

PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE  
LIKELIHOOD THAT ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKERS  
WILL REMAIN IN ON THE JOB LONG-TERM

by

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## ABSTRACT

### PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS THAT IMPROVE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES WORKERS WILL REMAIN IN ON THE JOB LONG-TERM

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A secondary data analysis will be used to examine data that was originally collected as part of a cross-sectional survey of adult protective service workers from May 2005 to June 2007. The purpose of this study to gain a better understanding of the socio-demographic and organizational factors that may influence the decision of APS workers to remain on the job in state, public welfare agencies. Data will be analyzed from a sample of 673 APS workers in Texas who completed questionnaires after completing classroom and field training in the Protective Services Training Institute. Hierarchical multiple regression and moderation data analyses will be used to examine the most significant factors that have been empirically linked in past research studies with improving employee retention. There is currently a paucity of research in the area of elder abuse and protection. The majority of employee retention studies are in the area of child welfare. Since this study is specific to gerontological human service workers, this study will fill in the gaps in knowledge on how agencies can increase retention in adult protective services work. Implications for social work policy, research and education will be discussed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES .....	v
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Study Purpose and Rationale.....	1
1.2 Adult Protective Services Organization .....	2
1.2.1 Problems in APS Organizations Nationwide.....	5
1.2.2 Turnover in APS organizations in Texas.....	5
1.2.3 Impact of Turnover on Adult Protective Services.....	6
in Texas and Nationwide	
1.2.4 Impact of Turnover on Older Adults.....	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1 Past Research on Employee Turnover and Retention.....	11
2.1.1 Reasons for Employee Turnover.....	13
2.1.2 Reasons for Retention.....	15
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	17
2.2.1 Social Cognitive Theory.....	17
3. METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	20

3.1 Study Aim, Study Design and Rationale.....	20
3.1.1 Aim & Study Hypothesis.....	20
3.1.2 Participants.....	22
3.1.3 Measurements.....	23
3.1.4 Measure.....	23
3.1.5 Variables.....	26
3.1.5.1 Independent variables for the ANOVA analysis.....	26
3.1.5.2 Dependent variables for the ANOVA analysis.....	26
3.1.5.3 Independent variables for the hierarchical.....	27
regression analysis	
3.1.5.4 Dependent variables for the hierarchical.....	27
regression analysis	
3.1.6 Procedures.....	28
4. RESULTS.....	29
4.1 Results .....	29
4.1.1 Sample Characteristics and Descriptive Findings.....	29
4.1.2 Independent t-test and ANOVA Analysis.....	30
4.1.3 Bivariate Analysis.....	31
4.1.4 Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis.....	33
4.1.5 Moderation Analysis.....	34
5. DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND.....	36
IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY	
5.1 Discussion.....	36
5.2 Limitations.....	37
5.3 Implications for Social Work Education, Policy.....	38
and Research	
5.3.1 Implications for Social Work Education .....	38
5.3.2 Implications for Practice .....	38

5.3.3 Implications for Research .....39  
5.3.4 Implications for Policy .....40

APPENDIX

A. TABLES.....41  
B. BSD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.....47  
REFERENCES.....51  
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....60



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
2.1 Reciprocal determinism figure.....	19
3.1 Moderation analysis figure .....	22

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A.1 Study respondents' characteristics .....	42
A.2 Component structure of self-efficacy .....	43
A.3 Independent t-test analysis results .....	44
A.4 ANOVA analysis results .....	44
A.5 Bivariate correlation analysis results .....	45
A.6 Hierarchical regression analysis results .....	46

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Study Purpose and Rationale

A review of the research literature indicates that staff turnover is a major problem in the adult protective services field that if unaddressed will lead to detrimental outcomes for many disabled and older adults in the future. The purpose of this study is to identify the personal and work-related factors that contribute to retention of staff in the field of adult protection. By understanding the factors that are important to employees that influence their decision to remain on the job, APS administrators can develop strategies and develop working environments that can retain staff on a long-term basis. Much of the past research in the area of retention has focused on child welfare workers and has focused on the reasons why workers choose to leave the job. Nevertheless, it is important to gain an understanding of what personal and organizational factors lead to a long-term career in the field of adult protection. This current study will address the gap in the research literature since it is a quantitative study with a major focus on adult protective services workers. The study will focus on demographic, personal factors and agency characteristics that have been linked to retaining state human service workers in past studies.

#### 1.2 Adult Protective Services Organization

“Adult Protective Services (APS) provides services to older adults and people with disabilities who are in danger of being abused and neglected and who are unable to protect themselves” (NCEA, 2000, p.9). The provisions of APS are administered under the Title XX of the Social Security Act of 1975. The federal government has given authority to the states to form APS units in their local social service agencies through statutes or regulations. All 50

states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have enacted legislation authorizing the provision of adult protective services (APS) in elder abuse cases (American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging, 2005).

#### *1.2.1 Problems in APS Organizations Nationwide*

The current APS system lacks coordination and comprehensiveness in the policy implementation process. Since the federal government has given authority to the states to form APS units in their local social service agencies through statutes or regulations, there are no federal funds or funding directly related to the delivery of APS services and each state develops its own system for service delivery (Teaster, 2003). According to the National Center on Elder Abuse (2005), there are no national statistics, uniform reporting systems or data collection methods. There is a lack of reliable state and federal data to evaluate state programs, establish benchmarks, or track service outcomes for clients. Due to the lack of data collection that currently exists, it is difficult for APS administrators to determine the future workforce needs within state APS departments. This fact is significant since the turnover rate in many APS offices across the country is steadily increasing as workers leave the field of adult protection to pursue other career opportunities. Research conducted by Bell and Otto (2003), found that many state administrators had the inability to retain enough staff with expertise in adult protection to effectively operate existing programs. Large caseloads and low wages often resulted in high staff turnover and many administrators indicated that they had a lack of funding to provide training to develop staff expertise in adult protection. Some administrators admitted that staff sometimes carried caseloads of both APS and CPS clients due to staff shortages. Additionally, adult protective services (APS) state administrators have reported that significant gaps exist in the knowledge base of adult protection. It is not clear what the best practice standards are for conducting APS work (Wolf, 1999). Since programs are administered by the

states, education and job experience requirements for APS workers and also the type of training offered to newly hired APS workers varies from state-to-state (Health And Human Services Commission, 2004; Otto, Castano & Marlett, 2002).

The training needs of newly hired APS workers are immense. APS workers need to have knowledge of multiple issues including: state laws, regulations, and policies governing the APS program, ethics, legal issues such as determining mental capacity and the ability of adults to consent, issues related to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, financial exploitation, neglect, self-neglect and community resources (Stiegel & Klem, 2006). Training, for newly hired and inexperienced workers, is imperative due to the magnitude of information that is needed to do protective services work. Yet, APS Administrators indicate that they have a lack of funding available to train staff. Otto, Castano and Marlatt (2002) reported that some states allow APS staff to work in the field without having any basic training due to staff shortages and budget cuts. In some instances, there is cross-training that may occur with other disciplines such as law enforcement, health care providers and other aging occupational providers due to a lack of funding. Some units report that they are only able to offer trainings one time per year at APS statewide training conferences for newly hired workers. Some state APS units use Social Services Block Grant Funding and/or funding from the Older Americans Act, but units across the country have experienced a reduction in available funds due to state and federal budget cuts. Some APS administrators reported having to develop their own training curriculum for newly hired staff in addition to doing other work-related duties due to a lack of funding.

APS state administrators were surveyed regarding the needs for program improvement in state units. Administrators overwhelmingly indicated the need for answers regarding: 1) educational standards for APS workers, 2) effective training methods for new APS employees and 3) whether formal curriculum in university settings should be offered prior to entering the field of adult protection (Wolf, 1999). Daly et al (2005) compared the statutes and regulations of various state abuse units concerning educational backgrounds for APS workers. They found

that APS workers had various educational backgrounds including social work, criminal justice, education, nursing, aging studies, sociology and other disciplines. Some states required through statute or regulation that an APS worker have a social work degree and social work license in order to be titled "adult protective services worker". A few states did not indicate a specific degree requirement and a few states required a Bachelor's degree for APS workers. The researchers also found that APS educational requirements varied from county to county in some states.

Determining the type of college major that is needed to do APS work is a complex issue for many APS administrators and policymakers. APS units that had the majority of workers with social work degrees had higher investigation rates than units that did not (Daly et al, 2005). There were no differences found in report, investigation or substantiation rates of elder abuse for those states requiring a social work degree and/or social work license and/or a bachelor's degree in the state policy. However, there was a lower substantiation rate (closure or findings of allegations of elder abuse according to state law) in states that only required a social work degree or license. It was felt that perhaps criminal justice disciplines or collaboration between APS and law enforcement could produce better substantiation rates and that what is necessary is adequate training for both APS workers and law enforcement individuals on issues related to elder abuse (Daly et al, 2005; Dubble, 2006). It is not clear if a social work degree is needed or if APS workers with various educational backgrounds could be given the necessary training to do the job. Furthermore, APS state administrators are seeking answers regarding the type of on-the-job training and development needed to help APS workers successfully carry out the responsibilities of their job to protect vulnerable disabled and elderly adults.

Bergeron (1999) and Bergeron (2006) also looked at factors related to decision-making in APS. The researcher identified that educational background, years of experience and motivation to work with the elderly had a significant impact on decision-making in APS workers.

Workers with a social work background understood the concept of self-determination in elder abuse cases better than those who did not have a social work degree. Social workers tended to use a more comprehensive approach to interviewing than workers who had degrees from other disciplines. Workers from other disciplines expressed difficulty with understanding the concept of self-determination because they did not have exposure to the concept prior to working at APS. Many workers had difficulty with evaluating competency in elder abuses cases and felt that they lacked the training necessary to conduct competency evaluations. Concern with interviewing skills and understanding the concept of self-determination also emerged as themes for further training in feedback that was given to educators after a training intervention in an adult social services department. Workers who participated in the training intervention suggested that further training was needed in those two areas (Cambridge & Parkes, 2004). In Wolf (1999), APS state administrators identified other training needs for APS workers. APS Administrators felt that training was also needed on effective documentation for substantiation, techniques for substantiating sexual abuse cases and cultural issues.

Turnover in APS work units often results in a continual recruitment and hiring of new staff that have little to no experience in adult protective services work. Weaver et al (2007) suggests that workers have an intention to leave their protective services job position when they are assigned a caseload too soon and when they have not received adequate training to perform their job as a caseworker. As a result, APS administrators have identified that developing best practice standards in program management and training are a priority for conducting APS work (Wolf, 1999).

#### *1.2.2 Turnover in the APS Organizations in Texas*

In the state of Texas, Governor Rick Perry issued an executive order to reform the APS system. There were significant problems in the El Paso state APS unit that prompted the governor to issue an order that would create systemic and administrative reform. Governor Rick Perry ordered state APS units to develop new training procedures for the effective

application of state regulations and statutes that protect vulnerable adults and issued a call to APS units to establish minimum qualifications and educational standards for caseworkers and supervisors (Perry, 2004). In 1997, the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services reported that there were 62,000 allegations of adult abuse and neglect. The incidence of mistreatment and neglect increased sharply for older adults that were greater than 65 and the prevalence of abuse for older adults was 1,310 per 100,000 (Pavlik, Hyman, Festa, & Dyer, 2001). In Texas, it is projected that older adults who are 60-plus will comprise 23% or 8.1 million of the total population by 2040 and older adults who are 85-plus will comprise 831,000 of the total population by 2040 (Texas Department of Aging, 2003). The state of Texas has had a similar experience as many states throughout the U.S. Texas has had the inability to retain workers who have adequate skills to serve the older adult population. In order to address this problem, the state of Texas in partnership with major universities has developed extensive training programs that include providing inexperienced workers with mentoring and support from more experienced co-workers, supervisors and field trainers during the first year of employment.

### *1.2.3 Impact of Turnover on Adult Protective Services in Texas and Nationwide*

The turnover rate in adult protective services has been of major concern to state protective services offices across the country. In particular, in the state of Texas the turnover rate for first-year APS specialist positions has been as high as 30% in 2009 (Wold, 2010). Although, protective service specialists in Texas are the second highest paid Health and Human Services employees, the turnover rate for protective services was the second highest among all HHS agencies representing 19% with 68% of employee turnover ascribed to voluntary, personal reasons. Department of Family Protective Services workers are the least tenured and least experienced among all HHS worker types since many workers leave in the first few years of employment (Texas State Health And Human Services Commission, 2010). Retaining staff in adult protective services is a challenge due to the fact that the work is often highly emotional and crises driven. It requires APS workers to interact with adults who are often in calamitous



situations which could be quite stressful for many beginning workers. There is an increasing population of older adults in Texas and across the country since the baby boomer population continues to age, the demand for services is beginning to far outweigh the supply of available workers who are trained, experienced and capable of handling difficult abuse, neglect and financial exploitation cases.

Additionally, the AARP Policy Institute published a study on the impact of the economic recession on long-term care services. It has been determined that since the beginning of the economic down-turn, Adult Protective Service units in twenty-five states have experienced an increase in the demand for APS services especially with self-neglect cases in which older adults are neglecting their own needs. APS units across the country report that adult children with developmental disabilities are increasingly being abandoned at emergency shelters and emergency rooms by caregivers since the recession started (Walls et al., 2010). It has also been determined that some family members are neglecting and financially exploiting the disabled adult living in their home due to a lack of income or unemployment (Walls et al., 2010). The increase in calls has not been matched with an increase in the employment rate or a reduction in the employee turnover rate in APS units. State APS units are reporting that higher call volumes are resulting in staff being reassigned to other areas to handle evaluations. In addition, supervisors are being required to carry a caseload and/or cover intake (North Carolina Department of Health And Human Services, 2009). Although the demand for experienced, competent workers continues to rise, the employee turnover rate in APS units also continues to rise. With increasing staff shortages, vulnerable older and disabled adults may fall through the cracks of the social service system and remain in catastrophic situations. It is important that APS administrators across the country find ways to increase retention among beginning APS workers in order to meet the needs of the increasing population of at-risk older and disabled adults who need protective services.

Employee turnover in human services has been shown to be costly financial-wise. The direct costs of employee turnover in human services include: the costs associated with processing the departing employee's paperwork, costs to pay out sick, vacation or severance pay, costs of unemployment compensation benefits, costs of recruitment activities to replace the departed employee, costs of background checks of the prospective employee, costs of training the newly hired employee. The indirect costs include: the productivity gap between the departed employee and the replacement, errors due to inexperience, low morale and productivity of other staff, the financial consequences of slower service due to the learning curve of the new employee and the lack of continuity and delays in services for clients (Graef & Hill, 2000). It is estimated that turnover in human service personnel cost agencies \$24,887 (70% of the average annual salary). If an agency has 50 human services workers and 30% (15 of those workers) leave the job within the first year, then it costs that one human service unit approximately \$373,305.00 annually (Champnoise, 2006; American Public Human Services Association, 2005).

#### *1.2.4 Impact of Turnover on Disabled and Older Adults*

A lack of coordination at the state and national levels has created an ineffective system that has the inability to adequately protect disabled and older adults. The older adult population is projected to increase in size in the United States over the next several years. Consequently, the abuse of vulnerable adults will also increase. Staff turnover is a major problem in the adult protective services field that if unaddressed will lead to detrimental outcomes for many disabled and older adults in the future since the older population (65+) has steadily increased since the early nineties (NIA, 1997). By year 2030, one in five U.S. residents is expected to be 65 and older. The age group is projected to increase to 88.5 million by 2050. Likewise, the 85 and older population is expected to triple by 2050 and increase from 5.4 million to 19 million (Kinsella & Wan, 2009). As the number of older adults living in the United States continues to raise, the number of reports regarding abuse and neglect of older adults will also continue to

climb as public awareness of this problem increases. From the year 2000 to 2005, reports made to Adult Protective Services rose by 19.7% and APS investigations rose by 16.3% (Teaster, Dugar, Mendiondo, Abner & Cecil, 2006). This fact is significant since there is currently a shortage in the number of human services workers who are trained and prepared for a career in the field of geriatrics or adult protection (Hudson, Gonyea & Curley, 2003). The inability of APS units nationwide to retain APS workers on a long term basis may leave some disabled and vulnerable adults without protective services. Shortages in staff available to handle complex abuse and neglect cases have been shown to have detrimental outcomes for some vulnerable clients that include: missed visits, poor documentation and even death (Long & Kennedy, 2011).

In order to meet the future needs of the vulnerable population of adults who are disabled and elderly, it is important that administrators gain an understanding of the factors that are the most significant in promoting retention among adult protective services workers. This study will make a contribution to the current literature on retention by examining the personal and organizational supports that make a difference in promoting a long-term career with adult protective services.

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1 Past Research on Employee Turnover and Retention

A search of the PsycINFO, Social Work Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, AARP Ageline, PsycArticles and Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection and Medline databases revealed many research studies on retention and turnover between the periods of 1984-2009. The keywords used in the search were retention or turnover and human service workers; retention or turnover and older adults; retention or turnover and adult protective service workers; self-efficacy and retention; self-efficacy and turnover; child welfare workers and retention; child welfare and turnover or child welfare and self-efficacy. The search generated a plethora of articles in the area of child welfare, but there was a dearth of research studies in the area of adult protection. Of the twenty-six articles that were identified in the scholarly research databases, twenty-three of the articles collected data from participants who were solely child welfare workers or child protective service workers (Barth, Christopher, Chapman & Dickinson, 2008; Blewett & Gupta, 2006; Calahane & Sites, 2004; Chen & Scannapieco, 2010; Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersall, 2009; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2007; Curry, McCarragher, Delliman-Jenkins, 2005; Davis-Sacks, Jayaratne & Chess, 1985; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Ellett, 2009; Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook, Dews, 2008; Jayaratne, Chess & Kunkel, 1986; Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; Landsman, 2007; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2009; Smith, 2005; Stand & Dore, 2009; Stevens & Higgins, 2002; Strand, Spath & Bosco-Ruggiero, 2009; Vandervort, 2008; Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett, 2006, Williams, Nichols, Kirk & Wilson, 2009; Yoo, 2002). On the other hand, only two of the journal articles in the research literature included a sample of participants who were older adult workers or adult protective services workers (Coffey, Dugdill &

Tattersall, 2004; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2008). Due to the scarcity of research that is available regarding APS workers, prior research studies on child welfare workers will need to be used to inform subsequent research about employee retention in adult protective services.

Using past research studies on child welfare workers is reasonable, since the job tasks of APS workers are similar. The major difference in the two types of workers is the type of client that is served. Child welfare workers investigate reports of child abuse or neglect in order to determine whether a child or children in a referred family have been abused or neglected. CPS workers initiate protective services for children who need protection if abuse or neglect is substantiated and they arrange for services to prevent further maltreatment. Similarly, APS caseworkers investigate reported abuse, neglect, or exploitation to determine if the reported situation does exist and to what extent it adversely impacts the elderly person or an adult with disabilities. When reports are confirmed on cases in the community and protective services are appropriate, APS caseworkers provide or arrange for services to alleviate or prevent further maltreatment (Texas Department of Family Protective Services, 2011). Nevertheless, future research studies that are specifically focused on the retention of APS workers are necessary since there are some salient differences that exist in the organizational environments for APS workers across the country. Differences exist in the following areas: 1) the amount of funding that is designated for APS work; 2) the workloads of some APS workers who carry dual caseloads of children and older adults; 3) the lack of training budgets for APS workers and 4) the comprehensive knowledge base that is needed to do APS work (North Carolina Department of Health And Human Services, 2009; Bell & Otto, 2003; Cambridge & Parkes, 2004; Wolf, 1999; Bergeron, 1999; Begeron, 2006; Steigel & Klem, 2006; and Otto, Castano & Marlett, 2002). It is important for researchers, APS administrators and policymakers to know if these major differences create an undue hardship for APS workers and contributes to the problem of turnover in adult protective services.

Past research in the area of child welfare and retention has been mostly quantitative and has included large participant samples. Nonetheless, there has been some inconsistency in the way that dependent and independent variables have been used. Additionally, participants in the studies have varied in the type of education (undergraduate and/or graduate and/or Title IV-E graduates), years of experience, work location (urban and/or rural and/or suburban and/or city and/or region and/or country) and worker type (front-line staff and/or supervisors). Moreover, past studies have varied in the types of variables studied. The majority of research studies examined the personal and organizational factors that were associated with retention (demographics, job location, worker role, role ambiguity, role conflict, supervisor support, co-worker support, training, advancement and growth opportunities, workload, organizational resources, decision-making ability, job commitment, prior work experience, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and organizational constraints). However, the research studies varied with regards to the dependent variable chosen by the researchers. Some studies utilized retention as the dependent variable (Calahane & Sites, 2004; Chen & Scannapieco, 2010; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2007; Curry, McCarragher, Delliman-Jenkins, 2005; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Ellett, 2009; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2009; Smith, 2005; Stand & Dore, 2009; Stand, Spath & Bosco-Ruggiero, 2009; Williams, Nichols, Kirk, Wilson, 2009). Other studies used job satisfaction as the dependent variable (Barth, Christopher, Chapman & Dickinson, 2008; Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook, Dews, 2008; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; Stand & Dore, 2009; Strand, Spath & Bosco-Ruggiero, 2009; Williams, Nichols, Kirk, Wilson, 2009; Yoo, 2002). Additional studies used absenteeism (Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersal, 2004), lack of perception, skill or ability (Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2008), lack of self-efficacy (Ellett,

2009), burnout (Stevens & Higgins, 2002) or depression and anxiety (Jayaratne, Chess & Kunkel, 1986) as indicators of turnover or retention. Out of 26 journal articles reviewed, 12 quantitative studies focused solely on retention as the dependent variable while the remaining research articles were qualitative (Blewett & Gupta, 2006; Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersall, 2004; Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook, Dews, 2008; Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett, 2006, Vandervort, 2008; Yoo, 2002) or used other variables that were thought to contribute to turnover or retention of child welfare workers. For that reason, more rigorous, quantitative studies are needed to understand why adult protective services workers remain on the job. This present study will use quantitative research methods similar to past studies in the area of child welfare. The same independent variables (personal and organizational factors) identified in the research literature that are thought to influence the retention of child welfare workers will be used in this study to gain a better understanding of their impact on adult protective service workers. Since the participants of this study responded to survey questions during the statewide PSTI training in Texas, the respondents in this study will consist of both graduate and undergraduate workers from different parts of the state with various types of degrees, who will consist of different staff types (line staff, supervisors and managers) and be employed by APS (newly employed and more experienced workers). Since abuse and maltreatment of older adults is prevalent and growing nationwide, more quantitative studies are needed in order for state administrators in the area of adult protection to gain a better understanding of what personal and work-related factors would make a difference in retaining quality staff in adult protective services across the country.

#### 2.1.1. *Reasons for Employee Turnover*

Due to high caseloads, staff working with children and family services and older adult services reports the highest levels of absenteeism, poorest well-being and highest level of organizational constraints compared to any other social service occupational type. Job satisfaction among child welfare workers and older adult workers has been shown to be low as compared to other occupational groups of human service workers (Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersall,

2004; Coffey, Dugdill & Tattersall, 2009). Many research studies in the past have focused on the causes of high turnover in public welfare agencies. Reasons identified by past studies for high employee turnover include value conflicts, role conflicts, role ambiguity, poor self-efficacy and poor self-esteem related to skill discretion and lack of decision-making authority. (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Stevens & Higgins, 2002; Siebert, 2005; Davis-Sacks, Jayaratne & Chess, 1985; Zlotnik, Defanilis, Daining & McDermott-Lane, 2005; Jayaratne et al, 1986). In addition, workload and the work environment have also been shown to cause stress in human service workers (Jayaratne, Chess & Kunkel, 1986). Stress and strain over a long period of time has serious effects on the physical and mental health of workers that often leads to burnout and compassion fatigue (Jayaratne, Chess & Kunkel, 1986; Bourassa, 2009). Work stress has also been shown to have harmful effects on the individual worker and job performance. Over time work stress leads to feelings of burnout that are associated with anxiety, depression and irritability and psychosomatic complaints (Jayaratne, Chess & Kunkel, 1986; Jayaratne & Chess, 1984). Not only does burnout have serious consequences on the mental and physical health of the individual worker, but it also has an effect on job performance. There have been reports of high work absenteeism and feelings of depersonalization toward clients when adult protective services workers feel burned out (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984). Moreover, studies have shown that when workers experience burnout, there is work avoidance. Workers who experience burnout have been shown to deny the need for involvement in particularly demanding cases, they become less proficient at attending, processing or responding to new information and they tend to make a significant amount of errors (McGee, 1989).

Other factors that contributed to turnover include the stress regarding legal ethics. A number of workers have identified that a lack of understanding of legal ethics, negative interactions with lawyers and negative interactions with the legal system often creates stress for the individual worker which contributes to high turnover rates (Vandervort, Gonzalez, & Faller, 2008). Bureaucracy in the form of paperwork and data entry, a poor image of protective



services work, lack of professional authority and defensive practice have also been shown to contribute to turnover among state human service workers (Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett, 2006; Blewett & Gupta, 2006). Dissatisfaction with supervision (feedback, emotional support, help with difficult cases, irregular meetings with supervisors), internal resources (lack of support staff, lack of work resources, lack of client resources), working conditions (inability to take a vacation due to workload, inflexible work schedules, concerns over personal safety and excessive overtime) and external resources (poor working relationships/ service coordination with courts, community providers and probation system) all contributed to a worker's likelihood to leave a job (Strand, Spath and Bosco-Ruggiero, 2009; Strand & Dore, 2009; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2009). In addition, a lack of recognition, lack of respect, lack of guidance and a lack of concern with personal safety from supervisors contributed to dissatisfaction in workers and influenced the likelihood that workers would leave the job (Williams, Nichols, Kirk, & Wilson, 2009).

#### *2.1.2 Reasons for Employee Retention*

Past retention studies have identified personal characteristics, work and organizational factors that contribute to retention of human services workers (Vandervort, Gonzalez & Fuller, 2008; Cahalane & Sites, 2008; Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett, 2006; Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook, and Dews, 2007; Blewett & Gupta, 2006; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2007; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2008). Participants in the studies ranged in the level of education and years of experience (Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett, 2006; Cahalane & Sites, 2008). Westbrook, Ellis & Ellett (2006) examined the factors related to retention among highly experienced human service workers. Workers in this study identified that movement within the agency from one unit to another, variety within work assignments and personal and professional support from supervisors and local administrators influenced their decision to remain on the job. For less experienced workers, the level of salaries, social support received from co-workers and supervisors, job satisfaction and personal accomplishment were predictive of staying versus leaving (Cahalane & Sites, 2008). Strand, Spath & Bosco-Ruggiero (2009) also found that

years of experience and type of position is linked with retention. Managers and supervisors were less likely to report an intention to leave. Child welfare workers who were non-management, newly hired or who had less tenure were less likely to be retained by the organization. Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook, and Dews (2007) found that job benefits, flexibility in work hours and having meaningful work contributed to retention among human service workers who ranged in the type of education and years of experience that they possessed. Past studies have also indicated that support from co-workers represented a buffer or protective factor for human service workers which helped to promote good work performance and better client outcomes (Yoo, 2002). Additionally, supportive and competent supervisors influenced a worker's decision to remain on the job long-term by increasing worker ability (Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; Smith, 2005; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2007; Chen & Scannapieco, 2010; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2008; Barth, Christopher, Christ, Chapman & Dickinson, 2008; Landsman, 2007).

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study will utilize an existing theory to frame the research design. Maxwell (2005) and Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) indicate that by using existing theory researchers can organize data and the relationships between variables that may exist in the data. Existing theories help researchers identify what pieces of data are relevant for study. With using existing theory, research can advance when ideas are developed and then refuted or validated by using empirical research methods. This process of using existing theories in research has been criticized by some researchers due to the fact that the use of existing theories could prevent the researcher from being objective when analyzing data (Maxwell, 2005). Despite this fact, this present study will utilize an existing theory to frame the research design of the study and the researcher will be mindful to evaluate the results of the data analysis objectively.

### 2.2.1 *Social Cognitive Theory*

Social Cognitive Theory is a theory that was developed by Albert Bandura. Bandura (1994) emphasized a cognitive viewpoint regarding the motivation of individuals. It is believed that individuals are motivated by self-influence and self-regulation. They are able to engage in self-monitoring of their behavior by judging their behavior against a personal standard in environmental situations (Bandura, 1994; Bandura 2005). Cognitively, people are able to form cognitive representations for their goals. They are able to form strategies for achieving their goals, form the intention of achieving their goals and form expectations for the outcome of their goals. Individuals are able to engage in self-examination of their effectiveness in a particular situation. They are able to self-regulate and they have the ability to alter or adapt to their situation. Bandura (2005) indicates that people often participate in activities that satisfy them, that increase their self-worth or self-confidence and they refrain from participating in activities in which they feel insecure or inadequate. He further indicates that people are not only participants in their environment where other's actions or other's influence shapes their behavior, but they are able to engage in self-reflection, self-regulation and self-gratification. By reflecting on their capability or usefulness in a particular situation, individuals are able to decide what action they will continue to take in the future, make adjustments or take on other pursuits. The motivation and actions of people are based on what they believe. Their motives are based on vicarious reinforcement (modeling), past reinforcement (people's success in a particular situation) and future reinforcement (incentives). (Bandura, 1988; Bandura, 2005).

In social cognitive theory, there is a term used called "reciprocal determinism" (Bandura, 1978). In other words, social cognitive theory is claimed to be a triadic, reciprocal causal model (Pajares, 2002). In this model, a person's behavior, cognition and personal factors (emotion, motivation, physiology and physical factors) and social/environmental factors interact reciprocally to influence each other (Figure 1.1). For this reason, it is proposed that organizations or employers can intervene and develop organizational strategies that can

improve an individual's mental or emotional well-being, improve a person's job skills or job performance or change the organizational environment to be more responsive to a worker's needs (Bandura, 1988). A key factor that is believed to influence a person's behavior is self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is a term that is the central focus of Social Cognitive Theory. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy beliefs are developed when people perceive that they have the ability to achieve a particular outcome in a particular situation. Their self-efficacy beliefs determine what they will attempt to achieve and how much effort they will put forth in performing in a particular situation (Grusec, 1992). Beliefs about self-efficacy arise from a person's history of achievement, from observation of what others are able to accomplish and from attempts of others to mold feelings of self-efficacy through influence (Bandura, 1986; Bandura, 1977).

Training and development has been shown to increase the capability, skill level and knowledge in adult protective service workers (Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2008). Cole, Panchanadeswaren, and Daining (2004) indicated that perceived self-efficacy mediates the relationship between perceived workload and job satisfaction. It is important to understand the role that training and development can play in increasing self-efficacy since it has been shown to increase job satisfaction (Jayaratne & Chess, 1984; Ellett, 2009) and it has also been shown in past studies to influence the retention of managers (Zunz, 1998) and staff-level workers (Chen & Scannapieco, 2010). Based on Social Cognitive Theory, it is believed that workers who receive professional support and who spend time in training with supervisors and experienced workers who have been successful in the field will experience an increase in self-efficacy which may contribute to greater retention among adult protective services workers.

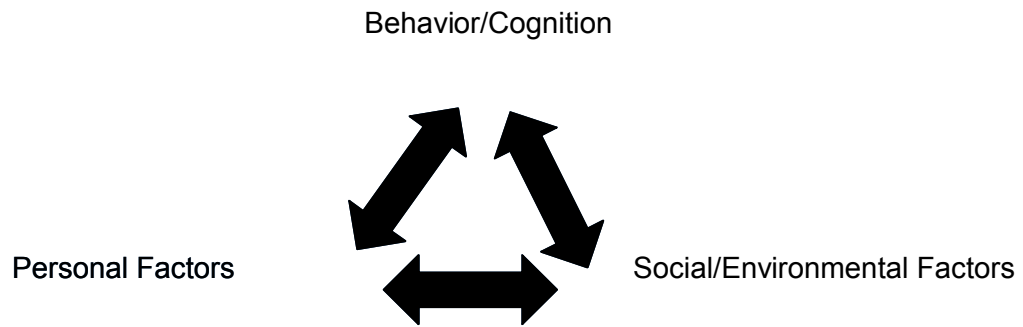


Figure 2.1: Reciprocal Determinism figure- personal factors (emotion, motivation, physiology and physical factors), behavior, cognition and social/environmental factors reciprocally shape behavior. Interventions and strategies can be used to improve emotional states, correct faulty self-beliefs and poor habits of thinking, increases skills and job practices, and improve organizational environments.

CHAPTER 3  
INTRODUCTION

3.1 Methods and Procedures

3.1.1 *Aims and hypotheses of the present study*

There have been some gains in understanding why employees remain on the job long-term. However, questions still remain with regards to how human service agencies can retain staff particularly in adult protective services work. This study addresses this gap by examining the personal and organizational factors that influence the likelihood that employees will remain with adult protective services long-term.

Bandura (2005) indicates that strong self-efficacy beliefs develop as a result of time and multiple experiences. The most influential source of self-efficacy is mastery or accomplishment in one's previous performance. Social workers receive education and exposure to topics that are covered in BSD training while completing their BSW and MSW degrees. Additionally, social workers have prior experience with doing some aspects of assessment and casework while completing field practicum requirements in college programs prior to going into APS work.

Thus, the aim of this study is: 1) to investigate the differences between APS workers' ratings (based on their demographics) of the organizational support and resources that were received during BSD training; 2) to investigate the association between the organizational support and resources received during BSD training and self-efficacy; and 3) to investigate the moderating role of work experience and type of major on the relationship between the organizational support and resources provided during BSD training and self-efficacy. Based on previous research studies the following hypotheses will be investigated in this study:

Hypothesis 1: APS workers who remain employed with APS will rate organizational resources and professional support received during BSD training higher than APS workers who terminated.

Hypothesis 2: APS workers with more years of work experience will rate organizational resources and professional support received during BSD training higher than those with less experience.

Hypothesis 3: APS workers with social work degrees will rate organizational resources and professional support received during BSD training higher than workers with other types of bachelor's and master's degrees.

Hypothesis 4: Professional support (supervisor support, skilled worker, field trainer) and organizational resources (training, technology) will predict self-efficacy among APS workers.

Hypothesis 5: Previous work experience and type of major will moderate the effect of professional support (supervisor, skilled worker, field trainer) and organizational resources (technology, training) on self-efficacy (figure 3.1).

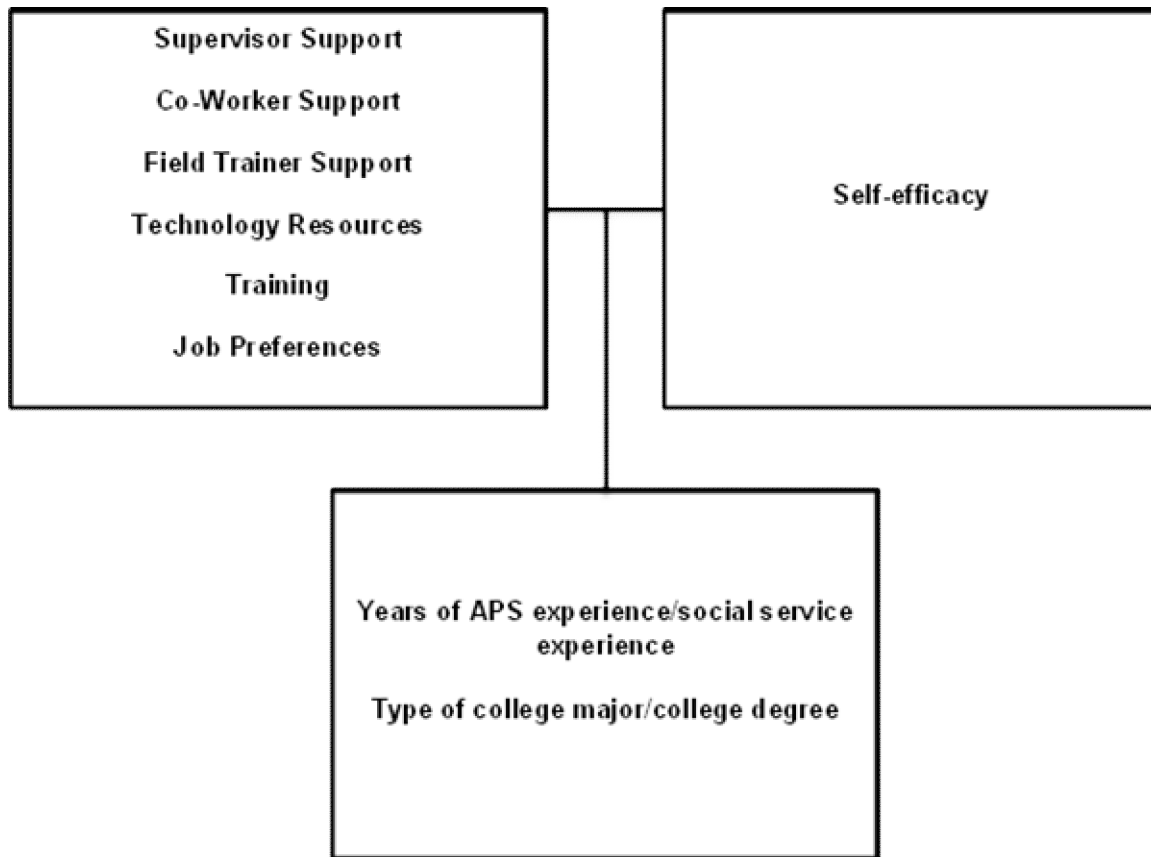


Figure 3.1 Moderation analysis figure-depicts the hypothesis that previous work experience and college major moderate the effect of professional support and organizational resources on self-efficacy.

### 3.1.2 Participants

A secondary data analysis, approved by the University of Texas at Arlington Institutional Review Board (IRB), was used to examine data originally collected as part of a cross-sectional survey of adult protective service workers from May 2005 to June 2007. Seven hundred twelve (N = 712) surveys were completed after Adult Protective Services (APS) workers attended the Protective Services Training Institute (PSTI). After Basic Skills Development (BSD) training, 673 or the 712 adult protective staff surveyed returned usable questionnaires yielding a 94% response rate. The sample was reflective of the APS workers throughout the Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston and Austin regions of Texas. Within the timeframe



of May 2005 to June 2007, 26.3% of APS workers who completed BSD training had terminated employment.

### 3.1.3 *Measurements*

The design of the survey instruments was developed by APS administrators, university faculty, and PSTI. Respondents voluntarily completed the surveys at the completion of BSD training. Participants were asked to rate their thoughts about statements pertaining to their job (organizational supports, training, knowledge, workload, skills and abilities) on a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Participants were also asked to indicate the number of hours spent in supervision per month with their supervisor and the number of hours spent in mentor/peer-trainer supervision per month. Additionally, participants were asked basic demographic questions about race, education, years of experience, relationship status, number of dependents and household income since retention literature indicates that certain demographic characteristics are related to a person continuing in protective services work.

### 3.1.4 *Measures*

Principal components analysis (PCA) was conducted using a varimax rotation to identify the latent structures of the scales that were developed by the APS administrators, University of Texas at Arlington and by PSTI. Several statistical assumptions were tested that are necessary for such an analysis. For the BSD survey, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .926 and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant ( $\chi^2=14961.114$ ,  $df=666$ ,  $p<.001$ ). These results satisfy the statistical assumptions needed for the principal components analysis. Items with a loading of greater than .30 were retained and items were dropped from the analysis if there was cross-loading on variables. The scree plot and Kaiser Criterion suggested a 7-component solution accounting for 70.918% of the total variance. Table A.2 presents the loadings for each of the 7-components. The seven variables were renamed and sub-scales were created. The sub-scales are listed below:

Self-efficacy Beliefs (SE) consisted of 9 questions that measured the belief or perception that APS workers have the ability to be successful doing their work-related tasks (alpha=.92):

1. I am capable of identifying substance abuse cases.
2. I know how to process an emergency removal.
3. I have skills and knowledge to testify in court.
4. I am capable of assessing sexual abuse cases.
5. I am capable of assessing domestic violence cases.
6. I am capable of assessing financial exploitation cases.
7. I am capable of identifying different types of mental illness.
8. I am able to create service plans which meet needs.
9. I know how to access community resources for my client.

Training Experience (TE) consisted of 8 questions that measured the APS workers' perception about the quality of the training that was provided at BSD (alpha=.92):

1. Materials were adequate
2. Activities in ASD enhanced learning
3. I gained knowledge and skills
4. Trainers were responsive
5. Trainers were prepared
6. Return to Field Experience brought in Class Experience
7. Facilities conducive to learning
8. Returning to field before ASD helped

Field Trainer Support (FT) consisted of 6 questions that measured the APS workers' perceptions about the mentoring and training provided by field trainers during BSD (alpha=.89):

1. Field trainer helped my enthusiasm about APS worker role
2. Field trainer helped me be enthusiastic
3. Field trainer facilitated learning about the APS worker role and function
4. Field trainer facilitated learning
5. I received field trainer support.
6. Trainee's Guide useful

Skilled Worker Support (SW) consisted of 5 questions that measured the APS workers' beliefs about mentoring provided by more experienced workers (alpha=.89):

1. Skilled workers helped my enthusiasm about APS worker role
2. Skilled workers facilitated learning about APS
3. Skilled workers helped me be enthusiastic
4. Skilled workers facilitated learning
5. I received skilled workers' support.

Supervisor Support (SS) consisted of 4 questions that measured the workers' perceptions of the quality of supervision provided by APS supervisors (alpha=.93):

1. Supervisor facilitated learning about the APS worker role and function
2. Supervisor facilitated learning
3. Supervisor helped my enthusiasm about APS worker
4. Supervisor helped me be enthusiastic

Job Preferences (JP) consisted of 3 questions that measured workers' beliefs about the job being desirable and the job being their first choice ( $\alpha=.82$ ):

1. Job going into desirable
2. Job position is first choice
3. Geographical location desirable

Technology Resources (TR) consisted of 2 questions that measured the workers' ability to use the IMPACT computer database system to submit case information as a part of their job responsibilities ( $\alpha=.94$ ):

1. I am capable of saving/submitted case docs in IMPACT.
2. I am capable of using IMPACT to meet my job responsibilities.

### 3.1.5 Variables

#### 3.1.5.1 Variables for the ANOVA analysis

The 673 respondents were given the questionnaires after the BSD training. The responses to the questions were used to analyze the demographic and organizational factors that influence retention in APS workers. For the independent t-test and ANOVA analyses, the independent variables are categorical variables. The variables included ethnicity (0=other, 1=Black, 2=Hispanic, 3=White), gender (0=male, 1=female), years of previous APS experience that is derived from grouping the continuous variable in three levels (1=0 to 3 years, 2=4-9 years, 3=10 or more years) and years of previous social service experience that is derived from grouping the continuous variable in three levels (1=0 to 3 years, 2=4-9 years, 3=10 or more years). These work-experience groupings were used in a previous research study on employment-based social work experiences (Hopkins, Holtz-Deal & Dunleavy-Bloom, 2005). Finally, the type of degree (1=MSW/BSW, 0=other degree types) and type of major (social work=1 and other majors=0) variables were also used as independent variables.

#### 3.1.5.2 Dependent Variables for ANOVA analysis

For the independent t-test and ANOVA analysis, dependent variables include (self-efficacy beliefs, perception of training, perception of field trainer support, perception of skilled worker support, perception of supervisor support, job preferences and perception of technology resources). The dependent variables are continuous variables deriving from scores on questionnaire items. The score range is from 1 to 4, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 4 indicating strongly agree.

#### 3.1.5.3 Independent Variables for Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

Demographic variables that include gender, ethnicity, type of degree, type of major and previous years of APS and social service experience were used as independent variables for the multiple regression analysis. The variables gender (1=female, 0=male), ethnicity (1=minority, 0=non-minority), type of degree (1=MSW/BSW, 0=other degree types) and type of major (1=social work, 0=other majors) were dummy coded for the multiple regression analysis. Stockburger (2011) and Hair et al (2006) indicated that dichotomous categorical variables can be directly entered into the regression model if they are dummy coded (0 or 1). The continuous variables previous years of APS and social service experience remained continuous and unchanged for the multiple regression analysis. The continuous variables (supervisor support, field trainer support, skilled worker support, training, technology resources and job preferences) were used as predictor variables that have been shown in the research literature to influence self-efficacy and APS workers' decision to remain on the job.

#### 3.1.5.4 Dependent Variables for Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

For the Multiple Regression Analysis, self-efficacy beliefs (SE) was used as the criterion variable in the multiple regression analysis to analyze the predictor variables of supervisor support (SS), skilled worker support (SW), field trainer support (FT), training experience (TE), technology resources (TR) and job preferences (JP). Self-efficacy was chosen as the criterion variable since it has been shown to influence the retention of child

welfare workers in past studies (Chen & Scannapieco, 2010; Ellett, 2009; Williams, Nichols, Kirk & Wilson, 2004).

### 3.1.6 *Procedures*

The PSTI was established in 1991 and expanded in 1998 to provide training and development resources to APS workers and supervisors. The Protective Services Training Institute consists of a partnership between Texas Department of Family Protective Services and a consortium of graduate schools of social work in Texas. The training is administered throughout the state to APS workers who work in Austin, Arlington and Houston, Texas. At the end of the training, APS workers receive certification as an APS Specialist or APS Supervisor. There are three levels of certification that include specialist, advanced specialist and supervisor. The certification process requires APS workers and supervisors to gain experience with the agency, attend trainings, undergo a performance/employee evaluation, take a supervisor exam and undergo recertification every two years. The Texas APS training model is a three-month training process that is enhanced with the addition of field trainers, skilled workers and structured field training designed to expose trainees to APS principles, policies and practices. The training program also teaches basic casework skills to beginning APS workers. Prior to attending the classroom training, trainees spend between four to eight weeks in the field studying, observing casework practice and performing casework duties under the guidance of unit supervisors and field trainers. Training resources include computer-based training, streaming media, online information resources, shadow contacts, IMPACT documentation, the shadow activity blog, caseworker discussion forums and coaching. Classes are scheduled to ensure that each trainee has a minimum of four weeks and a maximum of eight weeks in the field before attending the first classroom training. After the field experience, APS workers attend ten-day consecutive trainings on investigation and services delivery.

CHAPTER 4  
INTRODUCTION

4.1 Results

Quantitative data analysis was used to examine the demographic, personal and organizational factors that are shown to be the most significant in increasing self-efficacy and retention of workers in the field of adult protection. First, descriptive statistics analysis was used to look at the socio-demographic characteristics of the APS respondents in this study. Secondly, independent sample t-tests and ANOVA tests were used to compare the APS respondents who terminated employment with APS respondents who remained after BSD training. Thirdly, bivariate Pearson correlations was used to examine the associations between the demographics and predictor variables (supervisor support, skilled worker support, field trainer support and training, technology resources and job preferences) and the criterion variable self-efficacy. Fourth, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to test the significant factors related to self-efficacy. Finally, a moderation analysis was used to assess the degree to which the socio-demographic variables may alter or interact with the predictor variables' effect on self-efficacy.

*4.1.1 Sample Characteristics and Descriptive Findings*

In 2005, 673 adult protective services workers who completed the Basic Skills Development (BSD) training took the survey administered by PSTI. The sample of respondents was mostly females (76.7%) and White (39.1%). The ethnicity of the respondents also consisted of Blacks (30.8%) and Hispanics (24.7%). The majority of respondents had Bachelor's degrees (84.5%) and the remainder of respondents had Master's degrees (14.5%). The most common majors of the respondents were social work (15.9%), psychology/counseling (20.7%) and sociology/criminal justice (23.3%). APS workers in this sample were mostly APS

in-home specialists. The mean previous years of APS experience was 3.55 and the previous mean years of social service experience was 5.99. Chi-square analysis was used to examine the relationship between the demographics (ethnicity, gender, relationship status, English as a first language, type of degree and type of major) of APS workers and retention. Within the timeframe of May 2005 to June 2007, 26.3% of APS workers had terminated employment. Chi-square analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in the demographics between those who remain employed and those who terminated after BSD. (table A.1)

#### 4.1.2 *Independent t-tests and ANOVA analysis*

Hypothesis one was not supported since there were no significant differences in the mean scores of the perceptions of those who were still employed and those who terminated with regards to support received from field workers, skilled workers or supervisors and training, IMPACT technology resources or job preferences. ANOVA analysis revealed differences in mean scores between APS workers' perception of self-efficacy, field trainer support, supervisor support, skilled worker support, training experience, technology resources or job preferences. Differences in mean scores were seen in the groups based on prior years of social service experience, gender, type of degree and type of major. However, differences were seen in mean scores when comparing groups based on other demographics.

Independent t-tests were used to analyze demographic groups with only two distributions since post hoc tests could not be performed using ANOVA analysis when there were only two group distributions. Independent t-test were used to analyze gender (1=female, 0=male), English as a second language (1=Yes, 0=No) and partnered (1=partnered, 0=single). As shown in table A.3, male APS workers had more positive perceptions about their training and mentoring experience with the field worker ( $M=16.27$ ,  $SD=2.758$ ,  $p<.05$ ) than female workers ( $M=9.66$ ,  $SD=2.999$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Male APS workers also felt more positive about the job



being a good fit for them ( $M=10.08$ ,  $SD=1.817$ ,  $p<.05$ ) than their female counterparts ( $M=9.66$ ,  $SD=1.782$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Those who spoke English as a first language, felt more positive about their interactions, mentoring and support from skilled workers ( $M=16.76$ ,  $SD=3.001$ ,  $p<.05$ ) than APS workers who did not learn English as their first language ( $M=15.77$ ,  $SD=3.298$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Hypotheses two and three were not supported by the data in this study. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze groups with more than two distributions per group. Those with prior work experience and those with social work degrees did not report the highest mean scores on self-efficacy, supervisor support, skilled worker support, field trainer support, IMPACT technology resources or preference for APS work. ANOVA showed that self-efficacy was significant for the type of major of an APS worker  $F(3, 575)=2.809$ ,  $p<.05$ . Post hoc tests using the Scheffe's post hoc criterion for significance indicated that APS workers with psychology/counseling degrees ( $M=33.04$ ,  $SD=6.050$ ) felt more positive about their capability to do the job related tasks of APS workers than social work majors ( $M=32.85$ ,  $SD=6.050$ ), sociology/criminology majors ( $M=31.72$ ,  $SD=6.673$ ) and other types of majors in figure 2 ( $M=31.24$ ,  $SD=5.910$ ). Additionally, ANOVA showed that job preference was significant for those who had less social service experience  $F(2, 622)=4.484$ ,  $p<.05$ . Post hoc tests using the Scheffe's criterion indicated that those with less social service experience ( $M=9.92$ ,  $SD=1.758$ ) felt more positive about their job choice as an APS worker than those who had middle ( $M=9.41$ ,  $SD=1.889$ ) to high ( $M=9.84$ ,  $SD=1.734$ ) social service experience (table A.4).

#### 4.1.3 *Bivariate Data Analysis*

A bivariate correlation analysis was used to assess the degree of relationship between two continuous variables. Bivariate correlation analysis is used to measure the size and direction of the linear relationship between two variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). As shown in Table A.5, predictor variables of skilled worker support ( $r = 0.442$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), job preferences

( $r = 0.455$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), field trainer support ( $r = 0.413$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), supervisor support ( $r=.0386$ ,  $p<.01$ ), training experience ( $r=.547$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and IMPACT technology resources ( $r=.615$ ,  $p<.01$ ) were significantly and moderately correlated with self-efficacy. Additionally, there was negative correlations between gender and field trainer support ( $r=-.131$ ,  $p<.01$ ), gender and supervisor support ( $r=-.079$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and gender and job preferences ( $r=-.096$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Skilled worker support was positively correlated with APS workers who spoke English as a first language ( $r=.084$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Other college major types (humanities, gerontology, business, political science, education, etc.) were negatively correlated with the IMPACT technology resources ( $r=-.094$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and self-efficacy ( $r=-.093$ ,  $r<.05$ ). There was a positive correlation between psychology/counseling majors and self-efficacy ( $r=.084$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

#### 4.1.4 *Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis*

Hypothesis four was only partially supported by the hierarchical multiple regression analysis in that skilled worker support, field trainer support, technology resources and training experience predicted self-efficacy. Contrary to belief, type of major, prior years of social service experience and supervisor support were not predictors of self-efficacy.

A Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the BSD survey. Hierarchical multiple regression was chosen as the method of data analysis because it is most appropriate for analyzing the predictability of variables based on theory. In this case, social cognitive theory indicates that prior mastery experiences influence self-efficacy in individuals. For that reason, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was chosen as the method of analysis due to the fact that it is believed that certain demographics of APS workers (prior years of experience and type of major) influence self-efficacy.

Simultaneous and stepwise regression analyses are generally used to explore and maximize prediction. On the other hand, hierarchical regression analysis is appropriate to use when predictor variables that are entered into the multiple regression analysis are based on theoretical assumptions. The main focus in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis is on the

change in predictability associated with predictor variables entered later in the analysis over and above that contributed by predictor variables entered earlier in the analysis (Petrocelli, 2003). Change in R<sup>2</sup> ( $\Delta R^2$ ) and change in F statistics are computed by entering predictor variables into the analysis at different steps. The researcher examines the degree to which predictor variables entered later in the analysis account for variance in the criterion beyond those entered earlier in the analysis.

When conducting the test for multiple regression analysis in SPSS, it was discovered that all of the required assumptions were met in order to utilize this test. First, with regards to the test on autocorrelation (independence), the Durbin-Watson value was 2.1.03, which indicates the absence of autocorrelation. The tolerance limit (0.552 to 0.708), which was over 0.1, and the variance inflation factor (1.023 to 1.850), which was over 10, showed there was no multicollinearity problem in the models. The independent variables were established to be independent of one another. Finally, the assumption of the linearity of the model, the normality of the error term, and homoscedasticity were satisfactory. On the basis of these results, hierarchical multiple regression analysis of respondents' gender, ethnicity, language, partner status, parental status, years of social service experience, type of major, perceptions of skilled worker support, supervisor support, job preferences, field trainer support, technology resources and training experience was performed to identify the major factors influencing self-efficacy of respondents.

The socio-demographic variables accounted for 15% of the variance and none of the demographic variables emerged as a significant predictor. In the second step, standardized variables of supervisor support, skilled worker support, field worker support, training, technology resources, job preference were entered accounting for 50.8% of the variance of self-efficacy. Finally, in the third step the interaction terms were added to the model adding a significant 17% in the explained variance of self-efficacy. Overall, the final model explained 52.5% of the variance in self-efficacy ( $F = 16.506, p < 0.001$ ). The factors found to have the greatest

influence on the respondents' perceived self-efficacy was IMPACT technology resources ( $b = 0.420$ ), followed by training experience ( $b = 0.165$ ), skilled worker support ( $b = 0.112$ ), and field trainer support ( $b = 0.091$ ). (Table A.6).

#### 4.1.5 Moderation Analysis

Hypothesis five was not supported by using the moderation data analysis in this study. Moderation analysis was used to determine if any of the socio-demographic variables served as moderators that influence the direction and the strength of the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables. A moderator is a qualitative (e.g., gender, race, type of major, type of degree) or quantitative (e.g., years of experience) variable that affects the direction and strength of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable. Particularly within a correlational analysis framework, a moderator is a third variable that affects the zero-order correlation between two other variables (Barron & Kenny, 1986). Barron & Kenny (1986) indicate that moderation can be used to examine of the statistical interaction between two independent variables (at least one which is continuous) in predicting a dependent variable. Aiken & West (1991) indicate that moderation analysis can be done using multiple regression analysis if the categorical variables are dummy coded and if the variables are centered. Moderation analysis was done using the linear regression test in SPSS 19.0. The main effect and moderator variables were centered. The main effect, moderator and interaction variables were entered into a linear regression equation. In the first step, demographic variables of gender, ethnicity, English as a first language, relationship status, number of dependents, type of college major and years of social service were entered as covariate variables. In the second step, the main effect variables (skilled worker support, field worker support, supervisor support, training, technology resources and job preferences) were entered after all variables were standardized (centered). Finally, the interaction terms (main effect variables x years of experience) and (main effect variables x college major) were entered to test for moderation effects. No significant parameters or no significant R2 values were indicative of

actual moderation. Years of social service experience and type of college major were not moderators of self-efficacy in this study.

CHAPTER 5  
INTRODUCTION  
5.1 Discussion

Past research studies cited poor self-efficacy related to skill discretion as a reason for turnover (Stevens & Higgins, 2002). In this study there were no significant differences, between those who stayed and those who terminated, in the mean scores of self-efficacy, skilled worker support, field trainer support, supervisor support, technology resources, training or job preferences. Self-efficacy was significant for the type of college major. Nevertheless, social work majors did not report higher degrees of self-efficacy as compared to psychology/counseling majors which was unexpected given that social workers are exposed to APS type work (casework and assessment) in field placement settings and exposed to topics covered in the BSD training prior to graduation.

Additionally, past studies have indicated that poor working relationships with supervisors or dissatisfaction with supervision as reasons for turnover (Williams, Nichols, Kirk & Wilson, 2009; Strand, Spath & Bosco-Ruggiero, 2009; Strand & Dore, 2009; O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2009). Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2007; Chen & Scannapieco, 2010; Connell-Carrick & Scannapieco, 2008; Barth et al, 2008; Landsman, 2007). Studies on retention emphasized that a supportive and competent supervisor influenced a worker's decision to remain on the job (Juby & Scannapieco, 2007; Smith, 2005; Connell-Carrick, 2008). Since, there were no significant differences in mean scores of APS workers' perceptions of supervisor support between those who stayed versus those who left, it is not clear if workers in this study left for similar reasons. Furthermore, supervisor support was not predictive of self-efficacy in this study which may indicate a deficit in the worker-supervisor relationship.

For less experienced workers, social support received from co-workers was predictive in staying versus leaving (Calahane & Sites, 2008). Yoo (2002) also found that co-worker support served as a buffer or protective factor which helped to promote good work performance and better client outcomes. Similarly in this study, co-worker support was a predictor of self-efficacy for APS workers. However, APS workers who did not speak English as their first language reported lower mean scores on their perception of the social support received from more experienced co-workers.

Strand, Spath & Bosco-Ruggiero (2009) indicated that prior work experience was predictive of staying with an organization. Previous work experience in this study was not predictive of staying with the APS organization. In addition, previous work experience did not influence the relationship between skilled, field and supervisor supports or organizational resources (training and technology). Type of college major was also not predictive of self-efficacy nor did it serve as a moderator between self-efficacy and the organizational factors (supervisor support, skilled worker support, field trainer support, classroom training or technology resources).

## 5.2 Limitations

There are limitations in generalizing the findings of this study. The participants of this study represent APS workers in Texas. Furthermore, this study is using only one predictor of retention which is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is being operationalized from questions in the particular questionnaire used in this study. Other measures of self-efficacy were not included or considered and other predictors of retention that have been identified in past studies were not considered. The results of this study cannot be generalized to all APS workers since non-probability methods were used in this study to collect the data. The study is using cross-sectional data so any causal inferences cannot be made. More longitudinal and qualitative studies will be needed to better understand the role of self-efficacy as a predictor of retention in APS workers.

### 5.3 Implications for Social Work Education, Practice, Research and Policy

#### *5.3.1 Implications for Social Work Education*

The amount of knowledge needed to do APS work is vast. It is not clear why psychology/counseling majors had higher levels of self-efficacy as compared to social work and other types of college majors. Social majors receive education and have exposure to the social service field prior to graduation. Social work majors are able to practice case management, assessment skills and receive feedback from field instructors. Nevertheless, in this study, social work majors did not have the highest level of self-efficacy when compared to other majors. Bachelor's level social work majors often receive education that teaches them how to become generalist practitioners. It is not clear if a specialist-type or concentration-type education is needed to do protective service work. More studies will need to be done in the future to determine what specific training or university education is needed in order to be successful in doing APS work.

#### *5.3.2 Implications for Practice*

None of the APS workers in this study felt that their supervisor was helpful in influencing their feelings of self-efficacy. Skilled worker, field trainer support, classroom training and the IMPACT computer resources contributed significantly to APS workers' feelings of self-efficacy. Respondents reported that field supervisors and skilled workers increased their enthusiasm to do APS work, served as role models and provided guidance and emotional support during the training process. Supervisors in this study were not identified as being helpful. Therefore, supervisors may need more training in order to help less experienced social workers feel more capable of doing the work-related tasks of an APS worker. English speaking APS workers felt more positive about their interactions, mentoring and training provided by co-workers than non-English speaking APS workers. Skilled workers may need additional training to help them be more supportive to those workers whose first language is not English. Additionally, training materials may need to be in the first language of the trainees.



### 5.3.3 *Implications for Research*

There were no significant differences found in those who remained employed and those who terminated employment with regards to having more self-efficacy or more positive feelings about supervisor support, skilled worker support, field trainer support, technology resources or training experiences. APS workers who terminated may have left for other reasons that were not examined in this study. Past studies indicated that APS workers leave for other reasons that include pay, benefits, poor job fit or better promotional opportunities elsewhere. More studies will need to be done in the future on these work-related issues. Psychology/counseling majors rated their self-efficacy higher than social work majors and other types of majors which is surprising. There may be other factors that affected APS workers who were social work majors. Qualitative studies are needed in the future to better understand social workers' perceptions about their capability to do APS work-related tasks.

In addition, more research studies will need to be done in order to understand the training needs of supervisors and the type of support needed by APS workers from their supervisors. It is not clear what APS workers needed from their APS supervisors in order to feel more motivated and capable of doing their jobs. Qualitative studies could help identify the deficits that exist in the knowledge and training needs of supervisors. Since APS workers who spoke another primary language did not feel as supported as other workers. Studies should be done in the future in order to better understand the needs of APS workers who do not speak English as their first language. Male APS workers felt that training and mentoring from field supervisors was more helpful and effective than female workers. It is not clear why male workers perceived the field worker as being more supportive. Additionally, male APS workers indicated a job preference for APS work. Therefore, qualitative studies are needed in the future to answer these questions more specifically.

Social workers with less prior social service experience indicated that APS work was their job preference as compared to more experienced social workers. This may indicate that

more experienced social workers may be experiencing some degree of burnout which was not the focus of this study. Agencies will need assistance in identifying resources and designing organizational strategies that are helpful in reducing feelings of burnout in experienced APS workers. Future research studies could be helpful in identifying the needs of more experienced workers that can prevent burnout which has been shown in the research literature to cause high rates of turnover.

#### *5.3.4 Implications for Policy*

Further research will also need to be done to help APS administrators and policymakers make better decisions with regards to hiring practices or with developing organizational resources. Currently, the college degree requirement to do APS work varies from state to state. APS Administrators and policymakers indicated that they do not have a good understanding of the best practices for recruiting and retention of APS workers. Additionally, it is not clear what type of college major or degree is needed to perform successfully in the protective service field. In this study, the majority of respondents had a BA/BS degree in other college majors besides social work. Social workers have more opportunities to work in other practice-related areas than non-social work majors prior to graduation. However, in this study, social work majors did not have the highest level of self-efficacy as compared to other types of majors. More studies will need to be done in the future in order to help APS administrators and policymakers make the best decisions with regards to hiring practices of adult protective service workers. Continued research in the field of older adult protection will allow educators, policymakers and administrators to make better decisions regarding hiring, training, retention and recruitment in the future.

APPENDIX A  
TABLES

**Table A.1 Study Respondents' Characteristics**

<b>Variable</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>(n=673)</b>
Male	21.4%
Female	76.7%
Missing	1.9%
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Terminated	26.3%
Employed	73.7%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
White	39.1%
Black	30.8%
Hispanic	24.7%
Asian/Pacific	1.5%
American Indian/Alaskan	.9%
Native	1.6%
Other	1.5%
<b>Education</b>	
BA/BS	72.1%
BSW	12.0%
MA/MS	11.1%
MSW	3.4%
Other	.9%
Missing	.3%
<b>Mean Years of Social Service</b>	5.99
<b>Experience</b>	
<b>Mean Years of APS Experience</b>	3.55
<b>Mean Income</b>	51,363
<b>Position Type</b>	
APS Home-Specialist	30.9%
APS Facility-Specialist	1.0%
<b>Relationship Status</b>	
Partnered	53.5%
Single	41.6%
<b>Degree Type</b>	
social work	15.9%
psychology/counseling	20.7%
sociology/criminal justice	23.3%
business	9.4%
other	22.5%
missing	8.3%

**Table A.2 Component structure of self-efficacy**

Components	Component Loadings n=673	
Component 1: Self-efficacy Beliefs (SE) (alpha=.92)	I am capable of identifying substance abuse cases.	.790
	I know how to process an emergency removal.	.768
	I have skills and knowledge to testify in court.	.758
	I am capable of assessing sexual abuse cases.	.758
	I am capable of assessing domestic violence cases.	.738
	I am capable of assessing financial exploitation cases.	.726
	I am capable of identifying different types of mental illness.	.713
	I am able to create service plans which meet needs.	.661
	I know how to access community resources for my client.	.639
Component 2: Training Experience (TE) (alpha=.92)	Materials were adequate	.823
	Activities in ASD enhanced learning	.820
	I gained knowledge and skills	.804
	Trainers were responsive	.800
	Trainers were prepared	.759
	Return to Field Experience brought in Class Experience	.742
	Facilities conducive to learning	.644
	Returning to field before ASD helped	.426
Component 3: Field Trainer Support (FT) (alpha=.89)	Field trainer helped my enthusiasm about APS worker role	.836
	Field trainer helped me be enthusiastic	.824
	Field trainer facilitated learning about the APS worker role and function	.808
	Field trainer facilitated learning	.753
	I received field trainer support.	.711
	Trainee's Guide useful	.574
Component 4: Skilled Worker Support (SW) (alpha=.89)	Skilled workers helped my enthusiasm about APS worker role	.805
	Skilled workers facilitated learning about APS	.776
	Skilled workers helped me be enthusiastic	.761
	Skilled workers facilitated learning	.724
	I received skilled workers' support.	.699
Component 5: Supervisor Support (SS) (alpha=.93)	Supervisor facilitated learning about the APS worker role and function	.853
	Supervisor facilitated learning	.832
	Supervisor helped my enthusiasm about APS worker	.827
	Supervisor helped me be enthusiastic	.811
Component 6: Job Preferences (JP) (alpha=.82)	Job going into desirable	.756
	Job position is first choice	.756
	Geographical location desirable	.741
Component 7: Technology Resources (TR) (alpha=.94)	I am capable of saving/submitted case docs in IMPACT.	.786
	I am capable of using IMPACT to meet my job responsibilities.	.749

**Table A.3 Results of Independent t-test analysis**

		Mean	SD
Field Trainer Support	Male	16.27	2.758
	Female	9.66	2.999
Skilled Worker Support	English is a first language	16.76	3.001
	English is not the first language	15.77	3.298
APS as a Job Preference	Male	10.08	1.817
	Female	9.66	1.782

p<.05

**Table A.4 Results of the One-way ANOVA Analysis**

Self-Efficacy	Mean	SD	F	df	n
psychology/counseling majors	33.04	6.050	2.809	3	575
social work	32.85	6.050	2.809	3	575
sociology/criminology	31.72	6.673	2.809	3	575
other majors	31.24	5.910	2.809	3	575
<b>Job Preference for APS work</b>					
0 to 3 years of social service experience	9.92	1.758	4.484	2	622
4 to 9 years of social service experience	9.41	1.889	4.484	2	622
10 or more years of social service experience	9.84	1.734	4.484	2	622

p<.05

**Table A.5 Correlational matrix of predictor and criterion variable**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
1 Gender	1																			
2 Black APS Workers	.074	1																		
3 Hispanic APS Workers	-.115**	-.413**	1																	
4 Type of Degree	.149**	-.065	.038	1																
5 No. of Dependents	-.024	.087*	-.024	-.019	1															
6 Relationship Status	-.093*	-.127**	-.006	.013	.013	1														
7 Prior APS Experience	-.015	-.065	-.148**	.028	.073	.008	1													
8 Prior Social Service Experienc	.037	-.050	-.067	.038	.084	.042	.524**	1												
9 English as a first language	.049	.133**	-.382**	-.010	-.010	.015	0.063	.040	1											
10 Psychology/Counseling Major	.02	-.065	.038	-.229**	-.032	.003	-.003	-.032	.017	1										
11 Sociology Major	-.047	.067	-.009	-.237**	.035	-.001	-.102*	-.074	.032	-.315**	1									
12 Other Majors	-.094	.040	-.054	-.339**	.011	-.008	.065	.076	-.014	-.393**	-.426**	1								
13 Field Trainer Support	-.131**	.022	.062	.022	.034	.063	-.007	.024	-.018	-.067	-.004	0.02	1							
14 Supervisor Support	-.079*	-.043	.037	-.024	-.025	-.006	-.019	.030	.023	-.037	.003	.035	.382**	1						
15 Skilled Worker Support	-.055	-.029	-.007	.026	.031	.001	.022	.068	.084*	-.015	-.044	.015	.438**	.460**	1					
16 Training Experience	-.061	.031	-.013	.076	.029	-.003	.036	.057	.003	-.027	-.013	-.033	.472**	.392**	.492**	1				
17 Technology Resources	.015	.031	-.002	.025	-.032	-.018	-.056	.035	.059	.071	.015	-.094*	.328**	.392**	.315**	.500**	1			
18 Job Preferences	-.096*	-.056	.066	.034	.018	.017	-.002	-.013	.022	.018	.002	-.051	.377**	.313**	.417**	.466**	.441**	1		
19 Self-efficacy	-.068	.023	-.012	.044	.032	-.011	.058	.035	.028	.084*	-.031	-.093*	.413**	.386**	.442**	.547**	.615**	.455**	1	

p<.05\*; p<.01\*\*

Table A.6 Hierarchical multiple regression results predictor and criterion

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Gender	-1.234	.791	-.078	-.653	.570	-.041	-.865	.574	-.055
English first language	0.797	1.378	.031	-.433	.989	-.017	-.440	.996	-.017
Relationship status	-.438	.692	-.033	-.342	.494	-.026	-.145	.503	-.011
Number of dependents	.259	.259	.052	.245	.185	.049	.188	.187	.038
Black APS workers	.287	.770	.021	.427	.552	.031	.504	.555	.036
Hispanic APS workers	-.041	.870	-.003	-.295	.622	-.020	-.268	.623	-.018
Major	-1.041	.686	-.076	-.767	.490	-.056	-.839	.494	-.061
Years of Social Service Exp	.022	.050	.022	.036	.036	.035	.035	.038	.035
Supervisor Support				.155	.091	.071	.135	.093	.062
Training				.271	.076	.169**	.264	.076	.165**
Skilled Worker Support				.259	.076	.121**	.240	.096	.112**
Job Preferences				.300	.157	.083	.325	.167	.090
Technology Resources				2.318	.241	.412**	2.363	.242	.420**
Field Worker Support				.175	.094	.080	.200	.095	.091**
interaction SUPV							.149	.195	.032
interaction TRAIN							.292	.160	.087
interactionSKILL							-.163	.200	-.037
interacationJOB							.203	.383	.021
interactionTECH							-.625	.518	-.051
interactionFIELD							-.268	.206	-.058
interactionSS							-.022	.015	-.064
interactionTE							.021	.012	.080
interactionJP							.004	.026	.007
interactionTR							.055	.039	.059
interactionFW							-.002	.013	-.007
interactionSW							-.005	.015	-.014
$R^2$			.015			.508			.525
$F$ for change in $R^2$	.597			29.529**			16.506**		

Note: Years of experience, major, SE, SW, FT, JP, TE, TR, SS were all centered at their means. Race and major were dichotomized and dummy coded (0,1).

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .



APPENDIX B  
BSD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



Field Training Experience

How many weeks were you in a unit prior to attending BSD I Classroom Training?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many hours did you spend with your supervisor during this period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many hours did you spend with your field trainer during this period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many hours did you spend with skilled workers during this period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please circle the response that most closely represents your thoughts about the following statements from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4):**

	SSD	D	A	SSA
Supervisor facilitated my learning about the APS worker role and function.	1	2	3	4
Field trainer facilitated my learning about the APS worker role and function.	1	2	3	4
Skilled workers facilitated my learning about the APS worker role and function.	1	2	3	4
The supervisor's attitude helped me be enthusiastic about being an APS worker.	1	2	3	4
The field trainer's attitude helped me be enthusiastic about being an APS worker.	1	2	3	4
The skilled workers' attitudes helped me be enthusiastic about being an APS worker.	1	2	3	4
The Trainee's Guide to Field Training provided useful information for the Field Training experience.	1	2	3	4
Spending time in the field before classroom training helped me understand what I was learning in the BSD I classroom experience.	1	2	3	4

BSD II - Return to Field Training

How many weeks were you back in the field before attending BSD II? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many hours did you spend with your supervisor during this period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many hours did you spend with your field trainer during this period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many hours did you spend with skilled workers during this period of time? \_\_\_\_\_



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## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Traci A. Perry was born in Dallas, Texas. She received her primary and secondary education in the Dallas Independent School District until May 1990 when she graduated from Skyline High School. She attended the University of Texas at Austin from September 1990-September 1994 and graduated with a B. A. in Psychology and a Certificate in Business Administration. After graduation, Traci worked for a brief time for her father who owned his own business in the computer field. In 1996, the company closed and she decided to follow her mother's example by going into the field of social work. She returned to school to complete a Masters degree in Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington in September of 1998. Traci had never lived outside of Dallas, TX, so after graduation she decided to move to the Midwest area of the United States to be closer to her sister who lived in Chicago, IL. For seven years, she lived and worked as a professional social worker in Chicago, Indianapolis and Cleveland. Since, Traci minored in business administration during her undergraduate years; she still had a particular interest in business administration. Since most social workers have good clinical skills but lack business management expertise, Traci felt it necessary to return to graduate school. While in Cleveland, OH, Traci pursued a Masters of Business Administration in Healthcare Administration at Cleveland State University and she graduated in May 2003. For a brief period, she worked as a Business Manager and Senior Accountant managing staff and the grant, gift and endowment budgets for two major universities. She soon realized that she missed her first love, which was social work, and she returned to the field in 2006 and began pursuing a PhD in Social Work at the University of Texas at Arlington. In the fall, she will work as an Assistant Professor in the Texas A&M University-Commerce social work department. She will continue to teach and do research at the university. Traci has over 13 years of

professional social experience in healthcare, mental health care and long-term care. Her research interests are in healthcare, long-term care, aging and social work administration.