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Impact of organizational culture on perceived job satisfaction of mid-level social workers

Dlamini, Phiwase Marilyn, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1993
IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON
PERCEIVED JOB SATISFACTION OF
MID-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKERS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Phiwase Marilyn Dlamini

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1993

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This work is dedicated

to the memory of my father ZIBUSELE GUMA
and to my mother BUSISIWE GUMA
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON THE PERCEIVED JOB SATISFACTION OF MID-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKERS

By

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The Ohio State University, 1993

Professor Nolan Rindfleisch

Organizational culture and job satisfaction are significant components in the retention of employees in an organization. This study is an effort to explore the impact that culture within the organization has on the perceived job satisfaction of mid-level social workers (supervisors). Job satisfaction is translated as commitment to stay within the organization. The study departs from an interpretivist paradigm in an effort to understand the meaning that the mid-level social workers make of their setting and their work, that provide job satisfaction.

The literature on job satisfaction, organizational culture and organizations as bureaucracies was reviewed. The theoretical framework that forms the basis for this study is the organizational culture perspective. The data were collected utilizing in-depth interviews, document analyses and participant observation. Criterion sampling strategies were used. Six participants were involved in the study as my sample.
Fieldwork was conducted over a six month period. In all eighteen interviews were conducted. The interviews were all audiotaped and transcribed.

Analysis involved three stages of "tale-telling," viz. presentation of the data through the "realist tale," the "interpretive tale," and the "reflexive tale" for the various themes that emerged. Themes that emerged from the study were divided into two, viz. from Idealism to Realism and From Realism to Retention. The first theme reflected on issues of entry into the supervisory position; the false assumptions brought into the position, and ultimately the reality of working as supervisors within this organization. The second theme reflected on issues of perceived satisfaction that helped retain these professionals within the organization. These include relationships that have been made within the organization and the reward and benefit structures. Findings revealed that commitment to stay was predicated on some elements of culture, i.e., the mission of serving children, longevity, and the reward structure.

Results indicate a commitment to the values of the organization, i.e. a commitment to serve and protect children and their families. All the participants were satisfied with and enjoyed their work, albeit alternative career paths had not been overruled. While the participants were not satisfied with all aspects of their jobs, there appeared to exist "global satisfaction" that results in their retention.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact that organizational culture has on the job satisfaction of mid-level professional social workers employed within public child welfare organizations, that results in their retention. Organizational culture, in this study, refers to acts of meaning, that are created by a group, as they interact, that translate into certain behaviors and decisions. These acts of meaning are based on major assumptions that exist in the organization resulting in people making decisions that work for the organization. The major assumption stems from beliefs and values that have been internalized and hence taken for granted. This notion of organizational culture draws on the work of Ott (1989). Job satisfaction refers to commitment to stay within the organization.

This study arises out of my interest in the subject of organizational culture and issues of job satisfaction as they pertain to professional social work retention, in particular as they affect the mid-level practitioners. The study is an offshoot of a growing awareness of the potential power of organizations over the behavior of professional people within them, which may lead to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization in general, and their work, in particular. The study is a reflection of some of these concerns, through the lens of some professionals who were selected for the study.
Statement of the Problem

Mid-level practitioners, who are mainly social work supervisors in the agencies, work under a variety of constraints within organizations that stem from the balance that they have to maintain between their responsibility to top level management and frontline workers. Their role usually shifts from that of direct service practitioner to that of manager, sometimes without much preparation. Rycraft (1990:5) has suggested that, currently, the position at any public child welfare service in particular, is not "the best job to seek". Yet we continue to find social work professionals who are committed to staying on to get the work done in public child welfare agencies.

Thompson, cited by Schatz (1970), argues that supervisors operate in an organization-managing function which is concerned with the sustenance of the organization as a total entity i.e., with acquiring, assigning and planning for the orderly and coherent utilization of resources (p.38). They deal with people and therefore must give attention to interpersonal communication practices, to motivation, teaching and development and performance appraisal. This role of supervisor, according to Munson (1983:25), "requires mastery of a new perspective on work, new basic concepts, new emphasis on function, new sources of satisfaction, new status and new relationships with others in the organization." Their role as supervisors is a challenging one that rests on and is influenced by the existing culture of the
organization and that has implications for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work and hence their retention.

There are certain beliefs in most organizations about how things need to be done. These come from assumptions about the positions that different professionals hold within these organizations that are reinforced by conformity and compliance. These two elements are perpetuated through socialization and what has been described by Van Maanen (1988) as "people processing." Supervision, provided mainly by mid-level practitioners, is utilized in organizations to provide some form of direction and control of the work of caseworkers or direct service practitioners. The beliefs, especially about the authority that supervisors have or should have in the context of practice, stem from the professional and contextual values about the role of supervision. However, this authority is clouded in ambiguity, with several issues, especially those of limits of authority of supervision, not properly clarified. For example how much control should a supervisor have over the work of a practitioner and how much autonomy does the practitioner have?

For child welfare services, that continually face major problems of personnel, mainly because of how things are done within this context or because of the high level of expectation about their various roles, it seems imminent to focus research studies on these issues especially on personnel that are committed to remaining.

Research studies have, inevitably focused on the concern about turnover of frontline social workers who are not satisfied with the setting or context of practice. The challenge faced by stayers within these organizations, in particular, public child
welfare services, has not caught on. Furthermore, the focus of studies is on frontline workers more than on supervisors in these organizations. Supervisors, on the other hand, have the final responsibility for the work of these frontline workers. Such a burden is likely to bear upon how the job or the environment that the mid-level managers find themselves is perceived.

Issues of retention of social workers are just now receiving attention from a variety of research studies within the profession [Brode: 1990; Rycraft: 1990]. These studies have focused on the characteristics of stayers in the organizations and on the processes of performance, income and or organizational structure on retention of these social workers. Most research studies have not focused on the endurance of mid-level social workers that have resulted in their retention or commitment to stay.

There seems to be a compelling need to provide a different perspective in looking at factors that influence members' perceptions that lead to a desire to want to stay within organizations in spite of the listed constraints. Organizational culture is an effort to provide such a lens for describing the context in which organization members work; the assumptions, beliefs and shared experiences that results in a particular behavior and way of doing things.

Understanding organizational culture is of particular importance to social workers, not only in terms of their own behavior within organizations, but in terms of how they will eventually render a service within organizations and what type of service they will provide. The values of the broader society and the nature of the business of social work determine the type of service delivery. The people they have
to interact with in the course of doing their business, regulates life within organizations.

Social work service delivery operates within constraints of formal and informal regulations and rules that govern the haves and the have nots and how business will be run. These constraints do not render any service delivery an easy task as they determine the availability of resources and to whom these resources should be distributed and how they should be distributed. As a result, morale, enthusiasm and commitment of social workers are most challenged by the very nature of their business.

Furthermore, human service organizations, in particular, attract people who possess certain values and beliefs about human beings and are therefore predisposed to being socialized and to wittingly or unwittingly socialize newcomers into the culture of the organization. If one looks at the state of social work in America today, one is amazed at how these issues have played themselves out, to reflect the influence of the broader societal culture and the impact of organizational environment. The Reagan years, that turned the societal values around to be more conservative, had a lot of impact on social work delivery. Social workers were socialized into believing that societal problems were innate within people. Social programs were cut and now more than sixty percent of practicing social workers have adopted a more myopic view of social work, through private practice and clinical social work.

Brown (1973) argues that conditions that affect the individual within an organization will also affect the organization. This is an indication of the importance
of organizations. In emphasizing such importance, he continues to state:

our morning newspapers are full of reports of what organizations are doing..... but in the welter of information about particular organizations, through time, there is little insightful analysis or inductive generalization about the common denominator which persists through all manifestations and events - the phenomenon of human organization as such.

This influence that the organizations and their cultures have on the people, impact on the delivery of the human services. Denton (1976:1) believes that, not only do organizations influence professionals, but in part, determine the behavior of the individual, his or her performance and satisfaction. He cites Richan, who claims that.

. . "the behavior of the individual social worker within the organization will be influenced by the posture his profession assumes at large; and that posture, in turn, will be modified as the constituency of professional employees find a particular stance more or less consistent with the demands of the work setting." How organizations are managed have a bearing on the environment or climate within which these.

More understanding of human behavior within organizations is necessary in order to accumulate data and information about organizational culture. In working in this particular organization, that is, Franklin County Children's Services, social workers have wittingly or unwittingly participated in and shaped a culture within this organization, through shared understandings and meanings about ways of doing things.

Knowledge is power and human service organizations need this knowledge to strategically plan, organize and survive. More industries are focussing on what they call corporate culture because they believe there is a link between organizational
culture and organization behavior. Social workers are employed within bureaucratic organizations, be they public or private, specialist or generalist. A focus on the impact of organizational culture on these professionals seems indicated. Arches, [1991:202] argues that bureaucratization, controls introduced by funding sources and limits on autonomy are becoming more characteristic of the "social services workplace". She further argues that the bureaucratization of social work resembles that of the worker in industry, where authority and discipline imposed by sponsors undermine autonomous input. However, sometimes it is not so much the expectation of the sponsors more than the assumptions about what social workers understand their tasks to be, the acts of meanings they create that influences their behavior within organizations.

There is a need for a bank of knowledge that will inform planners and educators how human service organizations impact on the behavior and hence the commitment to stay within these organizations by the individual mid-level social workers. The social work profession should not remain behind on organizational behavior issues as they affect their human resource power.

The influence of organizational culture on the decision of some mid-level social workers to stay within organizations, when their counterparts leave, is not known. It seems opportune to learn about the impact that organizational culture has on decisions to stay, and whether those decisions are linked to satisfaction with what the professionals view as adequate execution of expected roles or in meeting societal needs or whether it is loyalty to the organization. In short it is important to decipher
whether the commitment to stay arises out of "commitment" to organizational norms/values or out of satisfaction with what these supervisors do.

Focus of the Study:

The study focused on the perceived experiences of mid-level social workers about the organization and its culture. The emphasis was on job satisfaction, that was translated as commitment to stay within the organization. Commitment to stay is associated with job satisfaction in a generic sense. It is suggested in this study that what causes mid-level managers to remain within the organizations is attached to their satisfaction with some aspect of the organization e.g. the camaraderie within the organization, that makes the job worth the effort. The concern is the manner that organizational culture affects the execution of tasks and satisfaction with the job. Studying the experiences of professional supervisors provided depth of knowledge about this group of employees.

Social workers in such positions hold supervisory roles, usually recruited from mainstream social workers providing direct services. Mid-level supervisors were selected for study because they seemed to carry responsibility not only for their own productivity, but that of their subordinates as well. They are, wittingly or unwittingly responsible for releasing or blocking individual social workers' abilities and commitment in pursuit of effectiveness and efficiency. Their role seems to be very much linked to their ability to be satisfied or not satisfied with their work and hence
their commitment to stay or not stay.

Metzger (1987:291) claims "supervisors presently face a new breed of employees, more assertive, more knowledgeable about their rights and more demanding." He believes that those professionals who work at supervisory levels should possess a genuine interest in people and work itself to survive their jobs. It can therefore, be surmised that the job of the supervisors or mid-level managers is the most stressful within the human service organization. They serve as both a bridge and buffer between employees and management and vice versa. Hence, to remain within the organization, these professionals have to have feelings of being treated fairly, that is attached to equity and expectancy theories. However, all of these feelings occur within a certain culture that exists or should exist within an organization. In studies by Brode (1990) and Rycraft (1990) their findings suggest a link between supervision and the high turnover rate of social workers. This suggestion places heavy responsibility on supervisors.

The study, therefore, attempted to ascertain what it is about the culture of the organizations that persuades or commits the mid-level social workers to stay in the organizations and continue to do what they do. It identified and documented those aspects of organizational culture that impact on professional participation within the organization that results in perceived satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the organization. There was an in depth analysis of professional supervisor characteristics and organizational characteristics that shed light on the culture and sub-cultures in the organizations that impact on social work activity.
A set of questions was devised that provided the necessary focus and guided the discussion with the social workers. These focusing questions included, among others, the following:

- What led to your reasons for choosing this organization as a place of employment?
- What characterizes a social worker who remains in this particular organization for as long as you have?
- What experiences within the organization have persuaded you to want to remain in it?
- What is it about this organization and its people, that you want to continue to work in it?
- What is most satisfying and or dissatisfying about working in this organization?

The argument that is put forward here is that the conditions that affect the individual affect the organization as a whole. Organizations operate differently throughout because of the differential influence of culture, political, economic and social influences.

Significance of the Study:

Issues that affect job satisfaction and the resultant retention of professionals within organizations seem to be of high priority within the profession in general and within public child welfare in particular. This study traversed new territory that
produced new knowledge about how beliefs, norms and language within the organizations impact on the commitment to remain within the organization of mid-level professionals. Rycraft (1990:5) suggests that "public child welfare positions are not currently viewed as the 'best' job to seek and there appears to be few if any counterbalancing effects for all the reported minuses."

The implications of this statement for the public child welfare organizations are tremendous especially in investigating issues of culture and satisfaction. It appears imminent that focus should be on the professionals who continue to stay within these organizations to ascertain the factors that contribute to their retention. The organizations need to accumulate information that will enhance not only the employment and retention of social work managers, but also their professional training.

The argument is that much of what happens within organizations is not recorded and kept for posterity. This study is an effort to achieve this goal. Professional social workers need to accumulate information that will enhance these major factors.

Presentation of the Study.

The study is presented in the following fashion: CHAPTER 1: This chapter provides an overview of the study which includes an introduction; the statement of the
problem that was studied; statement of its significance and its focus.

CHAPTER 2: This chapter presents a review of literature on issues of job satisfaction; organizational commitment and organizational culture.

CHAPTER 3: This chapter presents the methodology utilized in this study. This includes the research design, sampling methods, data collection, and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter presents findings of the research. This outlines excerpts of interview responses of the interviewees.

CHAPTER 5: This chapter includes discussion and the implications of the study for social work education, policy, practice and research.

The appendices include solicitation letters written to the official administrators for authority to undertake the research in the establishment and letters to the individual participants. Also included, are the form of consent, the interview guide and the approval form from the Human Subjects Review Committee.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction.

Patton (1990:163) argues that the literature review is useful in focussing the study and in assessing how other researchers have approached similar concerns. He warns, however, that care should be exercised if literature review is to be done before data collection as it may "bias researchers' thinking and reduce openness to whatever emerges in the field." For the purposes of this study, the literature review became a continuous process that was conducted simultaneously with the data collection. The trade-offs of this system are heralded by Marshall and Rossman, cited by Patton (1990:163) as "permitting a creative interplay among processes of data collection, literature review and researcher introspection." In this study, I selected to undertake literature review first and continue with it as I collected the data.

This chapter, reflects on three sources of data that portray issues of interest related to this work, viz., data that deal with job satisfaction issues, data that deal with organizational culture issues and lastly, focus is given to an approach selected for organizational analysis. The literature reviewed includes approaches that have been utilized to study issues pertaining to culture, job satisfaction, and organizations; research studies that have been conducted on these
satisfaction, and organizations; research studies that have been conducted on these subjects and the methodologies that have been utilized, including the rationale for the selection of these strategies in studying these phenomena.

JOBS SATISFACTION

Literature review of the subject of job satisfaction reflects a continuing effort to understand this concept. Brabson, Jones and Jayaratne (1990) report over 5000 articles, having been written on this subject and the effort not easing. They contend that job satisfaction has been viewed in a number of different ways in the literature. For example, they indicate that some studies have given it definitions that imply that it is a multi-dimensional concept (Quinn and Staines, 1978).

Conceptualization.

The concept of job satisfaction traditionally has been of great interest to social scientists concerned with the problems of work in an industrial society (Kalleberg: 1977). It has now shifted from being the domain of the business community. The utility of the concept "job satisfaction" is currently prevalent in many professions, not the least social work. Issues of efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability suggest a need for an examination of this concept. Furthermore, this may result in the improvement of the experiences of individuals as an end in itself (Kalleberg: 1977).

Heneman et al (1989:170) have conceptualized job satisfaction as feelings employees have about their jobs and the organization that employs them. They
believe that job satisfaction depends on the evaluation employees make of the job and environment surrounding the job. Their definition of this concept is the balance between "what employees actually experience at work (what is) and what values or desires for rewards the employees bring to the workplace (what should be)." The concern with job satisfaction is linked to the belief that it influences employee behavior e.g. turnover, and the belief that management is "doing alright by its employees." Arches (1991:202) contends that job satisfaction is an affective state describing feelings about one’s work. She argues that the concepts of burnout and job satisfaction can be used interchangeably. However, in this study, the concept of burnout is viewed as a separate concept that does not address the issues at hand.

Theories of job satisfaction contend that in most cases the employees will be satisfied with some aspect or component of the job or work environment. The claim is that not all the employees will be satisfied with all the aspects of the job all the time. These main job components or facets have been outlined by Heneman et al (1989) as

(1) organizational policies (e.g. compensation, promotion, or security).
(2) colleagues (e.g. co-workers or supervisors).
(3) the job itself.

The correct identification of facets that need improvement become important if the organization is determined to change aspects of the policy to improve employee satisfaction. This study encompasses all these components and further includes
satisfaction with the environment or how things are done around this organization. An added component to this conceptualization is the approach adopted in this research, for the understanding of job satisfaction. For purposes of the study, job satisfaction is further viewed as the commitment to stay (retention) within the organization.

Measures of Job Satisfaction.

Several instruments have been developed to measure the concept of job satisfaction. Arches (1991:203) in her study suggests two measures of this concept, the facet free measures (those measures that question about the workplace in general) and the facet specific measures (those measures that question about the effects of specific workplace variables on job satisfaction). According to Rycraft (1990), commitment can be differentiated as organizational, job, and professional, and stems from employees' interaction with their work setting. The argument put forward in the study is that organizational culture impacts on individual supervisors' job satisfaction—and hence commitment to stay.

While Rycraft points out the many contradictions tied to the notion of job satisfaction and commitment as different concepts, it is proposed in this study that there are some elements of "how things are done within the organization" that appeal to these professionals and hence keep them in this organization. This does not imply that they may be satisfied with all the elements of the job or organization.

Heneman et al (1989:175) mention the Job Descriptive Index and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The former carries five job facets, i.e.
satisfaction with (1) work itself, (2) supervision, (3) pay, (4) promotion opportunities, (5) co-workers. The latter scale carries twenty satisfaction facets; each facet is measured by five items ranging from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. They warn, however, that these measures sometimes do not take into consideration the biases that come with age of the employee—the claim being the older employees tend to be more satisfied than younger employees; the purpose of the survey—the claim is that if management is going to act on the findings there may be general honesty in responses and lastly bias may be caused by fear of reprisals by giving honest responses.

The main characteristic of the instruments is that they are quantitative. The problem with these measures is that they do not put emphasis on the subjective meanings and the experiences of the participants. It is the contention in this study that better understanding of job satisfaction could be achieved through learning about the experiences of the people in the field about their conception, in a dialogue, or what job satisfaction means to them.

Job Satisfaction Studies.

Studies in job or professional satisfaction abound. (Rindfleisch et al, 1958; Wancous, 1972; Locke, 1976; Jayaratne, Chess and Kunkel, 1986; Conway et al, 1987). In 1987, Conway et al. proposed that job satisfaction is a "matter of public concern since Hoppock published 'Job Satisfaction in 1935'." They believe that Hoppock's description of the concept of job satisfaction was very graphically presented. Hoppock, cited by Conway (1987), claimed that "... whether or not one
finds his employment sufficiently satisfactory to continue it, either permanently or until he has prepared himself for greater responsibilities is a matter of the first importance to the employer or employee. To the state the problem is no less significant: subject any group of normal persons to intolerable working conditions or revolt is inevitable; first in strikes; if they fail, in riots; finally, if necessary, in political or social revolution."

Conway's study does not resort to all these issues that Hoppock describes, more than that they seek to identify further facets or elements of the job that lead to overall satisfaction. Their study operationalizes job satisfaction as a feeling, or affective state, that an employee holds in relation to his or her job. They believe that overall job satisfaction is assumed to be composed of facets of job satisfaction e.g. pay, the task itself, the work group, the supervisor and the organization (p. 148).

Their study disputes earlier studies that connect job satisfaction and productivity. They assert that the modest and complex relationships identified between absenteeism, turnover and job satisfaction suggests that attitudes towards the job are related to employee behavior.

They acknowledge that this concept of job satisfaction which has been viewed as global and multifaceted refers to a "general feeling or attitude about the job." Their work relies heavily on the work of Wanous and Lawler (1972) which concluded that job facet satisfaction was the appropriate way to analyze job satisfaction because of the relationship that was established between individual facets drawn from different theories and measurement instruments.
Their study was a large scale research on satisfaction of public employees done in 1980 and in 1982. This study aimed at expanding facets presently included in job satisfaction models. They utilized the Likert-type scale with seventy-one closed-ended statements which included choices on a continuum, closely agree to strongly disagree. The statements included, "I have enough time to perform my job tasks"; "People who are most qualified get promoted"; "I could do a better job in this position."

The conclusions that they reached were that job satisfaction is composed of elements or facets of the job—rather than global measures that reflect a level of satisfaction constant across the varied components of a job that are important to employees. The authors emphasized that facets vary across agencies and cross sub-groups. This is linked to the idea raised by Heneman et al (1989) that emphasizes certain components of the work environment and the work itself.

Another study that reflects on issues of job satisfaction is one by Arches (1991). This study links social structure, burnout and job satisfaction. She studied social workers in Massachusetts in 1988 to better understand burnout and job satisfaction. Burnout was operationalized as "a cluster of physical, emotional and interactional symptoms related to job stress and included emotional exhaustion, a sense of lacking personal accomplishment and depersonalization of clients." Her claims are that past research focussed on encouraging social workers to cope with subordination, exploitation, and alienation. She believes that theories that have been previously used to study conditions within organizations have not attempted to confront social relations under capitalism and the class that benefits from workplace factors that are possibly
associated with burnout.

An important point that this study raises is that of the bureaucratization of social work. She believes that bureaucratization "allows for the control, centralization, and co-ordination of large numbers of workers in one location" (p. 203), and has authority and discipline imposed by sponsors, which rigidly enforces and schedules work hours and quotas thus undermining the autonomy of social workers.

She separates the body of knowledge that forms job satisfaction. She believes that this work is guided by three theoretical categories viz. personal, social and organizational. An important element of her argument is that studies of burnout or satisfaction should consider the historical and organizational context in which they occur. She describes the process of bureaucratization of social work which has resulted in isolation, fragmentation, and deskilling of professional social workers. Isolation is described as the "rule-governed and codified behavior; constraints on scheduling, and separation of services inherent to bureaucratic structure that is rule governed, characterized by codified behavior that limit peer consultation and informal interaction" (p. 203). She asserts that fragmentation of services prevents workers from holistically approaching their tasks through compartmentalization into narrowly-defined tasks and knowledge. Deskilling is viewed as the breakdown and destruction of a worker's generalized body of knowledge and professional skills as a result of the rationalization of skills, division of labor, specialization and reliance on the technology.
The instrumentation utilized in Arches' study includes the Maslach Burnout inventory. Job satisfaction was operationalized utilizing the Job Description Index by Smith et al (1967). Questions that were put to the social workers included issues of demography, organizational size, funding, and bureaucratization.

This study provided an exhaustive account of issues that are linked to issues of organizational behavior. The author attempted to adopt a macro-perspective that addressed issues outside the realm of the individual that affects job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The notion of the proletarianization of social work provides a conflict theory perspective in the understanding of the dynamics of social work practice. Arches (1991) contends that this proletarianization process "fuses three types of alienation: economic (the selling of a worker's labor power); organizational (the placing of external controls over pace of work and direction of work) and technical (the loss of power over the content of work) that inevitably produces the working class (p. 204).

While the supervisors can be viewed as above the process of proletarianization in practice, they, because of their mid-level status, belong in the same category as the direct service workers. The bureaucratic nature of organizations promote this culture within organization of "class"--the lower level and upper level administration; line workers and executives.

Job satisfaction should, therefore, have a direct link with the "seat" that each professional is occupying and whether that is the seat that the individual wants to continue to occupy. Previous studies have tended to blame the individual for his or
her inability to achieve job satisfaction. Elements of bureaucratization have not previously formed an agenda on job satisfaction and they need to.

Denton (1976), in his study, sought to explore factors in organizations that influence service delivery to clients. Among variables explored were leadership behavior and job performance. Job satisfaction was used as an intervening variable.

The study utilized community health centers and directors of administrative districts as setting and units of study. The sample consisted of eighty professionals. The data were collected utilizing questionnaires. The questionnaires were standardized and included Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire; Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire; Job Performance Rating Instrument. The method of analysis was the Pearson Product Moment correlation and Fisher's Exact Probability Test.

Denton (1976:25) asserted that much of the research on job satisfaction has tended to relate satisfaction to structural aspects of organization, to intrinsic satisfactions for the individual or to various leadership styles. On the whole, results on such aspects have tended to be clouded by ambiguity. He strongly believed that this was caused mainly by unclear conceptualizations of the concepts and a lack of proper and valid instruments. He was convinced that the tremendous amount of social welfare personnel turnover is sufficient evidence that there is a need to continue studying the concept of job satisfaction. He asserted that issues of job satisfaction are concerned with the needs of the individual in organizations, which issue was developed by the Human Relations School of Thought in organizational theory. He cited Galambos and
Wiggins who claimed that the turnover rate among public social workers was fifty-five percent (55%) separated from job within a three year period (p. 25). Denton's conclusions are that research on job satisfaction reveals a high level of satisfaction among social workers. Furthermore, he found that leadership is indeed, a factor in job performance. Those leaders who demonstrated the highest level of initiation of structure and considerate behavior, would have followers with highest satisfaction, and those followers most satisfied would have highest job performance rating.

Tsai (1990) undertook a study on the organizational environment and its relationship to social worker's absenteeism and overall satisfaction. This study examined social workers' perceptions of a selected aspects of job factors and their relationship to workers' absenteeism and overall satisfaction. Different organizational levels were examined, which included the individual needs for satisfaction, the nature of the work and work situation.

The sample consisted of social workers from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) members and full time employees of diverse service organizations. A one shot design was utilized. Methods of analyses included the Pearson correlation and regression.

This study found among other things, that three organizational factors correlated negatively with workers' absence frequency. These were agency policies, salary and working conditions. The study further discussed a "goodness of fit" between social workers and their work environment. Implication of the study is articulated as research, education, and managing social service.
Jayaratne and Chess' study (1984) focused on job satisfaction and turnover. They investigated the impact of job facets and job strains on physical and mental health. Job facets were viewed as job comfort, challenge, promotions, financial rewards, role ambiguity, role conflict, and workload. Their findings reflected that role ambiguity was a predictor of intent to change jobs among community mental health workers and child welfare workers Brabson et al (1990).

Studies by Brode (1990) and Rycraft (1990), while they do not link retention with satisfaction, appear to be linking certain organization experiences with commitment to stay within organizations. Brode, on the one hand provides a persuasive account in her study of public child welfare social workers that reflects on their experiences and commitment for remaining in the organization. Her argument, however, is that such commitment is related to their personal experiences and their strength for coping with adversities.

Rycraft (1990) refers to those social workers committed to staying within public child welfare institutions as "survivors." The focus of her study is on the employment process these social workers have experienced and their reasons for staying when others leave. Rycraft (1990) focused on retention of public child welfare workers (with specific reference to their recruitment employment process), with a view to assisting agencies to identify and reinforce the positive aspects of employees. The purpose was to ascertain factors involved in their decision to stay. She conducted an exploratory study using twenty-three caseworkers. Participants had a minimum of two years working for public child welfare. Her findings reflect that
the general theme predicted unplanned and unprepared entry to the field of child welfare. However, these caseworkers had linked their desire to work with disenfranchised families to the mission of the organization and learned on the job what was necessary to survive.

Over and above the challenges that these professionals faced, she declared that there was a "consistent voice throughout" and that was of the importance of the job and its tremendous responsibilities." This led to their commitment to stay within this organization. Furthermore, she found that factors involved in their decision to stay included (1) mission of the organization; (2) goodness of fit; (3) supervision, a view that the job is made manageable; and (4) investment. Found that for some social workers it was "the magnetism of the challenge" itself that draws them to the job. These social workers experienced personal rewards that come with helping others overcoming frailties of the job and comfort with their abilities.

There appears to be sufficient studies on turnover among professional social workers, and insufficient evidence about the commitment of those who do not leave the agencies. Rycraft (1990:237) believes that while "there has been a proliferation of studies addressing the concerns of caseworkers and administrative practices with a discernable lack of attention to the supervisor." The study that I intend to pursue seeks to address this need and fill in the gaps in knowledge about the retention of supervisors, focussing on the impact that organizational culture has on such commitment to stay.
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Ott (1989:174) attributes the use of the concept culture within organizations to Jacque (1952). He is said to be the first theorist to synthesize and coordinate most of the concepts related to culture within organizations.

The subject of organizational culture seems to hold an important and significant key for both human service organizations and corporations in general. Meek (1988:453) asserts that organizational culture encompasses all that is human within the organization. The proponents of organizational culture seem to hold the view that its understanding and promotion would bring about morale which would lead to productivity, efficiency and commitment. This, of course, is a view held by those managers who feel culture is something that can be manipulated. The belief is that a "strong" culture enhances productivity by reducing ambiguity within the organization because it imposes "structure", "standards" and a value system" Deal and Kennedy, (1982:16)

Conceptualization of Culture

The theorists of organizational culture differ significantly in the conceptualization of culture. Kroeber and Klucholm, cited by Allaire and Firsatrotu (1984) indicate an existence of some 164 definitions of this concept. Literature further reveals different ways in which it is utilized. Ott (1989) gives it an inductive connotation, which builds on generalized theoretical definitions from one's own experiences and assumptions. He believes that other authors use the deductive
definitions from generalized theories. Furthermore, other theorists give it functional
definitions. He asserts that there are five generally agreed upon functions of
organizational culture upon which its conceptualization can be deduced, namely:
a) organizational culture provides shared patterns of cognitive interpretations or
perceptions, so organization members know how they are expected to act and think.

(2) it provides shared patterns of affect, an emotional sense of involvement, and
commitment to organizational values and moral codes—of things worth working
for and believing in so organization members know what they are expected to value
and what they are expected to feel.

c) it defines and maintains boundaries allowing identification of members and
non-members.

d) it functions as an organizational control system, prescribing and prohibiting
certain behaviors

e) it strongly affects employee performance (p. 68)

The argument here is that quantity and quality of organizational performance holds
most hope for truly valuable applications of the organizational culture perspective.

Ott’s explanation of organizational culture is simple. He claims that “it is a
social force that controls the patterns of organizational behavior by shaping members
cognitions and perceptions of meanings, realities, providing energy for mobilization
and identifying who belongs and who does not” (1989:69).

Schein’s formal definition of organizational culture is articulated by Ott
(1989:172) as a "pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by
a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems."

Pettigrew (1979:574) views organizational culture as a reality—what allows people to function within a given setting. It is a system of publicly and collectively accepted meanings, operating for a given group at a given time. Furthermore, she argues that it is a source of concepts and language, ideology, symbol, belief, ritual, and myth. She claims that culture as a language typifies and stabilizes experiences and makes it whole. As an ideology, culture is viewed as a set of beliefs about the social world and how it operates. As a ritual, she views it as permitting a repetitive sequence of activity in a social situation to express meaning. Pettigrew's definition seems to carry the notion of meaning that organizations contain for the people within them. The elements of culture that she describes seem to emphasize interdependence—a convergence in a way they relate to functional problems of integration, control, and commitment.

Deal and Kennedy (1982:37) acknowledge the powerful influence culture within organizations claiming that it affects who gets promoted, and what decisions are made; how employees dress; what they play, etc. This happens through behaviors; norms, which are defined here by Ott (1987:37) as prescriptions for behavior that exists in every social context, including organizations and work groups in organizations. Furthermore, they are linked to rites and rituals within
organizations. The patterns of behavior within organizations determine how things are done in organizations and enlists the co-operation of members of the groups.

This thinking places a lot of emphasis on the potential of culture for the people of organizations to do the work. The concept seems belabored and used as a necessary variable for performance, commitment, and compliance. This argument seems to highlight the notion that organizational culture is powerful, that it can be manipulated for the success of the organization. This state of affairs renders organizational cultures as controlling phenomena, which go beyond the capability of a person within an organization to think and make decisions for herself or himself. It suggests a level of conformity, which is a phenomenon that can either be positive or negative.

Ott (1989:5), on the other hand, assumes a more generic than specific notion in his analysis of organizational culture. He views it as carrying a useful element of describing, explaining, and to some extent, predicting behavior when organizations face fundamental changes. His claim is that organizational culture is helpful in understanding and predicting a host of other types of holistic organizational phenomena and behavior that involve employee commitment, loyalty, leadership, effectiveness, succession, creativity, and innovation and organizational survival strategies.

The element of prediction, however, seems to be a self-defeating concept, given the notion that the culture perspective is descriptive and explanatory. The descriptive and explanatory measures focus on understanding the interpreting issues
for their meaning more than for predicting them.

This study adopts the view that organizational culture is something the organization is. Ott (1989), Meek, (1988), Smircich, (1983). This view holds culture as "the product of a negotiated and shared symbols and meanings; that emerge from social interaction" (Meek, 1988:463). This view of organizational culture is adopted from anthropology. Over and above this position, Ott (1989:1) also is of the opinion that culture is a way of looking and thinking about behavior of and in organizations. In other words, he views it as a lens of perspective for understanding what is occurring within organizations. He suggests that it is an unseen and unobservable force that is always behind organizational activities that can be seen and observed.

Studies In Organizational Culture.

The subject of organizational culture has since become a focus of recent studies by organizational theorists and researchers (Pettigrew, 1979; Ouchi, 1981; Allaire and Firsioirtu, 1984; Deal and Kennedy, 1982, and Ott, 1989). Previously, not much attention has been paid to the notion of organizational culture, in spite of being used in reference to organizations in the early fifties and seventies. Now articles and books abound that study the subject.

Literature reflects several studies that have been undertaken to look at issues of organizational culture and job satisfaction. Theorists whose work reflect an interest in this subject include Locke (1976), Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982), Williams and Hazer (1986), Wilson (1989) and Roussel (199). With the exception of the study by
Wilson, most of these studies relied heavily on quantitative methods of study.

Studies that are organizational culture oriented indicate a bias toward concepts of commitment, values and satisfaction. Commitment is defined as a strong belief in the organizational goals and values, and a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization. Glisson and Durick (1988) examined simultaneously, the ability of multiple variables of worker, job and organizational characteristics in predicting job satisfaction. Their findings stress the worker's beliefs about the organization in the development of commitment.

The work of Sinclair, Crosbie and Vickery (1990), produced findings that linked organizations and procedures in offices as influencing behavior of social workers and their satisfaction with work. They claimed that procedures impacted a lot on how social workers perceived their work.

Gutnecht (1982) suggests the existence of positive features of organizational culture eg. solidarity, a sense of community, harmonic relationships and emotional satisfaction. He criticizes the growing concern to measure formal and rational attributes of organizational life, instead of concentrating in collective goal and individualistic values.

Reichel, Neuman and Saad (1986) examined the relationship between organizational climate, job satisfaction and gender issues. Their focus was on school as a modernizing change agent. They represented school climate with negative atmosphere and relationship between staff and the school principal. Their findings were that negative feelings about atmosphere were with the males than females. With
the females it also formed a significant factor in the human relations facet only.

Studies that have been undertaken that link organizational culture and job satisfaction are few and far apart, especially as they relate to the profession of social work. Russel (1990) studied the concept of organizational culture and linked it with leadership styles, in a private psychiatric hospital. Her argument was that organizational culture was an important and essential component in the success in the health care industry, especially as the organizations attempt to rethink and improve performance and productivity. She agreed that existence of both corporate and organizational culture in an organization may cause conflicts for employees.

The study utilized inductive methods of participant observation, informal and formal interviews and lead self/lead others questionnaire, in attempting to investigate the meaning of organizational culture and leadership within this setting. She concluded by stating that the conceptual framework of both concepts demonstrated their interrelatedness.

Another study was that by Prince (1990) which examined the relationship between organization employees as communicators of their culture and their wider culture of the organization. He examined symbols, language and values which the individuals use in developing personal identity with organizational culture. He examined literature on symbolic interactionism; organizational culture; language and symbol systems. Nine group interviews of between two and three members were conducted using top management, middle management and primary worker levels. He found that workers draw from their organizational culture to form a personal sense of
identity, both consciously linking themselves to its values and unwittingly using its root symbols in relation to themselves. Furthermore, he found that dissatisfied workers use similar values and symbols used by satisfied workers, except that they invert meaning to express irony and disillusionment. Lastly, he found that top managers were more distanced from personal identification while primary workers personally identified with and used illustrations that link culture to themselves.

Wilson's study (1989) sought to assess the impact of organizational missions' culture on staff communication of human services. It sought to discern how culture informs staff of their relationship to their client population so that they communicate these services in certain ways as opposed to others. She narrowed the concept to focus on identity understanding, which, according to her, is a relationship between understanding and communication--how participants see themselves in relation to others, that is. to unveil the understandings which shape staff's perception of themselves.

She conceptualized culture as "those shared understandings which a group of people use in making sense of the experience and in determining action". The approach she utilized in her study seems relevant in light of the nature of the problem. Her aim was to decipher meaning - a subjective notion -, how this meaning bears on action.

The findings were that organizational culture does not evolve outside of the environment, but is a consequence of conditions of the situation - the wider culture. She suggested looking at how larger societal culture impact on organizational culture.
The study did not, however, look at issues of perceive job satisfaction by the professionals. The study also left gaps for inquiry of human service professionals who operate at different levels, for example, at mid-level or top level, as with top executives.

Organizational Culture Perspective: An approach in Organizational Analysis.

The profession of social work has seen a proliferation of theories and perspectives, both micro and macro, in recent years. As more scientific and naturalistic research is undertaken by social workers, more theories will be developed, stemming from testing hypotheses and from grounded theories. Munson (1983:9) suggests that there has been increased emphasis on theory to the point of confusion. He claims that there are over one hundred and thirty theories of practice competing for utilization.

As social work practitioners move through the jungle of theories, there is a danger of thinking that there are better theories than others and that these theories can be used to explain every situation. This danger, in most cases, is brought about by the gullibility, the uncritical acceptance and use of theories without checking their effectiveness and worth. The other danger is brought about by the belief that the theories are ends in themselves, panaceas and not frameworks designed to guide and describe.

The intimations of culture found in organization literature differ markedly with respect to underlying factors they emphasize as the shaping force of the behavior
within organizations. The different notions of culture result in different theoretical formulations. Organizational culture is used, for purposes of this study, as both what the organization is and as a perspective for studying organizations Ott (1989).

Ott (1989:140) argues that theories about organizational culture do not develop in a vacuum. They more often than not reflect what is going on in the world, i.e. the environment outside the organization. He argues that theories attempt to explain and predict how organizations and people within them will behave.

He continues to give an excellent explication of theories or perspective and their functions. He reflects on the conflicts existing within different schools of thought on organizational culture and how the theorists usually stick with what and who they know in their selection of what affects the world. In his perception, the organizational culture perspective derives from the evolution of organization theories over the years. He believes that these perspectives has been shaped by the following schools of thought:

-- The Classical School of Thought;
-- The Neo-Classical School;
-- The Power School of Thought;
-- The Human Relations School of Thought;
-- The Systems and Contingency Theories
-- The Modern Structural Organization Theories.

All these schools of thought have different assumptions and perceptions about how organizations work and how they should work.
The view of the organizational perspective is that organizations are human institutions, living organizations. Deal and Kennedy (1982) adopt the view that organizational culture provides cultural bonds that result in a cohesive environment. They claim that the strong cultures in organizations sustain them in difficult times.

They further acknowledge the powerful influence of culture within organizations, claiming that it affects who gets promoted and what decisions are made; how employees dress; what they play etc. (p. 193). This influence happens through behavioral norms, which are defined by Ott (1989) as prescriptions for behavior that exists in every social context, including organizations and work groups in organizations. The patterns of behavior within organizations determine how things are done and it enlists the co-operation of the members of the groups.

This thinking places a lot of emphasis on the potential of organizational culture for the people in organizations to do the work. Ott (1989) suggests that organizational culture is helpful in understanding and predicting a host of holistic organizational phenomena and behavior that involve employee commitment, loyalty, leadership, effectiveness, succession, creativity and innovation and organizational survival strategies (p. 5).

Yet the element of prediction seems to be a self-defeating concept given the notion that the culture perspective is descriptive, seeking meaning that people make of different situations they find themselves in. The emphasis in the understanding of organizational culture as a perspective is that it is not a panacea or magic answer to all organizational problems. It provides an approach for viewing, thinking about and
understanding organizational culture.

For human service organizations, Maiello (1991) argues that there is more at stake than issues of organizational culture and identity. He argues that the social work profession is always anticipating a new world, posing critical questions about the world they live in, accepting the need for societal conversion and remaining dissatisfied with the status quo. However, given this argument, the issue is that what the social workers are mostly dissatisfied with stem from or is a result of organizational culture. All organizations, regardless of size and purpose have a system of shared values and beliefs that produce norms and behavior. Social workers, though not motivated by profit, are motivated by a sense of accountability to their sponsors and clients.

Riley (1983) proposes a theory of structuration as a means of studying organizational culture. In her research to investigate the interrelationships of subcultures and to identify structures that govern political nature of organizational culture, she utilizes organizational political symbols and compares two firms. Her findings suggest that organizational culture should be viewed as a system of integrated subculture not as a unified set of values to which all organization members subscribe.

Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) propose a typology of cultural anthropological schools of thought to assist in the understanding of diverse and complex theories of culture advanced in this field. They make an effort to relate these different points of view to emerging notions of organizational culture. They further attempt to pull together the insights and findings to formulate an integrative concept of organizational
other authors give their own perceptions of organizational culture theories. Ouchi (1985), for example, reflects on the mainline concerns of sociologists by observing that they believe that the study of organizational culture is a return to some of the basic concerns about the manner of analyzing them. For example, sociologists contemplate paradigms that would be most appropriate for the understanding of organizational culture. These include phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, semiotics, structural functionalism, anthropology and cognitive psychology. Meek (1988:463), who criticizes the structural-functionalist approach, claiming that it relies too much on biological metaphors, with its insistence that social order is created and maintained through individual internalizing dominant social norms and values; proposes her own structure of organizational culture theories. She believes that theories fall into two categories or schools of thought, those that view culture as a variable; something that the organization has Cummings and Schmitz (1972); Deal and Kennedy (1982); Peters and Waterman (1982). Secondly, she asserts that there is a school of thought that views organizational culture as something the organization is (Morgan 1980; Smircich 1983; Ott 1989). This approach to culture portrays it as an integral part of the social interaction within the organization. The vital point established by Meek (1988:465) is that the task of the researcher in the field is, therefore, not to observe culture or structure per se, but to observe the concrete behavior of individual actors, because culture is not an entity, but an abstract concept.
used to analyze behavior.

Some Methodological Issues.

There remains a research agenda that has not been resolved concerning methodological issues in analyzing organizational culture. This issue of methodological strategies is currently of concern in most literature dealing with organizational culture. Ott (1989:50) argues that organizational culture is a concept and not a thing. As a result, it cannot be discovered. It is something that exists in people's minds. There is no authoritative source or experiment to settle disagreements about what comprises it. Given this argument, therefore, it is no wonder that many organizational culture theorists do not find any common ground about appropriate methodologies to study this concept of culture. They have struggles between logical-positivist quasi-experimental research bases and the qualitative or naturalistic methodologies. The former methods lay emphasis on objective detachment from that which is studied; on validity and reliability. It must be mentioned here that this is an ongoing debate about methods of studying issues that have an impact on human behavior and interactions and not the sole avenue of organizational theorists.

Ott (1989) questions the viability of the quasi-experimental methods in the proper understanding of organizational culture as abstract phenomenon. He rejects the simplistic reductionist explanations given by this type of methodology. He further claims that there is trivial amounts of variance found in utilizing this method and the failure to achieve predictive validity. Indeed, the quantitative methods seem to be
constrictive and have a tendency to miss a lot that should be studied in efforts to control for extraneous variables, especially in the study of human behavior.

He further attacks the notion of objectivity, claiming that the mere fact that the logical positivists predetermine what will be studied, the research design and instruments to be used, what will be found out and concluded, calls for judgment in the researcher's hopes, preconceptions, values and perceptions. The results themselves, he asserts, tend to support the researcher's hypotheses.

The suggestion here is that all methods for analyzing and understanding organizational culture have their own problems and limitations. It is not necessarily correct that it is only the quantitative methods. The major issue about qualitative measures has been that they may not yield reliable and valid results. However, qualitative researchers use trustworthiness techniques to address the validity and reliability issues. Furthermore, the major purpose in qualitative research is understanding and interpreting phenomena that is being studied more than the ability to predict.

The challenge that is posed here is that researchers need to understand the purpose for which they are conducting the studies in the first place. The choice of a method therefore, should be driven by the intended use for the findings.

Bates (1984:47), criticizes a variety of instruments that purport to "measure" culture suggested by Allport (1960); O'Connor and Kinnane (1961), and Harrison (1978). He argues that these instruments are generally too vague or general to measure or alternatively too culture-bound themselves to be useful. This supports the argument
put before that measures that seek frequency of or to put quantity to organizational culture, seem to go against the idea of understanding.

I adopt the view that qualitative measures are more amenable to understanding and interpreting meanings and being sensitive to the dynamic and holistic nature of humanness. It is more responsive to the subjective meanings and the interpretations of the participants. While I do not reject all that is quantitative, I also do not idealize all that is qualitative. All forms of inquiry have their forms of limitations and researchers should be aware of that.

The approach to theory that will be utilized for purposes of this research uses qualitative methods so that it will stay grounded in the empirical world. I have selected to utilize the phenomenological or interpretive paradigm in this study. Patton (1990:69) views the focus of this approach as seeking to answer the question "What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?"..."The phenomenon may be a program, an organization or a culture." He claims that phenomenology is the study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses. Hence phenomenologists focus on "how we put together the phenomena we experience in such a way as to make sense of the world and, in so doing, develop a worldview."

The subject matter of this study is the interpretation of the world by mid-level social workers about their world of work. The phenomenon that is experienced is a culture of an organization. The essences are the core meanings that the professionals understand through the culture commonly experienced. It is these experiences that
determine the behavior of the people in organizations. In this particular instance, the behavior is that of commitment to stay within the organization.

It is a fact that all theories of organizations are based on a philosophy of science and a theory of society. Burrell and Morgan (1979) assert that studies of organizations reflect assumptions which inform our point of view. These assumptions concern the nature of the social world and the way in which it might be investigated.

What is happening in social work organizations and how it affects behavior and ultimately decisions to stay can best be perceived through the lenses of the organizational culture perspective. This theoretical perspective, rests upon the interpretive paradigm. The latter is concerned with the understanding of the world as it is. It is subjective and anti-positivist. The major premises of the interpretive paradigm are the notion that the social world is emergent, created by the individuals in their interaction. But the world does not force any particular understanding on them, hence different individuals interpret the world differently.

Hence the approach is humanistic. It focuses on human constructions and how people respond to them. Actions of people within organizations, depend, apparently on the meanings that people give to these actions. More and more organization theorists believe that organizational principles or structure, do not explain the form and nature of relationships or the culture within organizations. The argument that Blumer (1969:58) puts forward is that organizations need to be seen, studied and explained in terms of the interpretations engaged in by acting participants, as they handle the situation of their respective positions in that organization. This argument
seems to suggest that even with the given rules and regulations people will act in the manner that will be influenced by underlying currents of informal interactions and activity with other people within the organization, which affect input, output, satisfaction and commitment of people in the work place. No organization can afford to ignore such a powerful influence that has a potential for sustaining the organization or undermining it.

The Purpose of This Study.

The above literature reflects culture as a significant part of an organization. The view that it gives the organization its identity and provides meaning and direction for members indicates that it is a significant aspect that professionals within organizations cannot afford to ignore. Understanding the context where social workers practice and how it impacts on the behavior of these professionals seems highly indicated. However, while organizational culture is so pervasive and sometimes used loosely, social work professionals have not assumed responsibility for its understanding and utility.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to understand, from the perspective of the mid-level social workers, their perception of and experience within the organization that has contributed to their desire and commitment to remain within this organization. The overall aim of this study is articulated well by Wilson (1990:21) when she states that "the task of the interpretive researcher is to unravel these 'webs of significance' in order to unveil the meanings which undergird organizational life
The aim is to help professionals, especially those in management positions, to pay particular attention to issues of culture as these can have positive and or negative effects on social work practice. The findings should help the organization reflect on those activities and processes that are facilitating enculturation through selection and socialization of its members that have led to a desire or a commitment to stay. These activities would, in turn, have significant social and financial implications.

Furthermore, the purpose of the research is to provide an alternative tool for looking at organizational issues that move away from deductive measures. This tool relies on subjective meanings derived from thick descriptions of experiences and perceptions by participants, who are viewed as experts in the field that is being studied.

SUMMARY

Chapter II brought together ideas about issues in organizational life, namely, issues of job satisfaction and issues of organizational culture. Several studies that had relevance to job satisfaction and organizational culture were reviewed in order to determine whether there were gaps in knowledge that could be addressed in this study.

An extensive analysis of the organizational culture perspective was undertaken to highlight a different perspective that could be utilized in studying organizations. Conceptually, it provides a lens that is feasible to view particular issues pertaining to mid-level practitioners in public child welfare.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY CHAPTER

Meaning is created in everyday life through language and interaction. If one cannot simply observe the social word, but must interpret it as well, it could be necessary to employ a methodology which differs from that of positivism.

(WoodBrooks, 1991)

Introduction

The chapter reflects on several issues which include the selection and rationale of the methodology, different types of methods (instruments) utilized in the study; the study participants; data analysis and interpretation and ethical issues in this study.

As a researcher, I situated myself paradigmatically within the interpretive approach. According to Erickson (1986:120) this type of perspective is a matter of focus and is utilized by researchers whose central interests are "the meanings of actions to the actors involved." The interpretive paradigm's main focus, therefore, is understanding phenomena in their natural environments, hence deriving meaning. The major arguments of the interpretive paradigm are, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the acknowledgement that the knower and the known cannot be separated, as
there is a mutual shaping.

My study sought to consider meanings that happenings within organizational contexts had for the mid-level social workers, that lead to their commitment to stay within the these organizations. In social work, answers to these questions will become very useful for planning and education for future professionals.

Furthermore, as a social worker, I am concerned with the power of data that can be collected and their utility. The interpretive paradigm shares assumptions about human nature similar to those that guide social work practice. The research methods that this paradigm utilize reflect their sensitivity to humanity.

Selection and Rationale of the Methodology

The postpositivist era has widened the scope of choice of methods that one can utilize in an attempt to accumulate knowledge. Social work is taking tentative steps to moving toward postpositivist paradigms (Sands and Nuccio, 1992; Ruckdeschel, 1985). As mentioned previously, I situated myself within the interpretivist paradigm and the research methods best suited for collecting data were, decidedly, the qualitative methods for this study.

The qualitative research methods become useful in attempting to decipher what organizational culture and its implications are for social work professionals. Ott (1989:102) asserts that qualitative research describes the umbrella of interpretive
techniques for coming to terms with meaning and not the frequency of events or phenomena. The rationale for the selection of this methodology, in this study, is predicated on the nature of the subject that was investigated and also my assumptions about the world. Qualitative researchers deal with multiple, socially constructed realities, that are complex and indivisible into discrete variables (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).

The advantage of qualitative methods lie in the fact that phenomena can be studied in their natural contexts. This provides an opportunity for rich data, grounded in the observations and participation in the process of actual collection of the data. Ruckdeschel [1985:18] believes that the qualitative paradigm incorporates the belief that contemporary practice is strongly contextual and normative.

Qualitative methods are more holistic, encompassing all that need to be known about the phenomena. This is possible through the utility of multiple sources of data or multiple methods of data collection. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) refer to this as "doing justice to the complexity. . . contradictions and sensibility of social interactions" (p.17).

The qualitative methods are more amenable because they seek the subjective meaning of phenomena. There is no fallacy of objectivity in this methodology. Subjectivity assumes that, whatever conclusions the researcher reaches, are subject to multiple interpretations, as there is no single truth out there to be discovered, but different perspectives that reflect how people perceive the same situation. Truths are social constructions of people. As a result of this process, my data analysis was
mutually shaped by the participants through member checks.

The study of culture deals with meaning that people make of and that bears upon their action. The qualitative methods have been viewed as the more humanistic and more rigorous than they have been given credit for. They are useful also, in this type of study as they provide depth and detail of what is being studied, which is facilitated by methods of study utilized viz., in-depth interviews (open-ended), direct observation and written documents. Human behavior is dynamic and the method that is selected to study it should be flexible and cannot be finite. The study was an attempt to experience with the social work supervisors in the field, who have opted to stay in the organizations of their choice in spite of constraints that may affect satisfaction with what they do, the characteristics or phenomena that are responsible for their choice.

The task of this research was to determine, from the perspective of the social work supervisors, what it is about the organization that causes them to stay in their jobs. The qualitative methods become useful in any attempt to elicit information about lived experiences from the perspectives of the participants, which is not structured by the researcher. In this study the qualitative methods were selected for the express purposes of eliciting this information that would shed light on meanings that social work supervisors make of the interaction with the organization, that reflect the responses that are perceived by the researcher.

The quantitative methods are advantageous in that they permit measurement of reactions of the units studied, which according to Patton (1990:165), may "facilitate
comparison and statistical aggregation of the data." They, however, become too mechanistic, and fall short of being able to deal with emergent issues that only come about through the interaction of the researcher and the participant, especially in issues that are abstract like culture. Hence, the meaningfulness of what is studied is curtailed because of concern and preoccupation with prediction and control. Issues of humanness, which allow for participation of the researched in the research process, and recognize the implications for human free will, are ignored by a methodology that believes in a single truth and a single set of laws.

On the other hand, the qualitative methodology seems more amenable to dealing with multiple realities, that are a result of subjective meanings. The subjectivity of the qualitative methods are capable of exposing the interaction of the researcher and the participant, which facilitates the assessment of the process and the extent to which the situation that is being studied is adequately described and or affected by the researcher bias based on his or her background and or attitudes.

This methodology appeared more justifiable for a study of organizational culture, especially when one considers the characteristics of the naturalist paradigm set forth by Lincoln and Guba (1985:39). They claim that "these characteristics display a synergism such that, once one is selected, the others more or less follow."

It can be argued that this methodology allows for prolonged engagement in the environment, if the researcher is a participant observer. For me, however, the time spent in the field was limited because my study was not ethnographic in nature. I became a human instrument, that allowed for better grasping and evaluation of the
meaning of the interaction. My study sought personal stories of supervisors to better understand their experiences and the meanings they make of these experiences.

Selection of Study Participants.

The study participants were recruited from a population of child welfare social workers in Franklin County Children's Services. Social workers that were recruited were those who held mid-management positions. This group comprised professional social work supervisors. The supervisors needed to be in direct contact with caseworkers or line staff (professional social workers and other staff people). This group seemed ideal to study, as they appeared to be the more likely to experience the conflicts in the organization from top management and from line workers below them.

The study assumed that this group of social workers was the most likely to be affected and influenced by the culture and subcultures of the different groups they are working with in the organization. This assumption stemmed from the different expectations of roles and of behavior by these groups. The behaviors of middle-managers would yield differing interpreted meanings from the groups they work with.

Initial contact was made with the organization's officials to officially notify them of my intentions and to get approval to undertake the study with the professionals under their employ. A solicitation letter was written to the executive director to explain the project, and a meeting was arranged with the coordinator of the
organization's research projects. In this meeting, my proposal was discussed. Once authority was received, formal contacts with the supervisors were made in all the regions of the county, to participate in the project through a written solicitation. The intention was to study professionals from one county in order to ascertain similarity of experiences of these professionals. The intention was not to compare organizations at any level.

The type of sampling strategy utilized in qualitative studies is non-probability sampling. The focus is on smaller samples, with in depth interviews. Patton (1990:169) supports the search for "rich cases for study in depth, (that are) never intended to be perfectly representative of all social work experiences as a whole..."

For purposes of this study, the criterion sampling technique was utilized. The focus was on the professionals that met some pre-determined criteria. These included a period of about five (5) years with the organization. The professionals were expected to hold an MSW or BSSW degree and they should be supervisors of caseworkers or frontline workers. Continuous adjustments were made as more information became available. The final sample contained six supervisors. In-depth and open-ended interviews were conducted with them. My aim was to obtain a group that would have similar experiences that typified the issue at hand, i.e., their commitment to stay within their organization. The professionals who were interested in participating in the research project called directly to express their interest.
Data Collection Methods.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:240) are of the opinion that methods of data collection will vary along two dimensions and that is fidelity and structure. The former refers to the ability of the researcher to later reproduce exactly the same data found in the site, for example, in the manner that one could through recording the discussions that go on.

Measures of data collection for this particular study were many and varied. Triangulation was used only to get different meanings of the same phenomena and not only as a credibility check as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This was done to provide a rich experience of phenomena. The aim in qualitative research is to get understanding of the phenomena under study and to get reassurance from the participants that the interpretation of the data is in keeping with what they know and how things really are in the environment. Some of the methods of data collection that were used included the following:

1. Document and Record Analysis.

Patton (1990: 233) argues that "document analysis provides a rich source of information about things that could not be observed, and for revealing goals and decisions that might be unknown to the evaluators." The claim is that these frequently
reveal what people will not or cannot say. Document analysis was used as an important first step of this study in order to begin to immerse myself within this organization and also, as Gilgun, Daly and Handel [1992] put it so well, "to trace the cultural meanings of the context."

Documents include, among other things, policy documents, progress and annual reports, students' records, newsletters, minutes, proposals and the like. Bogdan and Biklen (1982:120) identify documents that consist of communications that are circulated inside the organization and external communication produced mainly for the consumption of the public. For any researcher, it is vital to get both types of communication in order to understand how the organization perceives itself both internally and how it assumes what the public would like to know about the activities of that organization.

I received documents of this agency from different sources, viz., their main office and during my participant observation stints. My selection of what would be "useful" documents was guided by the focus of my study. I could not, for all intents and purposes, be in a position to read all materials that have been accumulated by this organization over the period of years it has been in operation. The organization produces numerous volumes of policies and receives equally voluminous material and regulations from the State, to guide all operations of Children's Services. The agency is a classic example of what Glesne and Peshkin (1992:52) have labeled, "a society that venerates the written word."
Ideally, official documents would be used, and they were the only documents that were perused because of the nature of the data that were assessed to be valuable. My interests lay, in particular, in the history and guiding policies and principles of this organization. Personnel and client documents were thus excluded for the purposes of this study because they would not provide the contextual dimension necessary for my purposes. Lincoln and Guba (1985:276) also believe that documents provide a stable source of information grounded in the context they represent.

Reading the Mission Statement and the organizational board policies provided valuable understanding of what this organization represents, viz., "providing the protection and care of children in need." This gave me a bird’s eye view of what guides the action, and ultimately the behavior, of professionals within this organization. Reading through the different documents helped me to begin to identify emerging types of issues within this setting. I noticed, for example, the volumes of policies that the professionals and staff of the organization should know in order to survive the bureaucracy. It is very easy to overlook important documents or to be aware of certain policies, but be wary of exercising your right to use them for fear of victimization. For example, while policy statements leave room for employee suggestion, either anonymously or signed, one wonders whether such opportunity has been taken, and if taken, whether administration has responded positively or negatively. These are issues that affect satisfaction with what one does within an institution.
I noticed also that there were a number of guidelines about how work needs to be done, which could be a constraint in terms of

1. constricting creativity

2. preventing "proven" ways of knowing and handling certain situations born out of experience, especially for older professionals.

Bogdan and Biklen (1982:101) suggest official documents tend to follow the hierarchical course, circulation downward from the central office to organization staff. A noticeable fact in the policies that were given to me was the fact that their historical origins carried different dates, some as new as 1991. It struck me that these policies may have carried some input of staff in their reformulation, or continued the trend of Top to Bottom. The amount of documents that included different policies and regulations, journals kept for the benefit of the social work professionals within the agency, almost overwhelmed me. I had to devise a plan to get the most relevant information for the study that would most enhance my understanding of what obtains in this setting. I decided I did not need client nor personnel documents. I further decided that it was good to know that they had regulations that guided their everyday practice. I did not need to read all those documents. What would be important for my purposes would be the History; the Mission and Commitment Statement; the Table of Organization, and the different Board Policies that guided Service Provision and Practice within this agency.

Analysis of these documents within this agency became very useful for my
purposes. It gave me an "at a glance" impression of the extent of the services provided within the agency, and, as a result, made understanding of the involvement of the professionals within this agency easier. It became useful in integrating what the supervisors talked about in the interviews. Names given to certain services reflected that the agency has its own language that may be difficult for an outsider to comprehend. It became very useful for me, therefore, to combine document analysis and other methods of data collection to increase my understanding of the situation. For example, the "Performance Acts Program" became clearer to me when it was explained to the inductees in the orientation program. Otherwise, it carried a different connotation for me.

2. Interviewing.

Dexter, cited by Lincoln and Guba (1985), believes that an interview is a conversation with a purpose. The purpose in this study was to get the perspective of social workers about their experiences through communicating events and activities of organizations and through discussions. Quantitative studies usually structure formal interviews that guide the responses of participants. However, the more structured the interview, the more limited the responses will be. The creativity of the participant in expressing his or her views about what is triggered by the interview questions and the effect of the interaction between the researcher and the participant, dwindles.
The interview was used in this study as the major data collecting tool. It formed the tool through which the voices of the supervisors were heard. While observation and document analysis were used, the interview would provide an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their lives and to share their experiences and meanings they had made of their work and the organization.

Lincoln and Guba (1985:272) argue that the major advantage of the interview method is that "it allows the respondent to move back and forth in time to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future, all without leaving a comfortable chair."

In this study, both formal, but open ended formats, and informal, as in casual formats, were utilized. A standardized, open-ended, and semi-structured interview guide was provided. The purpose of standardized formats, according to Patton (1990), is to provide carefully worded questions that are arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence. This allows for easier data analysis and comparison of responses. Probes and follow ups were made as needed and to get clarification about other issues. Wilson (1989:50) suggests that the semi-structured approach provides an opportunity for respondents to take the interview in the direction they want, e.g. to elaborate on certain points in great detail.

The informal interviews took place mostly in conjunction with the method of observation, to get clarification of certain issue or in filling gaps about what was known by the researcher. The number of interviews and those professionals that were
interviewed were guided by the data that was received and the sites that were selected for study. A maximum of three interviews, not exceeding three hours in all, were held with each professional, for the elucidation of information that was given and for member checking. In all, eighteen interviews were held with the participants, during office hours. Each interview did not exceed an hour, mainly because of the type of work they did. I did not want to take more time than I needed to. All the interviews were audio-taped. These were the only materials used and were used only with the permission of and as did not distract or affect the process of interaction with the professionals. The data were all then transcribed as soon as possible after the interview. These transcripts and audiotapes would be destroyed after the research had been compiled and in keeping with the conditions of the Human Subject Review Committee of The Ohio State University. Constant member check characterized this study, as the aim of the research was to give voice to the participants' experiences. It was important, therefore, to ascertain from them that the interview and its interpretation represented their perceived experiences.

3. Observation.

This method of research assumes physical presence of the researcher in the site under investigation. Anthropologists developed the method of participant observation to the state that it is today. Van Maanen (1988:3) states that the participant
observation method "...reflects a bedrock assumption held historically by fieldworkers that experience underlies all understanding of social life. He points out that this method requires the researcher to share firsthand the environment, problems, background, language, rituals and social relations of a more or less bounded and specified group of people.

Observation became particularly important in this study that sought to ascertain the culture of organizations that impact on people. This culture can only be demonstrated through certain symbols, artifacts, norms and beliefs, language and the like. Physical presence of the researcher, therefore, appeared to be more relevant in grasping all of these abstract phenomena, that would, ordinarily be lost if using an instrument that is as detached as the questionnaire, to give but one example. Having been granted permission by the organization, I then spent time pattering around, looking at the general layout of the site, at the furniture arrangement, other material artifacts, in order to get the feel of the climate of the organization. Ott (1989:101) argues that culture can be determined quickly utilizing this type of instrument.

The value of observation is clearly outlined by Patton (1990:203) when he states that it useful:

- "for better understanding of the context where the units of analysis operate as this allows for better assessment";
- "for allowing for an open, discovery oriented and inductive approach";
- "for allowing for researcher to observe things that may escape the participants or that no one else has paid attention to";
- "for learning about issues that participants cannot talk about sensitive topics."

Attempts were made to participate in activities that were aimed at promoting better meaning of interaction and context of the experiences of the people from the role of the insider. Such participation allowed me to immerse myself in the process and the dynamics of some of the activities. It facilitated my understanding, from the participants' view point, of what obtained in the organization. Participant observation, from this vintage point, encourages realistic, informed interpretations and gives any researcher, a better understanding of participants and their contexts.

As part of the observation process, I was invited to participate in an orientation program for new employees of the organization. I was furthermore afforded the opportunity to observe one unit in order to collect sufficient data to begin to have a feel of the agency.

The orientation program provided me with an opportunity of observing what I perceived as an "enculturation process." As my study focuses on issues of culture, and their impact on the behavior of social work personnel, this opportunity was very significant. In short, the new workers were given, step by step, rules about "how things are done around here." They were given a breakdown of where they were, in terms of where they wanted or should strive to be, if they are to survive in this setting. As a result of their experience, some of the questions in the interview guide were rephrased to incorporate the language used within the organization.

Through the process of observation, an emerging focus could already be identified. There were commonalities in the language used by the director in one unit
and by the trainers during the orientation program.

Establishing Trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness pertains to how issues of confidence and validity in the findings are addressed. Guba and Lincoln (1989:233) refer to trustworthiness as the goodness or the quality of the research rigor. Kvale (1989:74) asserts that it is validity, and validity revolves around issues of truth, beauty, and goodness of research studies.

Literature reflects that there are multiple discourses concerning the issues of trustworthiness and or validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1989; Lather, 1990). The latter concept has been used mainly by quantitative researchers to refer to the extent to which the methods measure what they intend to measure (Kvale, 1989; Babbie, 1989). The selection of measures of credibility was, therefore, an informed one.

Kvale highlights the fact that how you think about what is truth and how you arrive at it is predicated on one's worldview. He reflects on relativists' point of view, which reflects that there are multiple realities of individuals. From the objectivist position, truth is reality. He talks of altered conceptions of validity that are moving from objective reality to falsified knowledge. Citing Polkinghorne, he reflects on the issues and states "validation becomes the issue of choosing among competing and
falsifiable interpretations, of examining and providing arguments for the relative credibility of alternative knowledge claims."

On the other hand, Sheurich (1992) raises compelling arguments about the issues of validity and how postpositivists have been drawn into the discourse and have "compelled the epistemological travellers of the postpositivist diaspora to not leave home without it" (p. 2).

Although labelled as translating positivist notions in their trustworthiness attempts, the postpositivists depart from the worldview that the audience [including self] should be persuaded that the findings of the inquiry are worth paying attention to and worth taking account of (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Kvale (1989), talking about the validity of the validity issue, asserts that validity is concerned with the quest for certainty and justification for knowledge. He warns of dangers of focusing more on existing knowledge instead of generating new knowledge and the danger of being trapped in the validity cycle.

The conclusion is that the discourse on trustworthiness is continuing and should continue. However, researchers who want to rest easy with what they are doing continue to select both from the positivist and postpositivist paradigms what best confirms what they are doing. Guba and Lincoln (1989) who first responded to the accusations from the quantitative researchers about the invalidity of qualitative researches came up with a parallel criteria as a way for considering the "goodness" of constructivist inquiry. However, they are also now providing alternative approaches for trustworthiness and they are calling for "authentic criteria in dealing
with issues of goodness of research. The claim is that the parallel criteria have their roots and origins in positivist assumptions and continue to play in the "friendly confines" of the opposition home court.

While this may be true, I selected to use the parallel criteria as a measure of trustworthiness for my research study. I use it smartly, with awareness of its shortcomings. My argument is that the other criteria have their flaws also and the discourse continues. My concerns are similar to those expressed by Kvale [1989:90] whether there will come a time when we have a "true, beautiful and good research."

I propose, therefore, to parallel validity and reliability issues to credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that

1. CREDIBILITY : (paralleled with internal validity) can be attained by:

- Prolonged engagement - that is, spending enough time in the field co-participating in order to establish trust and to be familiar with the context of the inquiry. Credibility addresses issues of techniques used to obtain credible research findings. Lincoln and Guba's view of prolonged engagement is daily engagement. They claim that this is done to avoid misinformation or distortions. The time that had been arranged for direct participation with the participants was estimated as three hours. This period of time would be used for both the interview and member check process. After data was collected, within the set time frame, however, more contact was made with the participants to counter check certain facts that were discussed under member checks. More time was spent in the different units as part of the participant-
observation process. In one unit, four hours were spent in an orientation program organized for new employees of the organization. In another unit, some three hours were spent in formal conversations with the director and associate directors of that unit. Some supervisors, who were not in my sample, also participated in informal conversations about life within this organization.

The period spent within the organization could not be characterized as prolonged engagement more than a period of establishing a sense of involvement with the setting that allowed for significant contacts to be made and trust to be established. However, for me, the daily engagement would not be feasible in the light of

- [i] my study was not going to be an ethnographic study but a field study;
- [ii] my purpose - of determining meanings of experiences of participants - as WoodBrooks (1991:119) suggests "my immersion into the everyday lives of participants would not only have been intrusive, but not suited to my research focus".

Culture would not and could not be observed but actions and perceptions of people.

- Triangulation, as suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1989), while not used as a credibility check, would be used to give different meanings of what is being studied.

The previous notion of triangulation suggested that there was a "there" out there to be discovered. This is a positivist notion. However, for this study, multiple sources were utilized for obtaining data, that facilitated the understanding of the setting. The different sources assisted in revealing different perspectives of what was being studied.

For example, having met the director and associate directors in one unit, I had a sense of the organizational structure and hierarchy.
- **Peer-Debriefing** -- This technique is used by qualitative researchers in their attempt to remain "honest" in their research. The process involves engaging a peer, who is not familiar with your work, to help give you insights about the different aspects of your study.

Lincoln and Guba suggest several advantages of peer debriefers, the most important involving "probing the inquirer's biases" in meanings obtained from the study and the interpretations made. The second advantage includes the "opportunity for catharsis" with colleagues who are willing to listen.

For purposes of this study, I asked two colleagues to serve as peer debriefers. Both of these colleagues had understanding of qualitative methods and would be useful in crystallizing certain concepts in my study, especially in connection with the analysis and interpretation of data.

The first session of peer debriefing involved sharing a broad overview of the study and the stage where I was in the process. In the second meeting, I shared my transcripts with them and the major themes I had arrived at in the coding process. They pointed out certain categories they thought were important in the study. They allowed me to make the final decision about what I wanted to include in the study.

In the third session, there was substantial input coming from both peer debriefers about my analysis and interpretation section. Their suggestions were very useful in focusing the participant narratives. Informal conversations over the phone helped me to ventilate feelings of frustration or elation.
- **Member checks** — input from participants was solicited from the beginning, to clarify wording and interpretation of their stories. These, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), are useful in establishing credibility. Member checks are vital in countering the politics of representation. The participants do not become but occupy a center position in research. I explained their role from the first interview as part of contract negotiation. They were given the transcripts to review and correct misunderstood language and to fill in gaps. Finally, they played a significant role with their input in my analysis and provided an opportunity for reflexivity which then formed a third strategy of interpreting data.

2. **TRANSFERABILITY** is parallel to external validity. There are debates about the utility of transferability within qualitative research methods, WoodBrooks (1991:124). The argument is that because postpositivists ask different questions from a different frame of reference, it is unlikely that the criteria used to judge credibility will be similar. Guba and Lincoln (1989) now suggest the utility of thick description as a way of providing salient features of the context which specify everything the reader may need to know and understand the findings.

3. **CONFIRMABILITY** : has been paralleled with objectivity. In qualitative research this process involves assuming that data, interpretations and outcomes of research are grounded in contexts and persons. In my study, I achieved this process through triangulation methods. Furthermore, all the material related to the study, including the transcripts, the audio tapes, and office documents obtained from the organization,
were kept safely as a means of establishing credibility.

4. DEPENDABILITY : has been paralleled with reliability. Dependability refers to the stability of data over time. Sometimes it has been referred to as the inquiry audit. Replicability, according to Lincoln and Guba (p. 299), depends upon an assumption of naive realism. There must be something tangible and unchanging "out there" that can serve as a benchmark if the idea of replication is to make sense.

ETHICS AND POLITICS

Ethics in research relate primarily to the relationship between researcher and the researched, with safeguarding and protecting human rights of the participants in research studying. McKinney, in Babbie (1989), proclaims that studying any form of human behavior brings about ethical concerns about informed consent, right to privacy, and protection from harm.

The researcher has the responsibility to protect the health and welfare of the participants. The issue of ethics in social research is receiving attention because sometimes researchers lose sight of the real reasons for conducting research. Most social research is related to social life and human conditions. It is disturbing, therefore, to learn about the "ethical sins" committed in the name of "science," how these have infringed and trampled on the rights of human subjects. The Tuskegee and Milgram's studies are some of the extreme cases of such infringements (Babbie, 1989; Gichelberger, 1989). Both these studies reflect the power that researchers have given
themselves over those who are studied.

My study did not involve any deceiving strategies or physical harm. It did, however, involve working with people who could be affected in some way through the process of research. My own construction of meaning from participants' experiences could reflect dominant meaning systems shaped by the theoretical frameworks that I use. The rights of the participants needed to be protected, and any potential harm minimized.

The protocol that guided what is proper in the conduct of this research study was approved by the Human Subjects Committee of The Ohio State University before the study commenced. Some of the agreements shared with the participants included the following:

(i) Informed Consent: this process involves several issues that ascertain that the participants have been advised about all the aspects of the study before they consent to participate. Hence the following strategies were followed:

(a) there was a full description of procedures that were used in the study and the purposes of the study;

(b) there was an explanation given about their role in the study—that of co-researcher. This ensured that the final document contained issues that they had agreed to. The final document would form part of the organization's property;

(c) all participation was voluntary. If in any stage during the
process the participants needed to withdraw, they could willingly do that without any reprisals;

(d) it was also explained that participation involved time and all participation would be restricted to their office hours. At least three hours of interview time was used with each participant.

(ii) Confidentiality and anonymity: this was assured all the time. Their real names were not used in the narratives. Any statements and responses that would lead to their identification were left out of the narratives. The disadvantage of this was that some rich data was omitted in order not to violate their right to privacy.

The audio tapes were always kept safely. These will be destroyed immediately after the completion of the study. All transcribed material was destroyed.

In this study, the supervisors are already the vulnerable group. As described by Erickson (1986), these are the occupants in an institutional status. They were selected as participants in this study. It was vital that the participants' identities not be exposed beyond their status as a group of supervisors. The issue of sharing information with the organization was of concern to me—how much to share, without infringing on the participants' rights to privacy. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) consider the issues of balancing the researcher's unqualified obligation to the participant with the researcher's appreciation of the organization's natural interest in the research. This, to me, reflects the point that these are dilemmas with no easy solutions.

Lastly, McLaren (1991) suggests that, as researchers, we have to face the
painful truth about our own ethnographic practices within the larger structures of power and privilege. The questions that need to be answered remain, "Whose interests are being served by our research efforts? Where do we stand ethically and politically on issues of social justice?"

DATA ANALYSIS.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) argue that by the end of data collection, the researcher must expect to be overwhelmed with sheer volume—notebooks, note cards, computer files, manila files, and documents—that has accumulated . . . "fat data." The challenge that remains, therefore, is the ability to comprehend and make sense of these data. The aim of this particular stage is, according to Patton (1990:371), "to make sense of the massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal." He adds that the problem with qualitative data analysis is that there are no ground rules set for such analysis. He believes that researchers need creativity because of the uniqueness of qualitative studies. He cites Miles and Huberman (1984), who claimed that "we have few agreed-on canons for qualitative data analysis, in the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying their sturdiness .... (there) is no way of replicating researchers analytical thought processes and no tests for reliability and validity."

Scholars who have selected the route of qualitative research methods have more often been faced with the predicament of what procedure to utilize to organize
the data that have been collected. Short of resorting to linear methods, the majority of these scholars has left the data "speak for itself" by relying on extensive excerpts from the actual data.

Nelson (1991:222) argues that qualitative researchers "must explicate procedural processes so that they are no longer muted, implicit, and taken-for granted, but are rendered public, problematic, and available to others—to create practical understanding of the ways in which we work." There are several methods of "finding one's story" or data analysis that have been suggested by various authors (WoodBrooks, 1991; Lather, 1991; Patton, 1990; Strauss, 1987; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1984). According to Glesne and Peshkin, this phase includes "organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned......you create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link your story to other stories."

Glasser and Strauss (1967) believe that qualitative data analysis should follow certain strategies. These include:

- converting qualitative data into crudely quantifiable data and coding them,

- inspection of data for purposes of identifying new properties for the researcher' theoretical categories and writing memos on these properties,

- analytical induction, which, to some extent, combines the first and second methods.

WoodBrooks (1991), influenced by Lather (1991) and Van Maanen (1988), proposed a creative technique for analyzing data that is hereafter reshaped for the purposes of this research. The data were divided into several categories in terms of
emerging themes. Each of the themes is then presented as the "realist tale." This represents the participant's own stories.

These data are then analyzed utilizing the "interpretive tale" and the "reflexive tale" (Van Maanen, 1988). The interpretive tale serves as the analytical aspect of the data. The analysis reflects on my perspective--the interpretive perspective as a researcher. The data from the realist tale are viewed against existing theoretical frameworks or against emerging or grounded theory. It was not the purpose of this study, however, to seek out grounded theory. The reflexive tale provides an opportunity for the participants to respond to my interpretation of their stories. This style of analysis facilitates trustworthiness of the researcher's interpretation. WoodBrooks (1991) suggests that the "purpose of the tale telling approach is to illustrate the limitations and possibilities within the presentation of data" (p. 138). While I was situated in the interpretive perspective, the participants would not be and were not marginalized and objectified. Their voices were juxtaposed and constantly compared to yield more meaning. There was heavy reliance on quotes from participant narratives. Lather (1988) suggests that quotes authorize both in the sense of "I," the researcher was there, in the field, and to say "someone really said this exactly this way."

The common theme in all these formulations is that the data that have been collected should now be broken down and reduced so as to tell the researcher a particular story that not only makes sense to her or him but to the "others', i.e., the researched. Data analysis is an ongoing process which addresses the question of how and
why the collected data will be handled. The nature of the methodology calls for the continued analyses of the experiences that the researcher is finding. It is the most significant part of the study as it reflects on the other steps of the research design. It is viewed as critical also as it reflects on the subjective meaning that the researcher has made of the data that she collected. Any flaws at this stage of the design can influence the whole study and the conclusions that are reached.

I relied also on the technology that is available mainly as a labor saving tool. Computers have been found to be more efficient in cutting down most of the clerical type activities. It makes for easier handling of data e.g., for editing and changing data, and record keeping. Once the data are in the machine, they are easier to handle than a bundle of papers. Furthermore, with creativity, the computer can sort, code and display material with ease and speed. Various software has become available for researchers interested in qualitative methods. The software selected for processing the data was the Ethnograph. The Ethnograph is "a set of interactive menu driven computer programs designed to assist the demographic/qualitative researcher in some of the mechanical aspects of data analysis" (Seidel, Kjolseter and Seymour, 1988). These programs facilitate the management of the field data that includes transcripts, data from document analysis, or field notes. Once coding of the data was completed according to the emerging themes, the Ethnograph was able to sort all the common responses of the participants for easier handling.
Summary.

This chapter presented some methodological issues pertinent to the study. It reflected on issues for consideration to make qualitative methods trustworthy. These methods have in the past been viewed as haphazard and illogical. The chapter illustrated how salient issues of selection of participants, protection of human subjects' trustworthiness were handled. Clear illustration of methodological issues encourages trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Chapter four presents the data through the process of tale-telling. This is where the stories of the participants emerge guided by interjections from the phenomenological tale, but subdued by the reflexive tale.
CHAPTER IV
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Analysis brings moments of terror that there's nothing there and times of exhilaration from the clarity of discovering ultimate truth. In between are long periods of hard work, deep thinking, and weight-lifting volumes of materials.

From Halcolm's Laws of Evaluation
Research à la Murphy.

Introduction.

This chapter presents the findings and theoretical underpinnings employed to guide the analysis. The major purpose of the study was to explore the impact of organizational culture on perceived satisfaction of mid-level social workers.

Data analysis principally aims at making sense of all the data that have been collected. Potter and Wetherell (1987:168) argue that data analysis is made up of closely related phases, viz.

1. "a search for patterns in the data that will be in the form of both variability and consistency" and

2. "forming hypotheses about these functions and effects, and searching for linguistic evidence."

While these arguments appear clear and simple enough, the qualitative methodology has consistently been criticized for lacking authoritative data analysis.
procedures. The claim that qualitative research methods have no standard formats for
data reduction, data display, or the organization of the case have been highlighted by

Harding (1992) asserts that the lack of canonized analytic procedures is a black
hole of qualitative research because of the lack of immutable, systematic, and
universally applicable practices of analysis. She suggests reliance on reflexivity as a
major part of the analysis to learn from the sources in the field.

While qualitative researchers presented a tentativeness in the past in the writing
of qualitative findings, there is now a proliferation of choices of how these findings
can be written. Glynn (1990:1) asserts that there is a myriad of useful suggestions for
writing up qualitative findings. She reflects on the following choices:

a) Research as a search for falsification—this includes an attempt by the researcher
to "forcibly reinterpret" the raw material. Glynn (1990) cites Erickson, who believes
that it is the researcher's responsibility to document the falsification process.

b) Research as a collaborative process. This is a portrayal of the many voices
through fictionalized forms of writing. This form was developed by Van Maanen
through realist, confessional, and impressionist tales.

c) Research criteria of apparency and verisimilitude or communicative and pragmatic
validity. Citing Kvale (1989) and Van Maanen (1988), Glynn believes this strategy
foregrounds the critical issues of quantitative research that include internal validity,
generalizability, and replicability.

d) Research as at least a triangle; the triangle being the researcher, the participant,
and the reader; who is the audience all brought together in the story.

e) Metaphors prefigure language. The metaphor was developed by Laura Richardson who focuses on dialogic expressions of the narrative. The focus is on metaphors used by the informants.

Lather (1991b), Tierney (1991), and WoodBrooks (1991), influenced by Van Maanen (1988), present a novel way of presenting qualitative findings. Lather utilizes realist tales; critical tales; deconstructive tales and reflexive tales to introduce different ways of writing science. In the latter tale, the reflexive tale, she uses a playlet format to analyze data. On the other hand, WoodBrooks (1991), while using the same formats, divides her data in terms of themes and juxtaposes the different coded categories under these themes. She distances herself from reflexive, playlet format.

These choices include decisions that are made about "what details to include or omit, how to summarize and present data; what voice to select and what quotation to use" (Van Maanen, 1988). These are some of the decisions that I make within the study.

This study borrowed extensively from the above-mentioned research scholars in an attempt to find an amenable methodology that would not alienate the researcher from the research work. The format utilized by WoodBrooks (1991) was the ultimate choice for the data analysis, in this study.
After the data were coded, two emerging themes were identified by which the data could be interpreted. The first theme, "From Idealism to Realism," reflected on issues of entry into the supervisory positions; the false assumptions brought into the position and ultimately the reality of working as supervisors within this organization. Under this theme, the hypothesized functions provided explanations for the patterns evident in the discourse about issues of culture. All the data that reflected in the reality of the position were kept together to maintain consistency.

The second theme identified was "From Realism to Retention." This theme reflected on issues of perceived factors within the organization that have helped retain these supervisors within the organization. These include relationships that have been made within the organization and the reward and benefit structures.

Both these themes are presented by the author via three readings, they being Reading One, the Realist Tale, Reading Two, the Interpretivist Tale, and Reading Three, the Reflexive Tale. The reflexive tale incorporated the views from the participants.

According to Van Maanen (1988), the realist tale reflects the participants' point of view. He argues that this tale is characterized by the absence of the researcher in the narratives. The claim is that the researcher only provides a perfunctory appearance through putting the narratives in perspective. The result is there is an interpretation that carries directly from the perspective of the participant.

The interpretive or critical tale reflects on the perspective given by the researcher. This perspective is driven by the larger social, political and economic
issues (Harding, 1992). The utility of grounded theories to juxtapose the participants' voices is an attempt to speak for others. This section of the study will reflect my analysis and interpretation of the given data.

Lastly, the reflexive tale "brings the researcher into the tale as an embodied knower with investment of privilege and struggle. It asks who is speaking for whom and with what authority" (Harding 1992). This section brings together the thoughts of participants about the perceived analysis by the researcher. This knowledge assisted me in reflecting on how the perspective I used in the analysis influenced the findings of this research, and the reality that I therefore created. As WoodBrooks (1991:153) concludes, I, too, believe that "this analysis dynamic assumes the 'we who know better' attitude, because, 'we have somehow got science and can write of their naive narratives'."

THEME ONE
From Idealism to Realism

Not everybody can do (the job). It requires a lot of hurdles and barriers to overcome just dealing with a multitude of change within the system. Just keeping abreast can be a culture shock. [But] all of this is growth producing. Makes you aware of who you are as a person, what you really value in life.

Sindi

After reading the data, I discerned a theme of idealism, which translated to realism with years of experience in the organization. Idealism is associated with what
the employee believes he or she can expect to achieve in that position. In this instance, supervisors were unshakable in the belief that they could contribute in the organization that helped children and their families.

Idealism further relates to naivety of some supervisors when they first took up this position. One participant admitted, for example, that she thought that "being a supervisor was easy" vis-à-vis being a caseworker. Most of the supervisors contended that they lacked knowledge about the amount of responsibility the position entailed. Most of them had experienced supervision as caseworkers, and as students and had ideas about what the position entailed. Munson (1983) accedes to the notion of supervisor preparation needs. He believes that formal learning about supervision, and how to do it, is not widespread in the social work profession.

The supervisory responsibilities, compounded by the assumptions that the organization makes about the preparation for the position, quickly drummed the reality of their situation home. That the organization is very rigid and bureaucratic only complicates the position in which the mid-level social workers find themselves.

However, with greater involvement in the organization, the conflicts and contradictions brought about by the true potential of their position have translated to a sense of reality of the situation in which they find themselves, i.e., a bureaucratic structure with its own culture to which they need to subscribe or exit.

Under the broad theme of Idealism to Realism, I identified several categories that include entry to the position, job expectation and preparation; compliance issues; work conditions; recognition by upper management. These categories helped provide
a focus for meanings that supervisors made of their work. All the categories that related to issues of Idealism to Realism were grouped together under this theme to facilitate the shaping of the data.

Based on their professional training, and a sense of identity, with the culture, i.e., the beliefs in the values of the organization, some supervisors have felt that it is their lot or obligation to commit themselves to working with families and their children. In doing so, many of them were initially confronted with issues of idealism which have transformed these to reality—a reality that encompasses the true boundaries of supervision.

This one participant directed the response to this question to what she perceived the profession could do for the people who are served.

Her words:

I like social work. I feel that it has more potential for change for kids and their parents.

Kelly

The Realist Tale.

The question of what attracted supervisors into their positions became a significant one in terms of career choices. I believed the responses would open a window of knowledge about who, among the supervisors, would ultimately be persuaded to stay on within the organization. The nature of the business of Children's Services would attract a certain type of person, one who elects to work with children
and within such an environment. It might also attract professionals who believed they have something to contribute to the ideas and values of the organization. A perspective:

I had as a second year graduate student done my fieldwork at this organization. So had become somewhat familiar with the agency and knew what it was about. So I was comfortable from that standpoint. I knew I wanted to work here and I enjoyed it.

Pat

This next participant reflected on opportunities that were created by changes within the organization that for her were positive. She muses:

We had a change in administration in terms of many people were leaving through retirement and early buy-outs, and some supervisors who were on those spots moved up to the upper administrative levels. That created opportunities for about eight people to move into supervisor. I began as a supervisor then.

Sindi

The other response touched on an issue more personal about why people work in the first place. This participant shares:

I graduated with a social work degree, and I needed to secure a job. This was a job that paid the most money.

Senzo

For one participant, social work was a choice made for her by her college advisor. She had not made up her mind about what was appropriate for her. Her voice:
I was told my math and science were not that good and if
I wanted to help people I should be a social worker. That
is how I got into this field. I think that’s probably where
my calling is. This is reality.

Sindi

In looking at the issues of what supervisors expected in their positions, an
array of responses emerged that reflected a common pattern. While most of the
supervisors acknowledged that the supervisory position would lean more toward
administrative functions, the data revealed, however, that the core feelings owned by
the supervisors reflected more commitment to helping people and supervisors as
opposed to their administrative tasks:

I wanted to work with people, and working with kids in
their own homes and helping them.

Georgie

Another participant appeared to be informed about what the role of supervisor
entailed and had been eager to assume this responsibility. Her response was:

I had the expectation that I would know the job and be able
to teach and train others to do it. I also had the
expectation that I would be able to train staff, that I
would be able to communicate to them the love for child
welfare, and the desire to do good social work practice. I
also thought that I would be valued as an administrator, as
a supervisor, and that my input towards the agency would
be considered. If I had been in this position long, if I had
been with this agency this long, I had some experience that
I could offer tenured social workers.

Sindi
She, too, realized the impact of the job as evidenced in this unexpected response from her. This response expressed the reality of the situation removed from idealism of entry into a new level. The contradictions of the position brought reality home:

In terms of my expectation about administrative support, the most frustrating thing about being a supervisor is that you don’t have any level of impact with upper management and upper administration. You are a buffer. There are also paraprofessionals. So I get their inputs and it’s all coming here (points to herself), and I understand it, and I understand their frustration in terms of trying to interpret policy and procedure and in trying to understand new processes and new programs. So the upper administration communicates about the front line supervisor, but I don’t think much attention is paid to them. There is just the expectation that you will do your job and that your staff will follow suit.

Sindi

From these narrations, it does not appear as if the job, per se, was a letdown. There was too much of it that these professionals had let themselves anticipate. These reflections indicate their perceptual level. Her voice:

As if we can totally control the workers, and that’s ludicrous, you can’t. You know I cannot totally control what my workers do. And for administration to think that I can is ludicrous.

Pat

One participant’s view of her job moved beyond her organization, clients, and direct service workers. She seemed eager to establish relationships with other organizations which showed a similar mission as her own organization. She reveals:
Getting to work also with other agencies and the court system and collateral agencies.

Kelly

The responses coming from this participant show that the choice made for her ended up being her life—a life that has many struggles, but that which she enjoys.

Their voices:

Why I got into the profession in Child Welfare, basically, is because I was very ideological, very idealistical . . . I knew where I wanted to go even though I knew the opportunity was limited.

Georgie

Even though the views of this participant went deeper than this initial expression, after two interviews she believes:

Children’s Services would be (provide) a good opportunity to grow.

Sindi

The issue of preparing individuals for the roles they will play in the new positions is a neglected one in most organizations. The assumption is that they can learn from their peers or supervisors. The other assumption is that professional training should prepare people to be autonomous and ready for the field. The following voices point out:

What I could say is folks are not adequately prepared for the job. When I became a supervisor we didn’t have that much staff development for workers when they became supervisors, but that much has increased greatly over the years. By the time I had been a supervisor, for a long
time, so I had taken a few courses (because) there wasn’t a core curriculum for supervisors until just a few years.

Kelly

Concurring with this view, another participant painted a vivid picture of her experiences concerning preparation.

When I first became supervisor, I literally taught myself what needed to be done. I looked at the job description and tried to follow that. About six years ago, the governor mandated for everybody to receive training. When I became a supervisor, I went on past experience as there was no training. On the first day as supervisor, instead of giving me an orientation, I was told to go and sit in a social worker’s meeting. So I was thrown literally to problems. Having some perseverance helped to take everything in stride. From previous experience, I had a little training and that helped.

Georgie

One of the participants emphasized the fact that organizations make false assumptions about preparation for their employees.

A perspective:

As a social worker, you are not taught to be an administrator. They are not trained how to deal with problem employees, difficulties in the job and interpersonal problems. They are not trained in that area. Social workers are not trained how to interrelate with upper administration, how to communicate either verbally or in writing. They aren’t trained in these things unless they have had a supervisor or a piece of that to some degree or another. The presumption that you know is false.

Sindi
A different perspective was brought in by this participant who voiced a belief that it was the post-graduate education that prepared her for her new position. She stated:

I think because I took the administration courses I was very much better prepared and had a knowledge base of what I was doing in terms of personnel issues. Very much... I used everything I knew from graduate school. I could not have done that job. I had some knowledge base. I was very aware of that. I did not use all the things here because the job is much more.

Linda

These narrations do not, however, reflect several changes that have occurred within this organization. While most participants interviewed did not receive any form of preparation from the organization for their positions, there is a changing pattern with new appointees. There appears to be a formalized program for socializing all new employees including supervisors as evidenced in these words:

Generally, it was not formalized when I first came in. When I first came in you just showed up. And there was this OJ T, which was the on-the-job training. It was that simple when you first came in. Now there is a formal and full introductory session that talks about your benefits--and the multi-facets of the job. There is a core curriculum for supervisors' knowledge.

Sindi

In a follow-up conversation, this participant reflected on a program that the organization has embarked on that has as its aim the preparation of supervisors.

Her voice:

The agency is attempting to teach social workers to become supervisors by a position called mentor. This mentor will have some supervisory responsibilities and act in behalf of
the supervisor in her absence, so that, as the supervisory opportunity presents itself, they should be able to take over the job. But I venture to say that even the mentors don’t know even a tenth of what you (as supervisor) do daily.

Sindi

An alternative view that was provided by one participant is that the training programs may not be cost effective in terms of time and effort put into it. They have not been evaluated. She pointed out:

But from September last year we supervisors have undergone very intensive training programs. To be perfectly honest with you, we got only 5% out of that training. The rest of it we felt it was a waste of time. Well, the training is very good, but what they teach you and what is reality are two different things.

Georgie

The question of working conditions within the organization prompted a variety of responses from the participants. Some responses focused on the physical environment. Other participants talked about their relationships with their superiors. These responses reflected the meaning that the participants made of their work environment.

One voice articulated:

Work areas need to be more spacious. There are privacy issues. (Although) administrators are sensitive to the situation, the working conditions do take their toll on workers and there is a sense of frustration. You keep on giving pep talks.

Senzo
The following responses focused on relationships with upper level administration.

I feel comfortable with people directly above me, but not the hierarchy in general. I do not feel that I am appreciated for what I do.

Kelly

In a follow-up conversation, this participant elaborated:

Some administrators don’t want to hear honest feedback of what they did. They feel it is an attack rather than a difference of opinion.

Kelly

A different perspective was given by this participant, who viewed the working conditions in her region as:

Good. We are treated as professionals here.

Georgie

However, in a follow-up conversation, she pointed out that:

The executive and associate directors sometimes come across as punitive. This may not be intentional. Questioning supervisors about social workers. Supervisors are not overseers. We are pushed to get accountability from social workers.

Georgie

An important element in all organization is cultural communication. The voices of the participants mirror how the organization continues to preserve and perpetuate itself.
I think people get promoted for a lot of reasons. Because you are particularly knowledgeable is only among the backdrop. I think it is because they fit in the value structure of the system of administration and I think that makes sense because nobody likes the challenge of ideas that may or may not work. I think what happens strategically is that you are a system that has the greatest chance for failure.

Senzo

When asked how supervisors were this system with the greatest chance for failure, the response was quite vivid:

How does that work? Why do I say that? Senior management gets the information first. They also get to process it first. This is not different from any other agency either. But then what happens is that they get it first, see it first, get to talk about it first. They usually get the speakers. You don't, which means that you are one step removed from the information.

Senzo

This participant concludes by stating that it is not only the information and knowledge that makes the other systems—i.e. the upper management and unions appear wiser, but also how it is channelled. Communication is an important characteristic of organizational cultures.

His voice:

(They) come in with information that is organized and processed, which is the way it should be because you don’t want an ignorant administration. But the union people get to process it through. They get certain protection. They have stewards. They have information that they get. So
oftentimes, senior management knows the union knows but the line workers don’t. They are the last ones to find out, which means, at times, not all the time, on occasion, you are going to be the last person in the agency to find out what’s going on, which makes you in a not-so-best situation. Who is going to tell you? In essence, you don’t find out.

Senzo

Furthermore, looking at organizational culture, one becomes aware of traditions and/or ceremonies helping entrench certain values and beliefs that are part of the organization.

A participant’s view:

One of the personal traditions that I have developed in my unit is when someone comes to the unit and is new to the unit, we go out to lunch together. Lunch is on me. A going-away party is one of these. We are not real good with birthdays. It depends on the group. It builds future relationships. It's important to me and I try and encourage it with my staff. It's nice to see them make social plans together. So it's that kind of thing that is important to me.

Linda

Yet another voice:

Within one’s unit there is an opportunity to celebrate birthdays, celebrate promotions, and things of that nature. There is also, within the unit itself, celebration of the holidays. Often the agency has something on a broader level. If someone dies, they will lower the flag down by the administration as an acknowledgement.

Sindi
In a follow-up conversation, this participant further added:

Here in the region we have all staff meetings quarterly. We have breakfast together. People have responsibility to bring food. Upper management has the opportunity to know "happenings" within the agency. We also have professional days away—when we get off the job. Someone would cover office phones for the entire period.

Sindi

One participant reflected as follows:

There is an agency-wide Christmas party in December. There is an agency-wide recognition banquet in May—recognition for good work. The pen and pencil stuff. They are patting your back for loyalty.

Pat

Concurring with this view, one participant reflected:

There are different banquets—foster parent banquet, annual banquets. People have opportunities to serve on these committees. (Traditions) by higher administration. We have employee of the year. These stem out of committees charged with the responsibility to organize them.

Sindi

Another participant’s view of tradition was the structure of the organization and its concomitants. His voice:

(There) is a caste system. It is a caste by relationship to information and responsibility and also salary.

Senzo

It can be noted here that, as far as traditions and rituals within the organization was concerned, the participants appear to have articulated only what had meaning for
them. Hence the perceptions range from personal traditions within the participants' own unit to organizational traditions and rituals.

Language is another determinant in looking at the organizational culture. Certain meanings seem to derive from the jargon used by employees. A reflection:

It takes experience to know all the buzz words which are the networks and should be tapped into. [In this organization] you have to eat lunches and dinners with people so that you can hook up network. But sooner or later you do that--work with other people so that those networks are established. That's how it's true. You have to know your way around. It takes time and it changes all the time. New political people come into power. There is a new buzz word. There is a new system to learn. If you are good at your work and you stand by the products of your work, you stay part of the political arena as long as it is possible. If the work is good, people truly believe you. If you should die, there should be no problem.

Senzo

One participant vocalized the ability of expression especially for people who represent the organization in other institutions. For her, language was a way of transmitting the organization's values and beliefs.

Her words:

We have people who are excellent as far as clinical theories, but aren't able to express themselves in court. They go and put their foot in their mouths. They don't know what to do and they can't say it neatly.

Kelly
The opportunity to become supervisors for the majority of the participants was a natural progression, emanating from their experiences as caseworkers, coupled with their qualifications. Some supervisors did not view their current position as their final destination, i.e., the position currently held is not an end in itself. One participant stated that if the opportunity for upward mobility would arise, she would grasp it, whether or not it was within the organization.

Her voice:

Let me put it this way, if there was an opening for an executive director in another agency and the opportunity was there, I would take it and leave. But those opportunities are few.

Georgie

One participant associated upward mobility with their knowledge and potential to contribute even further to the development of this or any other organization. She mused:

The skills and abilities that I have are underutilized. The total skills are undertapped. My visibility is very poor at this level besides being on the list. I have skills and experiences that are underutilized. So I can say to you if I made in my mind a commitment to retire here what I would be making is a commitment to be professionally stagnant.

Sindi

For other participants, a career within Children's Services and in particular, this Midwestern Children's Service, was a matter of choice and a decision predicated on the reality of their current situation.
One perspective:

If I could find a better job I would. But no job can meet all your needs. So I don’t think it is wrong to say you have to dream. That’s important. You have to have other things to keep alive. So I see looking for a job as staying marketable. But right now (they) got me.

Senzo

Promotions and opportunities to move to upper level management are based on certain cultural values and assumptions of founders/leaders of organizations. They are the ones who determine the characteristics of the people best qualified to assume these upper management positions. The following views expressed by participants reflect feelings about their perception of this process:

I am talking about certain games that you play. Certain people that you hang with in order to be favored. I am talking about the unspoken political games, being extremely visible. Sitting at the table with the master. I am not into that. I know there are certain games that you play—conversations that you have or you don’t have. And I do that extremely well. Or doing something that I am not. So if my excuse is if you look at some of the people that have moved up in this organization... certain games, certain behaviors that they engaged in.

Sindi

Another view was:

You have to eat lunches and dinners with people so that you can hook up network. But sooner or later you do that—work with other people so that you can hook up network. If you are good at your work and you stand by the products of your work, you stay part of the political arena as long as it is possible.

Senzo
Another important element that has been linked to organizations that impact on work of professionals is related to policies, rules, and regulations. This element is traced back to Weber's conceptualization of organizations. Rules and regulations are viewed as the major characteristics of bureaucracies. How these rules and regulations impact on supervisors is articulated by one participant as follows:

I will say our agency is driven by regulations imposed by the Ohio Department of Human Services. Those regulations are multiple in numbers, in hundreds in terms of regulations. So it's heavily driven by that. Failure to comply can result in going down the ladder.

Sindi

There appeared to be a pattern in terms of responses to the issue of compliance. This participant stated:

I think the agency is involved in code enforcement of laws, regulations, and standards. The amount of flexibility gets to be minimal. It's not a particularly creative process. It is selectively creative. There is not much opportunity to develop new programs. It is, rather, done in a selective basis which it is not different than in any other organizations. It is always the in-group than the out-group.

Senzo

The following response reflected on how these rules and regulations of the organizations impact on practice. The response furthermore portrays the helplessness of the supervisors in a system that is propelled by guidelines and more guidelines.

We have federal mandates. We have state mandates the ODHS regulates. Some of those things are put on us that we are not able to change those. There are organizational regulations which have been developed. I can't even tell you by whom. But they might be things that make sense
from Child Welfare standpoint. But when we try and walk through those things, you can’t, you don’t have the time.

Pat

In another conversation, this participant reflected on how they try to survive the system and its rules and regulations. Her voice:

You also make sure that you cover yourself. An example might be, you know, if you have got a worker who has not met some particular regulation, then you cover for that and we have to log in places and you just address in the log as to why it wasn’t done so you’re both covered. Sometimes it is done after the fact. Sometimes it is done before that, you know you’re not going to see someone, this month, then you address that.

Pat

However, one participant provided an alternative perspective to the issue of rules and regulations; she felt they need guidelines for the type of work they did. She focused on the use of the said code enforcement. Her words:

I’ll tell you the organization does have several policies but if you work because you have to have some guidelines in investigations in working with children and other things. Where the problem comes is when you have an organization such as ours—that is county-wide—you know the State of Ohio the social services are provided basically on some of us are strictly general and some of us deal with combined county and state—and in one building they’d do welfare and in the other building, the Children’s Services. Well, here we don’t deal with most of that. It is not an issue and I think the problem is when Children’s Services has one set of policies and we are following state mandates that you have some policies that deal prevent freedom for
creativity. Organizational policies are much more stable to change, so you always know what they are expecting. But it is difficult to try and fulfill two kinds of expectations.

Georgie

The issue of recognition by upper level management brought about strong comments from the participants. The responses showed that the participants felt less valued by upper management in particular. One perspective was:

To truly value workers is important. I think the way we treat each other is one that is out of control. The goal of the manager should be to catch people doing things right rather than catch people doing things wrong.

Senzo

Another's voice:

I don’t think that there is much respect for the supervisor, yet we are a critical front line. So the upper administration communicates about the front line supervisor, but I don’t think much attention is paid to them. There is just the expectation that you will do your job and that your staff will follow suit.

Sindi

Mid-level social workers play a buffer role for upper managers and direct service workers. The participants in this research expressed a feeling that their input was not necessarily considered. They felt isolated and not given the recognition and respect they felt they deserved. A voice:
There has always been a better relationships between supervisors and staff than between administration and staff. It is perceived in this agency the supervisors see to it that everything gets done. We act as buffers between social workers and administration. We try and give them--I try for my unit addressing social workers so there is no aggravation.

Georgie

While patterns and trends were established concerning the issue of recognition by upper level administration, one participant’s response was the exception to the rule. She believed that:

As far as work condition in treating people--let’s say as far as treating social workers as professionals, we’ve always been treated as professionals by upper-management.

Georgie

This view deviated from the perspective that mid-level social workers are not respected or recognized by upper administration. In a later conversation, however, the participant acknowledged her position as a buffer between upper administration and direct service workers.

One participant expressed a sense of frustration about the position of supervisors within the organization. She had expectations of impacting more on upper administration. She stated:

The most frustrating thing about being a supervisor is that you don’t have any level of impact with upper management and upper administration. You are a buffer. If the information comes in all different directions from this social worker and that social worker. There are also
supervised peer professionals too. So I get their input and it’s all coming here (points to herself), and I understand it, I understand their frustration in terms of trying to interpret policy and procedure and in trying to understand new processes and new programs. Some of it doesn’t make sense. But I can’t tell them that. So just the thought that I as a supervisor can make much of an impact with policy and procedures is probably the most discouraging for me. I don’t think that there is much respect for the supervisor, yet we are a critical front line.

Sindi

One participant considered the rigidity of the organization as affecting what would or would not be acceptable as knowledge. He reflected:

I wish there were more flexibility within the system so that we could enhance the value of the agency. The middle manager could make contributions here or at lower management level or wherever and the workers could be here or there they are all working in interchanging ideas and in development of different projects, e.g. Ford would give cash rewards to build a better product to people at different levels depending on what their ideas were. They would take ideas from the janitor to so and so and so and so. But that is not the way for me to look and see whose ideas are—who is that group and so on. That’s how we know. You are as good as people above you.

Senzo

In another conversation this participant expressed further views about upper level management. His voice:

If your associate director or anybody in a chain of command is threatened by what you know and by what you do, the amount of impact you have would be minimal. You can’t go inside out, but you have to go around, which means that politically speaking, you have been invited to
participate, the invitation involving the directors, it has to go higher in the echelons.

Senzo

Another response seemed to be a reflection on how communication sometimes goes between upper management and supervisors. She recalled:

Sometimes it seems like the things or information that administration needs from us they need right now. I don’t see what the emergency is. Why we have to drop what we’re doing to do something else, I mean, changes that are being made in how we do something took effect last week and we’re finding out this week. That makes it hard: I don’t see where we have much power to impact changes.

Pat

Yet another opinion was shared that spoke to the view of upper management by some supervisors.

Many times I think the supervisor is in a very vulnerable situation from both sides because they can truly advocate through workers but then you have administrators or directors or associate directors in this agency that really don’t care they are mainly interested in their own career and looking good. So they don’t want to hear that and it also depends on the top administration as to whether—again this is a large agency and you have people that listen and I have been in management meetings where I mean the expression that comes from you is that old parable that you want to yell out, "The emperor has no clothes," because they are not hearing anything reality, and you hear, you know, and they are spending time and energy on this thing that has no relevance, making these foolish plans that you do not support.

Kelly
In turning to the issue of whether the participants felt they could impact on changes within the organization, there were a variety of responses that were quite diverse. Many participants expressed skepticism in their ability to impact on changes within the organization.

I’d say no! Because what we usually do is that agencies across the state deal a lot with . . . unfortunately, social workers. Why I’m not sure. About organizing, is because sometimes you need a lobbyist. At agency level, changing policies. . . social workers can get together because in the past it has been perceived as a threat to administration.

Georgie

One view was that the organization needed to change in a variety of ways that would encourage job satisfaction.

So if I could change things, what would I change? I would say treating people in a more positive manner and making evaluations as concrete as possible so it reduces subjectivity. To truly value workers is important.

Senzo

Another opinion was that focusing on the image of the organization. The feeling seemed to be that with public support, the organization could move forward with more strength and confidence.

If we are talking about being publicly supported, then the more positive exposure that we have, the better it is. Would improve the image of the agency so that we are not just a bunch of bumbling fools that can’t get jobs elsewhere. So my hope is that the greatest exposure should be allowed and should be bolstered. Here we can’t always
give money, but what we can do is to foster opportunities to be involved in research and enhance practice goals.

Senzo

The position of supervisor is characterized mostly by administrative functions. While some supervisors have caseload responsibilities, most of their time is spent on planning, coordinating and managing functions. This was clearly outlined in their responses about a typical day of a supervisor. There was common ground about how each one of them spent their day.

One voice:

My supervision time. I have to meet social workers with their cases. . . .I have a lot of phone work I do carry one case. It doesn’t require face-to-face contact as the person is out of state. But it does require that I attend to that. I have paper work expectation in terms of statistics, evaluation of statistics. Monitoring and managing the paperwork that comes through, in terms of evaluating what the workers produce. My own supervision time with my bosses. My unit meetings with my staff once a week. Meeting with managers all together once a week is a requirement. Case reviews once or twice a month. It’s probably an eight-hour day, critiquing cases. Every twenty minutes there is a new case you are critiquing. So I believe that is mind-boggling. It is outrageous. The paperwork.

Sindi

Besides just being administrative, the functions of supervisors appeared to involve a substantial paperwork too. This is reflected through this voice:
A typical day is pushing and processing and reviewing reports. The work is much more paperwork-oriented. The social worker can just come in and talk about their work or hang around. I am able to do direct service work. I do go to court once in a while just to keep my skills up. I am involved with policy, not deciding how it will change but how it should be implemented.

Georgie

Concurring with this view, another participant contended:

Process a heck of a lot of paper work. . . you know there are times when you don't feel like you have accomplished anything unless you have moved paper. This paper has come in today. And if I don't move some of those I don't feel like I have done anything. And that's sad. It really is. We have become so paper-oriented that it is all-consuming. So it's all processing moving papers from one area to another. . . but part of it in moving the people is also doing some quality assurance for workers and the work they are doing, doing some teaching, and helping them correct some of the things they are doing.

Pat

Another voice:

I do process a lot of paperwork. I think some of that could be reduced if we were allowed to use computers in a more functional manner. But we have to document and the paper trail that we leave is important and necessary. The majority is okay. It's part of what should happen. A little bit of it is what I could call inappropriate.

Senzo

Over and above the paperwork that characterizes their work, the supervisors believed they were involved more with product and quality assurance than with people
and the process of work. In lamenting this state of affairs, this participant suggested:

Oftentimes in training you are trying to do in social work practice I have to be concerned about the end result of what the paperwork looks like and not be concerned about what happened to get there. I tell them that you have a case plan due by such and such a day. I don’t always get the opportunity or I don’t always have the time to talk about how that case plan is being formulated. I may give this at the beginning an indicators to follow up on, you know, check up XYZ, but in four weeks I expect that document to be on my desk. The ideal model would be for the supervisor to identify the document that is needed, to have an interim conversations about how that document is developed. What objectives and services are going to go into that document. And then at the final stage look at it and do a critique. I try to be more quality-focused but also I have to look at compliance check-ups. Were the boxes filled in? Is this area filled out? Oftentimes I repeat myself. So all I am concerned about is paper instead of the integral part of what is contained in that report or where we are headed in terms of directing services. So we get caught up in those repetitive processes and you can lose the training and the teaching because you have got into shuffling paper. They pay me lots of money to shuffle paper. We can probably get a two-year associate degree student to process the amount of paperwork that I do.

Sindi

In turning my attention to issues of career path, I noted differing views from the participants. Some supervisors felt that in spite of a variety of constraints brought about by working in this organization, their place was with the agency.

One somber note was provided by this participant who reflected on her career and stated:
I have had some health problems that have forced me to take a second look at my ambitious self and I have changed that idea that relates to why I do what I do. When I took this job I never intended to stay here forever and I've said this to my friends, I don't plan to retire from this same position. I don't want to stay here for the next ten years. I don't intend to stay here in this position, but I have changed what I want to be in ten years.

Linda

On a more somber note, one participant reflected on how promotions are issues that affected not only her personal but also her professional life:

The next opportunity for me to move up to the next level will be if someone dies or retires. That is at least five to ten years before the next group moves around. I can't commit to another roller coaster without more opportunity for responsibility to grow. With supervision you train social workers and they move on. They are either moving on, up, or out. Most of the supervisors are moving up or around. (Here) I have to wait to be competitive with colleagues at my level.

Sindi

The Interpretive Tale.

As mentioned earlier, the interpretive tale gives the perspective that is driven by theory, and influenced by the thinking and interpretations of the researcher. There was a diversity of responses to the question of what attracted mid-level social workers to the position of supervisor. Most supervisors moved from their experiences as undergraduate students, getting into the profession for the first time. They reflected on issues of their idealism about what they could achieve within the Children's
Services, in particular. Some viewed this type of organization as a place with an opportunity to grow, while others just liked the profession in general for what it could provide for children and families.

The underlying principle in these responses is their training. Most of them had been exposed as students to fieldwork practice within children’s service organizations. They had enjoyed this experience. Some decided to make careers out of this work.

Most of these practitioners had moved from the casework position to mid-level social work positions. The sense that one gets from these responses is that the participants preferred this organization for what it represented and its potential for change. It would not be hard for these participants to continue to stay within this organization. While other participants stated they had been attracted by what the organization could offer them (financial rewards), they have stayed on for more than five years in the position of supervisor.

Major assumptions are made by organizations about capabilities of personnel for certain positions, which, inadvertently, lead to their promotion to the next level. As a result, proper preparation for the next level, or if provided, it is seldom evaluated for its worth.

For most supervisors, the appointment to the supervisory position comes after several years of employment as caseworkers or direct service workers. According to Munson (1981), transition from practitioner to supervisor is an important change that often does not result in adequate preparation.
Lack of a planned process of learning is characteristic of the responses of these supervisors. The argument is that they had to draw from their own experiences as supervisees to perform their new roles. One participant reflected on how she taught herself the job by reading the job description. Another supervisor talked of being trained on the job.

Organizations that ignore this human resource management function take huge risks, in terms of resulting negative human resources outcomes. The latter include, among others, poor performance and attendance. Sometimes it results in lack of satisfaction with what the employee does and ultimately leads to turnover.

This Children's Services agency has, however, developed a program for its new employees. Some supervisors mentioned that there is now an on-going program for supervisors. No mention was made of efforts to evaluate these training programs by the organization. The following response clearly indicates a need for such evaluation.

(The) Children's Services does not have enough training because what they are doing now is, they are racing some of the training programs to fill in the positions or what they are saving to the training supervisors, we will disperse the cases to your trainees, but that does accomplish anything because in training the idea is to go slowly through the process and really learn how the system works . . . To be perfectly honest with you, we got only 5% out of the training. The rest we felt, it was a waste of time. The training is very good, but what they teach you and what is reality are two different things.

Georgie
From this response, one gets the sense that the organization has not invested in any evaluative programs that would assess success of their training efforts. Heneman, et al. (1989:421) assert that the United States trained about 38.8 million employees in 1987. In total, these employees received 1.2 billion hours of training. Furthermore, they believe that these organizations take for granted and on faith the benefits of employee development. If research studies point out to such high expenditure on training, this organization, too, could benefit from investing not only in the training and development of its staff, but in the evaluation of the impact of such training. Heneman, et al. (1989:421) refer to these efforts as serving the following purposes:

-- directed toward organizational and P/HR management objectives

-- undertaken only when they are the most effective way to attain these objectives

-- carefully administered and thoroughly evaluated.

Evaluation of training does not only save the organizations millions of dollars but ascertains that the training period provided the information necessary to enhance the professionals’ input within the organization. In short, it should serve the purpose of weighing whether determined needs and expected experiences balance.

Orientation and training, on the other hand, play a significant role—that of socializing members to the culture of the organization. Van Maanen (1976:67) conceptualizes culture as beliefs, norms, values, assumptions, and required behaviors that permit them (employees) to participate as effective members of an organization.
From the participants' responses, it was assessed that appropriate behavior to (their) position was learned through imitation and observation of other professionals in similar positions. These assumptions stem from the responses of the participants that reflect that they were not prepared for their roles as supervisors within the organization. The socialization process, in this case, was left to chance. The strength of the culture of the organization prevailed, however, as the participants were able to learn the procedures and protocols necessary for their positions.

An important event within the organization that occurred is that of some reshuffling of supervisors from one unit to another, as part of the reorganization. This event reflects the need for appropriate communication. The responses from the participants reflect a neglect of the needs of these professionals.

I was there, managing very well and they called the supervisors into a room one day without any warning, called an emergency meeting, like a crisis, and they gave us this five-minute lecture about what the agency needed and then they proceeded to say which supervisors will be transferred to which region. On top of that, those of us that moved had to go back to our units to tell them (caseworkers) this.

Georgie

For this participant, being transferred meant a variety of things. First, she was not consulted about it, which reflected a perception that her opinion was not valued by upper level administration. Second, her contributions in an environment which she called "inner city" were not considered. She was being destabilized. She has settled in the other region now, but would have felt respected had she been consulted.
Ott (1989:91), citing Kaufman, talks of different varieties of socialization viz. training programs, identification building programs, transfer policies and practices, promotions, and other rewards. This organization appears to have taken great risks about not preparing supervisors for transfer. However, this action does not appear to have resulted in any negative outcome. The participants were, however, left very dissatisfied with the move at the time. Yet there were turnovers resulting from this exercise. This action did not seem to evoke any negative response by mid-level social workers that were affected. This may point to their loyalty to the organization. An alternative view may be their present acknowledgement of the reality of their situation within a bureaucratic system, that is usually unyielding. The action by upper management was resented by the participants at the time. However, now that they had adjusted in their new environment, they had made the most of it. One participant stated:

Many (supervisors) were glad for the transfer.

Pat

The key issue, though, is that of compliance. The participant did not resist the decision of upper administration. This reflects on the impact that the leadership had and continues to have on the outcomes of personnel in the organization.

The major thesis of this study is not to determine whether this organization operates on an established culture. The purpose is to ascertain how the culture of the organization impacts on the supervisors' commitment to stay within the said organization. The arguments that have been put forward by Ott (1989:75) about the
sources of organizational culture suggest that it stems from:

(a) the broader societal culture in which the organization resides

(b) the nature of an organization’s business

(c) the beliefs, values, and basic assumptions held by the founder or dominant leader.

These determinants provide a lens through which to view and understand the meanings the supervisors within this organization have made of their experiences. Literature on organizational culture and cultural communication reflects that all organizations, regardless of purpose and size, develop systems of shared values and beliefs that produce norms of behavior (Borman and Deal, cited by Maiello, 1991). Organizations then uphold these beliefs, values, and assumptions about the behavior of employees that are known but not expressed. Those who deviate from these unspoken norms exit early or are released from their responsibilities.

The responses received from the participants addressed some of these issues of assumptions, values, beliefs, and generally, the way of doing things within this organization. For example, while no participants articulated their loyalty to the organization as a calculated decision, their narratives point to their unquestioning responsiveness to their employers (Ott, 1989).

The assumption by upper level management that supervisors could control direct service workers was cited by several participants and referred to as ludicrous. One participant argued that these major assumptions have been challenged by this group of professionals. The organization expects that the supervisors will be able to
control these workers and the supervisors have disagreed that this is possible.

The issue that the participants raise about their ability to control direct service workers has been articulated by Munson (1983). He claims "the problem of control in conjunction with the teaching and evaluation functions in supervision of professional practice leads to a number of important questions. He proclaims that the use of authority in social work should recognize the role of authority and its limits. He cites Scott Briar, who maintains:

Ninety percent or more of all caseworkers practice in bureaucratic organizations, and the demands of such organizations have a tendency to encroach upon professional autonomy. There are, of course, realistic limits to the amount of autonomy and discretion an organization can grant to the practitioner, but no one knows just where that limit is, and we cannot know until we have tried to reach it. (120)

The concerns about control raised by the participants is real and social work theorists continue to struggle with them in search of an appropriate answer. The assumptions made by organizations concerning the issue of control could be addressed by heeding Kadushin, cited by Munson (1988:124). He warned "as long as the issue is viewed as a worker-agency, conflict with the supervisor as mediator, little substantial change will occur. . . only when the social work profession as a group addresses this issue through its professional organizations with systematic, standardized principles be established to guide agencies in their practices."

There was an established pattern about the participants' responses concerning their perceived lack of recognition by upper level administration. They felt they were
not valued or given the respect that they deserved within the organization's upper level administrators. From an organizational theory perspective, some causes of constraints in the work setting stem from the aloof posture and impersonality of individuals working within organizations. The arguments for such behavior is tied to the notion of organizations being systems that strive to maintain and perpetuate themselves, thus overcoming the mortality of human beings.

However, one participant believed that they were treated professionally by upper level administration. The meaning she got from her experiences indicated what she expected and received from them. While she expressed frustrations and constraints like the other participants, her perspective seemed to be based on the bureaucratic nature of organizations, i.e. that no one was to blame for the directives under which they had to work. People were all trying to do their jobs in the best way they could. In bureaucratic settings, people, especially those higher up in the hierarchy, tend to be aloof in an attempt not to get too involved in the affairs of others. In short, they try to be "professional" in their relationships, especially with subordinates.

The issue of public perception of the work of these professionals within this organization is a delicate one, where the organization is viewed as a "troubled system (that) leads to painful lives" (Columbus Dispatch, Dec. 13, 1992). The professionals interviewed believed their relationships with some colleagues and/or friends is affected by the public's perception, from which they cannot defend themselves because of confidentiality issues. The executive director of the organization has spoken to this
issue when she stated:

This is kind of a tough one, and one of the most frustrating things about our job is confidentiality requirements . . . It feels on the worst days like we’re trying to bail out the Titanic with a teaspoon, and on the best days, I look at the outcomes and we have an increase in adoptions and increase in reunification . . . our overreaching concern is that the child is safe.

M. Sandberg
(Columbus Dispatch, Dec. 13, 1992)

This perception by the public and the inability of the professionals to respond to some of the charges made against their institution and how it operates has led to some defensiveness about what they know they are capable of achieving. This response reflects on this issue.

To work here is a tough point. Periodically we always go through and get rejected by the newspaper situations and you are not allowed to tell your side of the story. So you are a victim because the system makes you a victim. So, if you don’t have a tolerance for that, then it is a problem. I’d go to parties and people treat me a certain way . . . . The aura of working for the agency is not a particularly good one. So I would say, you have to have a certain amount of internal strength or naivete or tunnel vision or something. You just can’t be reactive to your environment and perhaps survive as well as you want to because you are a sitting duck and the system, in many ways, is stacked against you.

Senzo

The above message is clear. Supervisors learn that there are certain values of the organization that should not be disrupted. Sometimes they have to be resilient in order to maintain the status quo. If they do not, they lose their positions within the
organization. By maintaining the status quo, they are unwittingly perpetuating the culture of the organization that is not altogether satisfactory to them.

All the employees within this organization operate within a framework of established rules and regulations. These are both State and County mandated. Furthermore, the organization has its own regulations aimed, not only at regulating the behavior of their employees, but at facilitating the adherence to these mandates.

Dressel (1971:33) citing Wasserman claims that:

public assistance policies and practices are in almost perpetual flux, reflecting the complex permutations of the phasings of federal, state, county (and) local administrative fiscal processes, the vagaries of political decisions, pressures, cycles of virtue and terror and local grassroots demands and the organizational disarray induced by shifts in caseload, size, turnover of employees, and so on . . . (P)olicies are in perpetual fluidity from office to office and from day to day.

The responses of the participants reflected this double bind of rules, regulations, and policies. They noted that their work was driven by these code enforcements which were aimed at facilitating service delivery. Yet, the frustration came with the fact that these rules and regulations were formulated by people who had no conception about the work of these participants. Their work, therefore, became one of checking and cross-checking if all the requirements were met by the caseworkers they were supervising. This created a dilemma for them. In an environment where even operating within the parameters of the law and official guidelines is not sufficient, based on the negative publicity the organization is receiving on this issue, is bound to foster feelings of dissatisfaction.
The position of supervisors was viewed by most participants as challenging. This was an established pattern and trend. However, there was an alternative view provided by one participant, who felt that the job of supervisor was "easy." On closer reflection, this participant recognized that her experiences as a caseworker were demanding and sometimes dangerous. Comparatively speaking, what she did as a supervisor could not compare with the challenges of being a caseworker. Her perspective is best described by her analogy of the situation:

We (supervisors) are here in the office and the fieldworkers are out there in the frontline and they come back in for comfort and to get their bearings again.

Linda

Her other experience relates to the fact that she always wanted to be a supervisor. That was her goal in her professional life. Now that she achieved it, she feels satisfied with what she does within the organization.

This different perspective brought about some useful insights about her response. Her response was connected to how she understood the world. For her, the task of being a supervisor might be challenging and difficult, but it is "easy," comparatively speaking, from what she used to do as a frontline worker. For her, working as a supervisor was her reality. Hence, colleagues who also worked for this organization, and who she looked up to, influenced her ambitions. It is apparent, therefore, that these factors impacted on her decision whether to stay or leave the organization.
For some, the product-process dichotomy provided a contradiction that was leading to resignation rather than satisfaction with what they were doing within the organization. In their professional training, for example, emphasis was put on process of how things are done and results achieved. For the supervisors, the focus on process is related to caring about the person who does the work. It fosters independence and ultimately, confidence.

However, the supervisors felt what the organization valued was the finished product with no details of the process. The response from one participant articulated this sentiment.

You have people interested in the product and not in the dynamics. That means you are not interested in what happens to a person. You only want the product because of the information track.

Senzo

Concurring with this view, another participant concluded that ultimately all she does is quality checks on the supervisees. She felt she was not doing any social work process delivery. For her, this was going against her personal and professional philosophy. This philosophy is of caring, about the direct service workers and their work. For her, "chasing deadlines and making sure all the paperwork was done limits the individual contacts. These contacts are for 'updates about families; conversations about how documents are developed; what objectives and services go to these documents'." In short, there was a call for an opportunity of treating direct service workers and of their own treatment by upper level management, as people.
The belief is that their inputs are being channeled into the wrong cause. The contention is that they could better serve the organization by being productive, anticipating problems by working on case plans and debriefings with the direct service workers than on quality assurance, achieved through mounds of paperwork, and a threat to appearing in computer lists. Dressel (1971:69) puts it well when she states that politicians benefit from the quantifications produced by the paperwork. Number counts of persons served, programs operating and funds spent are useful measures of achievement that enable politicians to symbolize the success of legislative efforts. Statistics can evoke popular reassurance, even when they have little relevance to client experiences of "programmatic outcomes."

Social work students and practitioners have spoken out about the issue of paperwork that they have to contend with in their organizations. This is not a new issue. Some organizations have responded by introducing computers that have helped to cut the paperwork to a great extent.

In talking about the issue of paperwork, especially in children's service agencies in general, Brode (1990) contends that not only is the paperwork demand high, it is also complicated. She asserted, "with the passage of Amended Substitute Senate Bill 89 into Ohio law, caseworkers had to learn a whole new system of standardized case planning. Case plan documents are now the same from one agency to the next." This amount of work for caseworkers means more supervisors, who are responsible for working with these caseworkers from planning each case to termination.
The participants expressed a willingness to learn and to use computers if the organization makes them available for their use. One participant shared with me an article he had been reading about the issue of computers in human service organizations. There is a belief that computers can cut their paper load down by half.

Whether or not an organization can move an extra mile to meet the needs of its employees depends on what its values and beliefs are. It also depends on the founder's or leader's ideas about issues of change and innovation. From the participants' perspectives, the organization's leadership has been responsible for several changes that have been acknowledged by some, but that remain unacceptable to other people within the organization.

The responses of the participants reflect not only what they think they can achieve, working within the environment of Franklin County Children's Services. They articulate their motivation and ability to perform their tasks. Heneman (1989:94) supports the argument that the ability to perform the job and what the job requires of an employee combine to determine whether he or she is capable of performing as the organization expects.

The participants appeared to have a desire and were motivated to contribute to society through their impact on people. This approach to work is further associated with what Dressel (1984:15) refers to as the "altruist model that many have come to associate with professional social workers." According to her, this model reflects a dedicatory, helpful-to-others attitude.
This altruist culture seemed to run through in most of the responses connected with the job performance and the commitment to stay within the organization. It appears that this attitude has promoted loyalty to the profession in general and to the organizational mission in particular, among the participants.

The Reflexive Tale.

Oftentimes researchers in the field are perceived as the knowers and the participants, the known. This perception is exacerbated by the manner in which science is written, that interprets responses of the participants utilizing paradigms and theoretical frameworks that do not represent contextual meanings of participants’ constructions of meanings. The participants, in this particular situation, remain objects to be analyzed and interpreted, who make no contribution in the interpretation of their own experience.

In this study, as part of the methodology, the process of intersubjectivity was explained to the participants through self-disclosure and disclosure of the research process. This was an attempt to avoid the politics associated with representation of the researcher. As a result, use was made of thick description, in particular, with the realist tale. This conscious effort was aimed at giving the participants’ narratives a "fuller and fairer hearing" (Nelson, 1988).

Yet, having gone this mile, the voice of authority seems to have come through, especially within the interpretive tale, which is written within the context of an organizational culture theory perspective. In an attempt to concretize the emerging
meanings, I ascribed value to them as I thought these meanings were experienced or lived. The interpretation of participants as "helpless" or having shown no negative response concerning their transfer was not, with the reaction by one participant, that indeed the participants had reacted to their being reshuffled by upper level administration. When the other participants, who had not reacted to their statement, were approached for their comments, they were able to collaborate this reaction. They had differed in their opinions about how they needed to react, but the issue had been raised as a concern.

This statement could only be rectified through the process of member checking—which also serves the purpose of validating the study. As Nelson (1988) states, "the interpretation is an attempt to specify the preconscious and intentional meaning of the described and defined phenomenon. . . the original presence of that which never could be present in person . . . conceivable only as the shadow and the latency of our experience, that which is present to us only by remaining from us, it is graspable only through interpretation" (p. 238).

The process of reflection helped focus the researchers continued sensitivity to the fact of multiple realities. Furthermore, the participants live and remain in the setting that is being studied and interpreted. If research is to be relevant, fair, and just, it needs to incorporate the perspective of the participants.
THEME TWO

From Realism to Retention.

There is crap everywhere. No matter where you work you experience problems with your administration. You know you run into the same problem from one organization to another. I mean, why change for that?

Pat

I have come to realize that other organizations have their own crap. They have their positives and they have their negatives.

Sindi

The Realist Tale.

This theme represents issues that pertain to satisfaction with what supervisors do and what they experience from the organization that results in their retention within this organization. This section focuses on rewards and benefits of being a supervisor at Franklin County Children’s Services. It also reflects on reasons for staying in this environment. The responses reflect a desire and a commitment to work with families and children that goes beyond extrinsic satisfaction. One participant reflected:

I would like to say to you that it’s probably the money (that makes people stay), but that isn’t true. Even though they are angry, I think the bottom line is commitment. Look around and those who have been around long have been around forever. I think they stay because of their desire to work with children. For the most part, those supervisors who are here stay because of their dedication and commitment. If you look at increases also, there is a ceiling as to how many increases you can get. Once you reach that ceiling, the only raise you will get is only 2 or
3% per year. Yet supervisors stay. It’s not a financial incentive. It is not so much for this organization more than their desire to work for Child Welfare. It’s more than advocacy, it’s social action.

Georgie

There were other views that linked commitment to stay with extrinsic factors. The following response linked commitment to staying in the organization with financial rewards and benefits.

She noted:

I think financially we get paid more than the private agencies. Besides that, we have health insurance. The other thing is after you have stayed for so long you accumulate the vacation and sick leave. To me, that is more important than monetary rewards.

Kelly

The organization appears to have an impact in the decision of most supervisors who continue to stay. Over and above the extrinsic factors, there seemed to be other considerations by mid-level social workers that impacted on their decision to stay. There is an identity with the philosophy and a mission of the organization, and the manner in which the organization conducts its business that appeals to some of the participants.

For the most part, for people in Child Welfare, there is not an interest in what I would call "hanging the shingle." Few people that I know in Child Welfare have any desire to go out to private practice and do counseling or consultation, in spite of the financial benefit. They have no desire to do that. I think it is the opportunity, a desire to
keep children safe. They have a right to remain in their own homes, and those of us who are professionals would like to keep it that way.

Georgie

For other participants, their responses reflected a meaning they got from what they did within the organization. This was put forward as a reason for their satisfaction:

Making a difference in the lives of the children. Children who would otherwise not have a chance. The knowledge that my efforts and social work efforts has made an impact in the termination of the cycle of abuse and neglect because this becomes a generational cycle. That I have an impact to stop it feels good to do that. Educating people. Educating parents. Seeing the mothers grow with maternal instincts and other developments. That makes for the intrinsic joys.

Sindi

Another voice:

I like the short nature of the job. I like working with child abuse. I do it and I happen to do it very well. I have the expertise. I have been doing this for many years. That familiarity is comfortable.

Linda

One participant conceded that his retention was related to the notion that there was no better agency out there which possesses no negatives. He felt that:

The organization, as far as organizations go--child welfare is a good agency. Very progressive. They try to make the environment and the job one that people can do. Is it slow? Yes. Probably so. Does it make any sense?
Probably no. But that is no different than in other agencies. Are we one of the better ones in the country? Probably so. Are there any others that are better than I could name? Yes. Probably so. But that’s because I like what they do. I know they are doing research. They are on the cutting edge. How I know is because they are published, which means they do not have only have developed a product but they teach it. So I consider that a higher quality of knowledge. A lot of workers do things but they can’t tell you what they did. They can’t teach you what they did. So it’s good practitioners that can teach you.

Senzo

Yet one participant listed change as problematic and having influence on her decision to stay. According to her, the ultimate result for change is not worthwhile. Her words:

I don’t like to make major changes. And the two job changes would be a major change. I like the money I’m making here. The vacation . . . I know pretty much how things are done around here. When I talk with other folks . . . There is crap everywhere. No matter where you work there are . . . you experience difficulties with your administration. You know you run into the same problems one organization to another.

Pat

Another response reflected on the issue of commitment:

A person who feels satisfaction doing this type of work can remain committed— you can’t do a game. You see the rewards of this job— you have a great respect for everyone. It is a tough job— It is a tough job! I should say that probably it is the toughest in the field— Anyone who has worked here can go anywhere, I think, and do the job.
There are times when we have got to remember that it is dangerous.

Pat

The element of danger was included when this participant reflected on her experiences as a fieldworker. While she recounted the hazard of the job, she was quick to point out that the job did "keep your adrenalin flowing" as "you never knew what you will face next." The emphasis was on avoiding boredom in the job and this job provided that advantage. While individual commitment was counted as a major influence in decisions to stay, some participants felt "locked in" by the benefit structure provided by the organization.

We have health insurance and then the other thing is after you have stayed for so long you accumulate the vacation and sick leave and to me that is as important, in some cases more important, than monetary rewards.

Kelly

For this participant, the fringe benefits were not just important for their own sake. They were part of the values she was brought up to seek out and keep. Her father had put emphasis on these issues and hence they were important for her, too. Having invested in time in this organization, for her it was cost-effective to remain there, based on her near future need for these benefits.

Concurring with this view, this participant commented:

I think, especially for the people who have been here fifteen-twenty years, you get locked in. Now my assumption then would be that if it gets to that point, you know on a scale, if these benefits here start to outweigh the
negative stuff, then you need to get a shift on how you are looking at things, or get out.

Pat

The issue of longevity, i.e., length of service with the organization, is a vital one for many organizations for the promotion of its culture. So, the longer the professionals stay with the organization, the more cost-effective a fruitful it is for the organization. The following responses reflect on the gentle snare of longevity on professionals. They are:

What has kept me [is] I do believe that what I am doing here in the community is of value, it is of importance and a job that has to be done. I also believe that not everybody can do it. And since I have been trained to do it I might as well stay to do it. The financial compensation is attractive and after you have been in a job this long, you get into the longevity mode. So why you stay, financially speaking, it might be difficult to try and get out to at least try and find another job that is going to pay a comparable salary. So, I have stayed because of a commitment to change and I have stayed because of financial compensation.

Sindi

The longevity mode was cited as one of the major reasons why people remained in this organization.

The organization does provide some incentives and benefits, but it's more than that. The reason why I'm staying is because I have been here for so long. It is not so much that I work for (the organization) more than what I have built (this organization) up for myself, the longevity. I think it's the professional context.

Sindi
The status issue did not become a very significant issue with most of the participants. Here, status is linked to recognition by peers and professional respect. One participant felt strongly that who she had become and what she was able to do were significant influences in her commitment to stay within the organization. Her words:

I guess the most rewarding thing is that I have gained more respect within the field. People are more comfortable around me now. I think I have attained professional credibility. I am listened to as a person who can contribute something worthwhile.

Georgie

In a follow-up conversation, this participant reflected:

Professionally I don’t want to leave at this time because I have established credibility. I have made significant professional contacts. I have earned professional courtesy enough that when my back is against the wall I’d call and say I need help. And usually it’s not. I have grown and I’m well known and respected by external agencies. If I were to leave, I’d lose all that. And for the most part, I like (this organization). It has been very good for me.

Georgie

Her concluding reflections were:

If I were to go to a private agency or social services, they don’t pay that well. And I think we are still paid well for what we do. Not that I am too concerned about money. When I got into Social Work I knew that. I enjoy Child Welfare work. I don’t want to work in the hospital. I figure there is enough people that can do counseling. And I’ve always been a social activist, and I think that is what keeps me here. So and I’ve been treated very well here
even though it was about time that I got the supervisory position and I think I've proven myself. I hope, I truly like it here.

Georgie

Another participant’s view of her position was that of power and influence. Having achieved this level, the tendency is to want to keep or maintain that rather than leaving, perhaps for a lesser role or position.

I have just realized what I like about the job. I like people who work for me. I think one of the things that keeps me here too is wanting to be a supervisor. I like mentoring and that’s why I like students. I have come to realize the power of influence that I have as a supervisor. I like when staff move on to get promotion or graduate school. I enjoy encouraging people to go to graduate school. I like writing those recommendations to graduate school. I am very proud that my staff make professional development and I have to admit that I feel I have been part in that. They do all the work. So there are rewards and I like that. That’s the part of the job I like.

Linda

After further reflection, the participant continued and noted:

I really enjoy this job. It’s much and much less stressful and believe me it has its stresses. But I knew I always wanted to be a supervisor. Maybe it’s because I have finally achieved something that was my long term goal. That is why I feel satisfaction and when I became a supervisor at this agency and that is something I always wanted to do. So I felt very proud of myself for having accomplished.

Linda

The organization provides an opportunity to establish relationships with colleagues and peers within and outside its boundaries. Some decisions to stay appeared to be influenced by such working relationships and bonds. One participant
shared:

I think you really do meet a lot of good people. You become friends with people. And each day or at least weekly you are inspired by a lot of people. You meet also in this particular job we meet the people from the private agencies. I would not have had the opportunity to meet so many from other agencies that work with us, and that's a nice camaraderie.

Kelly

In a follow-up conversation, this participant included other rewards she found working in this organization. She delighted in:

(You) are able to see the changes that are happening in the families and the growth and especially when families come back to tell you that they are doing well. They just get in touch with you because they feel you may be different, they could trust you.

Kelly

For some supervisors, the fact that the organization provided opportunities to establish relationships was very significant and contributed to their satisfaction.

I started looking at, "What do I have here"? There are very nice things—and friends. I have a friend that I met twenty years ago. She and I are both working in this office and that is important. I have developed relationships with some of the supervisors here. One of the things I like in this office as a whole is the relationships. There are supervisors I went to graduate school with. We have lunch together, talk about personal things. But we also talk about and share frustrations with and about work. So that's very important to me. I don't like an office where everybody did their own little things and they don't talk to anybody else. I know some of my staff members—who moved out a few months ago and said she thought of this office as a M.A.S.H. unit. I like that analogy—that's a wonderful analogy.

Kelly
On the other hand, one participant took a view, as some participants have, that remaining in the organization is like survival.

That is how you penetrate yourself in that environment. And it is . . . part of culture is that it dictates how you will succeed and how you will not. And I feel that considering that . . . I feel that I have learnt how to survive. It is like a regular structure instead of hanging about. I have to decide, if I stay, what am I trying to say?

Sindi

During a follow-up conversation, this participant’s view was that one needed energy to survive within the system of Children’s Services. For her, this experience was painful. She noted:

You know (there are) a lot of hurdles and barriers to overcome just dealing with a multitude of change within the system. Just keeping abreast of that can be painful. Something like a culture shock.

Sindi

This participant’s response came after her reflection on the impact the organization had made, both on her personal and professional life. She had mentioned how the working hours sometimes conflicted with her personal schedules. The talked about the many changes she had had to contend with as the organization reorganized. She had mentioned the pain associated with the promotion process that is not only long but beleaguered by political games. One reflection on the experience of Sindi working in this organization was outlined by this participant as:
Whether you stay here or not, I don’t know—depends on your internal strength and your external resources.

Senzo

An interesting notion of stayers and those who leave was ascribed by one participant to the question of "fit"—fitting within the system. If the organization is regarded as a stress-conducing environment, bureaucratic and controlling, then the meaning that one gets is that those who continue to stay do so out of choice—because they believe they "fit" within the organization.

Yes, I’d say the social workers have been here—if they haven’t left after the first couple of years, they’ll stick with it. I think social workers that leave are the ones that can’t fit within the system . . . the government system. And we have to consider that some social workers are under a lot of pressure too.

Georgie

One differing perspective about colleagues who stay was articulated by one participant who believed it is not necessarily commitment. Her voice:

I think there are people who are committed and people who aren’t. And so each person is different. There are some people who are very good who stay on. And there are some people I wish could leave because I think they promote a negative niche not only to the agency but what we try to do.

Kelly
The Interpretive Tale.

Literature reflects changing theories of job satisfaction from those that sought to associate it with personalities of individuals (Broom 1964); or job satisfaction serving a function of differences or the nature of jobs people perform to structural ones—who view the attitudes of workers as a direct reflection of the structure of the workplace (Kalleberg 1977:125). However, an element that is worth noting is one that associates job satisfaction with the meanings that the individual "impute to their work activity."

In analyzing job satisfaction, Kalleberg (1977) suggested six criteria for viewing work values. These are:

1. an intrinsic dimension—associated with the work itself
2. a convenience dimension—associated with the job characteristics
3. an extrinsic dimension—associated with pay and benefits
4. relationship with colleagues dimension
5. career dimensions—associated with chances of upward mobility
6. resource dimension—associated with adequacy of needed resources to perform the job, e.g. information, authority, etc.

In conceptualizing the participants' responses, it appears that the meanings the participants made of issues that were satisfactory to them incorporated these dimensions. The participants reflected that they enjoyed their work and they enjoyed the benefits that came with it. They enjoyed the relationships they had with their prospects for upward mobility. Others seemed complacent with the status quo.
Several organizational stories that linked success with the job the supervisors were performing were related. These stories were linked to their perceived contributions that impacted positively on the lives of children and their families. Some participants delighted in their ability to work with and help families and children to grow. This was exemplified by success stories they related, that gave them major rewards.

From the participants responses, it was found that supervisors had a range of specific satisfactions and dissatisfactions associated with their work. Job satisfaction could also be linked to what Locke (1967, p. 127) described as "the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values."

For some of the participants, work carried a variety of meanings for them. They contended that it was something they liked and could do well. Furthermore, there was a belief that child welfare work was something that not every social worker was cut out to do. This means that they believed that it was something that only they could do. Those who couldn't do the work left the organization. They believed strongly that they had a lot to contribute to the lives of children and their parents that they served, but most especially the shaping of the careers of the direct service workers.

However, one theme that characterized most of the responses of the participants is their commitment to their work and hence a commitment to staying with the organization. Their retention could be linked to their personal beliefs about work with children and their families because of their commitment to this ideal.
Furthermore, their individual strengths and discipline could be counted as something they brought or continue to bring to their work situation that sustains them through the difficult job that child welfare work is.

Another element related to the participants retention is the culture of the organization— in terms of the norms and beliefs that exist within the organization. There was a strong identification with the mission statement of the organization—that of protecting children and their families. They believe in what the organization stands for and its role in society. They operate from a shared and understood core of knowledge and procedures.

While there were constraints within the job in relation to the physical working conditions, the amount of paperwork they had to contend with and the product vs. process dichotomy, the general feelings about the work and the organization were good. There was recognition and acceptance that other organizations have their constraints as well and some participants did not want to change. Furthermore, supervisors as a group did not indicate any attempt at changing the status quo or challenging it. The issue of "volunteered" time—i.e., work hours beyond the expected 40 hour week, was not contended. Most professionals acknowledge that "volunteered" time comes with the responsibility of the position that has been accepted. This was not different for the supervisors in this organization. Not one complained about the extra hours they put in on the job.

Literature on burnout and job satisfaction reflects that dissatisfactions within organizations on any aspect of the work can impact negatively on individuals and lead
to certain behaviors e.g. turnover. Dressel (1984), for example, emphasizes the fact that job stresses take their toll in increased incidences of apathy, cynicism, loss of idealism, feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, and generally low morale (p. 35).

The responses from the participants provide examples of constraints they face in their daily work in the organization. These constraints can easily end up impacting on job attitudes and performance. One participant, reflecting on this issue, articulated her feelings well when she stated:

I think there are some people who are committed and people who aren’t. There are some good people who stay on and there are some people I wish could leave because I think they promote a negative niche not only to the agency but to what we try to do.

Kelly

This response highlights the fact that people can be committed to stay in the organization for other reasons than being satisfied with their work or their organization itself. This becomes a challenge to the leadership within the organization to be sensitive to constraints and other issues that may lead to unhappiness in the job, as it may affect job attitudes and job performance. At the moment, most participants expressed a willingness to stay in the organization. This is an advantage for the organization. It cuts down on the high cost of turnover. However, longevity also suggests that care can be taken that those people who are retained continue to perform and contribute as expected by the organization. Creating opportunities for promotion and responsibility influences the desirability to stay on in the organization.
The Human Resource Management model suggests active engagement in activities that promote satisfaction and hence retention. This includes improvement in the conditions of employment.

The participants reflected a general consensus about the job being rewarding in the sense of the results that were being achieved. Responses, furthermore, reflect a sense of challenge provided by the job that is performed by the supervisor. Comments such as

What I like (about this job) and what has kept me is that I do not know what I am going to do each day. It is different each day and I like it because I don’t want to get bored. It (the job) is challenging. I like the short term nature of the job.

Linda

It is a tough job. It is a tough job. I should say it is the toughest in the field. Anyone who has worked here can go anywhere, I think, and do the job. There are times when we have to remember that it is dangerous, [but] some of those things get your adrenalin going.

Pat

According to Ezioni (1964), human resource managers believe that without effective employees, the organization produces its goods and services inefficiently and may even place its survival at risk. Hence the outcomes of human resources management for organizations include among others:

(a) attraction of employees to organization

(b) employee job performance
(c) retention—this represents a form of commitment to the organization
(d) attendance at work
(e) job satisfaction—this is linked to retention as long as the needs of the employees are satisfied (p. 9).

This organization has continued to receive negative publicity, mainly because of public misconceptions about its role, should, and found it vital to survive, maintain its mission and its work force. This was done through its reward structure. Not only are the supervisors willing to remain within the organization, they believe organization is doing its best to keep them through its reward structure. The responses from the participants reflected positive human resource outcomes, as far as this group of employees is concerned.

The financial rewards and benefits were counted as forming a major source of extrinsic satisfaction. All the supervisors expressed they were well paid for what they did in the organization. Some were even able to compare their incomes to those of private welfare agencies. For other supervisors, it was not the salary per se, more than the fringe benefits that they considered more valuable. The feeling was that if they could move to other organizations, they would lose these benefits because they are attached to length of service. They expressed that the longer they stayed within the organization, the harder it became to leave because of what they stood to lose. They became "locked in" to the benefit and reward structure of the organization. This is wittingly or unwittingly linked to longevity.
Kallerberg (1979) asserts that valuation of the financial dimension reflects a worker's desire to obtain present and future monetary rewards from the job. These responses can be tied to the "worker's desire to be stimulated and challenged by the job and to be able to exercise acquired skills at work."

The reward structure reflects policies of management aimed at and impacting on positive outcomes of human resource management, for example, retention. Furthermore, the view of rewards by the participants varied in terms of what was valued by them most. Some felt that benefits, e.g. sick leave, vacation leave, etc., were more important than basic pay. On the other hand, rewards were linked to ability to perform tasks they were able to perform. That brought a sense of comfortableness with their work.

Some theories of job satisfaction have linked desirability to leave with age. This occurs in spite of the reward structure offered by the organization. If the person does not perceive the organization as providing what is valued, the result is voluntary turnover. One participant articulated this very well when she noted:

I can't commit to another roller coaster without more opportunity for responsibility to grow. What is frustrating about supervision is that you train social workers and then they move on. They are moving on, up, or out. Most supervisors are moving up or around. I just can't commit to retire within the system from this seat I am at.

Sindi

This alternative view provides insight to meanings that this one participant made of her life within the organization. For her, the financial rewards and the
rewards provided by the job itself were good, but not sufficient. The determination to seek change remains with her. The challenge remains with the organization, which will recruit younger supervisors to be sensitive to issues of movement within the organization through transfers and promotions. The needs and expectations of individual members in the organization are not equal and are not the same.

The issue of friendships and pleasant colleagues was brought up by some participants as very important to them. Colleagues play a significant role of support and validation. Some of the friendships the participants were talking about have continued over long periods of time. When a job permits and creates opportunities for establishing friendship, it promotes a healthier environment in which to work. Inevitably, it enhances satisfaction with one’s job. One participant offered:

So relationships with people that I work with become extremely important to me. They are very much part of . . . what I liked about the job.

Linda

Reflexive Tale.

Erickson (1986) states that trust and rapport in any research study is not simply a matter of niceness; a noncoercive, mutually rewarding relationship with informants is essential if the researcher is to gain valid insights into the informant’s point of view. The narratives reflected this necessary insight into the informant’s experience.

The interpretive tale utilized theoretical frameworks of job satisfaction that have guided quantitative studies that contain dominant meaning systems deduced from
objective research. My aim was to present a view that would not "totalize, that would not present emergent, multiply sited, contradictory movements as fixed, unified, monolithic" (Lather, 1991).

While the reality of the participants' experience was characterized by the imposition of these theoretical bases, substantial use was made of grounded data. The participants did not raise any issues about the interpretation of the second theme, when this analysis was shared with them as part of member check.

Several conclusions can be reached about lack of feedback from participants. However, for me, the analysis tried to explain the experiences as lived and communicated by participants. The participant accepted the interpretation as it appeared to reflect on their lived experiences. The issues raised were not controversial to them and the assumptions made were grounded on data.

Furthermore, the issue of methodology had been explained exhaustively to the participants. They had been given the liberty to comment on any part of the analysis and interpretation as part of member check.

All forms of writing are representational. The section that discusses the realist tale also may be representational. However, the participants contributed extensively throughout the sessions I had with them in correcting and confirming that their stories had been represented properly.
Summary.

This chapter reflected on issues of data management within naturalistic studies. The study presented the participants' narrative through three tales, viz., the realist, the interpretive, and reflexive tale provided an opportunity to reflect on issues of the politics of representation. It also helped me reflect on how as researchers we have not "explored what it might mean to generate ways of knowing that can take us beyond ourselves" (Lather, 1991, p. 153).

The next chapter presents the summary of the study and its implications.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY and IMPLICATIONS

Caring means that other persons matter, that what happens makes a difference not only to the person directly affected but also to the others who care. Caring also provides the motivation to help.

Roberta Wells Imre (1982)

Introduction.

The chapter contains a summary of the study including the purpose of the study, some methodological issues and findings. These findings are presented in the form of a summary of emergent themes within the context of relevant theoretical and empirical work. Furthermore, the chapter presents the implications of the study for future research, social work education and practice.

This study sought to examine the impact that organizational culture had on the perceived job satisfaction of mid-level professional social workers employed within a public child welfare organization, that results in their retention. In order to achieve this goal, experiences that were central to the study included those that focussed on an entry to the organization; the experiences of working within the organization in the position of supervisor, and the meanings they made of these experiences that were connected with their commitment to stay, were pursued.

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Previous studies of retention and job satisfaction within public child welfare organizations have concentrated on direct service workers or caseworkers. Some of these studies have also pointed in the direction of supervisors or mid-level social workers as a major contributing factor in the high turnover rate of these caseworkers. Fewer studies have focused on direct social workers' experiences within public child welfare organizations and their commitment to stay. Even fewer studies have linked this resolve or commitment to stay with organizational culture.

This study aimed at linking issues of organizational culture and a commitment to stay by mid-level workers using an organizational culture perspective. The study helped to illuminate this fit between organizational culture and a commitment to stay. The study utilized naturalistic research methods in searching for meanings that participants made of their work. It was mentioned earlier that the choice of a research method in this study was predicated on the subject at hand—i.e., organizational culture and job satisfaction. The latter concept has been studied exhaustively by disciplines including industry, sociology, and psychology, using quantitative methods. Measures and models to predict job satisfaction have been devised with a view to providing the best method to explain the nature and consequence of the concept of job satisfaction. Despite these efforts, investment in years of study and "wealth of research on the topic, there is no single, agreed upon theory of work satisfaction" (Mottoz, & Potts; 1986).

On the other hand, there have been arguments whether organizational culture could be studied by quantitative methods without bias. Van Maanen, Dabbs and
Faulkner in Ott (1988) maintain that quantitative, quasi-experimental research methods used by the structural and systems perspectives cannot identify or measure unconscious, virtually forgotten basic assumptions." (p.3)

The naturalistic research methods were selected for their ability to derive meaning from phenomena under study. Organizational culture, being the unseen, unobservable force always behind organizational activities (Ott 1988), necessitated a method that would yield more meaning, hence a better understanding. A method that involved a collaboration of participants and researchers in the understanding of the phenomena was indicated.

Sharing the experiences with mid-level social workers in this study through intensive engagement in the natural setting eased the process and politics of representation. The interpretation of their stories was shared with the participants in the process of member checking.

Stemming from my interaction with the participants and understanding the position they hold, it was my conclusion that collaborative studies need to be emphasized. In these collaborative studies, the researched are viewed as experts and not objects. They are capable of contributing to the knowledge of the researcher. Looking at issues of organizational culture and job satisfaction from the perspective of the mid-level social workers, and not through the limiting predetermined indicators, presented an innovative way of understanding the various dimensions of these concepts, through probing and follow-up conversations. While there were standardized, semi-structured questions used to initiate discussion, the participants
moved freely to subjects of their experience within the organization. Using naturalistic methods provided an alternative way of studying familiar problems.

The report of the analysis and discussion in chapter four were guided by an interpretive paradigm based on the content of the study and the meaning perspectives of the participants. As a result of this perspective, which reflected meanings of what was happening in the organization, the participants appeared to agree with and embrace my interpretations of their everyday life. Some participants commented on the reflexive nature of their participation as the interview made them think about the familiar, that had been internalized and was, therefore, taken for granted. An anthropologist, Kluckhohn, put it well when he stated that "the fish would be the last creatures to discover water." The utility of the interpretive paradigm is supported by the argument that the issue of organizational culture and satisfaction from work cannot be thoroughly considered without a knowledge of the meanings that individuals impute to their work.

Based on the responses from the participants and information from document analysis and observation, two main themes evolved from the study. These were: "From Idealism to Realism" and "From Realism to Retention."

In arriving at these two themes, the purpose was to organize the data in terms of what was viewed as the emerging patterns and commonalities from the study. The discussion of the themes in this chapter reflects on the meanings ascertained and conclusions reached from the study.
From an interpretive point of view, commitment to stay within the organization by supervisors is based on the social organization of the agency. This refers to the meaning that the supervisors make of practice as a moral obligation of caring and serving those who cannot help themselves in this case, children and their families. This meaning further derives from what the organization stands for and professes to do.

The data pointed to the fact that these mid-level social workers had initially been idealistic about their role within organization, stemming from what attracted them to the organization to their expectation of the supervisory position. They had come to terms with the demands and expectations of the organization they worked for. They acknowledged the fact that the grass is not always greener on the other side. They had become aware that all organizations have their own constraints. Some participants went further to acknowledge that their organization—as far as organizations go—was indeed a good organization. Key to this statement is the link between organizational identification and their commitment to stay. The participants identified with the mission of the organization. They enjoyed the camaraderie they experienced with their colleagues that made their work worthwhile. They benefitted from the rewards of their longevity which the organization expressed in the form of pay and benefits.

The result was, therefore, that the participants did not want to change organizations or leave. Some felt they had finally achieved credibility and respect from their colleagues within the organization and with colleagues from outside
organizations, and they did not want to lose that.

The data seemed to reflect that some of these professionals still kept the option of pursuing other avenues of circumstances became intolerable within this organization. This canceled the notion that they are survivors in the organization.

From Idealism to Realism.

First, if one views the reasons why they joined or what attracted the professionals to their positions within the organization, one is struck by the commonalities of the responses. There were several features of their stories that were similar and shared by some participants. For example, most participants had been exposed to public child welfare or services as undergraduate students or they had as newly qualified social workers started work within this organization. They had enjoyed their work and not found any reason to leave in spite of a variety of constraints.

The participants showed idealism about what they thought they could achieve, both as caseworkers and as supervisors. Some participants actually believed holding the position of supervisor would be simpler than being caseworkers. However, they discovered that this position had its own responsibilities, demands, and challenges. The participants argued that they had not left the organization because of the focus of their work and the identification with the mission of the organization. Their longevity with the organization can be related to their strong belief in the values of the organization and in what they contribute. For them, what Imre (1982) states is
relevant, and that is, "Caring means that the other persons matter, that what happens makes a difference not only to the person directly but also to the others who care. . . . Caring also provides a motivation to help." (p. 114)

From the participants' responses, a voice that could be heard was of dissatisfaction with the status quo. They felt constrained by the control they felt from upper management. There were expressions of frustration with upper management. The issue was that they felt they were not recognized by them. They believed they served as buffers between upper level administration and direct service workers. For this they did not receive any regard or recognition from upper level administrators. This made them feel isolated and unappreciated. Furthermore, there was a view that there were too many assumptions about the role of supervisors. First, the assumption by upper level administration was about their ability to control direct service workers. The participants believed that they should not be expected to control the caseworkers but direct, train, and support them.

Issues of authority and control have not received sufficient coverage in social work literature. The data from the field reflects that the participants continue to struggle with these issues with little sympathy from upper-level administration. The perception from the participants is that the conflicts do not stem from caseworker anxiety about how the participants perform their job, but from the expectation from upper level administration. The belief is that they have been turned into overseers of caseworkers, and for them, this is not satisfactory. Obviously the participants had set certain limits for themselves for carrying out their work, that was apparently not
meeting expected standards. The voices of the participants sounded strong in connection with the appropriateness to control caseworkers.

Furthermore, there was a belief that what upper level administration expected from them "encroached upon professional autonomy" of caseworkers. Scott Briar, cited by Munson (1983) in addressing the issue of autonomy, asserts:

Every attempt by the agency to routinize some condition or aspect of professional practice amounts to a restriction of professional discretion and for that reason should be resisted, in most instances by practitioners.

These expectations were putting a strain on the work of the participants. The challenge that remains seems to be, as Nelson (1990) put it, "a need for (supervisors') empowerment in mediating with upper level administration." There appeared to be a need to involve participants in more decision-making, especially with issues that involved their work with caseworkers.

Most professional social workers struggle with the issue of authority and autonomy, yet these issues form part of the culture of social work organizations. That the profession has become part of organizations, and inevitably bureaucracies, suggest that, "The principles of office and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of super- and sub-ordination in which there is a supervision of the lower office by the higher ones--(but) hierarchical subordination does not mean that the 'higher' authority is simply authorized to take over the business of the 'lower.'" (Schuber cited by Munson, 1983).

There are two issues that indicated experiences and meanings that were not positive in the study. One is about the orientation program to prepare supervisors for
their new position from the caseworker position. The participants reflected on these experiences and stated that the organization neglected its responsibility to prepare them. The participants had thus learned on the job or used past experiences of being supervised to come to terms with their supervisory responsibilities. This organization has since incorporated on-going development programs aimed at training supervisors for their role and enhancing their skills. However, the participants pointed out that even this development program needed to be evaluated for its effectiveness. The comments from the participants pointed to the fact that little was gained from participating in this on-going development program.

The other issue pertains to code enforcement and compliance to rules and regulations imposed by both state and federal governments. Most participants indicated that the work of the organization was driven by these rules, regulations, and codes. This made the work very mechanistic and void of what was, to them, meaningful contact with direct service workers. The participants felt that they were stuck with tremendous amounts of paperwork, aimed at quality assurance issues and not at insuring the welfare of the people who worked directly with clients, who were thus constantly exposed to dangers and risks of working within an organization of this kind. The view was that the organization was not people-centered but product-centered--products whose sole aim is to preserve and maintain the organization. The products in an organization like the public child welfare agency include bureaucratic routines, completed tasks, e.g. reports, monthly statistics of opened and closed client files, and other tasks.
All these data suggested that the organization operates on certain assumptions and values. The assumption is that regulation of services will bring about uniformity and increase the level of accountability by professionals to the sponsoring institutions. While the mission of this organization indicates it values the general welfare of children and their families and that it values professionalism of its personnel, bureaucratic routines and high level of expectations hinder the preservation of these values.

The participants felt helpless to change the status quo. The regulations and rules they have to comply with are centralized and affect all professionals, across the state and country, who work for public child welfare services. There is centralized direction for all of children's services. In exchange for compliance, they receive funding from both state and federal funding sources. Hence, these regulations and rules have become part of the culture of public child welfare services. Changing this culture would take a concerted and tremendous effort. As a result, the participants in this study find themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, allies with upper administration about conserving the culture of the organization. They find themselves caught up in a double bind of having to comply to regulations they feel helpless to change, regulations which are impacting negatively on their service effort.

That the participants have not attempted to change how things are done suggests that Ott's utterances are correct when he states: "if a public agency wants to perpetuate (an) ethic, one of the first steps should include seeking out and selecting new members who already possess it or who are strongly predisposed to accepting it."
In essence, people who would not fit in an organization are not selected for positions, or if they are selected, and they do not conform, they are released or they exit voluntarily.

When social workers are socialized into the profession, they are trained to fit within bureaucratic organizational structures. The table of organization reflects a schema for communications and promotion lines. With the hierarchical structure that determines seniority comes expectations about expected behaviors and roles. The dilemma within the profession of social work is that socialization into the profession is linked with moral issues in serving and caring for clients. Imre (1982) suggests that the altruistic nature of the participants could be linked to the moral philosophy of the profession. What is valued and what people ought to do is tied to what is ethical.

In planning for change, questions that have held back people in organizations include how the change would affect services to their clients, who would benefit about satisfaction or not. Meaning obtained from the study suggests that ways of doing things within this organization had been internalized and hence, viewed as the normal, convenient way of proceeding. Change in this instance becomes even more complex.

The study reflects meanings obtained from organizational communication aiming at controlling information systems. There was a strong indication by the participants that the supervisory position was one that was built up not to succeed in its tasks. Through being given information late or not at all, they claimed they were being set up to fail or to be redundant while, at the same time, making upper level management smarter, because they received all the information first.
For the participants, the issue of communication held substantial implications, in particular, their potential for promotion or recognition. The view that if you "do not do the lunch thing" or if you "do not speak the language" was an indication that you were not part of the "in-group." You would either be excluded or the chances of your upward mobility would be slimmer. Organizational culture theorists contend that language is an important artifact in any culture. Participants in this study realized this fact. The view was that if you were to survive in the organization, you needed to know the "buzz" words. It was considered significant that, with each new executive leader, there are new buzz words that come to be used. The type of language used in the organization was just as important as the type of information it carried and when this information reached participants. For all the participants, receiving information timeously was a sign of respect, and recognition as an important, contributing part of the organization. Up to the time this study was concluded, the participants felt they had not yet received such recognition by upper level administration. Yet they are committed to stay in the organization.

From Realism to Retention.

Under this theme a summary is given of all factors that were related to rewards and commitments to stay within the organization. The findings of the study shed light on the participants' commitment to and enjoyment of their work with direct service workers. They wanted the case workers to succeed and get satisfaction from success achieved in the field. While the data would suggest the mid-level social workers
dissatisfaction with upper level supervisors, through expressed frustrations with a variety of organizational issues, a sense that one gets from the data reflects the following:

There was a lot of evidence that reflected a commitment to stay within the organization. This commitment to stay, to serve the needs of children and their families, could be linked to the notion of altruism and the meaning that supervisors found in their work. These professionals felt they had a lot to contribute to the organization, based on their experience and love for the job. It is important to note also that these professionals felt they were the only ones who could perform the job in question because not only did they know the job, they also stuck with it when their colleagues left or exited.

When one views the issue of commitment to stay within this organization by the supervisors, one is struck by the diversity of what is valued by them. It can be concluded in this study that there are various factors within the organization that have persuaded the participants to continue to stay within the public child welfare service.

Findings of the study reflect that longevity was viewed as a significant part of the participants' commitment to stay. Length of service within organizations in general, and this agency, in particular, is greatly valued and reinforced. From an organizational culture perspective, longevity is not just an isolated concept, but is linked to perpetuation of culture. Organizations link commitment to stay with identification with the mission of that particular organization, and more important, with loyalty. Loyalty is rewarded annually with pay increases and ultimately with
better benefits, promotions, or other forms of recognition.

In this organization, participants mentioned fringe benefits as the best within the field. The financial rewards were very attractive. As the study focused on participants with more than five years of experience, they became a group that had longer tenure within this organization. Leaving would be costly for them in terms of what they stood to lose, in medical aid, sick benefits, holidays, and other perks.

The reward structure was shown to affect decisions to stay within the organization. All the participants talked positively about the rewards and benefits that the organization offers them for their services. They indicated how some participants, with more years of experience in the organization, get "locked in" to its reward structure. These extrinsic rewards, from a cultural perspective, can serve as an organizational culture-perpetuating device. Professionals who have invested in time, ie., those who have been with the organization longer, may be reluctant to change the status quo or to leave. Citing Sathe, Ott (1989) is of the opinion that organizational culture can be perpetuated by influencing the behavior of members. By altering or perpetuating people’s pattern of behavior, the organizations can change or reinforce their corresponding cultural beliefs, values and assumptions. This can be achieved through a system of rewards and punishments.

The other factor linked to longevity is that which the cultural theorists term a "strong bond" which is a manifestation of professionals and their professions. The social work profession, in the training of its professionals, infuses dominant ways of thinking that are internalized by its members that result in their identification with the
profession and what it stands for. Furthermore, these professionals are trained to practice within an organizational context. When they find themselves in these contexts, the social work professionals have to contend with structures and employment systems that are designed to elicit commitment from the workforce (Lincoln and Kallerberg, 1985).

The participants in this study attempted to separate themselves from the organization and asserted that what was satisfying for them was work with children and their families. While one can understand the attempt by the professionals to separate themselves from the hegemony of the "bureaucratic" structures that directed their work, it appeared that it was difficult for them to achieve this as it is within the nature and the business of this organization to provide services to children and their families that these participants identify with. The overarching demands for accountability of bureaucratic structures make it difficult for these professionals to focus on what they perceive is what they were trained to do—i.e., work with people. The positive streak is the compensation that the organization gives these professionals. These material rewards reinforce their willingness to enact the service role in spite of the bureaucratic constraints. This constraint-reward pull, while creating conflict for professionals, results in organizational maintenance and retention of some professionals. At this level, for some participants, it was unthinkable to serve in other organizations. Their work in this organization gave them substantial satisfaction. What was more satisfying for them was their perceived knowledge of the job and what it entailed; the belief that they were the best people for the job; the fact that they had
reached a level where they were comfortable with what they knew they could contribute to the welfare of their clientele. This encouraged them to stay.

It has been argued, from a work perspective, that it is natural and healthy to base one's identity on the work role since work is such an important part of life in society. Furthermore, it is argued that when people do not view work as an important part of the self, it is because the type of work they perform does not provide a meaningful identity of which the individual can be proud (Kornhauser, 1965).

The participants felt the positions they held were important and they were able to impact on direct service workers, in particular. They identified with their work because of its perceived importance to society. The work they did contributed greatly to their sense of self. The position of supervisor brings with it elements of responsibility and some form of autonomy, which, by themselves should be rewarding, and hence apt to encourage commitment to stay. From the findings, the issue of autonomy was a source of concern for the participants. Most of them indicated that upper-level administration was not giving them the autonomy they felt they deserved. They carried great responsibility within the organization, for which they needed formal recognition. Whether the recognition was forthcoming or not, the view was, their work was important to them and the community, they enjoyed it, and that was satisfying for them.
Implications for Research

Research on the subject of organizational culture within social work has been somewhat limited. Although there has been a focus on burnout and job satisfaction issues (Jayaratne and Chess), very little focus has been given to the work environment within social work.

This study has highlighted the advantages of undertaking a naturalistic study as a way of understanding issues of organizational life. These are summarized as follows:

1) Negotiated Outcomes:

Naturalistic studies allow the researcher to ascertain meaning and interpretation from the participants. This allows for verification and a confirmation of the data and interpretations of the study by the participants who are people who understand the context that is being studied better than the researcher. Negotiated outcomes mean that the participants work in collaboration with the researcher. The participants are regarded as the experts in what is being studied and what they considered. Engaging participants as collaborators helps to validate the study and to reduce the politics of representation.
2) Natural Setting.

Naturalistic studies allow for direct participation in the physical and social environment of the phenomena being studied. This is useful for many reasons including the fact that

a) the researcher is able to understand fully the "whole" phenomenon and not parts of it by being available within the context of study;

b) the bases for meanings that are reached are understood from the perspective of the phenomena being studied.

3) Human Instrument.

Naturalistic studies allow for the researcher to use herself or himself as an instrument of collecting data. The researcher is able to participate in the elements being studied. S/he is able to adapt the question and information needed depending on what s/he is getting from the participants. It is possible for the human instrument to assess the context from which the understandings and meanings come.

Social work is practiced within the context of organizations and more studies that portray this context are needed. From the study one gets the sense that social work organizations are rich in data that need to be collected and interpreted in order to better shape the missions and purposes of these organizations.

An interpretive paradigm within a naturalistic methodology is indicated for researchers who want to get the sense of organizational life. The challenge for social workers interested in organizational culture is to continue to seek meaning from the observed behaviors of professionals within organizations.
Citing Geertz, Meek (1988) summarizes the issue of approach to studying organizational culture in this fashion, "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 465).

The above arguments demonstrate the necessity for collaborative and naturalistic methods in understanding organizational culture. These methods offer a different way of looking at familiar problems in conducting inquiry.

Over and above developing an approach to study issues of organizational culture, this particular study reflects a need for future studies that focus in particular on the impact of societal culture on organizational culture. In this particular study, I conclude that some rules and regulations—i.e. certain ways of doing things within this organization—may be a reaction to public expectation or a response to a public concern about how the organization is conducting its business.

More studies that focus on younger supervisors or newly appointed supervisors are needed. These participants could be a group of professionals with less than five years of experience in their positions. There were suggestions in the study that people with more experience find themselves "locked in" to the system of benefits provided by the organization. The dilemma of whether or not they stay because they want to or because they have to could then be resolved.

Another argument has been that organizational culture has a controlling effect on the behavior of individuals within the organization. Organizations have prescribed
and expected behavior and language, i.e., norms and standards and those who do not, conform, exit early, or are released by the organization. A relevant study could also include a sample of these supervisors who left the organization, to determine the impact of organizational culture on their decision to leave.

The study, furthermore, focused on one public child welfare organization. There were no attempts to compare this organization with others or to expand the sample. This being a naturalistic study, I opted for an in-depth look at one organization, seeking individual perceptions of what was satisfying about the work environment that was encouraging them to stay. Future studies could focus on the perceptions of upper level managers, and why they themselves stay. While the participants in this study were retained, there were strong feelings about the "people above you"—meaning, upper level administrators.

The study therefore has implications for further studies pertaining to management issues because of their link to retention of staff.

Implications for Social Work Education

Few supervisors have the luxury of devoting all their time to their supervisory roles, so they must be highly organized and efficient to be successful, helpful, and appreciated. Some people find that supervision is more demanding than they expected and resign themselves to limited effectiveness, proceed through trial and error. Knowledge and skills of good people are not passed on to the next generation of practitioners. Our profession cannot afford such losses.

Carlton E. Munson
(1983)
The study reflected a need for a concentrated effort by the social work profession to provide formal learning about the nature of the organizational context and supervision. The findings reflected that supervisors lacked proper preparation and provide an indication of the challenge that social work education in conjunction with social work agencies should accept. In his study, Munson (1983) found that sixty percent of the supervisors had no formal academic training in supervision. The participants in this study contend that their experience was "on-the-job training of supervision." There is a need, therefore, for schools of social work to develop social work practitioners with a bent toward management and leadership. Emphasis should be put on supervision, and the context of practice and its ramifications.

The organization that was studied now provides on-going programs to supervisors, orienting them to some of the expectations of their positions. This appears to be an indication that the organization wanted more attention on supervisors. However, there was no indication of any collaboration of their efforts with the social work training institutions or colleges. Literature reflects a lack of input from field agencies and professional organizations in influencing the trend in education for social work administration (Neugebaren, 1987). Katz (1982) has strongly argued that the practice agencies, which hire the products of these schools, and provide the field instruction or practicum experience, seem not to have a tremendous influence on the educational programs in the sense that they are not challenging the focus of education provided to the newly qualified MSW professional. Most social work schools do not seem to be responding to the need for more professionally-trained social work
administrators who can take their place in welfare organizations with confidence.

Furthermore, there was an indication from the study of a need for a policy agenda in the education of social work supervisors. The organization seemed to be characterized by rules and regulations and code enforcements that affected the practitioners in a variety of ways. These federal and state rules and regulations are constantly changing, and the participants expressed helplessness in their ability to influence or change them. Richan (1983) has emphasized the connectedness of policy issues to political questions. The contention is that social workers who are in administrative positions need a firm understanding of the underlying rationale for policies if they are to be credible contenders in the political arena. He emphasizes that the survival tactic of the profession is self-reliance, claiming that these issues do not need to be delegated to the so-called "experts." He believes that with the current scarcity and stress, it is easy to turn problems of politics into problems of organizations and administration. This results in administrators having to say no to professionals and to clients. If social work professionals are going to end up as supervisors and administrators, they need to know and be aware of these issues so that certain behaviors and actions of upper level administrators or colleagues are understood as occurring in good faith.

Collaboration of academia and these bodies i.e., field agencies and professional associations, seems imminent, to deliberate on common issues and curricula issues for future administrators.
Literature in social work administration views the field of social work as relatively new, in terms of conception and formal educational content (Katz, 1982). Programs preparing social work students for administrative positions are seen as showing a slow move in meeting the needs of the field (Chess, 1989; Patti; 1985). This trend is demonstrated by the limited number of professionals being prepared or educated for administrative positions in social work. Dumpson, Mullen and First (1978) have aptly stated that there is perhaps no more critical issue confronting the social work profession today than the need for personnel with competencies in managing social programs and agencies. There seems to be a growing challenge for social work education to prepare professionals who will take their place in the management of social work organizations.

Lastly, education for social work administration appears to need a focus on issues of organizational culture—what it is, where it is, where it comes from, how it develops, and how it is perpetuated. According to Ott (1989), answers to these questions are useful because

a) they hold the answers to how one goes about changing or strengthening aspects of an organizational culture, and why organizational cultures are very difficult to change;

b) they explain why all organizational cultures are relatively unique, and why most subcultures are either enhancing or orthogonal rather than counterculture, and they lay the groundwork for understanding how to identify or decipher an organizational culture (p. 74).
This subject would be vital in social work education because of its focus on organizational context issues. The participants in this study would understand how, for example, the act by organizational leaders to seek out people who share their values and beliefs for promotion is an act to further shape the culture of the organization as an arm of organizations. Those members of the organization who do not conform to the rules and standards are released.

Social Work Practice/Administration

The findings of the study reflect that there are certain concerns that the upper level administrators should consider for the smooth-running of this organization. These issues are:

The impact of upper level administration in the daily activities of supervisors. Responses from the participants shows that they felt a strong presence in the form of control from upper level administrators. The view was that they were unappreciated and their efforts went by unrecognized. While all the participants suggested they were adequately paid for what they did, some indicated that rewards leading to promotions were what they aspired to.

The participants talked highly of agency efforts to hire minorities in this organization. Even then they indicated that the process of recruitment and selection could still be improved. Participants pointed to certain political games that individuals needed to play in order to be in good standing with upper level administration. They indicated that they did not play these games. The conclusion is not knowing how this
action affects their chances of moving to the top.

As mid-level social workers, they could participate in decision-making pertaining to recruitment and selection of staff in a collegial manner. From the study, there was an understanding that some participants would miss this aspect of their work and they could enjoy being involved in it. In their training, supervisors are or should be prepared for overall management functions. However, only an aspect of their training is utilized by organizations. This may lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and disgruntlement by the supervisors.

Upper level administration could make efforts to engage those supervisors more and more in rewarding and responsible activities that are beyond their daily grind. The study reflected that some participants had the view that their full potential was been being tapped by the organization. Such involvement could curb feelings of resignation or thoughts about leaving that may be engendered by a stalemate. It would furthermore suggest that the individuals' skills were better utilized by the organization, thus preventing stagnation. Some supervisors have mentioned that looking for other jobs means, for them, remaining competitive, and keeping themselves marketable.

Second, the issue of evaluation was brought up by some participants as important, and needing attention by administrators. By its very nature, evaluation is a subjective activity. However, there were indications that this process could be improved to provide a more balanced and equitable activity. Suggestions of clearly outlined indicators and standards were raised by the participants as vital to prevent
subjectivity. Furthermore, with established standards and indicators, professionals would know beforehand how their work was being judged or evaluated. Evaluation does not need to be a threat to professionals but should be a way of promoting growth constructive and supportive criticism. Evaluation given in a supportive and constructive manner cannot cause defensive behavior to the recipient. The study reflected a view by some participants that upper level administration came out as punitive. Another participant contended that staff evaluation was not equitable. This is an issue that has implications for administrators.

The third issue pertains to the product-process dichotomy. For most of the participants, focusing on products and control of direct service workers was not their ideal supervisory function. There was an indication that this particular focus did not reflect a caring for people. The ever-continuing threat of being on a computer list (ding list) reinforced the need to focus on task completion and bureaucratic routines. That people sometimes had reasons for not finishing tasks on time or for appearing in the computer list, did not seem to matter with upper level administrators.

Flexibility in work that deals with people seems indicated in an organization that is threatened by staff burnout and high turnover. Upper level administration could attempt to balance the cost of turnover as the organization experienced it and the benefit of flexibility that allows for better accountability and openness.

The issue of paperwork is the most written-about aspect in the profession of social work. Yet no efforts are made to curb the ever-increasing amount of paperwork that these supervisors in particular have to contend with. Some supervisors
suggested that experimenting with computers could impact on the amount of paperwork that each professional had to deal with daily in the organization. Administrators could support this idea and move forward with issues of process that the participants in this study preferred. Interacting with caseworkers, critiqueing plans of action and reflecting on the successes they had achieved was counted as an important supervisory function that would yield better satisfaction with what the participants did within the organization.

Finally, the issue of regulations and rules both federal and state was mentioned as sometimes constraining in the conduct of daily activities. The frustrating thing about these code enforcements was the inability of the participants to effect changes pertaining to these. As a group in this one organization, they not only did not have the power but lacked the clout to make decisions about these issues. There seems to be a challenge for upper level administration to balance the demand of code enforcement with what the participants perceive as "what we were trained to do." The data pointed to the fact that these mid-level social workers had come to terms with the demands and expectations of the organization they worked for. They had initially been idealistic about their role within this organization, stemming from what attracted them to the organization to their expectation of their supervisory position.
Conclusion.

This chapter underlined the main issues that this study achieved. The underlying principle was that the organization impacts heavily on mid-level social workers in all aspects of their work. The organization achieves this through its culture-expected norms and behavior that are governed by numerous rules and code enforcements which are the controls. The organization balances these controls by the rewards that it offers the participants for their compliance and loyalty. The study unveiled that commitment to stay by their participants was predicated on some elements of the organizational culture, i.e., its mission of serving the children and their families. Financial rewards and fringe benefits persuaded most of the participants to stay. However, the overriding principle for the participants' commitment lay with their commitment to children and the satisfaction they derived in performing their tasks. It seems fitting, therefore, to conclude with the words from Imre (1982):

Caring is a fundamental moral principle, which in effect motivates social workers to be concerned about the freedom and well being of others. (p. 108)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Children's Services explains policy. (1992, December) *The Columbus Dispatch*.


The Executive Director
Franklin County Children's Services
Columbus OH.

Madam

DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT : 1992-93

I am a PhD candidate in the College of Social Work at the Ohio State University. The reason for this letter is that I am eliciting your assistance in conducting a research study within the Franklin County Children's Services, which is part of my Doctoral program.

The purpose of the study that I propose to undertake is to examine, through qualitative study methods, the impact that organizational culture has on the perceived job satisfaction of mid-level social workers. The study will examine the meanings that these social workers attach to the world of work that results in perceived satisfaction, and therefore, their commitment to stay within this organization.

The population that will be included involves mid-level professionals - in particular - professional social work supervisors. Theoretically the role of the supervisor is very stressful given the fact that they are a bridge and or a buffer between management and employees. Furthermore, it has been established that organizations do impact on the delivery of services in various ways. My focus will be on organizational culture. As this would be a qualitative study and hence involve intensive interviews and general participation in organization activities, a sample of ten (10) supervisors is considered adequate.

Franklin County Children's Services was selected because it would provide the environment that is bureaucratic; offers professional services and maybe stressful for social workers in terms of the constant decisions that they have to make that affect young lives. It would be of
interest to me to ascertain whether cultural issues affect or are a factor in their commitment to stay given these conditions.

Findings of the study might provide more knowledge about the human behavior within organizations that is useful for social work in general and F C C S in particular. While social workers spend most of their working lives within organizations, there is a lag in studies that highlight the impact of organizational culture on their job satisfaction.

Your co-operation is vital to the success of the study. If there is more information you need about the study, I will gladly furnish it. I can be reached at this number (614) 337-8719, after hours.

Yours sincerely

Phiwase Dlamini
PhD Candidate
Dear Colleague:

I am enlisting your assistance in a study I am undertaking that seeks to ascertain the impact of organizational culture on perceived job satisfaction of mid-level social workers [supervisors] in Children's Services. I believe this study will be useful for the understanding of the dynamics of work within Children's Services and serve as a source of encouragement for those social workers who want to join the profession and Children's services in particular. This study is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Nolan Rindfleisch, Principal Investigator. He is a graduate faculty member in the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University.

An informed consent agreement for your perusal and signature, if it meets your expectations about our impending work together, will be made available to you in our first meeting. This is a requirement of the Human Subject Committee intended to safeguard your interests in this research work.

While permission has been obtained from the research committee in your agency to undertake the research, I would like to emphasize that this process is completely voluntary and there is no obligation on your part to participate. If, for any reason you want to withdraw from participation at any time during the process of research, you may do so without any reprisals. Your name and any information shared between us will be kept confidential. The findings will be arranged in such a way so as not to disclose your identity.

There will be three in-depth interviews that will take a total of three hours. All the interviews will be conducted at your agency address during office hours and at your convenience. I will also need your permission to use a tape recorder to record the full interview since some material may be difficult to recall at a later time. All audiotaped material will be erased immediately after transcription.

Furthermore, my methodology calls for perusal of agency documents that will include minutes, policy documents, mission statement of the organization and other material that will assist me in understanding the context of your work. Please be assured that no personnel documents will be used as this research does not call for any personal details you are not willing to share with me directly.
As a final step in the study, you will be asked to review my interpretation of what you have shared and to give me your feedback about its accuracy. For any further clarification, I can be reached at (614) 337-8719.

PHIWASE M DLAMINI
PH D CANDIDATE and Co-Principal Investigator
College of Social Work
APPENDIX C

LETTER OF CONSENT
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

I consent to participating in research entitled

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON PERCEIVED JOB SATISFACTION OF MID-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKERS.

Phiwase Dlamini [Principal Investigator] or her authorized representative has explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, and the expected duration of my participation. This explanation has included the investigator's request to audiotape my interviews with her. It has further been explained that all audiotaped material will be erased immediately after the audiotapes have been transcribed.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

DATE: ___________________  SIGNED: ___________________

[Participant]

SIGNED: ___________________  [Principal Investigator]

WITNESS: ___________________

HS-27 (Rev. 3/87) -- To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE
INTERVIEW GUIDE

INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS
- educational background
- marital status
- age [optional]
- gender [optional]
- race [optional]

JOB CHARACTERISTICS
- description of what attracted you to this job
- length of period in current position
- length of period in this organization
- description of expectation of position
- description of work that you do

ORGANIZATION CHARACTERISTICS
- description of working conditions
- description of some organization policies that guide your practice
- description of some organization traditions/rituals/unique language
- description of process of induction of new members
- description of your own preparation for the current job you hold
JOB SATISFACTION ISSUES
- description of a typical day in the organization
- description of rewards of this job
- description of some constraints of this job
- description of factors that encourage you to stay in this organization
- description of equity issues eg. feelings of being treated fairly
- description of expectations before joining this organization
- description of things within the organization that you could change if you could
- description of your experience with the grievance procedure - is it adequate
- description of feelings about the job
- description of characteristics of colleagues who stay in the agency
- description of some things that have kept you so long in this job
- would you advise a friend to come and work in this organization?
- would you opt for the same decision if you were to do things all over again
APPENDIX E

APPROVAL FORM--HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE
RESEARCH PROTOCOL:

93B0029  IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON PERCEIVED JOB SATISFACTION OF MID-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKERS, Nolan Rindfleisch, Phlwaae Dlamini, Social Work

presented for review by the Behavioral and Social Sciences Review Committee to ensure proper protection of the rights and welfare of the individuals involved with consideration of the methods used to obtain informed consent and the justification of risks in terms of potential benefits to be gained. The Committee action was:

______ APPROVED  _______ DEFERRED*  

* APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS*  _______ DISAPPROVED

NO REVIEW NECESSARY

*CONDITIONS/COMMENTS:

Subjects were deemed NOT AT RISK and the protocol was unanimously APPROVED WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. Revise the consent form as follows, and forward a copy to the Committee:
   a. Obtain the signature of Dr. Rindfleisch as principal investigator.
   b. Modify consent form to obtain permission for taping.

2. Revise the written solicitation script to be used to recruit subjects as follows, and forward a copy to the Committee:
   a. Clarify the number and length of interviews.
   b. Clarify where and when interviews will be held.
   c. Clarify disposition of the tapes upon completion of the study.
   d. Identify Dr. Rindfleisch as the principal investigator and his affiliation to The Ohio State University.
   e. Indicate that some archival data will be used and assure subjects that no personnel-related materials will be accessed.
   f. Print on OSU letterhead.

3. Provide a clarification of the content of the secondary methods of observation and document analysis.

If you agree to the above conditions, PLEASE SIGN THIS FORM IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW AND RETURN WITH ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUESTED TO THE HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW DESK, J00 RESEARCH FOUNDATION, 1960 KENNY ROAD, CAMPUS, within one week. Upon such compliance, the approval form will be mailed to you. (In case of a deferred protocol, please submit the requested information at your earliest convenience. The next meeting of the Committee will be two weeks from the meeting date indicated above.)

DATE  2/12/93  Signatures(s)

Principal Investigators

MS-025A (Rev. 2/91) (CONDITIONS/COMMENTS)
APPENDIX F

RESEARCH APPLICATION, REVIEW AND APPROVAL FORM
Title of Research Project: IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON JOB SATISFACTION OF MIA-LEVEL SOCIAL WORKER

Name of Applicant/Principal Investigator: PHIWESE DLMINI

Organization: COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK - OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Mailing Address: 4310 N GOLDENGATE SQUARE - APT M. COLUMBUS OH 43224

The undersigned research project applicant understands and agrees to the following conditions:

1. Any major or significant deviation from the attached research proposal, once approved, will be reported to FCCS prior to implementation for review and further approval. Failure to do so shall be grounds for termination of the research project.

2. The confidentiality and identity of all present or former FCCS clients (parents and/or children) shall be respected/safeguarded at all times pursuant to OAC Rule 5101:2-34-38(DU14)(a-e) (over for details).

3. One copy of the final report will be submitted to FCCS upon completion of the research project. The cooperation/assistance of FCCS in the conduct of the research shall be acknowledged in the final report.

Signature of Principal Investigator: [Signature] Date: 11/3/92

Research Parameters:

Dates/Duration of Entire Proposed Research Period: From: JANUARY To: APRIL 1993

Involved Department(s): [Department(s)]

Data Collection Methods and Sources:

Client Types: Currently Open Parents [ ] Chn. [ ] * Previously Served Parents [ ] Chn. [ ]

→ Human Subjects Approval by Researcher's Organization? Yes [ ] No [ ]

→ Research Consent Form To Be Used? Yes [ ] No [X]

FCCS Staff: Specify Which Staff & Time Needed: SUPERVISORY LEVEL SOCIAL WORK STAFF

Other: FCCS Computer Data [ ] Case Record Information [ ]

Application and Supporting Documents Reviewed By: [Signature] Date: 11/2/92

Application Endorsed by Involved Department Director(s): [Signature] Date: 11/3/92

Application Approved by Deputy/Associate Director: [Signature] Date: 12/4/92

QA-3/rev.11/911
Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Rule 5101:2-34-38 (D)(14)(a through e) specifies the conditions under which public children service agencies (PCSA) may release information for research purposes. By signing this "Research Application, Review & Approval Form", the Principal Investigator agrees to all conditions stated in elements (a) through (e), as required by the Ohio Department of Human Services (ODHS) and Franklin County Children Services.

NOTE: Rule language from Section (D), Part (14) is supplied to contextualize requirements under elements (a) through (e).

ODHS (OAC) 5101:2-34-38

Section: (D) The PCSA is authorized to disseminate information in the following manner to:

Part: (14) An individual, agency, or organization for research purposes. Prior to the dissemination of information the PCSA shall ensure that the information is to be used only for the identified purpose for which it is made available and that such purpose is related to the goals of children’s protective services. The PCSA shall determine what information is appropriate to make available to the researcher. When the PCSA determines that any research requires sharing of information which contains names or other data by which any individual or out-of-home care setting could be identified or deductively disclosed, the PCSA must have a signed agreement in which the individual, agency, or organization conducting the research agrees to all of the following:

Element: (a) Ensure that information which contains names or data by which any individual or out-of-home care setting could be identified or deductively disclosed shall not be disseminated orally or in writing before, during or after conducting the research;

(b) Submit any and all research information, prior to dissemination or publication, to the PCSA for review to ensure that such information is void of names or data by which any individual or out-of-home care setting could be identified or deductively disclosed;

(c) Delete, prior to dissemination or publication and upon the instruction of the PCSA, any and all research information by which any individual or out-of-home care setting could be identified or deductively disclosed;

(d) Return to the PCSA all disseminated information which contains names or data by which any individual or out-of-home care setting could be identified or deductively disclosed;

(e) Accept liability for unauthorized dissemination of information given to them for research purposes, which leads to the identification or deductive disclosure of any individual or out-of-home care setting.