Broward Sheriff’s Office-Child Protective Investigation Section: Preliminary Findings on Employee Retention

Commander James P. Harn1, Kori A. Hakala, M.A., M.S.2, Christian DeLucia, Ph.D.2, and Vincent B. Van Hasselt, Ph.D.2

1 Broward Sheriff’s Office
Child Protective Investigations Section
2 Center for Psychological Studies
Nova Southeastern University

Abstract

The Broward Sheriff’s Office (BSO), Florida-Child Protective Investigations Section (CPIS) has been found to have one of the highest employee retention rates in the State of Florida. It has been speculated that demographic and monetary factors may be the primary variables leading to the increased rate of employee retention. In order to investigate this hypothesis, employee retention rates from 2007 to 2010 were obtained from both the BSO-CPIS and another comparable law enforcement-affiliated CPIS within the State of Florida. The comparison agency was selected based on its similarities to the BSO-CPIS; size, demographic composition (e.g., age, gender), and monetary resources (e.g., budgetary appropriations, average salaries) were all deemed comparable. Preliminary comparisons showed that when monetary and demographic factors are held constant, the BSO-CPIS maintained a retention rate that was 17.8% above that of the comparison department. The findings of this initial comparison failed to support the notion that demographic and monetary variables are primarily responsible for higher rates of employee retention. Although demographic composition and monetary resources may contribute to increases in employee retention, these findings are suggestive of additional contributing factors. Potential additional variables leading to increases in employee retention rates are proposed by this study. The perceived importance of employee retention lies in its correlation with experience level and subsequent successful outcomes for child protective investigations, and the children and families they serve.

Study Design & Procedures

- Archival data were collected through the Broward County Sheriff’s Office-Child Protective Investigations Section in Broward County, Florida.
- Archival data included information regarding the attrition and retention rates of County Child Protective Investigators across the State of Florida.
- Additionally, demographic and financial information from various county Sheriff’s Offices was obtained in order to identify potential comparison groups.
- The comparison Sheriff’s Office used in this preliminary study was found to have a demographic and financial composition similar to that of the Broward Sheriff’s Office.
- Analyses reflect descriptive statistics regarding child protective investigator employee retention rates between Broward Sheriff’s Office and a comparison Sheriff’s Office.

Results

- BSO-CPIS was found to be similar in number of child protective investigators (n = 89) to that of the Comparison Sheriff’s Office (n = 83).
- BSO-CPIS was also shown to have a similar gender breakdown for child protective investigators to that of the Comparison Sheriff’s Office (see Figure 1).
- The average age for both BSO-CPIS investigators and investigators from the Comparison Sheriff’s Office varied; however, the modal age of investigators from both offices was shown to be between 25 and 40 (see Figure 1).
- Monetary examination revealed comparable starting salaries and annual department budgetary appropriation for BSO-CPIS and the Comparison Sheriff’s Office (see Figure 2).
- Variations between average annual salaries plus benefits may be correlated with higher retention rates.
- BSO-CPIS investigators were found to have 17.8% higher employee retention rate than that of a comparison Sheriff’s Office (see Figure 3).
- BSO-CPIS investigator retention rates were found to be 34.1% higher than that of the Florida average retention rate for child protective investigators (see Figure 4).

Discussion

- BSO-CPIS (see Figure 1).
- BSO-CPIS was also shown to have a similar gender breakdown for child protective investigators to that of the Comparison Sheriff’s Office (see Figure 1).
- The average age for both BSO-CPIS investigators and investigators from the Comparison Sheriff’s Office varied; however, the modal age of investigators from both offices was shown to be between 25 and 40 (see Figure 1).
- Monetary examination revealed comparable starting salaries and annual department budgetary appropriation for BSO-CPIS and the Comparison Sheriff’s Office (see Figure 2).
- Variations between average annual salaries plus benefits may be correlated with higher retention rates.
- BSO-CPIS investigators were found to have 17.8% higher employee retention rate than that of a comparison Sheriff’s Office (see Figure 3).
- BSO-CPIS investigator retention rates were found to be 34.1% higher than that of the Florida average retention rate for child protective investigators (see Figure 4).

Discussion

- BSO-CPIS was found to have an investigator retention rate that is comparably higher than that of other Florida County Sheriff’s Offices.
- It was hypothesized that the demographic and financial composition of the BSO-CPIS may be responsible for the high rate of employee retention.
- In order to investigate this hypothesis, a comparison Sheriff’s Office was selected based on its similar size, demographic composition, and financial resources to that of the BSO-CPIS.
- Preliminary findings showed a 17.8% higher employee retention rate for the BSO-CPIS in comparison to a Sheriff’s Office with similar demographic and financial composition.
- Findings suggest that additional factors not examined in this preliminary study may be responsible for higher investigator retention rates.
- Factors such as training model, administrative support, colleague support, work appreciation, investigator education level, case distribution, schedule flexibility, and advancement opportunities are all possible areas for future study.
- Identifying the factors that lead to higher retention rate for Child Protective Investigators has the potential to improve the quality of service provided to children and families in communities across the country.

Limitation

- The comparison group used in this study was deemed most similar to BSO-CPIS of all County Sheriff’s Offices in the State of Florida; however, certain factors could have been more closely matched (e.g., age, ethnic composition, education level, etc.). Future studies may benefit from expanding the search for comparison groups to the nationwide level.

References

