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FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE MORALE OF
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKERS IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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

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

by
Kathryn Mary Sinclair

June 1998

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CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKERS IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

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June 1998

Approved by:


Morley Glicker, Project Advisor, Social Work

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ABSTRACT

The current study examined the contributing factors of morale in two Child Protective Services offices, Department of Public Social Services in San Bernardino County. Fifty-eight male and female, culturally diverse participants from the offices represented urban and rural regions within the county. The post-positivist paradigm utilized quantitative and qualitative research methods. Factors that contributed to high morale levels were identified as being supervisor support and supervisor validation of employees, co-worker relations, the physical environment of the office, office socials and celebrations, personal morale, and work and non-work balance. The results of the study are generalizable only to the San Bernardino County Child Protective Services agency. Results of the study may be applicable to other county organizations with similar populations.

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I wish to express my deep love and gratitude
to my four children:
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who have freely given me their
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INTRODUCTION

"Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival - to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated (Covey, 1989)."

Morale is an essential component of employee happiness in the work place today. Over the years, morale and its contributors have been researched in hopes of raising employee morale and increasing employment longevity, especially among governmental and other bureaucratic agencies. One such bureaucratic agency is the Child Protective Services agency of the Department of Public Social Services in San Bernardino County.

Morale among Child Protective Services workers in San Bernardino County has not been studied in recent years. Morale among Child Protective Services workers in San Bernardino County may be either high or low. Levels of high morale may influence employment longevity and diminish employee burnout. Therefore, it is important high levels of morale exist in the Child Protective Services agency. Because the Child Protective Services agency desires high morale in agency offices and among employees, the question

becomes: what are the contributors of high levels of morale? To identify the contributors of high morale levels among Child Protective Services workers in San Bernardino County is the purpose of the current study.

Problem Statement

In the 1990s, many individuals work eight or more hours, five days a week, at a job. Individuals bring their own personal needs to the organizations in which they work (Kossen, 1975). These needs are typically economic, psychological, and social. Personal needs may strongly influence an individual's interest and motivation on the job. For this reason, organizational staff are concerned with understanding employees' needs (Kossen, 1975; Maier, 1952). As employee needs are met, individuals' tend to feel happier, more satisfied in their jobs, and develop positive attitudes toward their organizations (Maier, 1952). An individual's attitude toward the employing organization is called morale (Kossen, 1975).

Morale is an elusive concept, and difficult to define and measure. However, morale exerts a "strong influence over the human relations climate in organizations (Kossen, 1975)." According to Kossen (1975) morale is defined as employees attitudes toward either their employing

organizations in general or toward specific job factors, such as supervision, fellow employees, and financial incentives. Morale may also relate to an individual or the group of which an individual is a part (Kossen, 1975). The current study defines morale as the atmosphere created by the attitudes of the members of an organization (Kossen, 1975).

Morale has been the focus of many professional studies including management and business professions, and the social work profession (Barron, Berger & Black, 1997; Bronars & Famulari, 1997; Diebold, Neumark & Polsky, 1997; Winter-Eber & Zweimuller, 1997; Newman, 1996; Rauktis & Koeske, 1994). Understanding morale and its influence in the workplace is important. Morale has been identified as a future predictor of job satisfaction (Benge & Hickey, 1984; MacCurdy, 1943). When morale wanes, job satisfaction tends to decline (Dattalo, 1997). Morale may wane due to job-related stresses and demands (Dattalo, 1997). Child Protective Services workers endure job-related stresses and demand in their jobs (Rauktis, & Koeske, 1994).

Child Protective Services workers face difficult demands in their jobs daily. Child Protective Services workers make investigations and assessments that affect

lives (Rauktis & Koeske, 1994). The lives of children, parents, and families are altered as a result of the decisions made by Child Protective Services workers. These decisions may drain Child Protective Services workers' energy levels and attitudes. The drain of Child Protective Services work may affect a worker's morale over time. According to Dattalo (1997), Child Protective Services workers may experience declines in morale due to the demands and stresses of their jobs.

Problem Focus

The current study uses a post-positivist paradigm to study morale in Child Protective Services agencies, Department of Public Social Services, San Bernardino County. Using a post-positivist approach allows the current study to utilize both quantitative and qualitative research methods on a self-report morale questionnaire (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). The current study focuses on morale in several areas of worker experience: wage, wage growth, and job survivorship; group dynamics in the form of co-workers who form supportive, cohesive relations; the sharing of personal and work related stories; worker personality, and personality perceptions; affects of empowerment, locus of control, and citizenship behaviors;

interaction of cultural diversity; balance of work and non-work; and effective managerial techniques that embody human characteristics of empathy (Diebold, et. al., 1997; Winter-Ebmer & Zweimuller, 1997; Chen, Yu & Miner, 1997; Gagne, Senecal & Koestner, 1997; Barron & Gjerde, 1997; Caproni, 1997).

To understand the effects of morale on social workers in Child Protective Services agencies, the responsibilities of workers must be examined. Child Protective Services workers help families and children reported at risk for abuse. Child abuse may be reported under maltreatment guidelines including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and/or neglect (Filip, McDaniel & Schene, 1992). San Bernardino County receives approximately 600 calls to the child abuse hotline weekly (Eklund, 1997). Response to these calls requires Child Protective Services workers investigate the authenticity of the reports and assess the risk to the child/ren under investigation. Results of the investigation and assessment may involve placing the maltreated child into a protective out-of-home environment, commonly called foster care (Dattalo, 1997).

Children placed into foster care make up a Child Protective Services worker's caseload (Rauktis & Koeske,

1994). San Bernardino County Child Protective Services workers manage caseloads of approximately 40 cases (individual and/or family constellations) which represent services to approximately 60-100 children monthly (Eklund, 1997; Filip, et. al., 1992). Duties of workers include assessing client problems, assessing service needs, and providing agency resources (Dattalo, 1997; Rauktis & Koeske, 1994; Filip, et. al., 1992). Difficult decisions regarding which services to provide, to whom, and at what level are made in each case by workers (Dattalo, 1997). Of concern is the effectiveness and feasibility of composition and caseload size to the delivery process. Effectiveness may become thwarted under multiple job demands. And, job demands and job effectiveness may affect workers' attitudes and morale (Rauktis & Koeske, 1994).

The current study examined the phenomenon of morale in Child Protective Services agencies, in the Department of Public Social Services of San Bernardino County.

Specifically, the current study analyzed factors that contribute to morale among Child Protective Services agencies in San Bernardino County. To determine morale factors, a study of morale was conducted among a sampling of social workers employed in two offices of the Child

Protective Services agency: San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville. The San Bernardino Mill Street office represented an urban area of San Bernardino County and the Victorville office represented a rural area of San Bernardino County. The current study proposed morale would be high in offices with supervisory support and supervisory validation, increased wage and promotional opportunities, cohesive co-worker relations, proportional work and non-work activity balance, safety and aesthetics of the physical office environment and the personal beliefs, values and behaviors of individual workers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers indicate morale is an attitude toward individuals' employing organizations (Kossen, 1975; Rauktis & Koeske, 1994; Maier, 1952; Galdston & Zetterberg, 1958). According to Kossen (1975) attitudes of employees are significantly influenced by their perceptions of several important factors, including individuals' personal activities both on and off the job, the nature of their work, their co-workers, management and supervisors, their concept of self, and the satisfaction of met needs (Kossen, 1975).

In the past, morale studies have focused on wage, wage growth, job survivorship, job mobility, and gender inequality in the workplace (Diebold, et. al., 1997). Current studies have examined more human characteristics such as the dynamics of co-worker support, the sharing of personal and work-related incidents and stories, personal empowerment, citizenship behaviors, and effective management styles that incorporate empathy (Good, 1994; Barron & Gjerde, 1997; Podsakoff, Ahearne & MacKenzie, 1997).

When questioning the desires of individuals in the workplace today workers express the human need to feel appreciated (Good, 1994). In 1986, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce published the results of a survey in which they asked workers what they wanted from their jobs (Good, 1994). The survey also asked employers what they thought employees wanted. Employers thought workers wanted good wages, job security, and upward mobility. However, the number one desire on the employees' list was appreciation. Second and third desires were to be part of the decision making process and help with personal problems (Good, 1994). Clearly, employees are more attuned to the human side of the workplace than finance and growth aspects.

Employees want to feel happy in their jobs, to feel appreciated and to enjoy morale.

Morale is an emotional attribute and is considered a future predictor of job satisfaction (Benge & Hickey, 1984). Morale provides energy, acceptance of leadership, and cooperation among members of a group (Benge & Hickey, 1984). Previous studies have defined morale as a proponent of various feelings and attitudes held by an individual toward the employing organization (Kossen, 1975). Morale results from irritants being addressed and removed, improvements in the workplace, open communication channels, and recognition for a job well done (Benge & Hickey, 1984). Among Child Protective Services workers it has been found morale results from worthwhile work within the community, work that is supported by their supervisors, development of a close rapport with supervisors and with co-workers, trusting relationships within the workplace, and wage (Dattalo, 1997).

Morale may be linked to factors associated with the Child Protective Services job and the assigned wage. According to Diebold, et. al. (1997), an important attribute of a job is its wage. Important changes have occurred in wage distribution over the last twenty years.

Wage changes include the deterioration of relative wages of young and less-educated workers, a convergence of black and white wages, and a closing of the gender gap in wages. The relatively high-paying, middle class wages have melded with the lower-middle class wages creating greater equality in wage earning ability by workers. Employers tend to pay higher wages to men and professionals and pay higher wages to skilled and professional women than to unskilled, non-professional women (Bronars & Famulari, 1997). Child Protective Services agencies employ both skilled and professional men and women. Therefore, job wage and wage growth may contribute to morale levels in Child Protective Services agencies.

Wage and wage growth may be effected by worker training. Research over the past twenty years has revealed the importance of on-the-job training (Barron, Berger, & Black, 1997). Training may occur informally between co-workers, formally from management, and from universities offering course work and degrees in social work. Training may occur under the guise of university sponsored internships in child, youth, and family arenas. Training at Child Protective Services agencies effects wages, wage growth, productivity, worker confidence, and contributes to

morale (Benge & Hickey, 1984). Other possible factors linked to morale are job stability and job/agency survivorship.

Job stability and job/agency survivorship are important attributes of morale (Diebold, et. al, 1997). Job retention rates over the last twenty years have remained stable. Many individuals have remained in their job placements for over 4 years in spite of the evolving labor market. With job placement longevity morale tends to improve. Longevity of job placement among Child Protective Services workers may affect morale. Morale among Child Protective Services workers may wane due to high incidence of job burnout related to the affects of child maltreatment on workers (Gagne, et. al., 1997). However, the current prevalence of child maltreatment also contributes to job stability and job/agency survivorship among Child Protective Services agencies (Rauktis & Koeske, 1994; Dattalo, 1997). Job stability and Child Protective Services agency survivorship may contribute to levels of morale among Child Protective Services workers. Other possible considerations of morale include job assignment and promotion, especially for women.

In the past, women were not rewarded in the same manner in the labor market as were men (Winter-Ebmer & Zweimuller, 1997). Job assignment and promotion were not equal between men and women. Women needed to fulfill higher ability standards to be promoted. The rationale for unequal job assignment and promotion suggested women were preoccupied with household work and childcare and turnover would be greater for women than for men. Therefore, women were kept in low status, low paying jobs due to training costs necessary for promotion (Winter-Ebmer & Zweimuller, 1997).

Currently, equality of job assignment and job advancement is considered more carefully in the labor market (Winter-Ebmer & Zweimuller, 1997). Women in the 1990s have greater potential to obtain meaningful work assignments and advancement opportunities. According to Meredith Newman (1996), women fare better at state government levels of employment. Approximately 20 percent of executives in state governments are women. There is a strong possibility that similar conditions exist for women working for other governmental agencies such as Child Protective Services agencies, which employ a high proportion of women. However, advancement may continue to

be problematic due to childbearing and maternity leave issues (Newman, 1996).

The U.S. Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 obligates employers to provide benefits and temporary leave of absence from employment for childbearing employees (Newman, 1996). Therefore, women of childbearing age may risk job assignment and job advancement. However, the benefit of maternity leave in Child Protective Services agencies may be a factor in morale levels of childbearing aged workers while possibilities for advancement may be linked with morale for others (Newman, 1996). Morale may also be influenced by managerial effectiveness.

Management motivation research indicates effective management promotes morale among employees (Schuster, Dunning, Morden, Hagen, Baker & McKay, 1977; Chen, et. al., 1997;). Schuster, et. al. (1997) indicate employee-centered management achieves high levels of employee motivation, commitment, and performance through management practice such as participation and involvement that emphasize attention to employee needs and goals. The employee is heavily involved in information sharing, training, decision making, and rewards. These characteristics may be problematic for large, hierarchical

organizations. Chen, et. al. (1997) reveal large, bureaucratic organizations are characterized by high centralization, high division of labor, and high formalization. Employees may become disgruntled and lost in such large organizations. Management effectiveness becomes crucial to employee morale in large organizations. Successful managers play a key role in positive employee relations through behaving assertively, performing administrative functions favorably, and emphasizing the human side of business. Successful and effective managers find employees match their motives with favorable attitudes toward superiors, desire to assert oneself, desire to be distinctive, and desire to perform routine duties responsibly (Chen, et. al., 1997). Employee-centered management techniques have been used to increase employee morale historically.

Mary Parker Follett, a pioneer of social work during the 1920s, challenged traditional approaches to organization structure and management (Selber & Austin, 1997). Follett stressed the importance of employee participation, empowerment, and the redesign of work with less hierarchical organizational structures. Follett encouraged team-driven work processes and people-oriented

approaches through employee and customer input. Follett believed her ideas would increase quality of human service delivery and morale. Put into practice today, Follett's ideas may help foster morale through organizational and personal empowerment.

Empowerment is a modern term used to connote an individual's internalized achievement over difficult experiences. Empowerment suggests feeling effective, feeling in control, and feeling influential (Gagne, et. al., 1997). However, at times, personal experiences and work experiences may occur that are disturbing and leave Child Protective Services workers feeling powerless. Feelings of powerlessness expose human vulnerability, stir innermost anxieties, and evoke defenses and coping mechanisms (Goldstein, 1997). Sharing of personal experiences, job-related stories and traumatic events with colleagues may alleviate feelings of powerlessness (McConkie & Boss, 1996). Therefore, sharing personal stories may be empowering, foster group cohesion, and be a factor increasing morale among Child Protective Services workers.

Cohesion is a phenomenon of group dynamics. An important component of the group requires cooperation among

superiors and workers, and among co-workers. However, when individuals work together, the risk of peer pressure exists (Barron & Gjerde, 1997). Peer pressure has both a positive and a negative connotation. Peer pressure may encourage work efforts from co-workers that inspire commitment and contribute to outcome. In Child Protective Services agencies, peer pressure may contribute to more effective interventions of clients by workers. However, peer pressure may impose unseen emotional costs on workers that affect job satisfaction and morale (Barron & Gjerde, 1997).

Emotion plays an important role in human behavior. And, the sharing of emotions (affect) appears to be an important factor in agency morale. Affect is beginning to be noticed by organizations and its essential contribution to justice and negotiation (Kumar, 1997). And, affect plays a distinctive role in making judgments and decisions. In addition, affect may be experienced differently among individuals in a group. Individual affect may be difficult to interpret, therefore affectional manifestations may enhance or diminish levels of morale in the workplace.

Researchers have suggested social roles, especially gender roles, may explain a tendency for women to have lower morale levels in the workplace (Lennon, 1987). In

the past, poor work conditions that included low employee status level, low pay, poor work conditions, discrimination, sexual harassment, and job instability may have contributed to lower levels of morale for women than men. However, influences outside the workplace may also affect morale, particularly among women. Women tend to experience greater distress associated with depression and other psychophysiological symptoms not associated with work (Lennon, 1987). Family responsibilities, feeling exhausted, and unresolved non-work related issues may also affect morale.

Much of the research on morale focuses on job related experiences, interventions, and outcomes. However, workers are more than the sum of their employment experiences. Employment is only one component of working individuals' lives. In life, individuals do many things. The question then becomes; does the overall quality of life affect job related morale? Caproni (1997) purports a work/life balance is essential to happiness both in and outside the workplace. Possibly morale levels are associated with quality of overall life, especially life experiences associated with non-work. Living fulfilling and productive lives benefits both individuals and organizations.

Therefore, work/life imbalance may contribute to lower levels of morale (Caproni, 1997). Because most individuals desire a fulfilling and productive life, obtaining balance appears to be crucial.

When workers feel the sacrifice to their families for benefit of work is too great, morale will surely be an essential cost (Caproni, 1997). Therefore, organizations and individuals seek knowledge on balancing work and life outside of work. Books written on efficient balancing of life and work suggest prioritization, time management, goal orientation, and categorization as possible solutions. However, joys and sorrows associated with family and work enter lives without prediction or warning. Similarly, blessings enjoyed today may be gone tomorrow. And, turn of events do not lend themselves to planning. Wise individuals understand life is emotional, haphazard, and uncontrollable (Caproni, 1997). Therefore, the idea that work and life must be balanced may be an erroneous assumption. Trying to achieve balance may produce more tension and subsequently undermine success in both domains of family life and work.

The basis for work and non-work domain interaction is based on the importance of each, effort devoted to each,

and multiple roles individuals hold (Cohen, 1997). Individuals have expectations regarding appropriate behavior at work as well as away from work. For many, the non-work domain contributes to the workplace. The spillover model asserts non-work related experiences carry over into the work domain and affect attitudes and behaviors there (Nagle, 1995). The spillover effect stems from a transference of beliefs, attitudes, and values learned in one setting to another. Research findings indicate the spillover hypothesis to be an accurate phenomenon (Nagle, 1995). Rather than competing, work and non-work involvement interface to provide both job and life satisfaction.

There appears to be little doubt that non-work participation influences work activities (Cohen, 1997). Possibly enrichment from non-work resources increases individuals' capacity to meet work demands, increase individual value to the employer, and increase a sense of personal competence. Also, effective coping strategies used in non-work environments may have a positive effect on work experiences. In addition, employer-based family support such as child care and flexible work schedules help to facilitate workers' abilities to cope with non-work

demands. Such supports also promote individuals' work performance and commitment. As attitudes positively and effectively interface between work and non-work in Child Protective Services agencies, morale levels may increase.

Caproni (1997) suggests happiness at work and outside of work becomes the responsibility of both workers and the agency. Of increasing importance in the agency today is managerial knowledge and practice. Superiors who develop ability to work effectively and empathically with workers in job roles promote agency commitment and morale. And, individuals with commitment to their work experience greater professional success and higher levels of morale (Caproni, 1997). Workers who replace balance with fulfillment also benefit with greater morale. The logical-rational approach to a balanced work/life may be replaced with an aesthetic perspective described as a "feeling of beauty." Beauty, not balance, is a very worthwhile guide to life and an essential perceptual shift that may make all the difference in individuals' feelings of happiness and levels of morale in the agency as well as at home (Caproni, 1997). Possibly a more satisfying home life and job are the rewards of individuals with self-determination and intrinsic motivation.

Important characteristics contributing to levels of morale are individual feelings of reward, self-determination, sense of purpose, and intrinsic motivation associated with work (Gagne, et. al., 1997). The enjoyment of work and the work atmosphere promote feelings of competence and autonomy, and are important characteristics of morale. High levels of morale and feelings of competence are found in six job dimensions: a) skill variety, defined as the opportunity to use many skills and talents at work; b) task identity, defined as the opportunity to identify a whole piece of work; c) task significance, defined as the recognition that a job has impact on others; d) autonomy support, defined as the opportunity for freedom, independence, and discretion; e) job feedback, defined as the information about ones' performance obtained from job activities; and f) feedback from agents, defined as information about one's performance obtained from supervisors and co-workers (Gagne, et. al., 1997). And, morale tends to occur more as a result of internal locus of control (Majumder, MacDonald, & Greever, 1977).

Researchers studying morale have found individuals with internal locus of control are happier in their jobs,

have more positive attitudes toward work related variables; such as co-workers, supervisors, and clientele, and perform at higher levels of functioning in their jobs (Majumder, et. al., 1977). Individuals with internal locus of control tend toward greater self-reliance and believe their success is determined by their own efforts, abilities, and skills. Internal locus of control orientations are empowering. Individuals with internal locus of control use more persuasive and resourceful approaches in solving problems with co-workers. Conversely, individuals with external locus of control believe their success is controlled by fate, chance, luck, and powerful others (Majumder, et. al, 1977). Those with external locus of control do not try to better their circumstances. Possibly individuals with internal locus of control have higher levels of morale. Therefore, locus of control among Child Protective Services workers may effect levels of morale. Morale may also be influenced by work performance.

Morale has been found to be positively correlated with work performance (Paul & Gross, 1981). Researchers found performance, productivity, and morale may be increased by means of organization development techniques. And, work performance reduces turnover rates through positive

feelings about individual's jobs (Anderson, Issel, & McDaniel, 1997). In addition, positive correlations exist between low levels of turnover in individuals who feel their clients need them, feelings of friendship between co-workers, and interactions between workers and supervisors when stressful events occur. Levels of morale were increased in organizations implementing interventions concerning people and processes rather than technology and organizational structure (Paul & Gross, 1981). Interventions concerning people and processes may be described as citizenship behaviors.

Citizenship behaviors are voluntary, discretionary acts not dictated by job requirements and promote effective functioning of the organization (Podsakoff, Ahearne, & MacKenzie, 1997). Citizenship behaviors are described as altruism, courtesy, cheerleading, peacekeeping, sportsmanship, civic virtue, and conscientiousness. Citizenship behaviors increase morale through being aspects of helping. This occurs when a worker encourages a co-worker who is discouraged about his or her accomplishments or professional development (Podsakoff, et. al., 1997). More established, knowledgeable workers may teach co-

workers and work groups various "tricks of the trade" and help with work related problems.

Work groups that contain similarity of gender, race-ethnicity, and tenure are found to have greater citizenship behaviors among co-workers (Riordan & Shore, 1997).

Similarity between individuals typically leads to more frequent communication, high social integration within a group, and group cohesion. Citizenship and helping behaviors are expected to foster group cohesion, contribute to the attractiveness of the work place, and thereby enhance morale (Podsakoff, et. al., 1997).

Current research indicates citizenship behaviors enhance morale in the workplace, therefore it becomes important to understand the ramifications of the absence of citizenship behaviors. Citizenship behavior withdrawal typically begins when a worker begins to experience feelings of unfair treatment by superiors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). When workers deem organizational decisions and managerial actions as unfair and/or unjust, affected workers may experience feelings of outrage, anger and resentment. There appears to be an association between perceptions of fairness and retaliation. Workers who feel exploited are more likely to engage in acts against the

organization such as retaliation and resistant behaviors. As workers' perceptions of unfairness grow stronger, workers feel more dissatisfied and behaviors that appear retaliatory become more frequent (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Dissatisfied workers may react to the perceived injustice through negative behaviors used to punish the organization and those who inflicted the injustice (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Many retaliative behaviors are covert and sabotage effective organizational functioning as manifest through withdrawal of helping behaviors. Retaliation may become more dangerous and/or aggressive as manifest through acts of vandalism, theft, and violence. To counter worker dissatisfaction and negative, retaliative behaviors researchers suggest organizations engage in fair formal procedures. Decision-making procedures need to be consistent, unbiased, accurate, correct, representational, and ethical. In the presence of fair procedures, workers tend to accept responsibility for their problems and levels of anger and resentment diminish (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Supervisors who are known to be considerate of workers' needs and respectful of their dignity, and work to

ensure fair treatment of workers increase likelihood of morale in the organization.

In most organizations and in Child Protective Services agencies, workers perform various job-related tasks. In Child Protective Services agencies, individuals work together in blended units, and members of the unit work closely one with another in an interdependent fashion (Pritchard, Jones, Roth, Stuebing, & Ekeberg, 1988). Working closely with co-workers may produce cohesion as well as foster problems. In the past, group interventions typically included feedback and goal setting. In the 1990s, research findings have indicated a positive correlation between self-help groups and low levels of job burnout (Medvene, Volk, & Meissen, 1997). Researchers of self-help theory have begun to identify burnout and exhaustion as one source of group instability. There appears to be higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization when workers perceive an imbalance in their relations with co-workers. And, researchers found burnout was high among Child Protective Services workers with burnout relating to organizational factors (Rauktis & Koeske, 1994). Former United States Surgeon General C. Everett Koop has recommended that "self-help" groups be

included in policy and practice of governmental and non-governmental organizations (Medvene, et. al., 1997).

Self-help groups help to initiate balance and reciprocity among relations (Medvene, et. al., 1997). Balance and reciprocity are associated with perceptions that each of the parties in a relationship is benefiting equally well. Workers' morale may increase when an individual feels he or she is getting back about as much as he or she is contributing. Self-help groups also support communal orientation within an organization. Communal orientation in an organization was negatively correlated with burnout and exhaustion levels of workers (Medvene, et. al., 1997). Possibly self-help groups may increase morale among workers. Self-help groups may work more effectively for individuals with certain personality characteristics.

Personality may affect morale (Holt, O'Connor, Smith, Gessner, Clifton & Mumford, 1997). An individual's personality and/or a perception of another's personality may cause problems in the workplace. There is a human tendency to attribute people with stable personality traits. And, people tend to assume personality causes behavior rather than situational influences. Because individuals use schemas to frame perceptions, personality

traits may strongly influence how workers perceive co-workers and superiors (Longres, 1995). Personality may facilitate or inhibit certain behaviors. Supervisors and workers may view others in the organization according to perceived personality traits (Holt, et. al., 1997). For example, a negative and cynical viewpoint of others may result from perceptions of dishonest personality traits in co-workers. And, workers may view supervisors as power seeking, narcissistic, and self-aggrandizing. Personality components may unravel morale in an organization. Therefore, decisions regarding behavior need to be based on situational information and not personality.

Short term situation effects may have impact on morale levels (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). On a daily basis, important events occur at work that may effect morale. How workers perceive the event is important. Equally important is the behavior of the work group when the event occurred, workers' feelings associated with the event, and how the event effected workers individually. Morale dimensions incorporate various needs of workers. When needs are met in the workplace, morale levels increase. Some of the most important worker needs have been identified by researchers as follows: need for achievement, need for affiliation,

need for power, communication channels, delegation of responsibility, performance appraisal, reward and punishment, relationships, warmth and support, organizational hierarchy, specified tasks, worker skills, wage and wage growth, tenure, and physical location of the organization (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). Outcomes on met needs tend to be higher levels of morale (Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Good, 1994).

Throughout the research on morale, findings consistently indicate influences of management on worker morale. Many books have been written on the subject of management styles and techniques. In a nutshell, managers must remember to manage with a heart, and learn to make workers feel appreciated (Good, 1994). Positive supervisor/worker relations are essential if an organization is to function at an optimal level with high morale levels among all employees. The following is a simple list of behaviors effective managers use to foster worker morale (Good, 1994):

- Talk to workers, learn their names, and treat them as individuals.
- Show interest in workers' personal lives.
- Provide support or counseling if needed for personal problems.
- Be concerned about personal tragedies.

Listen to workers' ideas, give credit for ideas, and use workers' ideas.
Provide a safe, attractive, comfortable, and clean workplace.
Eat, relax, and share stories together on breaks.
Create an atmosphere of safety and trust.
Be loyal, treat workers with respect and avoid favoritism.
Orient and train newcomers.
Be concerned about workers' needs, allow flexibility for special needs.
When work is slow, send workers home early.
Allow creativity in getting a job done.
Be a mentor, respect workers' feelings.
NEVER belittle a worker.
Treat workers with honesty and fairness.
Be clear in expectations, set limits as necessary.
Give lots of feedback and praise, especially worker improvement.
Specifically state criticisms, give encouragement and work on solutions together.
Allow workers to correct errors.
Avoid dwelling on the past, forgive, forget, and move on.
Remember humor goes a long way, and take care of yourself.
Apply the golden rule: do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Morale has been studied over the years to determine the best and most effective ways to improve worker productivity, absenteeism, lateness, and personnel turnover (Benge & Hickey, 1984). Morale research links sense of achievement and fulfillment in the job. Also, morale surfaces when there is a spirit of harmony between co-workers. It appears to be management's responsibility to see that co-workers are satisfied and that morale is high. When workers believe superiors are truly interested in what they think, morale is raised. Maintaining high

morale is a continuous job superiors must address. To do this, management may conduct regular formal or informal surveys to gather data, talk to workers, listen and validate workers' feelings, and address existing problems in a timely manner (Benge & Hickey, 1984).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study examined morale levels among the Child Protective Services agency of the Department of Public Social Services in San Bernardino County. A morale study was conducted among a sampling of social workers employed in two Child Protective Services offices recognized as San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions pertaining to morale were answered. The current study proposed morale would be high in offices with supervisory support and supervisory validation, increased wage and promotional opportunities, cohesive co-worker relations, proportional work and non-work activity balance, safety and aesthetics of the physical office environment and the personal beliefs, values and behaviors of individual workers.

The current study used a post-positivist paradigm (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). Post-positivist research emphasizes objectivity, precision, and generalizability. Post-positivist research seeks to verify causality through attempts to sort out what is really causing the effect. Therefore, the post-positivist paradigm in the current study used a combination for quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative methods were empirically based and utilized statistical analysis. Qualitative methods were exploratory in nature and tended to generate new ideas for further testing. Using post-positivist research in the current study necessitates replication to achieve reliability and validity (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). However, using the post-positivist paradigm allowed the researcher to extract participants' own ideas as to contributing morale factors.

Participants

Participants were recruited from the Child Protective Services agency in San Bernardino County. Approval to survey Child Protective Services employees was received from the Department of Public Social Services, Deputy Director Gary Null (see Appendix G). Fifty-eight Child Protective Services social workers volunteered to

participate. Participants were culturally diverse males and females. All participants were employees of the Department of Public Social Services, Child Protective Services Agency, in San Bernardino County. Participants were recruited from San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices. All participants were treated in accordance with the "Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct" (American Psychological Association, 1992).

Instrument and Data Collection

Data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire was described as a self-report scale. A self-report scale is a source of data in which all participants respond in writing to the same list of written statements or questions that have been devised to measure a particular construct (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). The self-report scale for the current study measured factors that may contribute to morale in Child Protective Services offices.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section asked demographic information and was titled "Demographic Information" (see Appendix A). Demographic data included gender, age, marital status, ethnicity,

income level, level of education, academic degree, license, location of employment, length of employment at current location, and position title. The second section included both closed-ended and open-ended questions and was titled the "Morale Scale" (see Appendix B). The closed-ended questions included 38 statements rated on a Likert scale. The Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample statement was "I receive positive feedback from my supervisor." The questionnaire also included eight open-ended questions. Questions were answered in participants' own words. A sample open-ended question was "What do you think contributes to the morale in your office?" The morale scale was devised specifically for the current study by the researcher in consultation with the faculty project advisor at California State University, San Bernardino. The researcher used current research literature on morale as a basis for the morale scale. The survey helped identify morale contributors for San Bernardino County Department of Public Social Services, Child Protective Services agency, but had limits to generalizability for other counties, departments and/or agencies.

Strengths and Weaknesses

There are strengths and weaknesses in using a self-report scale in a research study. Strengths include: survey questionnaires are relatively simple to complete, large amounts of information can be gathered in a uniform manner, and a large sample population can be surveyed in a short span of time (Rubin & Barrie, 1997). Weaknesses include: the researcher is not available to answer questions, some questions may be left unanswered, and relevant issues may be missed due to pre-selection of questionnaire items by the researcher (Rubin & Babbie, 1997).

There were both strengths and weaknesses in using the self-report scale devised specifically for the current study. The self-report scale allowed items to be constructed that reflected the problem addressed by the study (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). In the current study, the self-report scale reflected morale in Child Protective Services offices. The findings from the self-report scale were applicable to the participants who answered the survey questionnaire. The study was generalizable to Child Protective Services offices in San Bernardino County.

The strength in using the self-report scale was weakened due to the scale not being an existing scale and, therefore was untested for reliability and validity. Using existing scales eliminates the uncertainty of reliability and validity (Rubin & Babbie, 1997). Reliability and validity are generated from consistent test and retest answers over time. Reliability refers to an instrument's consistency, predictability, stability, or accuracy (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Reliability is established through replication and is a precondition for validity. Validity refers to truth value (Erlandson, et. al., 1993). Validity indicates the extent to which an instrument actually measures what it proposes to measure. In addition, existing instruments are cost effective and readily accessible. Another weakness in using the self-report scale for the current study was generalizability to populations other than agencies of San Bernardino County Department of Public Social Services was hampered.

Procedure

Participation in the current study was voluntary. A manila envelope was placed in each Child Protective Services worker's mail box in San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices. The manila envelope was labeled

"survey." Each manila envelope contained an informational letter (see Appendix C), a morale survey with an attached informed consent form (see Appendix D), a detached debriefing statement (see Appendix E), and a business-sized white envelope. The business-sized white envelope was used as a return envelope and was labeled FROM: RESPONDENT/TO: KATHRYN SINCLAIR SW INTERN, SPECIAL SERVICES. Upon opening the packet, the participant read and marked the informed consent with an X. The participant then completed the survey. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, the participant placed the survey and the attached informed consent into a business-sized white envelope and sealed the envelope. The sealed envelopes were mailed to the researcher through the San Bernardino County inter-office mail system. Participants were not mandated to answer the survey within a specific time frame and answered questions at their leisure. Envelopes were collected over a period of three weeks by the researcher only.

Protection of Human Subjects

The current study received the approval of the Department of Social Work Human Subjects Committee, under authority of the Institutional Review Board, California

State University, San Bernardino (see Appendix F).

Adequate efforts were made to insure confidentiality of all participants. To maintain the confidentiality of participants, personal names were not placed on the completed studies. An informed consent form was attached to the survey. The informed consent described the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of participation in the study and requested the participant acknowledge participation of the survey by signing the survey with an X. There were no anticipated risks as a result of participation in this study. The signature of the participant as marked by an X was used as evidence that the participant gave his/her consent and had an understanding of the nature of the study. In spite of efforts, confidentiality problems existed.

Problems with confidentiality possibly occurred as a result of human error. Problems possibly resulted from participants failing to place completed studies in return envelopes and immediately sealing the envelopes. Unsealed studies may have been left on participants' desks within view of onlookers. Participants received a debriefing statement with the telephone number of the faculty project adviser at California State University, San Bernardino.

Participants were able to contact the project adviser to obtain information about the project or discuss the survey. The survey and signed informed consent forms were collected and stored in a locked box at the private residence of the researcher. When analysis of the survey was completed informed consent and surveys were destroyed.

Data Analysis

The focus of the current study was to determine factors that contribute to morale in the Child Protective Services agency in San Bernardino County. Data was analyzed through quantitative and qualitative methods (Rubin & Babbie, 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Quantitative analysis was the product of empirical research of which the current study was a part (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Qualitative research methods measured theoretical interpretations of the current study. Simply stated, quantitative analysis measured numbers and qualitative analysis measured ideas. Quantitative and qualitative methods worked together in the current study. Qualitative methods clarified and validated quantitative data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Using quantitative analysis, the current study used descriptive statistics to analyze data collected from a

self-report scale on morale. "Descriptive statistics is a method for presenting quantitative descriptions in a manageable form (Rubin & Babbie)." Descriptive statistics computed frequency distributions using the Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for demographics characteristics and 38 quantitative response items on the Self-report morale scale.

Qualitative analysis was required for the eight open-ended questions on the self-report morale scale.

Qualitative analysis occurred through coding of similar phrases and words derived from the scale (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process involved the "grounded theory" or the grouping and comparing of similarities and differences in responses. Grounded theory, or qualitative analysis gave intricate details of morale that were difficult to convey with quantitative methods only.

RESULTS

The purpose of the current study examined morale levels among the Child Protective Services agency of the Department of Public Social Services in San Bernardino County. A sampling of social workers from the San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices was taken.

Approximately 225 surveys were placed in the two Child Protective Services offices. Findings revealed there were 58 participants who responded to the following research areas: demographics information and a morale scale which required both quantitative and qualitative participant reporting. Qualitative research results supported quantitative research findings on morale levels in San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices. The enclosed tables reflected the current research findings. The analysis of quantitative demographic characteristics data was presented followed by the analysis of qualitative data. An elaboration of the results was found in the discussion section of the current study.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis included demographics information and closed-ended questions from the morale scale. The quantitative demographics were divided into 11 categories. Demographic categories analyzed: gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, income level, level of education, degree, license, employment location, length of employment in location, and position title.

Demographics for Gender of Participants

The majority of the participants were female (44), which represented 75.9 percent of the participants (see Table 1). Male (14) participants represented 24.1 percent of the participants.

Table 1. Demographics for Gender of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	14	24.1	24.1
Female	44	75.9	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Age of Participants

Of the 58 participants, 10.3 percent (6) were between the ages of 21-30 (see Table 2). The highest category for age demographics was represented by 32.8 percent of the participants (19), which were between the ages of 31-40. The second highest category for age demographics was represented by 29.3 percent of the participants (17), which were between the ages of 41-50. In the age range between 51-60, participants (15) represented 25.9 percent. The data revealed only 1 participant was over the age of 61, which represented 1.7 percent of the participants.

Table 2. Demographics for Age of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
21 - 30	6	10.3	10.3
31 - 40	19	32.8	43.1
41 - 50	17	29.3	72.4
51 - 60	15	25.9	98.3
Over 61	1	1.7	100.0

Demographics for Marital Status of Participants

Of the 58 participants, 50.0 percent (29) reported they were married (see Table 3). Less than one-quarter of the participants (9) reported they were single, which represented 15.5 percent. Less than one-half of the participants (18) reported they were divorced, which represented 31.0 percent. The data revealed 2 participants were separated, which represented 3.4 of the participants

Table 3. Demographics for Marital Status of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	9	15.5	15.5
Married	29	50.0	65.5
Separated	2	3.4	69.0
Divorced	18	31.0	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Ethnicity of Participants

Of the 58 participants, 56 revealed ethnicity (see Table 4). The data revealed the majority, 72.4 percent of

the participants were Caucasian (42). African American participants (7) were represented as 12.1 percent. Latin/Hispanic participants (6) were represented as 10.3 percent. The data revealed there was one Asian American participant, which represented 1.7 percent of the participants. Two participants failed to reveal their ethnicity.

Table 4. Demographics for Ethnicity of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
African American	7	12.1	12.1
Latin/Hispanic	6	10.3	22.4
Caucasian	42	72.4	94.8
Asian American	1	1.7	96.6
Blank	2	3.4	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Income of Participants

Of the 58 participants who responded to demographics for income, the majority was represented by 39.7 percent of the participants (23) in the \$40,001-50,000 range. In the \$30,001-40,000 range, income was represented by 19.0 percent of the participants (11). Eight participants earned income in the \$20,001-30,000 range, which represented 13.8 of the participants. In the highest income category, 12.1 percent of the participants (7)

earned income over \$60,001. Six participants earned income in the \$50,001-60,000 range, which represented 10.3 percent of the participants. And, in the lowest income category, 3.4 percent of the participants (2) earned income in the \$10,000-20,000 range.

Table 5. Demographics for Income of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
\$10,000 - 20,000	2	3.4	3.4
\$20,001 - 30,000	8	13.8	17.2
\$30,001 - 40,000	11	19.0	36.2
\$40,001 - 50,000	23	39.7	75.9
\$50,001 - 60,000	6	10.3	86.2
Over \$60,001	7	12.1	98.3
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Level of Education of Participants

Of the 58 participants, 56 responded to the demographic characteristic level of education (see Table 5). The data revealed over one-half (35) of the participants had an education level between grades 17-18, which represented 60.3 percent of the participants. The data revealed 24.1 percent of the participants (14) had a education level between grades 13-16. Five of the participants had an education level of grade 12 or under, which represented 8.6 percent of the participants. Two participants had an educational level higher than grade 18,

which represented 3.4 percent of the participants. And, two participants failed to reveal level of education.

Table 6. Demographics for Level of Education of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Grade 12 and under	5	8.6	8.6
Grades 13-16	14	24.1	32.8
Grades 17-18	35	60.3	93.1
Over grade 18	2	3.4	96.6
Blank	2	3.4	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Degrees Obtained by Participants

The data revealed over one-half of the 58 participants (34) had obtained Masters Degrees, which represented 58.6 percent of the participants (see Table 7). The data revealed 12 participants had obtained Bachelors Degrees, which represented 20.7 of the participants. The data revealed four participants had obtained Associates Degrees, which was represented by 6.9 percent of the participants. Two participants had obtained Ph.D. Degrees, which represented 3.4 percent of the participants. And, two participants failed to reveal degree demographics.

Table 7. Demographics for Degrees Obtained by Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelors	12	20.7	20.7
Masters	34	58.6	79.3
Ph.D.	2	3.4	82.8
AA	4	6.9	89.7
Blank	6	10.3	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Licenses of Participants

The data revealed the majority, 86.2 percent of the 58 participants (50) had no license (see Table 8). Five participants had a Marriage, Family, Child Counselor (MFCC) license, which represented 8.6 percent of the participants. Possession of the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)/Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW) was represented by 5.2 percent of the participants (3).

Table 8. Demographics for Licenses of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
MFCC	5	8.6	8.6
LCSW/ACSW	3	5.2	13.8
No license	50	86.2	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Office Location of Participants

Of the 58 participants, 36.2 percent of the participants (21) worked in the San Bernardino Mill Street

office. The data revealed the Victorville office employed 63.9 percent of the participants (37).

Table 9. Demographics for Office Location of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
San Bernardino Mill Street	21	36.2	36.2
Victorville	37	63.8	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Length of Employment of Participants

Of the 58 participants, 29.3 percent of the participants (17) had been employed at the current location less than one year (see Table 10). The data revealed 24.1 percent of the participants (14) had been employed at the current location from one to two years. Employment at the current location from two to five years was represented by 19.0 percent of the participants (11). Over ten years of employment at the current location was represented by 13.8 percent of the participants (8).

Table 10. Demographics for Length of Employment of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than one year	17	29.3	29.3
One - two years	14	24.1	53.4
Two - five years	11	19.0	72.4
Over ten years	8	13.8	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Demographics for Employment Positions of Participants

The data revealed the majority of the 58 participants (32), 55.2 percent worked in the position of Social Service Practitioner (see Table 11). Eight participants worked in the position of Supervisor Social Services Practitioner, which represented 13.8 percent of the participants. Seven participants worked in the Social Worker II position, which represented 12.1 percent of the participants. And, the position of Clerk III/IV was also represented by 12.1 percent of the participants (7). Four participants, which represented 6.9 percent of the participants worked in other positions.

Table 11. Demographics for Employment Positions of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Social Service Practitioner	32	55.2	55.2
Social Worker II	7	12.1	67.2
Supervisor Social Services Practitioner	8	13.8	81.0
Clerk III/IV	7	12.1	93.1
Other	4	6.9	100.0
Total	58	100.0	

Breakdown of Significance of Morale Scale

Of the 38 items on the Morale Scale, one item, question number 36 revealed significance at the $p \leq .005$ level and was distinguished by the single ampersand (*) mark (see Table 12). The data revealed 19 items, listed as question numbers 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 34 were significant at the $p \leq .001$ level and were distinguished by the double ampersand (**) mark. The data revealed 18 items, listed as question numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32, 33, 35, 37 and 38 were not significant.

Table 12. Breakdown of Significance of Morale Scale

Question no.	Question	Significance
1	I'm happy with the people I work with.	P=.000**
2	I'm happy with the support staff I work with.	P=.000**
3	I like the work I do.	P=.000**
4	I feel I'm being paid a fair wage for the work I do.	P=.059
5	I feel supported by my supervisor.	P=.470
6	I feel motivated to come to work.	p=.019
7	I Feel there is a positive attitude in my office.	P=.260
8	My co-workers get along well with one another.	P=.000**
9	I can talk to my co-workers if I have a job-related problem.	P=.000**
10	I can talk to my supervisor if I have a job-related problem.	P=.036
11	I help my co-workers.	P=.000**
12	I am happy with my work schedule.	P=.000**
13	I like the physical environment in the office.	P=.000**
14	I like the community where the office is located.	P=.055
15	My co-workers help me.	P=.000**
16	When there is a problem, I assess how I may have prevented it.	P=.000**
17	Some co-workers are difficult to work with because of their personalities.	P=.104
18	I enjoy positive self-esteem.	P=.000**
19	I feel I can share part of my personal life with my co-workers.	P=.006
20	I feel like a team member at work.	p=.008
21	When there is a problem I tend to blame others.	P=.000**
22	I like my personality.	P=.000**
23	I have the opportunity to earn more income in my job.	p=.016

24	I feel secure in my job.	p=.000**
25	I have one particular friend at work.	p=.068
26	I feel I make a difference in my work.	p=.001**
27	I feel I am important at work.	p=.008
28	I have a good balance between work and home activities.	p=.000**
29	I feel challenged in my work.	p=.000**
30	I feel validated for the work I do.	p=.039
31	I feel competent to do the work I do.	p=.000**
32	I receive little perks and favors at work for a job well done.	P=.007
33	My office celebrates holidays by planning office get-togethers.	P=.006
34	I receive positive feedback from my co-workers.	P=.000**
35	I receive positive feedback from my supervisor.	P=.244
36	I feel free to express my ideas to my supervisor.	P=.002*
37	I feel my ideas are appreciated at work.	p=.104
38	My supervisor manages with empathy.	P=.030

p_≤.005* p_≤.001**

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data was divided into 8 open-ended questions listed on the Morale Scale which reflected personal opinions of the 58 participants. The data reflected the high incidence of similar response opinions by the participants and did not reflect participant responses that were isolated or few in number. Therefore, the results of the qualitative analysis was not an

exhaustive representation of the participants' responses regarding morale.

The analysis of the participants' responses revealed several themes which were categorized as: morale level, supervisor support, co-worker support, pay and promotions, office social activities, computer training, even distribution of work responsibilities, safety concerns, laws and court, bureaucracy of the Department of Public Social Services, office location and high incidence of caseloads. Several participants failed to respond to some or all of the open-ended questions. Results of the qualitative data were categorized and revealed through tables and/or discussion below.

Question No. 1: How do you feel the overall morale of your office is?

Participants revealed office morale levels to be either low or high (see Table 13).

Table 13. Office Morale Levels

	Low	High	Total
Morale	25	29	54

Question No. 2: What do you think contributes to the morale in your office?

Participants expressed low office morale contributors to be lack of support by supervisors, lack of appreciation by supervisors, high caseloads, poor pay and difficulties with the computerized reporting system; Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS), and safety issues. Participants revealed high office morale contributors to be supportive supervisors, supportive co-workers, and office location.

Question No. 3: How would you rate your own personal morale?

Participants revealed personal morale in three categories: low, average and high (see Table 14).

Table 14. Personal Morale Levels

	Low	Average	High	Total
Personal Morale	10	23	15	48

Question No.4: What do you think contributes to your current level of morale?

Participants expressed current levels of morale to be either low or high. Low level morale contributors were

revealed as lack of support by supervisors, high caseloads, difficulty with the computer system (CWS/CMS), and the initiation of blended units. Participants revealed high level morale contributors to be supportive co-workers, supportive supervisors, and a balance between home and work activities.

Question No. 5: What do you think takes away from morale in your office?

Participants expressed diminishing morale factors to be lack of support by supervisors, uneven distribution of work responsibilities, bureaucracy of the Department of Public Social Services, the laws and court system, lack of training in the computer system (CWS/CMS), co-worker issues, low pay, and safety concerns.

Question No. 6: What do you think takes away from your current level of morale?

Participants expressed personal morale levels diminish due to bureaucratic policies of the Department of Public Social Services, lack of supervisor support, co-worker issues, high caseloads, and problems with the computer system (CWS/CMS).

Question No. 7: What do you think would improve morale in your office?

Participants expressed factors which would contribute to improved office morale to be more supportive supervisors, monthly staff meetings, computer training (CWS/CMS), increased co-worker support, and a more even distribution of work responsibilities; including the possibility of clerks accepting some of the on-line workers' computer duties.

Question No. 8: What do you think would improve your current level of morale?

Participants expressed factors that would contribute to improved personal morale levels to be improved supervisor support, praise from supervisors for jobs well done, more social events within offices, regular pay raises and promotions, a more even distribution of work responsibilities, and the implementation of safety plans as suggested by an inclusion of pagers and/or cellular phones by on-line workers.

DISCUSSION

The current study focused on the contributing factors of morale levels among Child Protective Services workers employed by the Department of Public Social Services in San

Bernardino County. Child Protective Services workers were employed in the two offices of San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville. The San Bernardino Mill Street office represented an urban area of San Bernardino County and the Victorville office represented a rural area of San Bernardino County. The participants represented employees working in positions labeled as Social Services Practitioner, Supervisor Social Services Practitioner, Social Worker II and Clerk III/IV.

Participants were male (14) and female (44) with ages ranging from 21 to over 61. Most participants were married, however many were divorced, separated, or single. Participants reflected various ethnicities such as Caucasian, African American, Latin/Hispanic, and Asian American. Income of Participants ranged from \$10,000 to over \$60,000. Participants' levels of education ranged from grade 12 and under, which represented a high school education; grades 13 to 16, which represented an undergraduate education; grades 17 to 18, which represented graduate level education; and over grade 18, which possibly represented education at the doctorate level.

Many participants possessed educational degrees. Over one-half of the participants had Masters Degrees. Other

participants had Bachelors Degrees and Associates Degrees. While it would be advantageous to possess an educational degree in conjunction with a clinical license, most of the participants failed to possess clinical licensure.

A majority of the participants had worked for their respective offices for under one year. Most of the participants worked in the office located in Victorville. Unknown to the researcher was information related to years worked in other offices preceding employment at the current location. Possibly the participants had greater employment histories than were revealed by the current study.

A profile of the current study participant was a Caucasian female between the ages of 31-40, married, with an income between \$40,001-50,000. The profile participant also had a graduate level educational background, a Masters Degree and the absence of a clinical practice license. In addition, the profile participant had been employed less than one year in the Victorville office as a Social Services Practitioner.

There was an overwhelmingly high incidence of female participants. Possibly more females responded due to a higher incidence of females over males employed as Child Protective Services workers. Possibly female/male response

ratio was attributed to past job-related problems historically faced by women in the work place. The current study supported research by Winter-Eber & Zweimuller (1997) which described the need for female equality in the work place. Possibly female participants desired an outlet to express their views concerning the issue of equity in the work place for women and hoped to initiate changes in their respective offices and job responsibilities.

Participants voluntarily responded to demographic characteristics and both closed-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions included on the Morale Scale. The qualitative portion of the Morale Scale supported findings revealed by the quantitative analysis for office and personal morale levels. There was a slight difference in office morale levels with a high:low ratio of 29:25. Personal morale levels were indicated as average.

Of importance to the current study, participants revealed personal factors that contributed to morale levels. The act of participants taking personal responsibility for their own levels of morale is supported by the research findings of Majumder, et. al. (1977). Participants revealed their own personal coping mechanisms and beliefs affected levels of morale. Participants with

high morale levels tended to like themselves, enjoyed a sense of personal empowerment, refrained from blaming others when things went wrong, enjoyed positive self-esteem, and enjoyed a good balance between work and home activities. In addition, participants who enjoyed higher personal morale levels felt secure, competent and challenged in their jobs, were happy with their wages, and liked the physical location and environment of the office.

The physical location and environment of the office contributed to levels of morale. Participants revealed they liked the physical environment of their offices, however location of the offices was not found to be a significant morale contributor. The offices tended to not celebrate holidays or organize social events, however workers desired socials and celebrations.

Another contributing morale factor was indicated by job performance. Morale tended to be higher when individuals generally liked their jobs. Participants in the current study revealed they liked the work they do, felt secure in their jobs, felt they made a difference in their work, felt challenged and competent to perform their work duties, and liked their work schedules. Participants

revealed they tended to assess how to prevent a work-related problem and avoided blaming others.

High morale levels were indicated as participants reported they were happy with the support staff in their offices and felt they could express their ideas to their supervisors. However, the participants may have determined support staff to be other than supervisors. Participants revealed actually feeling supported by supervisors, feeling ideas were appreciated, receiving empathy from supervisors and receiving little perks and favors for work well done was not significant.

Participants contributed high morale levels to supervisors who had the potential for improving or diminishing office and personal levels of morale. The incidence of supervisor support as a contributor to morale supports findings by Chen, et. al. (1997) and Good (1994). For example, high morale levels were a result of the active support of supervisors who listened to workers' complaints and ideas, helped make difficult decisions, gave praise for jobs well done, and organized office social activities and holiday celebrations.

The incidence of high office and personal morale levels was also attributed to co-workers. The importance

of positive, trusting co-worker relations at work supports research findings by Dattalo (1997) and Medvene, et. al. (1997). Participants revealed the importance of having group cohesion within the office, co-worker rapport, and at least one office friend. Findings revealed morale was high when workers were happy with their co-workers, co-worker relations were reciprocal, and co-workers tended to get along. Participants revealed they tended to talk to co-workers over supervisors about job-related problems and also tended to receive positive feedback from co-workers over supervisors. Many of the contributors of high morale also were found to contribute to low morale levels.

Low morale in the office and on a personal level were revealed in both the quantitative and qualitative participant responses. Participants revealed low levels of morale in the office and personally were contributed to lack of supervisor support and supervisor praise. Participants reported the absence of supervisor support and supervisor praise made it difficult to enjoy jobs, effectively manage caseloads, and led to feelings of exhaustion and burnout. Burnout as a result of low morale levels supported findings by Gagne, et. al. (1997).

High incidence of low office and personal morale levels were also contributed to the unequal distribution of work responsibilities. Participants revealed morale levels fell when burdened by job-related factors such as difficult decision making, high caseloads, and managing the computerized data system; Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Participants employed as Child Protective Services workers revealed they faced challenging jobs fraught with safety risks and felt some of the time-consuming, computer-related duties could be relegated to office clerks. The importance of equal work distribution as a contributor to level of morale supports findings by Winter-Ebmer & Zweimuller (1997). In addition, work-related problems associated with bureaucracy lowered morale levels.

The bureaucratic problems inherent in the Department of Public Social Services, regulations in the form of laws and the court process contributed to low levels of morale. Participants revealed frustration with bureaucratic procedures and organizations with which they felt powerless. Participants who learned to work with the bureaucratic process had improved morale levels, which supported findings by Chen, et. al. (1997).

There were problems with the current study that may have effected outcomes. Of the nine Child Protective Services offices in San Bernardino County, a sampling from only two of the offices was taken. The two offices were located in urban (San Bernardino Mill Street) and rural (Victorville) areas of San Bernardino County, however it cannot be concluded the San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices were representative of overall morale levels of Child Protective Services workers countywide.

In addition, there was a low incidence of participant response from the San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices. Of the 225 surveys placed in the two offices, only 58 individuals participated. Possibly participants were hesitant to answer the questions on the morale scale. The morale scale asked participants to reveal personal information and personal opinions about their offices, co-workers and supervisors. Participants may have felt wary about answering personal, job-related questions due to fear of placing their jobs in jeopardy.

Problems with the current study may also have resulted from the low incidence of male participants. Male Child Protective Services workers may have different perspectives and experiences than female participants. Contributing

morale factors among male workers may be vastly different from those of female workers. Males may be more hesitant to participate in research surveys than females, therefore the ability to accurately determine contributing morale factors may remain elusive.

Other problems with the current study may have been inherent in the Morale Scale. The Morale Scale questions were devised by the researcher and a California State University, San Bernardino advisor from the current morale literature. There existed the possibility of problems centered around issues of reliability and validity regarding the Morale Scale due to the absence of previous tests of the Morale Scale in other studies.

Finally, the current study, is not generalizable to populations outside the Child Protective Services agencies of San Bernardino County. Possibly the research findings may be applied to other agencies within the Department of Public Social Services in San Bernardino County. Possibly the research findings may be applied to other governmental agencies and departments with similar populations as Child Protective Services agencies in San Bernardino County. Possibly the research findings may be applied to other governmental agencies and departments with populations

similar to child Protective Services agencies outside San Bernardino County.

SUMMARY

The current study used the post-positivist paradigm to determine morale contributors of Child Protective Services workers. Findings revealed contributors of high morale in the Child Protective Services agency offices to be supervisor support and supervisor validation, reciprocal co-worker relations, personal morale input and training on the computerized data system.

The role of supervisors as a contributor of morale was clearly evident in the findings of the current study. Morale was found to be high in offices with supervisor support and supervisor validation of employees. Supervisors enhanced morale in their offices through helping workers make difficult decisions, gave praise for jobs well done, and established an atmosphere of camaraderie through office get-togethers and holiday celebrations.

Morale levels were also found to be high when employees had positive co-worker relations. Co-workers were important in helping workers feel validated and supported. Co-workers also tended to help in decision

making with absent supervisors. Workers especially felt the need to have one particular friend at work with whom to confide and share both office and personal stories and information.

Personal morale input also tended to increase levels of morale in the office. Workers with high morale levels appeared to have inherent strengths, values, beliefs and behaviors which enabled them to withstand factors that diminished morale levels. Morale tended to be higher among workers who enjoyed a good balance between work and home activities and kept the responsibilities of office and home in their proper perspective.

The current study also identified possible contributors of low morale levels among child Protective Services workers. Morale tended to be lower when problems with training, safety and decision making were not addressed by supervisors and/or the Department of Public Social Services. Training on the computerized data system: Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) was especially important in raising or lowering levels of morale and workers.

The current study is generalizable to the Child Protective Services agency and its respective offices in

San Bernardino County. Findings may be applicable to other governmental agencies and departments which serve populations similar to Child Protective Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study considered the following recommendations for the improvement of morale levels in Child Protective Services agencies. Recommendations were applied to Child Protective Services agency workers including supervisors, non-supervising workers, the Department of Public Social Services, and future studies.

Supervisor Recommendations

The current study recommended Supervisor Social Services Practitioners in Child Protective Services agencies receive managerial training including effective leadership skills, time management, organizational skills, relational skills, listening skills, delegation skills and special training in the computer system (CSW/CMS).

Supervisors needed to practice their leadership skills through helping workers make difficult decisions, giving praise, implementing office social activities, delegating time-consuming duties as needed, hosting monthly staff meetings, providing pay and promotional increases as

appropriate and in a timely manner, and providing computer training in CWS/CMS.

Non-supervisor workers

The current study recommended non-supervisor Child Protective Services workers develop habits and behaviors of self-determination to improve personal and office morale levels. Workers needed to develop a healthy balance between work activities and home responsibilities. And, workers needed to initiate conversations and/or meetings with supervisors to express their job-related needs.

Department of Public Social Services Recommendations

The current study recommended the Department of Public Social Services consider the needs of its Child Protective Services agency employees to improve organizational effectiveness, operations, and morale. Recommended improvements included activities such as in-service meetings with a focus on managerial training, knowledge of equitable distribution of job-related responsibilities, and CWS/CMS computer training.

Future Morale Studies

The current study highly recommended future studies be conducted on factors that contribute to morale levels. Additional morale studies may enhance the current study and

provide organizations with research-based knowledge To
improve their organizations and employee morale.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please mark your answers with a check or an X

1. gender _____ 1) male
_____ 2) female
2. age _____ 1) under 20
_____ 2) 21 - 30
_____ 3) 31 - 40
_____ 4) 41 - 50
_____ 5) 51 - 60
_____ 6) over 61
3. Marital status _____ 1) single
_____ 2) married
_____ 3) separated
_____ 4) divorced
4. Ethnicity 1) African American _____ 2) Latin/Hispanic _____
3) Caucasian _____ 4) Asian American _____ 6) other _____
5. Income level _____ 1) under \$10,000
_____ 2) \$10,001 - 20,000
_____ 3) \$20,001 - 30,000
_____ 4) \$30,001 - 40,000
_____ 5) \$40,001 - 50,000
_____ 6) \$50,001 - 60,000
_____ 7) over \$60,001
6. What is your highest level of education? _____
7. What is your highest degree? _____
8. What is your license? _____
9. In which location do you work? _____ 1) Mill Street
_____ 2) Victorville
10. How long have you worked in this location? _____ 1) less than one year
_____ 2) one to two years
_____ 3) two to five years
_____ 4) five to ten years
_____ 5) over ten years
11. What is the title of your position? _____

APPENDIX B

MORALE SCALE

Part 1

On a scale on 1-5 with 5 being the highest, rate your current level of morale in your job by agreeing (5) or disagreeing (1) with the following statements:

1. _____ I'm happy with the people I work with.
2. _____ I'm happy with the support staff I work with.
3. _____ I like the work I do.
4. _____ I feel I'm being paid a fair wage for the work I do.
5. _____ I feel supported by my supervisor.
6. _____ I feel motivated to come to work.
7. _____ I feel there is a positive attitude in my office.
8. _____ My co-workers get along well with one another.
9. _____ I can talk to my co-workers if I have a job-related problem.
10. _____ I can talk to my supervisor if I have a job-related problem.
11. _____ I help my co-workers.
12. _____ I am happy with my work schedule.
13. _____ I like the physical environment in the office.
14. _____ I like the community where the office is located.
15. _____ My co-workers help me.
16. _____ When there is a problem, I assess how I may have prevented it.
17. _____ Some co-workers are difficult to work with because of their personalities.
18. _____ I enjoy positive self-esteem.
19. _____ I feel I can share part of my personal life with my co-workers.
20. _____ I feel like a team member at work.
21. _____ When there is a problem I tend to blame others.
22. _____ I like my personality.
23. _____ I have the opportunity to earn more income in my job.
24. _____ I feel secure in my job.
25. _____ I have one particular friend at work.
26. _____ I feel I make a difference in my work.
27. _____ I feel I am important at work.
28. _____ I have a good balance between work and home activities.
29. _____ I feel challenged in my work.
30. _____ I feel validated for the work I do.
31. _____ I feel competent to do the work I do.
32. _____ I receive little perks and favors at work for a job well done.
33. _____ My office celebrates holidays by planning office get-togethers.
34. _____ I receive positive feedback from my co-workers.
35. _____ I receive positive feedback from my supervisor.
36. _____ I feel free to express my ideas to my supervisor.
37. _____ I feel my ideas are appreciated at work.
38. _____ My supervisor manages with empathy.

MORALE SCALE

Part 2

Please answer the following morale questions in your own words

How do you feel the overall morale of your office is? _____

What do you think contributes to the morale in your office? _____

How would you rate your own personal morale? _____

What do you think contributes to your current level of morale? _____

What do you think takes away from morale in your office? _____

What do you think takes away from your current level of morale? _____

What do you think would improve morale in your office? _____

What do you think would improve your current level of morale? _____

APPENDIX C

INFORMATIONAL LETTER

February 18, 1998

Dear CPS colleague:

The following is a study being conducted on morale among CPS offices in San Bernardino county. Morale is an important topic for CPS workers and therefore, it is important that you have an opportunity to express your views concerning the issue.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and mail it back to me in the inter-office envelope provided. However, participation is completely voluntary. I appreciate your efforts greatly.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Sinclair
SW Intern

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

This study is designed to help San Bernardino county Department of Public Social Services understand the differing factors that contribute to morale of Child Protective Service workers. This study is being conducted by Kathryn Sinclair under the supervision of Dr. Morley Glicken, Professor of Social Work at California State university, San Bernardino and has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee.

In this study you will answer a questionnaire that asks demographic information pertaining to your gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, and information pertaining to your employment, such as where you work, length of employment, and position. In addition, you are asked to rate 38 statements on a scale from 1-5. Finally, there are 8 questions you are asked to answer in your own words.

Please be assured any information you provide will be held in strict confidence by the researcher. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses to any Department of Public Social Services personnel, including supervisors and/or trainers. A contact phone number will be provided at the end of this consent form if any questions or concerns should arise.

It is hoped the results of this study will provide San Bernardino county Department of Public Social Services information that will be helpful in raising morale among Child Protective Services workers. Your participation is necessary to attain this goal. Participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to respond. In addition, you are free to withdraw from this study at any time. However, should you choose to participate, please mark the space provided below with an X. Please keep this informed consent form attached to the Morale questionnaire. Upon completion of the questionnaire, place the informed consent and the questionnaire in the envelope addressed to Kathryn Sinclair and place the envelope in the inter-office mail.

I acknowledge I have been informed of and understand the nature and purpose of this study. I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge I am at least 18 years of age.

Give your consent to participate by placing a check or an X here _____

Today's date is _____

Thank you,
Kathryn Sinclair, MSW Candidate (909) 387-5144

Dr. Morley Glicken, Ph.D., Research Advisor (909) 880-5557

APPENDIX E

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study in which you participated is designed to help the Department of Public Social Services understand the differing factors that contribute to morale of child protective service workers employed in San Bernardino county. The research data will be collected through questionnaire. You may request results of this study by contacting Dr. Morley Glicken, Professor of Social Work and project advisor at (909) 880-5557. If personal issues should surface due to participation in this study please contact the Charter Behavioral Health System by calling (909) 592-8637, or contact a local family service or mental health facility of your choice.

APPENDIX F

APPLICATION TO USE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Application to Use Human Participants in Research

1. PROJECT REVIEW

- New Project (ID# will be assigned by the IRB) _____
- Revised Project (Enter ID#) _____
- Renewal (Enter ID#) _____

Approximate date of most recent previous review of this project _____

2. INVESTIGATOR(S) NAME(S) Kathryn Sinclair

Department Social Work Phone _____

If you are a student, please provide the following information:

- This research is for Thesis Honors Project Independent Study
 Course SW 613 Other _____

3. PROJECT TITLE Morale Levels Among Child Protective Service Workers in San Bernardino County

4. DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS (Enter approx. no. of participants and categories that apply)

- Number 60 Gender: Female Male
 CSUSB Students Children (17 or younger) Child Development Center
 Prisoners Patients in institutions Other CPS social workers

5. IS THIS PROPOSAL BEING SUBMITTED FOR GRANT SUPPORT?

- Yes No

If yes, you must submit one complete copy of that proposal as soon as it is available and respond to the following questions:

- Is notification of Human Participants approval required? Yes No
Is this a renewal application? Yes No

Funding Agency _____
(NIH, ASI, CSUSB Mini-Grant, etc)

Project period from _____ to _____

6. INDICATE THE REVIEW CATEGORY FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING.

- I am applying for **exempt review**, based on the following category(ies):
(Check all that apply. Submit an original and one copy of all application materials to the IRB.)
- Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings and involving normal educational practices
 - Research involving the use of educational tests, if information from these sources is recorded in such a manner that participants cannot be identified in any way
 - Research involving survey or interview procedures where participants cannot be identified
 - Research involving the observation of public behavior where participants cannot be identified.
 - Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, *where these sources are publicly available or where participants cannot be identified*
- I am applying for **expedited review**, based on the following category(ies):
(Check all that apply. Submit an original and 2 copies of all application materials to the IRB.)
- Collection of hair, nail clippings, teeth in a nondisfiguring manner.
 - Collection of excretal and/or external secretions.
 - Recording of data from adults using noninvasive procedures.
 - Collection of moderate levels of blood samples from adults in good health.
 - Collection of supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus.
 - Voice recordings made for research purposes.
 - Moderate exercise by healthy volunteers.
 - Study of existing data, documents, records, or pathological or diagnostic specimens.
 - Nonmanipulative, nonstressful research on group or individual behavior.
- I am applying for **full board review**.
(Submit an original and 7 copies of all application materials to the IRB.)

7. **ATTACHMENTS.** I have included copies of all relevant project materials and documents, including (check all that apply):

- Surveys, questionnaires, or interview instruments.
- Informed consent form.
- Letters of approval from cooperative agencies, schools, or education boards.
- Debriefing statements or explanation sheet.

8. AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE:

I agree to follow the procedures outlined in the summary description and any attachments to ensure that the rights and welfare of human participants in my project are properly protected. I understand that the study will not commence until I have received approval of these procedures from the IRB or where appropriate a department Human Participants Review Board; I have complied with any required modifications in connection with that approval. I understand that additions to or changes in the procedures involving human participants, or any problems with the rights or welfare of the human participants must be promptly reported to the IRB. I further understand that if the project continues for more than one year from the approval date, it must be re-submitted as a renewal application.

Yakirum Sinclair
Signature of Investigator

Oct 29, 1997
Date

Signature of Co-Investigator

Date

APPROVAL OF FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR (Required for all investigators who are students)

I affirm the accuracy of this application, and I accept responsibility for the conduct of this research, the supervision of human participants, and maintenance of informed consent documentation as required by the IRB.

Marley D. Shaton
Printed Name of Faculty Advisor/Sponsor

880-5557
Campus Phone

Marley D. Shaton
Signature of Faculty Advisor/Sponsor

Dec. 4, 1997
Date

Attachment To Application

9. Participation Recruitment

Participants are individuals employed at the Child Protective Services agency, Department of Public Social Services in San Bernardino County. Participants will be recruited from the offices of San Bernardino Mill Street, and Victorville. Participants will represent diversity of the offices in areas of gender, ethnicity, and age. Participants are mentally competent and participation is voluntary.

10. Project Description

The current study attempts to examine levels of morale in the Child Protective Services agency. A sampling of Child Protective Services employees from two offices will be conducted. The two offices represent urban and rural areas of San Bernardino County. The study attempts to examine contributing morale factors and proposes morale will be high in offices with supervisory support and supervisory validation, increased wage and promotional opportunities, cohesive co-worker relations, proportional work and non-work activity balance, safety and aesthetics of the physical office environment and the personal beliefs, values and behaviors of individual workers.

The study will occur among employees of the San Bernardino Mill Street and Victorville offices. Each employee will receive a packet in their personal mail box containing an informational letter, the questionnaire, informed consent and debriefing statement. It is not anticipated findings of the study will be generalizable except to the participating offices and the Child Protective Services agency in San Bernardino County. However, findings may be applicable to other governmental agencies with similar constellations.

11. Confidentiality of Data

Efforts to maintain confidentiality will be implemented. At no time in the current study will participants be required to verbally disclose and/or sign personal names on any of the study forms, to the researcher, to the University or to the Department of Public Social Services. Participants will be required to give consent by marking an informed consent with an X or a check mark only. The completed studies will be put directly into a sealed envelope for return to the researcher. The completed studies will be handled only by the participant and the researcher. The studies will be returned to the researcher via sealed envelopes through the inter-agency mail system. Should a sealed envelope become opened by another or through the inter-agency mail delivery, there is no way to identify the participant except through careful handwriting analysis.

12. Risks and Benefits

There are few risks to participating in the current study. One risk is the possibility of participant confidentiality being revealed to co-workers and/or supervisors. This may occur as a result of participant negligence due to: leaving a completed study in view on a desk, talking about answered questions with co-workers and/or supervisors, giving the completed study to co-workers and/or supervisors rather than placing the completed study in the sealed envelope, and/or failing to return the completed study in the sealed envelope to the researcher. This risk will be controlled by detailed instructions included in the informed consent about the process of returning completed studies. There are no other risks anticipated through participation in the current study.

The benefits of participation in the current study are findings apply directly to the San Bernardino County Child Protective Services agency. Because of the possibility of employee turnover and feelings of burnout among Child Protective Services employees, it is important to discover the factors that contribute to morale. The findings will help the Department of Public Social Services, Child Protective Services agency, management and supervisors implement a plan to help raise morale among the Child Protective Services agency in San Bernardino County.

13. Informed Consent

Informed consent will be in written format. The informed consent will include an explanation of the nature and purpose of the current study, the research method, duration of research participation, and a description of how confidentiality will be maintained. The informed consent further explains the participant's right to voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from participation at any time and information about foreseeable risks and benefits. The informed consent will include a statement that the current study received the approval of the Department of Social Work Human Subjects Committee of California State University, San Bernardino and who to contact regarding questions about the current study. Informed consent requirements will not include the signature of the participant. Rather, participants will acknowledge consent by marking an X or a check mark in a designated spot on the consent form.

14. Debriefing Statement

The current study will contain a debriefing statement describing the reasons for the study, the way to obtain the general results of the study and the persons to contact if the participant has any questions or concerns as a result of participation. The current study does not incorporate the use of deception, therefore debriefing for this purpose is not required.

APPENIDX G

APPROVAL LETTER

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
SOCIAL SERVICES GROUP

JOHN F. MICHAELSON
Assistant Administrative Officer
Administrative Office
150 South Lena Road
San Bernardino CA 92415

December 10, 1997

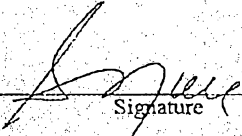


DR. TERESA MORRIS
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY
SAN BERNARDINO CA 92407-2397

This letter serves as notification to the Department of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino, that Kathryn Sinclair has obtained consent from the Department of Public Social Services, San Bernardino County, to conduct the research project entitled, "Factors Contributing to Morale of Child Protective Service Workers in San Bernardino County."

This letter also serves as notification to the Department of Social Work that the Department of Public Social Services, San Bernardino County, is giving consent to allow DPSS staff to participate in this research project.

If you have questions regarding this letter of consent, you may contact Kathryn Sinclair, Intern, at (909) 387-5144.



Signature

GARY NULL, MSW

12-9-97

Date

Deputy Director, Children's Services

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