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Do Welfare Benefits Stifle the Resolve of Recipients to be Economically Self-Reliant?

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Do Welfare Benefits Stifle the Resolve of Recipients to be Economically Self-Reliant?

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for

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Abstract

This study investigated chronic welfare dependency in Springfield Illinois whether it is a willful act or welfare recipients are inured to it because of uncontrollable circumstances that restrain their efforts to exit the welfare program and how to reduce the burden of this dependency to acceptable levels. The theory of change and assumptions were that IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, invest/budget in more preventive programs, and establish partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations, THEN the number of persons who depend on welfare in Springfield, Illinois will be reduced. Previous studies on this topic presented ambivalent views. Some studies concluded that welfare dependency is behavioral and that dependents find in welfare programs a comfortable place to ensconce themselves from hard work. Other studies also found out that welfare recipients are willing and fighting to exit welfare programs against the grain of socio-economic and political factors that stifle their efforts. To affirm, deny or establish a new paradigm of truth, concerning if welfare benefits stifle the resolve of recipients to be economically self-reliant, this research conducted a survey by convenience sampling among residents in Springfield Illinois to collect data. Interviews were also conducted with administrators of welfare to work programs. This study found out that dependents are willing to exit the welfare program if they are given the right training and support and if hostile socio-economic barriers are also reformed. The theory of change for the study was validated. To reduce the burden of welfare dependency, this study recommended that education on welfare must start with children and the unfavorable economic policies must also be reformed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Welfare Program started as a government policy to address the harsh economic conditions during the Great Depression. Since then, the program has increased its services to include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Earned Income Tax credit (EITC) and Housing Assistance. With about 4 percent of the population currently receiving welfare benefits in 2019 and the corresponding amount of about \$361 billion in government welfare expenditure over the same period (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities), it is evident that total government spending on welfare is significant. With Hawaiian residents receiving as high as \$49,000 in welfare benefits a year (Tanner & Hughes, 2013), it is not surprising that more people tend to stay on the program contrary to the original prescriptions of the welfare Program.

Receiving welfare benefits generally means that one is fully or partially relying on the government for living expenses. This robs the recipient of the pride of self-fulfillment that is realized through work and self-reliance. With eight states paying more in welfare benefits to recipients than an average salary of a teacher, the motivation to stop relying on welfare benefits and start a business or to find a job may be weakened forever. The recipient may then become deficient due to lack of exercise of the creative and motivational faculties that will stimulate them for economic activities; the economy is then deprived of the benefits which may accrue if recipients were fully engaged economically. This study investigated if recipients' inclinations to exit the welfare program have been numbed by the welfare largesse or are hindered by irremediable factors.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem then, which motivated this research study, was how individuals are faring under the welfare program and how their efforts to break the welfare spell and exit the program has worked. This research also investigated the effectiveness of government welfare-to-work programs to determine if these programs are efficient in helping recipients to exit the welfare program.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to lay bare the facts whether relying on welfare suppress the creative capacities of recipients for a comeback against the economic hardships and social conditions that plunged them into receiving welfare and their efforts to achieve economic freedom. This study also examined if government and other preventive programs have been effective at their objectives to reduce welfare dependency.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study was to provide welfare recipients, policymakers, and society with the implications of relying on welfare. With the knowledge provided by this research, individuals can make seasoned decisions if it is in their interests to rely on welfare instead of using all means available to maintain economic independence. It will also direct future investment and resource allocation decisions of governments and policymakers either in welfare programs or in self-help programs that equip recipients to be economically self-reliant. Findings from this study can also help shape public perception about welfare dependency through education.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB QUESTIONS

The main research question is: Do Welfare Benefits Stifle the Resolve of Recipients to be Economically Self-reliant? The research further addressed these sub questions: Will increased education about implications of welfare dependency cause welfare dependency to decline? Will increased investments in preventive programs cause welfare dependency to decline? Will establishment of welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations cause welfare dependency to decline? With these questions adequately answered, individual and national resources can be properly allocated and directed for maximum social benefits.

THEORY OF CHANGE AND ASSUMPTIONS

The Theory of Change examined the significance of the research question and its impact on the future decisions of the target population. The Theory of Change is as follows:

IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of persons who depend on welfare in Springfield, Illinois will be reduced.

ASSUMPTIONS

As a result of the above theory of change, the assumptions are as follows:

A1: IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

A2: IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

A3: IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

LIMITATIONS

This research acknowledges that there are limitations in the data collected. The most significant among the limitations is that the data does not permit us to conclude how welfare recipients will respond to various government interventions that may be advanced to tackle the problem of welfare dependency. Thus, there is the possibility that the observations may not represent what might actually take place when government intervention programs are introduced. However, since the data were gathered from a diverse population, it is predictable that the conclusions reflected the attitude of recipients under the measured parameters.

Another limitation is that the respondents may not be welfare recipients, and their responses may not reflect the views of actual welfare recipients. This study also acknowledges possible response biases since welfare recipients may provide responses that will support their position and non-recipients may also provide responses that may be prejudicial towards the concept of welfare dependency.

Finally, the contribution and influence of social factors such as job loss, parenting during teenage years, and generational dependency, towards welfare dependency are limitations that can affect the outcome of the study. These factors cannot be measured and controlled, and their effects on respondents' behavior can affect the reliability of their responses.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study utilized key words, which may be unique in the domain of welfare programs and administration. Welfare dependency is defined as the proportion of all individuals and families that receive more than 50 percent of their total annual income from TANF and or SSI benefits (United States Department of Health and Human Services). Welfare spell is defined as a sequence of consecutive months of receiving welfare; and welfare exit is defined as when an individual did not receive welfare benefits for a month. Welfare-to-work program is defined as program that will give welfare recipients the needed tools to successfully exit the welfare program.

EXPECTED IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH

This study assessed the effectiveness of welfare-to-work programs to enable welfare recipients evaluate and formulate ways for a successful exit; it will also help policymakers to allocate welfare related funds effectively.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

To understand what others have already argued in support or against this issue and its impact on the validity of this research, this study conducted a literature review of written works on this subject. Research from previous studies undoubtedly guided this study, supported the conclusions, and argued for the limitations which were undoubtedly inherent in this research.

WHY PEOPLE SEEK WELFARE ASSISTANCE

The Welfare system in the United States was designed to address the economic hardships that threatened the nation during the Great Depression. The Welfare program focused primarily on displaced workers, retirees, the needy children, and the blind in society (Cohen, 1983; Cook & Barrett, 1992). The need to sustain and administer the welfare programs has been advanced by many researchers on the grounds that the same unfavorable economic conditions that occasioned the introduction of the program currently exists; additionally, the size of the population that has fallen below the poverty line has increased just as population increases and the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor has also increased (Blank, 2007; Turner, Danziger & Seefeldt, 2006). In their article *Remaining off welfare in the 1990s: the influence of public policy and economic conditions* (2005), Hofferth, Stanhope and Harris concluded that only favorable economic conditions are critical for continuing self-sufficiency of single mothers who depended on welfare. Further evidence from Banerjee, Hanna, Kreindler and Olken, (2017) argues that welfare is indispensable and needful in our current economic system because it transforms individuals and families from poverty and provide them with the substance and help for

economic freedom through its various programs. According to them, welfare programs lead to improved standards of living, quality education and reduced poverty.

Other researchers, however, argue that welfare programs are currently stretched beyond their useful limits and have become a haven for idlers and people who may refuse hard work. They concluded that welfare programs encourage laziness and unproductivity as is evidenced by 21.3% of the population receiving welfare subsidies as of 2015, with about 19% of these figures remaining on the program beyond the five year limit imposed by most states.

The reasons for the uncontrollable welfare dependence were attributed to lack of personal responsibility, blame game and uncontrollable family size which precipitated recipients into the poverty trap (Bullock, 1999; Feagin, 1975; Hunt, 2004; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Seccombe, 1999; US Census Bureau 2015; www.dhs.state.il.us, 2021).

WHY PEOPLE STAY ON WELFARE AND THEIR EFFORTS TO EXIT THE PROGRAM

Other researchers opined that the current overreliance on the welfare program is the result of the fact that welfare benefits reward even more than a full time prestigious job. In 3 states, a person receiving welfare benefits usually takes home more money than an entry level computer programmer; welfare programs in 11 states pay more than an entry level teacher, while in 39 states, the welfare benefits pay more than a starting wage for a secretary (Tanner & Hughes, 2013; Tanner, Moore & Hartman, 1995). Even Republican Party Senator Graham said he believes “very few people would choose work over unemployment benefits that provided moderately more money” (Moye, 2020). The same line of thought helped to create the myth of the welfare queen which was exploited for political expediency. However, this myth has been recently challenged by the liberal policies of Biden Administration which has been dubbed as

“dethroning the welfare queen” because it stands in sharp contrast to the views of Reagan administration on the issue of welfare. (Blake, 2021; Mould, 2020).

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) reformed the American Welfare system and imposed many restrictions on access to welfare programs and benefits and reduced the amount of welfare benefits to an insufficient low. Yet, it has been found that needy single mothers who did not receive welfare benefits or were adversely affected by the provisions in the PRWORA found ways to supplement their income from various sources such as contributions from family members, formal and informal child support from noncustodial fathers and working off-the-books (Edin & Lein 1997; Seefeldt & Sandstrom, 2015). They argued that such contributions were scarcely enough thus they had to rely on one form of welfare program or another for survival.

Aware of the inadequacies, as advanced further by Edin and Lein, most welfare recipients want to leave welfare for work, however, most also believe that unless they can lower the cost associated with work or increase their earning capacities through investments in education, they will be unable to meet their expenses from working. Studies into the rate at which welfare recipients would fall back on welfare had revealed that more than 60 percent of recipients who exited the program within two years returned to the program and the main reason was lack of work experience and education to enable them to earn adequate income through work (Bane & Ellwood, 1996; Dantzler, 2020; Harris, 1996; Pavetti, 1994).

WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAMS TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL WELFARE EXIT

Recognizing the enormous expenditure incurred on welfare programs each year, the government has, over the years, instituted measures, and programs to help recipients transition

out of the welfare program towards economic independence. Programs such as The Demonstration of State Work/Welfare Initiatives yielded different results in different states for instance, the Training Opportunities in the Private Sector (TOPS) program in Maine did not pay for itself due to the relative high cost of the program, while the same program under New Jersey's On The Job (OJT) program earned the completers a 22 percent higher wages and the program was expected to pay for itself (Auspos, 1988); Freedman, 1988; Friedlander & Burtless, 1995; Gueron, 1985; Parker, 2004). New York City's BEGIN program aimed at moving welfare clients off public assistance and into the labor market did not improve the clients' odds of exiting the welfare program, while most of the faith-based organizations lacked program effectiveness despite huge sums of program funds. On the contrary, the Latter Days Saints (LDS) Welfare program success journey out of poverty for participants has demonstrated the efficiency of private endeavor in welfare-to-work partnerships (Angelo & March, 1997; Iglesias, 2020; Monsma, 2006; Monsma, 2009). Meanwhile, Benish (2007) has argued that when Welfare to Work programs are contracted out to for-profit organizations, it creates a democratic deficit as a result of the meaningful authority and wide discretion given to the private organizations in determining welfare recipients' eligibility for social rights.

Together, both the government and the private sector have exploited various avenues through which they aim to lessen welfare dependency and make welfare programs function once again, as a temporary relief measure for unexpected adverse economic situations.

CONCLUSION

It can be inferred that the unfavorable economic conditions which the welfare program was started to solve are still in existence and the number of recipients have increased over the

years. Some have argued that it is irresponsibility, playing the blame game and laziness that had caused dependency on the welfare program. They reaffirm that it is conditions such as huge benefits in welfare vouchsafed upon the recipients that lure them to stay in the program more than is needed as legally sanctioned.

On the other hand, others argue that recipients want to exit the program for various reasons including unfavorable and unpredictable legal requirements, inadequacy of benefits and the stigma attached to welfare, but conditions that occasioned them to slip into the welfare program such as lack of education, inadequate work experience, low-paying jobs, pressing family responsibilities and social expectations and pressure still prevail and war constantly against their efforts to exit the program.

Primary data was collected from respondents to help clarify the issue and support or refute the assertion whether receiving welfare stifles one's resolve to exit the program or their efforts to exit the program must be augmented before they can successfully part with welfare assistance.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This research used convenience sampling to collect data for the study. There are approximately 114,600 residents in Springfield, Illinois and this diverse population will provide diverse opinions to the survey to make it more representational. This study also administered about 120 survey questions and received 101 responses (about 85%). The survey was deployed using Survey Planet, Survey Next-door, and through face-to-face administration. This study also conducted interviews with key personnel from Urban League, Catholic Charities, and the City Council offices in Springfield Illinois to obtain qualitative data from the perspective of these selected organizations that mostly manage Welfare-To-Work issues in the county.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SUBQUESTIONS

The main research question that the study answered is: Do welfare benefits stifle the resolve of recipients to be economically self-reliant? The relevancy of this question is very key in the life of welfare recipients because it points out to them the impact of welfare dependency on their lives, and policymakers for optimum allocation of funds. To achieve these objectives the following sub questions were also answered: If welfare agencies educate recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, will the number of recipients decline? If welfare agencies invest more in the education of recipients, will the number of recipients decline? And if there is strong partnership with nonprofit organizations on welfare-to-work programs, will the number of recipients decline?

THEORY OF CHANGE AND ASSUMPTIONS

The theory of change for this study is: IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of persons who depend on welfare in Springfield, Illinois will be reduced.

ASSUMPTIONS

A1: IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced. **A2:** IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced. **A3:** IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

To guide this research and for more successful understanding by users, the following operational definitions has been adopted for the purpose of this study:

- Illinois State Welfare Program is defined as government-sponsored assistance programs for Illinois residents and families in need, including programs such as health care assistance, food stamps, and unemployment compensation.
- Welfare recipient is defined as any person or family, residing in Illinois that currently relies wholly or partly on welfare benefits to provide for daily living expenses.

- Welfare-to-Work programs are defined as all federal, state, or privately-funded organizations aimed at helping welfare recipients to exit the welfare program.
- Reduced is defined as the lowering of the number of welfare recipients to an average of 10% or less than the current number of recipients.
- Economically self-reliant is defined as 0% reliance on welfare programs for daily living expenses.
- Educate prospective recipients is defined as programs that teaches eligible welfare recipients the importance of self-reliance and the implications of welfare dependency.
- Preventive Programs are defined as all federal and state funds and resources invested in helping eligible recipients in Illinois to be economically self-reliant and teaching them about the implications of welfare dependency.
- Welfare-to-Work non-profit organizations are defined as all federal, state, or privately-funded organizations aimed at helping welfare recipients to exit the welfare program.
- Partnerships are defined as collaborations between government and non-profit organizations to educate, train, and provide Welfare-to-Work programs for successful welfare exit.

POPULATION SAMPLING STRATEGY

Data were collected through a survey response from residents of Springfield, Illinois. This highly diverse and multicultural environment with different socio-economic status and political views will accurately present data that will reflect these qualities in the demography of the nation. Key program personnel from Urban League and Catholic Charities nonprofit organizations were also interviewed as well as personnel from City Council for data on how the

government is working together with nonprofit organizations for programs that advance the cause of welfare recipients for successful exit.

PROCEDURE

Convenience sampling method was adopted. This study also distributed surveys online and respondents self-selected if they wanted to participate. This prevented biases in the selection of respondents and gave equal chance to all respondents. The surveys were deployed through Survey Planet and Survey Next-door, and by personal administration. Appointments were scheduled to allow interviews with key personnel identified from Urban League, Illinois, Catholic Charities of Springfield, Illinois, and a Springfield City Manager. Opportunities were also provided for survey respondents to provide their opinions on the topic which yielded lots of valuable qualitative data.

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

The data collected were analyzed using tables, trend analysis, and charts that identified patterns, outliers, and inconsistent patterns of opinions on the research topic. The qualitative data obtained from interviews were arranged, organized, and coded for validation. This study used deductive coding by using “welfare”, “dependency”, “employment”, and “exit”, as code words to identify relevant data. The identified themes and patterns were compared with the findings gleaned from the literature review; the findings of this study agreed with some previous studies on this policy issue while it also refuted other findings.

Quantitative data obtained through surveying were summarized and processed using frequency tables and percentages. On the Likert scale, values were assigned as follows: Strongly agree-5,

Agree-4, Neutral-3, Disagree-2, Strongly disagree-1. The mean, median, and standard deviation statistical analysis tools were used to describe the data. Together, both sources of data were compared for pattern reinforcements, transcribed for further analysis, and conclusions were drawn based on the processed data.

INTERNAL VALIDITY AND EXTERNAL VALIDITY

This research and the survey questions were designed to remove any personal biases and influences but are guided solely by the research problem, the theory of change, and the assumptions. Standard tables and research data analysis tools were used to prevent researcher bias in data analysis. This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic which has placed greater restrictions on person-to-person contacts and interactions; also, the accompanying stress, time constraints, frustration, and care from contracting the virus placed greater restrictions on the accessibility of data and can compromise data validity. The eight-week time frame allotted for this study also affected the ability to acquire all the pertinent data.

Notwithstanding, with Illinois State ranking about 7th in the nation with most welfare recipients, residents of Springfield, the state capital of Illinois are comparably familiar with the concept of welfare programs and their views can be faithfully extrapolated over the rest of the nation.

LIMITATIONS

There is the limitation imposed by degree of representation. Extrapolating the responses of about one hundred participants as a representation of the views of about three hundred million Americans is too much of an overstretch since Illinois itself has welfare policies which differ from other states.

CONCLUSION

The data collection tools were designed to remove all biases and present objective views from the public as much as possible, giving all socio-economic and political views equal chance of representation. Notwithstanding these precautions, biases such as over misrepresentation or under misrepresentation and respondent biases might be inherent in the data.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

There are at least two basic approaches to studying welfare groups and recipient behavior. One is to gather, analyze and evaluate a little information about a lot of welfare recipients and affiliated organizations. The other is to gather, analyze and evaluate a lot of information about a small number of welfare recipients and affiliated organizations. This research study adopted a middle ground between these two approaches; this decision was influenced by the availability of a vast amount of information that relates to welfare programs and participants and the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted the gathering of these vast amounts of information. Data gathering for this study involved extensive interviews with three key personnel that run welfare programs and one City Manager. 101 survey participants also responded to the survey questions. This study also promised all interviewees and respondents' complete anonymity to enhance the reliability of the data collected.

The main research question examined in this study was: do welfare benefits stifle the resolve of recipients to be economically self-reliant? The theory of change and assumptions for this study were crafted to solve the research question, with the view that addressing this question will help to reduce the welfare dependency problem. The data that were gathered for this study were limited considering the vast amount of information that is available on this policy issue and the conclusions that were reached cannot always be conclusive and applicable in all areas. Nonetheless, the conclusions reached in this study can help illuminate the path of those who desire to address the problem of welfare dependency and hopefully reduce the number of people who depend on welfare and serve as hypotheses that can be subsequently tested in the future.

Theory of Change:

IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of persons who depend on welfare in Springfield, Illinois will be reduced.

Assumptions:

A1: IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

A2: IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

A3: IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

DATA COLLECTION

Surveys and interviews are the primary data collection methods used for this study. Nine survey questions were designed; two questions were geared towards the validation and explanation of assumption #1, six questions for assumption #2, and three questions for assumption #3 with one question applicable to all three assumptions. To gather opinions of Springfield residents on this important issue, this study deployed a survey using Survey Planet and Nextdoor.com online tools. Most importantly, this study conducted face-to-face

administration of survey questions at parking lots, recreation parks and during gatherings by word of mouth. This study finished with extensive survey data on 101 participants. The opinions of this number of respondents provide tenable arguments for the conclusions that were drawn. Additionally, the survey participants were offered chances to provide their opinions on the questions. These responses yielded immeasurable qualitative data, which further strengthened the conclusions that were reached for this study.

This study also conducted extensive interviews to further validate the proposed assumptions. Five questions were designed; two questions sought to validate assumption #1, a further two questions for assumption #2 and one question for assumption #3. This study interviewed management personnel from Springfield Urban League, Catholic Charities and Springfield City Council on these five questions. Their responses convey perspective of these organizations in the fight to end over-dependence on welfare and provide further directives for future studies along this line of research.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered was analyzed using simple data analysis tools. Responses of survey participants was also tabulated with the raw score and percentages. A tabular report depicting a graphic view of this aggregated information was also provided to enhance the visual concepts of the responses to the survey questions and to increase the perceptibility of the overall results. Interview questions were quoted verbatim to enhance the real life perception and receptibility of the discussions. The interview questions were also grouped under their related assumptions for easy comprehension and connection to the presented facts.

Each survey and interview question was followed by an analysis that explained how the respondents validated or refuted the assumption and the theory of change. This restatement and analysis of survey questions preceded the restatement and analysis of the interview questions.

This method of analysis was applied in the testing of all three assumptions.

The information from the collected data were further compared with the themes expressed in the literature review to see if the current public opinion and perception align or disagree with the findings contained in the literature review.

Assumption #1:

IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

To test the validity of this assumption, two survey questions and two interview questions were designed.

Survey Question 1: Do you think that if State and City welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency that the number of persons who depend on welfare will be reduced?

Table 4.1

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	20	20%
Likely	45	45%
Neutral	12	12%
Unlikely	17	17%
Very Unlikely	7	7%
Total	101	100%

Review: This question yielded surprising results. The majority of all respondents (65%) posit that it is likely the number of persons who depend on welfare will reduce if State and City welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency; (12%) were inconclusive about this assumption and 24% responded that it is unlikely the above assumption will achieve its objective. What was surprising about the responses to this survey question was that I realized, during my interviews with survey participants, that more people sympathize with people on welfare and are eager to help them to exit the welfare program through better jobs to improve their standards of living, though most of the respondents did not possess the capabilities to bring about these changes. I expected the percentages to be lower as it contradicted the popular opinion that people want to remain on welfare without any efforts to exit the program. However, this finding echoed the voice of one respondent, “**many beneficiaries of current welfare programs really want to get a good paying job rather than being dependent on free money. They are not lazy people!**”

Survey Question 7: Do you think that Springfield residents who are welfare recipients will prefer to continue to depend on welfare even if the State, the City, and nonprofits provided job training and counselling programs?

Table 4.7

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	1	1%
Likely	11	11%
Neutral	37	37%
Unlikely	42	42%
Very Unlikely	10	10%
Total	101	100%

Review: In response to this question, more than half of the respondents were not sure of the reaction of welfare recipients to State, City, and nonprofits programs on job training and counselling. About 52% responded that it is unlikely, while only 12% responded that it is likely. 37% of the respondents cannot tell how likely State, City and nonprofit intervention will decrease the number of welfare recipients; they are of the opinion that the number of welfare recipients will remain the same regardless of the interventions from State, City, and nonprofits.

Interview Question 1: If state welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, do you think the number of persons who depend on welfare will be reduced? Please elaborate on your response.

Response: Three program administrators answered no to this question. They all responded that the number of people who depend on welfare will not reduce because there are so many individuals and youth who are not obtaining their certificate in General Educational Development (GED). Additionally, deficit education, limited work experience and unfavorable socio-political factors exist and affect certain category of people in our society. This category of the population will not be able to earn sustainable income due to their level of education. Because the expected future earnings in wages and salaries for this category of people will not be enough to cover the ever-increasing cost of living. These people must rely on welfare subsidies to be able to survive the current economic cost of living. Also, the mindset of the youth from poor homes and generations that are dependent on welfare are such that welfare has become second nature to them. This makes it very difficult to counsel them out of welfare dependence even with strong practical education.

What the organization has been doing to help reduce the number of dependents is the provision of post-secondary education and job training techniques that help some of the dependents to successfully exit the welfare program.

Review: The response of the administrators of these programs show that education of prospective/current welfare dependents will fructify when there are collaborative efforts among different sectors in society focused on removing conditions that causes welfare dependency.

Interview Question 2: Professors Banerjee et al, (2017) have argued that “welfare is indispensable and needful in our current economic system because it transforms individuals and families from poverty and equip them with the substance and help for economic freedom through its various programs.” Do you think education or transformation should happen while they are receiving welfare or should education be provided before they become welfare dependent?

Response: Three of the administrators responded that education must be part of the success story and must be provided before welfare dependency and during welfare dependency. “Education and transformation should happen while the individual is receiving welfare” wrote one respondent. It is one thing teaching prospective/current recipients about welfare implications and another, educating them on the same issue. To help reduce welfare dependency, these organizations has been working to make all people self-sufficient. Low income means low chance of thriving in our monetized environment which means education, job training, advance training, and internships leading to full-time employment and job placement must increase.

Review: To make welfare-to-work programs more effective, ongoing practical education must be part of society. Job training and placement programs must also increase to help welfare recipients to become employable.

Analysis

Both questions sought to test the validity of the first assumption. In the quest to solve the welfare over-dependency issue there is the need for extensive collaboration among all parties, federal, state, and local level governments that administer welfare programs, with strong partnerships with organizations that administer welfare schemes, and individuals in society. Since only their coordinated effort will unleash synergistic onslaught on this social menace. The overwhelming response to these questions (see Figure 1 and 2 below) validated assumption #1 and clearly stated that majority of the public favor increased education from State and City offices as solutions to the welfare over-dependency. Contrary to the opinion that welfare benefits stifle the resolve of recipients to be economically self-reliant, more than half of the respondents are unsure if welfare benefits produce this effect on recipients, while about thirty percent of respondents are of the opinion that welfare benefits do not discourage recipients from finding means that will make them economically self-dependent. This sweeping public preference for education as tool to reduce welfare dependency also validates the findings of Banerjee et al, (2017) which states that rather than being an excuse and pretense for laziness, “welfare is indispensable and needful in our current economic system because it transforms individuals and families from poverty and equip them with the substance and help for economic freedom through its various programs.” The survey results also validated the findings of Dantzler (2020) which

states that the length of public assisted housing spells has reduced and further education for recipients will augment the progressive efforts of dependents in this positive direction.

However, the response from the administrators of the welfare to work organizations provide perspectives that seem different from public opinion that increased education can be a great panacea for reducing welfare dependency. Their responses seem to side with the 37% that are hesitant about the prospects of this assumption. “Some people would not understand the program, and some are just not able to work”, wrote one of the survey respondents.

The administrators go a step further in providing the explanations to their positions on this issue. Clearly, the administrators of these organizations are focusing on the long-term objectives of the organization as catering to the poor. And for the society to rid itself of the poor, social programs must focus on removing barriers and conditions that occasion some citizens to be economic dependents such as not getting a GED and limited work experience. Also, children that have been exposed to intergenerational welfare dependency, must be counselled on the implications of welfare dependency and the possibility that welfare spells can be broken and that complete and successful exit out of welfare is also attainable. Education of the implication of welfare dependency must be preventive, corrective, and restorative, timely and ongoing, to achieve the desired effect. “The poor will always be with us” said one administrator, and the fact that these organizations take strong and determined initiatives in helping to relieve the economic burden of the poor and working to reduce the number of welfare dependents through education and training programs aligns with the findings of Banerjee (2017) and validating the assumption that increasing education on implications of welfare to recipients will reduce the number of welfare dependents.

Assumption #2

A2: IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

To test the validity of this assumption, six questions were designed. These are Questions #2, #3, #4, #7, #8, #9. Question #7 was designed to test the validity of all three assumptions.

Question 2: Do you think that if State and/or City increased funding support for job training programs that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

Table 4.2

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	17	17%
Likely	57	56%
Neutral	17	17%
Unlikely	10	10%
Very Unlikely	0	0%
Total	101	100%

Review: To this question, more than 70% of the response were Likely; Unlikely (10%) and 17% was Neutral. Majority of the respondents validated this assumption while very few of the respondents disagreed with this assumption or were unsure of how increased State and/or City funding support for job training programs will cause the number of welfare recipients to decline.

Survey Question 3: Do you think that if State and/or City increased funding support for personal financial management programs that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

Table 4.3

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	13	13%
Likely	55	54%
Neutral	21	21%
Unlikely	11	11%

Very Unlikely	1	1%
Total	101	100%

Review: The survey response to this question are as follows: Very Likely (13%); Likely (55%), Neutral (21%), Unlikely (11%), and Very Unlikely (1%).

Most of the responses to this question also validate the assumption while about 20% are unsure or refute the outcome of this assumption on the decisions of welfare recipients.

Survey Question 4: Do you think that if State and/or City increased funding support for entrepreneurship programs that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

Table 4.4

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	18	18%
Likely	56	55%
Neutral	22	22%
Unlikely	4	4%
Very Unlikely	1	1%
Total	101	100%

Review: More than half of the respondents were positive about the efficacy of this assumption to help reduce the number of welfare dependents; Very Likely, (18%), Likely (56%), Neutral 22%, Unlikely (4%), Very Unlikely (1%).

Question 8: Do you think that Welfare to Work programs have been effective in securing employment for welfare recipients and thus reducing the number of welfare dependents in Springfield?

Table 4.8

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
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Very Likely	9	9%
Likely	26	26%
Neutral	42	42%
Unlikely	23	23%
Very Unlikely	1	1%
Total	101	100%

Review: The response to this question is as follows: Very Likely (9%), Likely (26%), Neutral (42%), Unlikely (23%), and Very Unlikely, (1%). The responses show that majority of respondents are skeptical about how welfare to work programs have been effective in the past in reducing the burden of welfare dependency in the city.

Survey Question 9: Do you think that if government welfare programs such as TANF, SSI, and SNAP are more funded, they will be more effective in helping welfare recipients to find work better than the activities of Private/NGO/CBO partnerships welfare-to-work organizations such as United Way, IL and Urban League, IL?

Table 4.9

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	14	14%
Likely	28	28%
Neutral	36	36%
Unlikely	15	15%
Very Unlikely	8	8%
Total	101	100%

Review: To this question, less than half of respondents validated this assumption (Very Likely 14%, Likely 28%), significant number of respondents are unsure of the effect of increased funding of government programs such as TANF, SSI and SNAP on welfare recipients (36%), while more than 20% of the respondents did not agree with this assumption.

To obtain the perspective on the efficacy of programs in the reduction of welfare dependency, this study interviewed administrators who run welfare to work programs to ascertain the role of their organizations toward reduction in the number of people who depend on welfare.

Interview Question 3: If state welfare agencies invest in more preventive programs, such as job training, do you think the number of persons who depend on welfare will be reduced?

Please elaborate on your response.

Response: If the education continues long enough to be well integrated in their value base. In a republican democracy with capitalism at its core, there will always be an underclass represented by those suffering from mental health issues, physical impairments that keep the impaired from working, drug abuse, alcoholism, gambling, and other ills. This is just a fact of life.

Review: The response of the administrators agrees with the findings of Hofferth, Stanhope, and Harris (2005) that attributes the problem of welfare dependency to the current economic system. The Welfare Program was initiated to help the poor in society and the same factors that occasions poverty still prevails. Consequently, the number of people who depend on welfare will not reduce because these underclasses are not equipped or incapable to earn sustainable income. That means this volume of people will be on welfare. So long as the current economic system prevails, there will always be poor people in society. These poor people will have to depend on welfare regardless of the volume of investments in preventive programs.

Interview Question 4: Professors Tanner and Hughes (2013) and U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham have advanced that current welfare largesse in some state and even the current

COVID-19 stimulus checks are counterproductive to Welfare-to-Work initiatives. Do you think that instead of sending checks directly to individuals that the money should instead be used for preventive programs?

Response: The checks must be given to dependents as supplemental aid to welfare recipients. Individuals need money to support their basic needs: housing, food, clothing, medicine, education. Also, preventive programs need to receive financial support as well. Any form of “user fee” only affects those most in need. There should be a fairness tax on millionaire, billionaires, and corporations who earn billions in profits. This would ameliorate the discrepancies in class struggle, especially of those in the underclass.

Review: It follows from previous explanation that the poor will always be around because people are not getting the required education for self-sustenance. Welfare checks rather help dependents to defray some of the crushing economic burden that faces them.

Analysis

To test the soundness of assumption #2, seven survey questions were established because the welfare schemes and all partnerships with private/NGO/CBO and nonprofits working to create a healthy welfare institution all run on programs. Consequently, to test the efficacy of the welfare system is to test the potency of these programs. Out of the seven questions, three of them demonstrated stronger support for and alliance with programs that administer personal training, financial improvement, and entrepreneurship programs as a means to reducing welfare dependency (see tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4). At the same time almost half of the respondents were

unsure of the effectiveness of welfare to work programs (Unsure, 42%) and government assisted programs (Unsure, 36%) as a means to reducing welfare dependency. Public opinion therefore puts the responsibility for personal development in the hands of the individuals and maintain that to reduce the number of welfare recipients is tantamount to empowerment of the capacities of these individuals for personal growth and development.

This finding conflicts with that of Iglesias, (2020) which asserts that there is efficiency in welfare-to-work partnerships. It rather confirms the findings of Angelo & March, (1997) which found out that public welfare to work programs has not been effective in improving the lots of participants in exiting welfare programs.

Though it aligns with the findings of Hunt, (2004) that attributed welfare dependency to personal responsibility, the findings of this study went further to propose personal improvement training programs as prescription to the social issue of welfare dependency.

Focused on lightening the plight of the poor, the administrators of nonprofits welfare to work programs that were interviewed expressed concerns which goes beyond programs designed to cater to the poor and helping them to improve their lot, if possible, through successful exit out of the welfare web. Rather, they give priority to education that seeks to eliminate poverty or the conditions that causes poverty in society, lest preventive programs will not avail much in the fight to reduce dependency after individuals have become dependents. If people are not getting their GED and the required job training and personal empowerment, then poverty and hence welfare dependency will prevail. Welfare checks, and all subsequent programs are important only to the extent that they help to ease the financial burden of the poor, but actual preventive programs must fight economic conditions that causes poverty, if these programs are expected to be effective towards the fight to reduce welfare dependency. The prescription of this interview

aligns with the findings of Hofferth, Stanhope, and Harris (2005). Unanimously, Hofferth, Stanhope, and Harris, together with all the interviewees ascribed increased welfare dependency to unfavorable economic conditions. **“I think it is a myth that welfare recipients want to stay where they are. Programs that provide incentives and training will improve life for everyone”, echoed one of the respondents from the survey.**

In all, survey response and interviewees validated the second assumption that investment in preventive programs will reduce the number of people who depend on welfare. The point of differences is rather on strategy. Survey respondents’ emphasis that the preventive programs must target and invest in individuals and not programs.

Assumption #3

The third and final assumption in the quest to reduce welfare dependency is: IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced. To validate this assumption questions #5, #6, and #7 were designed.

Question 5: Do you think that if there are increased State and City sponsored organizations such as Serve Illinois, that provide employment counselling to residents that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

Table 4.5

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	24	24%
Likely	39	39%
Neutral	29	29%
Unlikely	7	7%
Very Unlikely	2	2%
Total	101	100%

Review: More than half of the respondents validated this assumption (Very likely 24%, Likely 39%), 29% (Neutral) neither favored State and City program interventions as a means to reduce the number of welfare dependents while 9% do not favor this assumption.

Question 6: Do you think that if State and City increased partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations such as United Way, Illinois and, Contact Ministries and Helping Hands of Springfield, Inc that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

Table 4.6

Answer Choices	Score	Percentage
Very Likely	26	26%
Likely	39	39%
Neutral	29	29%
Unlikely	7	7%
Very Unlikely	0	0%
Total	101	100%

Review: More than half of the respondents validated this assumption; about 30% (Neutral) neither favored the State and City increased partnership with welfare-to-work programs as a means of reducing the number of welfare recipients, while only 7% (Unlikely) refuted this assumption.

Interview Question 5: If partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofits organizations are established, do you think the number of persons who depend on welfare will be reduced?

How?

Response: it is all dependent on whether or not the individuals are adequately trained. Too many programs push individuals through for statistical reasons rather than having them work ready. So, the individuals in the programs are set-up for failure. What is needed are programs that

cultivate the individuals' talents leading to work readiness. There is going to be a segment of the population that will remain poor because the economic system does not favor them. welfare-To-Work programs must exist to help those who will become part of the welfare program.

Review: The response shows that prior work must be done in preparing recipients for these partnerships. Programs that target individuals after they have fallen into the welfare web are less effective. Absence of preparatory and preventive education will only cause welfare to work organizations to exist primarily to alleviate the conditions of the poor.

Analysis

Survey response shows approval for State and City sponsored programs that provide employment counselling to residents, together with increased partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations as a means to reduce welfare dependency. However, in both cases, about 30% of respondents are unsure about how government sponsored programs as well as private partnership initiatives will be effective in reducing welfare dependency. This state of affairs is plausible as the literature review also show such conflicting findings. While Benish (2007) argue in favor of government sponsored welfare administration programs, Iglesias (2020) instead argues in favor of private welfare-managed organizations.

The interviewees were also ambivalent of the prospects of increased partnerships with welfare to work nonprofit organizations. However, their skepticism about the success of these initiatives hinges on the preparedness and conviction of the individuals. Prior preparation of the mindset of the individual towards economic independence and work readiness will determine the success of the opportunities arising from the partnership.

On the aggregate, most of the respondents agree that prospects from partnership with welfare to work programs will help reduce the number of people who depend on welfare, validating the third assumption, in spite of the minimal divergence on how the partnership would be effective.

Significant Findings

Can welfare dependency be reduced or “the poor will always be with us—and so will NGOs” (de Santisteban, 2005)? How well do the three proposed basic assumptions explain the process to reduce welfare dependency and the best choice to adopt?

To answer these questions, we evaluated the facts that led to the findings concerning the theory of change and the proposed assumptions. Careful review of literature and analysis of collected data led to the following findings.

A1: IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced. This assumption was **validated**.

A2: IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced. This second assumption was also **validated**.

A3: IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced. The third and final assumption was also **validated**.

Explanation of Validations

Though the assumptions were validated, it is essential that the reasons for such conclusions are further explained for fuller understanding to those who may be interested in this study as a basis for further research work and for other reasons to which this study can be made use of.

Assumption #1: Education Campaigns

About 65% of the respondents are of the opinion that education play a major role in the reduction of welfare dependency. With increased education comes the increased prospects of employability and the probabilities of economic independence. This education, according to 52% of the respondents, will move some of the current recipients from dependency to self-sufficiency, since “it is a myth that welfare recipients want to stay where they are. Programs that provide incentives and training will improve life for everyone” says one respondent.

Though the interviewees hold a different opinion about education, their point of view stems from the fact that social-economic and political factors are the reasons for the increased welfare dependency. From their perspective, effectual education can be attained if these factors are altered to ensure adequate economic sustenance for everyone. The fact that they are also engaged in training programs and counselling that seeks to improve the welfare of their dependent clients and to help the re-trainable portion of the dependents to successfully exit the welfare program attest to their support for education as a panacea to reducing welfare dependency.

Assumption #2: Investment in Preventive Programs

All the questions advanced to test this assumption received an average 70% favorable response. About 20% or less refuted this assumption while an average of 40% were unsure about

the efficacy of preventive programs, agreeing with Angelo and March on the possibilities of preventive programs.

Interviews from administrators also agreed that preventive programs are necessary, however, they can be effective if they are timely, ongoing, and social-economic environment also supports the goal of these preventive programs. **“Welfare for able bodied recipients under 63 need to have a requirement to work or attend a sponsored and participant skill targeted training weekly. Efforts to reduce welfare must start with children in 4-5th grade via specialized education programs and continue annually until high school graduation. Financial management and skills for acquiring jobs should be taught in high school to set a strong foundation for kids” according to one of respondents.**

All in all, the weight of evidence is on the side of increased preventive programs as it aligns with the findings of Banerjee (2017).

Assumption #3: Public-Private/NGOs/CBOs Partnerships

29% of the respondents were unsure of the potential benefits that will result from investments in State and City sponsored organizations that provide employment counselling to residents, as a mean to reduce the number of people who depend on welfare. However, an overwhelming 63% of all respondents vouched for this assumption. 65% of the respondents also preferred increased partnerships with welfare to work organizations as a means to reduce welfare dependency. Only 29% were unsure while 7% rejected this assumption.

The interviewees, although recognized the importance of partnerships with welfare to work organizations, were however skeptical of the overall effect, fearing that if individuals are not trained or mentally prepared to grasp the opportunities, then the merits from this partnership may

be wasted. This supports the findings of Hofferth, Stanhope, and Harris (2005) in the literature review that welfare dependency is caused by the current socio-economic system.

Conclusively, there is a strong evidence for partnerships with Public-private/NGOs/CBOs as means to reduce the level of welfare dependency.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

CONCLUSIONS

Eight questions out of nine survey questions inquired in the affirmative from respondents if in their opinion the theory of change and the assumption would help reduce welfare dependency. Figure 4.1 below clearly shows that 60% of respondents agreed with the assumptions as capable of helping to solve the welfare dependency problem. 26% were unsure about the prospects of the assumptions while only 14% refuted the assumptions. Figure 4.2 (see Appendix C) show the responses to the only question that inquired if welfare dependents will not respond positively to the outcomes of the proposed assumptions. It is also clear that more than half (51%) of respondents answered that it is unlikely that welfare dependents will react unfavorable to the outcomes of the assumptions. Only 12% did not agree with the assumptions while 37% were unsure. Qualitative data showed support for the assumptions, only that, socio-economic and political factors must change to make the assumptions efficacious. Based on the information presented, this study concludes that the three assumptions have been validated.

Figure 4.1: Summary of Responses Questions 1-6, 8-9.

Assumptions	Likely	Unlikely	Unsure	Status	Aggregate Responses
A1:	65%	12%	24%	Validated	101
A2:	58%	15%	27%	Validated	505
A3:	63%	8%	29%	Validated	202

Assumption 1 Conclusion:

A1: IF State of Illinois welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

The validation of A1 comes with substantial support from survey results as capable of helping to reduce the welfare dependency problem. The current dependency on welfare is a situation which has not been primarily the undoing of the dependents themselves; it is because they are faced with economic conditions and social parameters that must always produce an underclass in society as a result of the fierce economic competition and societal expectations. Educating prospective recipients on the implications of welfare will arm them with the needed knowledge and expertise to thrive within the current economic system. Because the education will entail guidance in job training, personal development and financial management skills, the lack of which precipitated them into the welfare web. It is in reversing these conditions by supplying the lack that the current and prospective dependents on welfare will gain their economic independence and successfully exit the welfare program. The State of Illinois policymakers must undertake and promote this education in the city of Springfield to help prospective recipients to arm themselves against the conditions that precipitate welfare dependency.

Assumption 2 Conclusion:

A2: IF State of Illinois welfare agencies invest/budget in more preventive programs, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

The confidence that the respondents reposed in this assumption as capable of mitigating the welfare dependency problem is significant. The findings of this study favored preventive programs that are timely, ongoing, and restorative as what society needs to cure the menace of

welfare dependency. These preventive programs must be individual-centered and substantial amounts of investments must target the training and re-training of individuals, especially, welfare dependents to make them work ready. State of Illinois policymakers must invest/budget in these preventive programs in the city of Springfield for the residents to be able to take advantage of these programs and improve their prospects for economic independence.

Assumption 3 Conclusion:

A3: IF partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations are established, THEN the number of residents in Springfield, Illinois who depend on welfare will be reduced.

Partnerships with welfare to work organizations are essential in the fight to reduce welfare dependency to acceptable levels. Welfare to work program organizations work with people who depend on welfare and are in the better position to foster their training needs and requirements necessary for successful welfare exit. However, preparatory work must be accomplished to usher minds into the provisions of the partnerships for full participation and benefits. Social, political, and economic factors that undermine personal economic freedoms must be reformed by State of Illinois policymakers to make way for greater advantages to be realized through partnerships with welfare to work nonprofit organizations.

Evidence from the quantitative data support all the three assumptions though there are slight uncertainties about the efficacy of these assumptions among the respondents. The qualitative data also reveals support for the three assumptions and the theory of change. However, with additional insights as administrators of these work to work organizations, they consider social, economic, and political factors as major hindrances to the success of these

assumptions. Even though the theory of change and assumptions were validated, these points of contention open further areas that needs to be investigated if acceptable levels of welfare dependency must be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data collected and evaluation, this study revealed society's perception about the issue of welfare dependency and how the proposed theory of change and the assumptions can help to mitigate the problem. Though they are mere responses, yet they contain important public opinion which needs consideration, especially, in our representative democratic government where the voice of the people must be the guiding principle for public policy formulations and decision making.

Based on the data collected and the conclusions drawn, this study recommends the following:

	Recommendation 1	Recommendation 2	Recommendation 3
Specific	State of Illinois must introduce modules on welfare education in early childhood	State of Illinois must introduce modules on financial management and job acquisition skills to be taught in high school	State of Illinois must reform unfavorable political and socio-economic factors
Measurable	State of Illinois must allot 2% of classroom hours to the study of module	State of Illinois must allot 5% of classroom hours to the study of module	State of Illinois must enact 5 or more favorable economic laws per year
Achievable	State of Illinois must train teachers to motivate pupils on module	State of Illinois school teachers must increase guidance to achieve demonstrable skills on module	State of Illinois policymakers must implement laws in federal and state organizations
Realistic	State of Illinois school teachers must assess and evaluate the impact of proposed welfare module on pupils' behavior	State of Illinois school teachers must assess and evaluate the impact of proposed module on students' behavior	State of Illinois policymakers must assess and evaluate impact of new laws on prospective welfare dependents

Time-Based	State of Illinois school teachers must conduct knowledge assessment on welfare module at beginning and end of each academic year	State of Illinois school teachers must conduct project-based assessment of welfare module at beginning and end of each academic year	State of Illinois policymakers must conduct yearly assessment of decline in welfare dependency at the beginning and end of each year
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The proposed recommendations are based on the findings of this research. They also represent the sentiments and opinions of the public concerning the problem of welfare dependency and how in their opinion the situation can be successfully mitigated.

The first recommendation is that State of Illinois must introduce modules on welfare education in early childhood. Exposure to welfare dependency, especially among children who come from intergenerational welfare dependency homes consider welfare dependency as second nature. The will to break free from the spell is not encouraged, and the chances of these individuals becoming dependent on welfare is proportionally increased. With a module on welfare education in schools where all children are taught how to be economically independent, how to avoid situations that lead to welfare dependency and how to break free when one is caught in the welfare web, they will stand better chances at identifying and preventing the conditions that lead to welfare dependency when these educated children become adults. The State of Illinois must allot 2% of early childhood education on welfare, train teachers to motivate students on the need for the module and assess and evaluate the behavior and performance of the children concerning the module. Equipped with this mindset, the residents will grow up better prepared to avoid the welfare web.

The second recommendation is for the State of Illinois to introduce modules on financial management and job acquisition skills to be taught in high school. As derived from the findings,

education on welfare must be ongoing and high school stage is the most appropriate time to stress the implications of welfare dependency and how to identify and prevent their occurrence. After high school education, most of the students are ready to enter the job market. They must be equipped with job training and financial management skills. The State of Illinois must ensure that all students leaving high school can demonstrate their job readiness skills through project-based assessments and ensure that all or majority of the students obtain their GED. With these preparations, residents will become more employable which will decrease their chances of becoming dependents on the welfare program.

The last and final recommendation is the proposal to State of Illinois policymakers to enact laws that will reform the unfavorable political and socio-economic factors within the State that leads to welfare dependency. Laws that discriminate against certain groups, and economic conditions that results in underclass in society are bound to produce dependents on the welfare program. State policymakers must enact at least five laws every year that increase the prospects of the poor to improve their economic conditions and eliminate unfavorable economic conditions. Schools, teachers, and individuals can all do their part in the struggle against welfare dependency but if the political and the socio-economic environment is hostile, it would be counterproductive to all their valiant efforts. With favorable economic laws, residents of the city of Springfield can improve their chances of becoming economically independent and increase their chances to exit the welfare program in case they ever become dependent on it.

AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Though the conclusions were drawn for this study based solely on information obtained from respondents, it is undeniable that the amount of uncertainty surrounding the validations

were quite substantial and of great importance and worthy of investigation. The reasons advanced in favor of the uncertainties are unignorable because they are political, economic, and social in nature and affect every sphere of life.

Due to time constraints and the limited scope of this study these important factors that will hinder optimum performance of the assumptions could not be investigated.

For future researchers who may have the burden to investigate why people are still dependent on welfare, I would recommend that they investigate into:

1. How social, economic, and political factors lead to the problem of welfare dependency.
2. How incorporating welfare as part of school curriculum will affect the problem of welfare dependency.
3. If special education and support programs for children exposed to intergenerational welfare dependency will help reduce welfare dependency.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONS**SURVEY: Welfare Benefits and Self-Reliance**

INFORMED CONSENT: My name is Enoch Ewoo. I am a US Army veteran residing in Springfield, Illinois and an Executive Master of Public Administration candidate at Golden Gate University in San Francisco, California. My capstone project seeks to determine if “Welfare Benefits Stifle the Resolve of Recipients to be Economically Self-reliant”. I have also chosen Springfield, Illinois as the area of study. This survey takes approximately five minutes to complete, and your responses are secure, anonymous, and confidential and will be used for the purposes of this study only. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

DEFINITION: Welfare-To-Work: programs that will give welfare recipients the needed tools to successfully exit the welfare program.

1. Do you think that if State and City welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency that the number of persons who depend on welfare will be reduced?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

2. Do you think that if State and/or City increased funding support for job training programs that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

3. Do you think that if State and/or City increased funding support for personal financial management programs that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

4. Do you think that if State and/or City increased funding support for entrepreneurship programs that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

5. Do you think that if there are increased State and City sponsored organizations such as Serve Illinois, that provide employment counselling to residents that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

6. Do you think that if State and City increased partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofit organizations such as United Way, Illinois and, Contact Ministries and Helping Hands of Springfield, Inc that the number of welfare recipients in Springfield will decline?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

7. Do you think that Springfield residents who are welfare recipients will prefer to continue to depend on welfare even if the State, the City, and nonprofits provided job training and counselling programs?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

8. Do you think that Welfare to work programs have been effective in securing employment for welfare recipients and thus reducing the number of welfare dependents in Springfield?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

9. Do you think that if government welfare programs such as TANF, SSI and SNAP are more funded, they will be more effective in helping welfare recipients to find work better than the activities of Private/NGO/CBO partnerships welfare-to-work organizations such as United Way, IL and Urban League, IL?

- a. Very likely
- b. Likely
- c. Neutral
- d. Unlikely
- e. Very unlikely

Please provide any comments here:

Thank you for completing this survey! For further comments or inquiries, please contact me at eewoo@my.ggu.edu.

REFERRAL: If you know another Springfield resident who will be able to help me, kindly provide the contact's name and email information in the space below or forward to them this questionnaire. Thank you very much for your kind support!

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**INTERVIEW: Welfare Benefits and Self-Reliance**

INFORMED CONSENT: My name is Enoch Ewoo. I am a US Army veteran residing in Springfield, Illinois and an Executive Master of Public Administration candidate at Golden Gate University in San Francisco, California. My capstone project is on “Do Welfare Benefits stifle the Resolve of Recipients to be Economically Self-reliant?” Your interview responses are secure and confidential. Anonymity could be provided if you wish. These questions only take less than 20 minutes. If you have further questions, please email me at: eewoo@my.ggu.edu

1: If state welfare providers educate prospective recipients on the implications of welfare dependency, do you think the number persons who depend on welfare will be reduced? Please elaborate on your response.

2: Professors Banerjee et al, (2017) have argued that “welfare is indispensable and needful in our current economic system because it transforms individuals and families from poverty and equip them with the substance and help for economic freedom through its various programs.” Do you think education or transformation should happen while they are receiving welfare or should education be provided before they become welfare dependent?

3: If state welfare agencies invest in more preventive programs, such as job training, do you think the number persons who depend on welfare will be reduced? Please elaborate on your response.

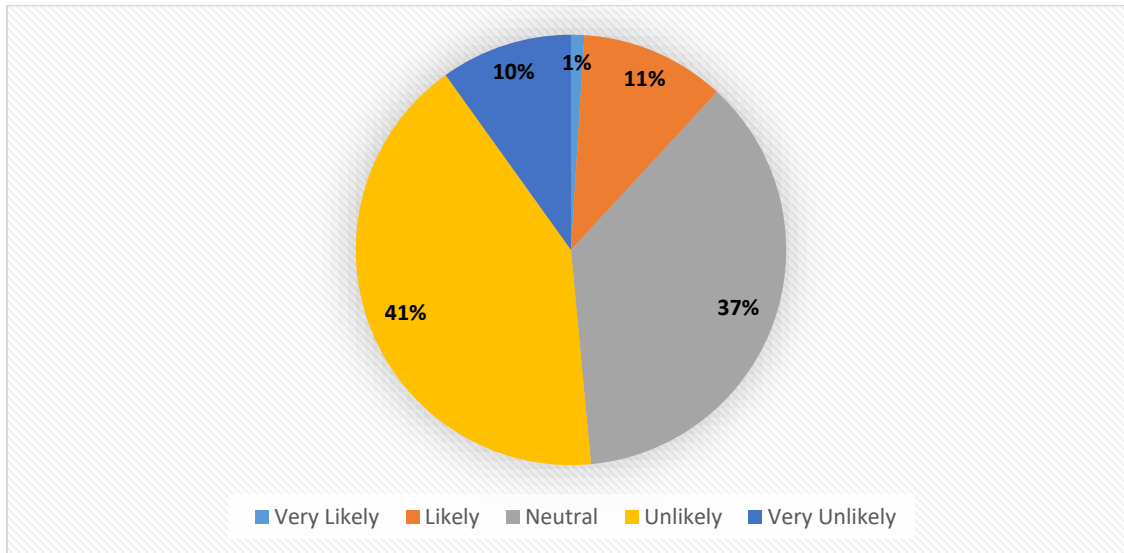
4: Professors Tanner and Hughes (2013) and U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham have advanced that current welfare largesse in some state and even the current COVID-19 stimulus checks are counterproductive to Welfare-to-Work initiatives. Do you think that instead of sending checks directly to individuals that the money should instead be used for preventive programs?

5: If partnerships with welfare-to-work nonprofits organizations are established, do you think the number of persons who depend on welfare will be reduced? How?

REFERRAL: If you know a colleague who will be able to help me, kindly provide the contact name and email information in the space below or forward to them this questionnaire. Thank you very much for your kind support!

APPENDIX C

Figure 4.2: Responses to Question 7.



* Question 7 is the only question in the disaffirmative and covers all three assumptions.