Factors that Relate to Job Retention for Former Welfare Recipients

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FACTORS THAT RELATE TO JOB RETENTION FOR FORMER WELFARE RECIPIENTS

by
Lisa Spadafore

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts Department of Psychology

Western Michigan University Kalamazoo, Michigan June 1988
This descriptive study attempted to determine the factors that relate to job retention for former welfare recipients. Welfare recipients (15 women and 17 men), who were participating in a job club program, completed the Wonderlic Personnel Test (Wonderlic, 1985), the 16 Personality Factors Test (Eber, Cattell, & IPAT Staff, 1985), and a Background/Monetary Questionnaire. Thirty-two clients who obtained jobs were divided into two groups, those who retained their job for 90 days (n=21) and those who did not (n=11). Of the 31 factors analyzed, four showed a statistically significant relationship with job retention; amount of jail time served, "intelligence", "boldness", and "imaginative". These results showed that the Retained Group had spent significantly less time in jail, were more intelligent, and less bold and imaginative than the Non-Retained Group. This descriptive information provides a beginning for further experimental research that can attempt to determine causal relationships between the identified factors and job retention.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of The Foundation for Behavioral Research, Kalamazoo, Michigan for their cooperation and participation in this study. I also wish to thank Michael Spadafore for his willingness to share his knowledge and time on this project.

Lisa Spadafore
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Factors that relate to job retention for former welfare recipients

Spadafore, Lisa Diane, M.A.
Western Michigan University, 1988
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Social Security Act of 1935 (cited in Federico, 1976) laid the foundation of the present public welfare system in the United States. It established two main categories of programs: (1) social insurance programs (e.g., Social Security insurance); and (2) grant programs. The social insurance programs were seen as much more desirable than the grant programs, since as in all insurances the recipients of the benefits had contributed to them, while in the grant programs recipients received money taken from general tax revenues.

Social Security insurance was intended to provide for need during old age and for the survivors (widows and children) of workers. Since it would take some years for the Social Security trust fund to be developed from the contributions of workers, the grant programs were included in the Social Security Act to meet the need of those who were already aged, disabled, or dependent at the time of the passage of the legislation. It was assumed that these grant programs would decrease in importance as more and more persons were covered by the new Social Security program. Social phenomena, such as rural to urban migration, family disintegration and increased poverty created an enduring
need for these programs that was not originally anticipated. It should be emphasized, that the intent of the Social Security Act (cited in Federico, 1976) was to supplement people's incomes and savings when they reached retirement age, rather than to provide enough for them to survive on the benefits, only. It can be seen that the original intent then was not to make individuals financially dependent on the government but rather to offer temporary or supplemental aid.

By far the most controversial programs in the Social Security Act (cited in Federico, 1976) were those providing the nucleus of the present public welfare system, direct grant programs. These programs were controversial because the recipients received direct cash grants from tax revenues without the requirement that they previously contributed to relevant tax revenues as was the case with the social insurance programs. Because the direct grant programs were so controversial, they were restricted to the destitute aged, the blind, and needy dependent children. The program to meet the needs of dependent children was the beginning of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) (cited in Federico, 1976). It was expected to be a relatively small program, providing aid mainly to families after the father had died. This program was minimal on scope and benefit levels which reflected the original belief that this help would be temporary, lasting only until another independent financial resource could be found (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980).
Recipients were required to pass a "means test" which asked them to prove that they had no other resources or means of support.

In summary, the Social Security Act of 1935 (cited in Federico, 1976) marked the formalization of the public grant programs, now known as AFDC. Although the focus of the program was to provide direct financial help, the program reflected society's value of self-sufficiency and financial independence by providing temporary relief and by aiding only the obviously needy which was determined by a 'means test.'

There was relatively little attention to welfare issues from the time of the Depression until the 1960s. Since the early 1960s, however, welfare reform has been a major political topic. The focus has gradually moved from providing supplementary financial assistance on a temporary basis to meeting other needs (such as medical benefits, job training and placement, and counseling). A major focus of welfare programs in recent years has been the provision of greater employment opportunities. If successful, this approach would not only provide the opportunity for the recipient to achieve financial independence; but also decrease welfare expenditures as former welfare recipients attained gainful employment and increase tax revenues as the work force expanded.

The federal government has been extensively involved in employment and training programs for welfare recipients.
for nearly two decades. The 1961 Amendments to the Social Security Act (cited in Federico, 1976) permitted states to expand their AFDC program by allowing grants to families with an unemployed parent in addition to single-parent families (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980). As a result, able-bodied males appeared on the welfare rolls in noticeable numbers and federal attention turned to finding ways to get them back to work. For example, the Community Work and Training Projects created in 1962 were intended to prepare these individuals for return to regular employment by enabling them to work for their welfare benefits (cited in Renee & Wiseman, 1978). The main objectives of these programs were to provide work relief to train and rehabilitate recipients personal resources through the acquisition of employment. Although this program was successful in providing subsidized work experience for welfare recipients, it was not effective in decreasing the welfare rolls.

The next major development occurred with the 1967 Social Security Amendments (cited in U.S. Department of Labor, 1980) that began the Work Incentive (WIN) Project. WIN incorporated financial incentives for the recipients by allowing welfare recipients to work and keep up to two-thirds of their earnings without losing benefits. Participation was made mandatory for some types of welfare recipients. Local welfare agencies provided child care and other supportive services; the Department of Labor and its local employment
services provided employment counseling and training. This program institutionalized the linkage between employment and welfare by requiring joint administration by the Departments of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare. The intent was to move recipients from welfare to financial independence through job acquisition. Despite these changes in programs, the welfare rolls continued to increase.

The welfare population grew steadily in size, increasing most dramatically from between 1968 and 1972. AFDC payments increased from $3 billion in 1968 to $7 billion in 1972 (Masters & Maynard, 1981). In 1971, partly as a result of the sharp increase in the welfare rolls, Congress passed the "Talmadge Amendment" to the Social Security Act (cited in Federico, 1976). This amendment shifted the priorities of the federal programs. No longer was the focus on providing supportive services and institutional training aimed at increasing employability and furthering long-term employment goals of recipients. Instead, the focus was shifted to increasing short term welfare and direct placement into unsubsidized employment. But the overall objective remained the same—to assist welfare recipients in obtaining productive jobs, thereby increasing their economic self-sufficiency and reducing the welfare rolls and expenditures (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980).

The shift in program emphasis from direct welfare payments to employment and training agencies, typically admin-
istered and partially funded by state agencies, was carried one step further in 1975. The individuals were exposed to labor market information at the time of application for benefits and an immediate attempt was made to find them a job. The intent was to place persons applying for welfare into jobs and thereby precluding their entry onto welfare rolls.

The direction of the national and state employment programs for the disadvantaged population has gradually changed from maximizing immediate placements to a more balanced approach emphasizing placement, supportive services, counseling and training (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980). Part of the current balanced mission includes improving the quality of placements in terms of entry level wages. So it appears that over the past two decades, the welfare system has been trying to balance the goals of providing supportive services while encouraging and aiding the recipients to achieve self-sufficiency through long term employment.

Billions of tax dollars are spent annually, in the United States, not only in direct welfare payments, but also in training and placement programs. According to the Michigan Department of Social Services (DSS) Biennial Report (1986), the State spent $3.9 billion to administer and make payments through the welfare system in 1986. Kalamazoo County along, spent $39,050,570 on AFDC, General Assistance (GA), Food Stamps (FS), Medicaid and employment programs in 1986 to serve 18,337 persons (Kalamazoo County,

Michigan DSS provides employment and training services to clients under the Michigan Opportunity and Skills Training (MOST) Program. The goal of MOST is to assist recipients in obtaining self-support status and to reduce dependency on welfare (*Michigan DSS, Biennial Report*, 1986). The MOST program aids individuals in obtaining employment through job placement contractors, job clubs, adult education, vocational training, community work experience and structured job search programs; all geared toward skills training and job acquisition. Chrissinger (1980) found that the success of these programs in assisting individuals to achieve the goal of financial independence through securing employment is questionable, at best. She concluded that although one-third of the recipients of AFDC participated in training programs, these programs were ineffective in helping them secure jobs. Thus, in light of the large number of individuals on welfare and the political pressure to continually cut the Human Service budget, we must spend our limited financial resources wisely, to encourage individuals to secure and maintain employment.

Not only is securing employment difficult for the average welfare recipient, but retaining a job is also a
major concern. Data collected from a job placement program in Kalamazoo County (Goodwill, 1985) showed that 76% of the clients at this placement program were placed in jobs but that only 52% of those placed were able to retain employment for 90 days. This means that 48% of the clients placed did not retain employment for 90 days. The majority of these individuals returned to the welfare rolls and also to another placement program. Individuals who are placed in a job and subsequently lose it are at jeopardy of having their welfare benefits suspended for up to three months, if it can be determined that they were responsible for losing their job. Unfortunately, if an individual has difficulty retaining employment there are no current services within the system to aid in rectifying the problem. The individual is either punished (suspension of welfare payments) or put back in the situation that resulted in failure originally.

According to the Michigan DSS Biennial Report, p. 7, 38% of welfare recipients have been on welfare 1-3 years and 28% have been on more than 3 years. Is it logical to assume that individuals who have been unemployed for so long would have maintained the necessary work habits, skills, motivation and social interaction skills that are needed to retain the job they may have acquired? The goal of financial independence can not be achieved if long term employment does not occur. It would seem that if the welfare employment programs are to be successful in assisting
an individual to achieve financial independence, the welfare system must provide not only training and placement programs, but also services that aid in the retention of employment.

Why is it so difficult for this population to retain the employment they have secured through welfare employment programs? There has been extensive research on the effectiveness of employment training and placement techniques (Azrin, Flores, & Kaplan, 1975; Azrin, Phillips, Thienes-Hontos, & Besalel, 1980, 1981; Jones and Azrin, 1973) but very little on the factors that affect retention. The studies that have been conducted on factors that relate to job acquisition have focused on a wide array of skills, personality, environment, employment history and attitudes. Some of the factors that were studied were difficult to operationally define. None of the studies attempted to experimentally manipulate the factors in an effort to increase retention. Some of these studies have analyzed the predictors of job acquisition. We may be able to extrapolate some of these findings to predict or promote job retention. Therefore, a brief review of the literature that examines job acquisition is appropriate.

Some of the studies have emphasized attitudes and values and their relationship to acquisition of employment. For example, Durbin (1969) concluded that the values of
work and welfare are not mutually exclusive, but are a complex set of interrelationships that increase personal resources. Goodwin (1972) compared the attitudes of a group of mothers who were on welfare and showed that there was no difference in their desire to work at their life goals. Both groups identified their self-esteem with work and had similar values related to the work ethic. He did find a significant difference in their level of confidence; the long term welfare mothers lacked confidence to secure employment; whereas the middle class mother did not lack confidence in this area. These studies suggest that it is not a difference of values and attitudes that affect acquisition of employment, but rather a more complex issue that needs further study.

Economic factors are strong vocational motivators and cannot be ignored when looking at individuals who receive welfare benefits. Opton (1971) studied economic factors, such as level of employment income vs. welfare benefits, that are associated with AFDC mother's activities in the employment market. He found that welfare mothers are not clear on how income affects benefits. He suggested that these mothers do not calculate the impact of welfare payments and employment income, but rather rely on situations that have happened to friends and acquaintances who have taken jobs. Chrissinger (1980) found that economic factors were the primary determinants in
whether a welfare mother would refuse work. She also showed that welfare mothers did not fully understand how employment would affect their welfare benefits. If economic factors affect acquisition of employment, they may also affect job retention. One of the issues this study will examine is the relationship between economic factors and retention of employment.

A person's "lifestyle" and culture may also influence vocational decisions. Rein (1972) studied the relationship between lifestyles and the receipt of welfare benefits. She stated that welfare recipients form a "subculture" which promotes its own lifestyle. She found the important factors of this lifestyle that affected the decision whether to work were: (a) several generations dependent on the welfare system resulting in no stigma for receiving benefits, (b) the family viewed their income as coming from many sources with welfare being the secure base, and (3) the family had extensive information about welfare and were "systemwise." These studies show that a person's lifestyle and background can affect their vocational success. However, further research into these issues could identify what particular factors are related to long term success in the labor market.

Our welfare system is complex and all individuals may not receive similar types or amounts of benefits. Levitan, Rein, and Marwick (1972) studied the components of
the welfare system and concluded that if a family receives all the auxiliary services, such as medical benefits, "working their way off welfare" is an extremely difficult accomplishment. Not only does a welfare recipient need to secure a job with wages at least equal to their monetary welfare benefits, but the job must also offer similar auxiliary benefits. This is extremely difficult even for the most experienced worker since welfare auxiliary benefits include medical and dental coverage, aid in budgeting resources through direct vendering of payments, and food stamps. They suggested that a temporary interdependence between welfare and work is necessary for the individual to achieve self-sufficiency eventually. In other words, a welfare recipient will need to retain employment and also retain welfare benefits for a period of time if the goal of financial independence is to be achieved.

These studies are significant in identifying factors that relate to acquisition of employment. There has been a recent change in Michigan DSS Employment Policies (DSS Biennial Report, 1986) that relates to the above research. In some cases, there is a continuation of AFDC benefits and medical coverage for a limited time during employment. As Levital et al., (1972) suggested, the temporary overlapping of welfare benefits and employment income may make the transition from welfare to employment easier. But again,
there has been no research which studied whether the interdependence between welfare and employment income has an effect on retention of employment. Although this research is significant in identifying factors that relate to job acquisition, there are some limitations. First, this body of research does not study the effects that "personality factors" may have on success in the labor market. Personality factors may represent learned behavior patterns. If these behavioral characteristics are shown to have a negative impact on job retention, perhaps they could be "unlearned" and replaced with behaviors that show a positive relationship with job retention. Secondly, and most closely related to this study, the results of the prior studies show factors that affect employment, not retention of employment.

While prior research identified a variety of factors that may influence an individual's ability or decision to enter the job market, little is known about what percentage of individuals attaining employment retain their jobs for a prolonged period of time, thus staying off welfare. Furthermore, there has been no research on predictors of job retention and we can not assume that the same predictors of job acquisition will also relate to job retention. These two outcomes, job acquisition and job retention, may involve vastly divergent behavioral repertoires.
In summary, it is the goal of the welfare employment programs to assist recipients in obtaining financial independence and to reduce dependency on welfare through the acquisition of employment (Michigan DSS Biennial Report, 1986). Therefore job acquisition and factors relating to it have been exhaustively studied and commented upon in the literature. Welfare employment programs have existed since the Depression and have claimed moderate success in aiding welfare recipients to achieve financial independance, but the welfare rolls have continued to increase (Federico, 1976). Experience with these programs and with welfare recipients has led to the theory that job retention is as important an issue as job acquisition, in reference to employment success for this population. The House Republican Task Force on Welfare (Michigan, 1987) reported, "It is crucial to the success of the welfare employment programs that the focus be on job retention rather than simply on job acquisition" (p. 5). Thus the welfare employment programs need to expand their focus to include services that aid clients in increasing job retention, if the programs are to be successful in helping this population achieve financial independence. An extensive literature review has demonstrated that there has been very little research to date that examines the issue of job retention and factors that may affect it. If the Republican Task Force's recommendation is to be acted on and the focus of
these programs is to be turned to job retention, then research in this area is imperative. Before changes can be made in current programming in an attempt to increase retention, the identification of factors that relate to retention must occur.

This study proposes to statistically analyze the factors that relate to retention of employment for former welfare recipients. It was recommended by the House Republican Task Force on Welfare, (Michigan, 1987), that the welfare employment programs design and implement an evaluation system which will assess such traits as the client's intellectual level, personality traits, and the adequacy of these traits for the available occupations. This study will examine a variety of factors that, based on prior research, casual observation, and theoretical speculation may relate to retention of employment. The relationship between retention of employment and personality factors, such as extroversion, dominance and enthusiasm will be studied. Background/monetary issues, such as length of time on welfare, amount of welfare benefits received, and amount of jail time served, will also be studied in an attempt to determine their relationship with retention of employment. The final area that will be examined in relation to job retention is "job potential," which includes problem solving skills and ability to learn new tasks.

There are at least three important reasons for trying to identify factors that are associated with job retention.
First, it may be possible to manipulate some of the identified factors, thus providing the opportunity for experimental research to verify the causal status of these factors. Second, it may prove possible to increase job retention through programs that manipulate these causal factors (e.g., providing adequate child care services). Third, variables that relate to retaining employment, that cannot be manipulated, such as length of time on welfare, can be used as screening criteria. These criteria could then be used to establish program eligibility, so that resources can be invested in those individuals who are most likely to secure and retain employment. These criteria could also be used to identify individuals who may need auxiliary services to help them become employment ready.

Although this analysis will not prove a causal relationship with retention of employment, it will open up the area for future research. It will identify factors that may be further explored for a causal relationship with job retention.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 32 DSS clients in Kalamazoo County who participated in a local job club program offered through the Foundation for Behavioral Research. DSS clients, without major obstacles to employment (e.g., physical handicaps) were referred to the job club program by their DSS caseworker. The caseworkers strongly encouraged attendance, but there were no consistent consequences for non-participation. Approximately 25% of the total DSS referrals participated in the job club. All subjects had open cases with DSS and were receiving public assistance, either AFDC or GA. Fifteen women and seventeen men, over the age of 18 years, served as the subjects for this study.

Setting and Ongoing Program

The job club is located in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The facility contains a large conference room with tables and chairs set in a horseshoe design. An adjoining room contains work tables, an area that displays job leads, and numerous telephone stations.

The clients participated in an orientation session...
their first week. During the orientation sessions, the minimum daily requirements on the job club were specified as follows: (a) make 10 phone calls to businesses to develop job leads, (b) bring in 3 completed job applications, and (c) follow up on all other job leads. The job club counselors also conducted a review of job seeking skills as part of orientation.

The job club was staffed by two counselors, who randomly divided the caseload between themselves. After conducting orientation, they supervised their clients' independent job search and monitored job retention of those clients who secured employment.

Clients were required to attend job club Monday-Friday, 9-11 A.M. until they secured employment. Clients spent their job club hours exploring possible employment opportunities by making "cold" telephone inquiries with area businesses, answering want-ads, researching telephone books and other directories, writing cover letters, and sending out resumes.

Dependent Measures

All subjects completed the following assessment devices which, in conjunction with the objective measures of job acquisition and retention, were the primary dependent variables for this study.
Background/Monetary Questionnaire (Appendix A)

I developed a 19 item, multiple choice questionnaire to collect data on subjects' welfare benefits, background work history, and environmental factors. The questions were developed based on 2 years of experience in a job club program in Kalamazoo County, during which major obstacles that prevented this population from acquiring or retaining employment (e.g., inadequate transportation) were noted. This questionnaire was used to collect data concerning the issues that were identified as employment obstacles. This questionnaire resulted in 14 variables that were later analyzed for a relationship to retention of employment. They were:

1. Motivators to work
2. Length of time since last job
3. Length of time last job was held
4. Length of time since they held a job for over a year
5. Amount of monthly welfare benefits received
6. Number of years of their adult life spent on welfare
7. Level of education
8. Type of transportation
9. Type of child care
10. Amount of jail time served
11. Level of budgeting skills
12. The reason their last job was terminated

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13. Level of income that they needed to achieve to make it "worth their while" to give up welfare benefits

14. Knowledge of how a job will affect their welfare benefits

**Modified Questionnaire (Appendix B)**

The questionnaire was not originally designed to allow for statistical analysis, so adjustments were made. Questions #1, 13, and 14 were not quantifiable and were analyzed for qualitative data only. Questions 11 and 12 were combined to form one question since they dealt with the same issues; as were questions 15 and 16.

In order to allow for quantitative analysis of questionnaire data, numerical values were assigned to each answer for each question. Each question and its respective answers were read to 6 area employers and 6 placement specialists, who were asked to rank the answers for each question from low to high according to their level of importance in reference to job retention. (Low numbers represent least desirable response and high numbers represent most desirable response.) For example, if a given question had 6 possible answers, the most desirable answer would be ranked "6"; for questions with only 3 answers, the most desirable would be ranked "3". An average of the numerical rankings made by the 12 experts was calculated for each answer to a question. Based on these average
rankings, the answers for each question were scaled from least desirable (with a scaled value of "1") to most desirable (with a scaled value of 3-6 depending on the number of answers for that question). For example question #7 Education has five possible answers. Answer D. (for question #7) "having more education than high school diploma" had the highest mean (4.6) thus giving it a scaled value of "5"; answer C. "high school diploma" had the next highest mean (3.9) and received a scaled value of "4", and so on. The scaled scores were used in all subsequent data analysis for this questionnaire. The mean rankings and the range of rankings for each answer is shown in parentheses in Appendix B.

Wonderlic Personnel Test (WPT) (Wonderlic, 1985)

I administered the Wonderlic Personnel Test (Wonderlic, 1985) which provided an estimate of general cognitive abilities. This was a 50 item timed test, that provided measurements of an individual's "job potential," "education potential," and "training potential." The "job potential" score for each individual were analyzed for their relationship to retention of employment. Education and training potential scores were not analyzed. Job potential included measurement of ability to use different tools and equipment, supervise and train others, solve problems, and learn new tasks. Thus, the test assessed aptitudes that are presumed to be
generic across occupations.

The validity of this test in measuring the relationship between variations in test scores and the variations in job performance was .53 (Wonderlic, 1985). Although .53 is not an extremely high validity coefficient, the Wonderlic Manual (1985) states that cognitive abilities tests (e.g., the WPT) are the most accurate estimates of employment success. Job tryouts were second with a validity coefficient of .44. This validity coefficient indicates how valuable this test was in predicting employment success. The test-retest reliabilities ranged from .82-.94. The norms used to interpret data were the adult working population. This standardized test was scored according to the instructions in its manual. Raw scores were converted to stanines using the normative tables in the manual. Stanine scores were used in all subsequent analysis.

**Sixteen Personality Factors (16 PF) (Eber, Cattell, & IPAT Staff, 1985)**

The 16 PF (Eber et al., 1985) is a factor analytically developed personality questionnaire designed to measure the major dimensions of human personality. This test covers the main personality dimensions along which individuals can differ according to basic factor analytic research.

I administered Form E, which had 128 items and a reading grade level of 3.3. Although reliability and
validity data are not as high as Forms A-D, I chose to administer Form E because a large portion of my sample had not finished high school and presumable had low reading levels. The validity coefficients indicate how accurately the scales measure the personality traits. Below is a table listing the variables measured, the test-retest reliability coefficients and validity coefficients.

Table 1
Reliability and Validity Coefficients for 16 PF Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Variable Measured</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Conscientious</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Boldness</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Sensitivity</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Suspicious</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Imaginative</td>
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<td>.41</td>
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<td>N</td>
<td>Shrewd</td>
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<td>.21</td>
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<td>O</td>
<td>Apprehensive</td>
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<td>.78</td>
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<td>Q1</td>
<td>Experimenting</td>
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<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Self-Sufficient</td>
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<th>Validity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>Tense</td>
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</table>

This standardized test was scored according to the instructions in its manual. Raw scores were converted to stanines using the tables in the manual. Stanine scores were used in all subsequent analysis.

Employment Measures

Employment data were verified and recorded by the job club counselors. When a subject reported they had been hired, the counselor verified via telephone call to the employer, the start date, name of employer, and the job title. Every 30 days, for 3 months, the counselors conducted a follow up phone call to the employer to monitor retention of that job. If the subject had lost that job, the termination date was recorded. There was no reliable method within the system to determine the reason for termination. Due to confidentiality considerations, I was not able to phone the employers to independently verify retention data. Since this retention data, which was collected by the job club counselor, could be verified
by the DSS caseworker, I do not question its accuracy.

Procedure

On the last day of their orientation session, I described the study to the group, answered questions, and recruited volunteers. The Informed Consent forms (see Appendix C), which outlined the subjects' rights and responsibilities, were distributed and signed at this time. Instructions were given for the group to meet the following Monday at 9:00 A.M. for the administration of the Background/Monetary Questionnaire, WPT (Wonderlic, 1985), and 16 PF (Eber et al., 1985).

I met with each group (avg. size 5) for 1 session on their first day of job club for a group administration of the 3 tests described under the dependent measures section. The session lasted approximately 1 hour. I conducted 14 weekly sessions, with a new group each week, which resulted in a pool of 70 individuals from which to draw my subjects. The first 32 persons from the pool to secure employment became the subjects of this study. Placement data were recorded at this time. Follow up retention was conducted at 30 day intervals by the counselor. Data collection was completed after all 32 subjects had either been employed for 90 days or were terminated from their job.
Administration of Testing Devices

Before testing began, each subject was assigned an identification number and was instructed to label the tests and questionnaire with this number, rather than using their names, for confidentiality purposes. The numbers were recorded with the corresponding names on a master file so the information could be used during the follow up procedure.

The Background/Monetary Questionnaire was the first measure administered. The group was instructed to choose the one answer that best represented their situation. There was no time limit for this questionnaire.

When the last individual completed the questionnaire, the WPT was administered, also in group format. I read the instructions from the test booklet and also reviewed the sample problems with the group. The subjects were instructed to answer as many of the 50 items correctly as they could in 12 minutes. At the end of the 12 minutes the subjects turned in the booklets and took a 10 minute break.

After the break the final test, the 16 PF (Eber et al., 1985) was administered. Again, the instructions and the sample problems from the test booklet were read to the group. When the subjects had completed the 16 PF, they went to the adjoining room and began their job search.
They continued to participate in job club until they either secured employment or were terminated from programming for not meeting the minimum daily requirements for continuation in the job club.

Reliability

The reliability of the scoring of the questionnaire and the two standardized tests was calculated by having two undergraduate students independently score a sample of the questionnaires and tests that had been previously scored by the experimenter. Each student randomly selected 10 completed questionnaires and 10 of each of the standardized tests and rescored them on a separate sheet of paper. The equation used to determine reliability was the number of items correct, divided by the total number of items, multiplied by 100. There was 100% reliability between all three scorings.

Data Analysis

Based on the retention data collected by the counselors, the 32 subjects were divided into 2 groups; those that retained employment for 90 days (n=21) and those that did not retain employment for 90 days (n=11). A non-directional two-tailed t-test was used to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the means of the two groups, retained and not-retained, for each factor. Because of the possibility that the mean of
either sample group could be greater, a nondirectional t-test was chosen. A nondirectional t-test not only determined whether to reject or accept the null hypothesis of no difference between the groups, but also when the null hypothesis was rejected, it indicated the direction of the difference. Thus, with the use of the nondirectional t-test, not only was the acceptance or the rejection of the null hypothesis determined, but the group with the larger mean was also specified.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results of this study show that of the 32 individuals who served as subjects, 21 or 65.6% retained employment for 90 days (Retained Group); 11 or 34.3% did not (Non-Retained Group). The Non-Retained Group showed a mean of 30.6 days employed, with a range of 1–70 days.

The 31 factors were divided into 3 categories: 14 related to background/monetary issues, 16 related to personality, and 1 related to job potential. Table 2 presents the data for both groups across all background/monetary factors. Table 3 presents the data for both groups across all the personality and the Wonderlic factors. Only four of the 31 factors showed statistically significant differences between the 2 groups' means in relation to length of retention of employment (t=2.04, p<.05).

Of the 14 factors related to background/monetary issues one factor was statistically significant: amount of jail time served. The data analysis showed that the Retained Group served significantly less time in jail than those in the Non-Retained Group. Not only did the Retained Group report less time in jail, but 76% of this group never spent time in jail at all, as compared to 45% of the Non-Retained Group. Also, 4% of the Retained Group were con-
Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Questionnaire Factors for Retained and Non-Retained Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Retained</th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Rg</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Rg</td>
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Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Personality and Wonderlic Factors for Retained and Non-Retained Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
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<th></th>
<th>Non-Retained</th>
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victed of a felony charge, whereas the Non-Retained Group showed 27% felony convictions. No one reported being on parole or probation at the time of the study.

The personality factor analysis showed 3 factors that related to the length of time the subject remained employed. First, there was a statistically significant difference between the means of the groups in relation to "intelligence" $t(30)=2.07$, $p<.05$. The 16 PF uses this factor as a global measure of intelligence, with abstract thinking related to more intelligent and concrete thinking related to less intelligent. The t-test produced a significant difference between the means with the Retained Group (mean=8.5) having a higher mean score in relation to cognitive functions than the Non-Retained Group (mean=7.3).

The second personality factor that resulted in statistically significant difference between the means was "boldness". The test results showed that the Non-Retained Group had a significantly higher mean (7.5) as compared to the Retained Group mean of (4.3). Thus, the group that did not retain their jobs, were bolder, less inhibited, according to the 16 PF (Eber et al., 1985).

"Imaginative" was the third personality factor to show a significant relationship with retention of employment. An analysis of the difference between the means showed that the Non-Retained Group had a signifi-
cantly larger mean (mean=7.8) than the Retained Group (mean=6.2).
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In this descriptive study, I sought to identify factors that related to retention of employment for former welfare recipients. The focus of this study was on retention of employment rather than job acquisition. The results demonstrated that 65.6% of the subjects retained their jobs for 90 days. It is difficult to evaluate these data for several reasons. First, there has been no comparative research that has examined job retention rates. Without first determining the factors that relate to retention of employment, it is impossible to evaluate any program's effectiveness in increasing retention rates. Second, there was no control over the type of position that the individuals accepted. The individual may have felt pressure to accept the first position that was offered, even if the individual did not perceive the position as very desirable. Third, there are no universal standards set for employment programs that relate to job retention. There are variations between programs as to the length of time individuals have to retain their job before their case is closed and they are no longer eligible to receive welfare benefits.
Without a control group or a group of subjects that were participating in other placement programs, it is difficult to determine the effect that the individual placement program has on job retention. The Republican House Task Force on Welfare (Michigan, 1987) recommended that stringent standards of performance be set for state and local welfare employment programs in reference to the job retention rates for clients placed in jobs.

Ninety days was selected as the follow up period because this is often the standard set for entrance into unions, as criteria for ending probationary periods and receiving non-cash benefits in employment settings, and as payment criteria in some performance-based contracts between federal/state agencies and placement programs.

Of the 31 factors, only 4 showed a significant relationship to the length of time the subjects retained employment. The two factors that were the amount of jail time served and intelligence. The two factors that were significantly related to non-retention were boldness and imaginative.

The results showed that the Retained Group served significantly less time in jail and were convicted of fewer felonies than the Non-Retained Group. One interpretation of this could be that the Non-Retained Group spent more time in jail, leaving less time to be spent in
the labor market gaining skills and experience. Another explanation concerns the high recidivism rate for ex-offenders (Piliavin and Gartene 1981). Since the reason for job termination was not determined, it is plausible that further criminal activities were the cause. Employer discrimination may have been a factor, but this seems more likely to occur in relation to job acquisition as opposed to job retention. Since the individuals conducted independent job searches, it was not possible to determine if the employers were aware of past criminal activities. The identification of this factor as significantly related to job retention may indicate special needs that ex-offenders may have in reference to employment (e.g., personal adjustment counseling or increased communication skills regarding their past criminal activities).

Three personality factors were significantly related to the length of time the subjects remained employed. First, the Retained Group scored significantly higher on the intelligence scale. The standardized 16 PF uses this scale to represent basic cognitive functioning. According to the 16 PF Manual, individuals who achieve high scores on this scale are described as more intelligent, fast-learning, and able to handle abstract problems (Eber et al, 1985). In reference to vocational success, it would seem logical that individuals who possess
these traits would be better able to learn their jobs more quickly and to solve spontaneous problems on the job. It is interesting to note that the WPT, which was designed to measure problem solving skills and the ability to learn new tasks, did not show a significant difference between the groups' means. A possible explanation might be that the Retained Group secured jobs that did not require the learning of new skills but rather relied on skills that were already in their repertoire. Further research could show if there is a relationship between job retention and familiarity with a task. If experimental data indicate that job retention is longer if an individual is already familiar with a task, perhaps placement programs should emphasize the matching of an individual's skills (work skills, social skills, and personality traits) with the job demands. It would also be interesting to determine if retention of employment is longer when an individual expresses prior interest in learning a job. Other future projects could also examine the extent to which problem solving skills relate to retention of employment. It would seem logical that an individual with good problem solving skills would be better able to handle novel situations on the job. This may only be true in higher level positions, where the individual is responsible for solving the problems.

Two factors showed a significant relationship to non-retention of employment. The Non-Retained Group had
a higher mean in relation to the boldness scale. According to the 16 PF Manual, individuals who score high on this scale tend to be socially bold, "thick-skinned", impulsive, uninhibited, and friendly (Eber et al., 1985). Perhaps the Non-Retained Group, which had the higher mean on this scale were too bold and uninhibited to function appropriately within the rules generally associated with employment. This could result in the individual acting impulsively and making a larger number of mistakes on the job. This type of individual may be less likely to accept constructive feedback and thus not learn the job as quickly. Also, the extreme boldness may be viewed by a supervisor as disrespectful or a "bad attitude."

Imaginative was the other factor that showed a significant relationship to non-retention of employment. A person that achieves a high score on this scale is described as "imaginative, absent-minded, absorbed in thought, and impractical" (Eber et al., 1985). They also state that groups with high means on this scale are significantly low in fortitude and give up easily. Occupationally, they tend to cluster in creative, unstructured kinds of positions. These are not the traits that are typically associated with the "ideal employee" for entry-level structured jobs, which are the type of jobs that welfare recipients tend to obtain initially.

No other factor showed a significant relationship
with either retention or non-retention of employment. Economic factors (Opton, 1971; Chrissinger, 1980) were the primary determinants in reference to job acquisition, but they did not relate to retention of employment. This could mean that the economic decisions regarding employment are made at the time the job is either accepted or rejected. But this study did not show that they affect retention of employment.

It is interesting to compare the interpretations of the results of both groups. In general, the Retained Group, was described as more intelligent and fast learners. This group also spent less time in jail and had better problem solving skills. The Non-Retained Group, on the other hand, spent significantly more time in jail. As a group, they were characterized as being more impractical, impulsive, uninhibited, creative, and socially bold. This characterizes an individual who probably would not function well in a system that is structured, rule-governed, and task oriented, as are most employment situations. There also is a resemblance to the antisocial personality disordered individual, who is described as uninhibited, socially bold, lax in following social rules and laws which often results in criminal behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). The antisocial personality typically has difficulties securing and maintaining employment. Further
research in this area could prove to be worthwhile in identifying those individuals who have difficulty retaining employment.

These results need to be interpreted cautiously, due to a number of methodological problems, for example the small sample size. I think the reliability and validity of the findings would increase if this study were run again with a larger sample. A larger sample size would reduce the probability that the results were due to chance, thus supporting less cautious interpretations of the results. A larger sample size would also make that sample more representative of the population.

Another limitation of the study was the relatively short follow up period. The goal of welfare employment programs is to aid welfare recipients achieve financial independence through long-term employment. Although the results of this study indicate that the individuals in the Retained Group were able to retain their jobs for 90 days, a longitudinal study could examine if the former welfare recipients were able to maintain their independence from the welfare system. Since there has been so little research done on this topic, it would be interesting to observe if there would be larger differences between the means of the 2 groups. Other information could be gathered at the same time, for example, the rate of promotions and raises experienced by this
population. Due to the limitations and the objective of this study (to provide descriptive information) there are no practical applications of these results other than as a basis for further research on the topic of job retention.

This study did not examine the reasons why the individuals who did not retain employment were terminated. A follow up study could determine the causes for termination. The termination of employment could have been initiated by the employee or the employer. Such a study would require more employer involvement. Without employer involvement all we can do is speculate as to why the factors relate to retention or non-retention. It would also be valuable to interview the employee to determine what they perceive to be the reason for their termination. It would be interesting to compare the employer's and employee's perceptions and observe how often they agree. Once the reasons for termination are determined, changes could be made within placement programs. This information would be valuable in aiding the placement program in determining employer needs and also client needs thus enabling them to better match the individuals to the jobs.

The most logical extension of this study would be to explore the identified significant factors for a
causal relationship with job retention. A follow up intervention study could use a between group design to examine what factors directly cause a person to lose a job. If a causal relationship is shown between the identified factor and retention of non-retention of employment, the study could be extended further to attempt to determine why this occurs. If the causal reason can be determined, perhaps preventive measure can be taken to alleviate the problem (e.g., getting teens into work programs before they get involved in criminal activities). Once a factor has been identified as having a causal relationship with retention or non-retention of employment, it could also be used as screening criteria for eligibility into programs. For example, if an individual exhibits the personality traits that are related to non-retention of employment, perhaps personal counseling to improve communication and social skills would be advisable prior to their entering the job market.

This descriptive study has identified 4 factors that have a statistically significant relationship with retention of employment; amount of jail time served, intelligence, imaginative, and boldness for former welfare recipients. If welfare employment programs are to be successful in aiding this population to achieve self sufficiency through long-term employment, further re-
search in this area is imperative. This study provides a basis for extended research which examines the issues that relate to job retention for welfare recipients.
Appendix A

Background/Monetary Questionnaire
Background/Monetary Questionnaire

1. If you could choose any line of work within your skill and education level, what would it be?
   a.) factory b.) cashier c.) an aide position d.) clerical e.) custodial f.) machinist g.) restaurant h.) printing i.) other____________________

2. Besides income, what is the next most important reason you want a job?
   a.) to meet new people b.) to feel a sense of accomplishment c.) to teach your children the value of work d.) to get you out of the house e.) no other reason f.) to develop a skill g.) other____________________

3. How long since your last job?
   a.) 1-3 months b.) 3-12 months c.) 1-2 years d.) more than 2 years

4. How long did you keep your last job?
   a.) 1-2 weeks b.) 3 weeks-3 months c.) 3 months-12 months d.) longer than 1 year

5. How long since you have held a job for over 1 year?
   a.) less than 3 months b.) 3 months-1 year c.) 1-2 years d.) longer than 2 years

6. How much money do you receive monthly from welfare?
   a.) under $200.00 b.) $200.00-$500.00 c.) $500.00-$800.00 d.) $800.00 and up
7. How many years of your adult life have you received welfare?
   a.) 0-2 years  b.) 2-4 years  c.) 4-6 years  d.) more than 6 yrs.

8. What is your level of education?
   a.) did not finish high school  b.) completed GED  c.) high school diploma  d.) more than high school  e.) college degree

9. What type of transportation do you rely on?
   a.) public transportation  b.) own car  c.) none  d.) friend or relative  e.) walking  f.) other ______________________

10. What type of child care do you have lined up when you begin working?
    a.) no children  b.) children are old enough to take care of themselves  c.) day care  d.) friend or relative  e.) none  f.) other ______________________

11. Have you ever been arrested or involved with the police?
    a.) yes  b.) no

12. Have you ever served time? How much?
    a.) overnight  b.) 2 days-3 months  c.) 3-12 months  d.) more than 1 year

13. What type of charge?
    a.) drunk and disorderly  b.) neglect of child support payment  c.) misdemeanor  d.) felony  e.) other • • • •________

14. Are you on parole or probation now?
    a.) yes  b.) no

15. Have you ever made a monthly budget for your family?
    a.) yes  b.) no
16. If yes, were you able to adhere to it?
   a.)yes  b.)no

17. Why did you leave your last job?
   a.)quit because I did not like the work  b.)quit because of child care or transportation problems  c.)fired for poor attendance  d.)fired because the supervisor did not like me  e.)quit because I did not get along with my supervisor  f.)fired—but do not know why  g.)laid off  h.)other________________

18. In your estimation, what is the monthly salary you need to make to make it worth your while to work?
   a.)$250.00-$500.00  b.)$500.00-$750.00  c.)$750.00-$1,000.00  d.)over $1,000.00

19. To the best of your knowledge, how will a job affect your welfare payments?
   a.)I will lose everything the first day of employment  b.)I will lose everything within the first year  c.)I will lose my welfare check but keep my medicaid and food stamps  d.)It depends on my new income  e.)I don't have the foggiest idea  f.)there are no rules—it depends on how my D.S.S. worker feels that day
 Appendix B

 Modified Questionnaire
Modified Questionnaire
Answer Ranking (mean, range)

1. MOTIVATORS:
   Besides income, what is the next most important reason you want a job?
   a.) to meet new people (2.8, 2-3)  b.) to feel a sense of accomplishment (4.8, 4-6)  c.) to teach your children the value of work (4.6, 4-6)  d.) to get out of the house (2.1, 2-3)  e.) no other reason (1, 1)  f.) to develop a skill (5.6, 4-6)

2. TIME SINCE LAST JOB:
   How long since your last job?
   a.) 1-3 months (4, 4)  b.) 3-12 months (3, 3)  c.) 1-2 years (2, 2)  d.) more than 2 years (1, 1)

3. TIME LAST JOB WAS HELD:
   How long did you keep your last job?
   a.) 1-2 weeks (1, 1)  b.) 3 weeks-3 months (2, 2)  c.) 3-12 months (3, 3)  d.) longer than 1 year (4, 4)

4. TIME SINCE HELD A JOB 1 YEAR:
   How long since you have held a job for over one year?
   a.) less than 3 months (4, 4)  b.) 3 months-1 year (3, 3)  c.) 1-2 years (2, 2)  d.) longer than 2 years (1, 1)

5. AMOUNT OF WELFARE BENEFITS:
   How much money do you receive monthly from welfare?
   a.) under $200.00 (4, 4)  b.) $200.00-$500.00 (3, 3)
6. YEARS ON WELFARE:
How many years of your adult life have you received welfare?
   a.) 0-2 years (4, 4)  b.) 2-4 years (3, 3)  c.) 4-6 years (2, 2)  d.) more than 6 years (1, 1)

7. EDUCATION:
What is your level of education?
   a.) did not finish high school (1, 1)  b.) completed GED (2, 2)  c.) high school diploma (3.9, 3-5)
   d.) more than high school (4.6, 3-5)  e.) college degree (3.5, 3-5)

8. TRANSPORTATION:
What type of transportation do you rely on?
   a.) public transportation (3.8, 3-4)  b.) own car (5, 5)
   c.) none (1, 1)  d.) friend or relative (2.1, 2-3)
   e.) walking (3.1, 2-4)

9. CHILD CARE:
What type of child care do you have lined up when you begin working?
   a.) no children (4.4, 3-5)  b.) children are old enough to take care of themselves (3.8, 2-5)
   c.) day care (3.3, 2-5)  d.) friend or relative (2.5, 2-5)  e.) none (1, 1)
10. JAIL TIME SERVED:
Have you ever served time in jail? How much?
   a.) none (5, 5)  
   b.) overnight (4, 4)  
   c.) 2 days to 3 months (3, 3)  
   d.) 3-12 months (2, 2)  
   e.) more than 1 year (1, 1)

11. BUDGETING SKILLS:
Have you ever made a monthly budget, and if so were you able to adhere to it?
   a.) no, I have never made a budget (1, 1)  
   b.) yes, I have made a budget but did not adhere to it (3, 3)  
   c.) yes, I have made a budget and was able to adhere to it (3, 3)

12. REASON LAST JOB ENDED:
Why did you leave your last job?
   a.) quit because I did not like the work (4.1, 4-6)  
   b.) quit because of child care or transportation problems (5.5, 4-5)  
   c.) fired for poor attendance (1.8, 1-3)  
   d.) fired because the supervisor did not like me (2.2, 1-3)  
   e.) quit because I did not get along with my supervisor (4.8, 4-6)  
   f.) fired, but do not know why (2.1, 1-3)  
   g.) laid off (7, 7)

13. INCOME NEEDED:
In your estimation, what is the monthly salary you need to make, to make it worth your while to work?
   a.) $250.00-$500.00 (3.5, 2-4)  
   b.) $500.00-$750.00 (3.8, 3-4)  
   c.) $750.00-$1,000.00 (2.3, 2-4)  
   d.) over
$1,000.00 (1, 1)

14. JOB EFFECTS ON BENEFITS:

To the best of your knowledge, how will a job affect your welfare benefits?

a.) I will lose everything the first day of employment (4.2, 3-6)
b.) I will lose everything within the first year (3.8, 3-5)
c.) I will lose my check but keep my medicaid and food stamps (4.4, 3-6)
d.) It depends on my new income (5.6, 4-6)
e.) I don't have the foggiest idea (2, 2)
f.) There are no rules—it depends on how my D.S.S. worker feels that day (1, 1)
Appendix C

Informed Consent
Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a study. We are investigating the factors that relate with retention of employment for former welfare recipients. We hope to learn what factors may potentially be important for a person to retain employment.

As a participant you will be asked to complete questionnaires concerning your work history, environmental factors, welfare benefits, motivation, aptitudes, and personality.

This study involves no risks to you. It will not take up any additional time, since we will meet during your regular job club hours.

Potential benefits for you include possible helpful information that may aid you in retaining your job once you secure it.

Any information obtained in this study will be confidential. If you give your permission by signing the Release of Information Form, a summary of the results will be mailed to you. By signing this Informed Consent document, you give permission for the information gathered to be used in academic presentation and publication. All identifying information will be removed—your name will not be used.

Participation is voluntary; your decision will not in any way prejudice relations with the job club. Although we
strongly recommend that your commitment be for the full length of the study, you will be free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

Questions or complaints regarding this study or your rights may be directed to Dr. Wayne Fuqua at 387-4474. If the solution is unsatisfactory, you may contact Dr. Ellen Paige Robin, Chairperson of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 383-1747.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above information and decided to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

_________________________            ___________________________
Signature                  Date

__________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Investigator                  Signature of Witness
Appendix D

Human Subjects' Rights Approval
TO: Lisa Spadafore  
R. Wayne Fuqua  
FROM: Ellen Page-Robin, Chair  
RE: Research Protocol  
DATE: July 13, 1987  

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research protocol, "Factors that Correlate with Retention of Employment for Former Welfare Recipients" is now complete and has been signed off by the HSIRB.  

If you have any further questions, please contact me at 383-4917.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


