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Intention to Leave and Organizational Commitment among Child Welfare Workers

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Shakira Alicia Kennedy entitled "Intention to Leave and Organizational Commitment among Child Welfare Workers." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Social Work.

William Nugent, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Cynthia Rocha, Karen Sowers, John Haas

Accepted for the Council:

Dixie L. Thompson

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Accepted for the Council:

Anne Mayhew
Vice Chancellor and Dean of
Graduate Studies

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Intention to Leave and Organizational Commitment among Child Welfare
Workers

A Dissertation Presented
for the
Doctor of Philosophy Degree
The University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Shakira A. Kennedy

August 2006

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Krishna Kennedy, Safra Mair, Simone Mair, Tanisha Hart and all the little black girls who where told, “you can’t”. Let hard work, patience and perseverance be your friend.

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Abstract

Little is known about the factors that contribute to organizational commitment among child welfare workers. Yet, since the early 1960s, child welfare has been plagued with high staff turnover rates that threaten the quality and continuity of services provided to vulnerable families. Child welfare organizations must be innovative and use proven models to assist in detecting when a worker has the intention of leaving the organization. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between intention to leave and organizational commitment among child welfare workers. Data were collected on 70 child welfare workers in North Carolina. The Three-Component Model of Employee Commitment was used to identify the types of commitment employees hold to their organization and predict employees' intention to leave their organization. The results suggested that only affective commitment independently predicted intentions to leave. Thus, all three components of this model may not be a good fit within the child welfare area to predict intention to leave. However, further research using this model with a larger child welfare sample is needed to see if these results continue to hold consistent.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It has been estimated that annual staff turnover in child welfare is between 30 and 40% nationally, with an average tenure for workers less than two years (U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO), 2003). The GAO (2003) reports that the lack of employee recruitment and retention are significant contributors to the decrease in a stable child welfare workforce. Among the primary factors negatively affecting retention are a lack of supervisory and agency support.

Recruitment and retention have been important considerations for the field of child welfare since the early 1960s, because when agencies lack adequate staff, caseloads and stress levels increase for the workers who remain (Kermish & Kushin, 1969; Podell, 1967). Employees who are over stressed and carry an increased caseload are less likely to produce quality work and effectively monitor the children for whom they are charged to care (Mannheim & Papo, 2000). Therefore, determining and utilizing the motivators of what makes employees committed may better serve the organization, the profession, and in particular the families themselves.

While studies of organizational commitment, turnover, and intention to leave have been popular with management researchers for decades (Liou, 1995; Wallace, 1995), an adequate amount of literature focusing on organizational commitment and employees' intentions to leave child welfare has not been explored. The nature of social work demands the retention of long-term staff members because children and families suffer when vital services are interrupted

(Child Welfare League of America, 2001; Jayaratne & Chess, 1986; Moore, 1992).

Therefore, it would be beneficial for the profession to utilize a model of organizational commitment that predicts turnover intentions and provides insight into an employee's relationship with his or her organization. Knowing what drives the commitment of employees to his or her organization may generate a positive working environment where employees want to work. A model with the ability to examine the relationship an employee has to his or her organization could position agency administrators to recruit and maintain employees who are more likely to stay, while providing specialized training to retain them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between intention to leave and organizational commitment among child welfare workers. Despite the large number of empirical studies regarding employee turnover, our understanding of how and why employees decide to stay or leave the organization is still unclear. However, studies primarily agree that less satisfied employees are more likely to have a decreased level of organizational commitment (Jayaratne & Chess, 1986; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). Once this occurs, employees are more likely to develop an intention to leave the organization, which may result in actual turnover (Bluedorn, 1982). Trett and Meyer's (1993) meta-analysis results were consistent with other studies indicating that turnover intentions were the strongest predictor of actual turnover.

Further, studies agree that supervisors are a pivotal point of contact for increasing organizational commitment and decreasing turnover (GAO, 2003; Rycraft, 1994; Samantri, 1992).

The proposed study will shed light on the relationship employees hold to their organization by testing a model of organizational commitment that predicts child welfare workers' intention to leave his or her organization. Once this is known, administrators may be better able to understand, predict, and target workers who have intentions to leave their current employment by applying individualized interventions to retain staff since different workers have different needs, perceptions and abilities (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984).

Objective

The objective of the proposed study is to:

- I. Test the Three-Component Model of organizational commitment to determine its likelihood in predicting child welfare workers' intention to leave.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Turnover in this paper is defined as the actual leaving of an employee from his or her place of employment. Researchers (American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), 2005; Brett, Guastello, & Aderman, 1982; Goodman, & Boss, 2002) have identified two types of turnover within the literature: *preventable/voluntary and unpreventable/involuntary*.

Preventable/voluntary turnover refers to an employee leaving his or her organization freely and without restriction. In contrast, unpredictable/involuntary turnover refers to an employee leaving his or her organization for reasons beyond their control such as illness or termination of employment.

Preventable turnover occurs after an employee develops an *intention to leave* the organization. *Intention to leave* refers to an individual's reduced level of commitment that results in an increased desire to leave the organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982). *Intention to leave* the organization has been positively correlated with age, years of employment, education, caseload complexity, self-esteem, organizational culture, and job satisfaction, among other factors (Blankertz & Robinson, 1997; GAO, 2003; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Poulin & Walter, 1993; Rycraft, 1994). Although studies support the importance of these variables, researchers further admit that there is no single identifiable variable that can be pinpointed as the leading cause of intention to leave.

Organizational Commitment is defined in this paper as the relative strength of the individual's identification with and involvement in his or her

employing organization (Mowday, Porter, Steers, 1982). Personal characteristics such as age, tenure, sex, sense of competence and education (Blau, 1985; Glisson & Durick, 1988; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Morris & Sherman, 1991; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974) and psychological variables such as role conflict, role ambiguity and beginning work experiences (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Bobocel & Allen, 1991) are cited as antecedents of commitment.

Though the profession of social work has tackled the topics of recruitment and retention within the field, there has not been a systematic effort in applying a model that has the potential to predict when an employee is in the first stages of leaving before he or she actually departs from their place of employment. The ability to intervene at this first phase of a worker's dissatisfaction with his or her organization might ultimately prevent turnover.

Turnover in Child Welfare

There has been considerable discussion in the social work literature when trying to determine at what point managers should begin to become concerned about their organization's turnover rate. Kermish and Kushin (1969) describe disturbingly high turnover among social workers as 32 %. Brown, Coyne, and Harvey (1985) identified high turnover for children services' organizations as between 17 to 20%, while Balfour and Neff (1993) indicate that turnover rates above 20% pose a threat to an organization and its effectiveness. Later, GAO (2003) indicated that a turnover rate of 30 to 40% is a cause for alarm.

The Effect of Turnover on the Organization and Staff

Investments of time, money and training associated with high staff turnover can be monumental, and in 1995 it was estimated that filling a child welfare job vacancy cost \$10,000 (Graef & Hill, 2000). This is due to the fact that newly hired workers need extensive training before they are ready to take on a full caseload.

Employee turnover also indirectly impacts coworker productivity. Child welfare workers who remain committed to the agency often find themselves stretched thin between their clients' increased requests for help and the agency's limited resources (Mannheim & Papo, 2000). Therefore, it is implied that turnover has far-reaching implications that ultimately threatens the organization's ability to effectively serve clients.

In addition, chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, lengthy hours, inadequate compensation, and a lack of accolades contribute to low employee morale. Lowered morale causes decreased job satisfaction and creates an intention to leave, which leads to actual turnover (Arches, 1991; GAO, 2003; Himle & Jayaratne, 1991; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Jayaratne & Chess, 1986; Rycraft, 1994; Samnatrai, 1992).

The Effect of Salary on Leaving

On average, child welfare workers earn \$35,911 per annum with only a 6.3% total increase since 2000. In contrast, the federal cost of living index during this time rose by 9.7% (American Public Human Services Association (APHSA),

2005). Researchers report conflicting findings on the impact of salary on child welfare employee turnover and retention. While some studies indicate that higher salaries lead to employee retention (Alwon & Reitz, 2000; Jayarante & Chess, 1984; Samantrai, 1992;), others show that salary is not an important predictor of worker intention to leave (APHSA, 2005; Child Welfare League of America, 2001; Cicero-Reese & Clark, 1998).

Conflicting findings within the literature may be due to low response rates, the use of non-representative samples, and asking supervisors about his or her workers' salary satisfaction. The relationship between salary and an employee's intention to leave his or her organization is not yet known, and requires further exploration.

The Impact of Supervisors on Turnover

Researchers (APHSA, 2005; GAO, 2003; Jayarante & Chess, 1984; Rycraft, 1994; Samantri, 1992;) remain in agreement about the critical role that supervisors play in retaining employees and that supervisors who improve staff morale increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover. Quality supervisors in the field provide guidance, case support, and advocacy, while helping workers manage the demands and responsibilities of their workload (Rycraft, 1994).

Samantrai's (1992) study on factors that influence social workers with a Masters of Social Work degree (M.S.W) to leave child welfare indicates that supervisors play a pivotal role in shaping a worker's perception about their place of employment. In turn, this affects job retention. However, despite numerous

recommendations on how to maintain employees, the field continues to struggle with recruiting and maintaining committed employees (GAO, 2003).

The Impact of Job Satisfaction and Burnout on Turnover

Researchers have identified that a relationship exists among job satisfaction, burnout and turnover (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Siefert & Jayaratne, 1991; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1991). In both Siefert and Jayaratne's (1991) and Jayaratne and Chess' (1984) studies the authors examined the relationship among all three variables using a sample gathered from the National Association of Social Workers (N.A.S.W). Their findings indicated that low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of burnout were strongly associated with the likelihood of actual employee turnover among full-time employees with a Masters in Social Work who identified themselves as community mental health workers (n=144), child welfare workers (n=60), or family service workers (n=84).

When examining job satisfaction and burnout independently on their relationship to actual employee turnover, researchers have found a positive relationship. In Maslach and Jackson's (1981) study of how burnout was experienced among human service workers (n=1025), burnout was related to the desire to leave one's job. This desire is often manifested in increased breaks from work, absenteeism and a decrease in the quality of job performance. Similarly, in Goodman and Boss' (2002) study, the authors explored burnout and its relationship to actual turnover. Results indicated that employees who actually

left the organization had significantly higher levels of burnout scores than those who remained.

As researchers have found burnout to be linked to actual employee turnover, other researchers have found job satisfaction to influence actual turnover. Locke (1969) contends that job satisfaction is the consequence of an interaction between the worker and his/her work environment. When examining this interaction, results show that high levels of job satisfaction and an elevated sense of personal accomplishment were associated with lower turnover in a study of job satisfaction, burnout and turnover in health care social workers (Siefert & Jayaratne, 1991). Researchers have noted that the factors that contribute to job satisfaction are most frequently the factors that actualize an employee's professional goals, such as skill variety, rather than environmental or financial aspects like salary or working conditions (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1991). The strong relationship between job satisfaction and burnout both collectively and independently to turnover may be a result of the two variables sharing common predictors.

Intention to Leave

Predictors of Intention to Leave

Researchers have examined job satisfaction and burnout as they relate to intention to leave and scholars have primarily focused on job satisfaction as a major cause of intention to leave (Acker, 2004; Barber, 1986; Penn, Romano & Foat, 1988). Studies indicate that among child welfare workers, community

mental health workers and family service workers, promotional opportunities were the best predictors of job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Jayaratne & Chess 1984; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974).

Barak, Nissly, and Levin (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of 25 studies that included variables such as job satisfaction and burnout as antecedents to intention to leave. Results indicated that burnout, job dissatisfaction, availability of employment alternatives, low organizational commitment, stress, and lack of social support were the strongest predictors of intention to leave the organization.

Burnout is a syndrome of physical, emotional, and interactional symptoms related to job stress that includes emotional exhaustion, a sense of lacking personal accomplishment, and depersonalization of clients (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Thus far, studies indicate that there is a significant and reciprocal relationship between employee burnout and job satisfaction (Anderson, 2000; Arches, 1991; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Siefert & Jayaratne, 1991; Patton & Goddard, 2003; Winefield & Barlow, 1995). Consequently, employees who experience a significant degree of burnout are more likely to be dissatisfied with their employment and equally, employees who are dissatisfied are more likely to experience a degree of burnout.

Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Other studies have sought to establish a link between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job challenge and skill variety were found to be the best predictors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Glisson &

Durick, 1988; Gould, 1979). As a result, organizational practices that increase job satisfaction will likely enhance both employees' service to clients and their commitment and willingness to contribute to the organization's success (Balfour & Weshsler, 1991). Additionally, as age and tenure in an organization increases, the opportunities for alternative employment may be restricted due to too many years invested within the organization or the perceived lack of employment opportunities due to age (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004).

How Organizational Commitment Was Developed and Defined over Time

For over forty years, defining the concept of commitment has been challenging for scholars, and there have been inconsistencies in the literature as researchers have tried to construct a working definition (Reichers, 1985). Generally, *commitment* can be described as a duty regarded as one's sole responsibility—a loyalty to one's occupation, profession, or other area.

Early use of the term came from the sociological perspective of Becker in the 1960s (Becker, 1960). Becker contended that commitment only emerges when an individual, by making *side bets*, links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity. *Side bets* are defined as individuals' investment (time, pensions, etc.) in an organization. For example, the longer a social worker works within child welfare, the more likely he or she has made a large number of *side bets*, thereby increasing commitment to the organization. This argument can also apply to an employee's age and organizational tenure. Thus, it is assumed

that an employee's tenure and age is positively associated with organizational commitment.

According to Becker (1960), organizations also make side bets for their employees through practices or policies that lock individuals into their organizational membership. For example, a social worker may want to leave his or her place of employment, but because of pension or retirement policies, they may be unable to leave without forgoing a considerable sum of money.

In the early 1970s Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian (1974) looked at commitment from a management perspective. They expanded on Becker's definition of organizational commitment by identifying additional components. The authors defined organizational commitment as the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization which can be characterized by three factors: a) strong belief in and acceptance of organizational goals; b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership.

Decades later, researchers from various disciplines grappled with the concept of commitment and began focusing on its antecedents, where key classifications have been identified. Personal characteristics such as age, tenure, sex, sense of competence and education (Blau, 1985; Glisson & Durick, 1988; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Morris & Sherman, 1981; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974) and psychological variables such as role conflict, role ambiguity and beginning work experiences (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer, Bobocel &

Allen, 1991) were cited as antecedents of commitment. However *organizational commitment* is defined, there is agreement that there are several distinct forms of commitment.

Forms of Commitment

Since earlier attempts have been made to tie commitment to the organization, researchers have begun categorizing the various forms of organizational commitment.

These forms include; 1) *Organizational Commitment*: beliefs one has concerning the organization (Glisson & Durick, 1998); 2) *Career Commitment*: one's attitude toward one's profession or vocation (Blau, 1985); 3) *Goal Commitment*: one's attachment to or determination to reach a goal, regardless of the goal's origin (Locke et al., 1988); 4) *Job Commitment*: the likelihood that an individual will stick with a job, and feel psychologically attached, whether their employment is satisfying or not (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983). For example, in Rycraft's (1990) qualitative study of Child Protective Service (CPS) workers (N=23), the researcher identified four factors of employee retention: 1) *Mission*: workers are dedicated to and believe in their work; 2) *Goodness of fit*: suitability to the job is extremely important for case workers; 3) *Supervision*: interaction with supervisor is viewed as guidance, rather than instruction or monitoring; and 4) *Investment*: workers describe their investment as personal and professional.

Conceptual Framework

Meyer and Allen (1991) argue that commitment is a psychological state with at least three separate components reflecting (1) a desire (2) a need, and (3) an obligation to maintain employment within an organization. Researchers have conceptualized organizational commitment as having both attitudinal and behavioral components (McGee & Ford, 1987; Reichers, 1985). Studies (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Porter, Steers & Mowday, 1974) have referred to *attitudinal commitment* as an intense identification with the goals of the organization. *Behavioral commitment* refers to a less intense relationship with the organization and focuses on the individual process that binds him/her to that organization. How these different forms of commitment relate to one's intention to leave an organization is theoretically important. Thus, it is implied that an employees' intention to leave his or her organization could be the final opportunity for administrators to prevent actual turnover.

The Development of the Meyer and Allen Three-Component Model

Meyer and Allen (1991) integrated attitudinal and behavioral approaches as distinguished by Mowday, Porter and Steers in 1982, and expanded the concept of organizational commitment. They concluded that organizational commitment is a particular mindset or psychological state that binds an individual to an organization, which may reduce the likelihood of turnover. Meyer and Allen (1991) recognized three themes in the definition of commitment: 1) commitment as an affective attachment to the organization; 2) commitment as an obligation to

remain within the organization; and 3) commitment as a perceived cost associated with leaving the organization (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004). The authors recommend analyzing all three components simultaneously to gain a clear understanding of an employee's relationship with an organization.

According to Meyer and Allen (1991), each component of commitment has a different implication for behavior: *affective, normative and continuance commitment*, respectively. The idea that each component of commitment should influence an employee's turnover intentions and turnover behavior is the key that unifies these constructs as components of organizational commitment (Jaros, 1997). **Affective commitment (AC)** refers to an employee's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. For example, social workers who work within child welfare do so because they *want* to. **Normative commitment (NC)** reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. For example, social workers with a high level of normative commitment will feel they *ought* to remain in child welfare; they may see it as a moral responsibility or a "calling".

Controversy over the dimensionality of Meyer and Allen's continuance commitment has led to numerous studies (Dunham, Grude, & Castañeda, 1994; Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Jaros, 1997; Lee, Allen, Meyer & Rhee, 2001; McGee & Ford, 1987; Somers, 1993, 1995). Researchers suggest that the continuance commitment scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) actually measures two forms of costs related to commitment (Stinglhamber, Bentein

&Vandenberghe, 2002). With ***Continuance commitment (CC)***, the first cost refers to a high level of sacrifice (HISAC), which includes the loss of pension plans, and broken relationships that would result from leaving. While the other reflects the perception of a lack of employment alternatives (LOALT) if an employee left his or her place of employment. For example, social workers with a high continuance commitment feel the *need* to continue in their organizations either because it would be harder to find another job or because they have too many years invested.

Findings have been inconclusive regarding the dimensionality of the subcomponents. In McGee and Ford's (1987) study of the dimensions of organizational commitment and turnover intentions, the authors concluded that the subcomponents of continuance commitment were not unitary, but consisted of two unique components. However, Hackett, Bycio and Hausdorf (1994), disputed that researchers should treat the subcomponents as a unitary construct since a differential relationship was not shown in how they relate to antecedents. A consensus has not yet been reached in regards to the subcomponents' dimensionality.

An explanation for the contradictory findings could be that McGee and Ford (1987) used a sample of faculty members with a response rate of 35 % and only analyzed two aspects of the Three-Component Model (affective and the two subcomponents of continuance commitment) to examine the scales' psychometric properties. The study by Hackett, Bycio and Hausdorf (1994),

used all three scales that comprised the Three-Component Model along with measures of job satisfaction, motivation, a performance rating scale and a three-item scale measuring an employee's intention to leave. Samples of registered nurses and bus operators were used to determine turnover intentions, yielding a response rate of 57 % and 63 %, respectively. More committed and motivated employees may more likely return surveys than those who may not be, which could explain the moderate response rates.

Methodological Strengths

How the Model Has Been Used in Other Areas. Studies using Meyer and Allen's model have been conducted in various state and private organizations (Meyer, Bobocel & Allen, 1991; Wasti, 2003); multinational firms (Shore & Wayne, 1993); four-year university programs (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993); and industrial health education institutes (Lee, Allen, Meyer, & Rhee, 2001). Samples consisted of nurses, industrial hygiene technicians, and students in a four-year nursing program, registered nurses, supervisors, mechanics, secretaries, accountants, office workers and various blue-collar workers.

The evidence in favor of Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model has been compelling with regard to the measures internal consistency (alpha coefficients) ranging from .74 to .89 for AC, .69 to .84 for CC, and .69 to .79 for NC, respectively (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Watsi, 2003). Confirmatory factor analysis has further supported each component to be distinguishable from the other (Dunham, Grude

& Castañeda, 1994; Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; Lee, Allen, Meyer & Rhee, 2001; McGee & Ford, 1987; Myer, Allen & Smith, 1993).

Applying the Model to Non-Western Cultures. Other studies (Lee, Allen, Meyer, & Rhee, 2001; Wasti, 2003) have used all components of the Three-Component Model to examine its usefulness in generalizing to non-Western cultures when determining organizational commitment and turnover intentions, measuring the influence of cultural values, and examining commitment to organizations and occupations.

A sample of 227 employees from the Industrial Health Education Institute was used in the Lee et al (2001) study to determine if the model could be generalized to Korean workers. Intention to leave the organization was measured using the NC questionnaire (ex: I would not feel guilt if I left this organization now, I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer, etc.). Results indicated when turnover was regressed on commitment; it showed that each of the commitment scales made a significant contribution to predicting turnover intentions.

Watsi (2003) examined the moderating influence of *idiocentrism* (individualism) and *allocentrism* (collectivism) on the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intentions by conducting two studies (study 1& 2) in Ankara, Turkey. *Individualism* refers to the individual's own thoughts, feelings and actions, rather than by reference to others. *Collectivism* refers to seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and

recognizing that one's behavior is contingent on what the individual perceives to be the thoughts, feelings and actions of their community.

Study 1 consisted of in-depth interviews of 83 Turkish citizens from various organizations. Interviews revealed that the most significant reference group for Turkish employees was their families. These results are consistent with Turkish culture, where members of large Turkish families, often living together as an extended family, are loyal to the family unit (Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2000). With that knowledge, a three-item social factor scale that assessed the perceived disapproval of the individual's family regarding his or her decision to leave the organization was developed.

In study 2, the moderating influence of cultural values on the organizational commitment-turnover relationship was tested. A total of 1,200 questionnaires were distributed to 46 private sector organizations in four major cities, and 914 (76%) surveys were returned. The same scales developed in study 1 were used along with a job withdrawal scale that measured the dependent variable, intention to leave.

Results indicated that turnover intentions were predicted as a function of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Social factors that were defined as the disapproval of the family, were less important predictors of turnover intentions for *idiocentric* (individualistic) individuals but more important for individuals with strong *allocentric* (collective) values. While employment may have normative implications for individuals who endorse allocentric values, such

concerns are less influential in determining the behavior of idiocentric individuals who highly regard personal goals and preferences.

Though both Lee et al (2001) and Wasti's (2003) studies were conducted within non-Western cultures, their findings remain consistent with other studies in determining the generalizability of the Three-Component Model on employee turnover intentions. As the model has provided positive results in non-Western cultures, it has also yielded positive results in Western cultures.

Applying the Model to Western Cultures. Two researchers have used the affective and continuance commitment scales (Meyer, Bobocel & Allen, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993) from the Three-Component Model to explain the development of organizational commitment, and how perceived organizational support (POS) affects employee behavior. The authors only used two scales because they concluded that the normative commitment scale is more effective when an employee has maintained employment for a considerable amount of time. These studies are further reviewed within this paper.

In Meyer, Bobocel and Allen's, (1991) longitudinal study of the development of organizational commitment during the first year of pre- and post-employment influences, the authors found significant relationships when determining commitment development. Four surveys were mailed to voluntary participants, one prior to employment and the others at 1, 6, and 11 months after they began employment.

The study examined 42 variables prior to employment including his/her number of job offers, a forecasted amount of time he/she will remain with the organization, how many contacts he/she made and the number of first interviews received, etc. After employment began, variables such as level of difficulty finding employment were considered. A total of four questionnaires were mailed, the first of which requested demographic information, information pertaining to the current job search and prior employment expectations.

Of the 192 questionnaires mailed, 157 usable questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 81%. The post-entry questionnaires consisted of the AC and CC scales, as well as measures of their antecedent variables. At 1, 6, and 11 months, usable questionnaires were returned by 145, 115, and 104 participants. Thus, the response rates were 76%, 60 % and 54%, respectively. Results indicated that organizational commitment is associated with a positive work experience, both prior to and following entry into an organization.

Findings indicated that the best predictor of affective commitment prior to employment was decision quality (confidence in choice of job and organization), and the best predictor of AC once employed was job quality. Job quality consisted of job challenge, participation, and role clarity. In essence, employees who were comfortable with their employment decision and their quality of work were more likely to have a positive emotional attachment and identification with the organization. Continuance commitment correlated strongly with prior- and after-entry measures of perceived alternatives for employment. In other words,

employees began thinking of organizational bonds before and after employment, which increased the likelihood of them remaining because the cost of leaving was perceived as being too high.

While Meyer, Bobocel and Allen (1991) examined the process of how individuals become committed to an organization; Shore & Wayne (1993) conducted a longitudinal study examining the organization's commitment to its employees. These authors suggested that how employees perceive the organization's commitment, referred to as *perceived organizational support* (POS), was based on an employee's belief of whether the organization values his/her contribution and well-being. The sample consisted of 383 employees (305 men; 78 women) and their direct supervisors (198 men; 33 women) working in a large southeastern multinational firm.

A random stratified sample (by age and tenure), consisting of 1,071 employees, were contacted by mail to participate in the longitudinal study of employee attitudes that involved completing four surveys over a 2-year period. Employees reported their level of affective and continuance commitment as well as POS, while supervisors rated how often their subordinates engaged in *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB). OCB are behaviors that an individual offers or withholds without concern for rewards or sanctions. *Impression management* (IM) behaviors, which an employee uses to influence or impress others, were also measured.

The internal consistencies for the four measures were as follows: .88 for AC, .82 for CC, .95 for POS. *Organizational citizenship* behaviors measured two dimensions: altruism with an alpha of .88 and compliance with an alpha of .87. The internal consistency was not reported for impression management (IM) where supervisors reported how often their subordinates engaged in IM behaviors. The return rate for employees was 90%, and for supervisors 73%.

Results indicated that affective commitment and perceived *organizational support* (POS) were positively related to both compliance and altruism, whereas continuance commitment was negatively related to these same constructs. In essence, employees who were involved in their organizations and felt that their organization valued their individual contribution were more likely to have an increased organizational commitment, and less likely to think about leaving. Additionally, both AC and POS were positively associated with supervisory favors, and IM was positively related to altruism ($r = .29$). The implication for this finding may be that doing favors for one's supervisor could be a result of positive feelings about the organization, as oppose to an attempt to impress the supervisor.

These findings should not be accepted without a few caveats. A low correlation was found between employee attitudes and managerial reports of IM and OCB behaviors. This may be due to the fact that additional variables are needed to explain employees' behavior and perceptions of managers. Additionally, low occurrences of IM behaviors were detected. In fact, the authors

identified that some forms of IM may not necessarily measure attitudes regarding the organization, but rather feelings toward the manager.

Both Meyer, Bobocel and Allen, (1991) and Shore and Wayne (1993) studies provide a complimentary view that demonstrates how organizational commitment can be developed prior to and after employment. However, Shore and Wayne, (1993) demonstrated that a reciprocal relationship exists when talking about organizational commitment. It is not enough for an employee to have prior organizational commitment, but to foster continued commitment, the organization must also value its employees. Consequently, further research is required to investigate the individual and situational factors that may influence employment and perceptions of organizational support.

Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) conducted the third longitudinal study. Like Meyer, Bobocel and Allen, (1991) and Shore and Wayne (1993), this study used the Three-Component Model to predict turnover intentions within organizations, and added a component of commitment to the occupation. Two separate samples consisting of student nurses and registered nurses were used.

The registered nurses were chosen from the membership list of the College of Nurses of Ontario. Questionnaires were mailed to 1,000 randomly selected registered nurses with a response rate of 61% (98% women, 79% married, 56% full-time employees, 2% casual employees, and 7% unemployed) with an average tenure of 15 years. For two consecutive years, data were collected during regular class meetings in required courses from students (9

males, 352 women) in a four-year nursing program. The Three-Component Model surveys were used for the nursing students and registered nurses and tested his/her occupational and organizational commitment. The registered nurses were also given a five-item questionnaire to assess job satisfaction.

Correlates of occupational commitment among student nurses indicated that continuance commitment measured at the beginning of the school year correlated positively with reports of having prior experience in the field of nursing. Affective commitment measured at the end of the year correlated positively with having secured, or intention to look for, a nursing-related job during school recess. The perceived cost associated with leaving the nursing profession was greater among those who had previous nursing experience, and a desire to remain in the profession was associated with efforts to procure employment.

Correlates of occupational and organizational commitment among registered nurses indicated that all three components of commitment to the profession and to the organization were positively and statistically significantly correlated with age and years in nursing. Affective commitment to both the organization and occupation were positive and correlated with whether the individual was currently working in the field and in the geographical location of his/her choice. Additionally, all three components of commitment to the occupation correlated negatively with intention to leave the profession. Affective and normative commitment correlated positively with professional involvement; and continuance commitment did not correlate significantly.

Methodological Limitations

Empirical Studies. Attention to commitment and intention to leave have been inadequate within social work literature; since many studies chiefly focused on job satisfaction and burnout (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Penn, Romano & Foat, 1988; Ratlif, 1988; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1991; Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986; Vinkur-Kaplan et al, 1994; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1996; Wares, Dobrec, Rosenthal, & Wedel, 1992) and to a smaller degree, turnover (Powell & York, 1992; Vinokur-Kaplan, et al, 1994). Glisson and Durrick (1998) have examined organizational commitment, but their study did not center attention on child welfare personnel or test a specific model of commitment and how it relates to one's intention to leave.

Sampling Methods. A pattern of methodological weakness surfaced throughout the literature with regards to the selection of participants. Appendix A demonstrates available research on job satisfaction and organizational commitment among child welfare workers, as well as commitment among other workers in other areas of practice. Methodological and theoretical limitations are evident throughout the grid in Appendix A. The use of convenience and/or small samples (Balfour & Neff, 1993; Jayaratne & Chess, 1986; Landsman, 2001; Rycraft, 1994; Shore & Martin, 1989; Winefield & Barlow, 1995), affects the amount of confidence placed in the results, along with the limited ability to generalize beyond the sample and to other areas.

The aforementioned studies, along with other research on job satisfaction among human service workers, pulled samples primarily from the National Association for Social Workers (N.A.S.W) list (Arches, 1991; Jayarante & Chess, 1985; Jayarante & Chess, 1984; Vinokur-Kaplan & Hartman, 1986; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1996). Being a member in a professional organization assumes some degree of professional identification that may not be representative of the entire child welfare workforce, so when interpreting the findings of these studies, it is important to consider how this population differs from those who are not part of such groups.

Blanket generalizations about the child welfare workforce using samples from professional associations are particularly problematic, especially since majority of employees are not professional social workers. The external validity of studies using small, convenience samples and/or public child welfare workers based on samples of N.A.S.W members is highly questionable, because inferences are made about a population from which the sample was not drawn. More importantly, generalizations should not go beyond the population of more committed association members.

Research Design and Measurement. Studies have compromised reliability, internal and external validity due to their decreased response rates and their use of pre-existing measurement alpha coefficients. In Meyer, Bobocel and Allen's (1991) study, results should be interpreted with caution because the attrition rate for the study continued to decrease by 5% after the first set of

questionnaires were distributed. Thereafter, the attrition rate decreased by 16%, and then by 6%. Mortality is a threat to the study's internal validity and the effects on findings may be significant because participants who dropped out were likely to be different from those who continued to participate. Those who remained could be more satisfied by definition; thus the results are not generalizable to the larger population of university graduates.

Additionally, Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) longitudinal study response rates for student nurses decreased in successive years. The first distributions yielded a response of 366 students, the second 296 (81%) and the following years since the first yielded, 26%, 23%, 17% and 14%.

Some authors did not standardize or clarify their measurement instrument to reduce error that would add to their measurement reliability. In both Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) and Meyer, Bobocel and Allen's (1991) study, the authors used existing internal consistency estimates (alpha coefficients) for the questionnaires and did not provide estimates of the effects of the 42 additional variables to test the instrument's reliability. This is problematic because the reliability of the measures remains in question, which makes the interpretation of the results dubious. The studies did, however, allow some comparisons to be drawn within the child welfare arena.

Data Collection. A hand full of studies have used mail-in surveys to collect their data (Meyer, Bobocel & Allen, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Winefield & Barlow, 1995). However, the non-response for these studies was too high to

have confidence that the samples were representative of the population, which questions the study's external validity.

The use of mail-in surveys is always open to systematic bias against those who do not have a stable address, such as the working poor who may reside shelters and those who frequently move. Additionally, those who returned questionnaires may have done so because they were more satisfied with their work than those who did not. Low response rates may indicate those who returned the questionnaires feel more strongly or more interested in a particular topic than those who did not respond. Further, the non-respondents could have been those who were most dissatisfied with their work environment. Thus, these studies do not accurately represent the larger child welfare workforce and its employees.

Addressing Methodological Issues

This study addressed some of the methodological weaknesses of previous studies. A non-probability sampling method was used to carry out this study from those who volunteered to participate. The study's sample size was determined by the use of a power analysis. To ensure a high response rate and avoid mailing questionnaires, the researcher distributed questionnaires to participants who were available and answered questions and/or concerns. Although the measures being used independently have preexisting alpha coefficients, a reliability analysis was conducted with the collected data. The next chapter will discuss the study's procedures in detail.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature presented above, the proposed study examined the following three hypotheses.

- I. Affective commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, continuance and normative commitment.
- II. Continuance commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, affective and normative commitment.
- III. Normative commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, continuance and affective commitment.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter reviews the procedures that were used to conduct the study. The agency description, sample, data collection, measurements, research design, power analysis, data analysis along with missing data are discussed in detail.

Agency Description

The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Youth and Family Services Division (DSS/YFS) in Charlotte, North Carolina was the data collection site. The YFS social work division is located within the community and adheres to a community-based service delivery model. This community-based service delivery system is designed to strengthen partnerships with existing community-based agencies through the provision of services that includes: 1) *Child protective services* - conducts investigations and family assessments to ascertain allegations of child abuse and neglect; 2) *Family interventions services*-monitor family's in transition and provides in-home services to maintain children with their families; 3) *Permanency planning services* - case managers provide assistance to children in legal custody; 4) *Resource development services* - provides a safe home for children within the organization's custody through the recruitment, training and licensing of potential foster parents; 5) *Adoption services* - permanent homes are located for children who have been cleared for adoption; 6) *Foster care services*-matches children with potential foster parents; 7) *Independent living services* - provides a continuum of services for children who

have aged out of the foster care system; and 8) *Family and children evaluation team* (FACT) - provides services to families whose children were taken for placement.

Sample

The research was conducted using a purposive sample. Participants were child welfare workers recruited from The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Youth and Family Service Division (DSS/YFS) in Charlotte, North Carolina. A letter of support (Appendix E) was obtained from the agency granting permission for data collection. The sample consisted of 70 child welfare workers at DSS/YFS in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Data Collection

The University of Tennessee, Institutional Review Board granted permission to gather data from the Department of Social Services Youth and Family Services (YFS). Data were collected May 23, 2006 to May 25, 2006. Access was granted from YFS to utilize three of their five sites. Available workers at each site were approached individually at their cubicle to solicit their participation in the study. The study's purpose and description (Appendix D) were provided and questions were answered during the solicitation. Emphasis was made that the study was being conducted independently of the organization, but the results would be shared upon the agency's request in aggregate form. The voluntary nature of participation was further emphasized and it was made clear that questionnaires could be placed in the box incomplete if they chose not to participate, or if they changed their minds after they started filling out the

questionnaire. In addition, partially completed surveys were destroyed and not used in data analysis. Participants were asked not to place identifying information on their questionnaires at any time during the data collection process. This made it impossible to link questionnaire responses with individual participants.

Furthermore, participants were made aware of the possible risks for participation, such as coercion to participate from workers and supervisors. While this risk seems to be small, it was emphasized to each participant that they did not have to participate and could place the survey in the envelope without completing it with no penalties. They were informed that if they decided to participate, then changed their mind; they could destroy or place the partially completed questionnaire into the envelope.

In order to prevent coercion from supervisors, administrative staff was asked to remain in their offices during the data collection, of which they agreed. Furthermore, employees were able to place incomplete questionnaires in an envelope so no one, including the researcher and colleagues, knew who participated and who did not. It was also emphasized that the researcher would remain outside in the lobby area while they decided what they wanted to do, and while those who chose to participate completed the surveys.

Once the instructions were provided to each participant, several employees denied to participate in the study and refused a packet, while others did not meet the study's criteria. In all, ninety workers were approached and

seventy workers decided to participate in the proposed study, providing a response rate of 77%. Those who agreed to participate were given an empty envelope, an informed consent with the researcher's contact information (Appendix B) and the Employee Commitment Survey packet (Appendix C). Once the packets were received, questions were answered and the researcher waited in the lobby, while completed surveys were returned sealed in the envelope and placed in the box provided.

Measurements

Dependent Variable

Intention to leave is the dependent variable for this study. *Intention to leave* refers to an individual's reduced level of commitment that results in an increased desire to leave the organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

Intention to leave has been frequently used in past research studies (Jayarante & Chess, 1984; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). Shore and Martin (1989) have noted that intention to leave is an appropriate dependent variable because it is linked with actual turnover. Additionally, Bluedorn (1982) and Price and Mueller (1981) have recommended the use of intention to leave over actual turnover because actual turnover is more difficult to predict than intentions since there are numerous external factors that affect turnover behavior.

The Staying or Leaving Index (SLI). The SLI is an 8-item scale presuming to measure both an employees' intention to stay and leave their place of

employment. Each item is rated on a seven-point scale: terrible (1), bad (2), not so good (3), so-so (4), good (5), very good (6), and excellent (7). Questions 1-4 are reverse scored before all eight questions are summed to produce the respondent's intent to leave score. Scores ranged from 8-56. The higher the score, the greater the respondent's intention of leaving. This survey was designed for use with other questionnaires in which other variables will be measured in addition to leaving intentions (Bluedorn, 1982). It is recommended that the two sets of questions be placed in nonadjacent positions separated by questions measuring other variables. The survey has been tested resulting in alpha coefficients from .87 to .95 respectively from samples of insurance employees, food service managers, faculty members, and clerical staff (Bluedorn, 1980, 1982).

Independent Variables

There are a total of eight independent variables, however only three primary independent variables were the focus of this study: 1) Affective commitment (desire-based), 2) Normative commitment (obligation-based), and 3) Continuance commitment (cost-based). Each form of commitment should influence an employee's turnover intentions and behavior. Employees were asked to respond to a series of statements pertaining to their relationship with the organization and their reason for staying.

The Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (TCMS).

The TCMS is an 18-item scale that presumably measures three separate forms of commitment (affective, normative and continuance commitment). Each scale has six questions rated on a seven-point scale: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3), undecided (4), slightly agree (5), agree (6), and strongly agree (7). Scores ranged from 6 to 42. Higher scores on each scale indicate the respondent's level of commitment to the organization. Employees with strong affective commitment who want to remain in their jobs (high ACS scores) tend to perform at a higher level than those who do not (low ACS).

Those with strong normative commitment (high NCS scores) stay because they feel they ought to and normally out perform those who feel no such obligation (low NCS). Finally, those with strong continuance commitment (high CCS scores) stay because they have to do so in fear of losing something of value or have little incentive to do anything more than is required to retain their positions (Meyer & Allen, 2004). Each scales' psychometric properties have produced modest internal consistency (alpha coefficients) ranging from .74 to .89 for ACS, .69 to .84 for CCS, and .69 to .79 for NCS, respectively (Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Watsi, 2003).

Defining Covariate Variables

The variables below were added to the multiple regression analysis in order to assess the relationship of the independent variables of focus in the study to the dependent variable, independent of the effects of the covariates.

Age. Participant's age was obtained by allowing them to fill in their respective age, thus making this variable continuous.

Gender. Participants were asked to select whether they are male or female, thus making this variable dichotomous.

Race. Participants were asked to select from six categories that best describes the race they primarily identify with; 1) African American; 2) Asian; 3) Caucasian; 4) Hispanic/Latino; and 5) other (specify). Once the data has been collected, the categories were collapsed into white and non-white categories to form a dichotomous variable.

Tenure. Participants indicated the length of time they have been working at YFS in years, thus making this variable continuous.

Education. Participants were asked to fill-in the number of years of formal education beginning with first grade, thus making this variable continuous.

Types of Commitment. Each type of commitment was simultaneously controlled for the other.

Research Design

A correlational design was employed in this study. Data were collected from 70 child welfare workers over a period of three days. The sample size was determined by the power analysis to be discussed below.

Power Analysis

A power analysis was conducted to determine the number of participants that would be needed to test the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables of focus, controlling for covariates, and the dependent

variable. With the use of existing literature, the relationship among the five covariates and the dependent variable yield an R^2 of .03, while the three types of commitment simultaneously yield an overall R^2 of .27 (Jaros, 1997).

For the current study, a test-wise significant level of .01 was set reducing the risk that the findings are the result of a Type I error (Murphy & Myors, 1998; Orme & Tolman, 1986). Results of the power analysis indicated that a sample of 100 participants would be needed when alpha is set to .01 to have power in excess of .90 to detect an association between the independent variables of focus and the dependent variable that accounts for an increase in R^2 of .27.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Data were analyzed through the use of the SPSS program software. Univariate analysis consisting of descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were used for data entry consistency and to describe the characteristics of the obtained sample. The alpha coefficient for each measure was also determined in order to check the measures internal consistency.

Bivariate Analysis

A Pearson's r parametric statistical test was used to determine if a linear relationship existed between the three independent variables of focus to the dependent variable intention to leave.

Research Hypotheses

A multiple regression analysis was used to test each research hypothesis. The covariate variables were entered into the analysis first to control for any effects they may have on the dependent variable. The other forms of commitment were entered into the analysis second, and finally the commitment variable of focus was entered into the analysis third to produce an overall R^2 .

Hypothesis 1: Affective commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, continuance, and normative commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Normative commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, continuance, and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Continuance commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, affective and normative commitment.

Regression Assumptions

The regression assumptions were tested in the following ways: (1) normality was determined with the examination of histograms as well as normal-p plots; (2) equality of conditional variances (homoscedasticity) was determined by the visual examination of a plot of the standardized residuals by the predicted values of the dependent variable; (3) independence of observations was assumed, given the research design; (4) linearity was determined by the

examination of the residual plots; (5) multicollinearity was determined by using tolerance statistics.

Missing Data

Only two of the independent variables data were missing. Given that small number, a mean substitution was conducted with the use of the missing values analysis. The average of each missing variable is computed to determine the missing value for that variable. Six of the independent variables (tenure, education, age, affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment) along with the dependent variable were entered to increase each independent variable response rate.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter discusses the results of the study. It presents the sample characteristics, measurement reliability, bivariate and multivariate analyses along with a summary of the findings.

Sample Characteristics

This study used a purposive sampling method, obtaining a sample of 70 participants with a mean age of 36.07 (sd=10.10). The average tenure was 4.1 years ranging from 0-31 years (sd=6.30). The average child welfare experience was 6.9 years, with a range from 0-31 years (sd=7.0). Twenty two percent (n=16) of the workers had been employed less than one year. The average income in the sample was \$43,264, ranging from \$35,000 to \$65,000 (sd=\$4703.588) (see Table 1). Forty eight percent (n=48) of the workers were African American; 4.3% (n=3) were Asian; 20.0% (n=14) were Caucasian; 2.9% (n=2) were Hispanic/Latino, and 4.3% (n=3) identified themselves as other or mixed. Of the 70 participants, 40.0% (n=28) indicated they worked in the child protective services division; 28.6% (n=20) indicated they worked in the family intervention division; 15.7% (n=11) were from the permanency planning division, 10.0% (n=7) were from the resource development division; 2.9% (n=2) were from the adoption division; and 2.9% (n=2) indicated that they worked in another area. Of those sampled, 54.3% (n=38) had a college degree and 42.9% (n=30) held a master's degree. In the sample there were 7.1% (n=5) males and 92.9% (n=65) were females; 45.7% (n=32) were married, while 42.9% (n=30) classified themselves

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Continuous Variables

Interval Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Education	16.8	.98	70
Age	36.0	10.03	70
Tenure	4.1	6.30	70
Child welfare Exp.	6.9	7.03	69
Income	43264.57	4703.58	67
# of times supervision received	2.03	2.05	70

as being single. Ninety four percent (n=64) stated they were receiving regular supervision, while 8.6% (n=6) stated they were not. In the sample 57.1% (n=40) of the workers stated they received supervision once a week (see Table 2).

Measurement Reliability

A reliability analysis was conducted on both the Staying and Leaving Index (SLI) and The Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey's (TCMS) individual commitment scales. Results produced an estimated SLI Cronbach alpha of .95. The estimated reliability of the Affective Commitment scale was .73; for the Continuance Commitment scale, .73, and for the Normative Commitment scale, .84.

Bivariate Statistics

The relationships between the three independent variables of focus and the dependent variable were examined using a bivariate analysis (see Table 3). As can be seen in Table 3, and contrary to hypothesis, statistically significant relationships were found only between Affective commitment and the SLI ($r = -.536$, $p = .001$, two-tailed), and between Normative commitment and the SLI ($r = -.492$, $p = .001$, two-tailed).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Sample Characteristics (N=70)

Variables	N	%
*Race		
White	14	20.0%
Non-White	53	75.7%
Gender		
Male	5	7.1%
Female	65	92.9%
Marital Status		
Single	30	42.9%
Married	32	45.7%
Separated	1	1.4%
Divorced	7	10.0%
Supervision		
Yes	64	91.4%
No	6	8.6%
*# of times received		
Whenever there is time	7	10.0%

Table 2 continued

Variables	N	%
1x a week	40	57.1%
2x a week	6	8.6%
3x a week	3	4.3%
More than 3x a wk	3	4.3%
Other	10	14.3%
<i>Department</i>		
Child Protective	28	40.0%
Family Intervention	20	28.6%
Permanency	11	15.7%
Planning		
Resource Develop.	7	10.0%
Adoption	2	2.9%
Other	2	2.9%

****Percentages may not add to 100% due to missing data***

Table 3 Bivariate Statistics

		Continuance	Affective	Normative
Continuance	Pearson Correlation	1	.073	.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.549	.756
	N	70	70	70
Affective	Pearson Correlation	.073	1	.583(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.549		.000
	N	70	70	70
Normative	Pearson Correlation	.038	.583(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.756	.000	
	N	70	70	70
sli	Pearson Correlation	-.155	-.536(**)	-.492(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.225	.000	.000
	N	63	63	63

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

Regression Analysis

Hypothesis 1: It was hypothesized that affective commitment would independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, continuance and normative commitment. It will be remembered that continuance was not significantly related to SLI at the bivariate level. As will be seen, the relationship between continuance commitment and SLI, controlling for the covariates, and other forms of commitment was statistically non significant, ($B = -.108$, $t(54) = -.667$, $p = .508$). Continuance commitment was therefore omitted from this and all remaining analyses. The dependent variable was therefore regressed on the demographic variables, normative commitment, and affective commitment.

As shown in the shaded portion of Table 4, affective commitment independently predicted intention to leave at the .01 level of statistical significance. A post-hoc power analysis resulted in an estimated actual power of .61. Further, there was a negative relationship between affective commitment and intention to leave [$t(54) = -2.987$, $p < .01$], as expected by hypothesis. Affective commitment uniquely accounted for 9.7% of the total variance in intention to leave.

Regression Assumptions

An examination of the distribution of the residuals from the analysis did not indicate a problem with normality, as shown by a histogram and a normal p-plot (Figures 1 and 2). An examination of a scatterplot of the predicted values and

Table 4 Affective Commitment Coefficients Predicting Intention to Leave

	B	SE	t-value	Sig
Education	.713	1.539	.463	.645
Age	.215	.185	1.159	.251
Tenure	-.228	.275	-.829	.411
Race	-.890	1.343	-.662	.510
Gender	-1.709	5.534	-.309	.759
Adjusted R²=.056				
F=.345				
P=.883				
Education	1.690	1.329	1.272	.209
Age	.291	.159	1.832	.072
Tenure	-.161	.235	-.095	.495
Race	-1.440	1.152	-1.251	.216
Gender	-2.257	4.721	-.478	.635
Normative	-.675	.143	-4.729	.000
Adjusted R²=.232				
F=4.124				
P= .002				
Education	1.811	1.245	1.455	.151
Age	.240	.150	1.602	.115
Tenure	.048	.231	.207	.837
Race	-.560	1.117	-.501	.618
Gender	-1.692	4.423	-.383	.704
Normative	-.400	.162	-2.462	.017
Affective	-.588	.197	-2.987	.004
Adjusted R²=.327				
F=5.309				
P< .001				

Note: N=63

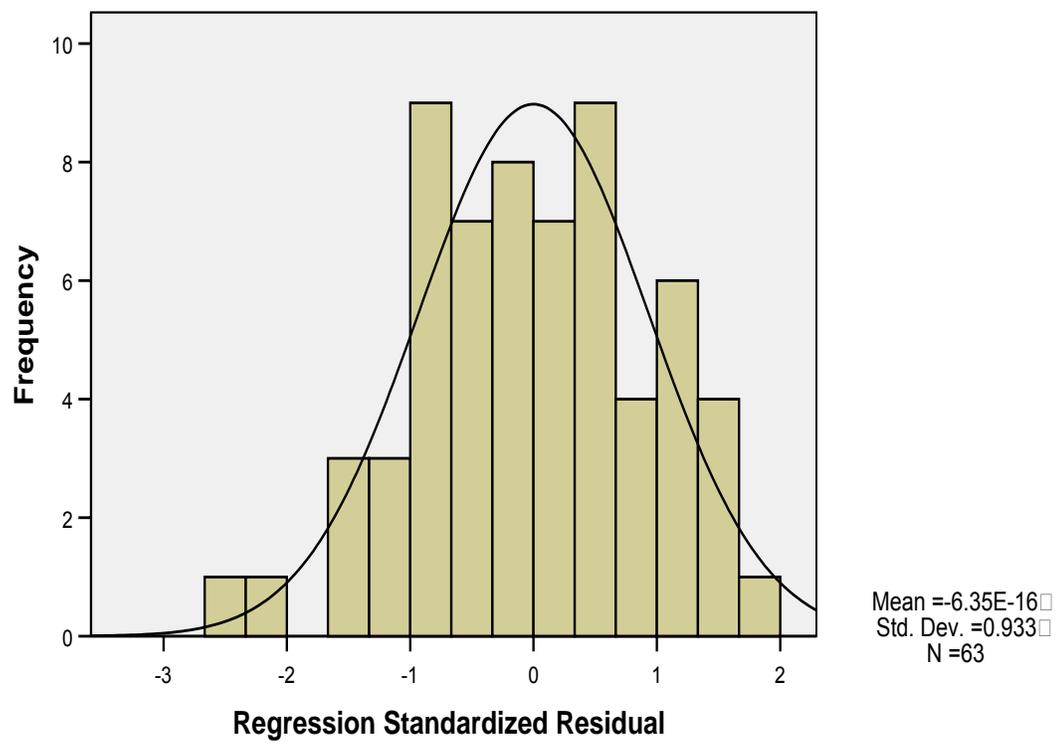


Figure 1 Affective Commitment Histogram

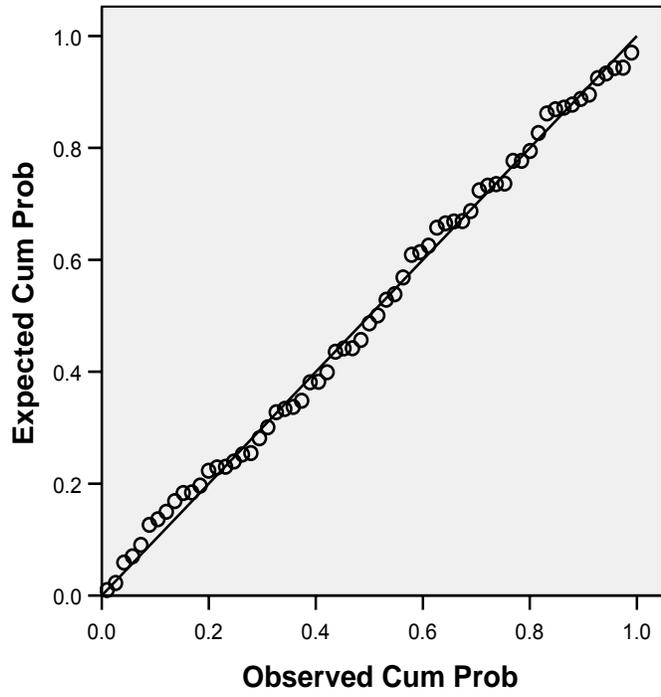


Figure 2 Affective Commitment Normal P-Plot

the residuals did not indicate a problem with homoscedasticity (Figure 3). Visual examination of bivariate scatterplots did not suggest anything but linear relationships between the variables. It has been suggested that if the tolerance is less than .20 there is an indication of problems with multicollinearity (Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003). For this case the tolerance equaled .594, suggesting no problems with multicollinearity.

Hypothesis 2: The second hypothesis stated that normative commitment will independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, affective and continuance commitment. As noted previously, the relationship between continuance commitment and SLI, controlling for the covariates and the other forms of commitment, was statistically non significant, ($B = -.108$, $t(54) = -.667$, $p = .508$). Thus, continuance commitment was omitted from further multivariate analyses. Results of the regression analysis for normative commitment are shown in Table 5. As shown in the shaded section of the table, contrary to prediction, normative commitment did not independently predict intention to leave at the .01 level of statistical significance [$t(55) = -.2462$, $p > .01$]. A power analysis was conducted to determine the actual observed power. Results indicated the observed power for this test was only .41. However, as predicted, there was a negative association between normative commitment and intention to leave, controlling for other variables. The results of this hypothesis test must be interpreted within the low power context.

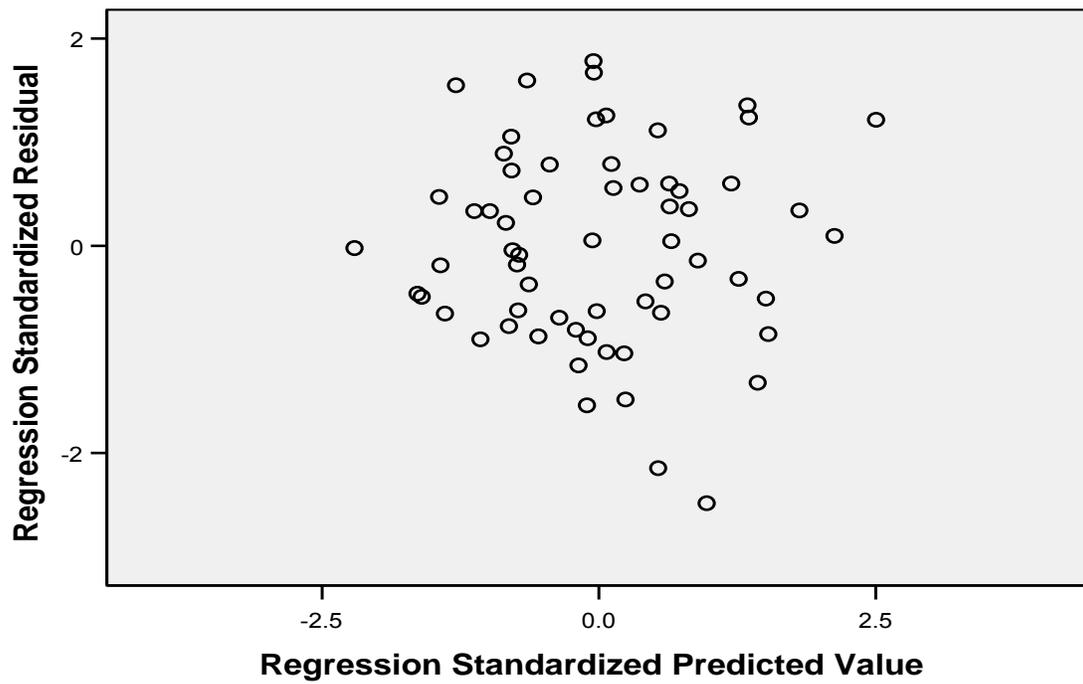


Figure 3 Affective Commitment Scatter Plot

Table 5 Normative Commitment Coefficients Predicting Intention to Leave

	B	SE	t-value	Sig
Education	.713	1.539	.463	645
Age	.215	.185	1.159	251
Tenure	-.228	.275	-.829	411
Race	-.890	1.343	-.662	510
Gender	-1.709	5.534	-.309	759
Adjusted R²=.056				
F=.345				
P= .883				
Education	1.475	1.292	1.142	258
Age	.185	.154	1.199	236
Tenure	.119	.239	.498	621
Race	.073	1.135	.064	949
Gender	-1.208	4.614	-.262	794
Affective	-.863	.169	-5.103	000
Adjusted R²=.266				
F=4.753				
P= .001				
Education	1.811	1.245	1.455	151
Age	.240	.150	1.602	115
Tenure	.048	.231	.207	837
Race	-.560	1.117	-.507	618
Gender	-1.692	4.423	-.383	704
Affective	-.588	.197	-2.987	004
Normative	-.400	.162	-2.462	117
Adjusted R²=.327				
F=5.309				
P = .000				

Note: N=63

Regression Assumptions

An examination of the distribution of the residuals did not indicate a problem with normality (Figures 4 and 5). An examination of a scatterplot of the predicted values and the residuals did not indicate a problem with homoscedasticity (Figure 6). A visual examination of bivariate scatterplots did not suggest anything but linear relationships between the variables. The tolerance equaled .644, suggesting no problems with multicollinearity

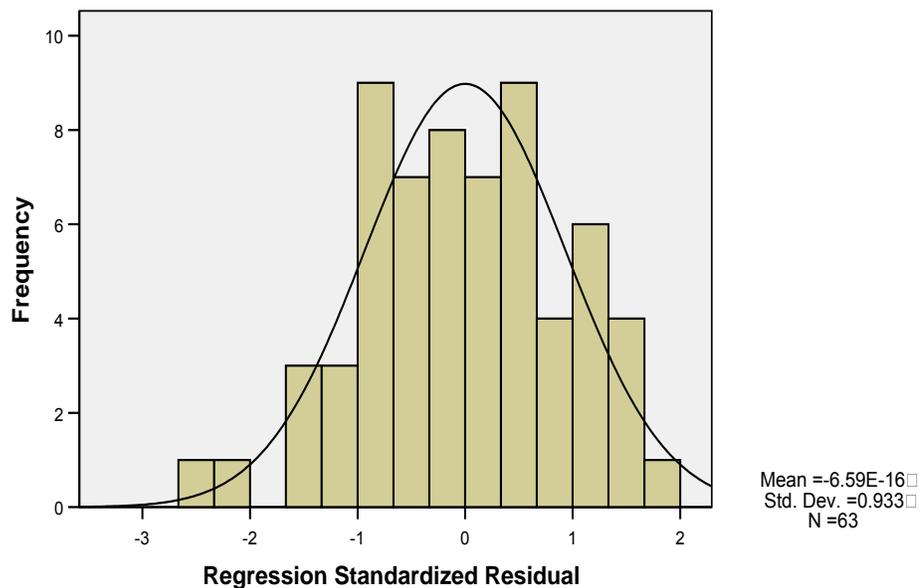


Figure 4 Normative Commitment Histogram

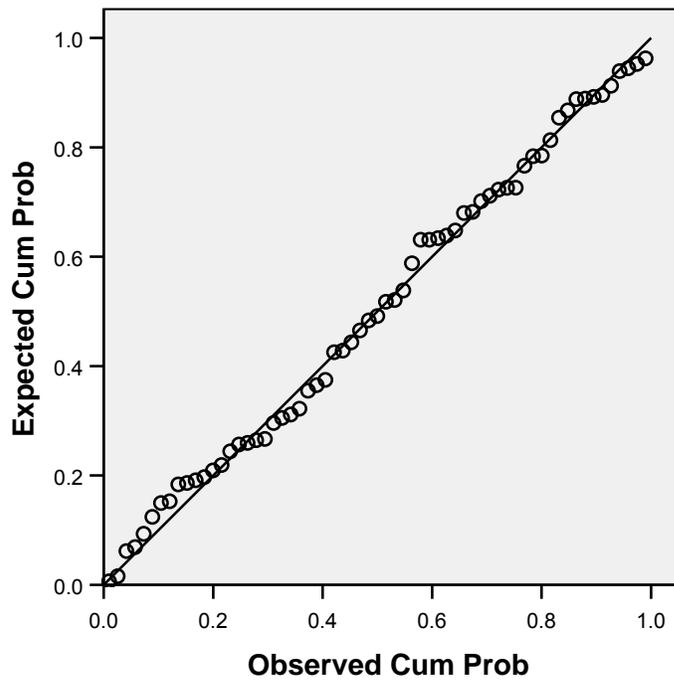


Figure 5 Normative Commitment Normal P-Plot

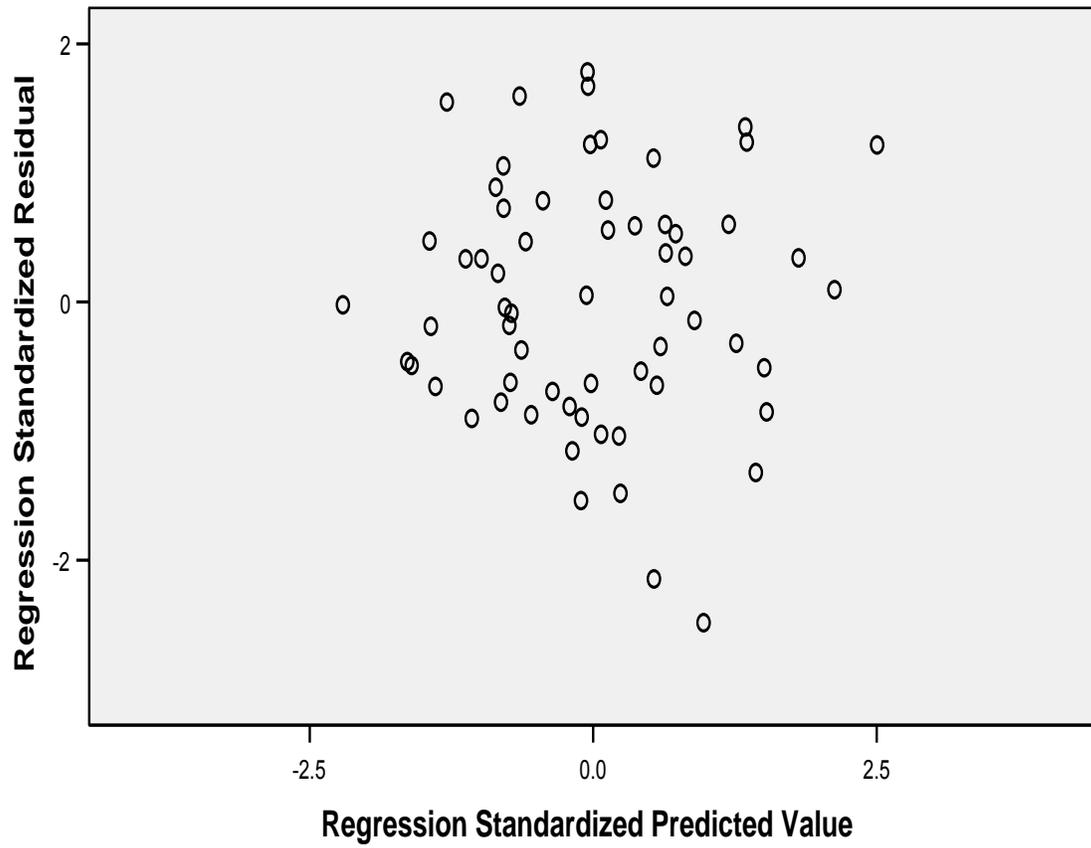


Figure 6 Normative Commitment Scatter Plot

Hypothesis 3: It was hypothesized that continuance commitment would independently predict intentions to leave, while controlling for age, gender, race, tenure, education, affective and normative commitment. As stated previously, the relationship between continuance commitment and SLI, controlling for the covariates, and other types of commitment was statistically non significant, ($B = -.108$, $t(54) = -.667$, $p = .508$) (see table 6). A residuals analysis did not indicate any problems with the regression assumptions, or with multicollinearity, with a tolerance of .82 (See figures 7, 8, and 9). It should be noted that the observed power for this test was .02, a low figure.

Summary

The alpha coefficients from the scales used were consistent with previous findings within the literature (Bluedorn, 1980, 1982; Hackett, Bycio, & Hausdorf, 1994; McGee & Ford, 1987; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Watsi, 2003). Contrary to the prediction that all three independent variables would be significantly correlated with the dependent variable, a statistically significant relationship was found between Affective commitment and the SLI, and between Normative commitment and the SLI. Affective commitment was statistically significant at the .01 level, and normative commitment had a significant level of .017 in the multivariate analysis. None of the covariates were significantly associated with intention to leave.

Table 6 Continuance Commitment Coefficients Predicting Intention to Leave

	B	SE	t-value	Sig
Education	.713	1.539	.463	.645
Age	.215	.185	1.159	.251
Tenure	-.228	.275	-.829	.411
Race	-.890	1.343	-.662	.510
Gender	-1.709	5.534	-.309	.759
Adjusted R²=.056				
F=.345				
P= .883				
Education	1.811	1.245	1.455	.151
Age	.240	.150	1.602	.115
Tenure	.048	.231	.207	.837
Race	-.560	1.117	-.501	.618
Gender	-1.692	4.423	-.383	.704
Normative	-.400	.162	-2.462	.017
Affective	-.588	.197	-2.987	.004
Adjusted R²=.327				
F= 5.309				
P= .000				
Education	1.545	1.313	1.177	.244
Age	.217	.154	1.412	.164
Tenure	.055	.232	.237	.813
Race	-.489	1.128	-.434	.666
Gender	-.827	4.631	-.179	.859
Normative	-.396	.163	-2.423	.019
Affective	-.584	.198	-2.947	.005
Continuance	-.108	.162	-.667	.508
Adjusted R²=.320				
F= 4.654				
P = .000				

Note: N= 63

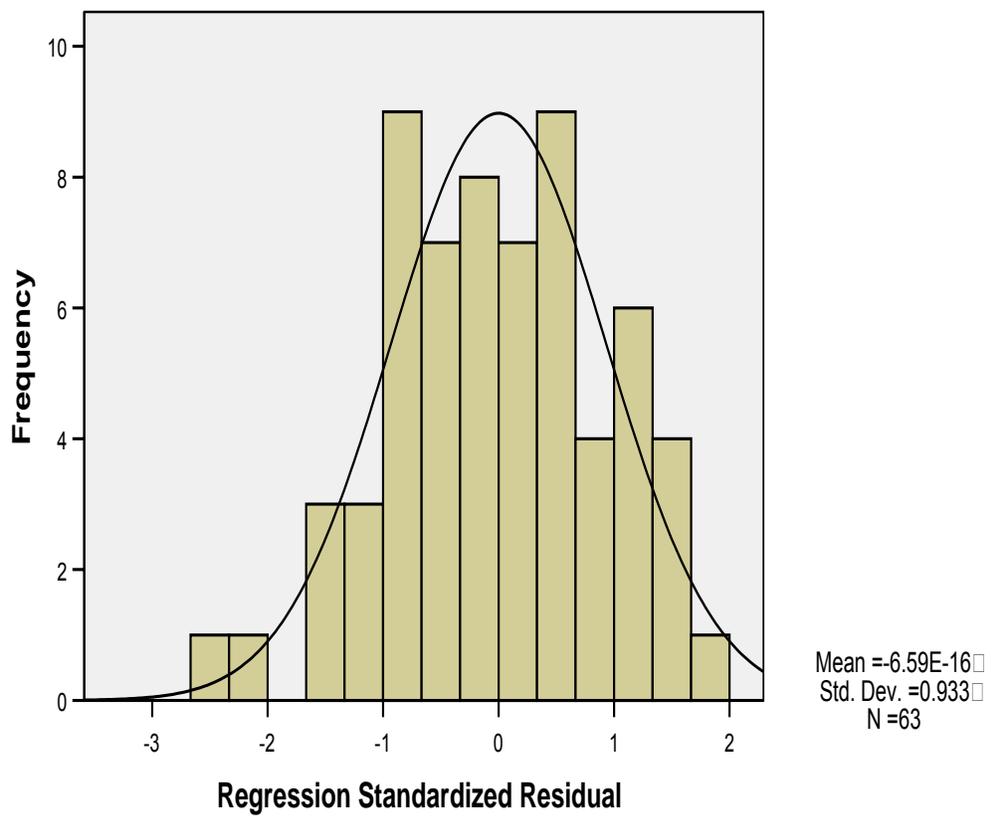


Figure 7 Continuance Commitment Histogram

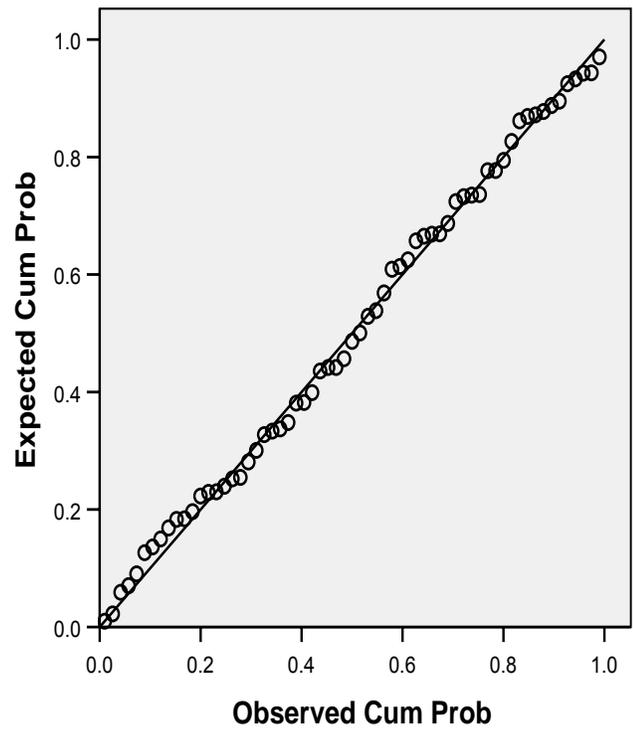


Figure 8 Continuance Commitment Normal P-Plot

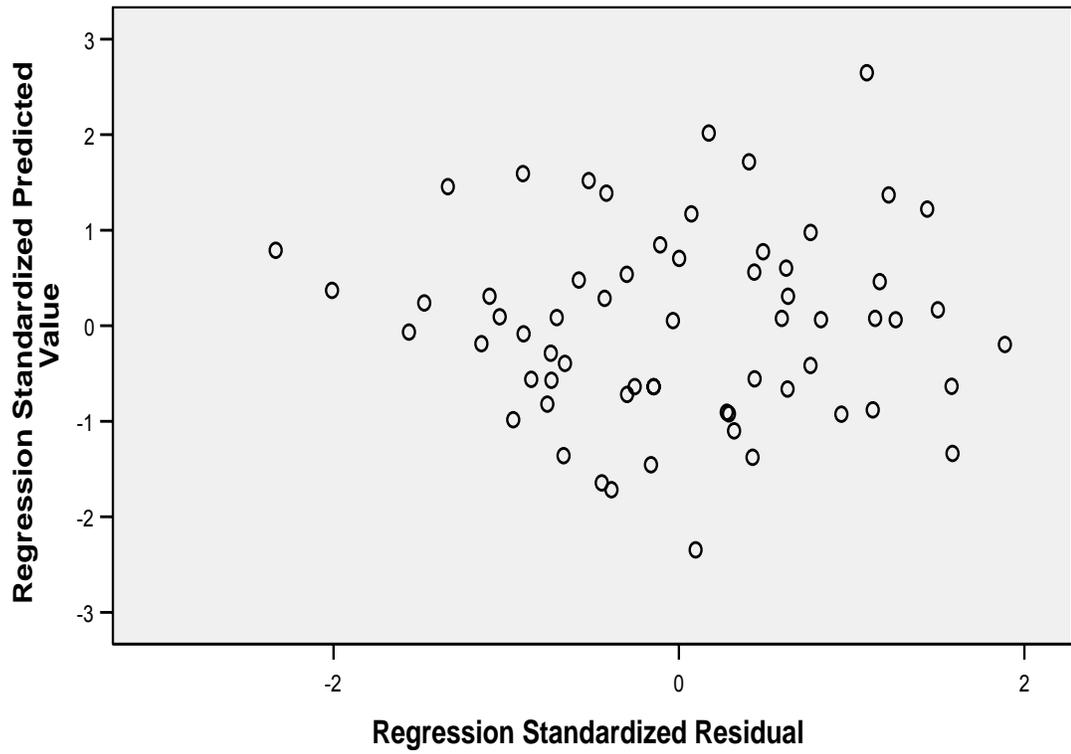


Figure 9 Continuance Commitment Scatter plot

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will discuss the limitations along with recommendations for future research based on the findings.

Methodological Limitations

Caution should be taken when interpreting the results from this study, and the forgoing findings should be considered within the context of the study's methodological limitations.

Design

A correlational design was employed in this study. A study qualifies as correlational if the data lend themselves only to interpretations about the degree to which certain variables are related to each other (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). The advantage of this design is that it allows the analysis of a number of variables to determine if relationships exist among them. An experimental design was not used; consequently inferences of causality cannot be made. Further, correlational designs leave the actual reasons for the associations unclear. However, the researcher at this time is only trying to determine if each type of commitment independently predicts one's intention to leave while controlling for age, tenure, gender, race, education and the other forms of commitment, so causality was not part of the research questions.

Sample

A purposive sample was employed for the study. The advantage of this non-probability method is that it is often used in exploratory research to provide

preliminary estimates of the results, without incurring cost. However, a consequence of this method is that an unknown segment of the population is excluded (e.g., those who did not volunteer) from the study. Therefore, the extent to which this sample actually represents the entire child welfare population cannot be known. While the sample obtained was small, the results were in the predicted direction. Replications of this study are strongly recommended, however, with a larger sample size, multiple child welfare agencies, with a stronger design, and with a broader representation of child welfare workers.

Time

Collecting data at the end of the month is also a limitation to this study. Within this organization, the end of the month is one of the busiest times because most of the employees are on what is known as a *flex schedule*, and conduct home visits to meet their monthly contact quota. Thus, those employees that completed the survey were not representative of the entire organization. Those who did not participate could be different from those who did. However, those that responded to the questionnaires were able to do so without indirect pressure from co-workers or supervisors.

Power

The study's sample size was partly determined by a power analysis using estimates of the R-square accounted for by the independent variables from previous research. However, a post-hoc power analysis resulted in actual power values ranging from .027 to .611 for the independent variables of focus. In cases

with inadequate power, the outcomes may yield ambiguous and inconclusive conclusions (Murphy & Myors, 1998; Orme & Tolman, 1986; Sheskin, 2004). The failure to find statistically significant relationships between continuance commitment and intention to leave, and between normative commitment and intention to leave could be due to low power.

Mean Substitution

The use of the mean to represent all missing data in a sample may result in an underestimation of the population variance as well as compromise the accuracy of any visual distribution of the data (Sheskin, 2004). However, it has been suggested that as long as the percentage of missing items does not exceed 30%, or no more than 20% of the respondents are missing items, the mean substitution technique provides reasonable estimates (King, Fogg & Downey, 1998). Missing data in this study was less than 5%, thus the study's results were likely not compromised by using mean substitution.

Omitted Variables

This study is vulnerable to the problem of omitted variables. Important independent variables potentially related to the dependent variable were excluded from the regression analyses. Therefore, the relationships identified in this study between the included independent variables and the dependent variable should be interpreted with caution. Some important omitted variables are briefly discussed below.

Burnout. *Burnout* is a syndrome of physical, emotional, and interactional symptoms related to job stress that includes emotional exhaustion, a sense of lacking personal accomplishment, and depersonalization of clients (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Thus far, studies indicate that there is a significant and reciprocal relationship between employee burnout and job satisfaction (Arches, 1991; Anderson; 2000; Patton & Goddard, 2003; Winefield & Barlow, 1995; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Siefert & Jayaratne, 1991).

Beck (1987) attributed burnout to *client severity*. *Client severity* is referred to multi-problem clients and caseloads with a high number of clients with chronic and complex problems. Employee burnout deserves particular consideration for future research, since burnout is directly related to employment job functions, and thus organizational commitment.

Organizational Culture. A particularly important variable omitted from this study is a measure of organizational culture and its relationship between organizational commitment and intention to leave. Organizational culture is defined as the shared values and norms that drive employee behavior. It communicates to employees what is valued in an organization and what should be emphasized in their work. Culture further indicates whether risks, innovation, flexibility, relationship building with clients, and paper work are high priorities within an organization (Johnson & McIntye, 1998).

Organizational Climate. Another variable omitted from this study that needs further attention is organizational climate. Organizational climate has

been defined in several studies as the psychological impact to an individual employee of their work environment, and how this impact contributes towards their work attitudes and ultimately their job performance (Hemmelgarn, Glisson & Dukes, 2001; Verbeke, Volgering & Hessels, 1998; Allen, 2003).

Stress. Another omitted variable that warrants attention within the literature is employee stress. A reciprocal relationship between stress and commitment has been found in prior research, though far less attention has been devoted to examining stress as a consequence of commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Employees who exhibit a high degree of commitment to their organizations may experience greater amounts of stress than those who are less committed (Anderson, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Thus, social workers who are highly committed may experience greater stress when facing the concurrent need to work overtime and the desire to spend more time with their families.

Professional Commitment. Another omitted variable that merits inclusion in future research is professional commitment and its relationship to organizational commitment and intention to leave. It is argued that professional commitment precedes organizational commitment (Landsman, 2001). It has been speculated that employees are more likely to commit to the profession first, before commitment to the organization is developed.

Implications for Social Work Practice

The purpose of this study was to examine if affective, normative and continuance commitment independently predicted intention to leave. Results

supported only one of the hypotheses at the .01 level. Affective commitment was found to independently predict an employees' intention to leave his or her organization. Studies have found affective commitment to be positively associated with the development of positive work experiences such as: anticipated satisfaction with the job, organizational dependability, management receptiveness, peer cohesion, role clarity, job challenge, and opportunity to voice one's views (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993; Somers, 1993, 1995). These variables have been identified as the best predictors of affective commitment.

Affective commitment or employees attachment to, and sense of identity with, the organization are more likely to lead employees to behave in ways that they view as being in the organization's best interest (Meyer, Allen & Topolnytsky, 1998) Therefore, child welfare organizations can be instrumental in developing affective commitment in their employees, especially since these employees remain with the organization because they *want* to.

Normative commitment, or having a moral responsibility/ obligation, did not independently predict intention to leave. However, the scores from this scale had an alpha of .845 and was significantly positively correlated to affective commitment at the .01 Bivariate level. Normative commitment had a significance level of .017 in the multivariate analysis, and with a larger sample and greater power it would likely have predicted intention to leave. Therefore, it warrants

further research looking at how employees with high normative commitment may be beneficial to an organization, for these workers view their work as a "calling".

Fostering both affective and normative commitment would be advantageous for child welfare organizations. Administrators can begin identifying the needs and preferences of their employees and, where possible, attempt to formulate early work experiences to be compatible. Workers possessing either component of commitment may serve as effective managers, trainers, co-worker mentors, recruiters, and case workers. Besides, these experiences are, to a large extent, within the control of the organization, and may increase an employees' intention to remain at their current job.

Continuance commitment, or cost-based commitment, did not independently predict intention to leave as hypothesized. The actual power for the test of this hypothesis was only .027. There was no relationship between this component of commitment and intention to leave, even at the bivariate level. Consequently, the continuance commitment scale may not be a good predictor of intention to leave among child welfare workers. This suggests that this scale may need to be removed from The Three-Component Model when examining the model's usefulness in predicting intention to leave within the child welfare arena.

However, this scale may be useful to identify workers who may not be productive, but would nonetheless like to remain for reasons not beneficial to the organization or its mission. If workers are not productive, then controlled turnover

would benefit the organization in order to continuously breathe new life, ideas, and renewed commitment in the organization.

Once administrators are able to identify stagnant workers, they will be able to utilize skill variation to improve employee productivity. Further, with the use of the commitment scales, administrators will be able to identify levels of employee commitment. This knowledge will allow administrators to think about creative and innovative ways to optimize seasoned employees, and provide customized training and relevant education to reduce intention to leave and ultimately, voluntary turnover.

Direction for Future Research

The issue of commitment is more clearly complex than presented in this study and what The Three-Component Model assumes. Though the model has been used to incorporate concepts such as perceived organizational support and organizational commitment in an array of settings, it did not appear to hold true within the child welfare arena. Only two of the three commitment scales may hold some promise in the child welfare arena, but more research needs to be done using the model. Further, creating an instrument that may identify child welfare workers who are more likely to form an affective commitment to the organization may also assist in the retention of employees. In addition to identifying workers who are more likely to form an attachment and identification with the organization, the identification of compatible positions may also be possible.

There is certainly agreement about the importance of recruitment and retention within the literature. In order to understand the issue of retention, it is important for scholars to continue to seek innovative models from other arenas and test their applicability within the social work arena. Further, research is needed using the Three-Component Model, especially continuance commitment, and understanding the types of organizational commitment child welfare workers hold to their organization.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A. Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

Authors	Sample description	Research Design	Attrition rate	N
Rycraft, (1994)	17 women, 6 men all employed in public child welfare.	Random stratified sample. Interviews.	Not discussed.	23
Winefield & Barlow (1995)	All clients were females who were clients of CPS. Staff mainly females (76%).	Structured interviews through standardized questionnaires-clients. Questionnaires-staff.	Not discussed.	Staff=21 Clients=24
Jayarante & Chess (1986)	Members of the National Association of Social Workers who possessed M.S.W degrees & identified themselves as an administrator or caseworker.	Descriptive study with convenient sample. Seven measures were used.	Not discussed.	Administrators=202 Caseworkers=356
Shore & Martin (1989)	Tellers in a large Midwestern bank & Midwestern hospital staff.	Mail-in questionnaire. Five measures were used.	85 tellers with 71 usable questionnaires. Response rate (83%) & 94 professional staff with 72 usable (77%).	Tellers=71 Professional Staff=72
Landsman (2001)	All employees within Children's Services. Demographic information missing.	Cross-sectional survey research. Mail-in questionnaire.	77% response rate.	990

Appendix B: Informed Consent Statement

Intention to Leave and Organizational Commitment among Child Welfare Workers

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a ***voluntary*** research project designed to examine the relationship between child welfare workers' intention to leave his or her organization and their organizational commitment. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment for the requirement of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the College of Social Work at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Shakira A. Kennedy, M.S.W, will be collecting, entering and analyzing the data for the purpose of completing a doctoral dissertation.

Your participation will require completing a survey that will take about 15 minutes to complete. The packet you will receive consists of an informed consent, the researcher's contact information, and the Employee Commitment Survey. Your participation is completely voluntary.

RISKS

The only risk to you brought about by your participation is someone knowing you participated and your responses to the survey questions. In order to prevent this from occurring, please ***DO NOT*** place your names on your completed surveys so that your identity cannot be determined nor your responses linked to you.

BENEFITS

Your participation will be beneficial for gaining understanding as to the type of commitment employee's hold to their organization and how each type of commitment can predict employees' intention to leave the organization. Results from this study can be used in the future to maintain committed employees from leaving child welfare organizations.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless participants specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link participants to the study.

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation for your participation in this study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Shakira A. Kennedy, at 128 Henson Hall, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996, or 865-470-8949. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research [Compliance Officer](#) at (865) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled (pensions, health insurance, wages, etc.).

CONSENT

Return of the completed survey (questionnaire) constitutes your consent to participate.

Thank you.

Appendix C: Employee Commitment Survey**Demographic Information**

1. Which selection bests describes your racial identity (***select one***):

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Other (specify) _____

2. What is your highest education level? _____

3. _____ How many years of child welfare experience do you have?

4. Are you a male or female?

- Male Female

5. _____ What is your age?

6. What is your own yearly income _____

7. What is your current marital status (***select one***)?

- Single, Never Married
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed

8. ___ Length of time working with current organization?

9. Do you get supervision regularly?

- Yes No I'm Not Sure

10. How often do you get supervision (***select one***)?

- Whenever there is time
- Once a week
- Two times a week
- Three times a week
- More than three times a week
- Have not received supervision since working
- Other _____

11. Which department do you ***primarily*** work in (***select one***)?

- Child protective services (intake and investigations)
- Family Interventions
- Permanency Planning
- Resource Development
- Adoption
- Foster Care
- Independent Living
- Family and children evaluation team (FACET)
- Communities for families and kids
- Other (specify) _____

12. How would you best describe your role in this organization (***select one***)?

- Case Manager
- Social Worker
- Other (specify) _____

Instructions

Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement by writing a number from 1 to 7 beside the space provided.

1=strongly disagree 2= disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided
5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

1. I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization. _____
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own. _____
3. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. ® _____
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization. ® _____
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. ® _____
6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me. _____

The following responses should be used in answering the next four questions.

7= excellent 6= very good 5= good 4= so-so 3=not so good 2= bad 1=terrible

How do you rate your chances of still working for Youth and Family Service
Division (DSS/FS)

1. Three months from now _____
2. Six months from now _____
3. One year from now _____
4. Two years from now _____

Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement by writing a number from 1 to 7 beside the space provided.

1=strongly disagree **2= disagree** **3=slightly disagree** **4=undecided**
5=slightly agree **6=agree** **7=strongly agree**

1. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire. _____
2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to. _____
3. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now. _____
4. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization. _____
5. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere. _____
6. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives. _____

The following responses should be used in answering the next four questions.

7= excellent 6= very good 5= good 4= so-so 3=not so good 2= bad 1=terrible

How do you rate your chances of:

1. Quitting Youth and Family Service Division (DSS/YFS) sometime in the next three months. _____
2. Quitting Youth and Family Service Division (DSS/YFS) sometime in the next six months. _____
3. Quitting Youth and Family Service Division (DSS/YFS) sometime in the next year. _____
4. Quitting Youth and Family Service Division (DSS/YFS) sometime in the next two years. _____

Listed below is a series of statements that represent feelings that individuals might have about the organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate your agreement or disagreement with each statement by writing a number from 1 to 7 beside the space provided.

1=strongly disagree 2= disagree 3=slightly disagree 4=undecided
5=slightly agree 6=agree 7=strongly agree

1. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer. ® _____
2. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now. _____
3. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now. _____
4. This organization deserves my loyalty. _____

5. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it. _____
6. I owe a great deal to my organization. _____

Appendix D: Verbal Description of Study

Good morning, my name is Shakira Kennedy and I am from the University Of Tennessee College Of Social Work. I am conducting a study that will attempt to examine the relationship between child welfare workers' intention to leave his or her organization and their organizational commitment. I am in no way affiliated with DSS/YFS, so please be as honest as you can on the questionnaires. This study is being conducted in partial fulfillment for the requirement of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the College of Social Work at The University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes and you can place completed and incomplete questionnaires in the box provided. **Your participation is completely voluntary; you may decline at anytime, and refuse to answer any questions without any negative consequences.** If you choose not to participate, you can place the survey in the envelope without completing it and then drop it in the collection box, without penalties. If you choose to participate, then change your mind, you can either place the partially completed questionnaire into the envelope and then into the collection box or destroy your survey. Please do not put your name on the survey.

In your packet you will find an informed consent describing the study, potential risk brought about by your participation, your rights as a participant, and the voluntary nature of this study. Please read the informed consent before filling out the questionnaire.

(Questions will be taken at this time)

I will remain outside the room during the completion of the survey. Once you have finished, you may leave the room. I will enter the room when the last person has finished I will collect the box of survey.

I will take your questions, comments or concerns regarding the study and your participation.

(Remain for further questions)

Thank you for your assistance.

(Exit the room).

Appendix E: Site Approval Letter

MECKLENBURG COUNTY
Department of Social Services
Richard W. Jacobsen, Jr.
Dannette R. Smith
Youth and Family Services YFS Division
Director: Smithdr@co.mecklenburg.nc.us
Director: Jacobrw@co.mecklenburg.nc.us

May 15, 2006

Shakira Kennedy
The University of Tennessee
College of Social Work
Henson Hall
Knoxville, TN 37996-3333

Dear Ms. Kennedy:

The Department of Social Services Youth and Family Service Division (DSS/YFS) is happy to provide you with a letter of support for your dissertation proposal entitled, "Intention to Leave and Organizational Commitment among Child Welfare Workers".

You are invited to collect data at our next agency wide staff meeting. DSS/YFS is excited and committed about its contribution to your project and to the field of social work. We further understand that in order to maintain the integrity of your research, we will not make any efforts to find out those who participated and those who did not. Further, supervisors will not be in the room at the time of the survey.

Since DSS/YFS does not have an internal review process, we will await the approval from The University of Tennessee's IRB board to proceed with the data collection.

Though the issue of commitment has been studied on various levels, your study may potentially add a new dimension to the discussion, while opening up the

funnel gates for innovative ideas and best practices. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine L. Lester', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Catherine L. Lester, MSSA
System Reform Administrator
Youth and Family Services
Division 720 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, NC 28202**

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www.charmeck.org/Departments/DSS/Home.htm

Vita

Shakira Kennedy, was born in Jamaica, W.I. and now resides in Hartsdale, New York. She received her Bachelor's degree from Long Island University in 1999 and her Master's degree in 2001 from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia. She was a recipient of the 2001 student publication, Continuing Social Work Education–Tyehimba Scholarship Award. Her social work experience includes; being a resident director for Clark Atlanta University, a case worker for Travelers Aid of Metropolitan Atlanta, clinical therapist for The Bridge Family Services, a case worker/interim supervisor for Neighborhood Youth and Family Services, a community mediator for the Institute for Mediation and Conflict Resolution, and a team leader at H.E.L.P.USA–Greenburgh. In August 2003, she entered the University of Tennessee's College of Social Work Program to pursue her doctoral degree. Her doctorate was received in August 2006 and her research interest includes child welfare, organizational change, culture, and climate.