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**THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: THE AFFECT OF
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION
AND JOB SATISFACTION WITHIN SOLANO COUNTY PROTECTIVE
SERVICES**

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LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND JOB
SATISFACTION
WITHIN SOLANO COUNTY PROTECTIVE SERVICES**



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for

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	4
Chapter 1- Introduction.....	5
Background and History.....	6
Statement of Research Problem.....	7
Research Assumption and Sub-Questions.....	8
Purpose of Study.....	9
Significance of Study.....	9
Chapter 2- Literature Review.....	11
The Motivating Factor.....	12
The Social Worker Challenge.....	13
The Role of Leadership	16
The Search for Satisfaction.....	22
Chapter 3-Research Methodology.....	25
Research Design.....	25
Research Purpose.....	26
Dependent and Independent Variables.....	26
Data Collection Plan Overview.....	27
Controlling for Internal and External Validity.....	28
Controlling for Bias.....	29
Chapter 4- Results and Findings.....	30
Survey Results.....	30
Social Worker Comments.....	45

Interview Questions for Organizational Leaders.....	47
Significant Findings.....	61
Chapter 5- Conclusions and Recommendations.....	62
Conclusions.....	62
Employee Appreciation.....	63
Inclusion in Decision Making.....	63
Shared Organizational Vision.....	64
Recommendations.....	66
Research Limitations.....	67
References.....	69
Appendix A: Survey Questions for APS/CPS Social Workers.....	71
Appendix B: Interview Questions for APS/CPS Administrative Leaders.....	75

Abstract

Social Workers employed within Solano County Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) are individuals who have chosen a complicated path of public service while enduring the external pressures of budget constraints, increased caseloads, and public scrutiny. While these external concerns continue to become more prominent, the internal relationships between staff and leadership have grown more convoluted.

Employees have experienced significant administrative and policy changes with leadership styles appearing less focused on communication and collaboration and more fixated on command and control. Workers seeking organizational change believe that transformational adjustments should start at the top. The implementation of a transformational leadership model is believed to be an integral way to elicit these top tiered changes. Transformational leaders exhibit an enthusiastic desire to deny self-seeking impulses and choose instead to empower employees to embrace the organizational vision and aid in the achievement of it. The incorporation of such a model could be the basis for improving professional relationships between staff and leadership while having positive effects on employee motivation and job satisfaction.

The purpose of this case study was to identify the effects that transformational leadership can have on employee motivation and job satisfaction within Solano County's two protective service departments. Information was gathered through the use of a qualitative survey completed by social workers in both APS and CPS as well as in-person interviews conducted with organizational leadership in both departments. Study conclusions and recommendations will be shared with county administrators for their consideration.

Chapter 1- Introduction

Many public organizations are filled with leaders who don't know how to lead. Leaders exhibiting charisma, enthusiasm, and passion have been replaced by individuals who have become fixated on micromanaging strategies, the strict adherence to managerial best practices, and draft policies and procedures that amount to repetitious mediocrity. Unfortunately, these individuals are not seeking to be great but instead find satisfaction in doing just enough for them to get by. Organizations that possess this type of transactional leader are in desperate need of a new kind of transformational leadership. Transactional leaders seek to command and control while utilizing a reward and punitive based system to encourage desired behaviors. In contrast, Transformational leaders motivate and inspire their employees to develop further, perform higher, and achieve greater success.

The term "transformational leadership" was popularized by American historian and political scientist, James MacGregor Burns, who saw a transforming leader as being one who "looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (Burns, 1978, p. 4). This leadership style inspires others to follow by implementing positive organizational changes and igniting enthusiasm and passion in everyone within the work group. A transformational leader is looked upon as a charismatic visionary who achieves his/her organizational reality through the articulation of an idea that is reflective of the organizational mission and the values that support it (Bryman, 1996). Transformational leaders mentor and motivate their followers while furnishing them with the necessary tools to increase responsibility, achieve goals, and eventually assume leadership roles of their own.

Unlike the collaborative spirit that embodies transformational leaders, transactional leaders aim at controlling employees through rational or economic means. They provide tangible

or intangible support and resources to followers in exchange for their efforts and performance, while punishing followers if they do not accomplish goals (Zhu, Riggio, Avolio, & Sosik, 2011).

Transactional leaders maintain a traditional and restrictive leadership style, which adheres to a clear chain of command and utilizes rewards and punishments as key motivational tools.

Employees are closely monitored and given the primary task of following guidelines and instructions instituted by the organizational leader. The side effects of transactional leadership may include decreased employee morale and motivation as well as a strong desire for organizational abandonment.

Background and History

Solano County is a relatively small county with a population of 413,344 citizens who reside within seven cities and receive a variety of government, community, and social services. The Department of Health and Social Services within Solano County oversees multiple divisions, which address the needs of the public. The current organizational structure is quite vast and includes a Director, Assistant Director, Deputy Directors, Administrators, Managers, and Supervisors. Solano County has largely maintained a traditional hierarchical structure, which conservatively leans towards a command and control leadership style. Critical program information is thought to be selectively shared and when disseminated is typically done in a way that lacks consistency and uniformity. This environment creates feelings of mistrust and uncertainty about the future of the organization, and if ignored, could infiltrate the entire workforce with damaging results. Disregarding the importance of employee collaboration and the sharing of ideas, could potentially alienate staff, resulting in feelings of frustration. Failure to initiate changes within this type of culture may with time result in an organization that is less effective and efficient.

Solano County Health and Social Services (HSS) is comprised of programs which are mandated either by the State or Federal Government and must comply with related policies and procedures. Two such mandated services, which focus on the investigation and prevention of abuse and neglect of both children and the elderly, are Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS). Within the divisions of APS and CPS are social workers dedicated to the needs of their clients while enduring constant criticism, public scrutiny, and entanglement in a widely bureaucratic and political system. The heartbeat of any organization or business is the front line employee who provides the direct services needed to bring the job to completion. In the field of government social services, this becomes especially true as the relationship between social worker and client can easily make the difference between perceived success and failure.

Solano County employees have increasingly become dissatisfied with transactional changes, which include the simple shifting of long standing duties or ideas. They are seeking transformational changes that will empower them to completely change processes and strategies from what they currently are. Organizations unable to take the transformational leap are quickly learning that their employees are willing to take their talents elsewhere. Solano County has maintained a traditionalist mindset that has hampered its ability to transform, leaving its employees frustrated and seeking more supportive and collaborative opportunities.

Statement of Research Problem

This study will analyze and evaluate what style of leadership is more likely to increase employee motivation and improve job satisfaction amongst social workers employed within Solano County's Adult Protective Service and Child Protective Service Departments. Employees have become increasingly dissatisfied with the quality of leadership currently occupying their departments, with managerial styles appearing more commanding and controlling than

collaborative and engaging. Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services provide the most responsible and difficult casework dealing with highly complex individual and family issues. Given the nature of the work that is performed, an internal system consisting of responsive, supportive, and influential leadership becomes essential to the organizations need to attract new workers and retain current ones. Failure to provide this type of employee-friendly climate may diminish the number of social workers willing to work within protective service agencies and increase the risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation amongst our community's most vulnerable populations.

Research Assumption and sub-questions

For this research project, information was collected using an employee survey and in-person interviews with department leaders. Information was examined to evaluate the following research assumption:

- Implementation of a transformational leadership style within Solano County's Adult Protective Service and Child Protective Service departments would better serve the needs of social workers and have a positive effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction.

The research sub-questions which guided this study included:

- How are current leadership styles perceived within Solano County APS and CPS?
- Which characteristics of leadership do county social workers desire most?
- How likely are social workers to make leadership style a primary motivator for maintaining employment in these departments?

This study assumes that in order for APS and CPS social workers to remain positively motivated about their work and maintain a higher level of job satisfaction, organizational leadership should incorporate transformational qualities which will promote a more inclusive organizational

culture. The study questions whether workers believe that the current leadership style has encouraged this type of environment or whether it has contributed to the erosion of worker trust.

In order to lead, someone must be willing to follow (Posner & Kouzes, 2003). A simple statement with clear meaning and intent, yet the relationship between many organizational leaders and employees remains a complicated one. Administrators, managers, and supervisors play an essential role in ensuring that the identified work of the APS and CPS departments is properly disseminated amongst its employees and completed in a way that effectively meets the needs of both its internal staff and external clients. The assumption and sub-questions are derived from the personal experiences of this writer and from data gathered on the subject that will be discussed in the Chapter Two-Literature Review.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the implementation of a transformational leadership model would have a positive effect on employee motivation within Solano County APS and CPS. It was also meant to determine whether employees experienced a higher level of job satisfaction with the inclusion of these characteristics which would likely result in higher retention rates for these departments.

The project goal would be the potential use of this evidence-based data to identify what organizational changes should be considered to improve leadership skills, increase social worker enthusiasm and job satisfaction while reducing department turnover.

Significance of Study

If the assumptions presented in this study are substantiated, results are likely to support the implementation of transformational leadership strategies to reduce social worker turnover rates within APS and CPS. This provides a potential cost savings to Solano County in terms of

hiring protocols (application reviews, interviews, and background checks), deliverance of new employee trainings, and the benefits to the community in maintaining an experienced workforce. Increased employee motivation and job satisfaction will also result in a more experienced leadership team in the future as line staff may more likely be promoted into higher positions within the organization.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

This literature review provided secondary research data which describes the characteristics of transformational leadership and the possible ways in which it can effect employee motivation and job satisfaction. It offered a scholarly definition of motivation and revealed its intertwining connection to employee morale and job retention. The review illustrated how organizational leaders are able to ignite enthusiasm amongst their employees by encouraging them to become active participants in the overall success of the agency in which they work.

The review placed emphasis on four themes that outline the uniqueness of government protective services and the varying reasons why certain individuals are attracted to and then disenchanted with the role of advocate for the most vulnerable citizens of Solano County. The first theme describes intrinsic factors which motivate workers to either maintain or abandon their employment in APS or CPS. Decreased motivation and job satisfaction increases the risk of mistakes being made, which can result in life or death consequences for the recipient of services. The second theme uncovers the unique challenges facing APS and CPS social workers who are cast into complex situations and given a brief amount of time to provide crisis intervention, stabilization, and resolution before permanent and life changing events for the recipients are imposed.

A third theme emphasizes the role of leadership which becomes key to building worker confidence by offering assurances that they are performing at an acceptable level and making the right decisions. It also offers the presence of an advocate and defends against external bureaucratic posturing. The final theme provides examples of how employee satisfaction can ultimately be achieved. According to the book Occupational Stress In The Service Professions,

“The importance of effective and supportive supervision has been consistently identified as of pivotal importance with respect to job satisfaction and moderating the effects of work stress while poor supervision has been found to contribute to higher work stress (Lonne, 2003, p. 283). The search for satisfaction may then be found through a leadership model that seeks to energize and incentivize its employees to remain committed to the field of social work, while discovering something greater than mere satisfaction in the roles that they play.

The Motivating Factor

Motivation is a key organizational instrument that can be derived as a result of either external or internal sources. In his book, Organizational Behavior, Dr. Stephen Robbins defines motivation as “the processes that account for an individual’s intensity, direction, and persistence of effort towards attaining an organizational goal” (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 201). An old analogy known to many has categorized motivation as being one of two types, the carrot or the stick. The carrot becomes the reward that is intrinsically sought after and moves an individual towards the achievement of a goal or accomplishment. The motivation of the stick on the other hand, is the result of an involuntary action. An action that is taken for the purpose of avoiding the consequence of not doing, instead of the reward of doing. In every aspect of an individual’s life, there is movement towards something or away from something, with the residual question being, why the move is being made. Author, Abraham Maslow in providing his theory of human motivation states that, “While behavior is almost always motivated, it is also almost always biologically, culturally and situationally determined as well” (Maslow, 2011, p. 171).

Motivation plays an essential role in the choices that are made as related to employment. What type of work is desired, where to work and how long to work before retirement are questions that all potential employees will eventually have to consider. Yet, once established

within an organization the “motivating factor” no longer becomes the sole responsibility of the employee, but the responsibility of organizational leadership as well. “Interventions [for an employee] remain the primary responsibility of human service employers rather than employees because the major influences on these factors are within their control” (Lonne, p. 287).

Understanding what motivates employees is key information for managers to grasp as it becomes a contributor to a shared vision and the development of a healthy organizational culture.

Effective employee motivation has been one of management’s most difficult and important duties, while its success has become more challenging given the difficulties of managing a diverse workforce (Haalachmi & van der Krogt, 2010, p. 524). The relationship between motivation and organizational outcome is undeniable. Positive collaborative results have included greater employee commitment, reduced turnover, higher productivity and quality, better service and safety, and increased financial outcomes (Lepak & Jiang, 2012). However, the relationship has also brought about negative consequences, including an increased risk of worker burnout, decreased productivity, and work abandonment. Simply put, management has become the gatekeeper for employee motivation and job satisfaction, while increased job satisfaction has become the primary catalyst for organizational efficiency and effectiveness. That being said, decreased job satisfaction then becomes the primary catalyst for organizational inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Work inefficiencies in any organization can be problematic; however in organizations overseeing the health and safety of others, consequences become much more dire.

The Social Workers Challenge

According to the National Association of Social Workers Preamble the primary mission of the social work profession is to “enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are

vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty (National Association of Social Workers , 2014).”

Social work is seen as an honorable profession that seeks to positively impact society with little appreciation in return. Most social workers are often tasked with doing more with less.

Possessing a strong desire to help others and complete the organization’s missions, they often succeed even at their own physical and emotional expense. The reality of the social workers plight can be experienced wherever the work is performed with the daunting question being, to what degree and at what expense do social workers achieve success?

In dealing with matters of life or death and abuse or safety, the desire to get the decision right becomes paramount. This pressure can become too much for some to handle resulting in career abandonment while for others, it becomes an invigorating surge that leads to a lifetime of public service. According to a study conducted by Bride (2007), 15% of the social workers who work with traumatized victims experience extreme distress from their particular field of work. What pushes some to leave the field of government mandated social work while others are motivated to stay can be attributed to a variety of factors. These factors will vary from person to person, from department to department, and from generation to generation. While some are motivated by compensation and challenge, others might claim a sense of dedication to the populations being served and the nature of the work itself.

When identifying the nature of the work itself, studies find that management style and leadership play a huge role in shaping how an employee feels about the work that they do. As a worker of mandated government services the need for self-motivation is critical; however, it does not negate the importance of a supportive administrative system and its’ duty to ensure that an employees’ needs are being met. These needs involve far more than compensatory packages but

include an emotional component that provides the affirmation and recognition needed to bring about high work performances.

The stressors experienced by those employed in the field of Social Work are well documented in the *Journal of Mental Health's* article, "Social Work, Stress and Burnout: A Review" (2002). Authors, Lloyd, King, and Chenoweth define both stress and burnout and identify the key dimensions that exist therein. A clear correlation is made between the type of work being performed, how social workers might feel as a result of their assigned duties, and how organizational structure and climate manifests itself into job dissatisfaction. "Burnout syndrome" is identified as depersonalization or how workers respond to persistent stress by developing negative, cynical attitudes and feelings about their clients. They also experience feelings of reduced personal accomplishment and begin to view their work negatively, feeling dissatisfied with their accomplishments (Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002, p. 256). An example of this was documented in a study of social workers and support staff within a social services department in North-West England completed by J. Bradley and V. Sutherland in 1995. The study would eventually be compared to a second study of healthcare workers completed by J. Collins and P. Murray in 1996 with quite similar results.

These studies concluded that workers reported higher levels of stress as a result of organizational structure and climate, particularly problems related to working in a climate of low morale (Lloyd *et al.*, 2002). Frequent sources of stress included 1) being exposed to conflicting demands, 2) being expected to do things which were not part of the job, 3) being unable to do things which should be part of the job, and 4) being unclear about what was expected (p. 258). With a reported pattern of withholding information and communication over the past several years, these identifiers could easily translate into the environment that has existed within Solano

County. Although workers continue to develop the necessary coping skills to better tolerate the anger and sadness often experienced in the homes of the clients they serve, they too have grown increasingly frustrated with the obstacles that a rigid organizational structure and restrictive bureaucratic system have created.

Social workers are taught and trained to supplement the needs of the program that employs them and the value system that is represented by those in administration for their own. They are susceptible to changes in social policy and legislation, which may result in a conflict between advocating for the needs of the client, representing their interests, and the responsibility [that social workers have] to ensure that they are safe (Lloyd *et al.*, 2002 p. 257). This shift away from traditional professional values has led to the embracement of business principles such as efficiency and effectiveness, as well as practices like cost-benefit analysis and strategic planning (Jones & May, 1992). An administrative emphasis on quantity of cases managed over the quality of work being performed can bring workers to their breaking point, leading to career abandonment. Power has transitioned from the professional social worker to managers, who have “marked their domain with a managerialist discourse that largely ignores notions of social justice and empowerment of service users” (Fook & Hawkins, 2000). The result of this conflict can present itself in the form of stress and burnout, which can eventually impact professional motivation and overall job satisfaction.

The Role of Leadership

Effective leadership requires the development of relationships which can only be achieved when the leader inspires his/her subordinates to follow (Posner & Kouzes, 2003, p. 20). Under this premise the division of labor becomes less about a separation of power and authority and more about increasing the quality of work and bringing about a level of expertise in the task

being performed while empowering the person performing it. Leaders must acknowledge the importance of followers and eliminate the common characteristics that identify dysfunctional leadership. Author and lecturer, Martin Dandira, lists the signs of a dysfunctional leader in his journal article, *Dysfunctional leadership: Organizational cancer*_(2012). The top ten signs include:

1. Poor Communication
2. Dictatorial tendencies
3. High labor turnover
4. Regionalism
5. Lack of Collaboration
6. Too much talk
7. Empire building practices
8. Personalizing organizational issues
9. Inefficient use of resources
10. Highly stressful workplace

Dandira concluded that leadership requires both values and performance; the ability to live the values and deliver results (Dandira, 2012, p. 192). Failure to identify the role that employees play towards the achievement of a successful organization ignores an essential power source. Acknowledging and rewarding this power [the employee], leads to increased commitment and loyalty, while also generating a strong desire to please those who empowered them.

The lines that define the differences between a manager and a leader have become increasingly blurred. Many consider them to be one in the same; however, leadership experts

beg to differ. According to Author and Professor of Business Administration, Burton Nanus (1989),

Leaders take charge, make things happen, dream dreams, and then translate them into reality: attract the voluntary commitment of followers, energize them, and transform organizations into new entities with greater potential for survival, growth, and excellence; and empower organizations to maximize contributions to the wellbeing of their members and society. (Nanus, 1989, p. 7)

The administrative techniques utilized by leaders may far outweigh those of managers in that they provide their employees with a sense of purpose and embolden them through the rendering of trust, respect, and professional independence. They take the time and effort to understand who their employees are, what they wish to achieve, and how to assist in making those desires and goals become a reality.

Research has confirmed that there is disagreement between what workers want and what organizational leaders think that employees want. Author Kenneth A. Kovach (1987) uncovered forty years of surveys from 1946 through 1986 that ranked employees top ten reward factors. Only slight changes occurred within the forty-year period with intrinsic factors consistently taking precedence when determining employee job satisfaction. Survey responses from 1986 clearly identify employee appreciation and inclusion as being an important factor in this regard. Employee rankings include:

- 1) Interesting work
- 2) Full appreciation of work done
- 3) Feeling of being in on things
- 4) Job security

- 5) Good wages
- 6) Promotion and growth in the organization
- 7) Good working conditions
- 8) Personal loyalty to employees
- 9) Tactful discipline
- 10) Sympathetic help with personal problems

Study results found that those occupying a leadership role maintained a different opinion of what they believed would be of most importance to their employees. Kovach noted that management failed to acknowledge the intrinsic factors related to motivation and focused primarily on extrinsic factors, showing themselves to have a very inaccurate perception of what motivates employees (p. 60). Rankings as identified by managers include:

- 1) Good wages
- 2) Job Security
- 3) Promotion and growth in the organization
- 4) Good working conditions
- 5) Interesting work
- 6) Personal loyalty to employees
- 7) Tactful discipline
- 8) Full appreciation of work done
- 9) Sympathetic help with personal problems
- 10) Feeling of being in on things

The study concluded that managers responded to rewards that would motivate them, essentially ignoring the rewards and behaviors that were actually found to motivate their employees. This

strongly points to the lapse in communication that continues to exist with organizational leadership moving no closer to understanding what staff wants for the achievement of employment satisfaction.

Communication is a key element in formulating a trusting professional relationship and determining what employees desire most. The exchange of information, feelings, and ideas is what promotes job satisfaction and is a shared responsibility of both leadership and employees alike. However when determining who must take the lead in correcting an organizational culture gone bad, Authors, Kouzes and Posner (2003), clearly give the responsibility to organizational leaders. Leaders are encouraged to incorporate the following five practices for the achievement of extraordinary results in an organization.

- 1) Model the Way
- 2) Inspire a Shared Vision
- 3) Challenge the Process
- 4) Enable Others to Act
- 5) Encourage the Heart

These five practices are believed to be the keys to successful and transformational leadership that will ultimately win the respect of employees, change the status quo, lead others to greatness, encourage employees to seek and accept challenge, foster collaboration, build trust, and show appreciation for the contribution of others creating a culture of celebration (pp. 13-19).

Authors, Kaiser, Hogan, and Craig (2008), suggest

Transformational leadership changes the way followers see themselves-from isolated individuals to members of a larger group...When followers see themselves as members of

a collective, they tend to endorse group values and goals, and this enhances their motivation to contribute to the greater good. (p. 104)

The process of improving motivation can become complicated and the process cannot be made into a one size fits all remedy. The role of leadership is to identify what makes an employee tick and within reason attempt to make appropriate organizational accommodations for the purpose of creating high performers.

Workers who are content with their jobs, who feel challenged, who have the opportunity to fulfill their goals will exhibit less destructive behavior on the job. They will be absent less frequently, they will be less inclined to change jobs, and most importantly, they will produce at a higher level. (Kovach, p. 65)

This of course becomes more challenging in large organizations, particularly public or government agencies where greater flexibility to deviate from standard operating practices is not well tolerated or accepted (Haalachmi & van der Krogt, 2010, p. 526). Government, although excellent at mandating services and creating policies and procedures is not inclined to take risks and think outside of the box out of fear of political retribution and public criticism.

Organizations must become more pliable, with the ability to change a course of action even when it is a departure from its original set of rules. According to Robert Merton, "Such devotion to the rules, leads to their transformation into absolutes; they are no longer conceived as relative to a set of purposes" (Merton, 2011, p. 110). Adherence to a broken plan is choosing to embrace failure and leaves employees feeling hopeless, unmotivated, and distrusting of their leaders. A strong level of distrust is created with a top down model, which encourages management to limit staff communication to a need to know basis (Quinn, 1996). The need to

replace the top down model with one that works from the bottom up is necessary to reduce bureaucracy and eliminate rigid and stifling organizational mentalities.

A Search for Satisfaction

The likeability or how one enjoys the work that they perform translates into job satisfaction and a workers desire to remain in the same position, promote into a higher role, or leave the profession altogether. “The importance of job satisfaction is evidenced by its consistent correlation with absenteeism and turnover (Lloyd *et al.*, 2002 p. 259). Two of the main questions being asked as related to employee motivation and job satisfaction of social workers within Solano County are 1) Will the implementation of a transformational leadership model improve employee motivation within APS and CPS? 2) Does the improvement of employee motivation translate into increased job satisfaction for social workers within these departments?

Critical in measuring the job satisfaction of social workers is the level of support received from their direct supervisors and administrative team. Emotional support not only from supervisors, but co-workers as well, results in lower levels of burnout and work stress, while the lack of support, especially executive support, can result in burnout (p. 261). Without a managerial commitment to lead, staff can lose their commitment to effectively serve their clients, while leaders who inspire a shared vision with their staff and have their needs and interests at heart achieve greater success (Posner & Kouzes, 2003). The key becomes a shared set of norms and behaviors that must transcend from the top to the bottom in total alignment. Leadership and employee culture must work hand and hand, with each side acknowledging the worth of the other and finding agreement in a common cause.

With family obligations and an absolute need for food, shelter and clothing, there is no question that monetary compensation is a key motivator for most employees. A high percentage

of social workers sacrifice time and money to attain higher levels of education and training to increase their marketability for employment that offers the highest compensation package. In addition to compensation, the purpose and meaning of the work being performed is a key motivator for social workers. The occupational challenge for those working within APS and CPS is undeniable. High caseloads, critical timelines and what typically turns out to be a brief amount of time for the establishment of a strong rapport and trust between worker and client, translates into a high level of stress and anxiety. Expectations run high that workers maintain an unrealistic capability to single handedly change a situation that often times a client has created for themselves. Yet workers frequently accept this role as a personal challenge to eradicate the risks that parents, children, and elders are faced with on a regular basis.

The need for transformational leadership becomes essential to maintaining employee focus and motivation. It becomes an organizational responsibility to not only ensure that it is getting value from its employees, but to ensure that it is providing employees with appropriate inducements (Haalachmi & van der Krogt, 2010, p. 528). Of all the inducements available, one that remains a mainstay to both APS and CPS social workers within the County of Solano is the respect and support of leadership. Polls have shown that a bad boss or supervisor is the number one reason why employees leave an organization, “People quit their boss, not their job” (Oien, 2011). Employees seek out a type of leadership that consists of role modeling, providing meaning and challenge, and considers individual needs (Gagne, 2012). Leadership that promotes the creation of partnerships and encourages staff to perform at a progressive level in exchange for a favorable award, recognition or achievement.

A number of process theories have been created with the purpose of determining the best way to run a successful organization. One such theory is the Vroom’s Expectancy

Theory. It surmises that motivation is the product of an individual's expectations that notable efforts will lead to the achievement of a particular set of results. Those results will then be acknowledged by leadership and will assist employees in developing a realistic assessment of their own abilities and translate these abilities into a desired outcome (Haalachmi & van der Krogt, 2010, pp. 536-537). Employees wishing to promote within the county expect that if they maintain a high performance level, leadership will acknowledge the work that has been done by providing the desired reward. If these expectations are not met, employees may no longer feel obligated to provide the same level of intensity to the partnership.

Motivational techniques can prove to be more challenging than anticipated. Multiple reasons have been given as to why motivation and job satisfaction are more difficult to achieve than one might think. Authors, Halachmi and van der Krogt (2010), identify some of these reasons as being 1) personal differences that affect the way in which individuals respond to the same motivators, 2) past experiences, 3) changes in popular culture and social values, and 4) information and communication technology which brings about changes in the way that employees interact with colleagues, superiors, clients and the general public (pp. 525-526). Despite there being no guaranteed formula to motivate all employees, all of the time, it remains imperative that leaders try. The keys to success are relatively simple, but require time and effort that some choose not to extend. They include 1) value your employees, 2) lead and engage your people, 3) provide meaningful work, and 4) ensure learning and development (Oien, 2011). Viewing employees as an asset instead of a burden goes a long way towards eliciting motivation and ending ones' search for increased job satisfaction.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

Research Design

The objective of this study was to determine what leadership style might better meet the needs of social workers providing protective services in Solano County. A qualitative case study research approach was conducted to analyze the qualitative and quantitative data, which was gathered through the use of a web-based survey and in-person interviews. The methodology used for this research encompasses primary research and secondary research procedures. Data was collected through the use of a survey questionnaire completed by select and relevant stakeholders, the interviews of key informants, and personal observations.

Primary data included a twenty-four question survey sent to all journey level social workers in Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services, while in-person interviews were conducted with three administrative leaders within each department. Secondary data was derived from the use of scholarly journals, articles and books that targeted the research issues being addressed in this project.

The research methodology approach required the gathering of primary qualitative data to support the main assumption that implementation of transformational leadership qualities within APS and CPS would improve employee motivation and job satisfaction. Qualitative data was also used to identify three sub-questions. The first determines what leadership style is currently perceived to be in existence within Solano County APS and CPS, the second identifies which characteristics of leadership county social workers desire most, and third establishes how likely social workers are to make leadership style a primary motivator for maintaining employment in these departments.

The results of this study provide evidence to either support or not support the research assumptions and sub-questions, and provide insight to additional factors which may prove influential towards the development of this project. The conclusions of the research project will be used to make recommendations for the implementation of a transformational leadership model and the incorporation of leadership skills training to the Solano County Health and Social Services Executive Team. While use of the data being collected will not establish the need for a similar program within other counties, the research plan could be used by those counties if found beneficial.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather data that would either support or not support my assumption: Implementation of transformational leadership qualities within Solano County Health and Social Services would improve employee motivation and increase job satisfaction amongst social workers in both Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services. A number of research projects have identified the negative effects of working in protective service agencies and the high turnover rates that typically occur. Multiple projects have also discussed the strong correlation between organizational leadership and employee motivation and/or job satisfaction. What is meant to be unique about this study is the question of whether transformational leadership has the ability to offset the high levels of stress associated with performing social work in the pressured environment of protective services and positively impact the level of job satisfaction that workers experience.

Dependent and Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

- Employee motivation and job satisfaction

Independent Variable

- Transformational leadership qualities
- Transactional leadership qualities

The dependent variable for this research project is employee motivation and job satisfaction. Employee motivation speaks to the intensity or persistence shown by the protective services worker to achieve identified organizational goals. Job satisfaction refers to the overall attitude that workers maintain while performing their specified duties. The two independent variables are: 1) implementation of transformational leadership, and 2) implementation of transactional leadership. Both transformational and transactional leadership styles can have an effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction. Transformational leadership qualities have been attributed to improvements in employee motivation and increased job satisfaction, while transactional leadership qualities typically maintain a more restrictive style, possibly fostering levels of decreased employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Data Collection Plan Overview

Primary qualitative data was collected to examine the accuracy of the main assumption and three sub-questions. The first step in this process was to create and distribute a qualitative survey to all journey level social workers within APS and CPS. Data was collected through the use of a survey (Human Factors international , 2007), which utilized a Likert Scale and was disseminated through the web-based computer program, Survey Monkey (Appendix A). Workers were allowed to complete the survey anonymously as to increase participation rates and data accuracy.

In-person interviews were scheduled and completed with three administrative leaders in each service department with appropriate confidentiality measures provided in advance

(Appendix B). Both the survey and interviews addressed several dimensions of organizational culture including leadership, communication, organizational participation, decision making, and goal integration. Demographic information including current department of employment, years of departmental service, gender, age group, and highest level of education completed was also gathered. The collection of this information was used as a base measurement in identifying any data fluctuations that may exist between male and female social workers, and workers of varying age, length of service, and levels of education.

The Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Departments were specifically selected for this research project based upon the rigorous and complex duties required within protective services. Each department was expected to provide a different perspective as related to their organizational leadership style and the level of job satisfaction and motivation existing therein. This qualitative data will be used to provide a response to the previously identified assumptions.

Controlling for Internal Validity and External Validity

To ensure the internal validity of this research project all journey level social workers within APS and CPS were invited to participate in the qualitative survey process. The survey was completed with the use of a web-based survey program that did not track the origin of those responding. Participants were prohibited from providing their names or any other identifiers which could potentially disclose their identity. Survey questions contained no references to transformational leadership or to the assumptions included within this study. Although the identity of those responding to in-person interview questions are known to the interviewer, appropriate confidentiality measures were discussed with each participant in advance. The names

and associated responses of administrative participants will remain confidential and have been withheld from the contents of this study.

Solano County is one of 58 counties in the State of California and the results of this study may or may not provide external validity to the benefits of implementing a transformational leadership model into other protective services departments. If findings obtained from the representative sample within this research project contain beneficial data concerning the use of a transformational leadership style, information may be generalized to other APS and CPS agencies.

Controlling for Bias

Several proactive steps were taken to avoid the potential for bias within this research project. Qualitative surveys were disseminated to all journey level social workers within APS and CPS through the use of a web based survey program. Data was sent via the County email system with appropriate authorizations to ensure receipt by all identified recipients. Participants were prohibited from providing their names and assigned a generic pseudo identification to track responses. Questions asked during in-person interviews remained neutral without leading the subject of this study. Questions were simple and easy to comprehend as to avoid any confusion or misunderstandings.

Chapter 4- Results and Findings

This chapter provides the results and findings obtained from survey questionnaires and in-person interviews. A total of 57 survey questionnaires were distributed to journey level social workers within Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services with a total of 32 responding. Survey data results will be followed by key interview data obtained from select departmental leaders. The final section of this chapter provides an analysis of the data received and identifies relevant points of interest.

Survey Results

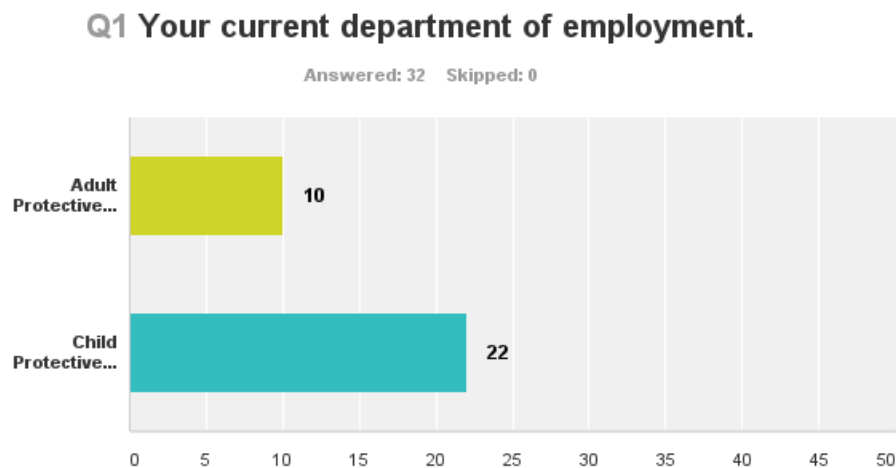


Figure 1

N=32

The majority of respondents, 68.75% were employed with CPS while 31.25% were employed with APS (Figure 1).

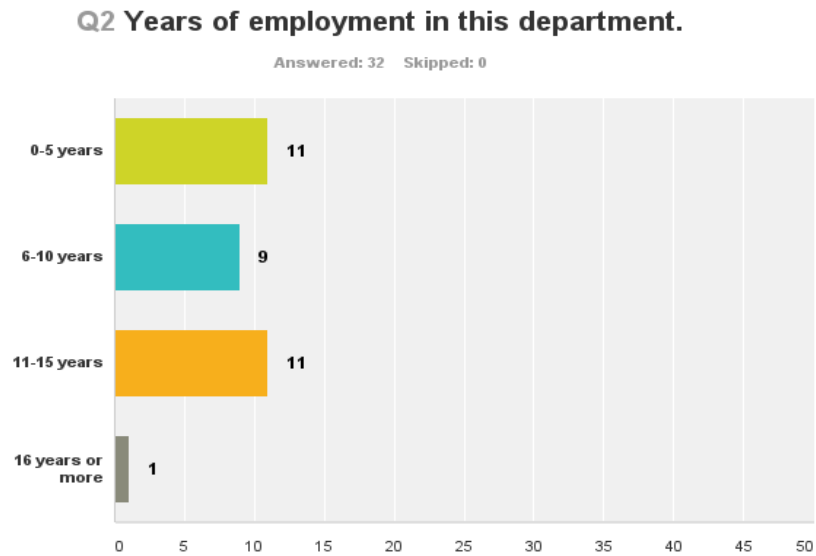


Figure 2

N=32

An equal number of workers employed between 0-5 years and 11-15 years responded at a rate of 34%, while 28% have been employed for 6-10 years and 3%, 16 years or more. The majority of respondents have been employed in their departments for over six years, increasing their time and exposure to current leadership practices (*Figure 2*).

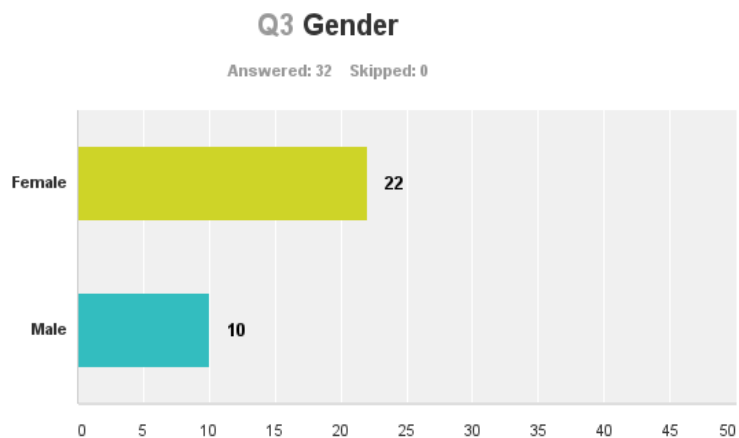


Figure 3

N=32

The majority of the respondents (68%) were female and 31% were male (*Figure 3*).

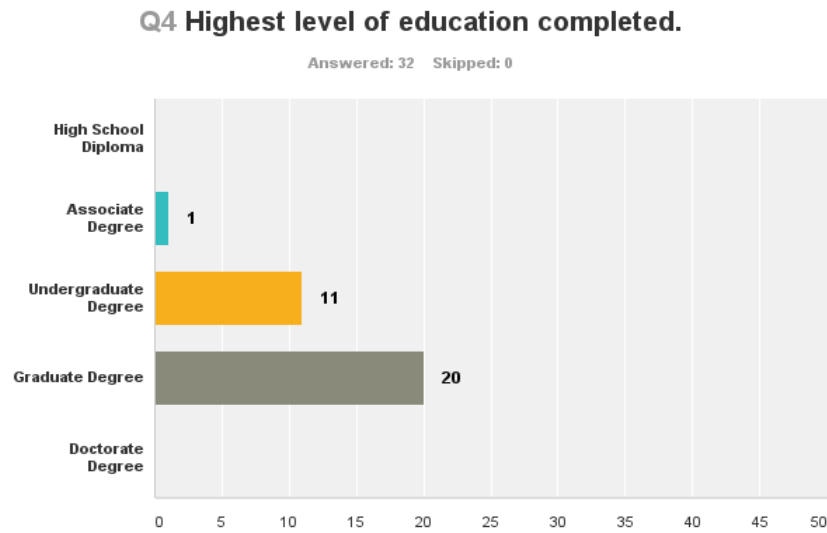


Figure 4

N=32

Sixty-two percent of respondents maintain a graduate degree, while 34% maintain an undergraduate degree, and 3% have an associate degree. The majority of workers surveyed have completed higher levels of education, increasing essential skills and knowledge in the field of social work (Figure 4).

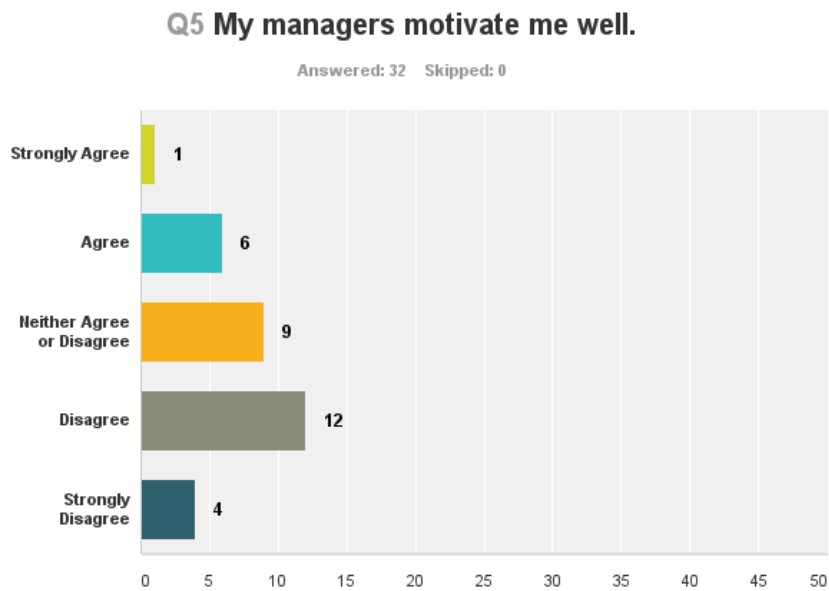
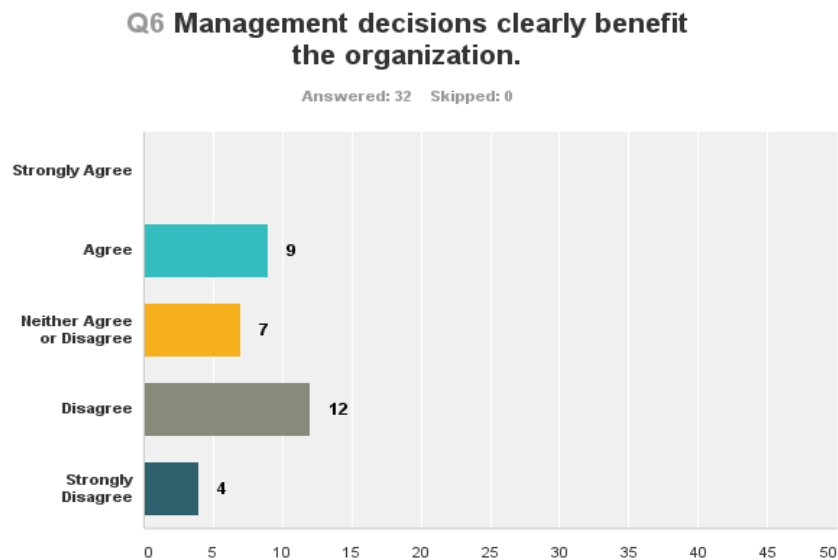


Figure 5

N=32

Fifty percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that their managers motivate them well. With only 7 out of 32 workers expressing satisfaction with the level of motivation being provided by department leaders, concerns related to a reduction in employee motivation appear to be valid (*Figure 5*).

*Figure 6**N=32*

Fifty percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that management decisions clearly benefit the organization. These findings reflect employee concerns with leadership expertise and the implementation of organizational decisions (*Figure 6*).

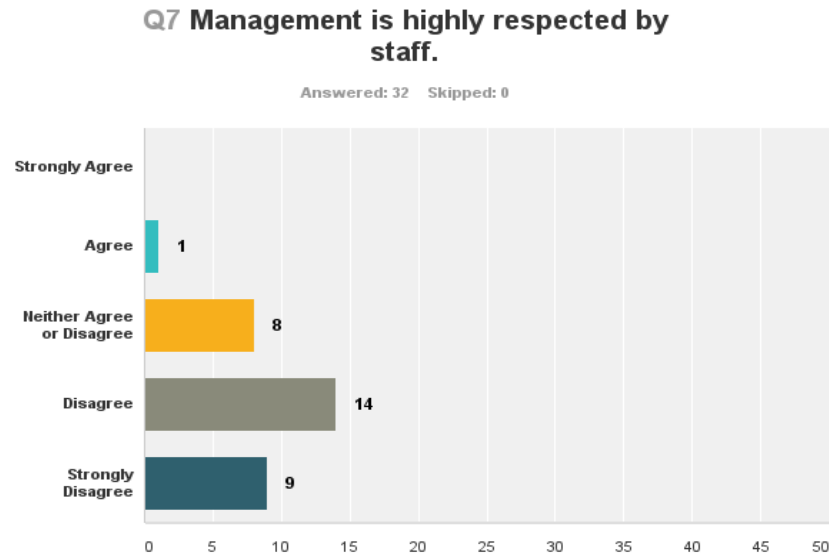


Figure 7

N=32

Over 71% of workers either disagree or strongly disagree that management is highly respected by staff, while only 1 of 32 workers agree that management is held in high regard. Results are indicative of a significant disconnect between workers and the departmental culture promoted by organizational leaders (*Figure 7*).

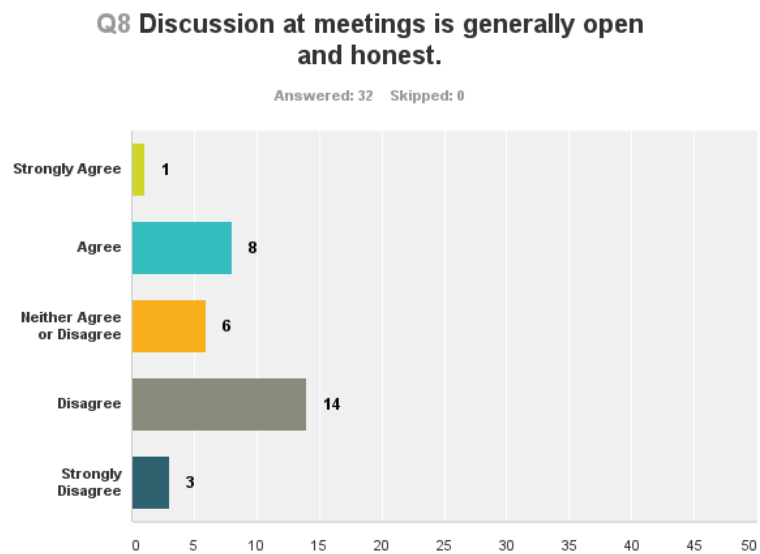
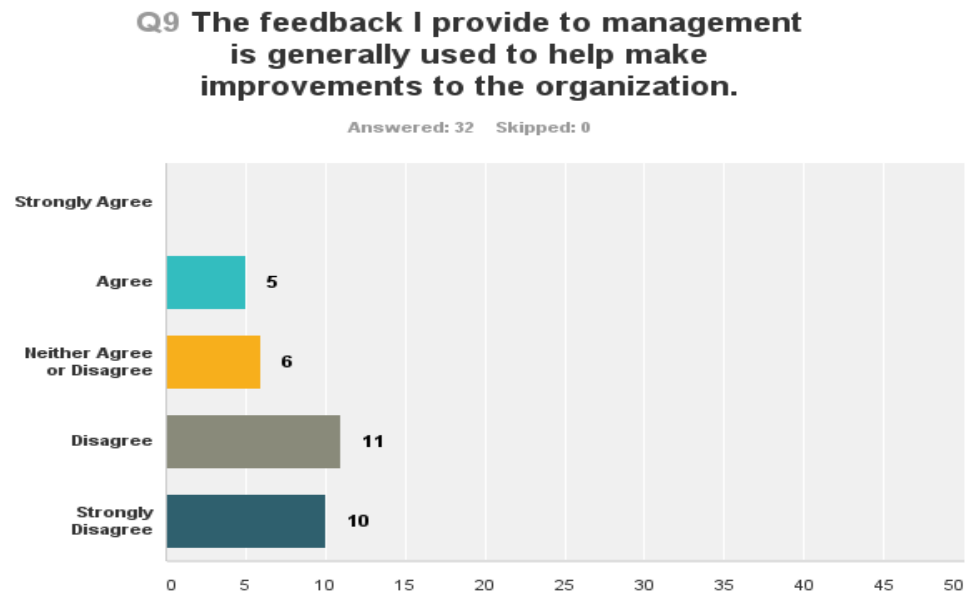


Figure 8

N=32

Over 53% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that discussion at meetings is generally open and honest. While 28% either agree or strongly agree that discussions are open and honest, the majority of respondents have reported that the sharing of ideas is not encouraged and that disagreement is looked upon negatively (*Figure 8*).

*Figure 9**N=32*

The majority of respondents (65%) disagree or strongly disagree that feedback provided to management is generally used to help make improvement to the organization. Only 5 out of 32 workers report that their input and opinions are utilized to address the future needs of their departments (*Figure 9*).

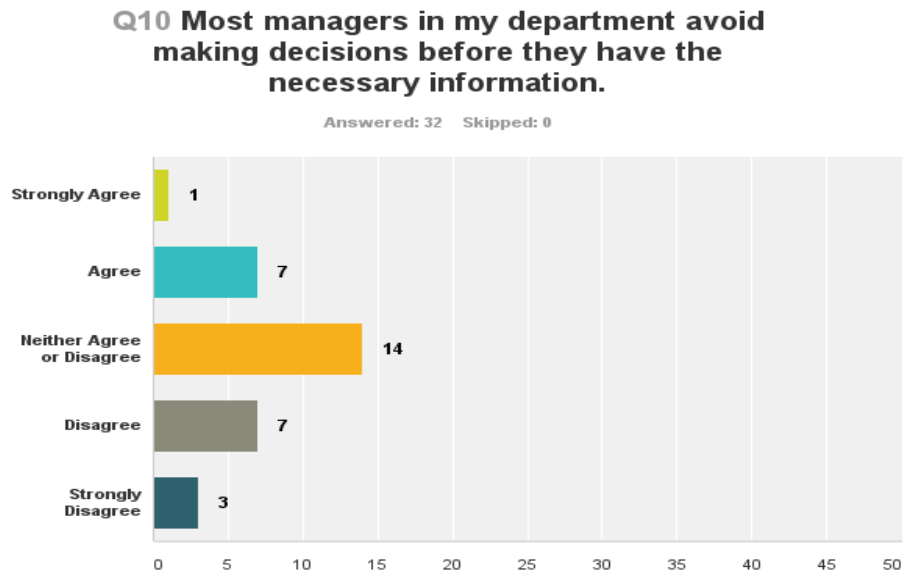


Figure 10

N=32

Forty-three percent of respondents neither agree nor disagree that most managers in their department avoid making decisions before they have the necessary information. While 31% percent of workers disagree or strongly disagree, findings may identify a lack of staff knowledge as related to the decision making process within their department (*Figure 10*).

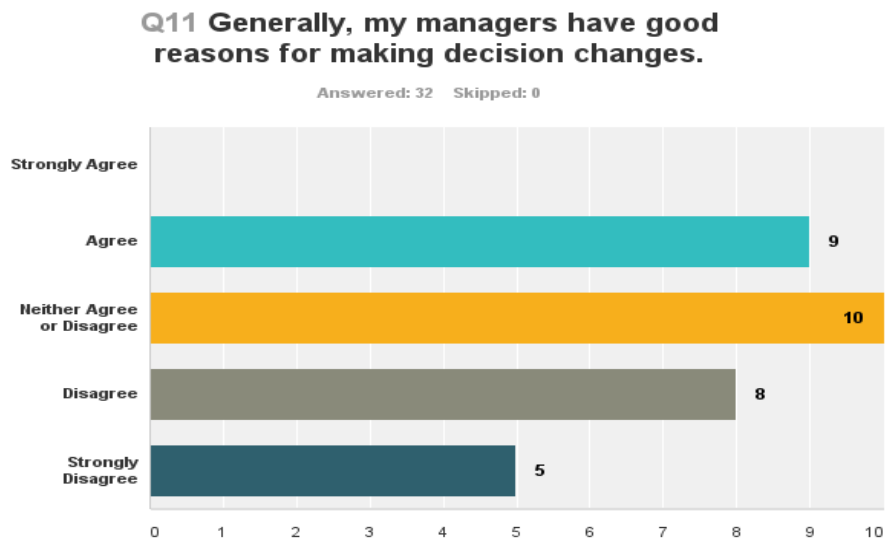


Figure 11

N=32

Forty percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that managers have good reasons for making decision changes. Thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree, while 28% agree.

Decisions made as a result of personal prejudice or self-interest lack transparency, adversely impacting employee job satisfaction and organizational culture (*Figure 11*).

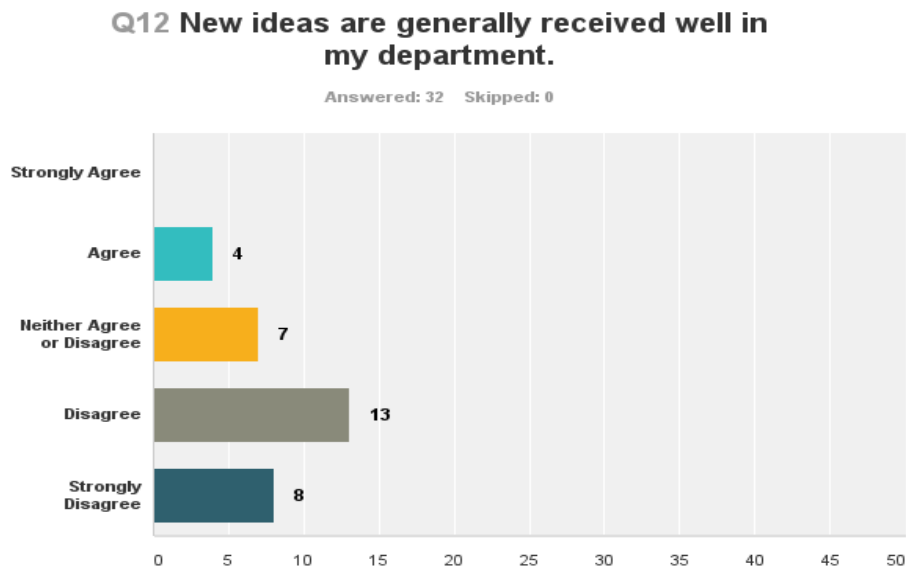


Figure 12

N=32

Sixty-five percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that new ideas are generally received well in their department. Twenty-one percent neither agree nor disagree, while 12% agree. Results reveal that the majority of workers view the receipt of new ideas by their leadership teams as unwelcomed (*Figure 12*).

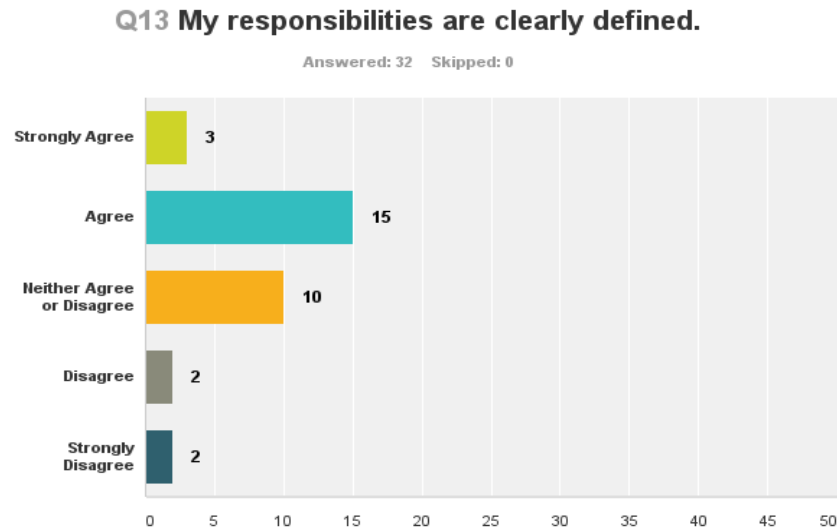


Figure 13

N=32

The majority of workers (56%) understand their role within their department and the level of authority that they maintain. Thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree, while 12% disagree or strongly disagree (*Figure 13*).

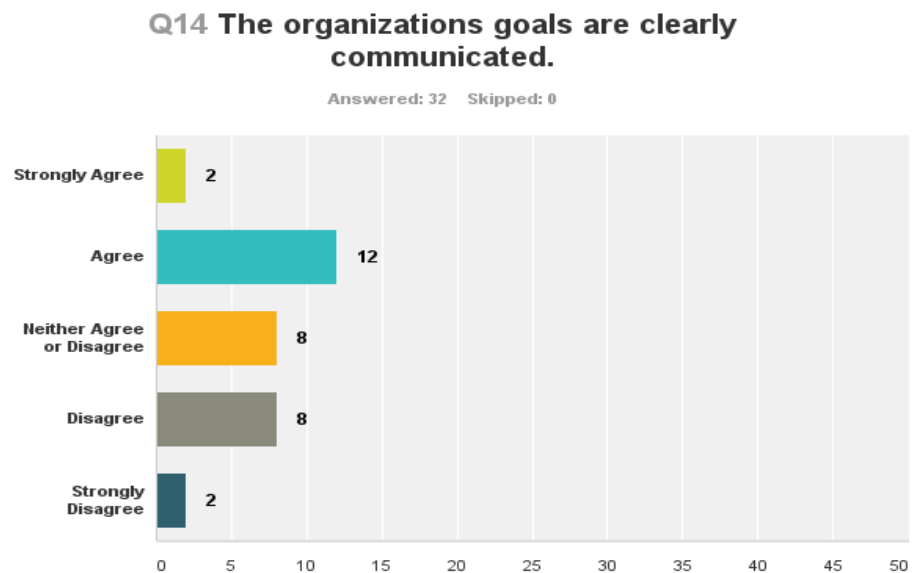
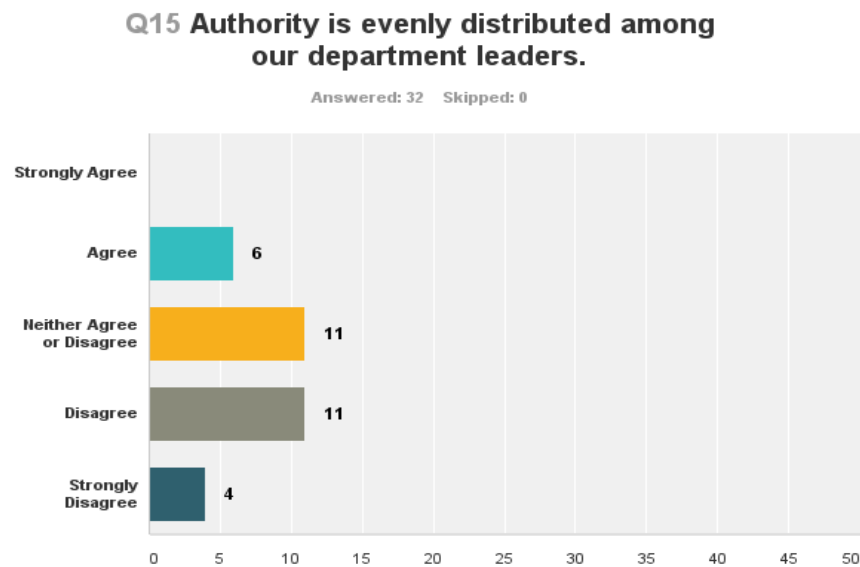


Figure 14

N=32

Forty-three percent of respondents either agree or strongly agree that organizational goals are clearly communicated. Thirty-one percent disagree or strongly disagree, while 6% neither agree nor disagree. Results are mixed with most workers understanding the structure of their departments and its' identified goals (*Figure 14*).

*Figure 15**N=32*

Forty-six percent of respondents, disagree or strongly disagree that authority is evenly distributed among department leaders. Thirty-four percent neither agree nor disagree, while 18% agree. Findings reveal worker concerns with the hierarchical structure of their department and the level of power that exists therein (*Figure 15*).

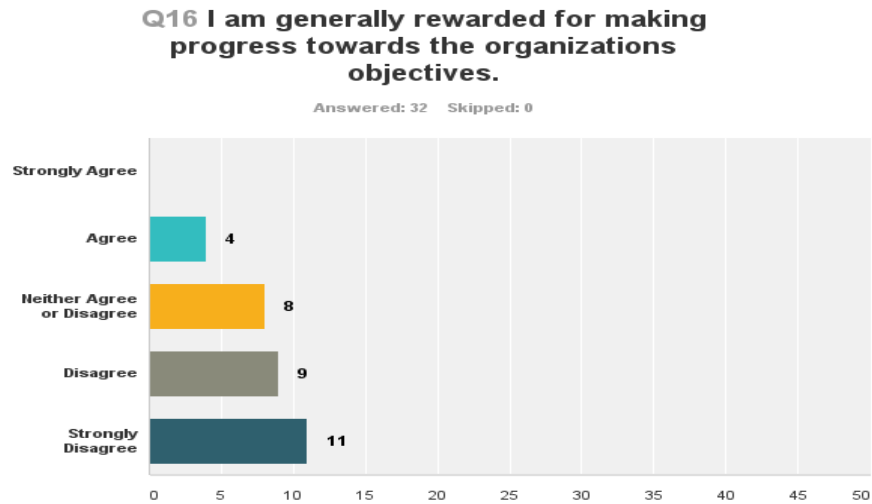


Figure 16

N=32

The majority of respondents, 62% disagree or strongly disagree that they are generally rewarded for making progress toward organizational objectives. Twenty-five percent neither agree nor disagree, while 12% agree. Results reveal a perception by workers that recognition for their contributions to the department is lacking, which can play a primary role in reducing employee motivation (Figure 16).

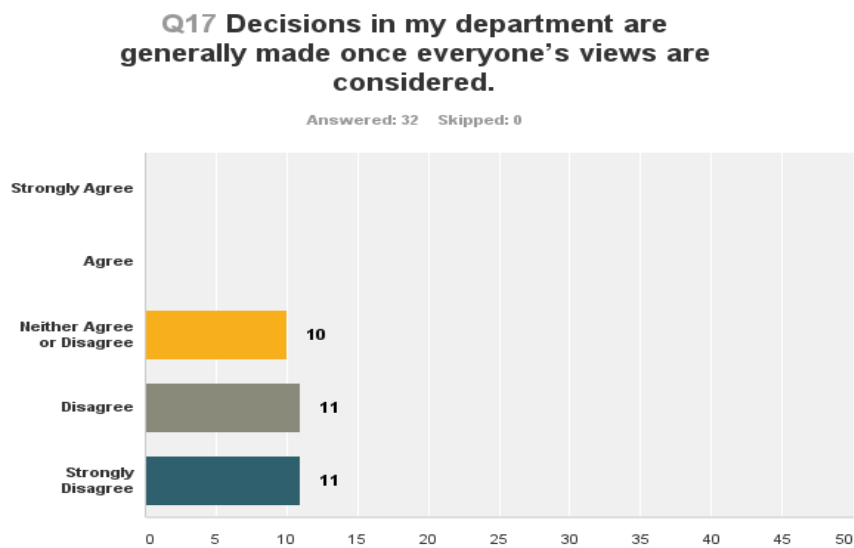
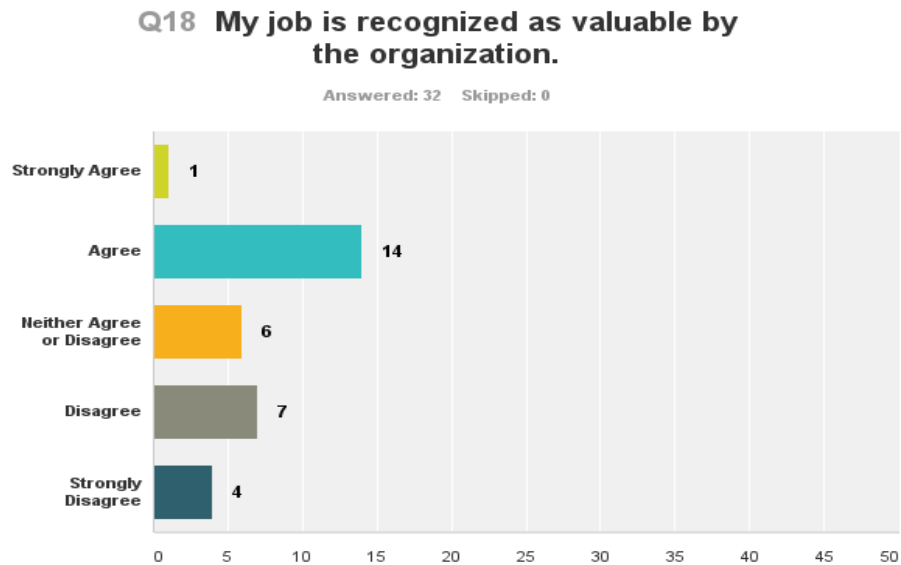


Figure 17

N=32

The majority of respondents, over 68% disagree or strongly disagree that department decisions are generally made once everyone's views are considered. Thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree. Results reveal that the ideas and views of workers are not seen as valuable and are not considered as part of the decision making process (*Figure 17*).

*Figure 18**N=32*

Forty-six percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that their job is recognized as valuable by the organization. Thirty-four percent disagree or strongly disagree, while 18% neither agree nor disagree. Employees typically acknowledge the value of their work to the organization and the community in which they serve (*Figure 18*).

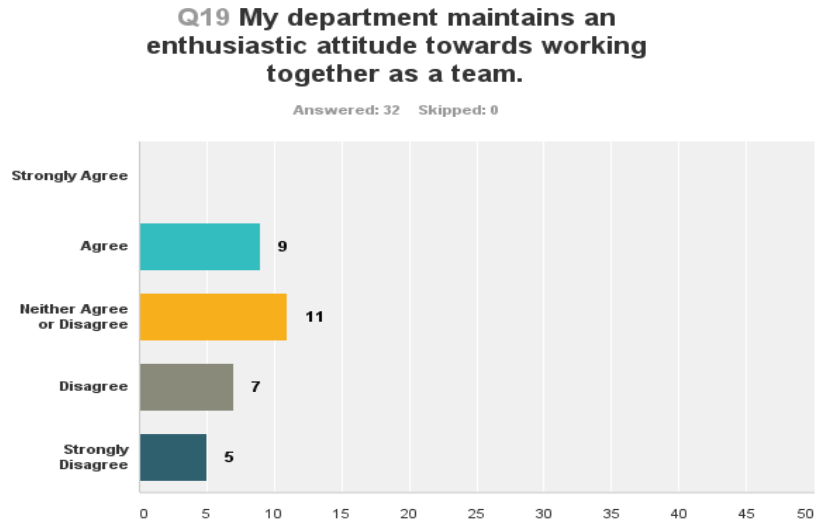


Figure 19

N=32

Thirty-seven percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that their department maintains an enthusiastic attitude towards working as a team. Thirty-four percent neither agree nor disagree while 28% agree. Responses produced mixed results which could be indicative of the independent nature of the work being performed (*Figure 19*).

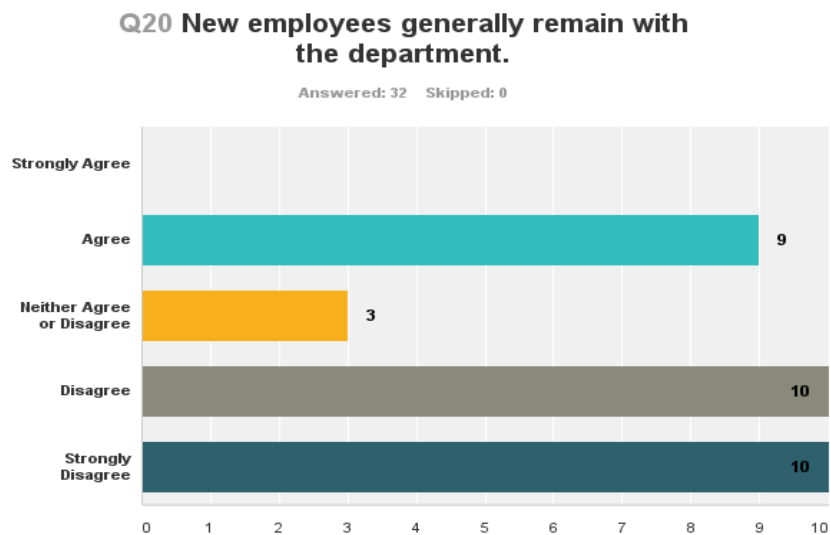
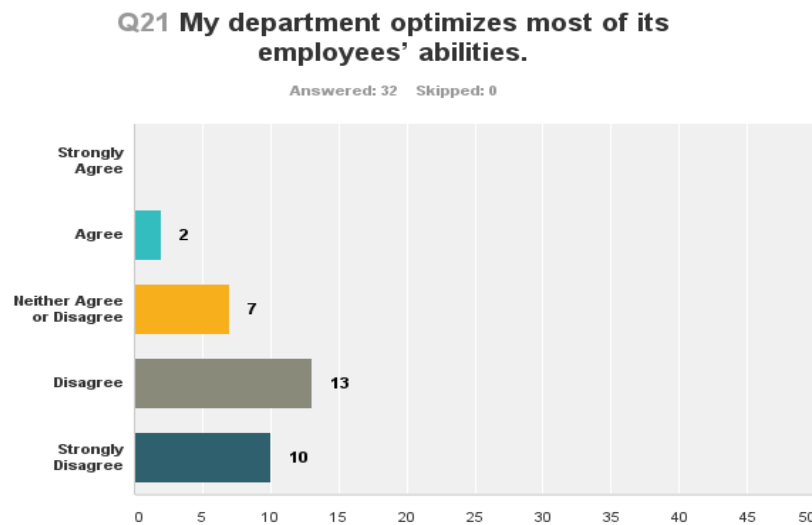


Figure 20

N=32

The majority of respondents, 62% disagree or strongly disagree that new employees generally remain with the department. Twenty-eight percent agree, while 9% neither agree nor disagree. Results help substantiate the high level of turnover that currently exist within protective service departments (*Figure 20*).

*Figure 21**N=32*

The majority of respondents, over 71% disagree or strongly disagree that their department optimizes most of its employees abilities. Twenty-one percent neither agree nor disagree, while 6% agree. Results reveal a perceived lack of support from leadership in encouraging career development and the achievement of organizational goals (*Figure 21*).

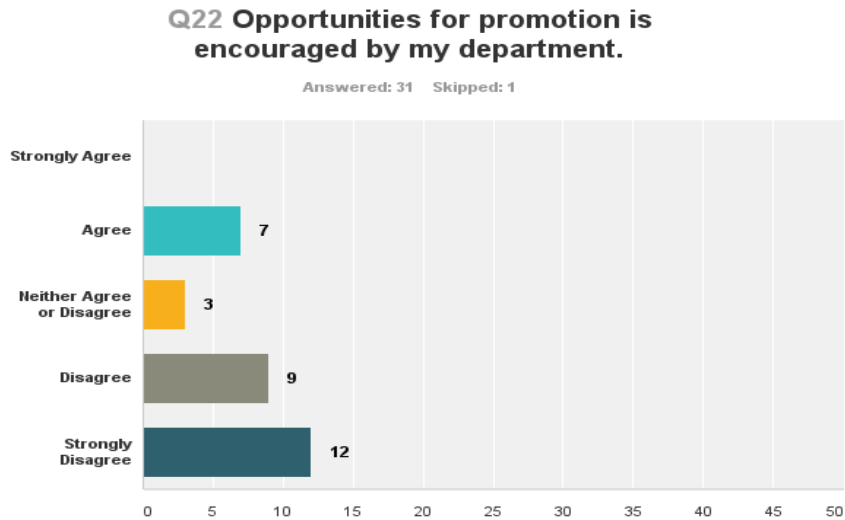


Figure 22

N=32

The majority of respondents, over 67% disagree or strongly disagree that opportunities for promotion is encouraged by their department. Twenty-two percent agree, while 9% neither agree nor disagree. Results provide evidence of minimal support for professional growth and advancement within their departments (*Figure 22*).

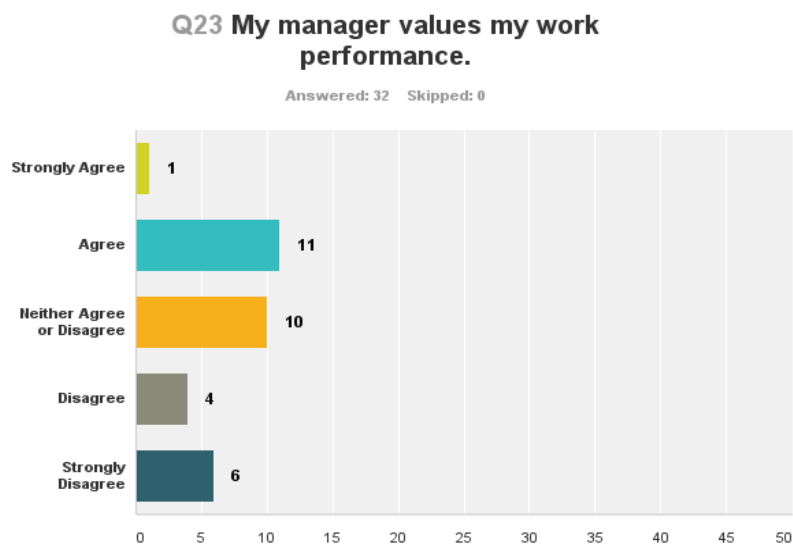


Figure 23

N=32

Thirty-seven percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that their manager values their work performance. Thirty-one percent neither agree or disagree, while 31% also disagree or strongly disagree. Results are mixed with no definitive or consistent opinion by a majority of workers as to how their performance is perceived by leadership or how leadership perception could impact overall motivation and job satisfaction (*Figure 23*).

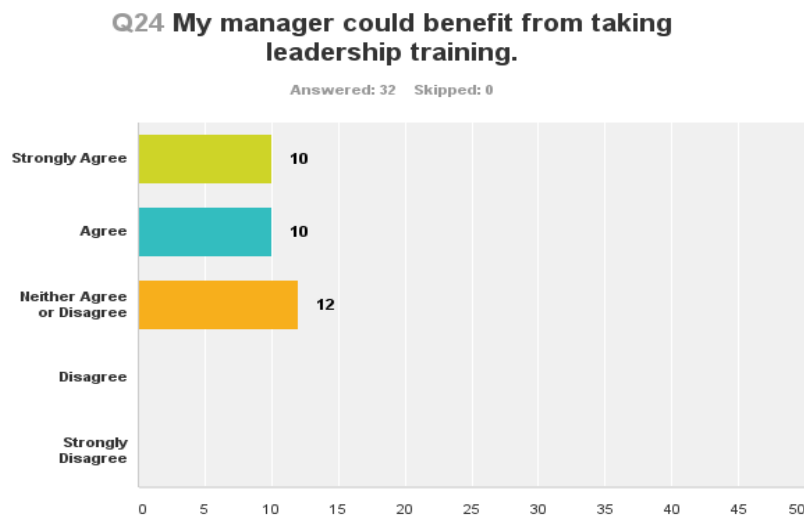


Figure 24

N=32

Over 62% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that their manager could benefit from taking leadership training, while 37% neither agree nor disagree. Results show a high level of support for increased training with a focus on leadership skills (*Figure 24*).

Social Worker Comments

At the conclusion of the survey questionnaire respondents were given the option of providing additional comments related to the leadership styles within their departments. Of the thirty-two respondents surveyed, only seven provided comment.

Please provide any additional comments you would like regarding what leadership styles work best in your department.

Response 1: "Prior to the recent year, our management had not used suggestions from staff nor requested input from staff regarding suggestions on how to make our department work more efficient and best meet our client needs. The concern for employee thoughts and wellbeing were not recognized. A change of management persons and styles in this year have brought employees thoughts and concerns "into the loop". There is also a visible effort to build employee morale. At this point, as a long-time employee of this department, I am waiting to see if and how management will handle employee input and make possible changes before adjusting my views of management and how our department is being run."

Response 2: "The leadership style of a dictatorship has been going on for about 5 years in this department and I can tell you this style has not worked well. This is an excellent group of social workers and support staff and they have been unsupported and dismissed for too long. This has led to a breakdown of team-work, pride in work and moral. The culture is more "stay off the radar or cover your behind"."

Response 3: "The Department struggles with retaining employees, which causes more stress on the senior workers. It is an ongoing problem that management fails to address."

Response 4: "Our Division does not value staff that has been here for long periods of time. Senior staff are not valued."

Response 5: "Program knowledge and expertise would be a beneficial component of effective leadership in Social Welfare program implementation. Combined with sound management principles and a mastery of personnel policies, a manager's program knowledge would provide a solid foundation for staff particularly when working in complex human service delivery systems that involve interagency collaboration with entities that may or may not have similar vision and

mission. In other words, when a ship out at sea encounters a storm, the ship's crew prays that the captain at the helm is a brave, seasoned sailor with strong navigational skills.”

Response 6: “Open and honest discussion.”

Response 7: “A good leadership style would be to have a good understanding of what the workers are experiencing and acknowledging their feelings; having empathy and respect for the effort that is being made to do excellent work. Also understanding time frames for getting things done or not being able to do all that you would like to do because of time. If you would like for me to put services in place for a particular client, know that I will not have the time to do it for ALL the clients I serve; there's not enough time. And, it feels disrespectful to ask me to cancel my appointments so I can do another task you fill is more important. Yet, when I'm evaluated it's based on the work you made me put off for something you considered more important and then you forget.”

Interview Questions for Organizational Leaders in APS and CPS

Question 1: How long have you been employed in this department?

Response 1: 20 years

Response 2: 11 ½ years

Response 3: 16 years

Response 4: 14 years

Response 5: 12 years

Data Analysis- Question 1

All respondents have been employed with Solano County Health of Social Services for at least 11 years and were selected based upon their experiences as organizational leaders within

their departments. Three separate hierarchical levels participated in this interview process and included front line supervisors, mid-level managers, and executive leaders.

Question 2: Have you ever been employed as a line worker in an APS or CPS Department?

Response 1: Yes

Response 2: No

Response 3: Yes

Response 4: No

Response 5: Yes

Data Analysis- Question 2

Three of the five respondents have been employed as line workers either in APS or CPS. This experience can offer additional insight as to the challenges that face social workers providing protective services and the preferred leadership style desired within these departments.

Question 3: How important is it to you that employees in your department are motivated?

Response 1: “Very important. We’re in a service industry and you’re dealing with people’s lives. Those in crisis situations and it is draining in itself. The desire to continue doing the work must be drawn from some level of motivation and I don’t know what that would be.”

Response 2: “100 percent. Motivation drives excellence in our performance and limits the risk of hurting our clients and limits the risk of others hurting our clients. Unless the front line is motivated to do the best they can, there is no need to perform these services. It’s called behavioral economics. You have a scarcity and opportunity mindset. Scarcity focuses on the problem and the social worker becomes embedded in the problem. This is what typically happens. An opportunity mindset looks outside the box and sees the client as a person and supports them as a person. For this to happen the social worker must be supported by the home

office. Unless this happens we shouldn't send front line workers into the field. We need to be asking how their doing and what do you need from me."

Response 3: "High. I believe in collaboration. Decisions that are important to program implementation should be a collaborative process. Line workers are the subject matter experts and should be involved. They know how the program translates to field experience and they provide the best source of information, especially to new employees. I as a supervisor need to facilitate that happening."

Response 4: It is very important that they are motivated to enjoy coming to work and wanting to do the job, working with the clients. It's a difficult job and can be stressful, will be stressful, it's automatic. I would like to see the workers have the ability to be fresh every day and not become jaded. They need to figure out what will keep you fresh. If the county or your employer can help with that, that's good too, but they can't wait on the employer to get you motivated, you have to be able to get yourself motivated.

Response 5: Pretty important. If they're not motivated it puts a damper on the work that they do. You achieve better outcomes when you're motivated.

Data Analysis- Question 3

All respondents agreed that motivation plays a critical role for their workers and is closely tied to performance outcomes and achievement. While one of the five respondents provided limited information as to the direct effect that motivation or its absence could have on workers, the remaining four gave more detailed responses which were significantly different. Two of the four expressed strong support for a collaborative relationship between management and staff with leadership taking primary responsibility for ensuring ongoing support and accessibility for workers. However the remaining two respondents seemed to question where the

source of motivation should originate. Respondent one stated, “I don’t know what that (motivation) would be”, while respondent four minimized the role that leadership should play in this process, stating “they can’t wait on the employer to get you motivated, you have to be able to get yourself motivated.”

Question 4: What do you do to increase employee motivation?

Response 1: It’s a hard job helping people. I remind them why they wanted to do this job in first place and help them see the little victories. You have to have some good in the day. I acknowledge where they are and if there are deficits or things within my control to change, I will. I try to find out why people are struggling and emphasize that we are a team and we are in this together.

Response 2: Involve all staff in the decision making. I drafted a policy for policy making. All staff is involved in drafting policies. All staff discusses policy. Once there is a consensus to move forward, the majority rules. If there is no majority, another round of discussion occurs. This satisfies the first standard deviation in capturing the main body of staff who are in support of the policy.

Response 3:” I try to stay positive, see the upside on everything and communicate that. I try to listen and keep an open door policy so that staff can come in and share whatever they have. I try to advocate for them to ensure that their voices are heard. I want them to know they have a supervisor who is present and make them feel like I’m there. I believe strongly in creativity to boost morale, but I also feel that there should be structure to take away uncertainty. Good communication and being truthful about the circumstances that we’re in. It takes away unknowns, which creates anxiety, and reduces morale. The job of the supervisor is to keep their team informed so that anxiety does not complicate a situation.”

Response 4: “I try to see it, say it. If I see people doing a good job, I tell them. I also use graphics in emails, such as a balloon that says great job, have a good day. I am trying to start giving out kudos, pats on the back at staff meetings, so that everyone can see.

Response 5: I speak to their strengths and remind them why they are doing this work. I help them to see the director’s vision and the vision for the department.

Data Analysis- Question 4

Providing opportunities for increased communication and collaboration were described as key strategies used by leadership to increase employee motivation. Verbal affirmation and reminders that speak to worker performance and the societal contribution that they make were also emphasized. While communicating a job well done was reported as being a pattern of behavior maintained by all respondents, only two viewed the inclusion of worker feedback on departmental policies and procedures as being a part of their leadership style. Respondent five discussed the importance of helping staff see “the director’s vision and the vision of the department”, yet did not acknowledge the input of staff as being an essential part of that vision. Data shared within the literature review supports employee participation and collaboration as a critical component to achieving increased motivation and job satisfaction.

Question 5: What increases job satisfaction for journey level social workers in your department?

Response 1: Making sure the desk next to them is not empty. When we’re not filling up (seats), it is hard. Not enough staff, not being trained, not having clear expectations. They have to have the tools to do the job. Staff realizes that there is only so much they can do and morale goes up and down. They want management to work with them and realize what is on their plate.

Response 2: Getting the tools that they need. A supervisor who practices reflective supervision. They need support from the director and manager; that the caseload is not overwhelming.

Caseload caps are seen as workers not wanting to do work, when in actuality a cap is needed so that workers can do high quality work. This is an important part of giving them job satisfaction.

Response 3: Currently, right now job satisfaction is self-created. They know what a good job is and when they are able to complete a case and define it as being good work; that creates job satisfaction for them. Having ample resources and the tools to do a job well creates job satisfaction. When we don't have those things it creates job dissatisfaction. When they are able to reduce risk and meet the need (of their clients) there is great job satisfaction. When they meet people who want help, say thank you for it, and go on to have a better life after engaging with the worker engagement, that is job satisfaction.

Response 4: I don't know. I'm not sure. I think I would have to ask them. If I think globally, less work I think. More workers, being listened to, being heard. Being involved in the decision making process. I think that is a good question to ask the people directly. We should ask the staff, so that I know what increases job satisfaction. I think you can get bored doing the same thing and having an opportunity to do something different might help.

Response 5: Research says that the majority of it is the relationship an employee has with their supervisor and I agree. Also their personal commitment to serve parents and families. However much they are invested in that, it will show and help them to perform well.

Data Analysis- Question 5

Supplying staff with tools and training was reported as primary factors needed to increase job satisfaction. The addition of new employees, a reduction in caseloads, and a personal commitment to the work being performed were also seen as essential components to achieving

this outcome. Only one responder acknowledged having no knowledge of what increases job satisfaction for staff as the question had never been posed. While the remaining four appeared comfortable relying on research and what they perceived to be ways to increase satisfaction, only one of five found this to be a question that actually needed to be asked.

Question 6: What interferes with job satisfaction for journey level social workers in your department?

Response 1: Not enough staff is the biggest thing and fairness. Not feeling like they are being treated fairly. Leadership being inconsistent with all staff. People are willing to accept correction, but it better be across the board. Everything is about numbers, the number of cases and different treatment. It is important that everyone (be part of) the team. Workers who are out for themselves within the department (interferes with job satisfaction).

Response 2: Top down management. Rules that don't make sense and are not explained. It is management's job to say, yes we know this doesn't make sense, but this is what we can do. Missing support from the home office, being given ineffective tools, an HR department that is not providing the recruitment we need (interferes with job satisfaction). Management is the nervous system of the company, its' what supports then line worker. If (management) doesn't work, the line worker starts to die on the line. Workers are placed between a rock and a hard place, the client and the home office. You can only sustain this for so long before you say this is not working and look for another job.

Response 3: The division falls short in utilizing their journey level workers to participate in a collaborative process for the betterment of the program. Improving program implementation and the uniformity of how services are delivered. Management is more top down than collaborative. Social workers need to be directly involved in developing our best service. In this division

everyone is chasing their tail, putting out fires, and performing crisis management. We need to get out of that and get into forward planning and building a mechanism for more participation in service delivery. I feel that we should have lead social workers, which should be an increase in position and pay. The position could provide program quality assurance and allow workers to publicly represent the agency, which we should have. It becomes a step up and we don't have those merits or bonuses in government public services. There are ways to recognize hard work through incremental promotion and recognize a worker's commitment to time and excellence with a status bonus.

Response 4: Resources. The main thing is resources. I think supervisory support. I'm not sure if that is at the level it should be in this division. It is not at the level it should be. Money within the county and available resources will help with job satisfaction. Too many changes that were beyond our control; there was no clear, consistent captain of the ship.

Response 5: When they are disenchanted. When they feel that the department doesn't care about them as a person.

Data Analysis- Question 6

Communication, collaboration, consistency and control were identified as primary factors creating interference with the level of job satisfaction among social workers in APS and CPS. Although all respondents agreed on what negatively impacts job satisfaction, three out of five respondents placed blame on a level of leadership other than their own for the problem. Respondents placed blame on "management", "the home office", "HR", "supervisors", and "the department" with few citing ways in which they might individually be helpful in correcting what has been determined to be wrong.

Question 7: What is your preferred way for social workers to offer feedback or suggestions in you department?

Response 1: (Provide information) not as a criticism but as a way we can do things better.

Recognize that things done wrong are not done with ill intent. They can communicate orally or in writing. Problems can be presented with or without solution, we still want to hear if something needs to be fixed.

Response 2: There are three, 1) anonymous whistle blower feedback 2) non-anonymous direct feedback, an open door policy, 3) institutionalized feedback, setting agenda items in meetings or allowing the worker to stand up and say let's talk about this or that. There should be an openness from management and we should be eager to hear and be critiqued.

Response 3: Personally. Just come in and talk to me. I like it when they identify a problem and a possible solution. I like the idea of ownership, not just ownership of the solution, but of the program. It shows that you are vested and interested in its success and doing your best.

Response 4: I try to have an open door policy. Come to me. Come to your supervisor and share it in a constructive way. It depends on what the feedback is regarding. General stuff can be presented in an open forum or meeting. If it is more specific about another person, it should be one on one. It depends on whether it is positive or negative. If it is constructive feedback it should be one on one, not in the hall way and not with raised voices. I think we have had times where constructive feedback was shared in a negative way and that is not okay. Everyone should be respected and be treated respectfully.

Response 5: Face to face during supervision or outside of supervision time. Just sit and have a conversation.

Data Analysis- Question 7

All respondents reported being open to in person feedback that is either scheduled or unscheduled, with most supporting both positive and negative feedback. While one respondent expressed a need to welcome and encourage critique with eagerness another appeared more reserved in their acceptance of negative feedback, which can have a direct impact on staff. If staff believe their feedback to be unwelcomed it may then be withheld and prove negatively on employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Question 8: Describe the current level of team spirit in your department?

Response 1: Our morale is up because we are seeing people in seats and we are closer to full staff. There is a lot of new staff and they start with a lot of excitement and energy. If I rate morale (on a scale of) 1-10, I would give it an 8.

Response 2: I think there is eighty-five percent comradery. They know that they have each other's back. They know my supervisor has my back. I'm not sure of management. Comradery is peer based. When management makes mistakes, the staff should come together as a group and present their concerns to management. We have Joint Labor Meetings and the union is being recognized as an important body by management, recognized as a partner in planning.

Response 3: Workers are feeling that collectively they are a team and they support one another and help to take care of one another. Overall they work well together. As a unit they are committed to the programs and have a heart for the program. They are willing to support each other by sharing information, resources and strategies. That being said, I think there is an, us vs. them (mentality) with line supervisors and that is lumped into management. Work needs to be done that makes the team, including supervisors and management more collaborative. There is a

top down, more old style kind of authoritarian type hierarchy of decision making that does not work well with social services. This division is mixed up and indecisive, creating muddiness.

Response 4: I think it is less than average. I'm not sure that everyone supports each other in a constructive way. There is an, us against them mentality. I think there are microcosms of teams; there are small teams within the department, but we are not one big team. It is not seen as being all of our work. I think the management team is really not a team. It's fragmented, the supervisory team is fragmented. I think that this is evident for people who are paying attention. It has created an environment that (makes it) okay to be in silos and not together.

Response 5: It is still pretty low right now. There is something that employees feel that they need right now and upper management doesn't hear them. They need to feel that management cares and that is going to be different for each individual.

Data Analysis- Question 8

While workers are described as having a high level of comradery and team spirit amongst themselves, respondents acknowledge an existing rift between staff and leadership. An "us against them" mentality has affected employee morale and is derived from unmet worker needs, perceived fragmentation amongst leadership, and an authoritative leadership style. The status of these two departments is further complicated by the inconsistent views maintained by department leaders as to the state of employee morale. Two of the five respondents describe morale as being "8 out of 10" and "eighty-five percent". While the remaining three identify it as being "mixed up, indecisive", "less than average", and "pretty low".

Question 9: How does your leadership team demonstrate appreciation for your employees?

Response 1: We created a board that recognizes employees who are doing well. Supervisors write (something) at the end of the month and give it to staff. The board is currently filled up.

The Director also acknowledges them. We have another board for birthdays and one day during the month, those with birthdays come and have cake. We also pick someone to feature every month. The county has created a new training called Investment in Excellence. The supervisors are currently attending and they really enjoy it and things are becoming more positive. We're moving towards (adding) more staff to decrease caseload and morale is slowly moving up. We are trying to keep people by getting them fully trained.

Response 2: That is where we're lacking. We are so busy reacting to changes at the state, we forget about appreciating our employees. Real appreciation is not a plaque, but supporting the needs of the employees. This is done through flexible work schedules, allowing for family time, a balanced personal life and having managers that support that. These are opportunities that we haven't materialized.

Response 3: I personally go to individuals and say thank you. I try to send notes of recognition for creative work. Not as much as I like. I don't think we have a good system of recognition. We have had attempts at it, we used to do it better, but it's not done very well now. Certificates and potlucks get old. It goes back to what we need to do more of, establish a standard of excellence that is well communicated and when met consistently recognize that excellence. The symbol doesn't matter, but the recognition does. We are not clear on what excellence is and not clear on recognizing it. In government systems it is very difficult. Ceremony and recognition is an art and I don't think government agencies do it well.

Response 4: I'm not really sure because I think that the supervisors feel (that) if I talk to you, if I have an open door, you should know I support you. I want them to do more, show it more. They feel that they do. But I hear workers say that they are not told they do a good job. Obviously

the way that the supervisors are doing it is not being felt. I need to ask staff how they want to be appreciated.

Response 5: We have social worker appreciation every year and we have a board where management can tell employees they are doing well.

Data Analysis- Question 9

While steps have been taken to increase employee appreciation in both APS and CPS there is overall consensus that more could and should be done. Acknowledgement boards and certificates along with annual appreciation potlucks and luncheons round out the extrinsic examples of appreciation that currently exist. Respondents identify this as being an area that is “lacking” and “not done very well.” Data contained in the literature review supports the use of more intrinsic forms of appreciation which include added support and input, establishing a standard of excellence that is recognized, and the incorporation of flexible work schedules that allow for increased personal time.

Question 10: What leadership skill training must department managers complete in this organization?

Response 1: We had to complete the Investment in Excellence training, which is something new and currently occurring. We also have core training for supervisors and county trainings through HR.

Response 2: It depends. We have 3 levels. 1) Investment in Excellence, which provides a positive psychology based system of planning and behavior changes that brings behaviors closer to then values of the organization and allows workers to formulate the values of the organization. 2) Training prescribed by each individual director, such as Strengths Finder, which is used by supervisors to pull out the strengths of their employees. 3) Individual coaching, the tools that

managers choose to use for themselves and a coaching model that holds them accountable for what they want to achieve. When managers set their own goals they are typically higher goals than will be prescribed to them through directives.

Response 3: We have to attend a series of leadership trainings put on by HR when we are first hired. It is a onetime mandate and is all about personnel. That's it. For newly hired supervisors mentor trainings are available if desired. Being a good supervisor develops over time, being paired with a mentor who coaches you as things come up is needed. Fortunately we have had really good managers that have made themselves available to new supervisors. Collegial support; but a lot of the burden falls on the individual to be proactive. We are going through an Investment in Excellence training now, which will lend itself to helping not only supervisors, but staff at every level. It will primarily help line supervisors, (as) it addresses elements that fall through the cracks. I think were on the right track. This division is going through an upheaval like never before. We'll see how it goes.

Response 4: I don't think anything is a requirement. The HR Leadership Academy is available, but I don't know if it is a requirement or not. All supervisors here have completed it, but it is a onetime thing. The UC Davis training is phenomenal, the best training I've ever had. To improve you have to make an investment and make an effort. Some supervisors say (trainings) are not useful, I've been doing this for a while, I'm on my way out, or I don't have time. It is weird for me to understand.

Response 5: HR leadership academy classes, which are one time only classes and an intermittent series of webinars, but that's new and I don't know much about it.

Data Analysis- Question 10

A level of inconsistency is evident when determining what leadership trainings management must complete. Respondents offered varying responses with no one training being identified by all responders. Most agree that leadership training within Human Resources are available to newly hired supervisors, yet there is no agreement as to whether this training is required or not. This confusion becomes indicative of the inconsistencies that exist in the styles of leadership that currently make up these two protective service departments and the resulting impact it is having on the staff therein.

Significant Findings

A review of the completed survey questionnaire, social worker comments, and in-person interviews has disclosed a clear disconnect between staff and leadership within the APS and CPS departments. Workers have identified ways in which employee motivation and job satisfaction are lacking and the role that leadership plays in this regard. Organizational leaders hold several misconceptions as related to how they perceive their staff to think and what they envision for them. In order for these issues to begin the process of resolution, communication between the two sides becomes paramount, with the formidable “us vs. them” mentality being abolished. Failure to take these steps towards resolution will continue to erode attempts at organizational success, improved relationships with management by staff, and the establishment of a motivated and satisfied organizational core.

Chapter 5- Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine what affect transformational leadership would have on employee motivation and job satisfaction within Solano County Adult Protective and Child Protective Services. The study's main assumption concluded that the implementation of a transformational leadership style within these two departments would better serve the intrinsic needs of social workers and have a positive effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction.

The qualitative data obtained from survey questionnaires given to social workers within APS and CPS, in-person interviews completed with leadership within these two departments, and the literature review supports the main assumption. The data indicates that although a significant number of social workers understand their responsibilities within the department (56%) and believe that the organizations goals are clearly defined (43%), the managerial structure lacks the collaborative environment that transformational leadership requires. The perceived denial of input or opinion by workers into how departmental decisions are made and how the organization is structured has resulted in the erosion of motivation and satisfaction.

The literature review provided study results, as well as scholarly opinions that placed great emphasis on the role of leadership and the strategies needed to achieve high performers. Information gathered supports the necessary inclusion of intrinsic factors that include 1) appreciation of work being done, 2) inclusion in decision making, and 3) becoming a part of the organizational shared vision. Results derived from the qualitative survey strongly suggest that these factors have not been incorporated in the protective service departments in Solano County.

Employee Appreciation

Workers responded strongly when asked whether they were rewarded for making progress towards organizational goals, with 62% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that this is the current practice within their department. Data obtained from organizational leaders supports these results by acknowledging that this is an area where they “are lacking” and that the departments don’t have a “good system for recognition”. This lack of recognition has negatively impacted the professional relationship between staff and organizational leaders with 71% stating that management is not highly respected. Three out of the five organizational leaders agreed with employee perceptions by rating morale within the department as “less than average”, “pretty low”, and one that maintains an “us vs. them mentality”. Leadership responses identified a common thread for correcting this departmental dysfunction which consisted of core transformational characteristics and the elimination of transactional qualities which include an authoritative and hierarchical mindset.

Inclusion in Decision Making

Survey findings show a pattern of top down decision making by managers that has left staff questioning the process, benefit and appropriateness of decisions being made within their departments. Fifty percent of workers disagree that decisions clearly benefit the organization, while only 25% find that decisions are being made after necessary information has been received. Of those interested in offering input or feedback concerning organizational decisions over 53% report that the sharing of ideas is not encouraged, while 65% find that their ideas are not being utilized to make improvements to the organization. Furthermore, a 68% majority state that decisions are being made without everyone’s views being taken into consideration.

The unwelcomed input and feedback felt by workers appears to be less evident to organizational leaders given their responses to preferred methods for the receipt of information or suggestions within their department. Management reported the embracement of direct feedback through the use of an open door policy, anonymous submission, and open dialogue at meetings. An inconsistency however exists with some reporting a need for eager acceptance of information and critique, while others are more cautious and restrictive in their preferred receipt of negative feedback in particular. Mixed messages have clearly been disseminated to staff who according to data have chosen the path of least resistance. Worker statements included in the qualitative survey describe current department culture as being one where they must “stay off the radar or cover your behind”, where “the concern for employee thoughts and wellbeing are not recognized”, and where “senior staff are not valued”.

Shared Organizational Vision

With 96% of social workers within APS and CPS maintaining a Bachelor Degree or higher, a financial and educational commitment to protecting the needs of the county’s most vulnerable population is evident. Yet a commitment to providing these services within Solano County appears to be more uncertain. Thirty-four percent of workers surveyed have been employed for less than five years, while 62% report that new employees generally do not remain with the department. The frequent turnover of workers impacts not only those who are left behind to continue their employment in the department but those who are dependent on the services being provided.

A shared organizational vision and leadership model is essential to employee retention. Organizational leaders shared their ideas for increased job satisfaction as being associated with additional staff, tools and resources, and a commitment to serve their clients. Only two responses

mirrored what workers actually desire most, “support from leadership”, “being listened to, being heard” and “being involved in the decision making process”. It is only after this message has been received and acted upon consistently by all organizational leaders that a shared vision can be achieved. With a majority of managers seemingly unaware or uninterested in what APS and CPS social workers truly want the gulf that exists between the two sides will only grow wider with the greatest effect being experienced by those whom workers are charged with protecting.

The lack of employee motivation and job satisfaction for social workers within Solano County APS and CPS is only relevant as long as employees are willing to tolerate the imposing treatment being received. Once a decision has been made that the cost of performing protective services in Solano County is too high they will continue to take their talents elsewhere. As one member of leadership advised, “Workers are placed between a rock and a hard place, the [needs of the] client and the home office. You can only sustain this for so long before you say this is not working and look for another job”. The likely hope of those not only working but residing in Solano County is that the deficits and drawbacks of the current transactional leadership style will be eliminated and the collaborative and inclusive benefits of transformational leadership will be incorporated before those once eager and dedicated to the field of social work grow more disillusioned and ineffective.

Recommendations

Utilizing the results of this study I have concluded that Solano County Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services should implement a transformational leadership style into their departments. A six month pilot program is being recommended to analyze the benefits and drawbacks that this leadership model may bring. If the results of this pilot show an increase in employee motivation and job satisfaction consideration should be given to permanent implementation. In order to proceed with the operation of this pilot program the following recommendations are being suggested.

Recommendation One

By April 1, 2015 the Executive Leadership team within APS and CPS along with the County Human Resources Department will implement a series of mandatory leadership skills training modules that focus on the characteristics and qualities of transformational leadership. The results of this study uncover a critical need for consistent knowledge and information amongst department leaders. A streamlined training program will ensure that managerial expectations are clear, concise and consistent at every level. This sends a unified message to staff which increases levels of trust and respect. Trainings should be completed on an annual basis for existing leadership staff and upon hire for new leadership staff.

Recommendation Two

Beginning January 1, 2015 the APS and CPS departments should incorporate quarterly all-staff meetings to review current policies and procedures and seek input from staff as to their appropriateness. A key aspect of transformational leadership is to build strong communication amongst all relevant stakeholders and create an environment where it is safe for staff to provide both positive and negative feedback. This process will allow for the removal of outdated and

ineffective policy and challenge organizational norms to determine their value. This venue will also allow for the creation of new policy that may prove to bring about higher levels of effectiveness and efficiency.

Recommendation Three

Beginning January 1, 2015 the APS and CPS Departments should incorporate subordinate reviews that will be included as part of the annual performance evaluation for administrative staff. The top-down model has historically focused on highlighting the strengths and weakness of staff from a managerial perspective without any information being shared from a subordinate perspective. Staff should be granted the ability to submit confidential electronic questionnaires that evaluate the performance of their superiors. This acts as a form of recognition that can emphasize an area where a leader may excel as well as those areas where improvements are needed. This tool will also give department leaders direct access to the intrinsic factors deemed to be of most importance to staff and their professional needs.

Recommendation Four

By April 1, 2015 the Solano County Human Resources Department should conduct exit interviews with those who have chosen to resign from employment within APS and CPS. Exit interviews performed outside of the department of employment are more likely to result in the receipt of honest feedback as related to department culture. What has worked, what is not working, and why the social worker has decided to end their employment with Solano County would be the focus of this interview.

Research Limitations

While the study supports the implementation of a transformational leadership model within Solano County APS and CPS, there are limitations to the study. With only 63% of APS

and CPS social workers responding to the qualitative survey a complete outlook of what workers want from their department leaders cannot be obtained. Those who chose not to complete the survey may have arrived at this decision for a variety of reasons and it is unknown whether those responses would have had a significant impact on study results. Also to be noted is that a high number of respondents failed to take a position using the Likert scale provided and would neither agree nor disagree with survey statements. Additional limitations may have occurred based upon the selection and participation of organizational leaders interviewed. Although a cross section of department leaders was requested, one individual did not respond to requests for an interview, limiting administrative responses in one of the departments to two instead of three.

It must also be understood that implementation of transformational leadership does not guarantee that an increase in employee motivation and job satisfaction will occur. Given the complex nature of the work being performed in protective services the stress and frustration derived from the work itself may in fact play a greater role in worker burnout and attrition rates. The literature review, survey results, and in-person interviews have clearly established support for the use of transformational leadership in Solano County. The sole purpose of Health and Social Services as a Department and Adult Protective and Child Protective Services as a division is to safeguard the most vulnerable groups of people within our community from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Failure to meet this charge increases the overall risk to individuals and families with potentially life altering consequences. The provision of transformational services within our community then becomes dependent upon a transformational worker who has found value and satisfaction in an organizational culture that has been inspired and nurtured by a transformational leader.

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Appendix A: Qualitative Social Worker Survey

My name is Alicia Jones and I am currently completing my master's degree in public administration at Golden Gate University. I am inviting you to participate in a brief survey to obtain your personal perspectives on Organizational Leadership.

This survey should take you approximately 10 minutes to complete (and is being conducted via www.surveymonkey.com). You can start the survey now and complete it later; your response will be considered finished only when you press the "submit" button. Neither your name nor ID number is required to complete this survey. Your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous. The survey will only be used by me for the purpose of completing my project. I will not publicly release your responses or other information about you. If you have questions or difficulty completing the survey, e-mail me at mslici4@gmail.com. My hope is that you complete the survey by Friday, September 26, 2014.

Thank you in advance for participating and for helping me complete my research study. Your participation and input is important.

Please select one answer for each of the following questions.

1. Your current department of employment
 - Adult Protective Services
 - Child Protective Services
2. Years of employment in this department
 - 0-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16 years or more
3. Gender
 - Female
 - Male
4. Highest level of education completed
 - High School Diploma
 - Associate Degree
 - Undergraduate Degree
 - Graduate Degree
 - Doctorate Degree
5. My managers motivate me well
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

6. Management decisions clearly benefit the organization
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
7. Management is highly respected by staff
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
8. Discussion at meetings is generally open and honest.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
9. The feedback I provide to management is generally used to help make improvements to the organization.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
10. Most managers in my department avoid making decisions before they have the necessary information
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
11. Generally, my managers have good reasons for making decision changes.
Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
12. New ideas are generally received well in my department.
Strongly Agree

Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

13. My responsibilities are clearly defined.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

14. The organizations goals are clearly communicated.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

15. Authority is evenly distributed among our department leaders.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

16. I am generally rewarded for making progress towards the organizations objectives.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

17. Decisions in my department are generally made once everyone's views are considered.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

18. My job is recognized as valuable by the organization.

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neither Agree or Disagree
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

19. My department maintains an enthusiastic attitude towards working together as a team.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20. New employees generally remain with their department.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. My department optimizes most of its employees' abilities.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. Opportunities for promotion is encouraged by my department.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. My manager values my work performance.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

24. My manager could benefit from taking leadership training.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree or Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Please provide any additional comments you would like regarding what leadership styles work best in your department.

Appendix B: In-person Interview Questions

My name is Alicia Jones and I am inviting you to participate in a brief interview on Organizational Leadership. As many of you know, I am completing my master's degree in public administration at Golden Gate University and I would like to get your personal perspectives on this topic.

The interview should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. Your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used by me for the purpose of completing my degree. I will not publicly release your responses or other information about you.

I hope that you will participate in this interview because your input is important. Please let me know what date and time works best for you, preferably within the next week. Thank you for participating and for helping me complete my research study.

1. How long have you been employed in this department?
2. Have you ever been employed as a line worker in an APS or CPS Department?
3. How important is it to you that employees in your department are motivated?
4. What do you do to increase employee motivation?
5. What increases job satisfaction for journey level social workers in your department?
6. What interferes with job satisfaction for journey level social workers in your department?
7. What is your preferred way for social workers to offer feedback or suggestions in your department?
8. Describe the current level of team spirit in your department?
9. How does your leadership team demonstrate appreciation for your employees?
10. What leadership skill training must department managers complete in this organization?