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The Impact of Low Retention of Nonprofit Organizations

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THE IMPACT OF LOW RETENTION IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Yolanda Angel Phillips
Jessica M. Hernandez

June 2018

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact of low retention rates in nonprofit organizations and review factors that are associated with this low rate. Nonprofit organizations are a crucial and integral part of our community. Many factors are influential in the retention of employees which affect the service that is available to those in need. The purpose of this study came from the researcher's desire to raise awareness of the factors that lead to low retention rates in social service non-profit organizations and its effects on service provision. This study allowed for administration to implement strategies that address the factors that lead to high turnover. Prevention strategies that can be utilized to decrease the dissatisfaction of current employees and increase engagement. The field of social services has been chosen for study because its programs are intended to improve the basic social welfare status of individual lives such that society is reformed. The following subsections were discussed: Growth of nonprofit organizations, nonprofits, and human need, nonprofit relationship with funders, challenges within Nonprofits, why employees depart from these organizations and, retention focus. The research method used for this study was quantitative data. Since the research method used for this study was the methodology of quantitative design, snowball sampling was utilized. The Quantitative design was chosen to collect data from a larger group of service providers who worked primarily in a not for profit setting through Likert Scale surveys. The design assisted in quantifying the answer from the surveys to allow comparison,

recognition of discrepancies, and or correlations of the data. The data was collected from 33 participants through an online survey program, utilizing Survey Monkey and, results were entered in SPSS, to compare relationships. Independent variable were the factors that contribute to low retention rate, and the dependent variable was the retention rate. The population this study focused on was management, staff and, direct service employees who work in social service nonprofits or have worked in the past. This study shows statistics which include ethnicity, age of the participants, marital status, education, and employment status. Along with statistical information on each item presented in the distributed survey, it outlines the statistical analysis that was conducted which includes a correlation study on the relationship between compensation, job training, professional development, filled positions, funding, disruption in services, self-care, access to management, and staff appreciate, and staff's desire to leave a non-profit organization. The data were analyzed and found that the biggest impact on employee retention is compensation and the stress caused by chronically vacant positions. The study reviews the conclusions relative to our research questions and hypothesis in addition to, theories guiding conceptualization. This study discusses the limitations of study design and, procedures, as well as recommendations for future social work practice and policy. The findings were significant because the study could narrow down two out of the five factors that demonstrated an actual impact on retention in nonprofit social service organizations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Formulation

There has been an increase in the registration of social services nonprofit organizations in the United States since 2013. In 2008, organizations in health and human services represented 31.5 percent of all registered nonprofits (Quick Facts About Nonprofits, 2013). These organizations contribute over 9 billion dollars to the economy since 2013 (Mckeever, 2015). However, there are threats to these organizations that provide much-needed services to our communities. When government spending decreases the need for social services, nonprofits become high in demand (Vaughan, 2010). Since the start of government social services has been tasked with addressing the needs of their communities (Hasenfeld & Garrow., 2012).

Along with spending cuts, non-profit organizations are also experiencing a challenge to keep this workforce employed, and high turnover is becoming a real issue for social service agencies. (Non-profit World, 2008) The impact of vacant positions and, challenge recruitment of inexperienced staff falls on current staff, organization programs and, clients (Whelan, 2002). If a non-profit does not have useful recruitment tools, organizations must rely on current staff to pick up the slack, which only increases the change of more staff turnover. For non-profits that are not adequately staffed, programs are sometimes discontinued until staff

can be hired. If programs are being shut down, families that need these services will not be able to access them. Whelan (2002) reported on a survey where 425 phone interviews with Executive Directors was conducted, and the results showed that 8% of positions were vacant, and 30% were vacant four months or longer, with 24% of the vacancies being management positions. The study also found that 26% of the non-profits held on to underperforming staff and 22% postponed or canceled programs because of vacant positions (Whelan, 2002).

For organizations with high turnover rates, the direct cost of employee recruitment includes training and overtime pay. However, these are not the only costs, the quality of services also suffers. With the rise in the homeless populations and families in need, it is necessary for us to rely on community-based services to provide for these populations. If the programs families are relying on for financial, social, or mental support are either closed or not being operated by engaged workers then we are causing more damage than improvement. (The Cost of Employee Turnover, 2015).

The need to keep an engaged workforce within nonprofit organizations is not only crucial for the provision of services but, as funds decrease, funders become more selective regarding agencies performance and outcomes (Vaughan,2010). Although having the government provide funding to non-profits is beneficial it can also negatively impact the relationships when outcomes are not met (Ferris,1993). Without an engaged and present workforce, agencies risk losing funding, and according to Vaughn, a current survey demonstrated that 61

percent of non-profits experienced cuts in government funding in 2008 (2010). Which, is a massive concern for social service in-profits, who rely solely on government funding.

Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that impact retention rates specifically in social service nonprofit organizations. The field of social services nonprofits has been chosen for study because in these harsh economic times their services are being relied on by millions of individuals who are suffering. Non-profits are on the front lines working directly with families to address poverty, mental health issues, discrimination, and the lack of food, clothing, and housing. These organizations should be staffed with skilled and competent Social Workers to ensure the quality of services are always high.

Per the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006), the nonprofit sector is now the nation's fourth-largest employer, employing more than 10% of the nation's workforce. With the current state of the economy, it has been a challenge to keep staff and maintain the quality of services due to an increase demands for services but a decrease in resources. With the nonprofit sector growing, engagement in the workplace is vital to the health of an organization as it grows (Nonprofit Employee Engagement & Retention Report, 2015). A current study pinpointed trends between employee engagement and turnover rates and

found that compensation, communication, culture, and hiring practices are factors in retention (Nonprofit Employee Engagement & Retention Report, 2015). Not only are engaged employees more likely to assist in making your mission a reality but, they are less likely to depart. (Nonprofit Employee Engagement & Retention Report, 2015).

For agencies that rely on employees to "produce" services, consequences tend to take a more significant toll on nonprofits. When positions are left vacant for too long, the extra work is given to the remaining employees which creates resentment and, discouragement. Also, the client service relationship suffers due to unstable service provision, poor service quality and, with the costs incurred from hiring and training takes a toll on already limited budgets (Kang et al., 2015, Selden, & Sowa, 2015., Lee, 2016).

The research method used for this study was methodology consisting of quantitative data. The Quantitative design was chosen to collect data from a larger group of service providers through Likert Scale surveys. The design also assisted in quantifying the answer from the surveys to allow comparison, recognition of discrepancies, and or correlations of the data.

Conducting this study helped us to explore the topic in-depth to incorporate topics that may not have been researched yet, and to address what the factors that impact the retention rate within non-profit organizations are? Limitations when conducting these surveys were our own bias, although

participants remained anonymous. It was less personal, and participants were not as open or honest in surveys. Also, a lack of management participation limits data to just direct staff.

Significance to Social Work Practice

The need for this study emerged from the researcher's desire to raise awareness of the factors that lead to low retention rates in social service non-profit organizations and its effects on service provision. This information allowed for administration to implement strategies that address the factors that lead to high turnover. Prevention strategies can be utilized to decrease the dissatisfaction of current employees and increase engagement. When positions are vacant, it increases the workload for current employees and or causes the loss or stalling of social programs. When these programs are eliminated, they are not generating outcomes to justify their funding, which puts them in jeopardy of a loss in revenue. The lack of outcomes can cause funders to withdraw grants and threaten the existence of organizations (Bridgeland, McNaught, Reed, and Dunkelman, 2009., Kang et al., 2015). The findings of the study bring awareness for the need of an engaged social service workforce.

This study's findings may engage social workers who are leading social service nonprofits to implement hiring practices that ensure a competent workforce is hired with a realistic understanding of job requirements. It will also

provide an opportunity for the development of standardized training programs that offer continuing education credits and professional development across all non-profit organizations. These new strategies could become standard line item written into Federal Grants to ensure staff is being engaged and professionally developed. Most nonprofits do not provide much upward mobility; training programs allow staff to feel they are growing with the agency and remain engaged in the mission and values of the organization. The assessment phase of the Generalist Intervention Model is currently informing this study as the issue is still being explored and problems are being identified. Through this exploration, the researcher was asking, what are the factors that are contributing to high turnover in social service nonprofits organizations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will introduce and consist of an overview of the research related to the impact of low retention in nonprofit organizations. The following subsections will be discussed: Growth of nonprofit organizations, nonprofits, and human need, nonprofit relationship with funders, challenges within Nonprofits, why employees depart from these organizations and, retention focus. The final subsection will discuss the theory associated with this topic, Social Cohesion Theory.

Growth of Nonprofits

There has been an increase in the registration of social services nonprofit organizations in the United States since 2013. Organizations addressing the community's basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, and mental health services, represented 31.5 percent of all registered nonprofits (Quick Facts About Nonprofits, 2013). These organizations contribute over 900 billion dollars to the economy since 2013 (McKeever, 2015). Social Service nonprofits not only provide direct services to the disadvantaged they also have a historical relationship with the federal government.

When government spending decreases the need for social services, nonprofits become high in demand (Vaughan, 2010). As mentioned before the social service nonprofit sector has grown and with organizational growth there comes an increase in jobs. Even with low retention, the nonprofit sector is growing, and fewer employees are being let go. (Friesenhahn, 2016). There is projected job growth in human services especially within nonprofits and has increased direct service positions by 46% (Friesenhahn, 2016). Even with the growth in positions within nonprofits, high turnover is still a hindrance to service delivery.

Nonprofits and Human Need

The idea that social service nonprofits would be able to meet the needs of their communities without government funding is solely a reflection of US culture (Salamon, 2012). According to State of Nonprofit America, there are three primary ways in which the nonprofit sector can contribute to the well-being of disadvantaged populations. First, it can provide services that would not be otherwise available, because of a lack of supply by other sectors of the economy, limited accessibility, or prohibitive cost. Second, nonprofits can advocate for the needs of low-income and minority populations. Doing so is critical to the development of anti-poverty policies. Third, the nonprofit sector can play an essential role in creating social capital in disenfranchised communities by promoting trust, community involvement, and volunteerism (Salamon, 2012).

Nonprofit Relationship with Funders

Nonprofit organizations increasingly rely on government grants and contracts with a significant portion of nonprofit revenues come from government grants and fee-for-service which represented 29.4 percent of nonprofit revenues in 2005 (Vaughan, 2010). With the increase of government funding to non-profits both locally and statewide outcomes have become essential in justification for the provision of funding (Vaughan, 2010).

Nonprofit organizations are required to be accountable to their constituencies those who provide funding. However, the accountability requirement squeezes the agencies they are supposed to keep functioning. In a current survey, it was reported, 52 percent of nonprofits reported they could not meet outcomes, up from 44 percent in 2009 (State of the Sector Surveys, 2013). For the last seven years research has shown that technology and limited resources are impacting non-profits ability to attract and retain highly skilled employees to their organizations (Buteau, Et al., 2014).

The costs of employee recruitment strategies and making salaries creates a challenge for employers to fill positions promptly and to stretch current staff to fill the gaps while keeping costs low (Austin, 2003). Having vacant positions that are not producing outcomes creates a challenge for local governments to support social service nonprofits to keep service delivery from being negatively impacted

(Austin, 2003). Having a positive relationship with your contractor creates a buffer zone where performance issues may be overlooked (Buteau, Et al., 2014).

Challenge within Nonprofits

Although this is somewhat good news on a macro level, there are still some challenges nonprofits are facing regarding retaining staff in their agencies. Nonprofit Human Resource Solutions (2012) "reported that U.S. nonprofit organizations had higher employee turnover rates than other types of organizations and were challenged to retain qualified staff." Hiring qualified staff, finding qualified personnel, and finding time to recruit are all challenges for nonprofits. Direct service positions are the hardest to retain, due to three factors; salary caps, no upward mobility, and excessive workloads, many Directors interviewed stated they did not see implementing new strategies any time soon (Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey 2014, Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey, 2015).

The literature demonstrates that employee turnover has direct negative consequences on efficiency, productivity, and employee morale within nonprofits. For agencies that rely on the employee to "produce" services, these consequences tend to take a more significant toll on nonprofits. When positions are left vacated for too long the extra work is given to the remaining employees which creates resentment and discouragement. Also, the client service relationship suffers due to unstable service provision and poor service quality

and with the costs incurred from hiring and training takes a toll on already limited budgets (Kang et al., 2015, Selden & Sowa, 2015., Lee, 2016)

Why Employees Leave

The results of a national survey of 1,270 nonprofit employees rated sixteen factors that contribute to job satisfaction and engagement in their organization which demonstrated a relationship between employee engagement/job dissatisfaction and high turnover in organizations, (UST Nonprofit Employee Engagement & Retention Report, 2015). Engaged employees are those who are enthusiastic and committed to their work and contribute to their organization (Gallup, 2013). Understanding why employee dissatisfaction occurs is a strategy to influence workable solutions and can offset the adverse effects of turnover.

The literature states that a lack of Human Resource director, career path opportunities, and motivation contribute to high turnover. (Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey 2015., Ban, Drahnak-Faller & Towers, 2003). The implementation of Human Resource directors would help organizations implement better recruitment strategies and decrease turnover, but nonprofits have limits that are imposed by funders that require funds go to direct services and not staff.

Organizations still use informal networks for hiring and have no budget or plan to create recruitment strategies. 1 out of 5 nonprofits says turnover is their

biggest challenge, with a 16% retention rate in 2013. In a Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey, 2015 interviewees reported the need for growth and advancement opportunities. According to another researcher, non-profits are challenged when it comes to offering growth opportunities. Non-profits are usually small organizations where upward mobility may be impossible. Which one has to assume for those that stay "motivation is based on it intrinsic or extrinsic value to the employee" (Ban, Drahnak-Faller, & Towers, 2003).

Retention Focus

The literature on retention strategies focuses primarily on recruitment and retention. The consensus is if an agency institutes strategy that invests in their employee's job, satisfaction will increase. Research has demonstrated that human resource management services ensure recruitment is efficient, onboarding is implemented appropriately, and employees are equipped with adequate training to do their job. Research shows nonprofits do not have the capital to increase wages, so the retention strategy is to focus on promoting intrinsic and mission values to retain staff. (Lee, 2016., Kang, Huh, Cho & Auh, 2015)

Per Kim and Lee, mission attachment has been neglected as a factor in nonprofit employee retention. While a study on the mission was completed and signed to research, the results showed no direct correlation with employee retention or pay dissatisfaction (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003). A replication of the

previous study was conducted with surety that researchers would find a correlation, but instead, sound pay and career advancement still outweigh mission value. (Kim & Lee, 2008)

Although we would like to believe intrinsic values would motivate employees to stay, the research shows that the focus of management needs to be increasing employee's job satisfaction which would impact their job performance. When looking at the rate of growth in the non-profit sector, there is a need to consider the factors that contribute to job satisfaction (Lee, 2016). Because Social Service Non-profits solely depend on direct service staff to facilitate outcomes, retaining highly competent staff is essential to them, so understanding how to increase retention of their employees would be valuable knowledge (Selden & Sowa, 2015).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

A guiding philosophy for this study is Social Cohesion. Social cohesion has been defined the factors that keep groups or organizations together and invested (Corbin, 1999). Because social services tenants of operation are to be generous and altruistic (Corbin 1999), it is an appropriate context for the study to analyze the connection between social service nonprofits and retention using social cohesion framework to understand what factors keep can keep staff motivated to stay with an organization. To, retain qualified personnel, skilled

leadership should be present. Who understand that social cohesion and its importance to the sustainability and development of social services (Prudzienica & Mlodzinska-Granek, 2014).

Summary

This study explored the impact of low retention in nonprofit organizations and review factors that are associated with this low rate. Although nonprofit organizations are a crucial and integral part of our community, many factors are influential in the retention of employees which impact the service that is available to those in need. It is vital to research and discover why employees are departing these positions and what efforts can be made to retain these employees.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This study explored the impact of low retention in nonprofit organizations and reviewed factors that were associated with this low rate. The research included why employees are departing from these organizations and, what efforts can be made to retain these employees in helping to serve the needs of our community better. This chapter entails the details of how this study was conducted. The sections that were discussed are as follows, study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, and protection of human subjects.

Study Design

The purpose of this study was to evaluate social service non-profit management implementation of staff retention strategies and the correlation of high turnover within these agencies and, to determine the factors that are contributing to this high turnover rate so actions can be taken to reduce it. This study sought to find answers as to why retention rates are low, and turnover rates are high in these organizations, it explored Non-profits perception of high turnover in their agencies. Current steps were taken by management to address high turnover rates and lastly, employee experience either leaving the agency or in the process of leaving the agency. Conducting this study helped us to explore

the topic in-depth to incorporate issues that may not have been researched yet, and to address what the factors that impact the retention rates within non-profit organizations. Limitations when conducting these surveys were our own bias, although participants remained anonymous. It was less personal, and participants may not be as open or honest in reviews. Also, a lack of management participation limits data to just direct staff.

Sampling

Since the research method used for this study was the methodology of quantitative design, we utilized a snowball sampling. The sampling criteria consisted of former or current employees of nonprofit organizations within San Bernardino County. Researchers are or have been involved with these organizations and its members. Therefore, they were contacted via email, in person, and via telephone and an invitation was extended to complete the survey. Surveys were conducted via survey monkey, online and also handed out to participants personally with hard copy surveys.

These employees and colleagues extended the invitation to others in the field and so forth. There is an estimated total of 20-50 subjects that participated in completing the surveys.

Data Collection and Instruments

Quantitative data were used to collect data via computerized surveys. Quantitative design assisted in quantifying the answer from the surveys to allow comparison and recognition of discrepancies and or correlations of the data. Primary data was used for this study. Participants that completed surveys remained anonymous. The survey was administered to random current and former direct service staff from non-profits via email or personally with hard copy. Surveys were ten questions and, lasted approximately five to ten minutes. Surveys allowed researchers to collect data and investigate why retention rates are high among non-profit organizations.

Procedures

Researchers contacted participants via telephone, email and, personally to advise the completion of surveys. Surveys with consent form (Appendix D) were emailed (Appendix E) to nonprofit organization members in the county as well as personally. A survey was administered to direct service staff currently working in non-profits or those that have a history of working in a non-profit organization. The population this study focused on was management staff and direct service employees who work in social service nonprofits or have worked in the past. The study focused on this population within the context of their employment experience in non-profits.

Protection of Human Subjects

The participant's identity was kept confidential and anonymous. Each participant within the agencies was reminded of confidentiality and, also where to obtain the results if they should need them. Information retrieved from the surveys including data, consent forms and, hard copies of the surveys were secured in a lock box where only the researchers had access to the six-digit code. Questionnaires were given via a computerized survey program, survey monkey, that was kept confidential, this computerized program was password friendly with only the researchers having access to these passwords. Surveys will be destroyed one year after the project has ended.

Data Analysis

Data were collected from surveys through an online survey program and were entered into SPSS, to compare relationships. Independent variable is the factors that contribute to low retention rate, and the dependent variable is the retention rate.

Summary

This study examined the factors that are associated with the impact of low retention in nonprofit organizations and the high turnover rates. The surveys assisted in identifying the elements needed to reduce high turnover rates within nonprofit organizations and the reasons why retention rates are so low in non-

profit organizations. The quantitative method that was used in this study best determined the factors that are most influential in low retention rates and high turnover rates within the nonprofit organizations.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will present the results of a statistical analysis done for this research project. This first section includes the demographic characteristics of the sample. Descriptive statistics will be provided which include ethnicity, the age of the participants, marital status, education, and employment status, along with statistical analysis of responses per question on the survey. The second section outlines the statistical analysis that was done which includes a correlation study on the relationship between compensation, job training, professional development, filled positions, funding, disruption in services, self-care, access to management, and staff appreciate, and staff's desire to leave a non-profit organization.

Results

Table 1 describes the demographics of current or former employees of a non-profit organization. Results show that out of 33 participants 19.35% currently work for a non-profit organization, 51.61% were employed for wages, 6.45% were self-employed, 3.23% were homemakers, 12.9% were students, 12.9% Were County workers, and 6.45% had other types of employment. Of the 33 participants, 3.23% are 18-25 years old, 48.9% are 25-35 years old, 16.13% are

35-45 years old, 9.68% are 45-55 years old, and 22.58% are 55 years or older. The greater number of participants were Hispanic/Latino (38.71%), 29% was white, 16.13% was African American, 3.23% was Native American, 12.9% was Asian, and 3.23% was described as other. The majority, of participants, had a bachelor's degree (51.61%), 3.23% have some college, 6.45% have an Associate's Degree, 29.03% have a Master's Degree, 9.68% have a Doctorate, and 6.45% have other education. Out of 33 participants, 38.71% were single. 38.71% were married or in a domestic partnership and 6.45% were widowed, while 16.13% were divorced. Out of 33 participants 51.61% were employed by wages, 6.45% were self-employed, 19.35% worked in a nonprofit agency, 3.23% were homemakers, 12.90% were students, 12.90% were working for a county agency, and 6.45% reported other as their occupation.

Table 1. Demographics

VARIABLE	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
AGE:		
18-25	1	3.23
25-35	15	48.39
35-45	5	16.13
45-55	3	9.68
55+	7	22.58
Race/Ethnicity:		
White	9	29.0
Hispanic/Latino	12	38.71
Black/African American	5	16.13
Native American/American Indian	1	3.23
Asian	4	12.9
Other	1	3.23
Education:		

Some College	1	3.23
Associates Degree	2	6.45
Bachelor's Degree	16	51.61
Masters	9	29.03
Doctorate	3	9.68
Other	2	6.45
Marital Status:		
Single/Never Married	12	38.71
Married/Domestic Partnership	12	38.71
Widowed	2	6.45
Divorced	5	16.13
Separated	0	0
Other	0	0
Employment Status:		
Employed for Wages	16	51.61
Self-Employed	2	6.45
Working in a non-profit agency	6	19.35
Homemaker	1	3.23
Student	4	12.90
Working For county Agency	4	12.90
Other	2	6.45

Table 2 shows the outcomes of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement on reported adequate compensation. 3.13% of participants totally agreed compensation was adequate, 25% agree, 18.75% were neutral, 21.88% disagreed, and 25% totally disagreed.

Table 2. Overall Compensation

Variable:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Overall compensation was adequate:		
Totally Agree	1	3.13
Agree	8	25.0
Neutral	6	18.75
Disagree	7	21.88
Totally Disagree	8	25.0

Table 3 shows the percentage of former and current employees planning to leave the non-profit organization. 3.13% of participants totally agreed compensation was adequate, 25% agree, 18.75% were neutral, 21.88% disagreed, and 25% totally disagreed.

Table 3. Plans to Leave

Variable: Planning on Leaving Non-Profit:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	8	25.0
Agree	7	21.8
Neutral	6	18.75
Disagree	5	15.63
Totally Disagree	7	21.88

Table 4 shows reported satisfaction of job-related training of former and current employees of non-profit organizations. 12.9% of participants totally agreed they were satisfied with on the job training, 29% agreed, 19.35 % were neutral, 22.58% disagreed, and 16.13% totally disagreed.

Table 4. Job Satisfaction

Variable: Satisfied with Job-Related Training:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	4	12.9
Agree	9	29.0
Neutral	6	19.35
Disagree	7	22.58
Totally Disagree	5	16.13

Table 5 shows the percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement on the dedication to professional development on the part of the non-profit. 22.58% of participants totally agreed their organization's dedication to professional development, 16.13% agreed, 32.26% were neutral, 22.58% disagreed, and 6.45% totally disagreed.

Table 5. Compensation

Variable: The Organization Is Dedicated to Professional Development:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	7	22.58
Agree	5	16.13
Neutral	10	32.26
Disagree	7	22.58
Totally Disagree	2	6.45

Table 6 shows the percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement on vacant positions being filled promptly. 16.67% of participants totally agreed positions were filled promptly, 10% agreed, 13.33% were neutral, 43.33% disagreed, and 16.67% totally disagreed.

Table 6. Vacant Positions

Variable: Vacant Positions Were Filled Timely:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	5	16.67
Agree	3	10.00
Neutral	4	13.33
Disagree	13	43.33
Totally Disagree	5	16.67

Table 7 shows the percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement on whether funding is/was an issue. 29.03% of participants totally agreed funding was an issue, 41.94% agreed, 9.68% were neutral, 12.90% disagreed, and 6.45% totally disagreed.

Table 7. Funding

Variable: Funding Was an Issue:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	7	22.58
Agree	5	16.13
Neutral	10	32.26
Disagree	7	22.58
Totally Disagree	2	6.45

Table 8 shows the percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement on services being disrupted in their organization. 16.13% of participants totally agreed services were frequently disrupted, 19.35% agreed, 12.90% were neutral, 38.71% disagreed, and 12.90% totally disagreed.

Table 8. Service Disruption

Variable: Disruption in Services Happen Frequently:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	5	16.13
Agree	6	19.35
Neutral	4	12.90
Disagree	12	38.71
Totally Disagree	4	12.90

Table 9 shows the percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement on self-café being valued in their organization. 16.13% of participants totally agreed services were frequently disrupted, 19.35% agreed, 12.90% were neutral, 38.71% disagreed, and 12.90% totally disagreed.

Table 9. Self-Care

Variable: Self-Care Was Valued in The Organization:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	9	29.03
Agree	7	22.58
Neutral	3	9.68
Disagree	8	25.81
Totally Disagree	4	12.9

Table 10 shows percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement that management was accessible to staff. 19.35% of participants totally agreed management was available to staff, 38.71% agreed, 22.58% were neutral, 9.68% disagreed, and 9.68% totally disagreed.

Table 10. Management

Variable: Management Was Accessible to Staff:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	6	19.35
Agree	12	38.71
Neutral	7	22.58
Disagree	3	9.68
Totally Disagree	3	9.68

Table 11 shows the percentage of former and current employees of non-profit organizations agreement that staff felt appreciated in their organization. 29.03% of participants totally agreed they felt appreciated as an employee, 25.81% agreed, 12.9% were neutral, 9.68% disagreed, and 22.58% totally disagreed.

Table 11. Staff Appreciation

Variable: You Felt Appreciated in Your Organization:	Frequencies (N)	Percentages (%)
Totally Agree	9	29.03
Agree	8	25.81
Neutral	4	12.9
Disagree	3	9.68
Totally Disagree	7	22.58

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The literature and previous studies asserted a core set of factors that contribute to low retention in non-profit organizations such as adequate compensation, vacant positions, self-care, professional development access to management, funding, and job-related training. The study's finding shows that overall compensation, funding issues, and filling vacant positions were more impactful in non-profit organizations turnover, then any of the other factors, i.e., self-care, professional development access to management, and job-related training. The results showed that these other factors might be present, but they were not a source of worry or attention for respondents.

Conclusions Relevant to Research Questions and Hypothesis

The study's finding showed that More than 50% of participants agreed that the overall compensation was not adequate for the position in their current organization. These results indicate that salary is a significant factor impacting retention. When comparing responses to participants satisfaction with professional development and on the job training, overall, participants scored these areas as being highly satisfied, which suggests that although compensation was an issue employee could be swayed to stay at nonprofits if

professional development opportunities were present. The desire for professional development opportunities indicates that non-profits could increase opportunities for professional growth to compensate for the inability to raise salaries. Results of the survey also showed that more than 50% of participants were planning to leave their current non-profit organization which again reinforces the suggestion that compensation more frequently impacts employee retention.

The study's findings also showed that most participants were satisfied with access to management, the majority felt the organization valued self-care, and most participants felt appreciated in the non-profit. The level of satisfaction with these particular areas in the organization indicates that overall organizational culture was not as big of a factor in retention as previously thought and while employees were satisfied with these areas in their organization one area had more of a negative impact. More than half of participants rated recruitment of new employees into vacant positions as an issue.

Participants agreed that positions were not filled promptly. The indication here is, that along with compensation, the inefficiency in filling vacant positions have a more profound impact on employee satisfaction than any other factor in the study, with the implication that the stress and increased workload that comes with vacant positions negatively affect retention. 60% of respondents agreed that vacant positions were not filled promptly.

When positions are not filled promptly, outcomes still need to be met, which is often put on the remaining staff, in addition to their routine tasks. The

impact of vacant positions and, challenge recruitment of inexperienced staff falls on current staff, organization programs and, clients (Whelan, 2002). Taking on the tasks of employees who have recently left can take a toll on staff which may contribute to feelings that compensation is not adequate. If all staff is carrying additional caseloads while positions are vacant, it would be highly probable that they feel they should be compensated accordingly. It is also safe to say that the social service non-profit world is very small and regarding salaries and employment experience it is known that people talk especially disgruntled employees which may make it difficult to recruit new employees into an organization where staff feel overworked and under compensated

The study showed that participants did not feel compensation was adequate for their current position, and these employees also reported their organizations did not fill vacant positions promptly which the literature stated can increase workloads and cause stress to remaining employees. The implication is that employees feeling regarding compensation may be impacted by the increased workload they must take on due to chronically vacant positions.

The suggestions here is that if non-profits could improve recruitment techniques and put a plan in place to disperse caseloads equally. By adopting these changes, employees may not feel that compensation is not adequate and the organization may be able to increase their employee retention. However, as a majority of, respondents reported, they felt funding was an issue within the organization. When looking at non-profits ability to address funding issues and

increase compensation one must look at the organization funding streams realistically.

Most nonprofit social service agencies rely heavily on federal funding, local grants, and donations to employ staff and provide services. The fact that non-profits rely on outside funding is well known and can create limitations on an organization's ability to compensate employees competitively. We should also look at the precariousness of federal funding with the understanding that it is fickle with ramifications on services. A recent survey reported that 61 percent of not for profit organizations lost funding in 2008, which puts these organizations at risk of closure because they rely on the federal government for a lot of their funding (Vaughan, 2010).

With funding reportedly, an issue and the agreement that positions are not being filled efficiently, an issue is raised regarding the disruption in service provision, which according to literature may take a toll on employee's workloads and organizational outcomes. Without an engaged and present workforce, agencies risk losing funding. The need to keep an engaged workforce within nonprofit organizations is not only crucial for the provision of services but because as funds decrease, funders become more selective regarding agencies performance and outcomes (Vaughan,2010). This barrier may also contribute to the organization's inability to fill vacant positions. If funders are seeing high voluntary turnover, this may cause a loss of confidence and risk of them withdrawing funds. The fear of losing funding may increase an organization's

desperation to keep producing outcomes and overloading staff in the process. Inadequate funding may be contributing to the lengths of time it takes to fill a position. Finding competent staff that has previous non-profit experience can be difficult when they expect to be compensated competitively.

For organizations with high turnover rates, the direct costs include advertising, time spent by HR, new employee training, and overtime pay for remaining staff (The Cost of Employee Turnover, 2015). With the costs of recruiting potential employees, some organizations may choose not to spare the expense at the expense of their employees. The indication is that the inefficiency in filling vacant positions may not be due to the inefficiency of management but due to the lack of funding that can be allocated to recruitment strategies and is a challenge that would be hard to rectify.

Overall the results of the study show that the culture of the organizations was satisfactory to their current employees when it came to self-care, professional development, staff appreciation, and the impact of possible service disruption. However, with such a high rate of respondents reporting their plans to leave their respective agencies despite the high rate of satisfaction in some aspects of the research. The implication is compensation and the burden of taking on additional responsibilities due to vacant positions out ways the positives reasons to stay.

The results of the study suggest that non-profits may not be in as dire of a position as previously thought at the start of the research project. The culture

within an organization takes much work to build, maintain, and correct, primarily when it is operating dis-functionally. It is comforting to see that culture is not a blanket issue that all non-profits are facing. The remaining challenges being narrowed down, i.e., compensation and recruitment strategies, can then be focused on and not seen as a failure on staff or management, but be met with the understanding that it is reasonable challenges agencies face, and as a team, it can be corrected. There is an alleviation of fear with the issues can be clarified, and a solution is found.

Limitations of Study Design and Procedures

Following the discussion, it is essential to consider certain limitations.

Our participants were gathered through snowball sampling, via a Survey Monkey link sent to county and local non-profit mailing lists. The reliance on workers to complete the survey was on blind faith. There was little control over who participated in the study other than the responses from the surveyors who answered that they currently worked or had worked in the non-profit organization.

A limitation to consider was the sample size and the county of focus. Being that only 33 participants completed the questionnaire, any conclusions in this study are limited to one county and may not correlate with more extensive studies' results. Participants who completed the survey were from San Bernardino County only; therefore, findings may not pertain to non-profit employees from other counties. Any researcher using this study in future

research should consider involving more participants that hold various positions within social service non-profits and increasing the sample size and may consider surveying a more extensive parameter.

Another limitation would be lack of access to the researchers and respondents. Due to completing the survey online, there is no physical contact with researchers to clarify their misunderstandings regarding questions but also to guide less tech-savvy participants in accessing Survey Monkey. The use of technology could have been a barrier to increasing our sample size and increasing the completion rate of the surveys.

Also, the using a scale such as the Likert Scale can create some barriers for participants in the wording of the survey questions and without access to researchers may haphazardly choose a response and skew the study's results. However, even with the limitations, the results may still apply to organizations interested in diagnosing low retention in their nonprofit. The results can help with future strategic plans to limit high turnover rates in nonprofit organizations.

Future Research and Recommendations

The study's finding shows that overall compensation, funding issues, and filling vacant positions were more impactful in non-profit organization's high turnover than any of the other factors found in the literature and from the results of this study. When it comes to funding issues, it is essential that social workers be familiar with funding and fundraising strategies. Knowledge is power and if

employees feel involved on all aspects of the nonprofit, when possible, ownership develops, and employee's natural feelings about the organization may guide them to find ways to support its sustainability. According to research, social workers may have additional connections to outside community members and can join forces with other nonprofit organizations to upsurge and maximize funding. Discovering different ways to include employees in the sustainability of the organization can expand employee motivation which should ultimately be the organization's goal (Damij, Levnajic, Rejec Skrt, Suklan, 2015).

According to the National Association of Social Workers, social workers have a duty to act against social injustice which can include, economic injustice (NASW, 2008). With nonprofits being on the frontline of addressing the needs of their communities which include, homelessness, trauma, mental health issues, poverty, etc., not having the funding to pay their employees to continue their work is a social injustice. Programs suffer when there is not enough staff to provide direct care. Social Workers need to advocate for new policy that would keep social programs funded. It is vital that they advocate on behalf of those organizations to increase funding.

Due to high turnover rates in nonprofits, it may be necessary to prepare for employee's partings and fill those spots in an appropriate time frame. Developing a standardized training program that will provide quick and efficient training to fill vacant positions. Since most non-profits do not have a Human Resources Department current staff or outside trainers would need to be

employed to oversee the training program for new employees. One choice, again, is to add line items written into grants to address the additional costs the new program may incur.

However, the literature stated increasing funding may not always be an option and from the results of our study funding in and of itself may not be the sole reason employees are leaving, but due to the inefficiency of filling vacant positions. Current compensation may be enough but taking on additional work may create resentment about salary. A small way to compensate for the lack of raising salary is to provide professional development where agencies could include a line item that sets aside funding for professional development opportunities which most grants do not include. The following recommendations are ways to address job dissatisfaction that may not include increase compensation.

A recommendation for social work practice would be to capitalize on the relationship and increase the open dialogue with board members, to advise them of retention issues that would allow them to take a proactive step in addressing the problems. Allowing employees access to the board to discuss job satisfaction, expectations, and roles are vital for professional and personal growth. It is essential that social workers feel the support from their management and their Board of Directors.

According to research, reviewing employee's levels of satisfaction within an organization should be a primary focus when addressing concerns about

retention (Kang, Huh, Cho, Auh, 2015). Employees should be allowed to discuss their concerns as well as their needs. It is essential for employees to participate in a discussion on possible beneficial changes that will improve job satisfaction. It is crucial for the administration to implement strategies that address job dissatisfaction. Prevention strategies can be utilized to decrease the dissatisfaction of current employees and increase engagement.

New strategies such as employee satisfaction surveys that will allow employees to express concerns that will assist directors to see what employees need and to follow up with those concerns.

Specific factors motivate employees to depart or remain in an organization; those factors can be most relevant when initiating the job. Therefore, it is vital to review expectations of what the employee is seeking during the interview (Barrick & Murray, 2009). Being clear about expectations, roles, and the culture of the agency can inform the new employee about the fit of the organization for them.

Another recommendation suggested is for every employee to receive an exit interview before his/her departure. It is essential to gather information from employees who are parting from the organization, and this data can be of excellent value for future reference and, will allow administrators to understand what improvements need to be made within the organization (Kang, Huh, Cho, Auh, 2015). Creating a culture that appreciates staff would be another recommendation to curb high turnover. When an employee feels appreciated,

they become increasingly motivated to complete tasks more effectively and efficiently. Many factors contribute to the success and satisfaction of a job, and recognition is one of the primary factors (Damij, Levnajic, Rejec Skrt, Suklan, 2015). It is essential for leaders to provide recognition for their employee's challenging work and dedication, in doing so, employees will feel appreciated and increase their productivity.

Keeping morale high in lean economic times is also a recommendation for social work policy. If there is a positive relationship between employees and their leaders, it will increase the productivity of the employee, and increase communication as well as collaboration; employees will be driven to achieve goals and mission of the organization (Tsai, 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the results and findings of high turnover rates in nonprofit organizations, in addition to, limitations of the study and, recommendations for social work practice and policy. This study's finding shows that overall compensation, funding issues, and filling vacant positions were more impactful in non-profit organizations turnover, then any of the other factors, i.e., self-care, professional development access to management, and job-related training.

The results showed that these other factors might be present, but they were not a source or worry or attention for respondents. Some limitations that

were discovered were the small sample size, utilizing participants from only one county, discrepancies that can occur with a database, Survey Monkey and, the question options in the survey may be unclear and interpreted in different ways from participants.

Recommendations for social work practice and policy were as follows:

Social workers should be familiar with funding and fundraising strategies.

Organizations should be enlisting Social Workers in advocating for additional funding. Along with increased funding nonprofits could consider influencing grant writers to add line items for professional development and training. With the increase in money dedicating to professional development, organizations can create standardized training programs to compensate for the inability of non-profits to offer competitive salary packages. Also, organizations should also consider creating a system for recognizing and appreciating staff that is embedded in the culture of their agency.

APPENDIX A:
DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

(Developed by student researchers)

Demographic Survey Please Mark all that Apply

Age: What is your age?

Ethnicity origin (or Race): Please specify your ethnicity.

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Other (please specify)

Marital Status: What is your current marital status?

- Single, never married
- Married or domestic partnership
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated

[] Other (please specify)

Education: What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? *If currently enrolled, highest degree received.*

- Some college credit, no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate

Employment Status: Are you currently...?

- Employed for wages
- Self-employed
- Working in a Not-for-Profit Social Service Agency
- A homemaker
- A student
- Working for County Agency
- Other (please specify)

APPENDIX B:
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY CONSENT FORM

Survey Consent Form

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the factors that lead to a high volume of workers leaving not-for-profit social service agencies. This study is being conducted by Yolanda Phillips and Jessica Hernandez under the supervision of Dr. Herb Shon, Assistant Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: This study will explore the impact of low retention in not-for-profit organizations and review factors that are associated with it.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will be asked to follow an internet link in an email to Survey Monkey. Participants will be asked to enter their demographic information and begin the survey. The survey will consist of approximately 10 questions. Once the survey is completed, the participants will exit the page and survey.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is completely voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and can freely withdraw from participation at any time.

ANONYMOUS: Survey Monkey will not collect any identifying information and the answers generated will not be connected to the participant.

DURATION: The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes for participants to complete.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to participants.

BENEFITS: There is no direct benefit for the participants resulting from their involvement in this research.

CONTACT: For answers to pertinent questions about the research, please contact Herb Shon, Ph.D., LCSW (909) 537-5532 Herb.Shon@csusb.edu.

RESULTS: The results of this study can be found from the Pfau Library Scholarworks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/help-search.html>) at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2018

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:

This is to certify that I acknowledge this information and I am accepting to participate in this study.

Please write an "X" here _____ and please date here _____

APPENDIX C:
EMAIL SURVEY RECRUITMENT GUIDE

(Developed by student researchers)

Email Survey Recruitment Guide

Hi, my name is, and we are conducting a research project for the Masters of Social Work Program at California State University San Bernardino. Our research project is exploring the impact of low retention in social service nonprofits. You were identified as someone who has worked or is working in a non-profit social service agency. I am emailing you to invite to be part of my research project by completing a survey about your experience in a non-profit social service organization.

The survey is ten questions and will take 5-10 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential, and only demographic information will be collected. Please follow the link in this email to access the survey in Survey Monkey. Once the survey is complete, you can exit the page. If you have questions, please email lealy@coyote.csusb.edu or hernj386@coyote.csusb.edu.

APPENDIX D:
INDIVIDUAL SURVEY

Non-Profit Employee Satisfaction Survey (Developed by student researchers)

Results will not be shared with employers.

Thank you for your participation.

1. [I am] Planning on leaving the Non-profit Organization.

- No
- Yes
- I already left

2. You were satisfied with the job-related training the organization offered.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

3. Overall compensation adequate for the position.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

4. The organization is dedicated to professional development.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

5. Vacant positions were filled in a timely manner.

- Agree
- Totally Agree
- Disagree
- Totally Disagree
- Neutral

6. Funding was an issue within the organization.

- Agree
- Totally Agree
- Disagree
- Totally Disagree
- Neutral

7. Disruption in services happened frequently.

- Agree
- Totally Agree

APPENDIX E:
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee

Researcher(s) Yolanda Phillips & Jessica Hernandez

Proposal Title The Impact of Law Retention in nonprofit
Organization

SW1994

Your proposal has been reviewed by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board. The decisions and advice of those faculty are given below.

Proposal is:

- approved
- to be resubmitted with revisions listed below
- to be forwarded to the campus IRB for review

Revisions that must be made before proposal can be approved:

- faculty signature missing
 - missing informed consent debriefing statement
 - revisions needed in informed consent debriefing
 - data collection instruments missing
 - agency approval letter missing
 - CITI missing
 - revisions in design needed (specified below)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

James Ch...
Committee Chair Signature

1/23/2018
Date

Distribution: White-Coordinator; Yellow-Supervisor; Pink-Student

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES

Yolanda Phillips-

Chapter One: Problem Formulation

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter Four: Results

Data collection

Data analysis

Chapter Five: Discussion

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Conclusions Relevant to Research Questions and Hypothesis

Formatting

Revisions

Jessica Hernandez

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