

Predictors of Undesired Turnover for Child Welfare Workers

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The persistently high turnover of child welfare staff hampers the ability of agencies to adequately serve families, children, and youth. This article presents the results of an experimental retention study using baseline demographic and attitudinal data collected from a child welfare worker survey, combined with employment data from a human resource database. Survival analyses and multilevel regression models identify the strongest predictors of intent to leave and actual turnover. Implications for research-based recruitment and retention strategies are discussed.

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Recruitment, selection, and retention challenges faced by child welfare agencies are numerous and readily acknowledged throughout the professional literature (e.g., Alwon & Reitz, 2000). The persistent shortage of a competent child welfare workforce has hampered the ability of agencies to provide effective services (Flower, McDonald, & Sumski, 2005; National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006). A groundbreaking report on this crisis (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003) called for more rigorous research about the nature of the child welfare workforce instability. The objectives of this research-based article are to add to the growing body of knowledge about the predictors of child welfare worker turnover and to recommend promising research methods and statistical analyses to use in probing the nature of the child welfare workforce crisis.

Background and Need

Understanding turnover and retention is fundamental to addressing workforce concerns. Research about the child welfare workforce, however, varies in rigor, making it difficult to arrive at a consensus about the factors that predict turnover. In their systematic review of research studies related to recruitment and retention (R&R), Zlotnik, DePanfilis, Daining, and Lane (2005) identified 25 articles and reports—out of 154 papers in a 30-year period—that were original research studies focusing specifically on public child welfare worker retention or turnover as the dependent variable. This low number indicates that serious research has not been the norm in studies of child welfare retention. Zlotnik et al. (2005) point out—and literature searches confirm—that more rigorous studies have increased during the last decade (e.g., Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levine, 2001).

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The methodologies and analyses for these studies are also increasing in sophistication. The research designs and analyses described by Zlotnik et al. (2005) varied considerably, from such qualitative methods as focus groups and written life histories to quantitative methods such as self-administered surveys and case record reviews. Descriptive statistics were used exclusively in 4 of the studies, bivariate analyses in 12, and multivariate analyses in 10. Six studies used comparison groups, mostly comprising title IV-E graduates. Zlotnik et al. (2005) recommend rigorous research efforts that include the following criteria: (1) describing current staff unplanned turnover rates and demographic characteristics; (2) collecting longitudinal data to determine factors that influence retention and turnover; and (3) using documented instruments/measures and multivariate statistical analyses. The project reported on in this paper adheres to these criteria.

This paper describes the results of three analyses. We begin with two survival analyses in which employment records and survey data are linked to identify predictors of turnover and to validate the use of intent to leave (IL) as a predictor of turnover. We then use multilevel regression models to identify the strongest predictors of IL. Finally, we will describe the implications of our results for R&R strategies.

Methods

Participants

This study combines baseline demographic and attitudinal data collected from a child welfare worker survey with employment data from a human resource database. These data were collected

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as part of the evaluation component of the North Carolina Child Welfare Staff R&R Project, one of eight university projects funded by the U.S. Children's Bureau from 2003 to 2008 to develop resources and training to increase child welfare worker retention. The R&R project was unique in that we randomly selected 34 project agencies from the 100 North Carolina county departments of social services and randomly assigned them to 17 intervention and 17 control groups. While this paper reports on baseline data collected across intervention and control counties, the experimental design gives us confidence that the results are able to be generalized to all North Carolina county child welfare agencies.

Over the course of the R&R project an online survey was administered five times to child welfare workers from 33 project agencies (a year into the project one agency withdrew from the study). The second administration of the survey occurred in November 2005 and is one source of data for this analysis. The second source of data, the human resource (HR) database, was created in December 2004 to collect basic employment information (e.g., hire date, exit date, general reason for leaving, etc.) prospectively over the course of the project. Confidentiality limitations constrained the type of demographic data that could be collected through human resource records. Fortunately, some demographic data are available from the attitudinal survey.

The cohort used for this study comprises child welfare workers from control and intervention counties hired between January 1, 2002, and October 1, 2005 (four weeks prior to the survey). Workers hired prior to 2002 were not included to minimize the potential for "survivor bias" (Singer & Willett, 1996). In this context, survivor bias occurs when a large portion of the sample consists of long-term employees while those who began working during the same time frame but left before the study began are not included. This cohort was followed until December 2006, when the intervention phase of the project was complete.

The response rate for this survey administration was 48.4%, which is above the overall average response rate of about 47% for

all five waves. Surveys were administered via the internet using the best practices for online surveys as prescribed by Dillman (2007). Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were informed that their participation was confidential but not anonymous since individual e-mail addresses were the link to the HR database. Three agencies that did not approve of workers being contacted directly allowed groups of workers access to a common link to the survey. Their responses, however, could not be linked to the HR database and so are not included in this analysis.

The initial sample consisted of 356 completed surveys. Respondents were dropped from the sample if they could not be linked to the HR database or were missing key employment data such as hire date ($n = 76$) or were hired before 2002 ($n = 123$), resulting in a final sample of 157 workers. Table 1 shows demographic characteristics reported by the respondents on the survey.

The HR database, developed specifically for the R&R project, was completed voluntarily by participating agencies. As shown in

TABLE 1

Demographics from Worker Survey ($N = 157$)

Gender

Female	140 (89.2%)
Male	14 (8.9%)
Missing	3 (1.9%)

Race

Nonwhite	46 (29.3%)
White	111 (70.7%)
Missing	0 (0%)

Age

Average	35.7 (rounded to 36)
Standard deviation	9.6
Missing	19 (12%)

Table 2, the analysis sample is comparable to all the workers in the HR database on available demographics.

Measures and Procedures

The Web-based survey consisted of 101 items about worker perceptions, characteristics, and attitudes shown from previous research to be related to retention, from which 17 scales were created (see Table 3). Items used a six-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Scales

TABLE 2

Demographics from Human Resource Database

	ANALYSIS SAMPLE <i>N</i> = 157	HR DATABASE <i>N</i> = 1669
Degree type		
Bachelor	75 (47.8%)	786 (47.1)
Master	5 (3.2%)	106 (6.4%)
BSW	54 (34.4%)	592 (35.5%)
MSW	22 (14%)	151 (9.0%)
Missing	1 (.6%)	34 (2%)
Previous experience		
No or indirect experience	53 (33.8%)	620 (37.1%)
Direct experience	103 (65.6%)	1036 (62.1%)
Missing	1 (.6%)	13 (.8%)
Exit reason		
No exit, still employed	76 (48.4%)	839 (50.3%)
Transferred to another position within agency	12 (7.7%)	173 (10.3%)
Promoted	8 (5.1%)	74 (4.4%)
Undesired exit (resigned or dismissed)	61 (38.8%)	555 (33.2%)
Resigned	58 (36.9%)	496 (29.7%)
Dismissed	3 (1.9%)	59 (3.5%)
Missing	0 (0%)	30 (1.8%)

TABLE 3

Reliabilities for the 17 Scales

SCALE	RELIABILITY (ALPHA)	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
<i>S1 Depersonalization</i>	.76	4.57	.97
<i>S2 Desire to help</i>	.73	5.06	.70
<i>S3 Self-efficacy</i>	.77	4.67	.66
<i>S4 Workload</i>	.84	3.34	1.56
<i>S5 Role clarity</i>	.75	4.32	.88
<i>S6 Role expectations</i>	.82	3.92	1.11
<i>S7 Supervisor practice support</i>	.95	4.57	1.12
<i>S8 Supervisor team support</i>	.82	4.28	1.33
<i>S9 Supervisor emotional support</i>	.93	4.53	1.21
<i>S10 Organizational commitment</i>	.87	4.36	.93
<i>S11 Agency's negative image</i>	.77	3.36	1.31
<i>S12 Agency affirmation</i>	.83	4.23	.93
<i>S13 Compensation</i>	.94	3.17	1.53
<i>S14 Shared mission</i>	.84	4.58	.95
<i>S15 Shared authority</i>	.88	3.95	1.07
<i>S16 Growth and advancement opportunities</i>	.90	4.26	.93
<i>*S17 IL*</i>	.91	2.57	1.49

**Lower scores are desirable. Scales S1 and S11 were reverse scored such that high scores are desirable.*

were validated using confirmatory factor analysis (Painter, 2006); scale scores were computed by taking the average of the individual items. A description of each scale and examples of specific items are in Appendix A.

All statistical procedures include corrections to accommodate the fact that workers from the same agency experience a common organizational culture and so are not statistically independent of one another; that is, workers are nested within an agency. Failure to accommodate this nesting can cause misleading results (Hox,

2003). All statistical procedures used for this study account for the nesting of these data.

First, a survival analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between demographic and attitudinal variables on whether and when undesirable turnover occurs (Allison, 2000; Singer & Willett, 2003). This analysis also provides an opportunity to test the predictive validity of a commonly used proxy for actual turnover: IL. A second analysis using multilevel regression was performed to identify both individual- and agency-level predictors of IL.

Analyses and Results

Cox regression survival analyses were used to examine the relationship between attitudinal scales and demographic variables on probability and timing of exit. Analyses were conducted using Statistical Analysis Software (SAS), which includes a statistical adjustment to account for nonindependence resulting from workers being “nested” in their respective agencies (Hox, 2003; Patetta, 2005). This analysis used 132 observations. Of this number, 37.7% experienced an undesired exit before data collection ended on December 1, 2006—the date the intervention was complete. Workers who were promoted or transferred were included in the analysis with their promotion or transfer date serving as their end date.

Validation of IL

We began by assessing the predictive validity of IL. Results indicate that IL is a statistically significant predictor of risk of exiting ($p < .001$, hazard ratio = 1.39), meaning that for each one point increase in IL, the risk of a worker actually exiting increases by 39%. A worker who strongly agrees with the IL items is more than twice as likely to exit as a worker who does not.

Attitudinal and Demographic Predictors

The second line of analysis identifies the best set of predictors of actual undesired exits. Because these variables are highly inter-

correlated, we began with a series of univariate analyses designed to identify a subset of variables that are viable candidates for a final model of predictors of undesired exits (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 1999). In addition to the attitudinal scales, the demographic variables of degree type, previous experience, age, race, gender, and caseload size were included.

Initial results indicated 10 significant univariate predictors of turnover (see Appendix A for definitions and examples of these scales): scale 1—depersonalization; scale 7—supervisor practice support; scale 8—supervisor team support; scale 9—supervisor emotional support; scale 10—organizational commitment; scale 15—shared authority; scale 16—growth and advancement opportunities; scale 17—IL; age; and education. The significant univariate predictors were combined into one model, model A, which was refined by using a manual backward elimination process whereby nonsignificant variables were removed one at a time until only significant variables remained. No significant interactions were found. Goodness of fit statistics indicate that model B provides the best representation of the variables that predict undesired turnover.

This final set of predictors (model B) consists of scale 7—supervisor practice support, age, and degree type. To facilitate interpretation, age is centered at the sample's mean of 36 years. The new definition of age can now be interpreted as change in risk multiplied by number of years above or below the average age. For example, a worker who is 26 will now have a value of -10 for age and will have an increased risk of an undesired exit that is 40% higher than a worker of average age. A worker who is 46 has a risk that is 40% lower than the average worker, and so on. Hazard ratios and model fit information are summarized in Table 4.

The survival function in Figure 1 is a graphical representation of the risk of undesired exits over time. In general, attention should focus on identifying an overall pattern or trend since small fluctuations in the slope of the line should be attributed to random variation (Singer & Willet, 2003). A relatively flat line, as is the case during the first 180 days, indicates a period during which few

TABLE 4

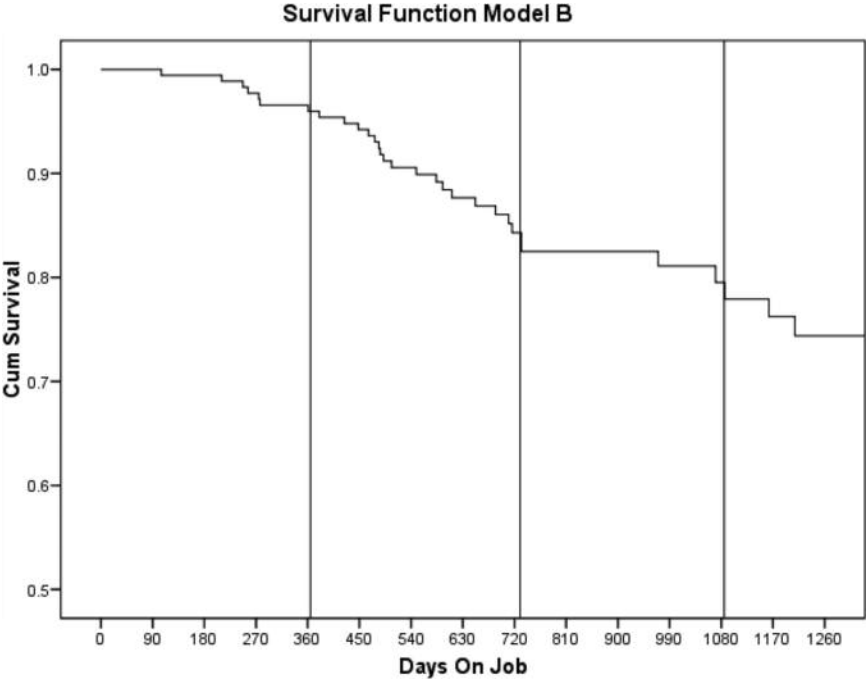
Results of Cox Regression (*N* for analysis = 132, number of exits = 50)

SCALE	VARIABLE	INDIVIDUAL MODELS	MODEL A	MODEL B
HAZARD RATIOS				
Worker characteristics	S1 Depersonalization	.83*	.96	
	S2 Desire to help	.98		
	S3 Self-efficacy	.78		
Job characteristics	S4 Workload	.87		
	S5 Role clarity	.79		
	S6 Role expectations	.77		
Supervisor support	S7 Supervisor practice support	.66***	.58*	.58***
	S8 Supervisor team support	.73***	.94	
	S9 Supervisor emotional support	.67***	1.0	
Agency conditions	S10 Organizational commitment	.72*	1.0	
	S11 Agency's negative image	.98		
	S12 Agency affirmation	.74		
	S14 Shared mission	.82		
	S15 Shared authority	.65**	.80	
	S16 Growth and advancement opportunities	.66**	1.0	
Salary and benefits	S13 Compensation	.91		
IL	S17 IL	1.39***		
Demographics	Age (mean of 36 years)	.95**	.96	.96*
	Gender	.51		
	Race	1.26		
	Caseload	1.03		
	Previous experience	2.4		
Education	BA versus MSW	.44*	.50*	.40*
	BSW versus MSW	.34**	.28*	.25**
FIT STATISTICS				
Model goodness of fit	-2 LOG L		259.0	276.6
	AIC		279.0	284.6
	SBC		293.9	290.9
Test that all betas = 0	SCORE (corrected for nesting)		14.2/df = 10	12.4*/df = 4
	WALD (corrected for nesting)		38.3**/df = 10	25.0**/df = 4

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

FIGURE 1

Survival Function Model B

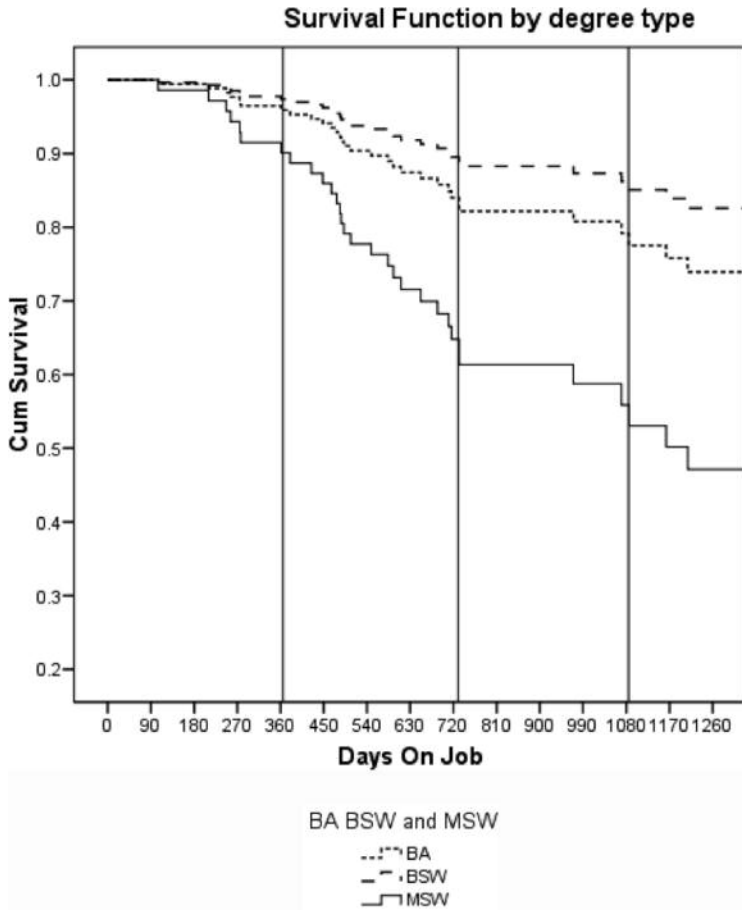


workers are leaving. About midway through the second year, the line begins to show a sharp drop indicating a period during which there is a noticeable increase in the number of workers leaving their agency. Based on this graph, the second year of employment appears to be a year during which a relatively large proportion of workers leave.

The survival functions in Figure 2 are by degree type. In this graph the relationship between impact of the MSW degree and rate of exits becomes more apparent. About six months into the first year, the MSW workers begin to diverge sharply from their colleagues. This is followed by a few months of relative stability,

FIGURE 2

Survival Function by Degree Type



followed in turn by a year of high turnover, so that by the end of the second year, nearly 40% of the MSW workers have left their agency compared to around 10% of the BSW workers.

To understand the circumstances surrounding those workers who exit their agencies, the descriptive statistics for the significant

predictors of turnover and workers' average length of time in position by education are presented in Table 5. Some interesting trends are evident in this table. First, it is noteworthy that across all groups, those who exit stay on average less than two years and score lower on the measure of supervisor practice support (defined as supervisor's ability to provide competent help with cases). Second, workers who exit are younger on average than those who stay. A striking exception to this tendency is that MSW workers who leave tend to be older (albeit the difference is not statistically significant). This suggests that older MSW workers who have strained relationships with supervisors are at highest risk of an undesired exit.

Multilevel Analysis

The purpose of the multilevel regression analysis was to identify attitudinal predictors of IL, which, as shown previously, is a strong predictor of actual exiting. A multilevel linear model (MLM) assessed the effects of scales from the worker survey as well as demographic data from the HR database on IL. This approach also

TABLE 5

Descriptive Statistics by Worker Degrees

	BA		BSW		MSW	
	No EXIT	EXIT	No EXIT	EXIT	No EXIT	EXIT
Average age	38.7	34.4	32.9	31.0	31.1	38.3
Average S7 <i>Supervisor practice support</i>	4.7	3.8	4.7	3.7	5.0	4.0
Average S17 IL	2.3	3.2	2.2	3.5	2.6	3.5
Average time in position	986 days	698 days	906 days	715 days	947 days	589 days
	2.7 years	1.9 years	2.5 years	1.9 years	2.6 years	1.6 years
<i>N</i>	56	19	44	10	11	11

allowed us to include predictors that function at both the worker level (i.e., degree type) and at the agency level (e.g., agency size). The first interesting result is that the variability between agencies is very small, and almost all variability in IL is due to differences among workers. This result also means that there is no point including agency level predictors, as there is no variation between agencies to explain. Attitudinal variables and demographic variables were assessed separately.

The baseline model establishes a comparison to other models and provides an estimate of how much variance is available for analysis at the individual level (level 1) and at the agency level (level 2). As shown in Table 6, results indicate that the vast majority of the total variance is attributable to differences between individuals (99.5%, $p < .001$). In other words, almost no differences can be attributed to agency effects. The estimated population mean for IL is estimated to be 2.6, which is in very close to the observed mean of 2.57. Recall that for IL, lower scores are desirable.

Values for the centered variables now represent a departure from the actual mean such that below average values are negative and above average values positive. For example, a worker reporting one point below average on the role clarity scale is predicted to have an IL score of 4.41, higher than the average IL score of 2.6 and indicating an increase in the worker's IL.

The full model was developed incrementally by including all attitudinal variables and performing a manual backward elimination of nonsignificant variables one at a time until a final set of significant attitudinal variables remained (Hox, 2003; Snijders & Bosker, 1999). The same process was repeated with the demographic variables and the combined results tested into a single model. No significant interactions were found. Results for the full model, presented in Table 6, comprise five attitudinal variables and degree type. The intercept of 3.34 now represents the expected value of IL for the hypothetical worker who is of average age, has a MSW, and an average score for each attitudinal variable.

Scale 5—role clarity, scale 7—supervisor practice support, and scale 10—organizational commitment all function as expected in

TABLE 6

Results of MLM Analysis

MODEL COMPONENTS	BASELINE MODEL COEFFICIENT	FULL MODEL COEFFICIENT	ACTUAL MEAN
PREDICTORS			
Average or intercept	2.6***	3.34***	2.6
S3 <i>Self-efficacy (centered)</i>		.57**	4.6
S5 <i>Role clarity (centered)</i>		−1.07***	4.3
S7 <i>Supervisor practice support (centered)</i>		−.51***	4.5
S10 <i>Organizational commitment (centered)</i>		−.47**	4.3
S16 <i>Growth and advancement opportunities (centered)</i>		.47**	4.2
BA		−.69*	
BSW		−.84**	
Sources of variation			
Variance between workers (level 1)	2.23***	.97***	
Variance between agencies (level 2)	.012	.17	
Model fit statistics			
−2 Restricted LL	530.1	402.7	
AIC	534.1	406.7	
BIC	540.1	412.4	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

that workers reporting above average scores on these variables are expected to have lower IL scores. However, results for scale 3—self-efficacy and scale 16—growth and advancement opportunities are not as intuitive. Increased levels of self-efficacy can lead to a greater propensity to leave as do higher levels of opportunities for growth. One possible explanation is that a worker might perceive an increased level of growth opportunity as a precursor to promotion, while a worker with higher self-efficacy might be more confident in their ability to move to another agency.

Discussion

Results of this study illustrate the value of linking longitudinal employment records to individual and agency level variables. Three distinct analyses were conducted. The first two analyses used Cox regression, a form of survival analysis, to examine key predictors of undesired exits (defined as resignation or dismissal). The third analysis, using multilevel regression analysis, identified statistically significant predictors of IL.

Results of the first Cox regression analyses show that IL is a significant predictor of actual exit. The hazard ratio indicates that for every one point increase on the six-point IL scale, the probably of an undesired exit increases by 39%. Thus, when it is not possible to access employment records, proxy measures such as IL can be a useful predictor of turnover.

The second Cox regression focused on identifying a best set of attitudinal and demographic predictors of undesirable exits. This analysis's results show that supervisor practice support can decrease a worker's risk of exiting by 42% and that, for each year above the sample's average age of 36, risk of undesired turnover is decreased by an additional 4%. Important differences were also found according to degree type. A worker with a BSW is 75% less likely to resign or be dismissed than a worker with an MSW, and a worker with a BA is 60% less likely to experience an undesired exit than an MSW. The survival graphs reveal that the risk of exiting tends to accelerate at six months for MSW workers and again during the second year of employment, followed by a period of relative job stability in year three. Close inspection of the predictor means for each degree subgroup indicates that, while the prediction equation holds for workers with a BA or BSW (i.e., exiting workers are younger and have poor relationships with their supervisor), it does not hold for the MSW group, where those exiting tend to be older. Unfortunately, this sample had an insufficient number of MSW workers to conduct a separate analysis. Thus, it is important to view the act of leaving as a complex process that can be quite different for different subgroups of workers.

Finally, in a MLM regression analysis, all variables except degree type are centered so that individual scores represent one's relative standing above or below the overall mean of that variable. It is noteworthy that above average scores for the scales role clarity, supervisor practice support, and organizational commitment reduce IL, while above average scores on self-efficacy and growth and advancement opportunities increase IL (see Appendix A for definitions and examples of these scales). These findings suggest a complex dynamic where multiple and sometimes competing forces are at play.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is the inability to track the career pathways of individual workers who leave an agency. Since North Carolina is a county-administered state and does not have a statewide HR database, when workers leave a county agency, there is no way to document whether they move to a child welfare position in another county or whether they leave county employment altogether. And because the county HR systems are independent of each other, workers can leave at any time and apply for positions when they want to work in other counties. Therefore, a portion of these workers likely leave the agency to secure a promotion but do not leave the profession. A longitudinal study of workers would contribute significantly to resolving this question.

Implications for R&R Strategies

This baseline study of 157 North Carolina child welfare workers in 33 county departments of social services who were hired between 2002 and 2005 documents the high turnover rates—38.8%—that are of concern across the country. As stated earlier, because North Carolina is county administered, workers who leave one county agency are counted in the turnover rate even when they go to work in another county's child welfare agency. This phenomenon results in a higher turnover rate than in state-administered systems.

But the harmful effects of turnover on children, youth, and families occur in spite of the different ways that turnover can be measured or explained. Research results must be used to develop R&R strategies that stem these harmful effects.

A major theme of this study is the effect of worker skills on their R&R. When workers feel confident in the match between their skills and job expectations (scale 5—role clarity), they are less likely to intend to leave. The importance of role clarity for worker retention has implications for strategies that agencies can employ to match the skills of applicants with the demands of particular child welfare positions. More specifically, agencies should employ realistic recruitment strategies that accurately portray the skills and attributes needed to work successfully in child welfare so that applicants can choose whether child welfare work is appropriate for them. Realistic recruitment strategies include realistic job previews, such as videos or worker panel discussions of the challenges, expectations and rewards of child welfare work. Also, new child welfare workers recruited by inside sources (e.g., current workers) become employees with a better understanding of the job expectations and a longer retention rate. Finally, a standardized and competency-based selection process reliably identifies applicants with skills that match child welfare jobs (Bernotavicz & Locke, 2000).

This study strongly supports other research on the important role that supervisors play in retaining child welfare workers (Dickinson & Perry, 2002), especially in providing practice support. Retention-focused supervisors know best practices with families, set clear and measurable performance expectations, and provide workers expert help through such tactics as coaching, case consultation and mentoring. Supervisors also help workers develop professional development plans and career paths that build on workers' skills. These activities define a learning organization that promotes personal feelings of accomplishment through communication and team work, opportunities for professional growth and education, and cooperative learning.

Workers in this study remained relatively stable during the first 180 days, while midway through their second year a disproportionately large number of workers left their agencies. These turnover discrepancies may be related to a lack of support at various stages of employment. Retention activities are important at every stage of the child welfare worker's development, but different strategies apply at different stages (Dickinson & Comstock, 2009). For example, during early months on the job, a retention skilled supervisor will focus on the concrete tasks of the work and give feedback about the worker's ability to accomplish those tasks. Later, as the worker develops confidence in accomplishing these concrete tasks, the supervisor will increase performance expectations and coach the worker for greater skill development and application.

As noted in this study, about six months into their first year MSW workers begin to leave their jobs more rapidly than their colleagues. Further examination of the characteristics of MSW workers shows that, unlike bachelor's level workers who leave at younger ages, the MSW workers who exit tend to be older. Because we cannot track the career path of these workers, we can only speculate that older MSW workers leave for promotion opportunities in other counties, a career change consistent with their ages. The fact that these MSW workers also rate their supervisors as less competent may indicate a lack of supervisor support for the skills of these workers. For examples, supervisors who do not let MSW workers use professional discretion, mentor new workers, or become subject-matter experts contribute to increased turnover rates of these skilled workers.

Increasingly, today's labor force is made up of workers who are motivated primarily by their contributions, see job advancement as based on performance and reject job security as a driver of commitment (Spherion Atlantic Enterprises, LLC, 2005). The complexities of child welfare work demand skilled, high-performing workers who reflect these emergent characteristics. Child welfare supervisors and agencies need to employ retention skills to attract and keep these qualified and committed workers.

APPENDIX A

Description of Scales

WORKER CHARACTERISTICS (WORKER)

S1=Depersonalization: Burnout dimension of emotional hardening. “At times I find myself not really caring about what happens to some of these children.”

S2=Desire to help: Wanting to improve the conditions of others. “I chose this profession because I want to help others.”

S3=Self-efficacy: Experiencing oneself as competent. “I am confident in my ability to perform this job.”

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JOB (WORK)

S4=Workload: Perception of one’s workload. “The size of my caseload is manageable.”

S5=Role clarity: Suitability of job assignment to skills. “There is a good match between the duties of this job and my skills and interests.”

S6=Role expectations: Congruence of job responsibilities and earlier expectations. “When I took this job, the expectations I had about my professional responsibilities match my actual responsibilities.”

SUPERVISOR SUPPORT (SUPERVISOR)

S7=Supervisor practice support: Supervisor competency. “My supervisor provides the expert help I need to do my job.”

S8=Supervisor team support: Supervisor support of the work unit. “My supervisor encourages coworkers in my unit to help each other with work related problems.”

S9=Supervisor emotional support: Supervisor care. “My supervisor cares about me as a person.”

AGENCY CONDITIONS (AGENCY)

S10=Organizational commitment: Feeling proud to be part of the organization. “I would recommend my agency to others seeking employment in child welfare.”

S11=Agency’s negative image: Negative community perceptions of the organization. “My agency is often ‘under fire’ by the community.”

S12=Agency affirmation: Agency affirmation and recognition. “Overall I receive sufficient recognition for my work.”

S14=Shared mission: Understanding of and identification with the organization’s mission and goals. “My work reflects the agency’s purpose.”

S15=Shared authority: Ability to participate in agency decisions. “I have sufficient input in formulating policies that govern my work.”

APPENDIX A cont.

S16=Growth and advancement opportunities: Agency support for professional development and advancement. "I have opportunities to improve my knowledge and skills in this agency."

SALARY AND BENEFITS (COMPENSATION)

S13=Compensation: Fairness of salary and benefits. "I am paid fairly considering the responsibilities that I have."

INTENT TO LEAVE (IL)

S17=IL: Lack of commitment to the job. "I am actively seeking other employment."

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