 when the social security act required nursing home administrators to be licensed by (Townsend 2020). Shortly thereafter, the Medicare and Medicaid required states to enforces licensing requirements; first provisionally by July of 1970 and then by examination in July of 1972 (Townsend 2020). The exam for licensure in it earliest evolution resembled a qualifying exam which considered the requisite knowledge required of a person tasked with the over-site of a nursing home. Management in general, as an area of study has reached a level of complexity that has resulted in the subdivision and development of specialization; has grown at an exponential rate since the sixties when this exam was originally established.

Simultaneously, healthcare expenses have increased exponentially, since the 1950s (Fuchs 2012). A growth spurt which was initiated at the introduction of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965; this growth is evidenced by the increase in health expenditure which accounted for 17% of our GDP in 2009 versus the 4.6% of GDP which healthcare expenditures represented in 1950 (Fuchs 2012).

## **Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment refers to an individual's relationship with her or his organization. Traditionally our understanding of organizational commitment is based on the commitment one has to the goals and values of the organization. Recently, scholars have begun to recognize the failure of this linear, one-directional understanding of the relationship between employee and employer. Instead, we have begun to recognize that organizational commitment is also nurtured by the organization's behavior toward the individual. Organizational commitment although often viewed as a one-directional, independent reaction of the employee towards her or his organization, when viewed holistically, is understood to truly speak to the reciprocal relationship between the organization and the individual and the expressed interactions between the two (Alkhateri et al. 2018).

Although theories of organizational commitment vary, three prevailing aspects of organizational commitment which tend to endure consistently is that it is affective, normative and continuous (Meyer & Allen 1984, 1997, Allen & Meyer 1990). Specific to all three of these aspects of the theory of organizational commitment is that it can be reduced to the relationship between the employee and employer. The progression of this relationship is based on the employees' willingness to accept the proposal terms of the work relationship. Additionally, the three aspects of organizational commitment which are reinforced by this relational perspective is that an emotional attachment exists often referred to as affective commitment. The obligatory nature of this employer/employee relationship is also referred to as the normative commitment. Finally, the repercussions of leaving a job are sometimes referred to as continuous commitment. Collectively these three notions of how employees determine whether they will leave or stay within an organization seem to be articulated in most iterations of organizational commitment theory.

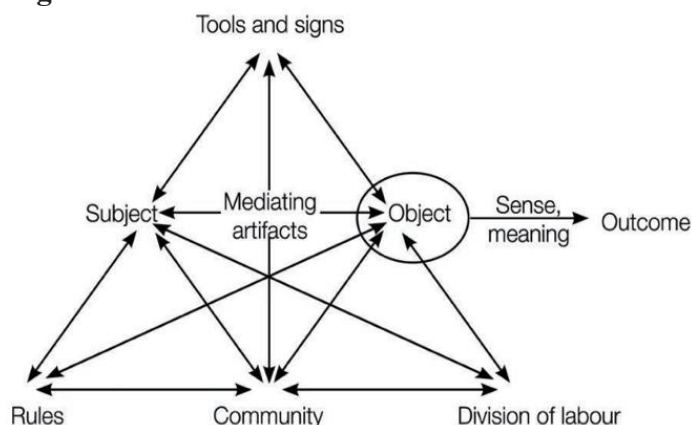
The Organizational commitment scale has consistently been a highly efficient predictor of employee retention rates (Ashman 2007). Alternatively, Lok and Crawford's studies (2003) found that high Levels of Organizational Commitment positively correlate to high levels of employee performance. Organizational commitment was also found to be a correlative predictor of workplace behaviors. This construct was linked with the level of employee contribution and employee withdrawal intentions. Age, position, and tenure were also positively related to organizational commitment. These findings further support the general belief that Organizational Commitment renders homogeneous findings when coupled with other qualitative tools (Pettaway 2010). Due to the highly complex nature of the construct of Organizational Commitment, researchers have often organized this construct into a "multiple-dimensional construct"; however, Organizational Commitment is most often used as the measure of attitudinal approaches associated with variables of interest (Lok & Crawford 2000).

### Theoretical Model/Philosophical Framework

Wenger explained in his landmark text, *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave & Wenger 1991) “Learning viewed as situational activity has a central defining characteristic a process which we call legitimate peripheral participation.” This definition hinges on the understanding that legitimate peripheral participation requires learners to not only express a level of mastery of knowledge and skills as they engage full in the sociocultural community practices. The internship or Administrator in Training (AIT) component of LNHA’s licensing/training grows out of this notion that legitimate peripheral participation is not only necessary, but quired to receive licensure and thus express some level of mastery or at least areas where requisite skills sets can be employed, adequately assisted and further developed. This process is probably best organized and expressed through the frame work of Culturally Historical Activity Theory (C.H.A.T.)

C.H.A.T. builds on the notion specific to activity theory. Activity theory is firmly rooted in ideas articulated by Kant and Hegel whose work placed emphasis on the active and constructive role of human development as viewed through the organizing lens of historical relevance (Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy 1999). Activity theory as a framework for designing constructivist learning environments. More recent iterations of activity theory are associated with Vygotsky, Leont’ev and Luria. This research has utilized activity theory as a philosophical framework as it lacks the features present in traditional theoretical methodologies. This framework has been utilized as it not only supports the epistemological ethos of the paper, but also reinforces the notion specific to this study’s findings.

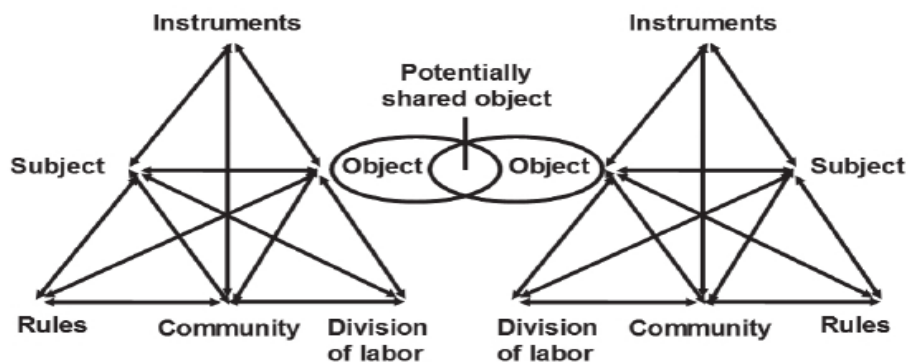
#### Diagram 1.



The organization setting of a nursing home lends itself to the activity theory model easily. Tools located within the nursing home setting, could be documents such a could be PPD (Patientcare Per Day tracking documentations) and databases to the actual beds and briefs which are needed to provide care to the residents. Division of labor in most nursing homes is located within a traditional framework with the administrator at the top of the diagram and everyone else falling

somewhere within the three or four levels below that. The community is constituted from the individuals inside as well as outside of the nursing home providing care for the community's residents. Rules are specifically defined through state and federal guidelines, reinforced through the regular evaluation as conducted during site visits, annual surveys and complaint surveys from the state representatives. The residents, under normal circumstances would be identified as the subjects. The object might be finally be recognized as the care provide. Mediating factors in this example would be many such as health insurance, organizational guidance and guidelines, personal perceptions of the resident as it relates to overall care just to name a few. These learning systems often speak to the direct experiences of those engaged in the activities/learning processes. Yet the learning is not truly isolated to the learning system acknowledge in this model, instead these systems coordinate the experiences of multiple individuals and posit the possible places where interactions may occur which contribute to the separate realities and learning experienced by individuals not by designs—but through random, uncoordinated varied interactions.

**Diagram 2.**



The uncoordinated interaction of various learning systems is often considered in an organized manner. However, this model needs to be thought of as a madding tornado of activities; excerpting pressures, work related and personal, at various speeds and with amplitude, under the pressure of deadlines, mandated at every level. This more accurately constitutes the nursing home administrative setting. It is riddled with intensity and complexities. Activity theory posits that the object resulting from the learning system is a place potentially shared objects and learning can occur. Unfortunately, the nature of that shared object can be unsupportive to the development of a sociocultural environment which supports the organizational goals, objectives, vision and mission.

Culturally historical activity theory (C.H.A.T) requires us to go even further and consider the time and cultural environment which the activity was located within (Nussbaumer 2012). Systems theory might have been a first choice for the methodological portion of this study, however, due to the complex nature of nursing homes environment as well as the seemingly random, plethora of activities taking place during any giving time C.H.A.T. seemed more appropriate.

Additionally, since we are utilizing a survey to gather data for this study systems theory would have been perfectly aligned with this study's design. The findings expressed within this study, however, speak to a lived as well as learned experiences of LNHA. The findings are about what these administrators have learned about their organizations. How they feel their contributions are valued and/or devalued; how their input is recognized and acknowledged or disregarded.

## **Research Questions**

Two research questions guided this study and are provided below. Question 1 is purely demographic while Question 2 required the utilization of a Null and Alternate Hypothesis.

### *Research Question 1*

What is the extent of response to questions one through twenty-six as provided on the Levels of Organizational Commitment survey instrument assessing the Level of Job Commitment for nursing home administrators?

### *Research Question 2*

Do relationships exist between or among the responses on the Levels of Organizational Commitment survey instrument assessing the Level of Job Commitment for nursing home administrators?

Research Question 2 was assessed using a null and alternate hypothesis as follows.

#### ***Null Hypothesis***

No relationships exist between or among the responses on the Levels of Organizational Commitment survey instrument assessing the Level of Job Commitment for nursing home administrators.

#### ***Alternate Hypothesis***

Relationships exist between or among the responses on the Levels of Organizational Commitment survey instrument assessing the Level of Job Commitment for nursing home administrators.

## **Research Design**

Data collection was derived from a self-administered on-line questionnaire. The participants were given copies of QR codes and asked to complete the questionnaires at their leisure. The researcher distributed over one hundred questionnaires at a regional leadership conference at Myrtle Beach. The final sample size for this initial exploratory study was 35 in total. This twenty-six-item questionnaire was developed for this study by a team of Licensed Nursing Home Administrators and Researchers. The questionnaire considers three different components which include: the respondents' overall perceptions of the organization

they currently work for, their feelings towards the organization and their perceptions of the Level of Racial Prejudice within the organization.

### Analysis of Research Question 1

The findings for Research Question 1 are provided in Table 1. These findings provide the descriptive demographics for each of the questions on the survey instrument.

**Table 1.** *Descriptive Demographics for the Survey Questions 1 through 26*

<b>Question 1: Respondent Title</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Licensed Nursing Home Administrator (LNHA)	18	51.4
Nursing Home Administrator	15	42.9
Executive Director	1	2.9
Other	1	2.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Question 2: Age Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 20	0	0.0
20-29	6	17.1
30-39	3	8.6
40-49	11	31.4
50-59	12	34.3
60 and Over	3	8.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Question 3: Highest Level of Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
High School	0	0.0
Some College, No Degree	0	0.0
Associate's Degree	1	2.9
Bachelor's Degree	19	54.3
Master's Degree	14	40.0
Professional Degree	0	0.0
Doctorate	1	2.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Question 4: Size of the Facility</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 50 Beds	4	11.4
50-99 Beds	16	45.7
100-149 Beds	10	28.6
150 Beds or More	5	14.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Question 5: Age of the Facility</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 5 Years Old	1	2.9
5-14 Years Old	7	20.0
15-24 Years Old	5	14.3
25 or More Years Old	22	62.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Question 6: Has Nursing Home Ever Changed Owners?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	1	2.9
No	9	25.7
Uncertain	25	71.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Analysis of Questions 7 through 26</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>
7. My organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place.	4.34	.725	35
8. My organization is a very formalized and structured place.	4.37	.690	35
9. My organization is like extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.	4.14	.912	35
10. My organization is very production oriented and focuses primarily on getting the job done with little emphasis on personal involvement.	3.00	1.372	35
11. My organization emphasizes human resources and places high importance on cohesion and morale.	4.54	.611	35
12. My organization emphasizes company growth and the acquisition of new resources.	4.20	.719	35
13. My organization emphasizes the accomplishment of measurable goals.	4.51	.507	35
14. Establish company procedures generally govern what people do.	4.17	.707	35
15. Employees are willing to stick their necks out and take risks to move the organization forward.	3.71	.987	35
16. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this organization be successful.	4.49	.612	35
17. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization for which to work.	4.60	.497	35
18. I feel a high degree of loyalty to this organization.	4.23	.731	35
19. I find that my values and the organization's values are similar.	4.34	.725	35
20. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	4.54	.611	35
21. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	4.51	.658	35
22. I really care about the fate of this organization.	4.69	.530	35
23. It is unlikely that I will actively look for a different organization to work for in the next year.	4.46	.919	35
24. My organization is primarily free from evidenced racial prejudice.	4.37	.910	35
25. All personnel are treated equally.	4.31	.900	35
26. Promotions and advancement are based wholly on ability rather than ethnicity.	4.49	.887	35



As indicated on question 1, almost all of the respondents listed themselves as either licensed nursing home administrators or nursing home administrators. The prevalent age categories were between 40 and 59 years of age and holding either a baccalaureate or graduate degree. The vast majority of the facilities operated from 50 to 149 beds and were 25 years old or older. The highest responses questions 11, 17, 20, and 22 dealing with the organization's high emphasis on cooperation and morale, the positive work environment, the organization as an inspirational place of employment, and the employees concern about the success of the institution, respectively. The lowest scores were found on questions 10 and 16 which focused on the organization being production focused and providing an environment in which employees are willing to stick their necks out to move the organization forward.

## Analysis of Research Question 2

An exploratory factor analysis was utilized to evaluate the null and alternate hypotheses required to answer research Question 2. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to establish the sufficiency of the data set for exploratory factor analysis. The KMO returned a score of 0.534 and the Bartlett's test had a significance of less than 0.001. Both scores fell within acceptable ranges indicating that the Null Hypothesis should be rejected in favor of the Alternate Hypothesis. Relationships do exist between or among the responses on the Level of Organizational Commitment survey. Initial Eigenvalues provided seven factors with values above 1.0 (Table 2).

**Table 2.** *Initial Eigenvalues*

Component	Initial Eigenvalues Total	Component Variance Explained	Component Variance Total
1	10.102	38.855	38.855
2	2.346	9.025	47.879
3	2.019	7.765	55.645
4	1.670	6.423	62.068
5	1.556	5.985	68.053
6	1.185	4.558	72.611
7	1.082	4.161	76.772

These seven factors (latent variables) explain a total of 76.772% of the variance in the data set explained a large portion of the sample variance. All of this strongly implies that the factors are very important in explaining the interaction within the data set. Subsequently, the factor loadings for these seven factors were obtained using a Varimax rotation. The rotation converged in 11 iterations. The factor loadings by factor follow in Table 3. Values with absolute values greater than or equal to 0.400 were deemed significant.

**Table 3.** Rotated Component Factor Loadings Matrix

Question	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Title	-.197	.095	<b>-.640</b>	<b>.544</b>	.028	-.173	.135
2. Age Grouping	-.379	.382	.381	-.048	-.358	-.260	.382
3. Highest Level of Education Completed	-.340	-.132	-.129	-.091	-.058	<b>.750</b>	.062
4. Size of Facility	-.232	.160	<b>.674</b>	.096	.043	-.138	-.083
5. Age of Facility	.305	.037	.181	<b>.687</b>	.064	-.261	.030
6. Facility Has Changed Owners	.020	-.179	<b>.752</b>	.154	.067	-.018	.042
7. My organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place.	.291	<b>.811</b>	.067	-.101	.130	-.116	-.053
8. My organization is a very formalized and structured place.	.201	.337	.029	-.055	.229	<b>.691</b>	.116
9. My organization is like extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.	<b>.487</b>	<b>.645</b>	.057	.121	-.080	.228	.179
10. My organization is very production oriented and focuses primarily on getting the job done with little emphasis on personal involvement.	.026	-.031	.148	.093	<b>.868</b>	.113	.234
11. My organization emphasizes human resources and places high importance on cohesion and morale.	<b>.734</b>	.144	.067	-.203	.043	-.140	.055
12. My organization emphasizes company growth and the acquisition of new resources.	.206	.275	-.068	<b>-.467</b>	<b>.700</b>	-.047	.022
13. My organization emphasizes the accomplishment of measurable goals.	.278	.110	-.060	<b>-.718</b>	.188	-.126	.345
14. Establish company procedures generally govern what people do.	.177	-.034	-.093	-.127	.288	.196	<b>.856</b>
15. Employees are willing to stick their necks out and take risks to move the organization forward.	<b>.424</b>	<b>.621</b>	.029	-.086	-.199	.044	.027
16. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help this organization be successful.	<b>.782</b>	.281	-.182	.006	.026	-.048	.259
17. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization for which to work.	<b>.430</b>	<b>.624</b>	-.381	.148	.152	.133	-.138
18. I feel a high degree of loyalty to this organization.	<b>.595</b>	<b>.606</b>	-.245	-.030	.274	.047	.014
19. I find that my values and the organization's values are similar.	<b>.574</b>	<b>.567</b>	-.148	-.085	.112	.034	.062
20. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	<b>.827</b>	.149	-.145	-.193	.164	-.123	-.003
21. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	<b>.855</b>	.252	-.296	-.030	.021	-.018	.092
22. I really care about the fate of this organization.	<b>.865</b>	.227	-.056	-.064	.018	.152	-.074
23. It is unlikely that I will actively look for a different organization to work for in the next year.	<b>.879</b>	.154	.040	-.004	-.059	-.170	.126
24. My organization is primarily free from evidenced racial prejudice.	<b>.672</b>	.164	.225	.251	.151	.131	.092
25. All personnel are treated equally.	<b>.739</b>	<b>.466</b>	-.007	.290	.115	.076	-.002
26. Promotions and advancement are based wholly on ability rather than ethnicity.	<b>.813</b>	.354	.027	.107	.172	.007	-.195

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

Questions 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 define the first factor and explain 38.855% of the variance in the data set. Factor 1 may be described as the Familial Nature of the Organization. Questions 7, 9, 15, 17, 18, 19, and 25 explain 9.025% of the variance in the data set. Factor 2 may be described as the Individual Investment in the Organization. Factor 3 is defined by questions 1, 4, and 6 and explains 7.765% of the variance in the data set. Factor 3 can be described as the Nature of the Facility. Factor 4 is defined by questions 1, 5, 12, and 13. Factor 4 explains 6.423% of the variance in the data set and may be described as the Vision of the Organization. Factor 5 is defined by questions 10 and 12 and explains 5.985% of the variance in the data set. Factor 5 may be described as the Organizational Work Environment. Factor 6 is defined by question 3 and explains 4.558% of the variance in the data set. Factor 6 may be described as Educational Attainment of the Administration. Question 14 defines Factor 7 and explains 4.161% of the variance in the data set. Factor 7 may be described as Adherence to Company Procedures. In summary, the seven following factors were found to underly the survey responses: 1) Familial Nature of the Organization, 2) Individual Investment in the Organization, 3) Nature of the Facility, 4) Vision of the Organization, 5) Organizational Work Environment, 6) Educational Attainment of the Administration, and 7) Adherence to Company Procedures.

## Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

The seven identified factors (latent variables) guiding the responses to the Levels of Organizational Commitment survey provide a road map for the acquisition and retention of qualified Licensed Nursing Home Administrators. Several of these latent variables have been overlooked by most of the identified studies broaching examining this topic. Additionally, licensing requirements of state and federal governmental agencies have evolved over multiple years, the earliest of which was 1965 when the social security act required nursing home administrators to be licensed by state. Shortly thereafter the Medicare and Medicaid required states to enforces licensing requirements; first provisionally by July of 1970 and then by examination in July of 1972. Employment for LNHA is projected to increase by 32 percent between 2020 and 2030, which means that these professionals will have plenty of career opportunities to find work over the next decade. Since, many people do not become nursing home administrators until later in their careers, consequently, the turnover is higher than in other positions as administrators age and retire. This creates new job opportunities for younger professionals who have obtained the necessary experience and education.

The Nursing Home market is ripe for expansion and positioned as a safe harbor profession safe from automation and most other forms of disruption. As the baby boomer generation ages, more and more older adults require beds in nursing homes, employees in all areas will be sought after. As of 2023, there are about **1.4 million residents** in U.S. nursing homes and it is anticipated that by 2050, up to **30 million people** in the Americas will require long-term care services. Just as

societies change over time, the specialization skill sets required of qualified nursing home administrative staff has changed. These seven factors call for further research and expanded examination of their importance to success in the field. They should be utilized to guide future research and practice as the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has projected the need for License Nursing Home Administrators (LNHA) to grow exponential across all industries and occupations.

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