



The Relationship of Training and Job Satisfaction in Behavior Therapist Retention

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INTRODUCTION

Background

- Most research in ABA with emphasis on autism focuses on assessment and treatment interventions.
- There has been very little research on the behavior therapists providing these services.
- With the increasing number of children with autism, there is need to rapidly train, place, and retain individuals in the field to meet the demand for services.

Past Research (outside the field)

- The cost of losing an employee and training a replacement hinders on the productivity of the company, puts financial strain on the company and accounts for a loss of knowledge among their employees (Kieckbusch, Price, & Theis, 2003).
- Satisfaction with job training relates to intentions to stay in a company (Liu, 2006).
- More training hours have been found to predict intent to stay in a company (Sieben, 2007).

Past Research (in the field)

- Systematic behavioral training procedures can be used to improve the work performance of staff (Reid, D.H., et al., 2005)



PURPOSE AND HYPOTHESES

- This study looked at the role of training satisfaction and duration of training in therapists who have intentions to stay in their company.
- Hypothesis 1:** Those who self-report intent to stay in a company will self-report longer total hours of on the job training.
- Hypothesis 2:** Those who self-report intent to stay in a company will self-report greater satisfaction with the training they received from their company.

METHODS

Participants

- Fifty-three employees (47 women, 6 men) from 11 different behavioral agencies in Southern California who worked with children with autism using behavior therapy.
- All participants were volunteers, who anonymously described their experiences working as a behavior therapist at their company.
- 30 = "Therapists" (provided behavior therapy); 8 = "Senior Therapists" (case management duties in addition to behavior therapy); 15 = "Supervisors"
- Participants ranged from 21 - 54 years of age.
- 85% completed all of the relevant measures

Measures

- As part of a larger study, a survey containing a 62-question demographics section and 6 questionnaires addressing various aspects of life and work as a behavior therapist were developed. The following measures came directly from the demographics section:

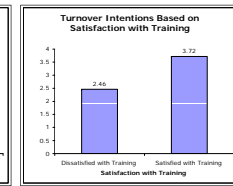
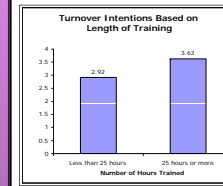
Measure	Item Examples	Scale	Original Reliability	Current Reliability
Turnover Intentions (Dupré & Day, 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •"I will stay at my job for as long as I can." •"I will leave my job if another job becomes available." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2 items •Likelihood rated on a 5-point Likert-type 	.89	.76
Training Satisfaction (Liu, 2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •"My training materials were not as extensive as I expected." •"The company provides enough initial training." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •5 items •Agreement rated on a 5-point Likert-type 	.71	.81

Procedure

- Participants were contacted through IRB-approved information e-mails or IRB-approved fliers.
- The survey was made available to participants by clicking on a link that directed them to Survey Monkey. The design of the survey was user-friendly with drop-down menus and a percent completed bar.
- Participants were reminded of their anonymity and the importance of answering honestly throughout the survey.
- The survey took approximately 45 minutes to complete.

RESULTS

- Hypothesis 1:** Results from an independent samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference ($t(51) = 2.03, p < .05$) between groups. Participants who report a longer duration of training before being placed independently in the field reported greater likelihood to stay in their company ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.13$) than those who reported a shorter duration of training ($M = 2.92, SD = 1.35$) before being placed independently in the field.
- Hypothesis 2:** Results from an independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference ($t(51) = 3.59, p < .001$) between groups. Participants who reported satisfaction with their training reported more likelihood to stay in the company ($M = 3.72, SD = 1.07$) than those who reported dissatisfaction with their training ($M = 2.46, SD = 1.26$).



CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- The above results supported both hypotheses. Training experiences differ in those that intend to stay in a company versus those that intend to leave.
- Although hypotheses were supported, limitations were observed. All participants were volunteers, meaning they may be uniformly interested in bettering the field. Also, only 11 different behavioral agencies were represented in the sample, not giving an accurate representation of the current status of employees in the field.
- Findings from this study confirm measures from other fields can be reliably used on the population of behavior therapists. This also suggests that similar techniques may be effective in this field.
- By understanding the antecedent of behavior therapists' turnover intentions, agencies can provide their employees with appropriate services, enabling therapists to more effectively help the increasing number of children with autism receiving behavior therapeutic services.

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Slide 1

- e1 offer Mean and SD
ek896371, 5/11/2009
- e2 Notice changes in this section--
ek896371, 5/11/2009
- e3 supported. specially in ABA community, p significance is meaningless
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