

UNDERSTANDING INTENT TO LEAVE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY
OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND TURNOVER INTENT
OF CLINICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES IN FEDERAL HEALTH CARE

by

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Abstract

As the Department of Veterans Health Administration advances into the 21st century, it is projected that a significant percentage of the staff in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will be leaving federal employment due to retirement. This research will investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and employee turnover, to be measured by the participants' intent to leave their jobs in the near future. The setting was one VA medical center with its six satellite clinics. Participants were all VA employees, both supervisory and hourly wage personnel. The study used a quantitative methodology to explore both clinical and administrative employees' intent to leave. Data were collected using web-based surveys. Survey instruments included the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI), the Stay or Leave Index, and a demographic questionnaire.

The findings suggested that overall employees were satisfied with their jobs. There were facets of their jobs in which they indicated dissatisfaction. However, they entertained the thought of quitting more often than taking the action. The implications from this study were that employee satisfaction does impact the turnover process as alluded to in the literature. In this study, employees have decided to not take the action of quitting the organization and this could be attributed to the failing economy and the difficulty of finding employment opportunities or it could be attributed to the age of the average employee in the study group, which was less than the usual retirement age. These are factors that could be investigated in further study.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my daughters. They have been my ultimate source of inspiration throughout this process. They have continuously reminded me that there will always be difficult challenges in life, but together we can overcome. I also dedicate this dissertation to my dad who passed away many years ago.

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It is with great pleasure that I acknowledge my family and friends who provided me with the spiritual, emotional, and financial support that enabled me to complete this dissertation. Second, I would like to thank Dr. April Boyington Wall, Dr. Valerie Coxon, and Dr. Kathlyn Sue Haddock and all of the professors, advisors, and support staff at the Capella University who diligently worked with me throughout this doctoral program. Third, I would like to thank the organization and employees who participated in my research study. Without the assistance of these people this project would never have been completed. Finally, I would like to thank my classmates and business colleagues. With their support, I was able to make it through the program despite facing many difficulties along the way.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Turnover is a phenomenon that reaches all occupations and branches of the government. According to the Congressional Budget Office turnover gradually increased through the 1970's and decreased between 1980 and 1984. Quitting and retiring were found to be the most common reasons for leaving employment, representing approximately 60% of total separation statistics for all workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2001). Federal health care relied on skilled and trained scientific and technical personnel in combination with experienced supervisors and administrators to perform their mission (Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 2004). Managers struggled to understand how they could minimize turnover and this generally led them back to the need to understand their employees' perceptions of satisfaction. Job satisfaction had been identified as one of the prominent factors associated with turnover as well as a key element in job retention. This research, sought to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave of clinical and administrative employees serving America's veterans.

Background of the Study

Workforce shortages in healthcare facilities along with increased demand for services from an aging patient population were at the critical level. According to a study conducted by a global human resource consulting firm, DMB, technologists, therapists, pharmacists, etc. were showing a turnover rate that exceeded 20% (Fryer, 2002). The individuals leaving the organization were central to the internal structure providing support to production and operation. One factor in the turnover equation was the growing percentage of baby-boomer.

Reports compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projected growth of the overall labor force of 12% by 2012. Concurrently, the estimated percentage of workers 55 and older was estimated to increase by approximately 49% during the same period of time (Bliss & Associates, 2006). Forty-three percent of HR professionals surveyed believe this could potentially become a problem primarily due to the roles and positions these individuals held in the organization (Castillo & Hink, 2004). Within the last eight years, congress had instructed Veteran Health Administrations to expand their services to the growing population of veterans returning from conflicts as well as those that had completed their tours of duty abroad and stateside. Historically health care could be provided at any number of main Veteran Affairs facilities (VA) across the country; however, it had become increasingly evident that there was a need to increase the number of facilities to accommodate the number of service men and women. As the turnover rates in VAs continued to increase this had turned into a monumental challenge. Dating back to the late 1900s, in the southeast part of the country there were only three major medical VA facilities to service veterans in Alabama, South Carolina and Georgia. Most recently each of those facilities had established community based outpatient clinics (CBOC) in an attempt to meet the increase in demand for comprehensive medical services.

As the demand for services increased, it had become imperative that VAs increased their recruitment and retention of clinical and administrative staff. Employee turnover could have negative impacts on quality of care and job satisfaction in an organization (Braddock & Mitchell, 1992). According to Bavendam Research Institute, Inc. (1999), the number one problem plaguing organizations had been the inability to find qualified personnel. This

concern was magnified in health care which relied on medical specialists and experts to perform vast numbers of invasive procedures and interpret life-threatening laboratory findings. Employee turnover also impacted access to health care as patients became dependent on facilities following up to ensure their health care was uninterrupted as they transitioned and relocated to all parts of the country. Knowledgeable individuals that could facilitate seamless transition for newly arriving veterans as well as transferring and homeless veterans were at risk with the rising tide of employee turnover. Competing in the labor market for recruiting of the best and the brightest could be difficult because of the financial constraints placed upon non-profit federal medical facilities. As a non-profit organization, fee for services were not as flexible as they might have been in the private and public sectors, which could limit the success of recruitment of quality staff (Gowdy, Carlson, & Rapp, 2003). The federal government employed approximately 2 million employees nationwide and with turnover anticipated to continually increase (Zemke, 2002), continued loss of labor would ultimately impact staffing and quality of care for many years to come.

The loss of day to day operational knowledge was another factor in the turnover equation. The Accenture Consultants Group found over 45% of full-time workers in the United States had no processes in place for the transfer of knowledge among employees. Most conceded knowledge transfer usually occurred in informal discussions amongst workers that simply occurred over time (Rouser & Dorsey, 2003). This supported the notion that as older workers leave employment the knowledge and know-how of the organization went with them. A recently published article entitled, UK Firms Face Management “Black Hole” (Amble, 2004) compared the loss of talented and knowledgeable personnel to a “black

hole”. They concluded that a loss of knowledge created a loss of continuity between the past, present and future. This loss of continuity eventually eroded the organization stifling any potential growth. Knowledge of past experiences, knowledge of organizational victories, and knowledge of organizational defeats was invaluable as it was the past that was the best predictor of the future (Muchinsky, 2000).

Federal non-profit institutions faced financial constraints that made them highly dependent on revenue generated from the government (Braddock & Mitchell, 1992; CSRRC Report, 2003). This forced them to creatively approach recruitment. Bonuses were offered to existing employees that could refer individuals for hard to recruit positions, one-time signing bonuses were offered to individuals that agreed to join the team, and compensation packages filled with family health care coverage, dental and eye options were offered as well. There were educational funds offered to pay historical educational debts and funds offered for future educational endeavors that often made employment with the federal government more attractive in light of the competition. As incoming employees were made aware of the demands, increased workload and expectations, they were further advised of other types of financial rewards available that were tied into the performance measures that all Federal facilities were required to meet for accreditation from external agencies such as Joint Commission Accreditation Health Care Organizations (JCAHO) that had the ability to shut down health care facilities that did not make the marks.

Statement of the Problem

There was an upward trend of turnover among clinical and administrative federal employees who provided healthcare and other ancillary services to veterans. There was

historically little research in federal health care that would identify a direct link between job satisfaction and intent to leave, however, there was a need to understand the relationship in this population to reduce negative turnover and increase retention efforts given the on-going conflicts world-wide from which our veterans returned seeking clinical and mental health assistance. Examination of demographic characteristics could identify differences in job satisfaction between clinical and administrative staff and could assist in designing programs to improve recruitment and ultimately providing continuity of care to America's heroes.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intent among employees serving veterans in one medical facility in South Carolina and six community based outpatient clinics. The secondary purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference in the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave between clinical and administrative staff. The results obtained from this study may help management understand the impact job satisfaction had on intent to leave and identify different strategies to improve satisfaction and address turnover.

Rationale

The rationale for this research was based on the following factors:

1. There was evidence of increased government commitment to expand services for veteran access to health care;
2. There was evidence that the extended war time conflicts would increase the demand for veteran health care for years to come as many

- had sustained mental health injuries to a more severe extent than previous conflicts had produced;
3. There was evidence that policy makers were increasingly restructuring policy for provision of resources for veteran health care and needed to appropriate sufficient funding for veteran health care as appropriations were no longer interchangeable after designated from Congress;
 4. Federal medical facilities would be in a position to benefit from research on organizations with the same infrastructures.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What was the relationship between levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among staff in federal health care?

H1₀. There was no statistically significant relationship between levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among staff in federal health care.

H1_a. There was a statistically significant relationship between levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among staff in federal healthcare.

2. How did levels of job satisfaction and intent to leave vary by each of the socio-demographic variables assessed in this study (age, gender, years of federal employment, ethnicity)?

H2₀. There was no statistically significant relationship between each of the socio-demographic variables assessed (age, gender, years of federal employment, ethnicity) and levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among clinical and administrative staff in federal health care.

H2a. There was a statistically significant relationship between each of the socio-demographic variables assessed (age, gender, years of federal employment, ethnicity) and levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among clinical and administrative staff in federal health care.

3. What was the relationship between job satisfaction (pay, peers, supervisors, and promotions) and job classification among staff in federal health care?

H3o. There was no statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction (pay, peers, supervisors, and promotions) and job classification among staff in federal health care?

H3a. There was a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction (pay, peers, supervisors, and promotions) and job classification among staff in federal health care?

Significance of the Study

This research had the potential of providing management officials of federal health care facilities the opportunity to not only understand how job satisfaction impacted an employee's intent to leave, but also to distinguish between those factors that were most relevant to clinical staff versus those factors that were most relevant to administrative staff. Findings from this research could redirect retention strategies and introduce recruitment ideas to minimize employee intent to leave. This could produce continuity of continued quality care, increased patient satisfaction, more efficient recruitment and retention efforts.

The major difference between the two subsets of individuals was based on their job classification, i.e. administrative or clinical, which dictated the types of support provided to direct patient care. This knowledge could then be passed along to federal health care facilities in the same geographical location that could be impacted by the same contributory factors in their environments.

The expectation of this research was that clarification would be provided on similarities and differences that may have existed in job satisfaction for clinical and administrative staff as well as drill down to specific similarities and differences that could be category specific or level specific. Overall, a general contribution to the general body of knowledge to a multi-disciplinary healthcare organization would be valuable to human resources departments that had increasingly become involved in the recruitment and retention efforts of human capital for organizations. All staff provided input in delivery of health care and successful delivery of this care required maximization of their satisfaction in their daily duty settings. Despite the extensive research done on job satisfaction and intent to leave, very few had been the result of research on health care to veterans by federal employees. The data could be utilized by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in their reviews of governmental organizations; it could be utilized by other federal organizations to include the Department of Defense and the Social Security Administration. Federal turnover rates were monitored by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) and many other sites as they were one of the largest employers of federal workers in the United States and strived annually to be the employer of choice.

Definition of Terms

Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI). A tool used to measure specific sub-sets of job satisfaction (Balzer, Kihm, Smith, Irwin, Bachiochi, Robie, et al., 2000)

Administrative staff – Individuals under administrative direction who performed general office duties and other duties as assigned. (Wikipedia, 2008).

Clinical staff – Individuals involved in activities including engagement of the patient, assessment, planning, consulting, and crisis intervention. (Kanter, 1989).

Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC). For the purpose of this study, this term was used to describe annexed medical facilities located over 30 miles from the main medical facility that offer a range of medical services.

Full time employee – (FTE) – Individual employed at least forty hours per week (HER, 2006).

Full time permanent – Individual employed at least forty hours that had completed a probationary period.

Job Classification. For the purpose of this study, this described the distinction between clinical and administrative groups of employees.

Job satisfaction – “a pleasurable feeling that resulted from a perception that one’s job fulfilled or allowed for the fulfillment of one’s important job values” (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2000).

Turnover. For purposes of this analysis, referred to separation of employees from their organization (Marsh & Manari, 1977).

Assumptions and Limitations

One limitation of this research was geography as the data was only gathered from one federal health care organization which limited the variety of data that could be collected. Other organizations may have had different environmental factors that could add to the study. Another limitation was that the study information gathered was based solely on honest responses or self reporting from the participants via a survey approach. Another limitation to this study was the lack of references to draw on for analysis. Historical studies focused on health care organizations in the private or public sectors that were for profit organizations. A final limitation was the use of the AJDI/JIG survey that addressed only five key factors of job satisfaction. This survey had been expanded over the years to include other identified factors of job satisfaction. Utilizing a survey methodology to collect data limited the depth of information that could be gathered. More depth could have been gathered if a qualitative methodology had been used.

A noted strength of this study was that it was conducted in a branch of the federal government that did not have documented studies on this specific topic. Previous studies conducted on government turnover date back over twenty years. Final strengths included elimination of subjectivity; clear specification of dependent and independent variables; specific statement of purpose and a higher level of reliability due to a controlled environment.

Nature of the Study

This study used a quantitative methodology to examine relationships between job satisfaction and turnover which would be measured by intent to leave. The study would allow participants to provide feedback via electronic survey on their perception of job

satisfaction in terms of pay, promotions, supervision, and work in general by completing the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI) and the Intent to Quit Index (ITQ). A 10-item demographic questionnaire containing questions on age, gender, education, tenure, and ethnicity was also used to gather additional participant information.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between employee job satisfaction and turnover in a federal health care facility. This chapter focused on reviewing literature that pertains to theories and concepts relevant to the topic of the research study. For the purposes of this study, the theory of employee turnover was discussed in relation to the Steers & Mowday (1981) conceptual model. This took into consideration some of the key indicators of potential turnover.

The foundations of research on job satisfaction could be traced back as far as the Greeks who posited the idea that individuals would seek pleasure rather than pain (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004). Somewhere around the turn of the century, the concept of job satisfaction transitioned from a philosophical concept to more of a psychological concept that intrigued researchers. Early studies did not examine the stimulators of pleasure and pain in relation to job satisfaction, until the 1920s when psychologist began to explore the drive theory. The drive theory suggested that job satisfaction was an end result of a motivated behavior and that this could be learned and carried into future behaviors (Steers, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004). As the years passed, other theorist continued to expand on the foundational ideologies to further explore the facets of job satisfaction.

Hedonist assumptions of pleasure over pain were followed by drive theories that evolved into reinforcement theories and around 1950 Maslow's content theory took root. Maslow's (1954) needs theory suggested five basic needs that any individual would have: (a) physiological: shelter, hunger or thirst; (b) safety: physical and emotional protection; (c) social:

acceptance and belongingness; (d) esteem: status or attention; (e) self-actualization: inner drive and self fulfillment. This hierarchy of needs according to Maslow suggested that as individuals achieved the lower elements of the chain, they would then strive to achieve the higher levels. Further study into ways to implement this theory identified the need to address different motivators as individuals had different needs and were at different levels of the hierarchy, as well as some simple measures such as minor changes in the environment that would supplement the needs of individuals.

Further development of the needs theory was continued by another theorist focusing on the achievement element of individual needs. He suggested there was a distinction between high achievers and low achievers. High achievers would expect rapid feedback that would allow them to alter or moderate actions to attain their goals (McClelland, 1961). Keeping in line with the earlier theories, the next theory to evolve was a cognitive theory. Cognitive theories sought to explain the relationship between human behavior and job satisfaction. One of the most prevalent cognitive theories was that of Vroom (1964). Vroom's theory suggested a behavior to reward relationship to explain aspects of job satisfaction. The next theory to evolve was the goal-setting theory in which job satisfaction was thought to be predicated on the accomplishment of goals which also increased performance, productivity (Lock, 1968) and job satisfaction.

Other theories developed by researchers in the evolution of research on job satisfaction included the equity theory (Adams, 1965). One of the most interesting facets of this theory was it suggested that individuals had six options to evaluate to address their perceptions of equity leading to satisfaction; (a) change their individual level of input, (b & c) change their individual level of output, (d) change the way they look at themselves or others, (e) compare themselves to

someone they perceive to be performing better, or (f) quit their jobs. Victor Vroom (1964) posits that an individual's behavior could be the predictor of an attractive outcome. This expectancy theory as it had been labeled met resistance from other theorist who suggested this was more idealistic than realistic (Robbins, 2005). As the evolution of theories continued, other prominent theorist including Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell (1957), Porter and Lawler (1968), suggested the understanding of job satisfaction could best be understood by understanding motivators, rewards, intrinsic (internal gratification) and extrinsic (external gratification) contingencies, praise, and changes in job content.

Overall, theorist had trended the complex matrix of variables and factors that impacted an individual's perception of being satisfied in their jobs. They ranged from skills, to tasks, to autonomy to feedback. All elements would not be represented in all jobs; however, communication of the expectations and those attributes that were present may have had a more profound impact on an employee's understanding of their relevance in a particular job (Robbins, 2005) and may have impact job satisfaction as they were realized.

Theoretical Conceptual Framework

The examination of turnover had been a research interest for decades. Turnover theories dated back decades (March & Simon, 1958) and were still conducted in modern society (Negrin & Tzafrir, 2004). The consistent theme of most theories was that there were certain factors that influenced an individual's decision to discontinue employment with an organization. Some of those influences had been job markets with increased availability for advancement (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004). Other factors included pay, working conditions, co-workers, and recognition in the workplace (Frank & Taylor, 2004). To further examine the impact that job

satisfaction had on turnover or intent to leave, this study would extract a subsection of the comprehensive turnover model proposed by Steers and Mowday (1981), schematically represented in Figure 1. The cross-sections for examination were job satisfaction and intent to leave. The model had three distinct categories or phases: (a) *job satisfaction (i.e. expectations and values)*; (b) *organizational commitment (job attitudes and intent to leave)*; and (c) *intent to leave (turnover)*. The ultimate decision to stay or leave belonged to the individual, and therefore the individual expectations and values were the starting point of the model.

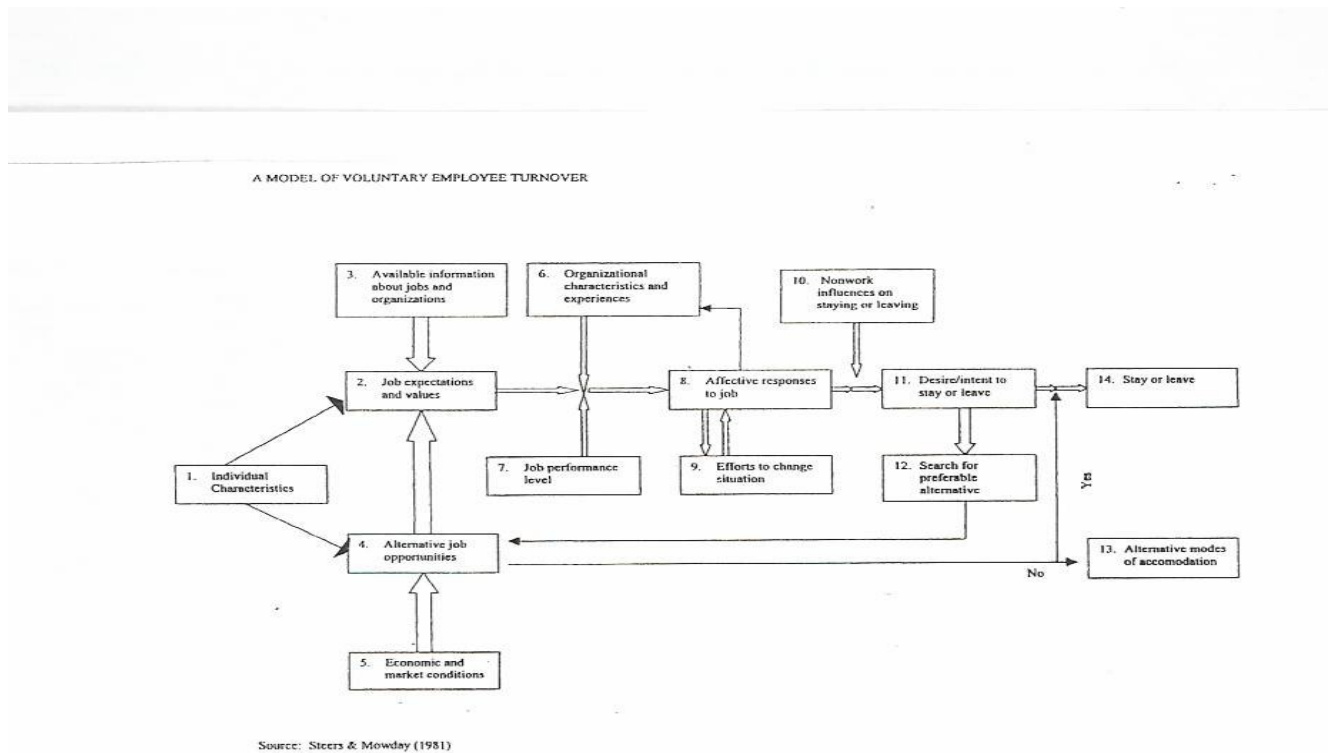


Figure 1. Model of Voluntary Turnover. For the purpose of this study the model shows relationships between variables indicated by research to be a part of the turnover process. This study focuses on job satisfaction (represented in box 7,8,9) and turnover (represented in box 11,14) and will investigate the relationships in reference to several demographics (represented in box 1). From: Steers, R. M., & Mowday, R. T. (1981). Employee turnover and post-decision accommodation processes. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 3, 235-281.

It was hypothesized that all individuals had different expectations upon entering a job that were influenced by beliefs, rewards, interpersonal relationships, etc. In the model, the individual's expectations (Figure 1, box 2) were influenced by three areas (i.e. characteristics, information, and opportunities). The first influence, characteristics, (box 1) included age, education, occupation, tenure, etc. to identify the degree to which these variables impacted leaving, Federico, Federico, Lundquist, Mangione, Mobley, Horner, et al., if any. The second influence, information, (box 3), postulated that individuals made more informed choices when they were provided information (Wanous, 1977) which led to the development of realistic expectations. Thirdly, opportunities (box 4) influenced expectations in how the individual evaluated the current job situation. Simply stated, the more attractive the alternative job opportunities, the more critical one would be when evaluating their current job (Lawler, 1975).

The next step in the first phase of linking expectations and values to attitudes (box 8) could be found in affective responses. These responses were comprised of individual attitudes, beliefs, motivation and confidence to move forward. (Further discussion of affective responses was found in Chapter 3). The general premise of this portion of the model was that expectations (box 2) and experiences (box 6) interacted and suggested the more congruency between an individual's experience within an organization and their expectations the less likely they were to leave (Muchinsky & Tuttle, 1979) (Porter & Steers, 1973). Other factors present in expectations included pay, job duties, geography, etc. These additional factors reminded the individual to consider whether or not their expectations were being met. Job performance (box 7) suggested poor performance was linked to increased frustration (Cooper & Payne, 1978) and even more recently studies showed poor performance as a direct influence on leaving (Marsh & Mannari,

1977; Wanous, Stumpf, & Bedrosian, 1978). This portion of the model emphasized the directional flow of the influences. Attitudes could flow back into experiences (box 6) and into performance (box 7). This particular position in the model was critical. If attitudes were negative they may decrease performance, and result in punitive actions which could further decrease performance. Poor attitudes could influence an individual's perceptions of actions implemented by the organization, (i.e. pay increases, promotions). This could then lead to the employee engaging in efforts to change the situation (box 9). Change could include altering the immediate environment to fit, (i.e. restructuring job assignments or transferring individuals) (March & Simon, 1958), or an attempt to alter the situations within the office including the flow or design, etc. When this could not be accomplished, the employee had a tendency to focus on leaving.

The second phase linked attitudes to intent to stay or leave (box 11). The influences in this phase initiated from non-work issues (box 10) or affective responses to the job. Research on attitude theory (Fishbein, 1967) suggested reduced levels of satisfaction and commitment (box 8) to manifest in behavioral changes. In terms of an employee leaving, decreased satisfaction would lead to increased intent to leave (box 11). (This theory was expanded in later sections). Many non-work issues impacted attitude including (a) remaining in an unpleasant job because of future career hopes; (b) inability of spouse to relocate to another location; (c) other personal or family interests (Dubin, Champoux, & Porter, 1975). Some research supports a relationship between supply of and demand for workers in a system along with the existence of non-economic factors etc. (More discussion of supply and demand could be found in the work of Sussman & Cogswell, 1971).

Some generally suggested turnover was a function of a negative attitude and the inability of individuals to secure other employment (March & Simon, 1958; Vroom, 1964; Price, 1977; Mobley, 1977). Despite the differences in the models and the existence or non-existence of intermediate linkages between attitudes and actual turnover (Mobley, 1977), there remained various areas of shortcomings in turnover research:

1. The role of information about ones current job or prospective job suggested prior knowledge could impact the turnover decision (Wanous, 1977).
2. The role of non-work influences included spousal and family situations in reference to mobility.
3. The role of dissatisfaction in the turnover process (March & Simon, 1958)
4. The role of the relationships between identified predictors of turnover (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).

In summary, well over 1,000 individual studies on turnover in organizations could be traced as far back as the early 1900s. Over ten reviews could be identified in just the last twenty-five years (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Forrest, Cummings, & Johnson, 1977; Herzberg, et al. All suggested the turnover process and even more specifically the turnover decision could be influenced by many factors. A look at the Steers & Mowday (1981) model identified not only those factors that may be from internal influence, but those from external influence as well.

Studies on Job Satisfaction

Prediction models identified close correlations between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Moon, 2000; Tett & Meyer, 1993; Porter & Steers, 1973). Mowday, Porter & Steers (1982) conducted extensive reviews of the theoretical and empirical work done on organizational

commitment (Reicher, 1985). Their findings supported a substantial linkage between satisfaction and commitment further supporting previously research findings of existing relationships between these variables. Satisfied employees tended to be more productive, creative and committed to their employers (Kaldenberg & Regrut, 1999). Other reviews of literature suggested positive and negative correlations in regards to consequences associated with job satisfaction. Workers tended to be less aggressive and defensive when job satisfaction levels were high versus more complaints, hostility and aggression associated with lower levels of job satisfaction (Chen & Spector, 1992).

Some studies directly linked satisfaction and quality of work (Murphy, 2004), however, others disagreed. Some studies argued that the link between satisfaction and productivity hinged upon the concept of happiness (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Satisfied employees tended to be more reliable to show up at work than dissatisfied employees (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2003), whereas resignation seemed to be more prevalent in dissatisfied employees. Ultimately, an employee's decision to separate or terminate their employment (i.e. voluntary turnover) affected an organization's ability to maintain consistency in productivity, cohesiveness within working units, increased the need for organizations to replenish dwindling knowledge pools (Pil & Leana, 2000), and ultimately unfavorably affected the image of the organization. Recent statistics on the continued drainage of experienced and knowledgeable workers included physician shortages anticipated reaching 20% of workforce, continual nursing and management shortages (Cooper, 2004), and a very poor financial bill of health for medical facilities standing to lose 50% of Medicare & Medicaid income (AHA, 2005).

According to Lynn Franco, director of the Conference Board Consumer Research Center, there was a widespread decline in job satisfaction that could be analyzed across age and income

brackets. The survey conducted on a population of 5,000 households suggested one-fourth of the surveyed population only showed up at work to collect a pay check. Only 50% of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs and this was a decrease in satisfaction from 1995, when the percentage of satisfaction ranked above 60%. The aforementioned survey by TCB revealed the group with the smallest decline in job satisfaction was the 65 and older group composed of the largest numbers of baby boomers preparing to leave the workforce. Contrary to the preconception that this group was highly dissatisfied with their jobs due to increased technological advances and increased demands on productivity, the survey confirmed they were more comfortable perhaps because they were so familiar with the organization (OPM, 2005).

Literature suggested the best measurement of job satisfaction was the Job Descriptive Index (JDI). This tool had been heavily researched since the late 70s and remained a highly effective as well as valid and reliable tool. Vroom regarded the JDI as one of the more cautiously constructed measures of job satisfaction in existence. The demographic pairings in the JDI were hourly workers vs. salaried workers; male vs. female; and management vs. non-management. The longevity and refinement of the JDI since the 1950s had strengthened its validity as well as reliability. Literature revealed the revised JDI was utilized in the 1970s to examine relationships between gender and job satisfaction. This study was conducted on 480 state government employees of whom 154 were male and 326 female (Sausser & York, 1978). This study concluded men were more satisfied in all areas of job satisfaction with the exception of pay. Women trailed in each area in term of satisfaction.

Another study conducted in 1993 on private and public section managers using the JDI revealed no significant difference in job satisfaction between the genders (Schneider & Vaught,

1993). The validity of job satisfaction and gender on the turnover decision may be debatable as may be the role of age. Over the years, older Americans comprised an increasingly larger percentage of employment in the workforce. Historically, life expectancy was in the early sixties and had evolved over the years to the mid seventies. Extended life expectancies could have a major impact on decisions workers made regarding employment. Many older workers had paid into retirement systems and 401K's to guarantee a comfortable life after retirement. Many continued to work as long as there were no major health conditions. Some older workers conceded that their lives actually revolved around their respective jobs. This environment was composed of not only activities that they had participated in over the years, and in some instances, it was also the core of their social circle. This was not the case for all older workers, nevertheless, workers did tend to put in long hours and seemingly spend great amounts of time at the workplace in comparison to other personal activities.

Over the course of the next five to fifteen years, mid career talent would be lacking as trends continuously predicted the mass exodus of experienced and knowledgeable employees that had been the inner fiber of organizations.

Intent to Leave

Institutions vary in their missions and goals; however, academic research suggested intent to leave could be categorized under voluntary turnover. Turnover referred to movement into and out of an organization (Price & Mueller, 1986) and this movement was voluntary if initiated by the individual. According to Lambert, (2001), intent to leave related to an individual's contemplation to leave employment within an organization. Academic studies concluded that the actual intent to leave preceded the voluntary decision to leave and could be predicted by several indicators (Steers

& Mowday, 1981). Other studies concluded that a predictor of the behavior to leave was the individual's intention to perform that behavior (Azen, 1975). This led into the cognitive process involved in decision making. Theoretical models indicated several steps ranging from the simple to the complex that could be involved in the process. Decisions according to the models were influenced by age, years in employment, employment opportunities, and the individual's perception of organizational factors such as promotional opportunity or rules and regulations (Mobley, Horner & Hollingsworth, 1978). The actual decision to leave was a choice made to pursue other career track, seek employment in another agency, or simply withdraw from current employment due to external factors or personal reasons.

Research said that employees who were satisfied, productive, and involved in their work environments were assumed to be committed and were then less likely to voluntarily leave (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992). This led into organizational commitment; another indicator of intent to leave as identified by previous academic studies. Organizational commitment went beyond acknowledgement of the thought of leaving but involved more of the individuals' evaluation of their attachment to the organization, its values and its goals (Porter, Steers, Mowday, Boulian, 1974).

A study entitled 'The NEXT-Study' conducted in Europe examined the question of intent to leave the nursing career (Hasselhorn, Tackenberg, Hans Mueller, & the NEXT Study Group, 2003). Their findings suggested, as most other academic research studies and theorist found, in the nursing field specifically, individuals reported leaving due to verbal aggression (13%), others left for reasons due to staff shortages (67%) and a remaining 20% left due to subordinates. This all suggested to the researchers that intent to leave rested upon the individual's perception of the

environment and the elements therein. Nursing studies conducted over the past few decades suggested the same as finding on intent to leave in higher education (Johnsrud & Heck, 1994). A national study concluded that intent to leave could be summarized by three factors (a) individual and institutional characteristics, (b) work environment, and (c) dimensions of job satisfaction (Smart, 1990). Yet other studies identified the impact of demographic variables and the role they played in the intent to leave decision.

Demographic Variables

Researchers used demographic variables as a method to evaluate data and it had been stated that demographic factors were often present very convincing predictors (Morbarak, Nissly & Levin, 2001). Most researchers included age, education, gender, tenure and socio-economic levels in their demographic profiles. Not all research supported relationships between demographics and intent to leave, however, several did. Nissly (2004) conducted research on state public welfare workers and findings suggested two demographic factors, age and education along with stress influenced intent to leave. Another study conducted using secondary data on 4, 000 hospital workers found significant correlations between job satisfaction and years of service (Ma, 2002). In contrast, another study on a different group of healthcare workers found no significant differences in job satisfaction based upon demographics (Bratt, 2002).

Studies using other demographic variables such as income and race also found statistically significant measures in relation to job satisfaction and intent to leave (Coward, Hogan, Horne, Hilker & Felsen, 1995). Reviews of relevant literature suggested an association between demographic variables, job satisfaction, and intent to leave. These findings were the basis for including age, education level, ethnicity, and job tenure in this study. Age in this study was

defined as the length of an individual's life (Montague, 2004). It was found that older individuals tended to be more satisfied with less intention to leave (Blegen & Mueller, 1987). In contrast, other studies found no consistent correlation between age and intent to leave. However, this variable was consistently studied in job satisfaction research and was included in this study. Education was defined as formal training or formal schooling (Bluedorn, 1982). As demographics researched in other studies there were cases in which there were levels of significance and others where there were not.

Two studies concluded that younger educated employees were more likely to leave (Namazi & Kahana, 1997) and that education level was positively related to an employee's intent to stay (Williams, 1999). Level of education was also included in this study. Ethnicity was defined as cultural background (DeLoach, 2002). When studied in relation to employee commitment in a study on welfare workers, there was no significance found (DeLoach, 2002). However, a study conducted by Coward (1995) found statistical significance when measuring ethnicity in relation to intent to leave and job satisfaction. As ethnicity was consistently addressed in literature, it was included in this study.

Studies on Turnover

Over many decades, studies conducted by sociologist, psychologist, economist, and organizational managers in search of data to further clarify relationships between job satisfaction and organizational commitment had been evaluated and analyzed by many scholars. Literature provided supportive and non-supportive theories that attracted researchers to continue to explore unfamiliar territories in turnover variables. In terms of general turnover research, median turnover rates averaged 14.3% in a range of 8.2% to 25.9% (WWDS, 2005) and included voluntary

resignations and involuntary terminations. The healthcare industry registered approximately 16% for medical turnover. In terms of industry, a regional analysis suggested a range of 10 % in Northeastern locations to 20% in Southeastern locations. In terms of organizational size, employee groups of full-time employees (FTE) ranged from 12.3% for groups between 2,000 and 4,999 to 18% for groups between 1,000 and 2000. Voluntary separations in the health care industry marked well above the general average at 12.2% where the mean was 9.7%; and in terms of involuntary separation the mean of 4.8% was slightly higher than that of 4.7% in health care. Finally, the Watson Wyatt Data survey revealed a relationship between overall turnover rate and the status of the employee in terms of being exempt or non-exempt. The median non-exempt turnover rate was 12% and the median exempt turnover rate was 10%. Generalizations in the health care arena surpassed the median averages for both exempt and non-exempt employees revealing a 15% turnover rate in non-exempt and a 12.3 % turnover rate in exempt employees (OPM, 2006).

Other turnover studies conducted in healthcare found dissatisfaction with managers, policies and personal reasons were among the main reasons for leaving employment. One study conducted with 70 healthcare employees in collaboration with a secondary study of an additional 29 employees (Sakulkoo, 2002) found job satisfaction and stress contributed to employee turnover. Brady-Schwartz (2003) conducted another study in a hospital environment of 470 nurses to measure job satisfaction, intent to remain and turnover. Findings identified nurses had high levels of job satisfaction and high intent to stay.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) conducted their annual survey to measure workers attitudes about their jobs (i.e. job satisfaction/ organizational commitment). In 1991, 9,340 FBOP employees participated in a survey conducted by the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE).

An 83% response rate combined with secondary data compiled from the company's human resource records was used to analyze turnover rates. In this case turnover rate (instability rate) referred to the percentage of employees employed at the beginning of the study and quit or left during the study period (Price, 1977). The researchers used a revised Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Porter et al. (1974), a Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall, & Hulin (1969) and Intent-to-Leave survey. Findings of the Federal Bureau of Prisons suggested higher levels of job satisfaction would have an inverse impact on turnover in terms of job satisfaction; however, an even stronger inverse relationship was documented in terms of organizational commitment (Camp, 1993). Some studies of non-federal agencies reported interesting findings in the areas of job satisfaction and commitment. A cross-cultural study on turnover conducted on the Japanese found they rated lower on job satisfaction measures but scored higher on those measures that purportedly resulted from higher satisfaction, i.e. worked long hours, did not use vacation time, etc. (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990).

Another study was conducted on 1102 Certified Registered Nursing Assistants (CRNA) who actively practiced in the state of Michigan (Chabaan, 2006). The purpose of the study was to gauge job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intent among urban and rural practicing CRNAs. Other variables identified included gender, age, tenure, education, race, ethnicity, salary, status, etc. It had been suggested that these personal variables accounted for substantial portions of variances in results (Parasuraman, 1982). Internal studies examined the employee turnover issue. Their results in summation suggested understanding of realistic job expectations, clear selection practices based upon merit alone to reduce conflicts within the working teams and units, opportunity for career advancement, relaxed management approach,

autonomy and flexibility to accomplish work assignments and tasks, the ability to be a part of the decision making process, feedback, and finally compensation (Merck, 2005) as relevant turnover issues. All the elements listed in the findings of the research conducted by the Merck Pharmaceutical Company could be related back to what researchers had identified as one of the top predictors of turnover, job satisfaction (Mobley, 1977). Turnover literature continued to intrigue researchers. This researcher examined the significance of the results, if any, by studying them in a federal forum.

Federal Turnover Studies

Changes in training, education and operational expectations were rapidly changing in health care. In the federal health care arena, consistent increased workload and patient complexity had challenged workers to be flexible with new electronic patient records and the ability to transcribe and/or view radiology results from state of the art imaging machines, created a very competitive environment. Turnover of these knowledgeable and experienced individuals placed the organization at risk for increased challenges in providing quality health care. This phenomenon was examined in the Mexican government and identified similar findings of increased volumes of turnover among workers. The Maquiladoras (Mexican government) studies began in the mid 1980s examining those factors that seemed to influence turnover. Some included pay, job expectations, non-work influences, etc. A second study conducted in the Maquiladoras suggested job expectation and job performance could have a noticeable impact on intent to leave (Huerta, 1993). This particular study referred to the voluntary turnover model of Steers and Mowday (1981). Findings suggested employees with high levels of satisfaction and commitment were more likely to remain with the organization, hence low intent to leave. Those findings resounded very closely to many American studies that concluded the same inverse relationship.

In U.S. studies, trends showed federal workforces had declined from 2.2 million employees to 1.8 million employees since 1992. Consequently, strategic human capital alignment had begun the reformation to address fundamental issues. It was projected that the potential turnover of federal employees between 2001 and 2006 would be higher than the previous eight years combined. Trends over the past 10 years suggested employees were not leaving within 1 year of eligibility but continued to work on for several years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics,

workers showed an 11% to 13% increase in workers still working at 65 years of age. According to a report submitted to the Carnegie Commission on Science, the federal government was the largest single employer of scientists and engineers in the United States with approximately 223,000 employees. This number constituted approximately 13% of federal civilian white-collar workers (Braddock, 1992). The remaining three quarters were involved in management, data collection, regulation of health, safety and environmental pollution (Braddock, 1992). Statistics from the 1990s revealed turnover rates between 9-10% a year, which was about 1/3 below private sector at that time (MSPB, 1991), which was down from 11% in the 1980s (Rumberg & Thomas, 2000). Studies concluded turnover was higher among white collar workers varying by occupation and tenure. Clerical workers rated high as well as those with fewer years in service. Over the course of 2 decades, the data collected from turnover studies was utilized not only to examine human resource practice and policy, but also to evaluate federal pay guidelines (OPM, 2005).

A projection was made in 1998 from trended information from the Government Accounting Office (GAO, 2001) that the turnover percentage for the Veterans Health Administration would be nearing 26% by 2006. Those percentages were identified as being very close in magnitude to the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act that designated baseline positions to be cut by federal agencies through 1999. Another projected estimation resulting from the large number of baby boomers eligible for retirement in the federal government was that the organizations would be effected in component levels within the organization. Even in instances where agencies had low rates of retirement, this was a concern. This projection suggested agencies could experience disproportionate levels of turnover that hit core components of the agency. In federal health care systems this could impact in the clinical departments as well as

the administrative and executive departments. The management positions alone presented staggering number in a study conducted by the GAO. They found high turnover potential in program management (53%); administrative officers (41%); personnel management (39%); and general business and management (37%). Over the years since the Federal Workforce Restructuring Act, some agencies had identified personnel problems (i.e., backlogs, skill deficits, etc.) which could also be impacted by turnover. The US Office of Personnel Management tasked by the President to examine the trends found 60% of the General Scale (GS) rank and file worker as well as 90% of the Senior Executive Service (SES) would be eligible for retirement within ten years (OPM, 2006).

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA), the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and National Cemetery Administration (NCA) all compose the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) which was the third largest employer of federal civilians, second to United States Postal Service (USPS) and Department of Defense (DOD). Most (88.5%) are employed full-time with designated forty hour work weeks. The DVA was also found to be the agency with the third highest numbers in voluntary turnover, followed by the Army and Navy. Even more statistically significant for the upcoming study was the quantity of the voluntary turnover statistics (i.e., DVA ranked third highest - 4,199; Army - 6,298; and Navy - 5,538). Seventeen percent turnover of any agency's workforce could have had enormous impact on their ability to operate or produce. As the concern continued to grow for federal health care organizations responsible for providing service to ailing, elderly, and seriously injured military personnel, the advances in modern technology had afforded society marked increases in the age of the population, both men and women, that are

living longer (BLS, 2005). As individuals were living longer, it would be interesting to see if they would choose to remain in the workforce or join the ranks of those that choose to leave.

Federal Workforce Overview

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VHA) was composed of 153 medical centers, 882 ambulatory care and community –based outpatient clinics, over 200 vet centers, more than 135 nursing homes, 40 residential rehabilitation programs, and over 90 comprehensive home-based care programs (CBO, 2007). The medical facilities provided inpatient and outpatient services to eligible veterans. Services included primary care, specialty care, mental health and rehabilitation. Those facilities in total employed approximately 200,000 full-time employees who included over 55,000 nurses and over 13,000 clinicians. Between 1994 and 2004, the largest percentage of increases, in age brackets, of full-time permanent (FTP) federal employees was seen in the 50-54 and 55-59 year olds. The former age group increased in size by 6.1% representing 19.3 percent of the federal workforce. The latter age group showed an increase of 5.6% representing 14 percent of the federal workforce. Combined, those groups represent one-third of the federal workforce (OPM, 2005).

Demographic changes occurring in the federal workforce had been trended in five occupational categories, i.e., professional, administrative, technical, clerical, or other (referred to as PATCO). During the late 90's and early 2000's the administrative category experienced an increase of 7.5 percent (33.2 – 40.7), while the clerical category experienced a decrease of 8 percent (15.1 – 7.1). The shift was attributed to increased office automation in the federal government (OPM, 2005). Equally important as age and demographic trends in federal employment was pay or salary. Traditionally, federal pay systems were only GS plans. As average salaries and grades increased for newly hired employees, the trend suggested that by 2004,

84 % of the federal workforce would be covered by GS and the remaining 6 % would be covered by GS and other related pay plans supplemented by local facilities (10 percent still under the older civil service plan). Separation trends were also examined in 2004. Among the top ten was an increase in separation rates in the medical and hospital arenas.

As far back as 2006, VA estimated the population of living veterans to be over 24million. The Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-262; 110 Stat. 3177) required veterans be assigned to priority groups based upon their service connectivity, service related exposure, income, or assets. There were eight priority groups ranging from 1-8 with 4 being the most expensive due to the fact that those individuals were mostly housebound with catastrophic disabilities not related to their military service. Along with the enrollment guidelines of the 1990s, there was a reengineering of the department's health system (Kizer, 2000). As an under-secretary for health, Dr. Kizer focused on improving quality, performance and innovation in an era when the tide was shifting from inpatient care to outpatient care. There was great skepticism in the VA's ability to provide managed primary care to a mostly male population in an outpatient setting. This did not deter Dr. Kizer, and before long, the outpatient clinics were arranged in Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) across the country. One VISN could be composed of anywhere from 7-10 medical centers and outpatient clinics.

The landscape of VHA continued to expand with over 320,000 active-duty veterans who returned home in addition to 370,000 National Guard Reserves with over 225,000 who received health care from VA. That begged the question of how to take care of so many veterans. The CBO estimated that the VHA budget authority per enrollee grew from 1999-2005 by as much as 1.7 real percent. Continual enrollment of veterans forced executives in VHA to continuously

address the issues of recruitment and retention of qualified clinical and administrative staff. Some incentives identified for managers included assessment of managers' performance levels in connection with quality indicators. Incentives for clinical providers included a new pay bonus system, The Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004 that was also linked to performance in areas such as access and quality. Another perk for clinical staff working within VHA health care facilities was their access to medical information at the click of a mouse. The VHA received praise for their electronic medical record in many forums. The Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VISTA) had in recent years been joined by an even more advanced system of Clinical Patient Record System or (CPRS). That electronic system allowed providers to be most proficient in the medical activity of the patient and that increased their ability to provide accurate and timely diagnosis (IMCD, 2003).

In light of the increased patient workload with aging veterans from earliest wartime conflicts (i.e. WWII and Vietnam), combined with veterans from the newest eras of conflict (i.e. Desert Storm and Iraq); also being one of the largest integrated delivery systems required human capital that would grow with the system. This study would address the incentives that were offered to clinical and administrative staff within VHA and identify the degree of impact, if any, that attracted clinical and administrative staff to stay or leave employment with their employing health care facilities.

Summary

The historical trends in turnover suggested contingent relationships between the variables. The variables most widely used to predict turnover were job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Though organizational commitment would not be a variable studied in this paper,

the impact of job satisfaction would be examined in detail. In addition to examining the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave, this study would examine both job satisfaction and intent to leave in relation to demographic characteristics and delve further to distinguish any relationships between clinical and administrative employees.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Methodology and Design

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intent among clinical and administrative employees serving veterans in one medical facility in South Carolina and six community based outpatient clinics. This chapter describes the research design, instruments used, sample, data collection procedures and analysis methodology. The methods and procedures presented in this chapter were used to test the hypotheses that served as the foundation for this study.

The chosen methodology for this study was a quantitative methodology. One portion of the study was conducted to identify the relationships between the variables. A standard survey for surveyed perceptions and experiences of job satisfaction was the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI). The JDI measured five facets of attitudes towards different employment factors to include, attitudes, satisfaction with pay, promotion, co-workers, and supervision (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969). The second portion of the study was conducted using the Intent to Quit Index (ITQ). According to O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, (1982), intent to stay or leave was often measured with a single item; thus, an eight item scale provided a more stable index of intent (Bluedorn, 1982). It contained four questions about the likelihood of still working for the organization, and four questions about the likelihood of quitting during a specific time frame.

Convenience Sampling

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used convenience sampling. One main reason for choosing non-probability sampling was time. There was less planning and repeat calling necessary. A second reason to use convenience sampling was cost. Finally, the freedom of choice for the researcher allowed easier access to finding participants.

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), this method of sampling may have been risky when trying to ensure precision as there were no controls and may have provided overwhelming results which may have required alteration in the sampling method. That was a limitation to using this approach however; the researcher believed convenience sampling would meet the objectives of the study.

Sample

Federal health care institutions or non-profit entities rely on federal reimbursement based upon complexity of services provided as well as a small portion of third party collections for funding. The facilities utilized in this study were all non-profit and the participants were both clinical and administrative staff. There are approximately seven federal healthcare facilities located in the south east region of the country covering South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama with approximately ten associated community based outpatient clinics (CBOC). These facilities provided a wide array of primary and specialty healthcare services to a veteran population of over 160,000. This study derived its sample from the facility servicing 38% of that total population.

Setting

The study was conducted with a total population size of over 1300 employees spread across a large geographic base. The parent or main facility in this study consisted of a 216 bed-facility that provided services in acute medical, surgical, psychiatric, and long-term care. The six CBOCs included in this study provided services in Primary Care, Mental Health, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Dental, Audiology, Optometry, Dietetics, and routine Radiology. Primary, secondary and some tertiary care is provided to over 56,000 patients annually. Subjects were recruited from all sites and major departmental areas to ensure valid representation for generality.

The determination of sample size was done using critical investigative questions that estimated precision (margin of error) and standard deviation (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Precision represented the confidence a researcher wanted in the estimate which previous studies had commonly identified as 95% represented by the (z) found in formulas. The standard deviation or margin of error was calculated by dividing the size of the interval estimate that the researcher would accept (+/- 5) by the (z).

For the purposes of this study a Yamane formula was used to calculate the sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

The population size of the study was 1300 employees with a confidence level of .05; margin of error is +/- 5. This would allow the researcher to calculate the appropriate sample size.

Calculations concluded 306 surveys would be an appropriate representation of the population.

When using a proportional method to estimate sample size, p = the proportion of the populations that had a certain attribute being willingness to participate in the study. According to Cooper

and Schindler (2003) this was a subjective decision. Instead of standard deviation, dispersion was measured in terms of $p \times q$ (in which q is the proportion of the population not having the attribute, and $q = 1 - p$). The assumption was that 50% of the population would participate in the study. An estimate was made of the true proportion in the population within 10 percentage points ($p = 0.50 \pm 0.10$). The researcher would like to be 95% confident that the population parameter was within ± 0.10 of the sample proportion. The desired interval range within which the population proportion was expected was ± 0.10 . The standard error of the proportion was 0.051. The estimated population dispersion was $n = 96$. This researcher would survey a sample size of 306 or 33% of the total population which was well above the proportional calculation.

Instruments

Three survey instruments were used for data collection in this study. The first was the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI). Similar studies used this instrument establishing its validity and reliability. This instrument was carefully developed to be psychometrically consistent, meaning consistent over a variety of occupations and organizations. The design of the AJDI allows it to tap into five dimensions of job satisfaction: satisfaction with supervision, co-workers, pay, promotional opportunities and the work itself. The respondents indicate agreement or disagreement with the application of an item descriptor to their jobs by marking “Y” for agreement with the descriptor, “N” if they do not agree with the descriptor, and “?” if they could not decide. The AJDI survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and was designed to measure job satisfaction. The scoring system as outlined by Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1975, pp. 79-80) indicated a score of “3” is assigned to positive items with a “Y” response and negative items with an “N” response. A score of “1” was assigned to any item with a “?”

response and a score of 0 was assigned to positive items with an “N” response or negative items with a “Y” response. The range on an individual item was 0-3. The bottom of the scale indicated dissatisfaction and the top of the scale represented satisfaction. The highest possible score was 54 and the lowest was 0. Permission to use the instrument was received from the author of the survey as well as the manual for interpretation of results prior to survey distribution.

Golumbiewski (1978) conducted a large study to examine the applicability of the Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI). His response rate was 70% for his chosen cross-section with $n = 2,671$. The AJDI was suggested to be the most carefully constructed measure of job satisfaction today. It had been attributed to having internal consistency values between 84-88% (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1975); impressive validity and adequacy ability in terms of reliability (Kerr, 1987); and had been utilized in several studies over the years (Smith, 1992; Hanisch & Hunin, 1990). Literature on the AJDI suggested the scales have good convergence and discriminate validity and reliability when compared to other job satisfaction measures (Jung, Delessio, Johnson, 1986). Medline published an article as recent as 2005 that also suggested construct validity of the AJDI and test-re-test reliability were acceptable (Kinicki, Mckee-Ryan, Schriesheim & Carson, 2002). The study reviewed over 210 articles on antecedents to job satisfaction as measured using the AJDI. The median consistence reliability found ranged between .80 and .85. The conclusion was that the tool did display high levels of construct validity. Elements examined in this study included relationships between correlates to job satisfaction; consequences of job satisfaction, etc (Kinicki, et al., 2002).

A second instrument for data collection was the Intent to Quit (ITQ) (Bowling University, Bluedorn, 2003). This survey asked 8 questions to assess the likelihood of still working for the current employer within a certain time frame (e.g. “what was the likelihood that you would still be working with your current employers within two years?”). Answers were given on a Likert seven point scale ranging from (1) “Extremely likely” (2) “Likely” (3) “Slightly likely” (4) “Neither likely nor unlikely” (5) “Slightly unlikely” (6) “Unlikely” (7) “Extremely unlikely”. Computation for General ITQ (first facet) involved the reverse scoring for the second item and then sum of the four responses. The total possible score was 28. Computation for Time ITQ (second facet) involved sum responses to the four items. The total possible score was 28.

A third and final survey consisted of demographic questions. Demographic information for this study included age, gender, education, and tenure. Other demographic information included job level, job classification, marital status, agency tenure, future planning system and ethnicity. This information allowed the researcher to identify any patterns relevant to the population size.

Access to Data and Permissions

Data collection consisted of retrieving employee responses via electronic survey. Electronic surveying afforded the researcher maximum survey distribution, minimal cost, and ease of conversion of collected data into an electronic format for analysis. A cover letter accompanied the survey clearly stating the nature of the study being purely academic, that participation was completely voluntary and anonymous with no identifiable information included (i.e., no names, no departments, no social security numbers). All email addresses from

participants were disassociated when the information was stored on the secure server. Finally, the letter informed participants that response to the survey would indicate consent.

This researcher worked in coordination with the director of the facility and the legal counsel representing bargaining unit employees to obtain permission to analyze the data. Once the researcher completed the data collection process, a data matrix was populated. The completed matrix included employee demographic information, tenure with the organization in intervals of 9 years and corresponding factor combinations for job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Permission to conduct the study was granted through written permission from the organization (Appendix D). The confidentiality and protection of all of the individuals identified for this study had been protected in the design of the data collection procedure to keep their identities anonymous.

Procedure

The surveys were accompanied by a cover letter that explained to participants that the study was conducted by a doctoral learner and that participation would be completely voluntary. The cover letter provided a statement to notify potential participants that the information would be collected for study purposes only and would be kept completely confidential. It also identified the timeframe for completion of the survey and contact information for additional questions. All surveys were accessible by all employees on their computer desktops. (Employees who did not have access to desktops could access the surveys on computers in the education center). No identifiable data was on the surveys and once submitted they were housed on a secure server accessible only by the researcher who had to use a secure password for entry. Upon final review of the data, the researcher did not need to create a tally to assign a four digit

code to each completed survey to distinguish between clinical and administrative responses because the software allowed the researcher to distinguish between clinical and administrative responses based upon selections by participants. The server did not provide any data on the locations or departments from where the surveys came and the password prevented other individuals from accessing the data, to include the programmer. The researcher had no access to the email addresses of the original surveys and would not have access in the future. The researcher only saw the completed surveys that had no identifiable information related to the individuals who submitted them. Therefore, the risk of linking responses to any participants was minimal.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. There will be a statistically significant relationship between levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among staff in federal health care.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a statistically significant relationship between each of the socio-demographic variables assessed (age, gender, years of federal employment, ethnicity) and levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among clinical and administrative staff.

Hypothesis 3. There will be a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction (pay, peers, supervisors, and promotions) and job classification among staff in federal health care.

Data Analysis

The population size was neither large nor extremely small. It was estimated that it would take this researcher 14 days to collect the survey data anticipating a response rate between 50 and

55% as the survey was easily accessible and centered at one facility. Another 14 to 16 days were allowed to analyze and populate the data matrix. Analysis included testing the relationships between the factors outlined in the hypotheses. In cases where incomplete data were received, the survey information was removed from the data under analysis.

Hypothesis 1 was tested using the Pearson Product Correlation. Hypothesis 2 was tested using t-tests, Mann Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests as appropriate. Hypothesis 3 was tested using Spearman Rho and Kendall Tau. Other correlations included job classification and gender using the Chi-Square; job classification and age using t-test and Mann Whitney U; job classification and tenure using t-test and Mann Whitney U. All data were imported into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. For this study, the researcher used descriptive statistics for independent variables of age, gender, tenure, marital status, and level of education.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher took all efforts to ensure University guidelines for conducting research with human participants was fully compliant. There were no special circumstances related to this study that increased risk or decreased safeguards to participants. An electronic cover letter accompanied all surveys to inform participants that the study was being conducted by a doctoral student. It clearly stated that participation would be completely voluntary with special emphasis placed on the secured electronic collection procedure to ensure participants and their responses remained anonymous. Participants were informed that they were free to withdraw at any time from participation in the study. Further the cover letter informed potential participants that all collected data would only be used for analysis related to this study and that no data-specific

information would be provided back to the facility. All would be securely stored only to be seen by the researcher to further ensure confidentiality of all responses received.

Summary

This chapter outlines the methodology that was used to conduct this study. All data were collected using validated surveys used by researchers in previous studies similar to the one conducted by the researcher. Ethical considerations were included for all voluntary participants to ensure confidentiality and anonymity so that no future repercussions were possible from the administration of the facility or the executives in any branch of DVA. Requests to complete the surveys were sent to all staff in one VA medical center and the clinics associated with the medical center. Data were analyzed to test the hypotheses using the appropriate statistical tests.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Demographics of the Sample

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship, between job satisfaction and intent to leave among clinical and administrative employees in a federal health care facility. The study intended to identify components of job satisfaction that could impact the intent to quit. Literature has supported the theory that intent to quit is one precursor to turnover. This chapter presents information related to the data collected and analyzed for this dissertation. It includes a description of the demographics, an analysis of the demographics in relation to the individual facets of the job descriptive index, and subsequently, the results of hypothesis testing.

The Abridged Job Descriptive Index (AJDI), Intent to Quit (ITQ), and a Demographic Survey, were used to identify the extent of job satisfaction among the target population and relationships between job satisfaction and intent to leave from approximately 950 employees. The AJDI is designed to measure an individual's perception of job satisfaction in specific areas such as supervision, co-workers, pay, promotion, and work itself; the ITQ survey described the time frame that individual's are considering leaving; the JIG was used to obtain data that measured overall job satisfaction; finally the demographic survey identifies the participants in categories as age, gender, job classification, (i.e. clinical or administrative), job level (i.e. hourly or supervisor), marital status, agency tenure, education, and ethnicity. These socio-demographic variables provided the researcher with variables by which deeper analysis could be conducted to produce subgroup information.

The theoretical framework of this research was based on two main concepts, job satisfaction and turnover. Throughout the literature, the concept of “turnover intent” was identified as a strong predictor of actual turnover. Two components of the ITQ survey were “intent to quit” in general, and “intent to quit” in a specific time frame. Intent to quit was identified as the dependent variable, while the job satisfaction subscales were classified as the independent variables. Overall job satisfaction was measured using the JIG total score, and the sub-categories of job satisfaction (facet scales) were considered as individual sub-elements of job satisfaction.

Of the 1300 surveys distributed, 950 were returned for a 73% response rate. Of the 950 responses 529 administrative staff (55.7%), 406 represented clinical staff (42.7%), and 15 respondents did not indicate which category they fell into (1.57%) Seven hundred fourteen of the respondents indicated they were hourly employees (75.2%), 219 indicated they were supervisors (23.1%), and 17 didn't indicate which category they fell into (1.78%).

Twenty eight employees (29%) were age 25 or under, 114 employees (12%) were age 26-35, 204 (21.5%) were age 36 to 45, 257 employees (27.1%) were age 46 to 55, 266 employees (28%) were age 56 to 65 and 80 employees (8.4%) were age 66 and over, for a total of 949 employees. One respondent did not provide an age (0.1%). Age distribution by employee job

level is presented in Figure 3. Age distribution by employee class is presented in Figure 2.

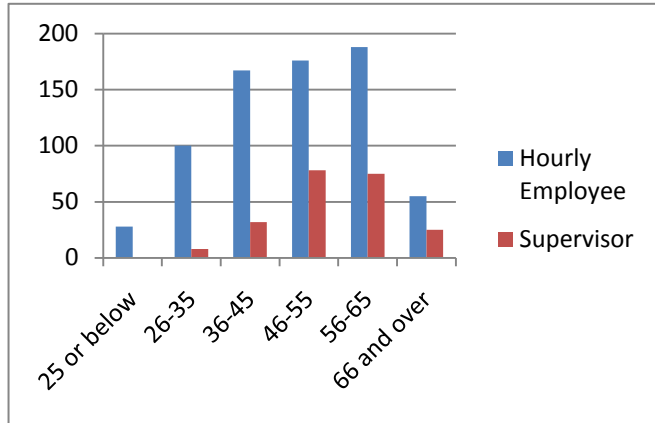


Figure 2. Age vs. Job Level of Employees

The larger supervisory group existed in the 46-55 age range (Table 1). Most of the supervisory staff (35.8%) fell between the ages of 46-55 while 26.3% of the employees were hourly employees within the range of 56-65 also demonstrated in Figure 3 below.

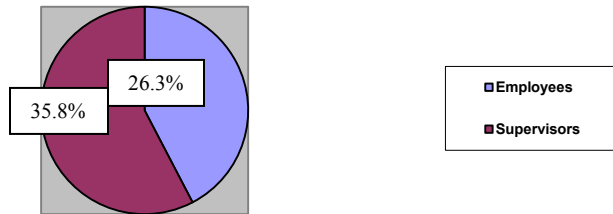


Figure 3. Employee/Supervisor Age Distribution

This could be indicative of a rapidly aging workforce within the supervisory and hourly staff employees.

The largest administrative group existed in the 56-65 age range (Figure 4). Most of the administrative staff (34%) fell between the ages of 56-65 while (30.3%) of the clinical staff fell between the ages of 46-55 as demonstrated in Figure 4 below.

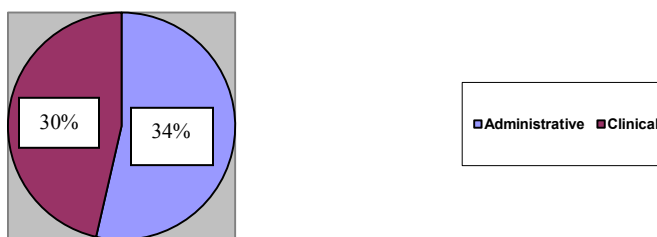
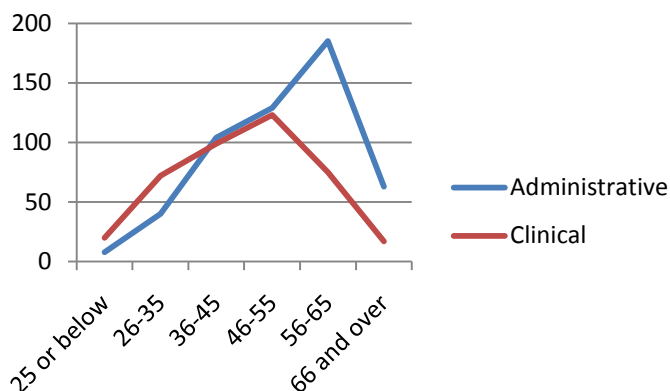


Figure 4. Administrative/Clinical Age Distribution

This was indicative of a fair balance between administrative and clinical staff while also indicative of a rapidly aging workforce represented by 62% to 65% of hourly staff and supervisory employees, administrative and clinical between the ages of 46-65.



N=932

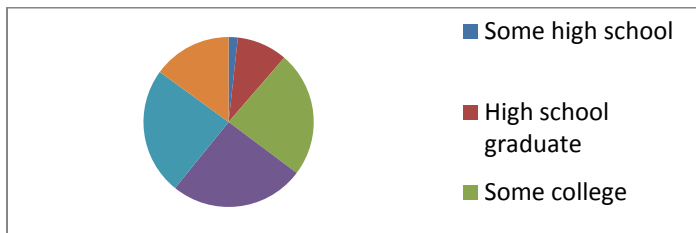
Figure 5. Age vs. Job Classification of Employees

Of the 950 surveys returned, 420 (44.3%) were male and 527 (55.5%) were female (Figure 9). One hundred ninety-six employees have worked for the company for 1-5 years with 69 (35.2%) in the age range of 26-35. One hundred sixty employees have worked for the company for 26-30 years with 68.1% in the age range of 56-65.

The analysis of education indicates a well-educated sample (Figure 7). Two hundred six employees (21.7%) had some college, 227 employees (23.9%) held associate degrees, 222 employees (23.4%) held baccalaureate degrees, and 159 employees (16.7%) held a master degree. A total of 85.7% of employees surveyed had some college education.

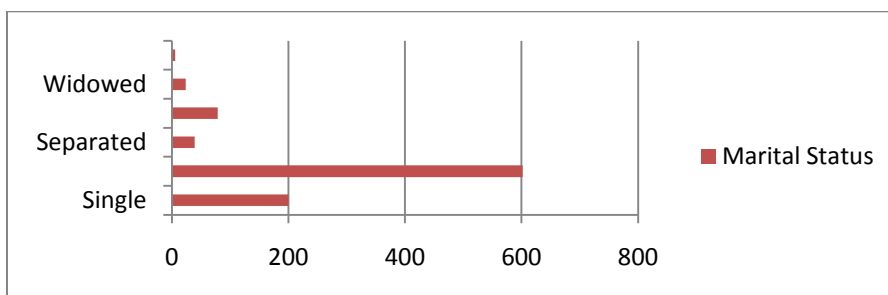
At the *baccalaureate* degree level 166 hourly employees held bachelor degrees in comparison to 51 supervisors. At the associate degree level 176 hourly employees held associate degrees in comparison to 49 supervisors. At the master degree level 103 hourly employees held master degrees in comparison to 52 supervisors.

Further analysis of the demographic data revealed 200 employees (21.1%) were single, 602 employees (63.4% were married, 39 employees (4.1%) were separated, 79 employees (8.3%) were divorced, and 24 employees (2.5%) were widowed. (Figure 7).



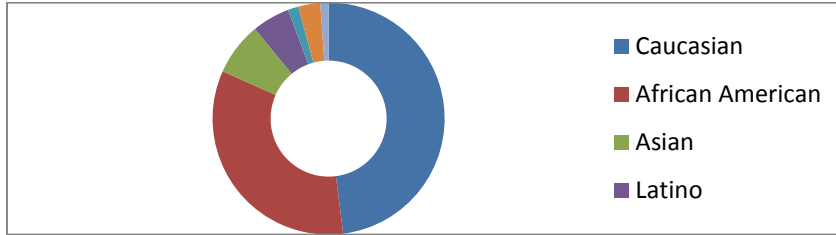
N=892

Figure 6. Education vs. Job Level of Employees



N=950

Figure 7. Marital Status of Employees



N=950
Figure 9. Ethnicity of Employees

In relation to ethnicity, the survey indicated a sample composed of 456 (48%) Caucasian, 320 (33.7%) African American, 70 (7.4%) Asian, 50 (5.3%) Latino, 14 (1.5%) Native American, 29 (3.1%) employees indicated other. Eleven respondents did not respond to ethnicity (Figure 8). Figure 9 presents the gender distribution for the sample with the majority being female.

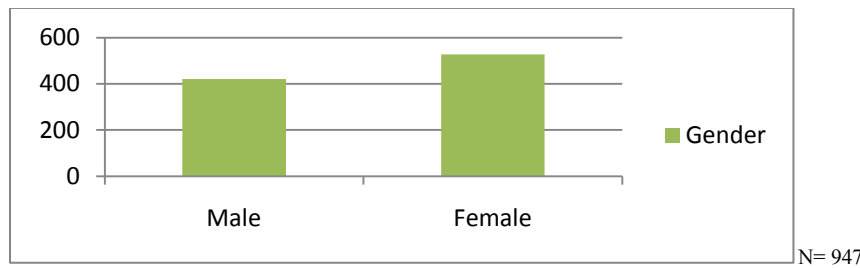


Figure 9. Gender of Employees

To further explore and describe the sample, relationships between age and gender and gender and education, were tested using Mann-Whitney U tests (Table 1).

Table 1. Education vs. Gender

Education	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
N=904	Administrative	399	372.91	148793.00
	Clinical	505	515.38	260267.00

Satisfaction level could be interpreted by whether employees were above or below some neutral point on each JDI scale or on the overall JIG. This neutral point represented an ambivalent feeling, a balance of positive and negative feelings about aspects of the job or the job overall. Scores well above 27 (i.e., 32 or above) indicated satisfaction, while those well below 27 (i.e., 22 or below) indicated dissatisfaction.

Scores on the JDI work, supervision, co-workers, and JIG scales were computed by summing the points obtained from an individual's responses to the items in each scale. Scores on the JDI pay and promotion facets were also computed by summing up the total points, but these totals were doubled to create the scale score because they included only half as many items as the other scales. Thus, the possible range of scores on each of the JDI facet scales and the JIG was from 0 to 54. The average score was 41.8 which indicated employees were satisfied overall.

Intent to Quit (ITQ) Results

Scores on the ITQ facets were computed by summing up the total points. The possible range of scores was from 0 to 28. Whether employees have intent to quit in general or in a specific time frame could be translated to mean whether employees were above or below some neutral point on the ITQ survey. This neutral point would represent an ambivalent feeling, a balance of positive and negative feelings about leaving. Scores well above 14 (i.e., 19 or above) indicated no intent to quit, while those well below 14 (i.e., 9 or below) indicated intent to quit.

Findings Based on Statistical Analysis

This research was based on the theory that intent to quit was a precursor to the actual action of quitting or employee turnover. A correlation analysis was conducted using the overall level of satisfaction as an independent variable, and intent to quit as dependent variables.

Employees overall indicated overall satisfaction with their jobs (based on the JIG results). A total of 82.8% of the participants scored between 12 and 24 points which is reflective of a 50-100% satisfaction rate. The highest possible satisfaction score was 24 points and was scored by 17.2% of the participants. Intent to quit was minimal with a negative correlation at the 0.000 probability level. This suggested that overall job higher satisfaction was significantly correlated with lower intent to quit and upheld the first hypothesis.

H1. There is a statistically significant relationship between levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among staff in federal healthcare.

There was a significant negative correlation at 0.000 probability level between job satisfaction and intent to quit in general, which was also consistent with the theory of the turnover intent process. The findings again suggested that the lower the satisfaction, the greater the actual “thought of quitting.”

There was no significant difference in job satisfaction between hourly employees and supervisors. There was a significant difference at the $p = 0.027$ level between the number of hourly staff and supervisors who entertained the thought of quitting immediately. There was also a significant difference at $p = 0.001$ between the number of hourly staff and supervisors who entertained the thought of quitting soon and supervisors. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.012$) between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting in six months

and supervisors. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.020$) between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting next year and supervisors was and a significant difference ($p = 0.019$) between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting before long and supervisors.

The Mann-Whitney test of significance was used to test hypothesis 2: hourly employees vs. supervisors overall satisfaction against JIG. This non-parametric test was necessitated because there was no normal distribution of the data. The test result revealed that there was no significant difference in the level at which hourly employees and supervisors were satisfied overall with their jobs. There was a significant difference of $p = 0.027$ between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting immediately and supervisors. There was a significant difference of $p = 0.001$ between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting soon and supervisors. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.012$) between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting in six months and supervisors. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.020$) between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting next year and supervisors. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.019$) between the number of hourly staff who entertained the thought of quitting before long and supervisors.

There was no significant difference between male and female employees in overall job satisfaction. In relation to overall job satisfaction and the socio-demographic variables, there were no significant differences in tenure, gender, marital status, education, and years of federal employment or ethnicity that would suggest rejection of the null hypothesis.

H2. There is no statistically significant relationship between each of the socio-demographic variables assessed (age, gender, years of federal employment, ethnicity) and levels of job satisfaction and employee intent to leave among clinical and administrative staff in federal healthcare.

There was a significant difference in overall job satisfaction between administrative and clinical employees. There was a significant difference ($p = 0.033$) between the number of administrative employees' overall job satisfaction and clinical employees. Administrative employees' score overall job satisfaction was 35.76 mean points higher than clinical employees, despite the latter receiving higher wages.

Table 5. Job Level vs. Overall Job Satisfaction

Job In General (JIG)	Job Level	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
N=933	Hourly Employee	714	453.09	323508.00
	Supervisor	219	512	112203.00

There was a significant difference ($p = 0.002$) in overall satisfaction between hourly employees and supervisors. The difference in the mean rank score of supervisor satisfaction was 59.25 higher than hourly employees despite the latter being better paid and higher on the organizational hierarchy of authority.

Table 6. Marital Status vs. Overall Job Satisfaction

Marital Status	N	Mean Rank
Single	200	411.53
Married	602	504.64
Separated	39	429.91
Divorced	79	399.36
Widowed	24	484.31
Not identified	6	

There was no significant difference in job satisfaction and marital status.

Table 7. Education vs. Overall Job Satisfaction

Education	<i>N</i>	Mean Rank
Some high school	12	469.42
High school graduate	79	461.72
Some college	206	467.25
Associates degree	227	447.51
Baccalaureate degree	222	443.15
Masters degree	159	450.56

Job In General	
Chi-Square	1.331
Asymp. Sig.	.932

Kruskal Wallis Test

There was no significant difference between education and overall job satisfaction.

Nonparametric test including Spearman Rho, and Kendall Tau were used to test Hypothesis 3. To objectively investigate the level of job satisfaction among a population sample based upon theory that posits dissatisfied employees were more likely to quit and entertain the thoughts of quitting, details of employee satisfaction in relation to all the facets of the job descriptive index were examined in throughout Chapter 4.

Table 8. Job Classification vs. Satisfaction with Work

Satisfaction with Work	Job Classification	<i>N</i>	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Administrative	529	490.54	259494.50
	Clinical	406	438.63	178085.50

N=935

There was no significant difference in satisfaction with work between clinical and administrative employees.

Table 9. Total Intent to Quit vs. Satisfaction with Work

Spearman's rho		Correlation Coefficient	Intent to Quit	Satisfaction with Work
	Intent to Quit		1.000	-.279**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	950	950
	Satisfaction with Work		.279**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	950	950

N=950. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A significant correlation of 0.000 levels was found between satisfaction with work and one of the variables representing a precursor of turnover.

Table 10. Total Intent to Quit vs. Satisfaction with Pay

Spearman's rho		Correlation Coefficient	Intent to Quit	Satisfaction with Pay
	Intent to Quit		1.000	-.077**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	950	950
	Satisfaction with Pay		.077**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	950	950

N=950. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

There was a significant negative correlation between pay and intent to quit despite the correlation of 0.18 that exist between thinking of quitting and satisfaction with pay.

Table 11. Total Intent to Quit vs. Satisfaction with Promotion

Spearman's rho		Correlation Coefficient	Intent to Quit	Satisfaction with Promotion
	Intent to Quit		1.000	-.178**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	950	950
	Satisfaction with Promotion		.178**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	950	950

N=950. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is a significant correlation between promotion and intent to quit. Significant correlations at $p = 0.000$ were found to exist between all three variables.

Table 12. Total Intent to Quit vs. Satisfaction with Supervision

Spearman's rho		Correlation Coefficient	Intent to Quit	Satisfaction with Supervision
	Intent to Quit		1.000	-.124**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	950	950
	Satisfaction with Supervision		.124**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	950	950

N=950. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is no significant difference in satisfaction with supervision and intent to quit.

Table 13. Total Intent to Quit vs. Satisfaction with Co-workers

Spearman's rho		Intent to Quit	Satisfaction with Co-workers
	Intent to Quit	1.000	-.190**
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	950	950
	Satisfaction with Co-workers	.190**	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	950	950

N=950. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Satisfaction with co-workers negatively correlated with intent to quit at $p = 0.000$ indicating a cordial relationship between co-workers.

Table 14. Total Intent to Quit vs. Age and Education

Spearman's rho	Intent to Quit	Job In General	Satisfaction with Work	Age	Education
	1.000	-.321**	-.279**	-.084**	.037
	Correlation Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	0.009	0.266
	N	950	950	950	950

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It was theorized that intent to quit may vary with the age of the employee. There was a significant correlation between age and intent to quit. This could be attributed to younger employees being more flexible to pursue other careers.

Table 15. Total Intent to Quit vs. Age and Agency Tenure

Kendall's tau_b			Age	Agency
Age	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.639**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.000
	N		949	949
Agency	Correlation Coefficient		.639*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.
	N		949	949

N=950. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

There is no significant difference between age and agency tenure.

Table 16. Job Classification vs. Age

Age	Job Classification	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Administrative	529	529.04	279863.50
	Clinical	406	388.46	157716.50

N=935

	Age
Mann-Whitney U	75095.500
Wilcoxon W	157716.500
Z	-8.110
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Grouping Variable: Job Classification

There was no significant difference between age and job classification.

Table 17. Job Classification vs. Agency Tenure

Agency	Job Classification	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
	Administrative	528	547.23	288938.00
	Clinical	406	363.81	147707.00

N=935

	Agency
Mann-Whitney U	65086.000
Wilcoxon W	147707.000
Z	-10.416
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Grouping Variable: Job Classification

There was no significant difference between job classification and agency tenure.

In summary, 71.03% of participants indicated greater than 50% satisfaction with the subscale satisfaction measures of work and co-workers. On the other hand, 90.69% of employees indicated less than 50% satisfaction with pay; 67.64% of employees indicated less than 50% satisfaction with promotion; and 77.76% of employees indicated less than 50% satisfaction with supervision. Although employees indicated dissatisfaction with supervision, it failed to strongly impact intent to quit. It is important to point out that, despite a similarity in the level of satisfaction between both groups, there is significant evidence at $p=0.027$ level, which indicated that hourly employees entertain more thoughts about quitting, than supervisors.

The test results revealed that there was a borderline significant difference in job satisfaction and job classification which upheld Hypothesis 3.

H3. There was a statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction (pay, peers, supervisors, and promotions) and job classification among staff in federal healthcare?

Note that there were significant correlation in facets, pay, promotions and supervisors for job classifications which indicated both classes were dissatisfied with these variables.

Job Satisfaction, (JIG) had a mean score of 17.38; SD of 6.9; and 82.8% of the respondents scored higher than 12 (with a range of 12-24), indicating greater than 50% satisfaction. In the case of “satisfaction with present work”, the means core was 11.93; SD was 4.9; and 78.96% of respondents scored higher than 7 (with a range of 8-15), which indicted greater than 50% satisfaction. On “present satisfaction with promotional opportunities” the mean score was 8.13; SD was 4.59; 67.64% of respondents scored below 7 (with a range of 8-15), which indicated greater than 50% dissatisfaction. Present satisfaction with pay had a mean score of 3.04; SD of 2.76; 90.69% of respondents scored below 8 (with a range of 0-7) indicating greater than 50% dissatisfaction. Present satisfaction with supervision had a mean of 6.45; SD of 2.53; 77.76% of respondents scored higher than 7 (with a range of 8-15), indicating greater than 50% satisfaction. Present satisfaction with coworkers had a mean score of 11.97; SD of 5.87; 63.1 % of respondents appeared to be pleased with the coworker variable, as they scored higher than 7 (with a range of 8-15) indicating greater than 50% satisfaction.

Summary

Overall, ITQ did correlate with the (JIG) subscales used to measure overall employee satisfaction with their jobs. There was also a correlation with age and intent to quit, which is common in turnover research. It is theorized that the thought of quitting is more active than the action of quitting. The data suggest employees often thought of quitting, but the action was connected to time frames from six months to years. There were no significant correlations for

clinical and administrative employees in terms of intent to quit, nor were there significant correlations between hourly and administrative employees. This was evidenced by the clinical employees that participated having the same degree of intent to leave as their administrative counterparts who are historically paid less.

One common assumption across turnover literature suggests employees are dissatisfied due to dislike of their jobs. This study quietens that myth identifying pay, promotion, and supervision issues as the precursors of turnover while also indicating commitment to their jobs despite dissatisfaction with factors connected to it.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The previous chapter presented the results of this study intended to identify variables impacting job satisfaction and intent to leave in one federal healthcare facility. This chapter will review the findings to compare them to previous research, discuss the findings in relation to the conceptual framework used to guide the study, and propose recommendation for future research related to job satisfaction and intent to quit.

In a study conducted by Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978), job satisfaction was identified as having an impact on intention to quit, with intent to quit more significantly connected to turnover. The data suggests that while job satisfaction influences the thoughts of intent to leave, other factors i.e. co-workers, work assignments, supervision and satisfaction with the job overall influence the action of leaving. The Steers and Mowday (1981) conceptual framework identify many stages that are involved in the decision making process of intent to leave employment. An employee can be satisfied with the job and be committed to the organization, but perfectly willing to leave under the right circumstances (Ang, Goh, & Koh, 1993; Glenn, Taylor, & Weaver, 1977). At 55, federal workers are eligible for retirement. At 30% to 34% of the federal workers in this study aged above 40, the prospect of remaining may be more appealing than changing jobs. (Hulin & Smith, 1965).

This chapter provides discussion of the study findings in relation to the conceptual framework proposed by Steers and Mowday (1981) and findings compared to those of earlier

researchers that had studied similar topics. Limitations of the study are identified as well as items which made the study original and valuable. Finally, the recommendations for future research will be presented.

The findings of this study were consistent with The Conference Board Report (2005) that stated employees were mostly dissatisfied with promotion policies, pay, and opportunity. These were the lowest ranked on the AJDI survey. Steers and Mowday (1981) developed one of several conceptual models that attempted to explain the process through which individuals quit. Their model identified key variables and suggested the decision making path taken. They proposed a sequence of variables that led to an employee leaving or staying: (a) job expectations, conceptualized as met expectations and values; (b) affective responses, with the choice to stay or leave depending on a variety of influences; and (c) intent to leave. Other studies also suggested similar variables as influencing desire to stay or leave including organizational commitment, perceived and alternative employment and culture (Mobley, 1979). More recently, researchers have begun to study the relationship between the individual and their organizational fit. It is referred to as organizational congruence and is beginning to expand turnover research into yet another direction (Weathington, 2008).

The study brings forth strong data to suggest a significant relationship between job satisfaction and intent to quit. Past studies of satisfaction and intent to leave suggested when job satisfaction was high, intent to quit was low and when job satisfaction was low, intent to quit was high Gerhart (1989). Price and Mueller (1981) echoed the findings reporting that those who experienced greater satisfaction would more likely stay. Though employees, for the most part, rate their satisfaction with pay, promotion, and supervision lower, a number of factors could

produce the variations. Relationships, environment, education, work/family issues, etc., have all been identified as factors that can contribute to an individual's intent to leave employment (Cavanagh, 1990). Flowers and Hughes (1973) contend that intent to leave was strengthened or weakened by the degree of compatibility between his/her own work ethic; the wider the gap, the stronger the intention to leave. They also suggested that outside factors such as family, friends, and community relationships may also directly affect the intent to leave. Price (1977) found that an individual's satisfaction level determined the probability of the individuals staying or leaving the organization.

Personal factors such as age and experience were found to influence job satisfaction (Ingersoll, Olsan, Drews-Cates, DeVinney & Davies, 2002). However, other studies reported no differences in job satisfaction related to age, gender, level of education or length of service (Siu, 2002). The findings from this study found no significant relationship between job satisfaction and personal factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, level or classification. These factors and their impact on job satisfaction could be a reflection of culture (Adams & Bond, 2000). An organizational culture includes commonly held values, beliefs and attitudes. The significance of culture is that it effects change in terms of preference, organizational design, i.e. work simplification or enlargement, and motivation (Hatch, 1993). Furthermore, much research continues to understand the relationship between employee organizational congruence and employee attitudes (Weathington, 2008) which adds another dimension to job satisfaction and job fit.

Mobley et al., (1978) wrote that an individual could be influenced by their perception of organizational factors (i.e. promotional opportunities). Participants in this study were

dissatisfied with pay and promotion, which according to Gerhart (1989) would indicate a higher probability of quitting. However, to understand why employees may not leave, Herzberg (1966) suggested that pay and promotion were not dis-satisfiers that would initiate a long term action such as leaving, but hygiene factors that initiate the entertainment of thoughts of leaving in an attempt to obtain the desired results. Pay raises for example have been shown to be more related to procedural justice and the impact on actual turnover is generally weak (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). Also studies conducted in federal and private sector health care organizations historically suggest employees in federal employment were less likely to leave in comparison to their cohorts in the private sector (Hellman, 1994).

The findings from this study indicated high incidence of thoughts of quitting, although the action of quitting was not highly indicated. Turnover is a process rather than a single discrete event (Alexander, 1998) and occurs over a period of time. Another approach to understanding the relationship between intent to quit and actual quitting could be examined by the works of Vroom (1964) who suggested that an individual's leaving was a function of the difference in strength between two opposing forces. The opposing forces in Vroom's model were the forces to either remain at the organization or the forces to leave the organization.

Discussion

This study concluded that the employees were satisfied overall with their jobs. There were only some aspects with which they were dissatisfied. Job satisfaction and intent to leave are topics discussed in many organizational arenas including health care facilities. Many organizations fail to either acknowledge turnover as a legitimate organizational challenge or to acknowledge the need to assess the impact and potential consequences identified with turnover

intent (Udechukwu, 2009). Healthcare organizations must find alternative ways to address satisfaction and intent to leave issues within their organization if they hope to address intent to leave and dissatisfaction. Skills shortages and increasing demand for health services for veterans and families make retention a key element of organizational survival (OECD, 2008). The link between satisfaction and turnover plays an important role in the management and planning agenda for health care organizations. Each individual is characterized by his own unique dimensions of knowledge, values, beliefs, and cultures which lead to the creation of well rounded organizations. According to Weathington (2008), this along with positive relationships between individual and organizational congruence (organizational values, employee attitudes, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions) may provide insight into the turnover phenomenon.

The overall conclusion drawn by this research was that there was dissatisfaction with some dimensions of job satisfaction (i.e., pay, promotion and supervision) but these dimensions were not motivators that would make individuals take action on their thoughts and intent to leave. Employees can experience a low level of job satisfaction but it does not mean the employee is dissatisfied (Udechukwu, 2009).

Turnover research dates back over centuries, and with changing economic times, changing organizational landscapes, academic studies must continue to examine more comprehensive and expanded analysis to uncover greater detail to further develop new assumptions to explain the comprehensive turnover paradigm.

Generally, the implications of having a large number of dissatisfied employees suggests increases in absenteeism, job avoidance, inter-role conflict, individual distress, increased sick

leave usage and decreased organizational performance. The question of whether “happy” workers are “good” workers has been a fundamental query in organizational findings (Kaplan & Bradley, 2009, pp. 162). The strength and/or consistency of the affectivity performance link are still unknown. Contradictory findings suggest that affect may be related to aspects or types of job performance (George, 1991; Wright & Staw, 1999).

Despite the fact that the most identified predictors of turnover include job satisfaction and intent to leave (Griffeth, et al., 2000) employees may not behave according to intentions expressed at a specific moment in time (Van Dam, 2008).

Limitations

As with field research, this methodology was not experimental, and thus required causal associations that must be carefully interpreted regardless of the statistical software used to analyze the data. The data was collected via self-reports and a common method bias may exist. According to Spector (1994) self-reported data could be useful when examining perceptions however, limited in the framework of responses due to the researcher’s need to place the responses into categories. The research study was conducted using a quantitative methodology which is an appropriate scientific approach for data gathering to conduct statistical analysis; however the mixed methodology approach would have provided greater depth to the study. According to Clark and Shober (1991) in ordinary communication, the desired understanding is only guaranteed through conversational collaboration. Schober and Fricker (2004) suggest allowing the participant to interpret the standardized survey interviews, aptitude tests, and experiment instructions can lead to unintended interpretation. More discussion and collaborative interviewing methods could promote clear and uniform understanding. Quantitative research can

be conducted along with qualitative research to do a more in depth examination of the individual's perceptions that could be missed with standardized questions. Finally, this model was tested in one medical facility (to include six outlying CBOCs) in south-eastern United States, and that may have some subtle differences from other federal facilities in other parts of the country.

Originality/Value

This research has made several important contributions. When this study began, there was little quantitative scholarly research on turnover in the federal health care arena. First, this research was the only one of its kind to study quantitatively turnover in VA health care in VISN 7 composed of South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. Previous research conducted was mainly focused on individuals in a population. This study focused on groups of workers in a population. Regardless of the results, this study only sought to identify variables that impact satisfaction and intent to leave as interpreted by one group of federal employees. In a business environment that is increasingly faced with phases of turnover, this study identified variables that impacted satisfaction and intent to leave as perceived by one federal facility. Even as studies on turnover are plentiful, the shifting paradigms make it necessary to continue to provide more recent studies to allow future researchers to have references to triangulate findings and continue responding to the new paradigm shifts. Organizational studies such as this provide tools to measure similar facilities on subjects such as job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, and intent to quit.

The research provided high and low satisfaction ratings that may have practical value for managers. It could assist managers to understand issues affecting staff which could lead to better

communication and a renewed sense of understanding for future improvement. Employees were satisfied with the work, co-workers and their jobs in general; while being dissatisfied with pay, promotion, and supervision.

Use of perceptions studies could join the many programs that focus on training programs that promote communication, collaboration, and openness. Human resource departments have offered incentive programs including recruitment incentives to provide employees with incentives to be a continued part of the organization. Another program being piloted by several federal health care facilities nationwide is the CREW which stands for Civility, Respect and Engagement in the Workplace (EES, 2004).

CREW was created in response to extensive data demonstrating strong statistically significant correlations between civility in the workplace and sick leave usage; combined inpatient and outpatient satisfaction; and success in meeting performance measures. CREW is not only humanistic but also makes excellent business sense. Embracing a culture of civility, respect, and engagement can help hospitals improve employee satisfaction, meet hospital missions, and benchmark in health care communities. A facility facing concerns with employee perceptions about pay, promotion, and supervision could allow CREW facilitators to work with groups of employees to identify underlying expectations and then spring board solutions for all employees using the employee's recommendations. CREW is a building block for improving working relationships as well as creating workable environments that could ultimately impact all facets of job satisfaction. Individual groups differ in turnover attitudes. According to Van Dam (2007), there are several categories of leavers, (i.e. urgent, determined, un-determined, long term and stayer). The findings of this study show a high frequency to think of leaving but not actually

take the action. This is described as undetermined stayer that is characteristically satisfied and committed (Van Dam, 2007). They are thought to benefit most from programs like CREW that provide explanations of organizational procedures and further explore individual organizational expectations with the hope of improving the workplace, the individual and the culture.

Overall, even though federal employees had the intent to leave, they tended to stay. This consistent negative correlation was also reported in a study conducted by Hellman (1994). He found that across levels of job satisfaction, employees from a U.S. federal agency were less likely than employees within the private sector to leave the organization. There is a greater need for individuals to take time before making career decisions (Singh & Greenhaus, 2004). The decision to leave has consequences affecting financial, social and geographic aspects for employees.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings, discussions, and conclusions of this study led to the following recommendations to further encourage future research on this topic. Similar studies should be conducted to include employees in different geographic areas. Special emphasis should be placed on study design to incorporate the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The triangulation of other studies combined with the mixed-methodology would allow the researcher to further explore the information found in the study. Follow-up studies conducted after implementation of suggested programs and recommended process change could provide comparative data on the same variables that could be used to examine if previous study suggestions were effective.

Future study should be conducted in various health care settings. Expanding the study to elderly care facilities, day care facilities, cultural living centers, etc. could provide valuable information for the academy on turnover in health care. Furthermore, conducting the study in different cross-sections could provide insight into variables impacting job satisfaction and turnover that may be distinct to only those cultures. Replication of the study could provide additional support of these findings and differentiating between the layers could lead in a promising direction for future turnover research in health care.

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Appendix A

Appendix A
THE ABRIDGED JOB DESCRIPTIVE INDEX

Bowling Green State University, 1982, 1985

WORK ON PRESENT JOB

Think of the work you do at present. How well does of the following words or phrases describe your work? Circle:

- 1 for "Yes" if it describes your
- 2 for "No" if it does not describe it
- 3 for "?" if you cannot decide

	Yes	No	?
Satisfying.....	___	___	___
Gives sense of accomplishment...	___	___	___
Challenging.....	___	___	___
Dull.....	___	___	___
Uninteresting.....	___	___	___

PRESENT PAY

Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your present pay?

	Yes	No	?
Income adequate for normal expenses.....	___	___	___
Fair.....	___	___	___
Insecure.....	___	___	___
Well paid.....	___	___	___
Underpaid.....	___	___	___

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your opportunities for promotion?

	Yes	No	?
Good opportunities for promotion...	___	___	___
Promotion on ability.....	___	___	___
Dead-end job.....	___	___	___
Good chance for promotion.....	___	___	___
Unfair promotion policy.....	___	___	___

SUPERVISION

Think of your supervisor and the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your supervision?

	Yes	No	?
Praises good work...	___	___	___
Tactful	___	___	___
Up-to-date.....	___	___	___
Annoying	___	___	___
Bad.....	___	___	___

PEOPLE AT WORK

Think of the majority of people that you work with now or the people you meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these people?

	Yes	No	?
Boring.....	___	___	___
Helpful.....	___	___	___
Responsible.....	___	___	___
Intelligent.....	___	___	___
Lazy.....	___	___	___

JOB IN GENERAL

Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time? For each of the words or phrases, circle: Yes No ?

	Yes	No	?
Good.....	___	___	___
Undesirable.....	___	___	___
Better than most.....	___	___	___
Disagreeable.....	___	___	___
Makes me content.....	___	___	___
Excellent.....	___	___	___
Enjoyable.....	___	___	___
Poor.....	___	___	___

From *User's manual for the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; 1997 Revision)* Balzer, W. K., Kihm, J. A., Smith, P. C., Irwin, J. L., Bachiochi, P. D., Robie, C., Sinar, E. F., & *Job in General (JIG) Scales*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Copyright Bowling Green State University, 1982, 1985, 1997. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix B

Intentions to Quit (ITQ)

Please respond to the following questions about your current job with your current organization:

	Strongly Agree						
	Agree						Strongly Agree
	Agree slightly					Agree	Strongly Agree
	Neither disagree nor agree				Agree slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree slightly			Disagree	Agree slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Disagree		Disagree	Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree		Disagree slightly	Agree slightly	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I intend to leave this organization before too long	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not intend to leave my present employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I intend to quit working for this company immediately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I expect to leave this company soon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How would you rate your chances of leaving your current employer within these time frames? ("Voluntarily" refers to leaving of your own free will, because you choose to, not because you are forced to. Being fired is NOT voluntarily quitting.)

	Extremely unlikely						
	Unlikely						Extremely unlikely
	Slightly unlikely					Unlikely	Extremely unlikely
	Neither likely nor unlikely				Slightly unlikely	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely
	Slightly likely			Likely	Slightly unlikely	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely
	Likely		Likely	Likely	Slightly unlikely	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely
	Extremely Likely	Likely		Likely	Slightly unlikely	Unlikely	Extremely unlikely
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will voluntarily quit my job in the next three months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will voluntarily quit my job in the next six months	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will voluntarily quit my job in the next year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will voluntarily quit my job in the next two years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From *User's manual for the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; 1997 Revision)* Balzer, W. K., Kihm, J. A., Smith, P. C., Irwin, J. L., Bachiochi, P. D., Robie, C., Sinar, E. F., & *Job in General (JIG) Scales*. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Copyright Bowling Green State University, 1982, 1985, 1997. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Please complete by selecting one answer for each question and marking that line with an x.

1. Age a. 25 or under b. 26-35 c. 36-45 d. 46-55
 e. 56-65 f. Over
2. Gender a. Female b. Male
3. Education a. Some high school b. High school graduate
 c. Some college d. Associate degree
 e. Bachelors degree f. Masters degree
 g. Other (GED)
4. Job Level a. Supervisor b. Hourly employee
5. Job Classification a. Administrative b. Clinical
6. Marital Status a. Single b. Married
 c. Separated d. Divorced
 e. Widowed
7. Agency Tenure a. Less than 1 year b. 1-5 years
 c. 6-10 years d. 11-15 years
 e. 16-20 years f. 21 -25 years
 g. 26-30 years h. More than 30 years

8. Ethnicity

a. African American
 c. Caucasian
 e. Native American

b. Asian
 d. Latino
 f. Other _____