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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 6
Issue 4 June

Article 6

June 1979

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Richard M. Grinnell Jr.
University of Texas, Arlington

Linda S. Hill
University of Texas, Arlington

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Recommended Citation

Grinnell, Richard M. Jr. and Hill, Linda S. (1979) "Do Agency Administrative Changes Affect the Effectiveness and Efficiency of DHR Employees?," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 6 : Iss. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol6/iss4/6>

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DO AGENCY ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES AFFECT THE
EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF DHR EMPLOYEES?

Richard M. Grinnell, Jr.
Linda S. Hill
Graduate School of Social Work
University of Texas at Arlington

ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of DHR employees before and after agency administrative changes. Results indicated that the employees' perceptions of effectiveness and efficiency after agency administrative changes were not significantly affected. The employees also felt that "communication" was the major factor hindering them in becoming more effective and efficient.

The attitudes of the employees in any organization have been considered to be important variables in the functioning of that organization in reaching its goal(s). The relationship between employee attitudes and such variables as motivation or incentive, internal communication, job satisfaction, job performance, and alienation from work have been previously explored. In addition, studies have also focused on the relationship between employees' attitudes of their effectiveness and efficiency as related to leadership, job production, and supervision.

If we as social workers are to maximize the services of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), we must know if agency administrative changes affect the effectiveness and efficiency of DHR employees. If there is a significant decrease in their effectiveness and/or efficiency, we may need to make the necessary adjustments when we recommend DHR services to our clients. However, few (if any) empirical studies have examined the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of DHR employees before and after agency administrative changes. Thus, the purpose of this article is to present the results of an empirically based research project that focuses on two issues: how administrative changes affect the effectiveness and efficiency of DHR employees; and, what factors (if any) DHR employees feel keep them from becoming more effective and efficient before and after agency administrative changes.

METHOD

Setting and Sample

This study was recently initiated and executed in 2 Medical Assistance Units (MAU) within one of the largest DHR agencies in the Southwestern region of the United States. On June 15, 1977, 118 people were employed full-time within the MAUs. Out of this population, and on a voluntary basis, 89 (75.4 percent) employees agreed to participate in this project which represents the sample for this study.

The average age of the sample was 39.6 years old and 78 were female. Their average length of employment with the DHR was 4.6 years and their average length of employment within the MAU was 2.0 years. Out of the total sample, 32 were line-level caseworkers, 29 were clerical staff, 11 were Registered Nurses, 4 were direct service supervisors, 3 were Medical Social Consultants, 3 were pharmacists, 4 were Medical Facility Consultants, 2 were physicians, and 1 was a Staff Service Assistant.

Instrument

For a complete discussion on the instruments' validity, reliability and scale development, see Grinnell and Hill (1979). The instrument was independently administered twice to the 89 employees, one month before and one month after administrative changes within the agency.

Administrative Changes

On September 1, 1977, three major administrative changes occurred within the agency. They were: a merger of two separate MAU units within DHR; a transfer of the Medical Services Department from the DHR to the Health Department; and, a name change from Texas Department of Public Welfare to Department of Human Resources. The first two major changes resulted in a change in the job functions of the employees and a variation in the line of command. The third change was merely in nomenclature. None of the three changes affected the salary level of the employees.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first area to be explored was to determine how DHR employees perceived their effectiveness and efficiency before and after agency administrative changes. Table 1 displays the means of their perceived

effectiveness and efficiency for each of the 6 perspectives before and after administrative changes. For each perspective, a difference score has been computed along with its associated t test and corresponding two-tailed significance level.

As can be seen from the difference column in Table 1, there were relatively small differences between the before and after scores for each perspective. There were no meaningful or significant differences (.05 level) for any of the 6 perspectives. This finding would indicate that the DHR employees did not see the administrative changes affecting their effectiveness or efficiency to any great extent.

The second area to be explored was to determine what factors the DHR employees felt kept them from becoming more effective and efficient before and after administrative changes. This was accomplished with two questions that asked the respondents to check the most important single factor that kept them personally from becoming more effective and efficient both before and after administrative changes. The respondents could choose from the 5 choices listed in Table 2 and 3. The single most important factor that the DHR employees felt was keeping them from becoming more effective and efficient was "communication." Analysis of variance indicated that there was not a significant change in the distribution of the DHR employees' responses in regard to their perceived effectiveness and efficiency before and after administrative changes. These findings are consistent with the previous findings in that the administrative changes did not significantly affect their perceived effectiveness and efficiency.

CONCLUSION

This article presented the results of a project that examined how DHR employees perceived their effectiveness and efficiency before and after administrative changes. The results indicated that the employees perceived the factor of "communication" to be the most important factor that kept them from becoming more effective and efficient before and after administrative changes. It is hoped that this study will encourage further research toward the effectiveness and efficiency of DHR employees. It is also hoped that the opinions of the employees as indicated in this project will be given serious attention to by social work practitioners, educators, and researchers.

REFERENCES

- Grinnell, Richard M., Jr. and L. S. Hill
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TABLE 1
 MEANS OF PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY
 FOR THREE PERSPECTIVES BEFORE AND AFTER
 ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES (N=89)

<u>Perspective</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p*</u>
<u>Effectiveness</u>						
How I Perceive Myself	4.11	4.04	.07	.72	64	.478
How I Perceive Others Viewing Me	4.11	4.04	.07	.98	82	.332
How I Perceive Others	<u>3.76</u>	<u>3.80</u>	-.04	-.82	48	.416
Total Average	4.03	3.95	.08	1.28	82	.206
<u>Efficiency</u>						
How I Perceive Myself	4.13	3.99	.14	1.59	64	.116
How I Perceive Others Viewing Me	4.15	4.08	.07	.99	80	.324
How I Perceive Others	<u>3.78</u>	<u>3.78</u>	0	0	48	1.000
Total Average	4.05	3.94	.11	1.86	81	.068

*two-tailed test

TABLE 2

EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FACTORS THAT KEPT
THEM PERSONALLY FROM BECOMING MORE EFFECTIVE
BEFORE AND AFTER ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES (N=89)

<u>Before</u>	<u>After Administrative Changes</u>					<u>Total Before</u>	<u>Correlations</u>	
	<u>Adminis- tration</u>	<u>Super- vision</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Commun- ication</u>	<u>None</u>		<u>r</u>	<u>p*</u>
Administration	<u>12</u>	2	1	5	0	20	.42	.001
Supervision	2	<u>1</u>	1	1	1	6	.13	.228
Training	3	1	<u>9</u>	0	1	14	.47	.001
Communication	3	1	5	<u>15</u>	3	27	.34	.001
None	3	0	2	7	<u>10</u>	22	.44	.001
Total After	23	5	18	28	15	89		

*two-tailed

Overall F = 1.2, df = 4/84, p = N.S.

TABLE 3

EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FACTORS THAT KEPT
THEM PERSONALLY FROM BECOMING MORE EFFICIENT
BEFORE AND AFTER ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES (N=89)

<u>Before</u>	<u>After Administrative Changes</u>					<u>Total Before</u>	<u>Correlations</u>	
	<u>Adminis- tration</u>	<u>Super- vision</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Commun- ication</u>	<u>None</u>		<u>r</u>	<u>p*</u>
Administration	<u>12</u>	2	1	4	0	19	.46	.001
Supervision	1	<u>1</u>	0	1	1	4	.26	.014
Training	2	0	<u>5</u>	5	1	13	.20	.056
Communication	3	0	8	<u>15</u>	2	28	.27	.012
None	4	0	3	6	<u>12</u>	25	.49	.001
Total After	22	3	17	31	16	89		

*two-tailed

Overall F = .78, df = 4/84, p = N.S.