The Influence of Perceived Program Needs & Change Orientation on Counselors’ Decisions to Quit

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Purpose
To examine whether program needs (conceptualized as a job demand) and program change orientation (conceptualized as a job resource) interact to predict individual decisions to quit.

Research Questions
1. Are staff in programs with high demands (i.e., high program needs) less likely to leave when program management is oriented toward change?
2. Do these influences remain after controlling for individual-level measures of satisfaction, burnout, and stress and for program-level characteristics?

Turnover results in poorer adoption of EBPPs

Turnover threatens new initiative implementation and sustainability

Underlying assumption—that program staff are in place

What Factors Contribute to individual Decisions to Leave?

• Burnout/Emotional Exhaustion (Ellis & Miller, 1994; Knudsen, Ducharme, & Roman, 2006; Lake, 1998)

• Low Job Satisfaction (Ellis & Miller, 1994; Slocum & Summers, 1987; Sig, Freeman, Ruda, & Lenza, 1990; Janaro, Flores, & Arias, 2007)

• Stress (Ben-Dror, 1994; Klib, Konska, & Konska, 1993)

• Organizational Climate (Baaker & Demerouti, 2007; Glisson, Schoewald, Kelleher, Landverk, Hoagwood, Mayberg, Green, 2008)

Job Demands: Aspects of a job that require sustained effort

Example: Program Needs

Job Resources: Aspects of a job that are functional, reduce job demands, or stimulate growth

Example: Program Change Orientation

Both contribute to personal job strain, motivation, and decisions to remain employed by an organization

Baker & Demerouti, 2007 (Journal of Managerial Psychology)

Organizational Climate: Job Demands & Resources

Treatment Costs and Organizational Monitoring (TCOM)

Assessment of
- Program structure
- Turnover
- Organizational functioning
- Client functioning
- Costs
- Annually over 3 years
- Outpatient Drug-free

Current Study: 210 Counselors drawn from 27 programs with Organizational Functioning responses from 3 or more staff and at least one respondent leaving the job in the subsequent year.

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**Influence of Perceived Program Needs and Change Orientation on Counselors’ Decisions to Quit**

**Measures**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 1</th>
<th>YEAR 2</th>
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<td><strong>SSO</strong></td>
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<td>Parent Affiliation</td>
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<td>Service Approach</td>
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<td>Staff Size</td>
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<td>Counselor demographics</td>
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<td>Program Needs</td>
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<td>Stress</td>
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<td>Burnout</td>
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<td>Satisfaction</td>
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**Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment (JSAT)**

Broome, et al., 2007; Knight, et al., 2008 (HSR)

**Multi-level Analysis using HLM:**
- 210 Counselors
- 27 Programs

**Job Demands and Resources**

**Measures**

- Program Needs
- Change Orientation
- Personal Job Attitudes

**Perceptions of Program**

- Demands
- Resources

**Counselors Who Left Job**

- Male
- Ethnic Minority
- Advanced Degree
- Tenure ≤ 1 YR

**Job Demands in Programs with Turnover Compared to National Means**

- Standards higher among counselors who leave

**Job Resources in Programs with Turnover Compared to National Means**

- Standards lower among counselors who leave

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Summary & Limitations

- Counselors’ perceptions of job demands and resources contribute to subsequent decisions to leave a job.
- Counselors are less likely to leave a job in a “high needs” program if they feel that the organization is committed to change.
- Findings remain significant after controlling for program membership, individual-level burnout, satisfaction, and stress, and program characteristics.
- Limitations include:
  - Reduced sample due to the inclusion of only programs that experienced turnover.
  - Measurement of Change Orientation does not include degree of personal involvement in change plans.
  - Other potentially important variables (such as organizational commitment) were not available.

Implications

- Results support Job Demands-Resources Model:
  - Perceived resources counteract potentially negative affects of job demands.
- The benefits of being oriented toward change extend beyond service provision and quality, impacting counselor retention.
- Communicating with staff about upcoming plans for change not only has the potential to stimulate buy-in and adoption of new initiatives, but can also increase counselor retention.
- Match between program needs and change orientation appears important:
  - Emphasis on change when perceived program needs are low may contribute to decisions to leave.
- Future studies should examine the role that active participation in change plans has in increasing staff retention.