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# Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction Among Child Welfare Staff

Meresa L. Stacy  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Meresa Stacy

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Walden University  
2015

Abstract

Factors Influencing Job Satisfaction Among Child Welfare Staff

by

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MS, Central Michigan University, 1998

BS, University of Alabama at Birmingham, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human Services Administration

Walden University

May 2015

## Abstract

Child welfare has been part of American society since the early 1900s and continues to play a pivotal role in response to troubled families. Although there is a need for qualified child welfare staff, the process of maintaining staff is a constant struggle for many child welfare agencies. Many states are experiencing high turnover rates within the child welfare system, and Florida has been acutely impacted. Researchers have demonstrated that the nature of the work, supervision, and other organizational factors continue to contribute to job satisfaction among child welfare professionals. Guided by the social exchange theory as the theoretical framework, which is based on intraorganizational relationships and workplace behavior, this quantitative study determined which indices of job satisfaction influenced retention among workers in Palm Beach County, Florida. It also examined how job satisfaction impacted different worker groups. Using Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey and additional demographical questions, data were analyzed to measure job satisfaction among the different worker groups ( $n = 18$ ). A 2-tailed  $t$  test, analysis of variance, and multivariate analysis of variance indicated that adoption workers were more satisfied than were dependency workers in each of the 9 indices measured and that having a degree in social work did not influence job satisfaction among the different worker types. By understanding the factors related to job satisfaction in Palm Beach County, Florida, child welfare agencies can implement measures and procedures geared at increasing retention among child welfare workers.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, friends, and coworkers. The constant push and motivational speeches were greatly appreciated. Although the journey was long, the support and positive energy never stopped.

## Acknowledgments

I want to thank my chair, Dr. Sally Brocksen, who provided great feedback and guidance throughout the process. I would also like to thank Dr. Eric Youn, who stepped in midway through to assist as my methodology committee member. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Gregory Hickman, who started this journey with me.

Lastly, I would like to thank Children's Home Society of Florida in Palm Beach County, for allowing me the opportunity to conduct research on the organization.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will provide an overview of the study, which will include a discussion of the significance of this social problem, the purpose of this study, gaps in the literature, and specific research questions. In addition, I will describe the research tool that was used to collect data and the design approach. Furthermore, I will present a brief description of the theoretical frameworks of this study, which are based on the social exchange theory (SET) and organizational culture, while providing insight into the social change implications.

### **Significance of the Problem**

The child welfare system is in a crisis and is struggling tremendously with retaining seasoned child welfare staff (Gonzalez et al., 2009). Historically, the process of recruiting and retaining qualified child welfare staff has been a problem (Landsman, 2007). Although there have been numerous federal and state initiatives, the child welfare system continues to be challenged with recruiting and retaining certified staff (Landsman, 2007). Two years is the average employment length of a child welfare worker (Dorch et al., 2008; Gonzalez et al., 2009; Strolin-Goltzman, Kollar, & Trinkle, 2010), and in 2002, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) reported that the national child welfare workers' turnover rate exceeded 50% per year (as cited in Dorch et al., 2008). Folaron and Hostetter (2007) determined that states that required a Bachelor of Social Worker (BSW) or Master of Social Worker (MSW) degree experienced lower turnover and vacancy rates than states with no degree requirement. Child welfare workers who

earned their MSW through subsidized Title IV-E funds are more likely to stay employed until the payback period ends (Stronlin, McCarthy, & Caringi, 2009).

The average cost for many agencies to replace a caseworker is approximately \$42,500, and the cost to replace a supervisor is approximately \$47,000 (Chernesky & Israel, 2009). Not only are there costs to the agency and the federal government, but there are also costs to the children and families involved in the child welfare system when a caseworker or supervisor leaves his or her position (Chernesky & Israel, 2009). When there is staff turnover, it increases the trauma experienced by children and families involved in the system (Chernesky & Israel, 2009). Van Camp et al. (2008) suggested that 33 % to 85% of children in the foster care system exhibit behavioral and academic problems as compared to the general population. Their behavioral and academic problems are associated with placement instability, unplanned moves, school failure, and juvenile delinquency (Van Camp et al., 2008).

### **Problem Statement**

Job satisfaction has been a longstanding and intractable problem in child welfare (Chenot, Benton, & Kim, 2009). Minimal job satisfaction contributes to staff turnover, and staff turnover increases the trauma experienced by children and families involved in the child welfare system (Chernesky & Israel, 2009). Additionally, the turnover of caseworkers destroys the trust developed with families, slows down safety and permanency decisions, and increases the feelings of neglect and abandonment by some children in care (Chernesky & Israel, 2009). There are federal timeframes not being achieved when children are not reunited with their families in a judicious and timely

manner (Schroeder, Lemieux, & Pogue, 2008). The 1997 Adoptions and Safe Families Act (ASFA) established the primary goal of ensuring safety and expediting permanency for children within a 12-month period (Schroeder et al., 2008). Chernesky and Israel (2009) asserted that child welfare staff who experience high levels of stress, have high caseloads, and lack of support from supervisors and coworkers are more likely to leave affecting safety and permanency decisions.

Not only are the emotional and physical demands of the job contributing to diminished job satisfaction and high turnover rates among child welfare staff, but the agency's climate and organizational behavior are also factors. Gonzalez et al.(2009) indicated that staff often felt as though they were unable to adequately serve children and families as a direct result of the agency's behavior. Staff's perception of the agency is a major factor contributing to turnover; staff indicated that agencies are more concerned with the numbers, reports, and other paperwork, and misguided focus leads to staff's departure (Gonzalez et al., 2009). Palm Beach County, Florida has a unique mixed model system of care, and I have not found studies that examined turnover in this type of setting, creating a gap in the literature. By better understanding job satisfaction in mixed private-government model agencies, I will be able to reduce turnover and improve and expedite the quality of permanency outcomes for children and families.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative comparative study is to determine the areas of job satisfaction that impact turnover among dependency and adoption child welfare workers at Children's Home Society in Palm Beach County, Florida. The areas of concern that



this research study will address are pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. This research project will extend the literature as to what we know about job satisfaction among child welfare staff. The expansion to the literature will focus on job satisfaction among child welfare staff working in a privatized child welfare environment in Palm Beach County, Florida. In 1997, the Florida legislature and Florida's DCF approved the outsourcing and privatization of child welfare services and agencies (Jordan et al., 2011). By better understanding the factors related to private child welfare agencies, measures and procedures can be implemented that are geared at increasing job satisfaction among child welfare workers. Stabilizing the workforce expedites the opportunities for children and parents to reunify and function as a family unit. This study will contribute to the current understanding by expanding inquiry beyond traditional child welfare agencies to job satisfaction within a privatized system of care.

Without adequate staff, agencies are unable to meet the state and federal child welfare guidelines and promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children under their care. This quantitative research project will measure nine factors that influence the job satisfaction of child welfare workers in an effort to increase the retention rate. The factors are pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) will be administered to staff to determine the areas of satisfaction and the areas that require development that will improve job satisfaction and the outcomes of children and

families involved in the Florida child welfare system. Florida is the only state that has outsourced child welfare investigations to local law enforcement agencies (Jordan et al., 2011). However, Palm Beach County, Florida is unique as child protective investigations are still performed by DCF and cases are transferred to the private agencies. By having a better understanding of the workforce retention challenges associated with child welfare workers in Palm Beach County, Florida, agencies can more effectively address the retention problem.

Increasing the job satisfaction and retention rate of child welfare workers is pertinent. Chenot et al. (2009) found that supervisor support was significantly and positively related to retention of staff. The role of supervisors is vital in helping caseworkers develop the knowledge and skills required to be successful in the job (Landsman, 2007). According to Barth et al. (2008), the quality of supervision is the strongest predictor of satisfaction among child welfare caseworkers. However, the quality of services provided is only as good as the competence of the child welfare professional providing those services (Westbrook et al., 2009). Supervision includes emotional support, advice giving, and the amount received (Barth et al., 2008).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are the premise for this research study:

Question 1: Is there a significant difference in the level of indices of job satisfaction among staff working in different child welfare program areas at Children's Home Society?

Question 2: Which factors influence job satisfaction among staff in the different groups?

### **Research Measures**

In this study, I used the JSS tool. The JSS was developed by Dr. Spector for use in human services organizations to measure attitudes about the job satisfaction. This 36-item questionnaire measures nine separate facets of job. This tool was used to validate the theory that a lack of job satisfaction is highly connected with supervision, which consequently leads to a low retention rate among child welfare workers. The dependent variables were the nine facets of job satisfaction and the independent variable was the type of worker—adoption or dependency.

Survey research is the most common approach to measure areas of social research (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Surveys are commonly used to generalize a sample of a population to determine trends, opinions, attitudes, characteristics, and behaviors of the larger population (Creswell, 2009). The survey addresses nine facets: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (performance-based rewards), operating procedures (required rules and procedures), coworkers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985). Data collected from the survey were anonymous and the survey was distributed in an electronic format. Additionally, demographic information related to education, age, and longevity was collected.

## **Research Design**

In this study, I used a quantitative, nonexperimental comparative survey research design. A standardized electronic survey was administered to all child welfare staff to measure nine facets of job satisfaction. Information was gathered utilizing a Likert type scale. The final survey includes the questions from the JSS tool developed and validated by Spector in 1985 and questions designed to obtain demographic information on staff. The survey was administered to caseworkers, supervisors, specialists, program directors, and support staff for adoption and family safety. A two tailed *t* test was conducted to test the means differences between groups to determine influences on job satisfaction. The groups indentified in the study were caseworkers and supervisors in different program areas. The data collected in this quantitative study addressed the variables of salary, supervision, coworkers, rewards, communication, operating procedures, promotion, nature of work, and fringe benefit. Demographical information will assist with the influence staff's educational background has on job satisfaction.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks Informing the Study**

#### **Social Exchange Theory**

The SET is the most influential conceptual model for understanding workplace behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), which is a tremendous strength and benefit. The SET is based upon intraorganizational relationships (Landsman, 2007). Gentry and Shanock (2008) defined social exchange as the “exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly between at least two persons” (p. 2471). Landsman (2007) suggested that workers and supervisors should have a social exchange,

which will increase job satisfaction and morale. However, it is also important for social exchange to exist between the supervisor and the organization (Gentry & Shanock, 2008). Gentry and Shanock (2008) indicated that when Person A's behavior reinforces Person B's behavior that Person B would feel obligated to return the favor and consequently create a perpetuating relationship. In order for a relationship to exist and the SET to be effective, there must be trust, loyalty, and mutual commitments among all participants (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Kelliher and Anderson (2009) asserted that the practice of social exchange increases job satisfaction. For example, flexible working practices and remote working have produced higher levels of job satisfaction and autonomy (Kelliher & Anderson, 2009). The intent is to increase job satisfaction among child welfare case managers and supervisors by applying the concepts of the social exchange theory. Subsequently, by increasing job satisfaction, the turnover rate will decrease and the retention rate will increase.

### **Organizational Culture**

Not only is there a correlation between the role of a supervisor and turnover, but Westbrook, Ellett, and Deweaver (2009) also identified a correlation between feelings of self-efficacy and professional organizational culture. An organization's culture has a dominant impact on social workers (Chenot et al., 2009). Westbrook et al. (2009) indicated that an organization's culture is

socially constructed, shared collective phenomenon that develops over time consisting of organizational members' latent assumption and the manifest artifacts

resulting from those assumption that serve as an unifying theme providing social order, meaning, and behavioral direction for members of the organization. (p. 732)

In other words, “it is the way things are done around here” (Westbrook et al., 2009, p. 732). However, when a worker perceives the support of the organization and the employee is committed to the organization, there is mutual reinforcement (Landsman, 2007).

According to Landsman (2007), the organizational structure influences job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and intentions to stay. Therefore, it is crucial for supervisors to understand the goals and mission of upper management and the organization (Gentry & Shanock, 2008). The trickle-down perspective of the SET suggests that supervisors who work well with upper management represent support from upper management, which inevitably leads to supervisors treating their staff better and putting them at ease (Gentry & Shanock, 2008). The idea of putting direct reports at ease and treating them with warmth and support increases a positive job attitude and well-being (Gentry & Shanock, 2008).

### **Assumptions**

1. I will use a tool proven valid and reliable for the collection of data for human service organizations.
2. The sample size used for the study will be large enough for a representative response of the group being studied.

3. That multicollinearity of the variables will be addressed accounting for variables that are highly correlated.
4. Informed consent will be established prior to conducting any research and participants will understand that participation is voluntary and anonymous.

### **Limitations**

1. Information collected through the survey is self-reported.
2. The response rate from surveys can be low, influencing the findings as a true representation of the group being studied.
3. The privatization efforts in Florida have contributed to the ability for multiple agencies to provide child welfare services influencing various organizational cultures.

### **Social Change Implications**

The child welfare system will continue to evolve. The federal and state governments will continue to impose legislation targeted at enhancing the lives of children and families involved in the child welfare system. However, child welfare professionals will be required to implement the processes and assist children with reuniting with their families when appropriate. By stabilizing the workforce for children in Palm Beach County, Florida, they will be more likely to reunite with their biological families within the established time frames, achieve permanency with an alternative family, and/or develop skills that will assist them with independent living.

Unfortunately, turnover of child welfare caseworkers and supervisors continues to be a problem that plagues many agencies. By assisting local child welfare agencies in

determining the job satisfaction of their staff and suggesting proactive measures based on the data to stabilize the workforce, turnover among professionals will decrease and permanency rates for children and families will increase. A review of the literature will further address factors that influence job satisfaction and retention rates of child welfare workers.

The child welfare system is in a crisis and is struggling tremendously with retaining seasoned child welfare staff (Gonzalez et al., 2009). Historically, the process of recruiting and retaining qualified child welfare staff has been a problem (Landsman, 2007). Although there have been numerous federal and state initiatives, the child welfare system continues to be challenged with recruiting and retaining certified staff (Landsman, 2007). Two years are the average employment length of a child welfare worker (Dorch et al. (2008); Gonzalez et al. (2009); and Strolin-Goltzman, Kollar, & Trinkle (2010) and in 2002, the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) reported that the national child welfare workers turnover rate exceeded 50% per year (as cited in Dorch et al., 2008). Folaron and Hostetter (2007) determined that states that required a BSW or MSW degree experienced lower turnover and vacancy rates than states with no degree requirement. Child welfare workers who earned their MSW through subsidized Title IV-E funds are more likely to stay employed until the payback period ends (Stronlin, McCarthy, & Caringi, 2009).

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In this chapter, I provided an overview of the research study and the purpose for the study. The impact a lack of job satisfaction has on children and families was identified and the purpose of the study and gaps in the literature were presented. In Chapter 2, I will explain how the literature supports the premise for the research and identify gaps in the literature.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Review of Related Literature**

I conducted a literature review using Walden University social science research databases, which included ERIC- Educational Resource Information Center, SocINDEX, PsycINFO, and PsycARTICLES. Key search terms included words such as *job satisfaction, retention, child welfare, turnover, privatization, and Florida*. The time parameter for the articles was 7 years. Overall, I analyzed more than 100 peer-reviewed articles from scholarly resources to develop a solid framework for this study and to provide a rationale for the need of this study.

Human services agencies have evolved through the years. Historically, there have been few to no laws that addressed the well-being of children who were abused or neglected by their caretakers (Jordan et al., 2011). There was little to no recourse or protection for children who were being abused and/or neglected. Children had no civil or human rights and were treated like property with little regard for their safety and well-being (Jordan et al., 2011). In this literature review, I focus on the history of child welfare as well as federal and state laws that govern the treatment of children. The retention rate among child welfare is high, and I will focus on areas that affect the job satisfaction of staff. There are several trends noted that influences the job satisfaction of staff.

### **History of Child Welfare**

The child protection movement and laws evolved out of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals after the Civil War (Antler & Antler, 1979; Stoutimore,

Williams, Neff, & Foster, 2008; Watkins, 1990). Throughout the 1800s, little progress was made to protect children from harsh corporal punishment until an analogy was made that children were helpless animals (Antler & Antler, 1979). A child abuse case in 1875 in New York involving Mary Ellen was the beginning of major change in the United States (Stoutimore et al., 2008; Watkins, 1990). As a result of Mary Ellen's child abuse case, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, child protection societies developed in many states (Antler & Antler, 1979). This was the beginning of a new era in child protection.

In the 1960s, interest groups started emerging and influencing public policy for children (Sribnick, 2011). During this time, the United States placed an emphasis on social needs and the development of human service agencies (Antler & Antler, 1979). According to Antler and Antler (1979), in the 1960s, child abuse became a national issue; legislation requiring the reporting of suspected incidents of abuse and neglect was passed in every state along with creation of the federal center on child abuse, and neglect was created. Sribnick (2011) indicated that the child welfare policies were developed haphazardly, and in many incidents, policies were piecemeal as state and federal governments worked on legislation. It was the 1970s before laws were established in all states requiring the reporting of abuse and neglect among children (Stoutimore et al., 2008).

### **Laws Regulating Child Welfare Decisions**

#### **Federal**

Today there are many federal and state laws that protect the rights of children. In 1974, the federal government passed Public Law (PL) 93-247, the Child Abuse

Prevention and Treatment Act (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

The major provisions of PL 93-247 provided states with assistance to develop child abuse neglect prevention and identification programs. Additionally, PL 93-247 allowed for the creation of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 addressed the removal of children from their parents (Sribnick, 2011). Through the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, states were encouraged to start permanency planning for children who were removed from their parents or were at risk of removal due to a maltreatment or neglect (Sribnick, 2011).

In 1997, legislators passed the ASFA after it was determined that an increasing number of children were in foster care and the average length of stay was getting longer (D'Andrade & Berrick, 2006). ASFA mandates that the principal goals of safety, permanency, and well-being be of paramount concern when decisions are being made for children in the child welfare system (Jordan et al., 2011). ASFA established shorter time frames that states are to follow to achieve permanency for children in care. Parents now had to reunify with their children within 12 months, decreased from 18 months. In addition, there were established mechanisms to encourage adoption of children, and states were required to make reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify families or find alternative permanent homes (D'Andrade & Berrick, 2006). Unfortunately, many states are struggling to meet ASFA requirements. According to D'Andrade and Berrick (2006), in 2002 there were 126,000 children in care with a case plan goal of adoption or

whose parents' rights had been terminated and these children had been waiting for permanency for 3 or more years. Approximately 542,000 children are living in foster care (Schroeder et al., 2008).

ASFA is a child welfare social policy that was developed to aid states in establishing permanent placement for children in care, through either adoption, reunification with family, or another appropriate alternative placement (D'Andrade & Berrick, 2006).

However, factors such as the high turnover of child welfare workers and supervisors and the complexity of substance abuse in which families struggle with have contributed to an increase in the length of time children remain in care (D'Andrade & Berrick, 2006)..

Consequently, the number of children remaining in foster care past the established ASFA time frame is increasing (D'Andrade & Berrick, 2006).

### **State**

The development of child welfare services in the state of Florida was a slow and unorganized process (Pierce, 2011). Pierce (2011) found that most child welfare services and initiatives were performed by charitable organization. Dating back to 1893, Daniel Memorial Home for Children in Jacksonville was established as an orphanage (Pierce, 2011). Later, in 1902, Children's Home Society of Florida (CHS) was established and was the primary statewide provider from 1910 to 1930 (Pierce, 2011).

Chapter 39 of Florida statute defines what abuse and neglect of a child constitutes, the penalties associated with the maltreatments, and the rights of the child and parents. Ironically and similar to laws passed in the late 1800s and early 1900s, physical abuse is still allowed by the caregiver. However, Chapter 39 of Florida statute specifically states

that bruises and welts cannot be inflicted on the skin as that constitutes abuse (FL Statute, Chapter 39).

Similar to other human services bureaucracies, the child welfare sector is increasingly turning to community-based providers as it relates to privatization and performance contracting (Collins-Camargo, McBeath, & Ensign, 2011). Florida is not exempt from the growing trend. As mandated by Florida legislation, in 1997, Florida's Department of Children and Families started privatizing various child welfare services throughout the state (Jordan et al., 2011). According to Jordan et al. (2011), Florida has been unique with the privatization process. Currently, Florida is the only state that transferred child protective investigative responsibilities to local law enforcement agencies (Jordan et al., 2011). Jordan et al. identified seven counties in the state of Florida that have transferred all investigative responsibilities to the local sheriff office. However, there is little evidence to support that performance based contracts have improved the quality of the child welfare services provisions being provided (Collins-Camargo et al., 2011).

### **Impact of Turnover on Child Welfare Services**

The work performed by child welfare workers is extremely important and demanding (Barth et al., 2008). For many child welfare workers, the job is an avenue of self-fulfillment and a part of one's sense of self (Pasupuleti, Allen, Lambert, & Cluse-Tolar, 2009). According to Barth, Lloyd, Christ, Chapman, and Dickinson (2008), in 2003, child welfare agencies received approximately 500,000 child abuse and neglect calls each

month. Yet, Strolin-Goltzman et al. (2010) indicated that the annual turnover rate was between 23% and 60% for both private and public child welfare agencies.

The role of a caseworker is critical to the child welfare system as evidenced by the number of calls received each month. Therefore, child welfare workers are essential to the success of a child welfare agency and the lives of those they serve and protect (Van Hook & Rothenberg, 2009). Abenyiga (2009) found that maintaining quality child welfare workers has ethical, professional, and administrative value. When a caseworker leaves his or her position, it has negative impact on the physical and emotional life of a child (Abenyiga, 2009; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2010). Nevertheless, some child welfare caseworkers manage the challenges of their work and still have a sense of satisfaction (Barth et al., 2008).

State and federal laws have provided strict guidelines and timeframes for youth involved in the child welfare system. Without adequate staff, it is difficult for child welfare agencies to meet the strict guidelines. Strolin-Goltzman et al. (2010) asserted that children in the child welfare system are exceptionally vulnerable as caseworkers are responsible for their safety, well-being, and permanency. A child with multiple caseworkers is 60% less likely to achieve permanency and live in a stable environment by the timeframe established by the ASFA (Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2010). When caseworkers and supervisors leave their positions, safety and permanency decisions are delayed, trust between the agency and families are jeopardized, and there is an increase feeling of neglect for some children in care (Chernesky & Israel, 2009). Van Hook and Rothenberg (2009) stressed that many children in the child welfare setting struggle with

attachment and trust further signifying the importance of stabilizing the child welfare workforce.

### **Trends That Affect Retention and Job Satisfaction**

There are many reasons why staff is leaving their positions. The lack of supervisory support is one major reason identified by Landsman (2007) and Gonzalez et al. (2009). Additional reasons provided for turnover are the exposure to the harm of children, involvement with hostile parents, and the threat or actual violence inflicted by families (Gonzalez et al., 2009). Child welfare workers deal with high levels of uncertainty, danger, and emotions (Barth et al., 2008; Dorch et al., 2008). Furthermore, the exposure to less than optimal working conditions, low salaries, poor work environments, incomplete training, and inadequate supervision also contribute to the degree of job satisfaction child welfare staff experience (Barth et al., 2009; Dorch et al., 2008). Other factors influencing the turnover of child welfare staff include legal liability, unmanageable caseload sizes, and low autonomy (Dorch et al., 2008). Additionally, Gonzalez et al. indicated that the level of education, the lack of specific education, and the concern that on the job training does not provide the needed skills are creating a retention crisis. Furthermore, unclear expectations and job descriptions as well as a lack of support from coworkers and supervisors are additional factors associated with a child welfare worker's intention to leave (Chernesky & Israel, 2009).

### **Supervision**

Chenot et al. (2009) found that supervisor support was significantly and positively related to retention of their staff. The role of supervisors is vital in helping caseworkers



develop the knowledge and skills required to be successful in the job (Landsman, 2007). Having a knowledgeable and supportive supervisor is critical to retention (Zlotnik, Strand, & Anderson, 2009). According to Barth et al. (2008), the quality of supervision is the strongest predictor of satisfaction among child welfare caseworkers. The quality of services provided is only as good as the competence of the child welfare professional providing those services (Westbrook et al., 2009). Supervision includes emotional support, advice giving, and the amount of guidance received (Barth et al., 2008).

The role of the supervisor is pertinent in helping caseworkers develop the knowledge and skills required to work in child welfare (Landsman, 2007). According to Renner, Porter, and Preister (2009) and Clark et al. (2008), supervision is most consistently linked to retaining child welfare workers and increasing their job satisfaction. An ideal supervisor should mentor and teach new caseworkers in an effort to improve retention and increase job satisfaction (Renner et al., 2009). Clark et al. indicated that high quality and supportive supervisors play a significant role in retaining professional child welfare staff. Reducing the turnover rate of child welfare staff helps to reduce the stress, burnout, and burdensome caseloads many caseworkers experience (Clark et al., 2008; Renner et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important for child welfare agencies to invest in their supervisors. It is suggested that agencies expand professional networking opportunities, allow supervisors to participate in conferences and training, and allow involvement in strategic planning and agency decision-making (Renner et al., 2009).

## **Education and Training**

Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (SSA) is available to states as an open-end entitlement; this means states may claim reimbursement for every eligible child who enters a licensed foster home or institution (Department of Health of Human Services, 2007). The federal government recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining a competent workforce by making federal training funds available to schools of social work and child welfare agencies (Zoltnik et al., 2009). Dorch et al. (2008) indicated that Title IV-E and Title IV-B provide states with federal funding for child welfare training. Title IV-E provided about 75% of matched federal funding that states can use for training current staff or staff preparing for employment. However, there are concerns about the quality of training caseworkers are receiving. The educational requirement for child welfare professionals is a bachelor's degree in a field related to social work (Gonzalez et al., 2009). Gonzalez et al. (2009) indicated that level of education, the lack of specific education, and the concern that on the job training does not provide the needed skills are creating a retention crisis.

Jones, Washington, and Steppe (2007) indicated that a best practice approach includes training intervention for supervisors and the opportunity for skills to be modeled for first line workers. When supervisors and managers have the opportunity to participate in professional growth and development, they are empowered to improve their behavior and model that behavior for their staff (Jones et al., 2007). Another factor associated with increasing retention is education. According to Barth et al. (2008), 15% of child welfare workers have a BSW degree and 13% has an MSW degree. Additionally, Barth

et al. indicated that 56% of child welfare staff has a bachelor's degree in a field other than social work and 13% has a master's degree in an alternative field.

Folaron and Hostetter (2007) determined that states that required a BSW or MSW degree experienced lower turnover and vacancy rates than states with no degree requirement. Child welfare workers who earned their MSW through subsidized Title IV-E funds are more likely to stay employed until the payback period ends (Stronlin et al., 2009). Child welfare professionals with a degree in social work and a specialized child welfare focus supports retention and enhances service provision (Zlotnik et al., 2009). Caseworkers with degrees in social work reported feeling better prepared to their jobs, and those with a MSW reporting feeling more confident than staff with a BSW (Barth et al., 2008). Furthermore, Folaron and Hostetter (2007) found that the practicum requirement for social work students grants them the chance to link theory with practice and provides them regular structure and the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

### **Environmental Factors**

Job dissatisfaction can be a major stressor for child welfare staff (Pasupuleti et al., 2009). The tension, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion that child welfare professionals experience can be more profound than other occupations (Pasupuleti et al., 2009). Pasupuleti et al. and Van Hook and Rothenberg (2009) found that prolonged exposure to high job stress is linked to turnover, absenteeism, burnout, emotional problems, physical ailments, and sometimes death.

## **Burnout**

Strolin et al., (2007) and Van Hook and Rothenberg (2009) and defined burnout as feeling hopeless, being emotional exhausted, the inability to perform their work effectively, or a sense that your efforts make no difference. Burnout may also be defined as “a state of fatigue or frustration brought about by a devotion to a cause, way of life, or relation that fail to produce the expected reward” (Hamama, 2012). Burnout decreased the retention rate among child welfare staff (Van Hook & Rothenberg, 2009). Stronlin et al. (2007) found a direct effect between emotional exhaustion and a child welfare turnover and/or intent to leave. According to Yamatani, Engel & Spjeldnes (2009), burnout and job dissatisfaction are the reasons most caseworkers cite for quitting.

There are also organizational factors influencing burnout. Daley (1979) indicated that caseload size, formalization of rules, a lack of supervisory control, work relationships, and job design are major aspects of burnout and frustration among child welfare staff. In addition to organizational factors, Hamama (2012) indicated that gender is also a factor and that female social workers are more likely to experience burnout than their male counterparts.

## **Stress**

Work stress is associated with the overall life satisfaction of professionals working in social service careers (Pasupuleti et al., 2009). Child welfare workers often experience stressful situations associated with the job. Dill (2007) indicated that media scrutiny, the death of a child, and lawsuits are potential stressors that child welfare

workers experience. The stress and trauma that child welfare workers experience often lead to high levels of emotional exhaustion (Dill, 2007).

The requirements and expectations of the jobs can be burdensome for some child welfare workers (Travis & Mor Barak, 2010). Travis and Mor Barak found that the role expectations of the job and the reality of the role are often unclear creating role ambiguity. When there are competing demands and unrealistic expectations, child welfare workers will experience reduced work efforts and decrease their performance (Travis & Mor Barak, 2010).

### **Caseload Size**

Reasonable workloads and caseloads may result in negative outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system as well as decreased job satisfaction for caseworkers (Yamatani et al, 2009). In order for child welfare agencies to have paramount functioning, caseloads must be manageable (Yamatani et al., 2007).

Caseworkers have indicated that caseload size and lack of control over workload has negatively affected their health. Yamatani et al. asserted that caseworkers who indicated they had control over their work were less stressed and experienced greater self-efficacy.

Yamatani et al. (2009) indicated that the Council of Accreditation (COA) and CWLA suggested that the maximum caseload of 15 for active investigations and 15 to 30 open cases for child protective services workers. In 2004, four states reported having laws that regulated caseload standards and requirements (Yamatani et al., 2009). Stolin-Goltzman (2008) reported that some states had caseload sizes as high as 100 per worker. Florida's caseload size is impacted by factors such as the number of staff, geographical

location, and maltreatments. However, Children's Home Society reports that average caseload size is 12 families. It is important to note that some agencies count families and other count children when determining caseload size.

### **Legal Liability**

Safety decisions made by stressed child welfare staff will vary significantly from caseworker to caseworker (Jones, Washington, & Steppe, 2007). However, Clark et al., (2008) Jones et al. and asserts that inappropriate decision can be costly to children and families, lead to an overuse of out-of-home placements, and even the death of a child. Stressed, overworked and inadequately trained caseworkers decisions are sometimes made quickly and with limited information (Jones et al., 2007). Caseload size is also a liability for caseworkers; the quality of service delivery becomes questionable (Stronlin-Goltzman, 2009).

### **Autonomy**

It is crucial that child welfare agencies allow their staff the opportunity to grow professionally and independently supporting the mission and goals of the organization (Stronlin et al., 2009). Caseworkers who have the ability to participate and influence decisions within their work group are often more committed to the organization (Travis & Mor Barak, 2010). Stronlin et al. (2009) indicated that factors such as autonomy, flexibility, and the ability to influence decisions positively influence job satisfaction.

## **Theory and Conceptual Framework**

### **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture explores the framework between the agency's culture, retention, and views of organizational culture as it relates to turnover or an employee's intent to leave Agbenyiga (2009). In order to develop an organizational culture there must be shared assumptions, beliefs, and behavioral expectations among organizational members (Chenot et al., 2009; Linn, 2008). Chenot et al. indicated that there are two types of organizational culture, constructive and passive defensive. According to Chenot et al., (2009) constructive culture relates to a higher level of satisfaction. Factors such as self-actualization, achievement, and the motivation to excel are examples of constructive organizational culture (Chenot et al., 2009). Child welfare workers who exhibited and participated in a constructive organizational culture are described as proficient, responsive to clients, and competent in filling responsibilities (Chenot et al., 2009). Passive defensive culture involved a lower level of security and conformity with rules and operational procedures (Chenot et al., 2009). According Chenot at al., characteristics of a passive defensive culture are resistance, evasion of responsibility, and the unwillingness to participate in change efforts.

There are many organizational factors contributing to job satisfaction and the turnover rate of child welfare professionals. The culture and climate of the organization may also influence workers intent to leave (Travis & Mor Barak, 2010). Linn (2008) described organizational culture as "the way we do things around here". The culture of an organization attempts to control people by using socialization, formal and informal

rewards, rituals, selection of role models, and by enforcing how past situations were handled (Linn, 2008).

A lack of organizational support, low salaries, and administrative burdens, and the inability to acclimate new child welfare workers to vacant positions are areas where agencies must improve (Stronlin et al., 2009). Other organizational factors include career development, workload, and employee selection (Agbenyiga, 2009). Zlotnik, Strand, and Anderson (2009) found that some organizational cultures and climates are not always conducive to ethnical and professional child welfare practices, which affects the retention rate and job satisfaction of staff. Cultural pressures can force staff into abiding by unacceptable behaviors once they have been established (Linn, 2008).

### **Social Exchange Theory**

The SET has been used since the 1920s in disciplines such social psychology, sociology, and anthropology (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Trust, loyalty, and mutual commitment encompass the foundation of a relationship modeled on the SET (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In order for social exchange to exist, something has to be given and something returned (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). SET requires reciprocity rules and guidelines among participants; support interactions produce reciprocity and organizational citizenship behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Landsman, 2007). It is important to note that reciprocal exchange does not include explicit bargaining (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Instead, a person or the organization supplies a benefit and the receiving party responds in kind (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). When the SET is applied in an organizational setting, the social exchange can be



between workers and their supervisors (Landsman, 2007). Workers and supervisors who participate in social exchange report a higher level of job satisfaction and morale (Landsman, 2007).

Landsman (2007) indicated that the organizational structure influences job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and intentions to stay. Therefore, it is crucial for supervisors to understand the goals and mission of upper management and the organization (Gentry & Shanock, 2008). The trickle-down perspective of the SET, suggested that supervisors who work well with upper management represents support from upper management, which inevitably leads to supervisors treating their staff better and putting them at ease (Gentry & Shanock, 2008). The idea of putting direct reports at ease and treating them with warmth and support increases a positive job attitude and well-being (Gentry & Shanock, 2008).

Social exchange relationships begin when the employer takes care of the employee and in return, there is a beneficial consequence (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Cropanzano and Mitchell suggested that when an advantageous and fair transaction occurs between the employer and worker, it produces effective work behavior and positive employee attitudes. Therefore, the perceived support from the organization and the employee's commitment to the organization creates a mutual reinforcement supporting the importance for exchange within work relationships (Landsman, 2007). When there is decreased trust in an organization or supervisors and a perception of being treated unfairly social exchange is compromised (Bentein & Guerrero, 2008).

### **Literature Summary**

The research indicated the importance of stabilizing the workforce for child welfare staff. It is imperative for child welfare agencies to have an adequate number of staff to meet the permanency and well-being needs of children and families involved in the child welfare system. The literature suggested that in many cases turnover can be prevented. As identified in the literature several areas contributing to turnover of child welfare staff, primarily supervision, a lack of preparation, training, and education for the actual job, and the culture of the organization. Those factors can contribute to staff becoming stressed and emotional exhausted and consequently impacting retention and job satisfaction. The literature suggests that the organizational culture is an important factor to consider when measuring the job satisfaction of staff. A review of the literature supports the benefit of the SET and the positive influence the concept has on increasing morale and job satisfaction in the workforce.

Chapter 3 describe sand supports the research design for this study. The methodology approach for this research design will help contribute to the literature as it relates to job satisfaction of child welfare workers. Not only will the research design answer the established research questions, it will help determine areas where future research is warranted.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Research Design and Methodology**

In this chapter, I will focus on the research design and methodology approach of the study. This chapter includes a detail description of the JSS instrument and the additional demographical questions, data collection, and the analysis procedures of the data.

#### **Research Design**

In this study, I used a quantitative, nonexperimental survey research design. Survey research is the most common approach to measure areas of social research (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Surveys are commonly used to generalize a sample of a population to determine trends, opinions, attitudes, characteristics, and behaviors of the larger population (Creswell, 2009). The primary purpose of this study was to determine differences in indices of job satisfaction of child welfare staff in Palm Beach County, Florida. A descriptive analysis of the independent and dependent variables was performed.

The independent variables are adoption and dependency workers and the dependent variables are the nine facets of job satisfaction. As shown in Figure 2, there are four questions representing each subscale. The questions were answered using a Likert or summative scale of 1 to 6 with high scores representing job satisfaction (Spector, 1985). Questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 36 are negatively worded and required reverse scoring. As shown in Figure 2, the sum of the four questions representing each subscale determined job satisfaction. To

avoid missing data and to allow for a more comprehensive survey, I required mandatory responses for each survey question.

### **Sampling**

Child welfare staff from the South Coastal Division of CHS was used in this study. All child welfare case managers, supervisors, and family support workers received the survey to integrate a representative sample of participants. The sample frame of the voluntary participants in the research study was 67. CHS is a private agency subcontracted through ChildNet, the lead child welfare agency in the county, to provide case management services including adoption to children and families in Palm Beach County, Florida. Since Florida has privatized child welfare services, the lead agency is responsible for the oversight and subcontracts of the private agencies providing services to children and families in each county.

### **Instrumentation**

The JSS was used to collect data in this research project. Spector (1985) developed the JSS specifically for human services professionals to measure job satisfaction, and permission was granted to use the tool in April 2012. There are 36 questions on the survey, which measure nine facets or subscales of job satisfaction. Pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication were the subscales measured. The data were measured using a Likert scale; respondents indicated a level of agreement, 1 = *disagree very much* to 6 = *agree very much* (Appendix D). Typical questions include the following:

- I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.
- There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.
- My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.
- I am satisfied with the benefits I receive.

A sample of 2,870 was used to compute the internal consistent reliability for each scale. Figure 1 represents the coefficient alpha (Spector, 1985). The results of Cronbach's alpha indicate consistent reliability for each subscale. To support and demonstrate validity among human services agencies, three pairs of samples were taken from the same organizations between 12 and 18 months apart (Spector, 1985). Spector (1985) indicated that the survey was developed, normed, and validated on human service personnel, therefore increasing the validity of use for child welfare staff. Additionally, a nonhuman services agency was used to show discriminant and convergent validity (Spector, 1985).

Scale	Alpha	Description
Pay	.75	Pay and remuneration
Promotion	.73	Promotion opportunities
Supervision	.82	Immediate supervisor
Fringe Benefits	.73	Monetary and nonmonetary fringe benefits
Contingent Rewards	.76	Appreciation, recognition, and rewards for good work
Operating Procedures	.62	Operating policies and procedures
Coworkers	.60	People you work with
Nature of Work	.78	Job tasks themselves
Communication	.71	Communication within the organization
Total	.91	Total of all facets

*Figure 1. Coefficient Alpha.*

Permission to use the JSS was granted in writing from Spector. (Appendix B reflects permission granted from Spector). The 36 survey questions of the JSS were not altered; however, additional demographic responses were collected to analyze such elements as educational background, time on the job, and job title. Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-30-12-0069607 and it expired on November 29, 2013.

### **Data Collection**

The survey was administered and returned electronically using the on-line survey application, Survey Monkey. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Participants had

no pressure or coercion to participate in this survey. The survey was confidential. I did not work at CHS and there were no repercussions for staff who chose not to participate in the study. Written informed consent forms were provided to each participant explaining any risk, confidentiality, and that participation was voluntary. There was minimal risk of exposure of confidential data. All data are stored in a password-protected file and locked file cabinet. I am the only person to have access to the information. The data collected were anonymous although there was minimal risk that participants could be identified through demographic factors.

### **Analysis**

A two tailed  $t$  test was conducted to compare the mean job satisfaction between adoption and dependency worker. The groups tested were caseworkers and supervisors in adoption and dependency program areas, although the survey was administered to all staff at the agency. Additionally, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there were any significant differences among dependency and adoption workers as well as staff in other roles within the agency. Lastly, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine if education had an influence on different groups and the indices that had a significant statistical difference. The data collected in this quantitative study measured the variables of salary, supervision, coworkers, rewards, communication, operating procedures, promotion, nature of work, and fringe benefit. The questions associated with each of the job satisfaction variables are the following:

### **Pay**

Pay relates to the economic aspects of the job and staff's overall satisfaction with his or her pay. Four questions measure the satisfaction of pay.

- I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work that I do.
- Raises are too few and far between.
- I feel unappreciated when I think about what they pay me.
- I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.

### **Promotion**

Promotion is defined by the opportunities staff have to progress and advance professionally within the organization and if staff believe there are many opportunities for advancement within the organization. Four questions examine staff's attitude towards promotion.

- There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.
- Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance at promotion.
- People get ahead here as fast as they do in other places.
- I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.

### **Supervision**

Supervision relates to the competency level workers perceive their supervisors to have as well as how well their supervisors provide guidance on work related issues. The four questions below measure the level of job satisfaction on supervision.

- My supervisor is competent in doing his/her job.
- My supervisor is unfair to me.
- My supervisor shows little interest in those below him/her.



- I like my supervisor.

### **Fringe Benefits**

Fringe benefits are related to the extra benefits an organization provides, such as paid holidays, pension plans, and flexible work schedules. Fringe benefits are separate from wages. There are four questions related to fringe benefits.

- I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.
- The benefits we receive are as good as those offered elsewhere.
- The benefits package we have is equitable.
- There are benefits we do not have that we should have.

### **Contingent Rewards**

Four questions examine staff's attitude on whether or not the agency show appreciation and recognizes positive job related performance.

- When I do a good job, I receive the recognition I deserve.
- I do not feel the work I do is appreciated.
- There are few rewards for those who work here.
- I do not feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.

### **Operating Procedures**

Operating procedures are related to the established procedures and protocols an agency has in place for staff to abide by to accomplish certain work related task.

Operating procedures are established on a federal, state, and/or local level, making it difficult for workers to exercise power and authority within the scope of their job. The four questions below are related to operating procedures.

- Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.
- My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.
- I have too much to do at work.
- I have too much paperwork.

### **Coworkers**

The four questions below reflect the attitude staff has toward the individuals they work with.

- I like the people I work with.
- I have to work harder due to the incompetence of others.
- I enjoy my coworkers.
- There is too much bickering and fighting at work.

### **Nature of Work**

The four nature of work questions relate to internal satisfaction workers have. Nature of work is associated with the concept of doing something worthwhile and having the opportunity to use and develop their skills and abilities.

- I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.
- I like doing the things I do at work.
- I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.
- My job is enjoyable.

## Communication

Communication relates to how well staff perceives the agency effectively communicates pertinent concepts and information. Communication can be enforced from various levels within an agency from a supervisor to corporate.

- Communications seem good within this organization.
- The goals of this organization are not clear to me.
- I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.
- Work assignments are not fully explained.

Additional demographical information was collected to examine how other elements impact and influence staff's job satisfaction. The questions are as follows:

1. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. What is your age? eg. 34
3. How long have you worked for Children's Home Society (Palm Beach Division) in child welfare?
4. How long have you worked in child welfare? (eg. 3 years)
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - a. High School Diploma
  - b. Associates
  - c. Bachelors in Social Work
  - d. Masters in Social Work
  - e. Bachelors in other field of study
  - f. Masters in other field of study
  - g. Doctorate in Philosophy
  - h. Doctorate in Social Work
6. Please select the response closest to your occupation.
  - a. Case Worker (dependency)
  - b. Case Worker (adoptions)

- c. Supervisor (dependency)
- d. Supervisor (adoptions)
- e. Administrator/Program Manager (dependency)
- f. Administrator/Program Manager (adoptions)
- g. Family Support Worker
- h. Court Liaison
- i. Other

7. Please select the salary range that best describes your annual income.

- a. Less than \$10,000
- b. \$10,000 - \$19,999
- c. \$20,000 - \$29,000
- d. \$30,000 - \$39,999
- e. \$40,000 - \$49,999
- f. \$50,000 - \$59,999
- g. \$60,000 - \$69,999
- h. More than \$70,000

Figure 2 indicates which questions on the JSS corresponds with each subscale.

Subscale	Item numbers
Pay	1, 10, 19, 28
Promotion	2, 11, 20, 33
Supervision	3, 12, 21, 30
Fringe Benefits	4, 13, 22, 29
Contingent rewards	5, 14, 23, 32
Operating conditions	6, 15, 24, 31
Coworkers	7, 16, 25, 34
Nature of work	8, 17, 27, 35
Communication	9, 18, 26, 36

*Figure 2.* Subscales and coordinating questions for scoring.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 contained a description of the research design, the population and sample, instrumentation, data collection process, and the data analysis process. The chapter also included the rationale for using a quantitative approach and the JSS to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4 includes an analysis of the findings of the study. It also includes tabulations of the findings and an explanation of the data tables presented.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Results

In Chapter 4, I describe the level of satisfaction, demographical background, and personal characteristics of child welfare workers at CHS. I will also explain the level of job satisfaction based upon different facets measured in the survey.

#### Participant Response

A total of 67 staff members were provided with the survey link and instructions for completion. Of the 67 surveys distributed, 18 were electronically returned for a response rate of 26%. There was a 100% completion rate for each of the 18 participants; however, one participant, who was not a dependency or adoption worker, did not complete the additional demographic questions. Participants were given 2 weeks to complete the survey. Reminder notices were sent to encourage participation.

The survey was divided into two sections. The first section of the survey was the copyrighted JSS created by Spector (1985). The second section of the survey captured demographic and personal characteristic information. The data collected did not require any corrections. The data from the surveys were analyzed using Survey Monkey and SPSS analytical software. The dependent variables were the nine facets of job satisfaction and the independent variable was the type of worker—adoption or dependency.

#### Data Collection

The data in the JSS were gathered using a Likert scale. The participants were asked to respond to 36 questions with a level of agreement, 1 = *disagree very much*, 2 =

*disagree moderately*, 3 = *disagree slightly*, 4 = *agree slightly*, 5 = *agree moderately*, and 6 = *agree very much*. For the purpose of the survey, eight additional questions were added to the survey to collect demographic data.

The data for each survey question was imported into SPSS software for statistical analysis. Prior to analyzing the data, Questions 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 36 were reversed scored. To increase the statistical power of the study, due to the low response rate, a bootstrap of 1,000 was conducted to analyze the data. Field (2009) defined bootstrapping as a technique in which the sampling distribution of a statistic is estimated by taking repeated samples from the data set. The data were treated as a population from which smaller samples were taken (Field, 2009).

## **Analyses of Results**

### **Research Question 1**

Is there a significant difference in the level of indices of job satisfaction among staff working in different child welfare program areas at Children's Home Society?

Table 1 summarizes the mean scores for all job satisfaction facets by worker type. One way ANOVAs were conducted comparing the mean scores of job satisfaction facets by work types. Levene's test for equality of variances indicated that all variances are equal. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was met (Field, 2009).

Table 1

*Descriptive Analysis of Facets*

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pay	Dependency	6	1.68 <sup>a</sup>	.65
	Adoption	6	2.80	.94
	Other	6	3.58 <sup>a</sup>	1.26
Promotion	Dependency	6	2.80	1.65
	Adoption	6	3.63	1.10
	Other	6	4.75	.92
Supervision	Dependency	6	5.25	.63
	Adoption	6	4.71	1.64
	Other	6	5.46	.98
Fringe benefits	Dependency	6	3.17	1.08
	Adoption	6	4.50	1.15
	Other	6	4.79	1.24
Contingency reward	Dependency	6	2.21 <sup>a,b</sup>	.86
	Adoption	6	4.08 <sup>a</sup>	1.14
	Other	6	4.54 <sup>b</sup>	1.13
Operating cond.	Dependency	6	1.96	.93
	Adoption	6	3.04	1.11
	Other	6	3.38	1.01
Coworkers	Dependency	6	3.54 <sup>a,b</sup>	.62
	Adoption	6	5.50 <sup>a</sup>	.67
	Other	6	5.13 <sup>b</sup>	.26
Nature of work	Dependency	6	4.33 <sup>a</sup>	.92
	Adoption	6	5.21	.56
	Other	6	5.50 <sup>a</sup>	.47
Communication	Dependency	6	3.50 <sup>a</sup>	1.48
	Adoption	6	4.75	.67
	Other	6	5.25 <sup>a</sup>	.79

*Note.* The letter superscripts indicate the groups that were significantly different from each other utilizing Bonferroni post hoc test.



Tables 1 and 2 indicate a significant difference in the scores for pay, nature of work, and communication between dependency workers and other workers. There was also a significant difference in the scores for contingency rewards and coworkers between dependency workers and adoption workers and dependency workers and other workers. For all variables compared, dependency workers had lower job satisfaction scores than adoption and other worker types. Since the sample size of this study was small, a bootstrap analysis based on 1,000 bootstrap samples was completed to produce means, standard deviations, and the ANOVAs. Table 2 provides the ANOVA results for all nine facets of job satisfaction among the three groups.

Table 2

*ANOVA on Facets of Job Satisfaction by Worker Type*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Pay	5.770	2, 15	.014
Promotion	3.619	2, 15	.052
Supervision	0.667	2, 15	.528
Fringe benefits	3.355	2, 15	.062
Contingency reward	8.305	2, 15	.004
Operating conditions	3.171	2, 15	.071
Coworkers	21.509	2, 15	.000
Nature of work	4.818	2, 15	.024
Communication	4.466	2, 15	.030

**Research Question 2**

Which factors influence job satisfaction among staff in the different groups?

Demographic information was examined to determine if there were differences by worker types. Tables 3 and 4 reveal demographical information by workers type specifically related to age, length of time with the organization, and overall time in child welfare.

Table 3

*Group Statistics of Age, Length of Time at CHS and in Child Welfare*

Dependency and adoption workers		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	Dependency	6	38.50	12.16
	Adoption	6	43.83	10.27
	Other	5	36.14	11.44
Time at CHS	Dependency	6	5.67	7.26
	Adoption	6	7.83	3.13
	Other	5	7.80	5.63
Time in child welfare	Dependency	6	10.50	9.94
	Adoption	6	8.83	3.00
	Other	5	9.60	8.39

Table 4

*One Way ANOVA of Age, Length of Time at CHS and in Child Welfare by Worker Type*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	.647	2, 14	.538
Time at CHS	.287	2, 14	.755
Time in child welfare	.071	2, 14	.932

The results from the ANOVA (see Table 4) indicated that there were no significant differences by worker type as it related to age, the length of time staff has worked at CHS-Palm Beach Division, and the length of time staff has worked in child

welfare. Therefore, age, time at CHS, and the length of time working in child welfare cannot be considered factors influencing the level of job satisfaction among the worker types. Table 5 indicates the impact having a social work degree and worker type have on the different indices of job satisfaction.

Table 5

*MANOVA on Social Work Degree and Worker Type on the Nine Indices of Job Satisfaction*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Social work degree			
Pay	0.894	1, 11	.365
Promotion	0.192	1, 11	.670
Supervision	0.867	1, 11	.372
Fringe	0.002	1, 11	.966
Contingency awards	0.325	1, 11	.580
Operating conditions	0.427	1, 11	.527
Coworkers	0.910	1, 11	.361
Nature of work	0.119	1, 11	.737
Communication	1.852	1, 11	.201
Worker type			
Pay	3.583	2, 11	.063
Promotion	5.224	2, 11	.025
Supervision	1.145	2, 11	.353
Fringe	1.178	2, 11	.344
Contingency awards	4.668	2, 11	.034
Operating conditions	1.962	2, 11	.187
Coworkers	9.640	2, 11	.004
Nature of work	2.843	2, 11	.101
Communication	2.579	2, 11	.121
Social work degree x Worker type			
Pay	0.030	2, 11	.971
Promotion	1.026	2, 11	.390
Supervision	0.083	2, 11	.921
Fringe	0.352	2, 11	.711
Contingency awards	0.164	2, 11	.851

*(Table continues)*

	<i>F</i>	<i>df1, df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Operating conditions	0.460	2, 11	.643
Coworkers	0.189	2, 11	.830
Nature of work	0.011	2, 11	.990
Communication	2.170	2, 11	.161

A 2 x 3 MANOVA was used to determine if having a degree in social work (SW) and the type of worker influenced pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingency awards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. There were no significant effects of having a social work degree nor was there a significant interaction between having a social work degree and worker type (see Table 5 for *F* values). There was significance with worker type on promotion, contingency awards, and co-workers. The effect on the type of worker with pay was approaching a significant difference,  $F(2,11) = 3.58, p = 0.063$  (see Table 6 for means and standard deviations).

Table 6

*Descriptive Among Worker Types With and Without Social Work Degrees*

		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pay	Dependency			
	No SW Degree	5	1.80	0.62
	SW Degree	1	1.00	--
	Adoptions			
	No SW Degree	4	2.94	0.59
	SW Degree	2	2.50	1.77
	Other staff			
	No SW Degree	3	3.75	1.80
	SW Degree	2	3.25	1.06
Promotion	Dependency			
	No SW Degree	5	3.10	1.65
	SW Degree	1	1.25	--
	Adoptions			
	No SW Degree	4	3.50	1.40
	SW Degree	2	3.88	0.18
	Other staff			
	No SW Degree	3	4.83	0.76
	SW Degree	2	5.38	0.18
Supervision	Dependency			
	No SW Degree	5	5.10	0.58
	SW Degree	1	6.00	--
	Adoptions			
	No SW Degree	4	4.50	2.01
	SW Degree	2	5.13	0.88
	Other staff			
	No SW Degree	3	5.75	0.25
	SW Degree	2	6.00	0.00
Fringe	Dependency			
	No SW Degree	5	3.05	1.16
	SW Degree	1	3.75	--
	Adoptions			
	No SW Degree	4	4.44	1.39
	SW Degree	2	4.63	0.88
	Other staff			
	No SW Degree	3	5.17	0.88

*(Table Continues)*

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
SW Degree	2	4.38	2.30
Contingency awards			
Dependency			
No SW Degree	5	2.10	0.91
SW Degree	1	2.75	--
Adoptions			
No SW Degree	4	4.13	1.45
SW Degree	2	4.00	0.35
Other staff			
No SW Degree	3	4.58	1.28
SW Degree	2	5.13	0.88
Operating conditions			
Dependency			
No SW Degree	5	2.05	1.01
SW Degree	1	1.50	--
Adoptions			
No SW Degree	4	3.38	1.27
SW Degree	2	2.38	0.18
Other staff			
No SW Degree	3	3.17	1.46
SW Degree	2	3.50	0.71
Coworkers			
Dependency			
No SW Degree	5	3.45	0.65
SW Degree	1	4.00	--
Adoptions			
No SW Degree	4	5.38	0.83
SW Degree	2	5.75	0.00
Other staff			
No SW Degree	3	5.08	0.14
SW Degree	2	5.13	0.53
Nature of work			
Dependency			
No SW Degree	5	4.30	1.02
SW Degree	1	4.50	--
Adoptions			
No SW Degree	4	5.19	0.59
SW Degree	2	5.25	0.71
Other staff			
No SW Degree	3	5.58	0.38
SW Degree	2	5.75	0.35

(Table Continues)

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Communication			
Dependency			
No SW Degree	5	3.15	1.35
SW Degree	1	5.25	--
Adoptions			
No SW Degree	4	4.94	0.72
SW Degree	2	4.38	0.53
Other staff			
No SW Degree	3	5.33	0.14
SW Degree	2	5.88	0.18

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Chapter 5 contains a summary of the data collected including conclusions and recommendations. Additionally, the chapter provides an interpretation of the data, limitations of the study, implications for social change, and recommendations for future study and actions.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Provided in this chapter is a discussion on the results of the study, limitations, implications for social change, conclusions of the study, and recommendations. A review of the study is presented as well as general discussions of the research questions. Implications for social change and recommendations for future study will conclude.

This study was performed to determine which factors are influencing job satisfaction among child welfare workers at CHS in Palm Beach County, Florida. In this study, I evaluated nine indices of job satisfaction as well as demographic characteristics of the workers. The research questions were designed to examine job satisfaction variables and the differences among worker types.

### **Interpretation of Results**

#### **Research Question 1**

Is there a significant difference in the level of job satisfaction among staff working in the different child welfare program areas at Children's Home Society in Palm Beach County?

This study indicated that child welfare workers employed with CHS in Palm Beach County had different indices contributing to job satisfaction. For each of the nine variables evaluated (pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingency rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication), dependency workers had lower job satisfaction than adoption workers and other workers at the agency. However, there was a significant difference in how dissatisfied dependency workers were with their pay ( $p = .014$ ), nature of work ( $p = .024$ ), and communication ( $p$



= .030) related to other workers at CHS. Overall, the results reflected that adoption workers were more satisfied with their work than dependency workers in each of the nine indices quantified. Many researchers group child welfare workers, investigators, dependency, and adoption workers into a collective group (Font, 2012). However, there are distinct differences in the roles and responsibilities of each child welfare worker. Investigators normally see families in a time of crisis and spend little time with them, while adoption workers often participate in favorable family and child outcomes and have little contact with the biological parents (Font, 2012). In Palm Beach County, Florida, the investigative role of child welfare has not been privatized, and that function continues to be performed by the Florida Department of Children and Families. Thus, ongoing dependency workers have more involvement and direct contact with the biological families and are required to spend more time with the families and children they serve.

### **Research Question 2**

Which factors influence job satisfaction among staff in different groups?

The study also showed that there was no significant interaction on having a social work degree among the worker types and the influence a degree in social work would had on job satisfaction. Barth et al. (2008) indicated that 15% of child welfare workers have a BSW and 13% have a MSW. According to Lee, Weaver, and Hrostowski (2011), most workers with a degree in social work report higher satisfaction, yet they are more likely to leave due to work environment factors. Lee et al. (2007) described work environment as organizational culture, policy, and workload. For most agencies, the educational requirement for child welfare professionals is a bachelor's degree in a field related to

social work (Gonzalez et al., 2009). Although child welfare workers with degrees in social work report feeling better prepared for their job (Barth et al., 2008), there was no significant difference influencing job satisfaction among staff at CHS. The results of this study were not consistent with findings from other studies.

In addition, age, length of time at the agency, and the length of time working in child welfare did not reflect an impact on job satisfaction among the various worker types. However, the study did indicate that the job satisfaction indices related to promotional opportunities ( $p = .025$ ), contingency awards ( $p = .034$ ), and relationships with coworkers ( $p = .004$ ) varied significantly among the work groups. These results are consistent with other research studies. Stalker et al. (2007) indicated that organizational variables such as promotional opportunities, perceptions of problems within the agency, and a lack of support negatively influence emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction of child welfare workers. Many female child welfare workers report that dissatisfaction with their job is often associated with a lack of support from their supervisor and coworkers (Stalker et al., 2007). Additionally, Chernesky and Israel (2009) indicated that not only do individuals accept child welfare positions because they believe the work is meaningful but also because but most agencies offer attractive benefits, incentives, and opportunities. When reward driven motivators are not met by the agency, there is a negative influence on job satisfaction (Chernesky & Israel, 2009).

### **Limitations**

There are a few limitations to this study that should be noted. This study was limited by the small self-selected sample of child welfare workers all from CHS in West

Palm Beach, Florida. Although the survey was delivered to all workers at the agency, the response rate was small. Out of the 69 staff members the survey was administered to, 18 completed and returned the survey using Survey Monkey. Consequently, there was a 26% total response rate. Out of the 18 responses, 12 workers provided direct services. When conducting a survey, there is a likelihood that some contacted for information will not participate.

The low response rate to the questionnaire may limit generalization of the data results reported. It is important that findings can be generalized and applied to individuals outside of the sample group (Cowan, 2009). Therefore, a bootstrap analysis was conducted on all the datasets to test for reliability and accuracy of the responses. To increase the statistical power of the study, a bootstrap of 1,000 was conducted to analyze the data. However, the findings of this study should be validated through future research using a larger sample size and different child welfare agencies throughout the state of Florida.

While there are limitations to quantitative research, this approach is ideal when time and resources are limited and it is possible to generalize findings from a sample to a whole population (Cowan, 2009). It would be important to have a larger response rate for the population being sampled. For example, to detect a 20% prevalence plus/minus 5% at 95% confidence in a population of 50, the minimum sample required is 42, and in a population of 100, a minimum sample required is 72 (Cowan, 2009). In general, the larger the sample size and response rate, the more likely the data will be representative of the target population.

### **Implication for Social Change**

Most individuals who seek social work careers do so because they value working with their clients and helping people (Gupta & Blewett, 2007). To their dismay, many social workers are disappointed to find that they spend a great deal of their time transporting clients, completing paperwork, and other administrative tasks (Gupta & Blewett, 2007). Increasing job satisfaction among child welfare staff, not only at CHS in Palm Beach County, Florida, will affect the safety, well-being, and permanency of children through the United States (Stoutimore et al., 2008). Adults, such as child welfare staff, are the people most likely to provide children with positive experiences and learning opportunities (Gupta & Blewett, 2007; Stoutimore et al., 2008). Therefore, stabilizing the workforce has a major impact on social change. Consequently, agencies will spend less on hiring and training new staff members.

Another gain of this research is the benefit it has on organizational culture. By identifying areas of concern, the agencies are better equipped to implement organizational strategies that will increase job satisfaction and consequently reduce turnover among staff. Furthermore, this benefit may increase morale and, more importantly, increase the health and well-being of employees. However just as important, children in the child welfare system have communicated that they value their relationship with their child welfare workers, particularly when they are able to develop trust that is cultivated through the child welfare worker's availability and reliability (Gupta & Blewett, 2007).

## **Recommendations**

The findings and limitations of this study justify the need for future research. This study has revealed the need for a larger study in child welfare in Florida. The low response rate did not allow for generalization outside of the sample group; therefore, it would be valuable to conduct future research with a larger sample size that encompasses each child welfare agency in Florida to better validate findings.

## **Rationale for Future Study**

In each of the nine facets, adoption child welfare workers are reporting higher levels of job satisfaction than dependency workers. The nature of the work varies depending upon the program area. Perhaps that is because adoption workers have very limited contact with the biological families, and most often the children they serve are placed in preadoptive homes, foster homes, or group home settings (Font, 2012). Workers at CHS should periodically be offered diverse work assignments and have flexible time options for staff to move to different program areas (Font 2011; Samantrai, 1992). Since 2 years is the average length of time of child welfare workers (Dorch et al., 2008; Gonzalez et al., 2009; Samantrai, 1992; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2010), a rotation in job assignments might increase the longevity of child welfare workers in Palm Beach County, Florida (Font, 2012). Samantrai (1992), Dickinson and Painter (2009), Burns (2011), and Font (2012) indicated that preference for child welfare work, decent wages and benefits, and job security are factors that influence child welfare workers decision to stay.

Allowing staff the flexibility to transfer to a different program area supports the SET. A social exchange relationship has a reciprocal benefit between the employer and the employee (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) suggested that an ideal social exchange relationship produces effective work behavior and positive employee attitudes. In view of the fact that this study indicated that adoption workers are more satisfied with their work than dependency caseworkers, it is recommended that staff have the opportunity to incorporate different job types into their employment cycle. The responsibilities and stressors for dependency case managers and adoption workers differ (Font, 2012). Unlike dependency case managers, adoption workers interact primarily with adoptive families, individuals who are voluntarily involved in the child welfare system, which is linked to higher job satisfaction of staff (Font, 2012). Career preference social workers often have a stronger commitment to child protection work and the children and families they serve (Burns, 2011).

There have been numerous academic studies addressing job satisfaction and the impact it has on retention and turnover. However, there is limited research addressing the actual reasons why child welfare workers stay. It is suggested that research be done to investigate the views and variables that contribute to staff staying.

I would also strongly recommend exploring the impact demographic factors have on job satisfaction and retention. An objective would be to learn whether individuals with a Masters degree in Social Work experience higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion. Stalker et al. (2007) found that 77% of female child welfare workers who are trained and educated in child welfare had higher

levels of overall job satisfaction. Although this study did not reveal a significant difference on the influence of a social work degree on the nine indices of job satisfaction, Falaron and Hostetter (2007), Stronlin et al. (2009), and Zlotnik et al. (2009) suggested that staff with social work degrees report feeling better prepared for their jobs and experience lower turnover than those without a degree in social work. It is important that social work be acknowledged as an expert profession and that child welfare social workers are able to confidently analyze and manage the complexities of the job (Gupta & Blewett, 2007). By hiring staff with social work degrees, agencies will more than likely experience higher retention rates (Gupta & Blewett, 2007; Stronlin et al., 2009; Zlotnik et al., 2009).

While studying demographical factors, it would also be worthy to determine if age and gender have an impact on job satisfaction and retention. Hamama (2012) suggested that workers who are younger and unmarried experiences higher levels of job dissatisfaction. Older workers, workers over the age of 30, are often more stable, mature, confident, financially secure, and have more life experiences to assist with critical decisions infer (Hamama, 2012). Therefore, it would be advantageous to repeat this study employing a larger sample size encompassing child welfare workers from each lead agency within the state of Florida to validate current findings and to measure demographical variables that affect job satisfaction.

### **Agency Concerns**

The Florida DCF has adopted a community-based care approach to child welfare, meaning they outsource foster care and other related services; DCF contracts with local

nonprofit agencies to provide child welfare services to children and families in need. In 1996, Florida statute mandated DCF to privatize foster care and related services; services were contracted to private community agencies, and child protection abuse and neglect investigations would remain with DCF or a county sheriff's office (Elder, DeStefano, Blazeovski, & Schuler, 2012).

Although CHS is the lead child welfare agency in Palm Beach County, Florida, ChildNet currently provides administrative oversight. However, when this study was initially conducted, Child and Family Connections was the community based care agency providing administrative oversight. Child and Family Connections is no longer providing child welfare services in Palm Beach County, Florida. Currently, ChildNet manages child welfare services in Palm Beach County, Florida and Broward County, Florida. There are approximately 81 dependency and adoption workers in Palm Beach County and approximately 140 dependency and adoption workers in Broward County. Combined, there are 221 dependency and adoption workers in both counties.

Florida has 67 counties. There are 18 lead agencies in Florida providing administrative oversight for the community based care agency within each county. To validate the findings in this study, increase the sample size, and provide more generalized results, the survey should be administered to dependency and adoption caseworkers in each community based care agency by going through the lead agency. The lead agencies and the counties they provide oversight for are as follows:



Table 7

*Name of Each Lead Agency in Florida and the Counties Represented*

Lead Agency	Counties
Families First Network	Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Walton
Big Bend CBC, Inc.	Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Wakulla, Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington
Partnership for Strong Families	Columbia, Dixie, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor
Kids First of Florida, Inc.	Clay
Family Support Services of North Florida, Inc.	Duval, Nassau
St. Johns County Board of Commissioners	St. Johns
Community Partnership for Children, Inc.	Flagler, Putnam, Volusia
Partnership for Strong Families	Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy, Union
Kids Central, Inc.	Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter
CBC of Central Florida	Orange, Osceola, Seminole
Heartland for Children	Hardee, Highlands, Polk
Brevard Family Partnership	Brevard
Eckerd Community Alternatives	Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough
Sarasota Family YMCA, Inc.	DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota
Children's Network of Southwest Florida	Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee
ChildNet, Inc.	Palm Beach, Broward
Devereux Families, Inc.	Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, St. Lucie
Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc.	Miami-Dade, Monroe

Each local agency has the flexibility to design its system of care and implement mechanisms for service delivery. Though the system of care varies in each county, the nature of work is the similar. Although ChildNet is the lead agency for both Palm Beach and Broward counties, there are some distinct differences. For example, in Palm Beach County, child welfare abuse and neglect investigations are performed by the state agency, DCF. In Broward County, this responsibility has been privatized; child welfare abuse and neglect investigations are performed by Broward Sheriff's Office. Not only do child abuse investigations vary in each county, but so does the organizational employment structure. For instance in Broward County, child welfare workers are employed directly by the lead community based agency, ChildNet. In Palm Beach County, child welfare workers are employed through Children's Home Society, the contracted non-profit agency.

It would be beneficial to know if there are significant differences in the level of job satisfaction between dependency and adoption child welfare workers within the various lead agencies throughout the state of Florida and whether or not the differences in the system of care are contributing factors. It would be valuable to identify counties and agencies with a similar system of care as well as large and medium municipalities and rural areas for comparison. Therefore, additional questions would need to be added to the demographical section of the survey to capture each agency's system of care, locality of participants, and their employer.

### **Lessons Learned**

While this study provided valuable information towards future research, there were also some lessons learned that could positively influence the approach to new research studies. It is important to increase the participation rate for future quantitative research studies. In an effort to improve the response rate, it will be pertinent to have the support of senior management and other key agency staff members, such as program managers and supervisors. This support can be gained by establishing an effective line of communication ensuring all staff is informed of the value and importance of the study. In this study, written and face-to-face communication were primarily with the executive director of Children's Home Society, permitting for limited support and interaction with the target sample group as well as the executive director for the lead agency. The executive director for Children's Home Society opted not to make this survey mandatory based upon other pertinent and obligatory demands of the jobs. However, if the agencies supported mandatory participation, the sample size would increase. Prior to the web survey being administered, it would be helpful to create an informational video for child welfare staff introducing the purpose and guidelines of the research study to the target population. The video can be played on demand, the message is the same for each agency, and eliminates travels to each county.

Furthermore, it would be favorable to offer a non-coercive, unconditional, and non-monetary incentive to all staff to increase the survey response rate. Matheson et al. (2012) suggested that incentives improve participate rates in research. Perhaps providing an incentive might encourage and increase respondents' willingness to participate.

Because the survey results are anonymous, a pre-incentive approach would be best. Pre-incentives items are available to all individuals chosen to participate in the study, regardless of whether or not they complete the survey (Sanchez-Fernandez, Munoz-Leiva, Montoro-Rios, & Ibanez-Zapata, 2010). According to Gendall and Healey (2008) examples of appropriate unconditional incentive items are such things as ballpoint pens, key rings, tea bags, and small food or snack items.

### **Distribution of Results**

The results of this study will be shared with the executive director for Children's Home Society in West Palm Beach, FL, personnel of the child welfare agency as well as the lead agency, ChildNet. However, the results of future research should be share with the executive director for each lead agency, individual directors for each community based care agency as well as the child welfare workers. It would be pertinent to ensure that the results of the study are shared with the participants as well as senior management. Too often respondents who participate in research studies are not informed of the results. Furthermore, DCF has 18 lead community based care agencies in the state of Florida. Based upon state and federal laws, each system of care has similar characteristics and guidelines that must be followed; therefore, I would strongly recommend that the chief operation officer for each lead agency and each county community based care agency review the results of the study for implications of organizational change. By implementing applicable change to their system of care, job satisfaction will be improved and turnover rates will decrease, subsequently having a positive impact on the safety,

well-being, and permanence of children and families involved in the child welfare system.

Not only should the results be shared with internal stakeholders involved in the child welfare system, but external community stakeholders would also benefit from the results of the research. Community board members influence policy and operations for each community based agency and for that reason, should be aware of the results of the research. Board members are local child advocate volunteers who have a desire and commitment to improve child welfare services within their local community.

### **Conclusion**

This research has provided valuable and essential data that will benefit Children's Home Society and the children and families impacted by the child welfare system in Palm Beach County, Florida. The immediate data has implications for social change that influences employee job satisfaction, retention options, and improvement in the continuity of care children and families receive from staff. Although the results of this study illustrate the need for additional research, it also revealed some key organizational factors that child welfare agencies can implement to increase job satisfaction among staff.

Social workers who specialize in child protection perform a critical role in the health, safety, and well-being of the children and families they assist. By increasing job satisfaction and consequently having a positive impact on child welfare workers' decision to stay, permanency outcomes rates for society's most vulnerable will improve.

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## Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation

### Letter of Cooperation

May 15, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

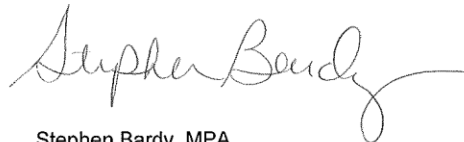
Meresa Stacy has requested permission to collect research data from employees at Children's Home Society of Florida, South Coastal Division. I have been informed of the purpose of the study and nature of the research procedures. Additionally, I have been given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

As the executive director of Children's Home Society of Florida, South Coastal Division, I am authorized to grant permission to the researcher to recruit research participants from our agency. As a part of this study, I authorize the researcher to distribute an anonymous and electronic survey to employees. The researcher may collect research data during office hours. However, I reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if circumstances change.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (561) 868-4330.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Bardy". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Bardy, MPA  
Executive Director

## Appendix B: Permission to Use Job Satisfaction Survey

## Original E-mail

**From :** "Spector, Paul"

**Date :** 04/12/2012 07:49 AM

**To :** 'Meresa Stacy' [

**Subject :** RE: Permission to use the JSS

Dear Meresa:

You have my permission to use the JSS in your research. You can find copies of the scale in the original English and several other languages, as well as details about the scale's development and norms. I allow free use for noncommercial research and teaching purposes in return for sharing of results. This includes student theses and dissertations, as well as other student research projects. Copies of the scale can be reproduced in a thesis or dissertation as long as the copyright notice is included, "Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved." Results can be shared by providing an e-copy of a published or unpublished research report (e.g., a dissertation). You also have permission to translate the JSS into another language under the same conditions in addition to sharing a copy of the translation with me. Be sure to include the copyright statement, as well as credit the person who did the translation with the year.

I've attached a paper describing the scale's development. Required sample size depends on your purpose and the analyses you plan to run. Comparing means between two groups might require no more than 30-40 people, if differences are moderately large. Doing IRT might require 1000 or more.

Thank you for your interest in the JSS, and good luck with your research.

Best,

Paul Spector  
Department of Psychology

## Appendix C Job Satisfaction Survey

<b>JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY</b> Paul E. Spector Department of Psychology University of South Florida <small>Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved.</small>							
PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.		Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
1	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I like the people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	Communications seem good within this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	Raises are too few and far between.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	My supervisor is unfair to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I find I have to work harder at my job because of the incompetence of people I work with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I like doing the things I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	The goals of this organization are not clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PLEASE CIRCLE THE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION THAT COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING YOUR OPINION ABOUT IT.							
Copyright Paul E. Spector 1994, All rights reserved.		Disagree very much	Disagree moderately	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree moderately	Agree very much
19	I feel unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22	The benefit package we have is equitable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	There are few rewards for those who work here.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I have too much to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I enjoy my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	There are benefits we do not have which we should have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I like my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31	I have too much paperwork.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32	I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	There is too much bickering and fighting at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	My job is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	Work assignments are not fully explained.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Appendix D: Demographical Questions

1. What is your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. What is your age? Eg 34
3. How long have you worked for Children's Home Society (Palm Beach Division) in child welfare?
4. How long have you worked in child welfare? (eg. 3 years)
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - a. High School Diploma
  - b. Associates
  - c. Bachelors in Social Work
  - d. Masters in Social Work
  - e. Bachelors in other field of study
  - f. Masters in other field of study
  - g. Doctorate in Philosophy
  - h. Doctorate in Social Work
6. Please select the response closest to your occupation.
  - a. Case Worker (dependency)
  - b. Case Worker (adoptions)
  - c. Supervisor (dependency)
  - d. Supervisor (adoptions)
  - e. Administrator/Program Manager (dependency)
  - f. Administrator/Program Manager (adoptions)
  - g. Family Support Worker
  - h. Court Liaison
  - i. Other
7. Please select the salary range that best describes your annual income.
  - a. Less than \$10,000
  - b. \$10,000 - \$19,999
  - c. \$20,000 - \$29,000

- d. \$30,000 - \$39,999
- e. \$40,000 - \$49,999
- f. \$50,000 - \$59,999
- g. \$60,000 - \$69,999
- h. More than \$70,000

## Appendix E: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study on Job Satisfaction among child welfare workers. The researcher is inviting case management employees with Children's Home Society of Florida, Palm Beach Division, to be in the study. This form is part of the process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This research study is being conducted by Meresa Stacy, a doctoral student at Walden University.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to gather data that would assist in stabilizing the child welfare work force. Historically, job satisfaction has been a contributing factor that impacts child welfare staff retention decisions.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a confidential electronic survey.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Children's Home Society will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to participate in the study you may stop at any time. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

### **Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Participating in this study involves minimal risk. There is minimal risk of exposure of confidential data. All data will be stored in a password protected file and locked file cabinet. The researcher will be the only person to have access to the information. The data collected will be confidential although there is minimal risk that participants can be identified through demographic factors.

By better understanding the factors related to the turnover and retention, child welfare agencies can implement measures and procedures geared at increasing retention among child welfare workers. Stabilizing the work force expedites the opportunities for children and parents to reunify and function as a family unit.

### **Payment:**

There will be no payment or gifts for participating in this research study.

### **Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. All data will be stored in a password protected file and locked file cabinet. The researcher will be the only person to



have access to the information. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions, you may contact the researcher at or. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss concerns with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368 extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-30-12-0069607 and it expires on November 29, 2013.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By completing the on-line survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

**\*\*\*\*Ctrl and click or copy and paste the link provided to take the web-based survey:**

## Appendix F: Reminder Letter

Dear Participant:

A week ago, you received an e-mail inviting you to participate in a web-based survey related to job satisfaction for child welfare staff. I am unable to determine whether or not you have already completed the survey as the information being collected is confidential. If you have completed the survey, thank you!

If you have not had a chance to complete the survey, please click on the link provided at the end of this e-mail.

### **Consent**

You are invited to take part in a research study on Job Satisfaction among child welfare workers. The researcher is inviting case management employees with Children's Home Society of Florida, South Coastal Division, to be in the study. This form is part of the process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Meresa Stacy, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to gather data that would assist in stabilizing the child welfare work force. Historically, job satisfaction has been a contributing factor that impacts child welfare staff retention decisions.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete a confidential electronic survey.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Children's Home Society will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to participate in the study you may stop at any time. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

### **Risk and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Participating in this study involves minimal risk. There is minimal risk of exposure of confidential data. All data will be stored in a password protected file and locked file cabinet. The researcher will be the only person to have access to the information. The data collected will be confidential although there is minimal risk that participants can be identified through demographic factors.

By better understanding job satisfaction and the factors related to the turnover and retention, child welfare agencies can implement measures and procedures geared at increasing retention among child welfare workers. Stabilizing the work force expedites the opportunities for children and parents to reunify and function as a family unit.

**Payment:**

There will be no payment or gifts for participating in this research study.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. All data will be stored in a password protected file and locked file cabinet. The researcher will be the only person to have access to the information. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions, you may contact the researcher at or If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss concerns with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368 extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-30-12-0069607 and it expires on November 29, 2013.

Please print or save this consent form for your records.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By completing the on-line survey, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

\*\*\*\***Ctrl and click or copy and paste** the link provided to take the web-based survey:

Sincerely,

Meresa L. Stacy

Doctoral Student

Walden University