

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

The Development of Alberta's Child Welfare
Legislation: An Exercise in Participatory
Decision Making

by

Sharon Muriel Heron

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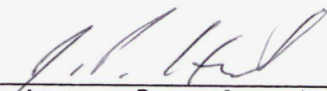
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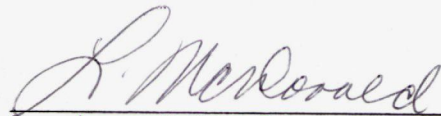
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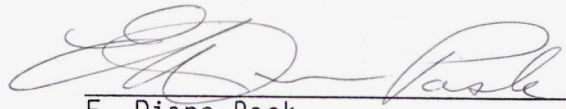
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "The Development of Alberta's Child Welfare Legislation: An Exercise in Participatory Decision Making" submitted by Sharon Muriel Heron in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Social Work.



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Abstract

The Development of Alberta's Child Welfare Legislation: An Exercise in Participatory Decision Making

Sharon Muriel Heron

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of a participatory decision making process within a human service agency when developing child welfare legislation. Staff who had an opportunity to participate in the process by virtue of their employment with the organization were surveyed to determine their attitude towards this exercise. They were also asked a series of questions pertaining to worker satisfaction and levels of job related stress, with the goal of measuring the attitudes of social workers towards their employment and to explore whether there was a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of the participants and non-participants. Additional analysis compared the dependent variable of staff's satisfaction with the process used to develop child welfare legislation and a series of independent variables measuring worker satisfaction, sociological factors and job related stress.

This study describes the process used by the department to involve staff in the development of the legislation. A questionnaire was created specifically for this study to measure staffs satisfaction with the participatory decision making process. This was used in conjunction with a survey designed specifically to measure worker satisfaction and job related stress.

A chi-square and student's t test were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between participants and non-participants in terms of specific sociodemographic characteristics, worker satisfaction and job related stress. A bivariate and a multivariate analysis was completed to determine which of the independent variables associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress had the highest correlation with staff satisfaction with the participatory decision making process.

The analysis did not indicate a statistically significant difference between the workers who participated and those that did not, according to three sociodemographic characteristics, and five job related themes. However, while the findings were not statistically significant, those employees who participated in the development of the legislation measured slightly higher in terms of a positive relationship with staff, occupational coping skills and a positive attitude towards their job and lower in the area of symptoms of burnout and negative psychological states and traits. Opportunities for promotion, job satisfaction, quantitative workload and relationship with co-workers were the four independent variables which, obtained the highest correlation with the dependent variable, satisfaction with process.

While this study is exploratory, the findings indicated that frontline child welfare staff were generally satisfied with their level of involvement in the development of the legislation. Given these results, the organization should continue to involve frontline child welfare workers in the development of legislation which they will be expected to enforce.

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Dedication

To my family; husband, Jim and children, Rob and Tricia, for your love, support, and faith in me. Without your assistance, I could never have achieved my goal.

Also to my parents, Robert and Muriel Fulton for your loving care during my stay in Calgary.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Context of the Study

Human service organizations have, in recent years, tended to promote the involvement of staff, notably frontline professionals, in decisions that affect their organizations. This has been particularly true in the development of policies and programs which staff are, or will be, expected to deliver. While there are many reasons given to support staff involvement, the more typical ones are that: 1) staff's motivation to implement the changes will be increased because they are more likely to understand and accept the decisions; 2) policy or program decisions will be superior because of the expertise of frontline staff; 3) it provides an excellent opportunity to expose staff to the normative values of the organization or to the proposed changes before implementation; 4) participation breaks down the traditional work patterns and increases the potential for creative thinking; 5) it reduces maladaptive or performance-related behaviors such as absenteeism or worker turnover; 6) participation increases staff's feeling of autonomy and influence; 7) it aids in increasing communication within the organization; and 8) participation is tied to the ethical values and practice principles of the social work profession (Vandervelde, 1979; Sashkin, 1984; Fallon, 1974; Weatherley, 1983; Hirsch and Shulman, 1979).

The most recent articles on participatory decision making, however, have taken the position that staff should not be involved in decision making without management and staff clearly understanding the purpose for

this involvement. Moreover, it is argued that participants should have an appreciation of the context of the work environment, commitment to carry the process through to successful completion, knowledge of the overall strategy and some understanding of the desired outcomes (Vandervelde, 1979; Locke and Schweiger, 1979). It is also recognized that successful participatory decision making is a bonus to any organization. If it is not properly implemented, however, it may not only be ineffectual, it may also be detrimental to the organization in terms of producing poor quality decisions or serious morale problems (Locke and Schweiger, 1979).

Another consideration is that participatory decision making is time-consuming. Normally, policy and program initiatives take longer to implement within an organization than is anticipated. Involvement of staff in the decision making process is likely to result in even more delays (Weatherley, 1983).

As pointed out by Weatherley (1983), it is relatively easy for managers to calculate the cost of involving staff in decisions affecting their work but it is far more difficult to measure the benefits. It is impossible for a manager to predict that entering into this type of exercise will produce tangible benefits such as increased productivity or a better quality decision.

Many human service organizations are highly volatile and subject to both shifting and conflicting pressures from the political system or special interest groups (Weatherley, 1983). In this type of environment it is difficult to obtain sufficient organizational stability to effectively carry out a participatory decision making exercise.

While there is some documentation of the effects of involving frontline staff employed in human service organizations in administrative

or policy and program decisions, there are no published articles on the efforts and outcome of involving frontline staff within a public agency in legislative changes. It is proposed that the development of legislation is significantly different from the design of programs and policies in that the elected representatives of the legislature have a far greater impact on the content of the legislative bill. Therefore a participatory decision making process that is designed to take into consideration all of the contextual factors of the organization may still be viewed as unsuccessful from the staff's perspective because their level of influence may be significantly diluted.

All in all, the reported findings in the literature on participatory decision making and a variety of alleged benefits to the organization are equivocal. It is hypothesized that this ambiguity has arisen because a critical intervening factor, namely satisfaction with the process, was not taken into consideration.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of a participatory decision making process within a public human service agency when developing child welfare legislation. Staff who had an opportunity to participate in the process by virtue of their employment with the organization were surveyed to determine their attitude towards this exercise. They were also asked to answer a series of questions pertaining to worker satisfaction and levels of job related stress, with the goal of measuring the attitudes of social workers towards their employment.

This particular study first measured staff's stated level of satisfaction with the process used by the organization to involve them in the creation of the legislation. Secondly, a series of statistical procedures were used to explore whether there is an association between the dependent variable (satisfaction with process) and a series of independent variables associated with worker satisfaction and job stress.

The specific research objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) to explore if those respondents who participated in the creation of the legislation were satisfied with the process utilized by the department to involve them;
- 2) to explore whether there is a difference between those respondents who participated in the process and those who did not, according to specific sociodemographic characteristics and a variety of concepts specifically associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress; and
- 3) to identify for those respondents who participated, which of the worker satisfaction and job related stress factors are most highly correlated with staff's stated level of satisfaction with the participatory decision making process.

1.3 Organization of Thesis

Chapter Two provides a brief description of the relationship between legislation and policies and programs for public agencies. A description of the process used to involve staff in the creation of the child welfare legislation in Alberta will be presented.

In Chapter Three, literature pertaining to participatory decision making within the human service spectrum is reviewed. Given the sparse

reporting in this particular literary domain, the review was expanded to include the recent articles on the topic found in the management and organizational development journals, mostly based on the work of behavioral scientists.

Chapter Four describes the methodology employed, including research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the methodology.

Chapter Five presents the findings of the research while Chapter Six discusses the significance of the findings as well as drawing conclusions and making recommendations for the department.

Chapter 2

Development of Alberta's Child Welfare Legislation:

A Description of the Participatory Decision Making Process

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of the process implemented by the Alberta Department of Social Services and Community Health to involve frontline child welfare staff in the creation of legislation. Staff satisfaction with the process described in this chapter is the dependent variable for the research carried out in this study.

While it is not the intent of this paper to discuss the substantive issues addressed in the legislative reform, or to provide a detailed description of child welfare services during that time period, it is critical to understand the climate under which the organization was operating and the impact this had on the methods available to involve staff in the legislative design.

2.1 Legislation Versus Policy Development

Organizations providing statutory services are confronted with an interesting dilemma when attempting to make significant program changes, because such changes usually require an extensive and simultaneous reshaping of both the program policies and the legislation. Considerable debate often occurs between members of the organization as to whether the legislation should provide the foundation for the changes or whether a program with corresponding policies should be designed first, with the necessary legal authority following from this product. According to

Driedger (1976), writing primarily for a legal audience, the purpose of a statute is to provide the legal expression of a legislative policy. He stated that before a statute can be drafted the policy sought to be implemented by it must be determined. According to him, legislative policy may originate with the public service, with the government in power, or both. Usually the government refers either a problem or a proposed policy to the public service for their consideration and recommendations and, based on the information received, formulates policy. Thus, based on Driedger's interpretation, legislation should be viewed as a byproduct of government policy.

2.2 The Need for Legislative Reform in Alberta's Child Welfare System

In the last decade, the Department of Social Services and Community Health's child welfare system has come under harsh public criticism. This began in 1979 when the media drew attention to the treatment of children who were placed in quiet rooms at Westfield Institution, a government-owned and -operated adolescent treatment centre located in Edmonton, Alberta. The criticism grew in intensity after the Provincial Ombudsman investigated the care provided by this institution and the findings of the investigation were made public in a critical report (Cavanagh, 1983). In response to the increasingly negative public perception of child welfare services in Alberta, the government, on March 16, 1980 commissioned a Board of Review to examine the services provided to children under the authority of The Child Welfare Act and the Social Care Facilities Licensing Act. Mr. Justice J.C. Cavanagh was named chairman of this review.

The Child Welfare Act which was under public scrutiny had been proclaimed in 1966. Although there had been some major revisions during the first 11 years, most of the changes since 1977 dealt with only one specific section of the Act at a time and were viewed as minor in nature.

The Department in April of 1981, to reflect upon and be consistent with the intent of the government, commenced a major initiative to decentralize the authority and responsibilities of all departmental programs (Honorable Bob Bogle, Minister of Social Services and Community Health, personal communication, April 3, 1981). This reorganization was occurring at the same time the Cavanagh Board of Review was examining child welfare services in the province. A corner-stone of the Child Welfare Act (1966) was the vesting of responsibility and authority for child welfare programs in one position, the Director of Child Welfare. Adequate decentralization of child welfare program responsibilities required that the legislated authority of this position be significantly altered. Given the fact that this position was named throughout the Act, it required that most sections be opened for the discussion and the examination of the Legislative Assembly. Members of the organization, based on the advice they were given by their solicitors, believed it to be risky to allow any debate on this controversial piece of legislation for administrative purposes only and advised the Minister accordingly. A decision was made to wait until the Cavanagh Board of Review had tabled its recommendations, or a Minister was willing to sponsor a Bill, and there was sufficient time in terms of the government's election mandate, to initiate a major piece of legislative reform.

The provincial election in Fall 1982 provided the government with a strong mandate from the electorate and the Minister assigned to the Social Services and Community Health portfolio appeared interested in

sponsoring a Child Welfare Bill. The one impediment to this initiative from the government's perspective was how to initiate this process when the Board of Review established by the government in the Spring of 1980, and which had held numerous public hearings to gain the perspective of interested Albertans, had not yet reported their findings.

2.3 Behind the Scenes of Bill 105

The information contained in this section describes the events leading up to the decision to proceed with draft legislation and the method of involving staff in this process. The description has been obtained by reviewing departmental correspondence retained on this matter and the minutes from: 1) The Child Welfare Legislative Review Committee, 2) The Child Welfare Program and Delivery Review Committee, and 3) The Child Welfare Steering Committee. It is the intent of this document to describe the staff participation process as accurately as possible, however, incomplete or inaccurate records could lead to omissions in this description.

The department's records indicated that the Cavanagh Board of Review was in favor of and had in fact made suggestions to the department in regards to possible amendments to the legislation for review at the 1983 Spring Session of the Legislature. In March 1983 the Deputy Minister corresponded with the Board, advising them of the government's intent to table a Bill at the fall session of the legislature reflecting major changes to the Child Welfare Act. "This will result in your work and the work of the Department proceeding in parallel" stated the Deputy Minister (D'Arcy Coulson, Deputy Minister, personal communication, March 9, 1983). The department's desire to review and reflect upon the Board of Review's

recommendations in regards to legislative charges prior to tabling the Bill was communicated to the Board members. If the full report could not be made available to the government in time for the tabling of the Bill, the Board was urged to release an interim report on the findings.

On March 16, 1983 the Minister of Social Services and Community Health, the Honorable Dr. Neil Webber, communicated in writing his agreement to the department undertaking several initiatives to improve child welfare services in Alberta, including modifying the legislation. In this same memorandum he stated "I endorse the proposal that a series of consultations be planned for regional and central office staff for the purpose of seeking their views and recommendations" (Dr. Neil Webber, personal communication, March 16, 1983). It was recognized by the department that involving staff in the creation of this legislation may be viewed as sensitive in that many of them had chosen to make very elaborate and time-consuming written submissions and verbal presentations to the Cavanagh Board of Review believing this to be the legitimate method of voicing their opinion on legislative and policy reform. Given the fact that they had not yet seen the results of their work, it was felt that staff may be reluctant to become involved again in a similar process. As well, the organization had stringent timelines for drafting the Bill, making it impractical to hear from every individual involved in the child welfare program.

As a result of some previous work done by the Children's Law Reform Committee and the Child Welfare Branch, a portion of the material on proposals for change had been collected in anticipation of amendments to the child welfare legislation prior to March 1983. When it became apparent that the government was willing to entertain the possibility of sponsoring a Child Welfare Bill, the department's senior management

endorsed the formation of two working committees with a reporting relationship to one steering committee to complete the necessary work. It is interesting to note that within the membership of the working committees, one responsible for legislative changes and one responsible for policy and program initiatives, there was lively debate as to which group was responsible for establishing the future direction of child welfare. While the two groups worked together from March to June 1983 gathering the necessary data for the proposed changes, the realities of the imposed timelines for drafting the legislation ultimately placed the activities of the Legislature Review Committee in a leadership role. Both committees were cognizant of the need to involve frontline professional staff, but utilized somewhat different approaches to accomplish this goal.

Membership on the Legislative Review Committee consisted of three lawyers, two social workers (with only one having extensive frontline child welfare experience) and one program planner. Their overall knowledge of the activities of frontline professional staff was therefore limited, and they also had extremely tight timelines in terms of collecting their data. For example, the committee was formed on March 1, 1983 with an initial expectation that a legislative draft be completed by June 30, 1983. (The timelines were eventually extended and the Legislative Review Committee members joined the Steering Committee during the summer of 1983 to complete the assignment.)

The committee identified a series of specific issues prior to meeting with regional staff. Each committee member was then assigned to a particular region for a three-day period to survey the opinions of a cross-section of the staff about specific issues. The regions were responsible for identifying one person in each region to coordinate this

activity and to determine which employees would meet with members of this committee. There are no recorded guidelines on how employees were to be chosen to take part in this activity.

The Legislative Review Committee also met with individual frontline professional staff on particular issues when it was known within the department that those employees, by virtue of their work experience, had gained expert knowledge.

The Child Welfare Program and Delivery Review Committee consisted of seven members, four of whom were professionally trained social workers with previous experience as frontline child welfare workers. Their mandate was to describe the current child welfare delivery organization and to make recommendations on how to improve this system. The committee was to conduct its work between February 15, 1983 and May 1, 1983.

The Program and Delivery Review Committee also had a mandate to meet with a cross-section of regional staff to determine their opinion on the changes needed to improve the delivery of child welfare services and to identify which issues should be considered a priority. While the chair of the Program and Delivery Review Committee distinguished to the regional staff the role of this committee in terms of relating to the Legislative Review Committee, there was still considerable overlap in the information received. An agreement was made between the two committee chairpersons to collect all the information given by the regions and to ensure that it was passed on to the appropriate committee for their consideration.

In terms of process, the Legislative Review Committee met with individual staff around specified issues while the Program and Delivery Review Committee arranged a series of one- to two-day meetings in each region and invited staff to attend. The Program and Policy Review

Committee's agenda was less structured and there was greater opportunity for dialogue with frontline staff. Again, the regions were responsible for determining who should attend the sessions and there was no recorded criteria for this decision.

Both committees appeared to view the regional sessions as fact-finding missions. There was no recorded discussion on how the information would be integrated in terms of a decision making process if in fact varying and or contradictory opinions were expressed.

Information from both committees flowed to the Child Welfare Steering Committee which was vested with the responsibility of managing and coordinating the various initiatives and recommending appropriate action to the department's senior management. The Steering Committee was also responsible for directing and coordinating legislative change and integrating the recommendations of the Cavanagh Board of Review with the initiatives of the department.

Recommendations for legislative changes were drafted for presentation to the Minister reflecting the opinion of staff at all levels of the organization who had an opportunity to meet with the working committees or who were part of the department's senior decision making body. The Social Planning Committee of Cabinet was given the responsibility of reviewing the organization's recommendation and ensuring that the spirit of the proposed law was representative of the wishes of the government in power.

On October 20, 1983 the Lieutenant Governor in Council was presented with the Cavanagh Board of Review report. This provided the department with 26 days to review the material and integrate the recommendations of the Board into the proposed legislative reform.

Bill 105 was tabled in the Alberta Legislature on November 16, 1983 and allowed to die on the order paper. The Minister of Social Services and Community Health, at the time of introducing the Bill, stated that this procedure was chosen to provide the public with an opportunity to review the proposed changes and to make their opinions on the intended changes known to the government. The intention of introducing a new Bill in the 1984 Spring Session of the Legislature incorporating the comments and recommendations of the public was communicated in a press release on the day the Bill was tabled.

The government decided not to hold public hearings on the proposed legislation given the extensive public consultation held by the Cavanagh Board of Review. However, the Minister was keenly interested in hearing the comments of departmental staff in regards to the proposed changes. He asked that special arrangements be established for him to meet with each region to hear comments on the proposed changes directly from staff involved in child welfare. The responsibility for arranging the meetings was left to each region, but the Minister requested that as many frontline child welfare staff as possible attend. He further directed that the number of senior staff travelling with him be limited in order that the size of the group did not intimidate the regional staff or hinder them from providing their honest feedback. It was decided that the Legislative Planner, one member of the Steering Committee (on a rotating basis) and someone to record the proceedings would attend each regional meeting.

The regional meetings with the Minister were scheduled during January 1984. At the same time, the Steering Committee was receiving briefs from interested members in the community and staff members as to their comments and recommendations on the contents of Bill 105. At the

initiation of interested community groups, and when time permitted, the Steering Committee members met with the public to receive their input. Given the timelines for completing the draft of the second Bill, this practice was not widely publicized.

Although the department's documentation is not clear, it is assumed that the purpose of meeting with regional staff was for consultation, to hear their opinion on the proposed changes. There is no mention of how all the varying and possibly conflicting information received from the staff and the public would be integrated into the second draft of the Bill.

The Steering Committee was given the mandate to recommend the proposed changes to Bill 105, channelled through the department's senior management, to the Minister. However, the Deputy Minister's contract was terminated in January of 1984 leaving the Social Services Department with a void at the executive level. As a result of the lack of continuity in the senior management team and the extremely tight timelines in terms of drafting the proposed changes, the Legislative Planner, as chair of the Steering Committee, dealt directly with the Minister of Social Services and Community Health and Social Planning Committee of Cabinet. The Steering Committee was responsible for making recommendations, however, this senior cabinet committee clearly held veto power in the decision making process. As a result of this review process, Bill 35 was tabled on April 18, 1984 and received Royal Assent during the Spring sitting of the legislature.

2.4 Summary

The description of this process indicates that the department involved frontline staff, at least to a limited extent, in the development of the child welfare legislation. The timelines for completing this work were extremely tight and the senior management level of the organization was unstable. As well, the activities of the Cavanagh Board of Review and the delays in receiving their report restricted, at least to some extent, the options of the government in terms of encouraging more staff and public participation in the decision making process.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction to Literature Review

Participatory decision making has been a topic of discussion in the human service industry for approximately the last ten years. Its roots, however, can be traced back to the birth of the human relations movement in the late 1920's and early 1930's when, under Mayo's direction, Roethlisberger and Dickson conducted the famous Hawthorne Studies (Locke and Schweiger, 1979). The Hawthorne studies reported that, as a result of the workers having more involvement in decisions affecting their work, productivity increased. (In recent years, however, the findings of the Hawthorne studies have been questioned because the research did not control for extraneous variables.)

The most striking findings of the literature review were that most of the studies on participatory decision making had inconclusive findings and that arguments defending participatory decision making tended to be based on ideology rather than on any empirical evidence. The social work literature is particularly plagued with a defense of this process based on moral grounds. For example, this type of attitude is expressed by Hirsch and Shulman (1976, p. 5), who stated "the rationale for participatory-collateral government is rooted in the ethical values and practice principles of the social work profession and in the socio-political philosophy of our democratic society."

The management literature is also heavily steeped in the ethical arguments as to the benefit of participatory decision making. Sashkin

(1984, p.5), for example, stated that the decision to use participatory decision making should not be based on the evidence as to its benefits, and "is a decision that rests equally on one's answer to a basic question of managerial ethics." However, many of the authors reporting in this literary domain have tried to defend participatory decision making on at least some degree of empirical evidence. Unfortunately, many of the studies are fraught with serious design problems which place the validity of the findings in doubt. Another weakness is the fact that in the studies conducted in the laboratory setting, the artificial nature of the experiment jeopardizes the generalizability of the findings.

Locke and Schweiger (1979) provided an excellent synopsis of the work published in English on participatory decision making. They found that contrary to popular belief, increased productivity cannot be attributed to participatory decision making and only 60% of the studies reported participatory decision making methods superior to other directive methods in terms of increasing job satisfaction. These authors summed up their position by concluding "there is a great deal we do not yet know about the conditions under which PDM will work" (Locke and Schweiger, 1979, p. 316).

Hespe and Wall (1976, p. 416) provided the best summation of this issue when they stated, "the most striking feature of the evidence relevant to employee attitudes towards participation is its general, indirect and indeterminate nature." They further contend that this allowed the commentators to reflect their own values towards this process, rather than providing a dispassionate recording of individual attitudes towards participation.

3.2 Definition of Participatory Decision Making

The literature displays an amazing lack of clarity as to what is meant by participatory decision making. Synonymous with participatory decision making in the literature are phrases such as work place democracy, quality of work life, quality circles, participatory management, worker participation, joint decision-making, team management, involvement, collateral governance and codetermination. Furthermore, the literature refers to this in terms of a particular leadership style or decision making method.

Vandervelde (1979), a contemporary social worker, defined participatory decision-making as a process involving both superiors and subordinates in some kind of joint effort. According to her definition, involvement is the only "legitimate usage of the term participation" (Vandervelde, 1979, p. 67).

Fallon (1974), also a social worker, viewed participatory management as much more than simply involvement in decision making. He stated that this management style "implies that staff will have a voice and a vote in those management decisions that affect their work" (Fallon, 1974, p. 556). His views are similar to those of Macbeath who distinguished between consultation and joint problem solving. Macbeath (1975, p. 51) stated "there is a difference between inviting staff to participate in real decisions and simply disclosing decisions in advance of implementation."

Locke and Schweiger (1979, p. 274), view participatory decision making as "joint decision making," a position that is consistent with Tannenbaum (1950) and Vroom (1960) and similar to Vandervelde's (1979) position. Furthermore, they state "this definition does not necessitate

that the sharing be equal, but only that there be some degree of sharing... Participatory decision making implies no specific content; it is simply a method of reaching decisions" (Locke and Schweiger, 1979, p. 274).

Participatory decision making is often confused with delegation. McMahon, congruent with Locke and Vroom, distinguished between the two concepts, stating "in participation the various levels provide inputs and influence into the decision making process whereas in delegation they have more say in what the final decision will be" (McMahon, 1976, p. 206).

Whyte (1983) described participatory decision making in the United States (and presumably he would say the same about Canada given the fact that most of our management philosophies are based on research completed in the United States) as an activity built on what he considered a very precarious foundation. He described it as a "participatory activity which comes to an end with the successful termination of a cooperative problem-solving project" (Whyte, 1983, p. 403).

To further complicate the definition of participatory management, Vandervelde (1979) pointed out this subject is often confused with issues surrounding centralization and decentralization, influence, power equalization and power distribution. Given the wide array of concepts used within the same context as participatory decision making and the fact as stated by Vandervelde (1979, p. 67) that "some researchers never bother to define participatory decision making at all, probably assuming that their own conceptions are shared by everyone," it is no wonder that there are inconsistencies in the research findings.

It would appear from the review of the information on the development of the child welfare legislation in Alberta that the

involvement of frontline staff in the process was for consultation purposes only, on one particular issue. In other words, it was not intended to be viewed by staff as a change from the traditional and hierarchical decision making practice commonly used in bureaucracies.

3.3 Contextual Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Participatory Decision Making

The lack of clarity in the definition of participatory decision making and the poorly controlled empirical studies account for confusion in the findings, and there is growing evidence to suggest that the success or failure of this process is contingent upon other variables which were traditionally not recognized. For example, according to Locke and Schweiger (1979, p. 318) "the results of research on participatory decision making make it unmistakably clear that its effectiveness depends on a number of contextual factors." Sashkin (1984) stated that the key to participatory management is proper implementation. Kanter in her article "Organizational Dynamics" (cited in Sashkin, 1984, p. 7) stated "that participative - management failures often occur because of too much emphasis on participative and too little on management."

It would appear that before a manager considers implementing such a process, certain factors must be taken into consideration to ensure that involvement is both appropriate and successful.

3.3.1 The Decision: To Involve Staff or Not

In the western world, involving staff in decisions which affect their work is normally left to the discretion of individual organizations. This is contrary to the legislated, and therefore involuntary, practice of involving staff in work setting decisions in such countries as Germany, Yugoslavia, Sweden and Israel.

Given the voluntary nature of staff participation, most authors agree that some types of decisions are better suited to staff involvement than others. For example, Hirsch and Shulman, social workers and strong advocates of the use of participatory decision making, stated "in developing an effective collateral governance process, it is necessary to be clear about what are appropriate and inappropriate areas for the collateral decision-making process" (Hirsch and Shulman, 1970, p. 440).

Locke and Schweiger (1979) recommended that staff be involved in organizational changes which are complex and where the cumulated knowledge of several people (providing those involved have the knowledge base) would result in a superior decision. They also recommended including staff in decisions involving change where the change may be viewed as threatening to the staff.

Vroom and Jago (cited in Whetten and Cameron, 1984) have developed a decision making model, derived from empirical research, outlining the circumstances under which participatory decision making should occur within an organization. The decision making model presents eight problem attitudes in the form of questions to be answered by the manager before deciding whether to involve staff in some form of decision making. This model is based on the premise that each decision has attributes that affect quality, acceptance, and time and that these attributes must be

considered when involving staff either through participation or by delegation of decisions.

Sashkin (1984) reported that there are three sets of contingencies which must be taken into consideration before deciding whether to involve staff in matters affecting their work and, more importantly in his view, on the process developed by the organization to involve them. The contingencies are psychological, organizational, and environmental factors.

Of the three contingencies described by Sashkin, only the psychological one deals with the overall appropriateness of involvement and will be discussed in this section. Organizational and environmental factors are concerned with the type of process rather than whether staff should be involved and are reported on in Section 3.3.2. of this study.

Psychological contingencies take into consideration the fact that not every employee wishes to become involved in decisions affecting their work. The values, attitudes and expectations of the workers should be known and respected when deciding whether to involve staff. According to Locke and Schweiger (1979), the importance of this motivational factor has been recognized by highly acclaimed authors such as Vroom, Tannenbaum and Meyer for years.

A critical element, as described by Locke and Schweiger (1979), in deciding whether to involve staff in a particular decision is dependent upon the knowledge base of the staff. Staff must have relevant knowledge to contribute if the exercise is to be worthwhile. Without such knowledge, the process becomes a waste of time and effort and may have a harmful effect on the quality of the decision. According to Hall (cited in Locke and Schweiger, 1979), even advocates of group decision making recognize that the group judgement is often inferior to that of the best

individual member. Participants' knowledge appeared to be considered essential in the description of most successful participatory decision making exercises. As Fallon (1974, p. 557) so aptly puts it "the prerequisites for participation must be ability and knowledge."

Involving staff in decisions affecting their work takes time. If the decision must be made quickly, a manager must be cognizant of the additional strain placed on the organization if they attempt to involve staff in the process. As well, it is equally difficult to sustain staff's interest in an initiative which takes several months or years. As Weatherly (1983 p. 47) stated, "It is difficult to sustain frontline staff's interest in an impending change over a period of several years. The involvement of frontline staff itself adds to the complexity and slows down the implementation process."

A final consideration of a manager as to whether to involve staff in decisions affecting their work is the potential for conflict between staff based on differing opinions, values or goals (Locke and Schweiger, 1979). This would be particularly relevant where the type of decisions are complex and value-laden and the participating staff have differing normative values based on their professional orientation.

The creation of Alberta's child welfare legislation is an excellent example of what can happen in a participatory decision making process when members of the group come from different professional orientations and are attempting to reach a decision by consensus on issues where each of the members have strong beliefs based on their unique backgrounds. The Child Welfare Steering Committee minutes reflect the impasse the committee reached on a few critical issues; the most notable being where to assign within the organization guardianship responsibility for children requiring this level of state intervention. As a result of the

decision stalemate, the concept of a Children's Guardian was introduced in the final draft stages of Bill 35. The department did not have sufficient time to design and operationalize a Children's Guardian program before the concept was cemented in legislation.

3.3.2 The Importance of Process

Participatory decision making may be (1) forced by law or voluntarily initiated by management; (2) formal with recognized decision making bodies or informal based on the personal relationship between the manager and his or her subordinates; and (3) direct where each employee has an opportunity to express his or her view or indirect where representatives are elected to speak for all of the employees (Locke and Schweiger, 1979). Furthermore, from the variety of definitions of participatory decision making, it quickly becomes apparent that this process may imply a very different type and level of involvement to different people. As stated by Vandervelde (1979, p. 66) "the actual process of an employee's participation in decision making may mean anything from a man whose suggestion or idea is promptly put in the waste basket, to a worker who is designated chairperson of the organization's policy setting body..." Participatory decision making may be nothing more than a process designed to consult staff on a particular issue or it may include a commitment to include all staff in a decision using a consensus model. If staff do not clearly understand or agree with the structure and process developed by the organization to involve them, they may be extremely disappointed with a participatory process and subsequently skeptical of all such methods of reaching a decision.

Central to this issue within the literature appeared to be whether staff had a clear understanding of and satisfaction with the degree of influence their participation had on determining the outcome. Locke and Schweiger (1979) summarized the work of Hoffman, Burke, and Maier (1975) and Mulder (1959) on this particular issue by stating that if an employee desired influence in the decision making process, satisfaction would depend upon how much influence was actually exerted in relation to the amount desired. Locke and Schweiger (1979) further stated that their literature review had not uncovered a single case in which the managerial hierarchy was totally dissolved through a participatory decision making exercise. Should that have been the desire of the employees, then it is unlikely they would be satisfied with participatory decision making. As Weatherly (1985, p. 47) pointed out "it is incumbent upon managers to offer potential participants a clear operational description of specific measures to be taken, and the consequences that will ensue."

The process used to involve staff does, and according to the literature, should vary depending on the type of decision being made, the unique characteristics of the employees who will potentially be involved, and the work environment. For example, Sashkin (1983) reported on the need for a manager to be attuned to the organizational and environmental contingencies of the work setting when determining appropriate methods for involving staff in a decision making exercise. An important organizational contingency to take into consideration would be the degree to which the design of the work makes employees dependent on one another (Sashkin, 1984). For example, if the work required a high degree of interdependence, such as on an assembly line, individual participation in decision making may be counter-productive, but group decision making may be extremely beneficial (Sashkin, 1984).

Locke and Scheweiger (1979), reporting on the work of Morse and Lorsch (1970) and Shaw and Blum (1965), stated that routine tasks are not necessarily performed better as a result of staff's involvement in the decisions. However, staff participation in decision making may make staff more motivated in their work, a valuable spin-off effect of the process. Locke and Schweiger (1979) further stated that highly complex and unstructured tasks required participatory decision making because of the increased knowledge and flexibility required.

Environmental contingencies include "changes in technology, in government regulations, and in competition" (Sashkin, 1984, p. 9). Sashkin believed the group approach to participatory decision making may be more appropriate in instances of rapid change or severe competition because it allows for a unified and rapid response if the manager and workers have the necessary skills to work in this manner.

Toseland, Revas and Chapman (1984) evaluated the comparative effectiveness of three different techniques for making decisions in groups. Of particular interest is the fact that the group involved in this study consisted of social workers and the type of decision was related to policy. While the purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the three decision making methods rather than its effects on worker satisfaction, an important contextual factor which they identified was the degree to which members liked or disliked the decision making process. According to Toseland et al. (1984, p. 343) "good decisions are important, but if members dislike the decision-making process, they may sabotage its implementation, or they may dread other meetings where similar decision-making processes are used."

It is therefore incumbent upon a manager to be clear about the purpose for involving staff in a participatory decision making exercise.

It is equally important that the process for involving staff be contingent upon the type of decision being made, the time available for staff to become involved, the knowledge and the ability of the staff, and the organizational environment.

3.4 Summary Findings Based on Empirical Evidence of the Effects of Participatory Decision Making

As mentioned in the introductory section, many of the findings on the benefits of participatory decision making are equivocal. It is hypothesized in this study that this occurred because most of the researchers, particularly in the earlier years, did not control for the participant's reaction to the process itself. Often the studies attempted to either demonstrate causality or to correlate the effects of participatory decision making on the individuals' attitudes towards their work environment, regardless of the success of the decision making process.

3.4.1 Empirical Evidence on the Benefits of Participatory Decision Making Within the Human Service Organizations

Most of the articles in the human service journals that discuss participatory decision making are descriptive rather than empirically based. Only those that have based their findings on at least some degree of empirical evidence will be discussed in this section.

One of the first empirical studies on participatory decision making and alienation was completed by Aiken and Hage in 1966. These researchers studied 314 professional staff from 16 American social

welfare agencies. Based on staff responses, each agency was categorized according to the degree of participation it allowed staff concerning policy, program and administrative initiatives. Staff alienation with their work and staff alienation from expressive relations were measured. "Alienation from expressive relations reflects dissatisfaction in social relations with supervisors and fellow workers" (Aiken and Hage, 1966, p. 497). Staff in agencies in which a greater degree of participation in decision making occurred expressed lower levels of alienation on both measures.

Jackson (1982) used a Solomon four-group design in an attempt to demonstrate the effect of participatory decision making on perceived influence, role conflict, role ambiguity, personal and job related communications, social support, emotional strain, and overall job satisfaction. The setting for this six month study was a hospital out patient facility and the participants were nursing and clerical employees. This study was one of the few that "explored the processes through which participation may have its effects" (Jackson, 1982 p. 182). The participation process was measured by: 1) the number of staff meetings held; 2) the amount of influence respondents had on specific issues; and 3) staff's perception of influence.

The findings supported only a portion of the causal model hypothesis, specifically: 1) participatory decision making is causally linked to role conflict and ambiguity over the long term (for this particular study, 6 months); 2) role conflict and ambiguity were positively related to emotional strain and negatively related to job satisfaction; 3) emotional strain was positively related to absenteeism and turnover intention; and 4) perceived influence was positively related to job satisfaction and turnover intention. The findings did not confirm

the importance of social support, personal communications and job related communications in the model. Perceived influence did not affect the interaction between frequency of staff meetings and role conflict.

Weatherly (1983) described the results of a voluntary participatory decision making exercise within an unidentified social services department. The organization pursued a participatory strategy when attempting to make significant procedural changes in regards to case management and financial issues. More than 100 frontline staff were involved in this process either as members of a committee recommending the proposed changes or in reviewing the recommendations. As well, a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to ensure that all staff were kept informed of the committee's activities.

The findings indicated that despite the attempts by the organization to implement an elaborate participatory process, the caseworkers and supervisors viewed both the actual and the perceived participation as limited. Weatherly believed that a number of contextual issues related to the process itself accounted for the dismal results, namely: 1) competing innovations; 2) limited command of resources; 3) organizational complexity; 4) conflicting interests and perspectives; 5) staff having insufficient time to become involved; and 6) conflicting definitions of participation.

Weber and Polm (1974) described two public welfare agencies that were simultaneously but independently undergoing reorganization through the adoption of a generic model of service delivery. Both agencies also wanted to increase the involvement of frontline staff in all areas of decision making. While the article described the participatory process as successful in both instances, it did not identify how success was measured. The article concluded that the workers were not more satisfied

with their jobs as a result of increased involvement in decisions affecting their work. Although empirical evidence is alluded to by the authors' use of phrases such as the "results of the research", the manner by which they arrived at their findings is not documented in the article.

3.4.2 Empirical Evidence on the Benefits of Participatory Decision

Making as it Relates to Job Satisfaction in Other Industries

Based on their extensive literature review, Locke and Schweiger (1979) delineated the alleged benefits of participatory decision making into two broad categories, namely: 1) participatory decision making increased morale and job satisfaction as measured by reduced staff turnover, absenteeism, and conflict; and 2) participatory decision making increased productive efficiency.

The literature is extensive in both categories. This section will highlight a few of the empirical studies related to participatory decision making and its effects on job satisfaction which have achieved a degree of notoriety or which have taken into consideration some of the contextual issues previously discussed in this paper.

Most studies which attempted to demonstrate causality or measure the correlation between participatory decision making and job satisfaction focused on leadership styles, particularly the authoritarian, equalitarian dichotomy. Weschler, Kahane and Tannenbaum's 1952 naval research laboratory study reported that 63.3% of the staff of the division headed by a permissive leader (one that allowed staff to be involved in decisions) were satisfied with their jobs while only 39.3% of the staff with a restrictive (autocratic) leader were satisfied in their employment (cited in Locke and Schweiger, 1979).

Subsequent reviews of the findings of this and other similar studies contended that the studies had inadequate research controls. In addition, the findings could not be consistently replicated.

The more recent studies completed by Vroom and his colleagues tended to support the contingency model. For example, the 1960 study of Vroom and Mann (cited in Locke and Schweiger, 1979) investigated the effects of leadership styles on employee attitudes. They found that employees in small work groups with a high degree of interaction among workers favored equalitarian leaders. In contrast, employees in large work groups where the staff worked independently favored authoritarian leaders.

Lisacheron and Wall (1975) reported on an experimental field study involving blue collar workers and their supervisors in a Parks Department who voluntarily agreed to take part in the exercise. Employees were first surveyed to determine who wished to be more involved in their organization's decision making process, and the type and the level of decision making responsibility they wanted. This survey indicated that: 1) most employees wanted more involvement in decision making; and 2) for those decisions normally made by middle management, the employees wanted direct contact with their supervisor rather than involvement by representation.

The employees were then divided into two groups. The experimental group was part of a participatory management scheme where all employees had direct contact with their supervisors and staff were given a voice in medium and distant level decisions.

The results indicated that the workers perceived they were able to influence and did influence both medium and distant level decisions and from this perspective the study was successful. However, using the Worker Opinion Survey to measure job satisfaction, the participatory

decision making exercise failed to support the hypothesis that participation in decision making is causally related to job satisfaction.

3.5 Conclusions

The literature review provided abundant documentation of participatory decision making and the effects of this process on staff satisfaction or production-related issues. Many of the articles were descriptive or based on ideology rather than empirical evidence. Several articles summarized the empirical studies previously completed and illustrated the equivocal findings within the research. In contrast to this particular study, most empirical studies described the participatory decision making exercise as the independent variable. The most recent articles, both descriptive and empirical in nature, have focused on the contextual issues which must be taken into consideration before embarking on a participatory decision making exercise. The literature seemed to indicate that by focusing on the contextual issues a more accurate assessment of the benefits of participatory decision making occurred. The literature does not clearly indicate which particular factors related to worker satisfaction, job related stress or sociodemographic characteristics are associated with staff's desire to become involved in participatory decision making.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter provides a description of the research design, the sample used in this study, instrument construction and validation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and methodological limitations of this study.

4.1 Research Design

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the attitude of frontline child welfare staff towards the method established by the department to involve them in the development of the child welfare legislation. An instrument was specifically designed for this project to measure participants' attitudes towards this exercise. Satisfaction with the participatory process is a dependent variable in this study.

The study also compared those respondents who participated in the process with those who chose not to. A statistical procedure was used to explore whether the two groups were significantly different in terms of specific sociodemographic characteristics and a variety of concepts associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress. The second dependent variable in this study is participation or non-participation in the development of the legislation.

Thirdly, the study used bivariate and multivariate statistical procedures to measure which job related concepts are most strongly associated with a respondent's stated level of satisfaction with the participatory decision making process.

The research design is a one shot case study survey. While the primary goal is to obtain quantitative-descriptive knowledge, associational knowledge in terms of using empirical data to indicate a relationship between two variables was also obtained (Grinnell, 1985).

4.2 Sample

The sample for this study consisted of frontline social workers employed by Alberta Social Services and Community Health. (In June of 1986 the Government reorganized the department with the responsibility for Social Service programs assigned to one Minister and the name changed to the Department of Social Services to reflect this new mandate.) At the time the legislation was being created there was no method available for the organization to distinguish who within the social work classification series was employed in a child welfare caseload, diversified caseload (a blend of program duties, normally including child welfare and income security), or assigned frontline responsibility to administer another program. There was also no record of the names of individual employees who chose to participate in the creation of legislation.

One hundred and seventy-eight employees responded to this survey and indicated that by virtue of their employment they had an opportunity to become involved in this process. However, only 109 employees indicated they were actually involved. Table 1 provides a summary description of the reasons staff gave for not becoming involved in the review of Bill 105.

Table 1
Reasons Given By Staff for Not Becoming
Involved in the Creation of the Legislation

Reason Given	Number of Employees	Percentage(%)
Did Not Want To	4	6
Felt they had Nothing to Contribute	8	12
No Organized Method to Contribute	9	13
Did Not Know they had Opportunity	13	19
Ill or Absent from Work	9	13
Was not Involved in CW at that Time	16	23
Other Reasons	10	14
TOTAL	69	100

At the time the legislation was being developed, the department had an educational leave program established to send child welfare employees back to university to obtain a professional degree. It is hypothesized that most of the 16 employees who indicated they were not involved with child welfare at that time, were in fact attending school.

Coupled with the educational leave program, the department conducted a massive Canada-wide recruitment campaign during the early 1980's to upgrade the qualifications of staff carrying a child welfare caseload. The last of the positions in the rural areas were being filled when the department was completing its legislative reform. This may be why eight employees believed they had nothing to contribute.

4.2.1 Sample Characteristics

It is interesting to note that of the 178 employees who responded to the survey, 59 were male and 119 were female. Respondents' ages ranged from 24 to 64 years of age, with the mean age being 35.3 years and the mode being 33. Experience in Alberta's child welfare program ranged from 1 to 22 years, with the most frequent length of experience recorded as 2 years, and the mean calculated as 3.95 years. Forty-two employees indicated they had some experience (from 1 to 13 years) in child welfare in another province. One year was the most frequent length of time reported for out-of-province experience. A more detailed breakdown of those employees who participated according to gender, education and years of experience in Alberta's child welfare delivery system is presented in Chapter Five.

4.2.2 Selection Procedures for Sample

The population for this study was identified by reviewing a May 20, 1986 "Social Services and Community Health Special Status Report" which listed all permanent employees within the delivery system who were classified as social workers I, II, III, IV, or V. The report listed employees by name, district office, and employment commencement date. Employees who were employed as of Oct. 31, 1983 in a social work position and who were still working with the department as frontline social workers were the subjects of this study.

The only method available to determine who was placed in a child welfare position on October 31, 1983 was to contact each district office. This was viewed as a time-consuming and intrusive exercise. The questionnaire was therefore sent to all employees regardless of caseload assignment who were selected from the printout as meeting the classification and length of employment criteria.

A decision was made to include all subjects in the study rather than to use a sampling technique. The reason for this was to maximize the total number of possible responses. Also, after consulting with senior departmental officials, it was believed that this survey provided an opportunity to collect valuable data not only for this particular study but for secondary analysis by the organization.

Staff participation in the study was completely voluntary. This fact was communicated to all subjects in the letter dated June 2, 1986 introducing and describing the study to the population (see Appendix A). All subjects were over 18 years of age and employed in a professional position. It was therefore decided that completion of the survey by the employee constituted their agreement and a separate consent form was not

required. In accordance with the ethical considerations outlined by both the Department of Social Services and Community Health and the University of Calgary there was no method available to identify individuals who chose not to participate in the study.

4.2.3 Return Rate for Sample

The status report identified 682 employees as potentially eligible for the study. Twenty questionnaires were returned as a result of the first mailout because those employees had recently terminated employment with the department. The names of those employees were removed from the population list and a follow-up letter was sent to 662 subjects. The follow-up letter generated an additional 43 names of subjects who had recently terminated employment or who were expected to be absent from the worksite for an extended period of time as a result of maternity, educational or sick leave. A further 17 questionnaires were returned by respondents who indicated that they had never worked in child welfare and thus believed that they were ineligible to participate in the study.

A limitation of the study which may have affected the return rate was the fact that some frontline employees who did not or had not worked in child welfare but received the questionnaire did not believe themselves eligible to participate after reading the second paragraph of the covering letter introducing the study. This portion of the letter described the purpose of the study as an investigation of the level of satisfaction of frontline child welfare staff with the process used by the department to involve them in the creation of Alberta's Child Welfare Act.

After subtracting the names of those employees who left the department, who were absent for an extended period of time, or who returned the document with a notation indicating their lack of involvement in child welfare, the population was reduced to 602 persons. One hundred seventy-eight subjects responded indicating they had involvement with either the child welfare program during that time or for some other reason chose to be involved in the legislative review process. A further 145 completed sections II, III and V of the questionnaire but stated that they were not employed in a child welfare role and could not therefore comment on the legislative review process. The total response rate for the entire study was 323 or 53.65%. Five questionnaires were returned with insufficient data and were considered spoiled. Of the 323 returned questionnaires, 55% of these respondents were classified as having some involvement with the child welfare program. This represents a reasonably large portion of social workers in Alberta Social Services, if one considers the figures compiled for the Child Welfare League of America membership. The membership study in September 1985 identified 439 permanent, social worker I, II, III, IV and V positions, employed in the Alberta child welfare service delivery section of the Department.

The Alberta Health and Social Service Manpower Monitoring System, an unpublished computer document, identified the turnover rate for social work positions within the regional delivery system as 13% between September 1983 and March 1984, and 12% between March 1984 and March 1985. While the data have not been compiled for the period March 1985 to March 1986 period, it is estimated by departmental staff to be approximately 10%. Unfortunately, there are no records on the duration of a staff member's employment with the department prior to termination or the caseloads assigned to those individuals who resigned. Assuming that

resignations are evenly dispersed throughout the various programs, a turnover of employees with less than one year of experience would provide the greatest possible number of respondents for this study. Given that there has been little change in the number of permanent positions assigned to each program (in the last three years one can assume that if there were 439 positions assigned to frontline child welfare in September of 1985, there would be a similar number in October of 1983) and assuming only a 13% turnover rate, there would be 382 of the original staff remaining. The most negative turnover rate would have all experienced staff (those hired prior to October 31, 1983) leaving and of the original staff only 287 would remain. A realistic but still conservative scenario would probably rest midway between those two assumptions and show approximately 335 employees remaining. If this last assumption is accurate, the 178 returned surveys represent 53% of the total number of potential respondents.

4.5 Instrumentation

The questionnaire consisted of five parts (Appendix B and C): Section I contained instructions; Section II collected sociodemographic data on the subjects; Section III identified who within the study population participated in the creation of the legislation and what method they used to voice their opinion; Section IV measured specific attitudes of the staff towards the process; and Section V consisted of a variety of scales used previously in other studies to measure staff attitudes towards their employment. Sections II, III, and IV were designed specifically for this study while Section V was adapted from the

Professional Satisfaction Inventory (1985 revision) compiled by the Center for Social Work Research at the University of Oklahoma.

The Professional Satisfaction Inventory was chosen for this study because it had been recently and extensively used to measure the level of job satisfaction of social work staff in the United States (Jayaratne and Chess, 1983). Dr. Jayaratne was contacted and he agreed to the use of the instrument should it be viewed as appropriate for this study. He sent a copy for examination. Dr. Jayaratne advised that the instrument was created by incorporating a series of tests, most of which had been previously used in other research projects, into one self-administered questionnaire designed to measure worker satisfaction and job related stress among professional social workers. The only copyright restrictions were on the items designed to measure burnout adapted from the works of Maslach and Jackson (1981). Once a decision was made to use the instrument for this particular study, the Consulting Psychologists Press Inc. was contacted and written permission to include pertinent items from their scale was obtained.

The remaining portion of this section will describe in detail the instrument construction for section II, III and IV of the survey and provide a chart on the concepts measured in section V. The chart will list the sources of the scales contained in the Professional Satisfaction Inventory, identify any changes made by Jayaratne and Chess, and document the reliability coefficients obtained by reviewing the literature on the construction of each scale.

4.5.1 Instrument Construction and Validation

Sections II, III and IV of the questionnaire were designed with the assistance of two senior departmental officials who were familiar with the creation of the child welfare legislation. In order to increase the assurance of content validity, besides using knowledgeable individuals during instrument construction, sections II, III and IV were also pretested by 10 social work staff. The manager at Centennial Mall District Office (a delivery system worksite in Edmonton, Alberta) granted permission for her child welfare staff, on a voluntary basis, to field test the instrument and allocated a specific time for this to occur. The forms were hand delivered to staff who had agreed in advance to participate and who knew only that they were going to pretest a questionnaire to be used to collect data for a thesis.

Once the form was completed, the staff were immediately interviewed to determine if they had any problems with the items and if, in the opinion of the staff, the questions were clear and the content relevant. Careful attention was paid to the time required to complete the questionnaire. All subjects returned the form within the 20-minute timeframe. After the pretesting process minor changes were made to the instrument based on the suggestions given by staff.

Section II of the questionnaire collected sociodemographic data on the respondents including the name of the district office, type of caseload, their age, gender, years of child welfare experience in and outside of Alberta's Social Services delivery system and educational level.

Section III of the questionnaire delineated those who participated in the legislative review process from those who did not. Data on the

reasons people participated in the development of legislation and how the participants made their opinions known were captured in this section. Data were collected at the nominal level.

In Section IV a Likert Scale was used to record the responses to 26 items dealing specifically with the process developed by the department to involve staff in the creation of the legislation. Although there is some debate as to whether Likert Scales measure data at the ordinal or interval level, in this study, the data were treated as interval level.

The SPSSX computer package was used to conduct a principal components analysis with orthogonal varimax rotation on 21 of the 26 variables in Section IV. The purpose of this procedure was to determine the inter-correlation amongst all paired items in order to construct one or more scales. The data used for this procedure were the responses given by 109 subjects who were involved in the legislative creation process.

Five items were not included in the principal components analysis because more than 6% of the respondents indicated they were either uncertain of their answers, or the question did not apply to their circumstances. On a particular item, if 6% or less of the respondents indicated they were uncertain of their answer or the question did not apply, the response was recoded to neutral. Results of the principal components analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Principal Components Analysis on Selected Items from the
Questionnaire Designed Specifically for the Study

CONCEPT MEASURED	VARIABLE NUMBER	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4	FACTOR 5	FACTOR 6
effective; then	V401	.63631	.01652	.25712	-.36509	.26328	-.09097
more input	V402A	-.59887	.34669	.15369	.16558	-.32825	.01440
respond position paper	V402C	-.27519	.33147	.39349	.13062	-.12476	.41633
satisfactory; then	V402D	.72727*	-.19545	.06945	-.27605	.12608	-.17284
sufficient time	V403	.57340	-.36210	-.15302	-.01342	-.07573	.19599
sufficient understanding	V404A	.40150	-.14306	.56154	.15237	.32795	.00088
views of cabinet	V404B	.11362	-.02771	.48489	.41856	-.18302	-.50582
sufficient experience	V404C	.04698	.06660	.63462	.13631	.42054	-.09049
committee interested; then	V405	.73408	-.00776	-.02742	.33220	.23249	-.01100
committee decided; then	V406	.69398	.08524	-.22742	.44740	.09257	.06405
effective; now	V407	.78787*	-.09097	-.07754	-.30022	-.13947	-.02632
committee interested; now	V408	.79965*	-.00679	-.29050	.18182	-.17813	-.10472
positive input; now	V409	.76877*	.02959	.01366	.15282	-.23971	-.00573
committee decided; now	V410	.68536	-.06213	-.27627	.38665	-.09271	.00009
important to participate	V411	.26111	.73835	-.16153	-.20241	.27846	-.20578
important for public	V412	.22970	.71654	-.23860	-.37157	.15613	-.17173
committed to implementing	V414	.64284	.14524	.21219	-.11609	-.34442	.05647
better understanding	V415	.60491	.17913	.41969	-.23018	-.35744	.01538
participate again	V418	.50916	.36010	.20652	-.01594	-.30481	.31904
important to participate	V419	-.00541	.51152	-.14808	.60228	.20528	.05865
want opinion reflected	V420	.30385	-.00213	.04778	-.07078	.28437	.70319

Asterisk (*) indicates a defining variable which is an item that loads high on only one factor.

Factor 1 accounted for 30.8% of the total variance.
 Factor 2 accounted for 9.3% of the total variance.
 Factor 3 accounted for 8.6% of the total variance.
 Factor 4 accounted for 8.1% of the total variance.
 Factor 5 accounted for 6.1% of the total variance.
 Factor 6 accounted for 5.7% of the total variance.

The principal components analysis extracted six factors with an eigenvalue greater than one.

A Cronbach's alpha and a item-to-total reliability analysis were completed on each of the first four factors. Factors 5 and 6 were not included in this procedure as they accounted for such a small percentage of the total variance. Only items with a coefficient in excess of .30 and where the content of the item made sense from a conceptual perspective were included in each of the factors for the item-to-total analysis.

Table 3 describes, in detail, the reliability analysis statistics for Factor 1 which accounted for 30.8% of the variance. Since the other three factors were deemed statistically invalid after completion of the Cronbach's alpha, or were conceptually redundant, only a summary description of the findings are included in this document.

Seven items were included in the reliability analysis for Factor 2 which accounted for 9.3% of the total variance. However, the alpha was 0.18 and only "important to participate" (V411) had a coefficient $>.30$. As a result of these findings, an index was not constructed.

Factor 3 consisted of five items but the reliability analysis identified only "sufficient understanding" (V404a) and "sufficient experience" (V404c) as having coefficients $>.30$. The alpha was only .49, less than the .50 minimum value, and therefore a scale was not constructed.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis for Factor 1 from the
Questionnaire Designed Specifically for the Study

	NUMBER	CORRECTED ITEM-TO-TOTAL CORRELATION
effective; then	V401	.54
more input	V402A	-.53
satisfactory; then	V402D	.61
sufficient time	V403	.47
sufficient understanding	V404A	.36
committee interested; then	V405	.65
committee decided; then	V406	.62
effective; now	V407	.70
committee interested; now	V408	.70
positive impact; now	V409	.72
committee decided; now	V410	.61
committed to implementing	V414	.59
better understanding	V415	.56
participate again	V418	.47
want opinion reflected	V420	.27

alpha = 0.8518
n of cases = 109
n of items = 15

As a result of the reliability analysis V420, having a coefficient <.30 was dropped. V402A was dropped as it did not conceptually fit with the remaining items. A scale labelled process (pro) was created using the remaining 13 items.

Five items were also included in Factor 4. Three items had a coefficient $>.30$, namely: 1) "committee interested; then" (V405); "committee decided; then" (V406); "committee decided, now" (V410). The alpha was within the acceptable levels at $.69$. Given this statistic, a scale could have been constructed. However, all three items were already included in the Factor 1 scale and therefore Factor 3 could be considered as tautological to Factor 1.

As a result of this statistical procedure one scale consisting of 13 items was constructed to measure staff's overall satisfaction with the process used by the department to involve them in the development of the legislation. The scale was constructed by adding the items together and dividing by 13, to provide a standardized measurement.

Section V consisted of a series of scales to measure a variety of concepts compiled by the Center for Social Work Research at the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Chess and Dr. Jayaratne granted permission to use the instrument and to make minor revisions by removing what would be viewed as irrelevant demographic data given the sample for this particular study. The changes did not involve any adjustment to items which were used to form scales. Figure 1 provides a description of the concepts measured, variable label, reliability figures and whenever possible the source of the particular scale. In some instances, Dr. Chess or Dr. Jayaratne made minor alterations to a particular scale. Dr. Jayaratne stated that he was personally acquainted with many of the designers of the scales and made changes or refinements to their work in consultation with them. A number located in front of the variable label indicates which scale was modified from the source document and the change is indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Summary of Concepts Measured by Professional Satisfaction Inventory

CONCEPT MEASURED	VARIABLE LABEL*	RELIABILITY	SOURCE
1. Supportive Behavior: Co-worker	(1) Scale consisting of V502A, V502B, V502C, V502D	$\alpha = .874$ kk	Adhering to Medical Regimens (Caplan et al)
2. Psychological Coping Response: Mastery	Scale consisting of V50407 through V50413	Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation Used to Form Scale (Item Loading Available in the Structure of Coping Articles)	The Structure of Coping (Pearlin and Schooler)
3. Occupational Coping Response: Substitute for Reward	Scale consisting of V50401 through V50403		The Structure of Coping (Pearlin and Schooler)
4. Occupational Coping Response: Positive Comparison	V50801 through V50803		The Structure of Coping (Pearlin and Schooler)
5. Occupational Coping Response: Selective Ignoring	V51201, V51205, V51206		The Structure of Coping (Pearlin and Schooler)
6. Occupational Coping Response: Optimistic Action	V51202 through V51204		The Structure of Coping (Pearlin and Schooler)
7. Role Ambiguity (Clarity)	V505A, V505C, V505E, V505G	.86	Job Demands & Worker Health (Caplan et al)
8. Quantitative Work Load	V505B, V505D, V505F, V505H	.60	Job Demands & Worker Health (Caplan et al)
9. Comfort	V506D, V506F, V506G, V506Q, V506R, V506S, V506T	.69	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
10. Challenge	V506C, V506E, V506I, V506Y, V506L, V506P	.88	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
11. Financial Reward	V506H, V506K, V506N	.66	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)

* Appendix C in this report provides a copy of the questionnaire used in this study. The variable label has been inserted in the right hand column of this questionnaire in order to identify to the reader the variable label associated with each item.

(figure continues...)

CONCEPT MEASURED	VARIABLE LABEL#	RELIABILITY	SOURCE
12. Relationship with Co-Workers	V506A, V506V, V506Z	.61	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
13. Promotion	V506B, V506U, V506X	.76	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
14. Role Conflict	V506E, V56M, V50Y, V506W	.62	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
15. Autonomy	(2) V506I, V506AA through V506DD	.78	The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
16. Effectiveness on the Job	V507A through V507D	No Reliability Figure Available	Chess and Jayaratne
17. Supportive Behavior: Supervision	V509, V510A through V510D	.874	Adherence to Medical Regimens (Caplan et al)
18. Individualization of Abilities	V51301 through V51303	Intercorrelation Matrix Described in Source Material	Job Demands & Work Health (Caplan et al)
19. Satisfaction with Job	V514		The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
20. Intention to Change Job	V515		The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
21. Personal Accomplishment	V517A, V517C, V517E, V517H through V517J, V517M, V517N	.77	The Measurement of Experienced Burnout (Maslach and Jackson)
22. Emotional Exhaustion	(3) V5170		The Measurement of Experienced Burnout (Maslach and Jackson)
23. Depersonalization	V517B, V517D, V517F, V517A, V517L	.59	The Measurement of Experienced Burnout (Maslach and Jackson)
24. Success of Professional Work	V518	No reliability figures available	Jayaratine & Chess

(figure continues...)

CONCEPT MEASURED	VARIABLE LABEL*	RELIABILITY	SOURCE
25. Depression	V519E, V519F, V519H, V519I through V519L		Job Demands and Worker Health (Caplan et al)
26. Anxiety	V519A, V519C, V519D, V519I		Job Demands and Worker Health (Caplan et al)
27. Irritation	(4) V519B, V519G		Job Demands and Worker Health (Caplan et al)
28. Somatic	(5) V521A through V521J	.80	1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Quinn and Staines)
29. What People Look for in Life	VJ22A, V522B		Jayaratine & Chess
30. Life Satisfaction	V523		The 1977 Quality of Employ- ment Survey (Quinn and Staines)

- (1) Original source stated "How often did someone do each of the following for you during the past six weeks?
- (2) One item removed from original source, dealing with work breaks.
- (3) Seven items dropped from emotional exhaustion scale.
- (4) One item dealing with aggravation dropped from original source.
- (5) Two items measuring smoking and drinking dropped from original source.

Maslach and Jackson (1980) reported the item-to-total reliability coefficient for personal accomplishment was .77 and for depersonalization .59. Dr. Jayaratne, in an unpublished document, indicated that the revisions he made to the Human Service Survey significantly increased the reliability of the coefficients. He stated the reliability coefficient for personal accomplishment was .94 and for depersonalization .81.

For the purpose of this study five independent variables were constructed by qualitatively clustering the scales included in the Professional Satisfaction Inventory into conceptual themes. Within each theme, scales were recoded where necessary to ensure that the direction was consistent for all the scales in a particular cluster.

CREL is the label for relationship with staff. The three scales, supportive behavior for co-worker, supportive behavior for supervisor, and relationship with co-workers were clustered together to form this variable. The higher the numerical value, the more positive the relationship with staff.

COCC referred to occupational coping and included the scales for substitute for reward, positive comparisons, selective ignoring and optimistic action. These concepts were linked together in the research reported by Pearlin and Schooler (1978). Coping was defined as "the things that people do to avoid being harmed by life strains" (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978, p. 2). The higher the numerical value the greater the ability of staff to cope with issues normally associated with occupational stress.

CPSY referred to a group of tests, namely: 1) mastery; 2) depression; 3) anxiety; 4) irritation; 5) somatic complaints; and 6) life satisfaction. The higher the numerical value the greater the degree of maladaptive psychological symptoms.

CBUR is the label for burnout derived from the works of Maslach and Jackson. It included a scale for personal accomplishment and depersonalization, and one item from emotional exhaustion. According to Maslach and Jackson (1981, p. 100) "burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do people work of some kind." A high value indicates fewer symptoms of burnout.

CATT, for the purposes of this study, referred to a variety of attitudes towards the job. The following scales were qualitatively clustered together in this study under this general theme: 1) job satisfaction; 2) intention to change job; 3) attitude towards success of professional work; 4) quantitative workload; 5) comfort; 6) challenge; 7) financial reward; 8) role conflict; 9) autonomy; 10) underutilization of ability; 11) role ambiguity; and 12) promotion. A high numerical value indicates a more positive attitude towards employment.

4.6 Data Collection

The survey was distributed to each of the staff identified within the population by mail, through the government's regular mail service. A package of material containing a description of the study, instructions, a self-administered questionnaire, and a self-addressed envelope in order for the subjects to return the document was sent directly to all potential respondents.

A memorandum from the Deputy Minister (Appendix D) endorsing the study, requesting staff to cooperate by completing the survey and authorizing staff to use the government's mail service to return the forms was attached to each questionnaire.

At the request of Alberta Social Service's central office mailing room, a staggered mailing procedure was used with the material being sent to the subjects between June 2 and June 6, 1986. On June 23, 1986, a follow-up letter was sent to each subject reminding those who had not completed the form of the importance of doing so. For those individuals who had returned the survey, the letter served as a thank-you. As the forms were returned, records were retained on the date of return, district office and caseload type.

4.7 Data Analysis

As discussed under Instrument Construction and Validation (Section 4.5.1) of this report, a principal components analysis, Cronbach's alpha and item-to-total reliability were the statistical procedures used to construct the scale (PRO) designed specifically for this study.

Frequency distributions were used to reduce the raw data, to present the sociodemographic data and to describe respondents' satisfaction with the participatory decision making process. Measures of central tendency (means, medians and mode) were used to describe the results.

Percentage contingency tables were constructed to describe the nominal level data between the two groups of respondents (those who participated and those who did not). A chi-square test (X^2) was used to measure the degree of independence of the two variables. A student's t test was the procedure used to compare the means between the participation and non-participation groups and to determine whether the difference was statistically significant.

A Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to determine the bivariate relationship between the dependent variable (PRO)

and a variety of independent variables related to sociodemographic characteristics or concepts associated with worker satisfaction and levels of job related stress.

A multiple regression analysis was completed to measure the influence of a series of independent variables on the dependent variable (PRO) when all other independent variables in the equation were held constant.

4.8 Limitations of the Methodology

The study is retrospective in that data were gathered during June 1986 to measure staff's attitude towards a process they were involved with during January, February and March of 1984. Normally such a time lapse would lead to significant recall problems for the subjects. Indeed, Campbell and Stanley (1966), indicate that history is a major threat to internal validity. The longer the time lapse between an event and the measurement of the outcome, the greater the chance that the findings may be a result of extraneous variables.

However, the creation of child welfare legislation in Alberta was perceived by frontline staff as a monumental event, given the fact that there had not been a complete legislative change in child welfare since 1966. The ten subjects who pretested the questionnaire were asked in a follow-up interview conducted immediately after the form was completed, "did you have any difficulty recalling your attitude towards the child welfare review process"? The subjects unanimously expressed no problems with recall once they had seen the items. Two of the subjects stated that when they initially read the instructions they believed recall might be a problem but once they started answering the questionnaire they

encountered none; All subjects completed the survey within the 20 minutes allotted timeframe indicating that they did not ponder over the questions. Thus, although it appears that the participants did not have much difficulty with recall, the possible impact of history must still be borne in mind when interpreting the results of this study.

Given that the subjects had an opportunity to work with the legislation they had a part in developing, maturation may also be a threat to internal validity. Maturation refers to what occurs to respondents as a result of the passage of time (Campbell and Stanley, 1966). For example, the subjects may initially have had concerns with the process used by the department to obtain their opinion, but over time and due to subsequent life experiences, now recognize this as an appropriate and meaningful mechanism. The reverse situation, of course, is equally possible.

Ideally, all of the subjects who participated in the development of the legislation, regardless of their current place of employment, should have been contacted to determine their attitude towards the process. A contributing factor to an employee leaving the department may have been their dissatisfaction with the process used by the department to involve them in the development of legislation. The initial proposal called for a sample from this population. The Department of Social Services and Community Health, however, was not at liberty to release the home address or last known address of former employees without first contacting the employees for permission. A decision was made not to contact this group given the problems with obtaining information from personnel records.

Section IV of the questionnaire combined two possible outcomes into one response and as a result, created confusion when interpreting the results. One of the possible response choices for items 1-21 in Section

IV was (U) meaning uncertain or does not apply. Uncertain should not have been provided as a choice, as it is similar to the neutral response.

The Professional Satisfaction Inventory is a relatively new configuration of a series of test items designed by a variety of researchers. Dr. Chess and Dr. Jayaratne have modified some of the items based on conversations they have had with the original test designers or work they have done on a particular subject. The changes at the time of this report have not been systematically documented in a published article. Information on the changes have been obtained through telephone conversations with Dr. Jayaratne.

Chapter 5

Results

5.1 Research Objectives

This chapter will review the results of the study focussing on the three research objectives previously described, namely:

- 1) To explore if those respondents who participated in the development of the legislation were satisfied with the participatory decision making process used by the department to involve them. The additional components of this research question are whether: 1) respondents believed they had sufficient experience in child welfare to effectively contribute; 2) respondents believed they were more committed to implementing the changes as a result of their involvement; and 3) it was important to staff to have senior officials take part in this exercise.
- 2) To explore if there are statistically significant differences between respondents who participated in the process and respondents who were employed in the child welfare system at that time but did not participate. The following sociodemographic characteristics were measured and later tested for significant differences between the two groups: 1) gender; 2) educational background; 3) years of experience in Alberta's child welfare delivery system; and 4) the conceptual themes associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress, specifically relationship with staff, occupational coping,

psychological states and traits, burnout, and attitudes towards their job.

- 3) To explore which independent variables associated with worker satisfaction, and job related stress were most highly correlated with staff's stated level of satisfaction with the participatory decision making process.

5.1 Findings Associated with Staff Satisfaction with the Process

A histogram (Figure 2) depicts the number of respondents in each category according to how they perceived the participatory decision making process developed by the department to involve staff in the legislative reform. The scale (PRO) designed specifically for this process provided a measure of the respondents' overall satisfaction with the process.

The findings indicated that frontline staff were generally satisfied with the process used by the organization to involve them in the creation of the legislation. The standard deviation of .70 indicated that the group was relatively homogeneous in regards to their response to this particular issue. Since the median is marginally larger than the mean, the distribution is slightly negatively skewed. It would appear from the statistics that a few respondents disagreed with the process used by the department.

The questionnaire constructed specifically for this project also asked the respondents their opinions on a series of individual items as they pertained to the development process. The results of the findings are presented in Table 4.

Figure 2
The Frequency of Each Category of Response Indicating Staff
Satisfaction With the Legislative Review

Number of
Respondents

Disagree very much with process	Disagree with process	Disagree/ neutral with process	Agree with process	Agree very much with process
--	-----------------------------	---	-----------------------	------------------------------------

Satisfaction with Process

(N = 109)

The mean is 3.12, the median is 3.18, and the mode is 3.90.

The standard deviation is .70.

Table 4
The Percentage of Staff Who Replied in Each Category and the
Measures of Central Tendency for the Three Specific Items
Related to the Legislative Review

ITEMS	Disagree very much	Dis- agree	Neutral	Agree	Agree very much	Not appli- cable	Total
1) did staff feel they had sufficient experience with child welfare to effectively contribute (V404C)	3.7% (4)	7.3% (8)	12.8% (14)	43.1% (47)	33.0% (36)		100% (N=109)
	Mean = 3.9 Median = 4.0 Mode = 4.0 S.D. = 1.04						
2) did staff feel more committed to implementing the Act as a result of their participation (V414)	3.7% (4)	22.9% (25)	43.1% (47)	29.4% (32)	.9% (1)		100% (N=109)
	Mean = 3.0 Median = 3.0 Mode = 3.0 S.D. = .84						
3) did staff believe it was important to have high ranking officials interact with staff during the review process (V416)	(23)	21.2% (32)	29.3% (35)	32.1% (8)	7.3% (11)	10.1%	100% (N=109)
	Mean = 2.3 Median = 2.0 Mode = 3.0 S.D. = .92						

The findings indicated that the greatest proportion of staff (76.1%) agreed or agreed very much that they had sufficient experience in child welfare to effectively participate in the creation process. Item one of Table 4 shows the median as larger than the mean indicating a negatively skewed distribution. The standard deviation of 1.04 indicated that the respondents, while still fairly homogeneous in their responses, varied somewhat. This is confirmed by the fact that the mode is four, while the mean, which is sensitive to extreme scores is slightly less. If this is compared to the fact that of those staff who responded to the questionnaire indicating they were involved in the creation process, only 54% had more than two years experience, one is led to conclude that staff view themselves as experienced (at least sufficiently to become involved in the decision making process) in less than two years.

One of the reasons given in the literature for involving staff in decisions affecting their work, is that as a result of their participation they will feel more committed to implementing the changes. While this survey has only the capacity to measure staff's perception as to whether this is the case, it is significant to note the response to item 2. This indicated that only 30.3% of the frontline staff agreed or agreed very much that they were more committed to implementation as a result of their involvement. The greatest portion of staff were either neutral or uncertain (43.1%) about whether participation affected their commitment to implementation.

The mean, median and mode were all 3.0, the neutral response, indicating that the distribution is almost normal and symmetrical. The standard deviation of .84 indicated there is some degree of dispersion in the group, as a normal distribution has a standard deviation of one.

The literature indicated the importance of having high ranking officials either directly involved or endorsing the staff's involvement in the decision making process. However, the findings of this study as shown by item 3 indicated that only 8.2% agreed with the importance of this, at least as it pertained to the method chosen by the department. A further 56.2% disagreed or disagreed very much with the statement while 35.7% were either neutral or uncertain. Since some employees chose to participate in the process but did not attend the regional meetings with officials from the department, 10.1% indicated the question was not applicable.

The measures of central tendency indicated that while the mean was 2.3, the median was 2.0, indicating a positively skewed distribution. The most common response was 3.0. The reason for this rather unusual distribution is that there was a fairly large degree of dispersion in responses when compared to the generally homogeneous responses to most of the other items.

5.2 Findings Associated with Determining Statistical Differences Between Participants and Non-Participants in the Legislative Review

Of the 178 employees who responded to the survey and indicated they were, on October 31, 1983, part of the child welfare system, 109 stated they were involved in the participatory decision making process used in the design of the legislation and 69 indicated they were not. Table 1 of this study categorized the reasons given by staff for not becoming involved.

Using the SPSSX program, crosstabs were produced to determine if there were any systematic differences between the two groups according to gender, educational background and years of experience in Alberta's child welfare delivery system. Chi-square was the statistical procedure used to determine if there were any significant differences between the two groups. The findings are presented in the contingency tables, numbered 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5
Description of Staff According to
Gender and Participation in Legislative Review

Gender	Did Participate	Did Not Participate	TOTAL
Male	62.7% (37)	37.3% (22)	100% (59)
Female	60.5% (72)	39.5% (47)	100% 119
TOTAL	(109)	(69)	N=178

The chi-square statistics were:

χ^2	DF	significance	λ
0.01468	1	0.9036	(with participation
0.08098	1	0.7760	dependent variable 0.0)

The chi-square results show that gender and participation in the developmental process are not related.

Table 6
Description of Staff According to
Education and Participation in Legislative Review

Education	Did Participate	Did Not Participate	TOTAL
Professional Trained in Social Work (BSW, MSW)	60% (79)	40% (53)	100% (132)
Other Education	65% (30)	35% (16)	100% (46)
TOTAL	(109)	(69)	N=178

The chi-square statistics were:

χ^2	DF	significance	λ (with participation dependent variable 0.0)
0.21893	1	0.6399	
0.41423	1	0.5198	

* Because of the departments extensive educational leave program during this time period, an intervening variable may be that social workers who now indicate they have obtained their professional training were at school during the legislative review period.

"Other education" for this particular comparison included all types and levels of educational preparation that were not a Bachelor or Masters of Social Work degree.

Once again, the statistical analysis has indicated that the two variables are independent of one another; professional training in social work and participation in the legislative reform exercise are not related.

Table 7
Description of Staff According to Years of
Experience in Alberta and Participation in Legislative Review

Experience	Did Participate	Did Not Participate	TOTAL
Under 2 Years C.W. experience	67% (48)	33% (24)	100% (72)
2 Years and over C.W. experience	64% (59)	36% (33)	52% (92)
TOTAL	(109)	(69)	N=164*

The chi-square statistics were:

<u>X²</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>significance</u>	<u>lambda</u>
0.03002	1	0.8624	(with participation
0.11457	1	0.7350	dependent variable 0.0)

* Fourteen respondents participated in the legislative review process because of their special interest in child welfare, but did not have any child welfare experience prior to October 31/83 with the department.

The chi-square results and the lambda provided statistical evidence that the two variables are not related. In other words, length of experience in Alberta's child welfare system is not related to whether staff chose to participate in the review process.

In summary, the findings indicated that when controlling for population size: 1) slightly more males than females participated; 2) those staff professionally trained in Social Work (B.S.W. or M.S.W.) were less likely to participate than those who had other educational backgrounds; and 3) the employees with less than two years experience in Alberta's child welfare system were more likely to participate. However, chi-square analysis indicated that the numerical differences were not statistically significant and the independent variables (gender, education and experience) were not associated with the dependent variable (participation).

In order to explore whether there was a statistical association between the respondent's decision to participate and a series of scales qualitatively clustered into themes associated with worker's satisfaction and job related stress, the SPSSX statistical package was used to produce the mean and standard deviation for the two groups and to complete a student's t test. (A student's t test is a statistical procedure that determines the significance of the difference between the mean scores of two groups.) For the purposes of this study, information obtained on a Likert Scale was considered interval level data providing the opportunity for more advanced statistical analysis. The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Mean, Standard Deviation and t Value
According to Participation and Concepts Associated
with Worker Satisfaction and Job Stress

CONCEPTUAL THEME	GROUPS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	SEPARATE T VALUE	2 TAILED PROB- ABILITY
Relationship with Staff (CREL)	Did Participate	9.77	1.60	0.74	0.46
	Did Not Participate	9.59	1.60		
Burnout (CBUR)	Did Participate	15.14	2.44	0.75	0.46
	Did Not participate	14.87	2.28		
Occupational Coping (COCC)	Did Participate	28.28	2.81	0.93	0.36
	Did Not Participate	27.84	3.20		
Psychological States sand Traits (CPSY)	Did Participate	41.41	5.68	-1.33	0.19
	Did Not Participate	42.76	7.11		
Attitude Towards Job (CATT)	Did Participate	34.76	4.37	0.91	0.36
	Did Not Participate	34.17	4.08		

Although the level of statistical significance was not obtained (minimum acceptable significance level for this study is $p < .05$), the direction of the means of the two groups was predictable. For example, the group that participated in the legislation design indicated that they had a more positive relationship with other staff, displayed fewer symptoms of burnout, had more positive occupational coping skills, displayed fewer negative psychological states and traits, and had a more positive attitude towards their job.

5.3 Findings Associated with Determining What Independent Variables Correlated with Staff Satisfaction in the Legislative Review

In order to satisfy the third objective of this study, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was calculated to explore whether there was an association between the dependent variable (satisfaction with process) and a series of independent variables associated with worker satisfaction, and job related stress. Table 9 provides the statistical results of this procedure.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) provided evidence that there was a significant but not a strong relationship between satisfaction with the participatory decision making process and 14 measures associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress, namely; psychological coping-mastery; quantitative workload; comfort; challenge; financial reward; relationship with co-workers; promotion; role conflict; autonomy; underutilization of abilities; burnout-depersonalization; irritation; satisfaction with job; and find a new

Table 9

**Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients for
Dependent Variable "Satisfaction with Process" and
Independent Variables**

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT
Psychological Coping - Mastery	.36**
Quantitative Work Load	-.33**
Comfort	.37**
Challenge	.33**
Financial Reward	.29**
Relationship with Co-workers	.36**
Promotion	.40**
Role Conflict	-.26**
Autonomy	.35**
Underutilization of Abilities	-.25*
Burnout - Depersonalization	-.25**
Irritation	-.31**
Satisfaction with Job	.40**
Find a New Job	-.25*

* Indicates a significant relationship at $< .05$.

** Indicates a significant relationship at $< .01$.

job. The bivariate analysis identified the scales for promotion, satisfaction with job, comfort, psychological coping - mastery, and relationship with co-workers as the five strongest independent variables. The strength of the relationship between the 14 independent variables and the one dependent variable was moderate, ranging from .25 to .40.

A step-wise multiple regression analysis was completed to determine which of the 14 independent variables identified by the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient as significant had the greatest relative influence in predicting satisfaction with the participatory decision making process. Table 10 contains the results from the procedure when the nine independent variables with the strongest association (i.e. $> .30$) as identified by the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were entered into the step-wise multiple regression equation.

Table 10

Multiple Regression Analysis of "Satisfaction with Process"
and Variables Associated with Job Related Stress
and Worker Satisfaction

CONCEPT MEASURED	STANDARDIZED CORRELATION COEFFICIENT
Promotion	.27**
Job Satisfaction	.19*
Quantitative Workload	-.25*
Relationship with Co-worker	.19*
Mastery (Psychological Coping)	.11
Comfort	.06
Autonomy	.13
Challenge	.10
Irritation	-.09
Multiple r	.58
Number of Cases	109

All coefficients are least-squares estimates

** Coefficients significant at $P < .001$.

* Coefficients significant at $P < .05$.

Of the nine independent variables entered in the multiple regression equation, only the first four, namely: 1) promotion; 2) job satisfaction; 3) quantitative workload; and 4) relationship with co-worker obtained statistical significance.

Promotion was chosen to be the most significant independent variable in predicting satisfaction with the participatory decision making process. Promotion consisted of three items concerned with promotions being handled fairly, opportunities for advancement, and employers who are perceived to give everyone a chance to get ahead.

The literature review conducted for this study did not identify staff's views concerning opportunities for job promotion as a variable associated with either participatory decision making or staff satisfaction with such a process. However, it is known within the department that many staff who become more visible as a result of working on a particular decision making committee are perceived by others in the organization to have a better chance for promotion as a result of their more visible profile. What is not known is whether this phenomenon is unique to this particular organization or can be generalized to include all large bureaucracies where it is difficult for individual staff to gain recognition.

The multiple regression analysis identified the one item concerned specifically with overall job satisfaction as the next highest independent variable to predict staff satisfaction with the decision making process.

The literature review provided empirical evidence, albeit equivocal, that participatory decision making is associated with job satisfaction. Most of the discrepancy between the findings occurred because the researchers attempted to prove causality by hypothesizing that involving

staff in decisions affecting their work would increase worker satisfaction or efficiency in their jobs.

The findings of this particular study provided further evidence of the relationship between participatory decision making and job satisfaction and added the interesting dimension of measuring satisfaction with a particular participatory decision making exercise.

The analysis identified quantitative workload as the next strongest independent variable in the equation. Quantitative workload referred to four items associated with working fast, working hard, having sufficient time, and being clear about job expectations.

The literature identified sufficient time as a contextual factor which must be taken into consideration when implementing a participatory decision making process within an organization. If staff do not have sufficient time to do the participatory decision making exercise justice, if they believe their other work is suffering, or if they are required to work considerable overtime as a result of their involvement, they will usually be dissatisfied with the process.

Relationship with co-workers was empirically associated with staff satisfaction with the participatory decision making process in this particular study. Relationship with co-workers is measured by three items, namely: the opportunity to make friends; co-workers taking an interest in them; and working with friendly people. The literature review found articles describing how participatory decision making improved morale, increased communication and fostered a caring and sharing attitude between co-workers.

In conclusion, the statistical analysis identified 14 independent variables dealing with worker satisfaction and job related stress as having an association with staff's satisfaction with the process. A

multiple regression analysis identified promotion, job satisfaction, quantity of workload and relationship with co-workers as accounting for the greatest amount of variance.

These findings seemed to indicate that feeling part of, and having a vested interest in, what is occurring within the department critically affects the level of staff satisfaction with the participatory decision making process. Typically, an individual who was satisfied with the process is one who believes there is opportunity for advancement, is satisfied with his or her employment, has a healthy relationship with the other staff and has a workload which is perceived to be reasonable. This type of employee could be described as a "company-man," i.e. one who has internalized the values of the organization.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is: 1) to highlight the results of the literature and the inference which may be drawn from this review; 2) to summarize the findings of the survey as it pertained to the three research objectives and the conclusions reached based on these results; 3) to make recommendations to the Department of Social Services as it relates to involving staff in future decision making activities; and 4) to comment on the generalizability of the findings.

6.1 Conclusions Based on Literature Review

While there was an abundance of literature on participatory decision making, the greatest portion of the articles provided a description of how participatory decision making was implemented within an organization. Most often, the practice of involving staff in decisions affecting their work was defended on an ideological basis rather than by providing empirical evidence as to the benefit of such an exercise.

The earlier empirical studies dealing with participatory decision making are marred by poorly controlled research designs or experiments conducted in laboratories where the generalizability of the findings are dubious. Within the last 10 years the research has primarily focused on attempting to prove causality between participatory decision making as an independent variable and a variety of concepts associated with job satisfaction or production efficiency. While the research has been generally able to demonstrate a relationship between staff's involvement

in decisions affecting their work and job satisfaction, attempting to prove causality has resulted in equivocal findings.

One reason for the varied findings is that there is not a consistent definition as to what constitutes a participatory decision making exercise. Many authors do not define what they mean when they use the term participatory decision making and others use different labels such as quality circles to describes the same process. Within the literature, participatory decision making can include any activity from consulting with staff on a particular issue to involving all levels of staff to reach a decision by consensus. A few authors even include delegation within the participatory decision making continuum. According to the literature, participatory decision making may be a method of involving staff in one particular decision or it may be a commitment to a particular management style.

Another reason for the equivocal findings is that often researchers did not pay attention to the contextual issues associated with implementing this process. The more recent articles appeared to realize that this is a critical component which must be recognized. The latest writings made an attempt to describe the method of involving workers and the constraints within the organization such as the time required to involve staff, type of decisions being made, stability within the work environment, and staff's knowledge of the matter, to name but a few.

In conclusion, the literature appeared to recognize that usually it is beneficial to the organiation to involve staff in decisions affecting their work. However, there are instances where this is inappropriate. To undertake such an exercise under adverse decision making conditions may have detrimental effects on both the employee and the quality of the decision.

6.2 Summary of Research Findings

The results of this research indicated that the majority of frontline staff were satisfied with the process used by the Department of Social Services and Community Health to involve them in the development of child welfare legislation, as measured by a self-administered questionnaire designed specifically for this study.

Approximately 58% of the staff believed they had sufficient experience in child welfare to effectively contribute, while only 54% stated they had two or more years of experience. From these data, it may be assumed that not all frontline staff believe two years is required to become fully trained in child welfare, at least as it pertained to having sufficient experience to comment on proposed legislative changes.

The majority of staff were neutral in their opinion as to whether they felt more committed to implementing the legislative changes as a result of their involvement in the process. Since a greater commitment to implementation is one of the reasons given by advocates of staff participation in decision making, this issue requires further exploration. Given the fact that this concept was measured by a single item in a questionnaire designed specifically for this survey, the reliability of the test warrants further examination.

Staff did not believe it important to have high-ranking officials interact with staff during the review process. While the majority of workers disagreed with this requirement, a significant number of employees were neutral. Again, this concept was measured by a single item question, raising the issue of reliability. Secondly, not all staff had an opportunity to be involved in the sessions held with high-ranking officials which could further distort the findings. Thirdly, the process

developed by the department to involve high-ranking officials may not have been considered appropriate by frontline staff. Again, this issue requires further examination before reaching even a tentative conclusion.

While the study provided statistical evidence as to the satisfaction of staff with the process, it did not provide any conclusive indication as to why staff believed this to be the case, or how this process affected their perception of implementation.

Frontline child welfare staff were categorized into two groups according to whether they participated in the development of the legislation or not. A chi-square and a student's t test were administered to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of gender, professional preparation in social work, years of experience in Alberta's child system, and a variety of concepts associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress. The statistical procedures indicated that the difference between the two groups were not statistically significant. However, the student's t test provided evidence that the direction of the mean for the two groups was predictable. For example, the group which participated in the development of the legislation measured: 1) higher in terms of a positive relationship with staff; 2) lower in regards to symptoms of burnout; 3) higher in terms of occupational coping skills; 4) lower in terms of negative psychological states and traits; and 5) higher in terms of positive attitudes towards their job. In general, the group that participated in the development of the legislation displayed slightly more healthy attitudes towards their employment in terms of their ability to cope with work related stress and job satisfaction.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient confirmed for this study a correlation between staff satisfaction with the process used

by the department, to involve them in the development of the legislation and 14 concepts associated with worker satisfaction and job related stress. The strength of the relationship between the 14 independent variables and the one dependent variable was moderate, ranging from .25 to .40.

A multiple regression equation loading the nine highest correlated independent variables identified by the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient indicated that staff's perception of opportunities for promotion, job satisfaction, quantitative workload and relationship with co-workers were the strongest predictors of staff satisfaction with the participatory decision making process. This leads one to conclude that in this study, there were four key contextual factors which influenced staff's perception of their satisfaction with the creation process.

6.3 Recommendations to the Department Based on the Findings

This research demonstrated that frontline staff were generally satisfied with the process used by the department to involve them in the development of child welfare legislation.

Chapter Two of this report provided a detailed description of the involvement process. Extremely tight timelines, lack of clarity as to the department's definition of participatory decision making and the purpose of involving frontline staff, turbulence within the senior management level of the department, and role confusion created by the simultaneous program and legislative reshaping initiatives of the Cavanagh Board of Review and the department made the situation less than

ideal. However, in spite of these constraints the process was viewed as positive from the frontline staff's perspective.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Department of Social Services continue to involve frontline staff when developing or significantly changing legislation.

It is recommended that in the future the department be clearer in defining and articulating the purpose and the process for involving staff in decisions affecting their work. Also the contextual issues associated with the process should be addressed before reaching a decision to involve staff, such as: 1) the time required to reach a decision; 2) whether staff have sufficient knowledge of the matter to effectively contribute; 3) what type of forum would be suitable for the issue under discussion; and 4) cost effectiveness of the proposed process. The contextual issues should be recognized and appropriate decisions made based on the situation in advance of implementing a decision making process.

6.4 Generalizability of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore whether frontline staff were satisfied with the process used by the Department of Social Services and Community Health to involve them in the creation of the child welfare legislation. To this end, the research reached its goal. However, it cannot be assumed that all levels of the department were satisfied with their involvement in the decision making process. In fact, it is entirely possible that staff in more senior positions within the organization were less satisfied with the process because they did not

have what they believe to be sufficient influence over the final decision.

The development of legislation is sufficiently different from program or administrative decisions in that the final authority rests with the Legislative Assembly. Staff may have very different expectations as to the amount of involvement they are entitled to under these circumstances, compared to situations in which all the decision making authority is vested within the organization.

The expectations of staff change over time and are influenced by previous experience. If staff had not been given a previous opportunity for involvement, they may have been very satisfied with the level of involvement. However, as they become more experienced, they may expect to have more influence in decisions affecting their work.

In conclusion, the research was designed to explore one level of staff's satisfaction with a particular process. While there is much to be learned from examining the method of involving frontline workers in the creation of legislation and measuring staff's perception of its success, caution should be used when assuming similar results in other situations. It is therefore recommended that further investigation occur before generalizing the findings.

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Appendix A

Letter Describing Study to Sample
and a Request for Their Cooperation

Department of Social Services
10030 - 107 Street
8th Floor, Seventh Street Plaza
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4

June 2, 1986

Dear Colleague:

I am presently on a leave of absence from the Department of Social Services to complete my Masters of Social Work Degree in the Management Speciality at the University of Calgary.

My thesis topic, under the direction of Dr. Joe Hornick, Faculty of Social Welfare, investigates the level of satisfaction of front line child welfare staff with the process used by the department to involve them in the creation of the Alberta Child Welfare Act (1984).

I have enclosed a self administered questionnaire which is designed specifically to measure staff's satisfaction with the participation process. I have as well incorporated a standardized test to measure the general level of job satisfaction. I am asking your cooperation in completing the forms which should take less than 30 minutes. Please return them to me by June 20, 1986.

The attached documentation contains five sections. Section I provides instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Section II collects background information on the respondents. Section III identifies those respondents who participated in the creation of the Child Welfare legislation. Section IV collects respondents' comments on their experience, and Section V consists of a standardized measure of staff satisfaction.

Also enclosed is a memo from Michael Ozerkevich, the Deputy Minister, endorsing my topic and asking your cooperation in completing this survey.

Your responses will remain strictly confidential. Your name will not appear on any forms or information used in the study.

.../2

-2-

A complete copy of the thesis will be presented to Alberta Social Services and will also be available through the University of Calgary library. Should you be interested in the results of the study an executive summary will be made available to you upon request. Please contact me directly at 427-6431 if you are interested in a copy.

I would very much appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey and returning it to me through the regular departmental mail system, in the enclosed self addressed envelope.

Your participation is critical for the successful completion of this research project. However, your participation is completely voluntary. Should you choose not to participate, I would appreciate you returning the questionnaire to me.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Sharon Heron

SH/

Appendix B

Instructions to Respondents

Section I: INSTRUCTIONS

You have been identified as an employee of the Department of Social Services who was employed in a social work position on October 31, 1983. As a result of your employment you may have been involved in the process organized by the department to obtain your comments on Bill 105, which was the first public document outlining the proposed child welfare legislation. I am completing a research project to determine your level of satisfaction with the process.

You will notice that the second section of the survey is designed to collect background information of each of the respondents, while section III determines who was involved in the departmental review process of Bill 105. Section IV asks specific questions on your perception about the process. This section is divided into two portions: the first part asks you to recall how you felt at the time of your involvement; the second part asks how you now feel about the process. Section V consists of a standardized instrument to measure your general level of satisfaction with your job.

In order to refresh your memory, the initial drafting of the Bill, in consultation with Cabinet and Caucus, was done by the departmental Legislative Review Committee. This document was tabled in the Legislature in October, 1983 as Bill 105. The public and staff were invited to comment on Bill 105 during the subsequent months.

Departmental staff were given a specific opportunity to participate. The Legislative Review Committee organized meetings in each region to obtain staff input on the proposed legislation. All staff involved in the child welfare program were invited to attend and they were given the opportunity to present their views verbally. For those staff who chose not to attend or who were unavailable, written submissions could be sent directly to the Legislative Review Committee.

The results of the review process, along with comments from the public, were studied at the government level and incorporated into Bill 35 which was tabled April 18, 1984. Bill 35 received Royal Assent in June, 1984 and was proclaimed, the Child Welfare Act (Alberta), July 1, 1985.

Appendix C

Self-Administered Questionnaire

Do Not Write
In This Space
(For Coding
Purposes Only)

Section II: Background Information

Case Number
Identification

1. Name of District Office _____ V201

For the following questions, please check () the appropriate response:

2. Gender:

___ Male

V202

___ Female

3. Age (in years) _____ V203

4. Present type of caseload.

___ child welfare

___ income security

___ diversified (income security and child welfare combined)

___ other (please specify) _____

V204

5. On October 31, 1983 the total number of years of district office child welfare experience you had with the department
Years _____

V205

6. On October 31, 1983 the total number of years of child welfare experience you had in another Province or State: Years _____ V206

7. Please indicate which category best describes the highest
level of education you have currently attained.

Indicate year
attained

___ High School _____

Social Service Worker Diploma (2 years
community college)

___ incomplete _____

___ complete _____

Social Work Degree

___ B.S.W. incomplete -----

___ B.S.W. complete -----

___ M.S.W. incomplete -----

___ M.S.W. complete -----

___ Other Diploma (please specify) -----

___ Other Degree (please specify) -----

V207

Section III

For the following questions please choose the appropriate response and indicate your response with a check.

1. Did you respond to the request made by the department for comments on Bill 105?

___ Yes (go to question 3)

___ No (go to question 2)

V301

2. PLEASE COMPLETE THIS QUESTION AND PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO SECTION V. (Please select only one response which most accurately reflects your situation)

The reason I did not participate in the creation of the legislation was:

___ I didn't want to

___ I didn't believe I had anything to contribute

___ there was no organized method available to me

___ I didn't know I had the opportunity to participate

___ I was ill or absent from work during that period of time

___ I was not involved in the child welfare program

___ other (please specify) -----

V302

3. For this question, you may choose more than one response. (Please indicate how you participated, ie, verbal presentation and with whom, ie, on my own)
I did participate in the creation of the legislation (check any of the following that apply):

___ by making a verbal presentation to the Legislative Review Committee:

V30300

___ on my own	V30301
___ as a member of a departmental committee or group (ie., district office, unit)	V30302
___ as a member of an organization external to the department	V30303
___ by submitting a written document to the Legislative Review Committee:	V30304
___ on my own	V30305
___ as a member of a departmental committee or group	V30306
___ as a member of an organization external to the department	V30307
___ by attending the meetings arranged by the Legislative Review Committee	V30308
___ other (please specify) _____ _____	V30309

Section IV

For the following items please indicate by circling the appropriate number from 1 to 5 the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. One (1) indicates you do NOT agree, five (5) indicates you agree VERY MUCH and three (3) indicates a neutral (N) response. You may choose any number within this range which best reflects your opinion. If you are unsure or if the statement does not apply to your situation please circle U.

disagree very much	disagree	neutral	agree	agree very much	uncertain or does not apply
1	2	3	4	5	U

For the following items, please reflect on how you felt about each of the statements AT THE TIME you were participating in the review process.

1. At the time of my participation in responding to Bill 105 I believed the review process established by the department was an effective method of obtaining my input.

1	2	3	4	5	U	V401
---	---	---	---	---	---	------
2. Before Bill 105 was tabled in the legislature:
 - a) I would have preferred to have had MORE input into the contents of Bill 105.

1	2	3	4	5	U	V402a
---	---	---	---	---	---	-------

disagree				agree			uncertain or	
very much	disagree	neutral	agree	very much			does not apply	
1	2	3	4	5			U	
b) I would have preferred to be personally involved in preparing a position paper reflecting proposed changes.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V402b
c) I would have preferred to respond to a government position paper reflecting proposed changes.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V402c
d) I believed the process established for staff participation was a satisfactory way of receiving my input.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V402d
3. I believed there was sufficient time allowed by the department to comment on Bill 105.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V403
4. At the time of my involvement in responding to Bill 105:								
a) I believed I had sufficient understanding of why the legislation was being changed.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V404a
b) I knew that any proposed child welfare legislation would reflect the views of cabinet and caucus.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V404b
c) I believed that I had sufficient experience in child welfare to make comments on the proposed legislation.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V404c
5. I believed that the Legislative Review Committee was interested in the comments I provided.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V405
6. I believed that the Legislative Review Committee had already decided upon the final version of the child welfare legislation before I responded to Bill 105.								
			1	2	3	4	5	U
								V406

disagree					agree	uncertain or
very much	disagree	neutral	agree	very much	does not apply	
1	2	3	4	5	U	

For the following items indicate how you CURRENTLY FEEL about each of the following statements:

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 7. I now believe the review process established by the department to review Bill 105 was an effective method of obtaining my input. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V407 |
| 8. I now believe that the Legislative Review Committee was interested in the comments I provided. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V408 |
| 9. I now believe that my participation had a positive impact on the final version of the legislation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V409 |
| 10. I now believe that the Legislative Review Committee had already decided upon the final version of the child welfare legislation, before I responded to Bill 105. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V410 |
| 11. Regardless of the process used to obtain staff participation in the child welfare legislation, I believe it is important for staff to participate in proposed child welfare legislation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V411 |
| 12. I believe that it is important to establish a process for the public to participate in proposed child welfare legislation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V412 |
| 13. As a result of my experience with the development of the new child welfare legislation, I believe that the public had more of an impact on the final version of the legislation than the departmental staff. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V413 |
| 14. As a result of my participation in the development of the Child Welfare Act, I feel more committed to implementing the legislation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | U | V414 |

disagree very much	disagree	neutral	agree	agree very much	uncertain or does not apply					
1	2	3	4	5	U					
15. As a result of my participation in the review process, I believe I have a better understanding of the intent of the legislation.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V415
16. For me, the most significant part of the review process was having an opportunity to interact with senior departmental officials.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V416
17. For me, the most significant part of the review process was the opportunity to meet the Minister.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V417
18. If asked today, I would be prepared to become involved in a similar review process with the department to create legislation.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V418
19. For me, it is important that the organization allows me an opportunity to participate in proposed organizational changes.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V419
20. I only want to participate in organizational changes when I am reasonably certain my opinions will be reflected in the final version of the change effort.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V420
21. If the organization had not provided a special procedure for staff to voice their comments on the child welfare legislation, I would have become involved as a private citizen in making my comments known.				1	2	3	4	5	U	V421

Section V .

PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION INVENTORY

A SELF ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE TO
MEASURE THE LEVEL OF WORK SATISFACTION
AND JOB STRESS AMONG SOCIAL WORKERS

ADAPTED FROM
CENTER FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
1005 JENKINS AVENUE
NORMAN, OKLAHOMA 73019

INTRODUCTION

This instrument has been designed by the Center for Social Work Research, University of Oklahoma. The questionnaire has been slightly modified by the researcher to make the content relevant to front line staff employed by the Department of Social Services, Province of Alberta. The survey is designed to obtain information on several dimensions of job satisfaction, stress, and the work environment.

INSTRUCTIONS

The questions that follow are designed to be straight forward. For the following statements please indicate by circling the appropriate number, the response which best describes your perceptions.

1. Is there any group of people at your work place that you think of as your co-workers--people whom you see just about every day and with whom you have to work closely in order to do your job well?

1 YES

2 NO SKIP TO Q. 3

V501

2. Now thinking about these co-workers, how true is it generally that they . . .

Very True	Somewhat True	A Little True	Not at all True
--------------	------------------	---------------------	-----------------------

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| a. are warm and friendly when you are troubled about something? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V502a |
| b. listen attentively to you when you need to talk about something? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V502b |
| c. show approval when you do something well? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V502c |
| d. show understanding when you are upset or irritable? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V502d |

3. In the past month, how often were you able to talk with a co-worker(s) when you were troubled about something?

VERY OFTEN	FAIRLY OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
1	2	3	4	5

V503

4. Here are some things that people say or think about their jobs. How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (CHECK ONE BOX PER STATEMENT)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
-------------------	-------	----------	----------------------

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| 1. The most important thing about my job is that it provides me with the things I need in my life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V50401 |
| 2. I can put up with a lot of things on my job as long as the pay is good. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V50402 |
| 3. Time solves most problems on my job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V50403 |
| 4. I have to accept my job as it is because there is nothing I can do to change it. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V50404 |
| 5. As soon as I leave work I put it out of my mind. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V50405 |

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
6. I don't really expect to get much pleasure out of work.	1	2	3	4	V50406
7. I have little control over the things that happen to me on the job.	1	2	3	4	V50407
8. There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have on my job.	1	2	3	4	V50408
9. There is little I can do to change any of the important things in my job.	1	2	3	4	V50409
10. Sometimes I feel I am being pushed around in my job.	1	2	3	4	V50410
11. I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems in the job.	1	2	3	4	V50411
12. What happens to me in the future on my job, depends on me.	1	2	3	4	V50412
13. On my job, I can do just about anything I really set my mind to do.	1	2	3	4	V50413

5. Here are some items which deal with different aspects of your work situation. Please indicate how often these aspects appear in your job. (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER PER STATEMENT)

	Very Often	Fairly Often	Some- times	Occasion- ally	Rarely	
a. How often are you clear on what your job responsibilities are?	1	2	3	4	5	V505c
b. How often does your job require you to work very fast?	1	2	3	4	5	V505b
c. How often can you predict what others will expect of you on the job?	1	2	3	4	5	V505c
d. How often does your job require you to work very hard?	1	2	3	4	5	V505d
e. How much of the time are your work objectives well defined?	1	2	3	4	5	V505e

f. How often does your work leave you with little time to get things done?	1	2	3	4	5	V505f
g. How often are you clear about what others expect of you on the job?	1	2	3	4	5	V505g
h. How often is there a great deal to be done?	1	2	3	4	5	V505h
i. How often do you feel professional values conflict with what you have to do on the job?	1	2	3	4	5	V505i

6. Now here are some statements that describe the work situation. Please indicate how true you feel each statement is of your job. (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER PER STATEMENT)

	Very <u>True</u>	Some- what <u>True</u>	A Little <u>True</u>	Not at all <u>True</u>	
a. I am given a lot of chances to make friends.	1	2	3	4	V506a
b. The chances for promotion are good.	1	2	3	4	V506b
c. I have the opportunity to develop my own special abilities.	1	2	3	4	V506c
d. Travel to and from work is convenient.	1	2	3	4	V506d
e. I never seem to have enough time to get everything done on my job.	1	2	3	4	V506e
f. I am not asked to do excessive amounts of work.	1	2	3	4	V506f
g. The work is interesting.	1	2	3	4	V506g
h. The pay is good.	1	2	3	4	V506h
i. I have the freedom to decide what I do on my job.	1	2	3	4	V506i
j. I am given a chance to do the things I do best.	1	2	3	4	V506j
k. The job security is good.	1	2	3	4	V506k

	<u>Very True</u>	<u>Some- what True</u>	<u>A Little True</u>	<u>Not at all True</u>	
l. The problems I am expected to solve are hard enough.	1	2	3	4	V506l
m. On my job, I can't satisfy everybody at the same time.	1	2	3	4	V506m
n. My fringe benefits are good.	1	2	3	4	V506n
o. The physical surroundings are pleasant.	1	2	3	4	V506o
p. I can see the results of my work.	1	2	3	4	V506p
q. I can forget about my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	V506q
r. I have enough time to get the job done.	1	2	3	4	V506r
s. I am free from the conflicting demands that others make of me.	1	2	3	4	V506s
t. The hours are good.	1	2	3	4	V506t
u. Promotions are handled fairly.	1	2	3	4	V506u
v. The people I work with take a personal interest in me.	1	2	3	4	V506v
w. I have too much work to do everything well.	1	2	3	4	V506w
x. My employer is concerned about giving everybody a chance to get ahead.	1	2	3	4	V506x
y. To satisfy some people on my job, I have to upset others.	1	2	3	4	V506y
z. The people I work with are friendly.	1	2	3	4	V506z
aa. I have a lot to say about what happens on my job.	1	2	3	4	V506aa
bb. I decide the speed with which I work.	1	2	3	4	V506bb
cc. It is basically my own responsibility to decide how my job gets done.	1	2	3	4	V506cc
dd. I decide who I work with on the job.	1	2	3	4	V506dd

7. Now think about your work this past year, how would you rate?

Low <-----> High

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| a. your <u>knowledge</u> of the subject matter in your area of practice? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | V507a |
| b. your <u>mastery</u> of the practice methods(s) relevant to your job? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | V507b |
| c. the <u>effectiveness</u> of your professional practice? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | V507c |
| d. the <u>fulfillment</u> of your professional practice | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | V507d |
| e. the <u>usefulness</u> of your formal academic/educational preparation for practice? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | V507e |

8. Would you say that your work life is better, the same or worse than:

Better Same Worse

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|--------|
| 1. it was a year ago. | 1 | 2 | 3 | V50801 |
| 2. it will be a year or so from now. | 1 | 2 | 3 | V50802 |
| 3. the jobs of most other people you know. | 1 | 2 | 3 | V50803 |

9. Is there one particular person you think of as your supervisor (someone directly over you)?

1 YES

2 NO Skip to Q.12

V509

10. How true is it that this supervisor . . . (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER PER STATEMENT)

	Some what True	A Little True	Not at all True
Very True			

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|-------|
| a. is warm and friendly when you are troubled about something? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V510a |
| b. listens attentively to you when you need to talk about something? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V510b |
| c. shows approval when you do something well? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V510c |

d. shows understanding when you are
upset or irritable?

1 2 3 4

V510d

11. In the past month, how often were you able to talk with your supervisor
when you were troubled about something?

VERY OFTEN FAIRLY OFTEN SOMETIMES RARELY NEVER
1 2 3 4 5

V511

12. When you have difficulties in your work situation, how often do you?

Never Once in Fairly Very
a While Often Often

1. tell yourself that they are unimportant. 1 2 3 4 V51201

Never Once in Fairly Very
a While Often Often

2. take some action to get rid of them. 1 2 3 4 V51202

3. talk to others to find a solution. 1 2 3 4 V51203

4. notice people who have more
difficulties than you. 1 2 3 4 V51204

5. try to pay attention only to your
duties and overlook them. 1 2 3 4 V51205

6. remind yourself that for everything
bad there is also something good. 1 2 3 4 V51206

7. wait for difficulties to work
themselves out. 1 2 3 4 V51207

13. The following items deal with the use of your skills and abilities.
Circle the number of the scale that comes closest to your judgement.

Hardly Very
Every Often

1. How often does your job let you use
the skills and knowledge you learned
in school? 1 2 3 4 5 V51301

2. How often can you use skills from your
previous experience and training? 1 2 3 4 5 V51302

3. How often are you given a chance to do
the things you do best? 1 2 3 4 5 V51303

14> All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job?

VERY SATISFIED SOMEWHAT SATISFIED NOT TOO SATISFIED NOT AT ALL SATISFIED

1

2

3

4

V514

15. Taking everything into consideration, how likely is it that you will make a genuine effort to find a new job with another employer within the next year?

VERY LIKELY

1

SOMEWHAT LIKELY

2

NOT AT ALL LIKELY

3

V515

16. Why is that? _____

V516(139, 14

17. Here are some statements of job-related feelings in direct work with clients. Please read each statement carefully and decide how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. Place a circle around the number on the scale that comes closest to your feelings.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree				
a. I can easily understand how my clients feel about things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517a	
b. I feel I treat some of my clients as if they were "impersonal" objects.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517b	
c. I deal very effectively with the problems of my clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517c	
d. I have become more callous toward people since I took this job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517d	
e. I feel I am positively influencing people's lives through my work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517e	
f. I don't really care what happens to some of my clients.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517f	
g. I feel that this job is hardening me emotionally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V517g	

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| h. I feel very energetic. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517h |
| i. I can easily create a relaxed atmosphere with my clients. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517i |
| j. I feel exhilarated after working closely with my clients. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517j |
| k. Many clients cannot be helped no matter what I do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517k |
| l. I feel clients blame me for some of their problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517l |
| m. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517m |
| n. In my job, I deal with emotional problems very calmly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517n |
| o. I feel "burned-out" from my work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517o |
| p. I find that my personal values and those of my clients differ greatly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517p |
| q. I find it difficult to get useful feedback from my clients. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | V517q |

18. Thinking about the clients you served last year, how successful would you say you were in your professional work? Circle the number that comes closest to your feelings.

VERY
SUCCESSFUL

VERY
UNSUCCESSFUL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	V518
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------

19. Now here are some questions about how people feel about themselves and their job. When you think about yourself and your job these days, how much of the time do you feel this way? (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER PER STATEMENT)

- | | Never or
Little of
the Time | Some
of the
Time | A Good
Part of
the Time | Most
of the
Time | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| a. feel nervous? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V519a |
| b. feel irritated? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V519b |
| c. feel jittery? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V519c |
| d. feel calm? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V519d |
| e. feel unhappy? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | V519e |

f. feel good?	1	2	3	4	V519f
g. feel angry?	1	2	3	4	V519g
h. feel depressed?	1	2	3	4	V519h
i. feel fidgety?	1	2	3	4	V519i
j. feel blue?	1	2	3	4	V519j
k. feel cheerful?	1	2	3	4	V519k
l. feel sad?	1	2	3	4	V519l

20. How many days of work did you miss last month because of not feeling well (include mental health days)?

1 NONE	3 TWO	5 FOUR	
2 ONE	4 THREE	6 FIVE OR MORE	V520

21. Here is a list of physical conditions. Please check how often each has happened to you in the last year. (CIRCLE ONE NUMBER PER STATEMENT)

	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	
a. trouble breathing or shortness of breath?	1	2	3	4	V521a
b. pains in back or spine?	1	2	3	4	V521b
	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	
c. becoming very tired in a short time?	1	2	3	4	V521c
d. having trouble getting to sleep?	1	2	3	4	V521d
e. finding it difficult to get up in the morning?	1	2	3	4	V521e
f. find your heart pounding or racing?	1	2	3	4	V521f
g. hands sweating so that they feel damp and clammy?	1	2	3	4	V521g
h. poor appetite?	1	2	3	4	V521h
i. spells or dizziness?	1	2	3	4	V521i

j. having trouble staying asleep?	1	2	3	4	V521j
k. having an upset stomach?	1	2	3	4	V521k
l. having headaches?	1	2	3	4	V521l

22. Here is a list of things that many people look for or want out of life. Please study the list carefully and indicate which one of them is the most important and which one of them is the least important to you.

	1 True Friendship (close companionship)
MOST IMPORTANT _____ (NUMBER)	2 Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)
LEAST IMPORTANT _____ (NUMBER)	3 Self-respect (self-esteem)
	4 Comfortable Life (a prosperous life)

V522a
V522b

23. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life these days? Circle the number on the scale that comes closest to your feelings.

NOT AT ALL SATISFIED

COMPLETELY SATISFIED

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

V523

24. Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. Please feel free to write any comments in the space below. We are particularly interested in your perception of our profession and its development. For example, is the profession a better profession today than it was four years ago? If so, why; if not, why not?

Appendix D

Deputy Minister's Endorsement of Study

SOCIAL SERVICES
AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

FROM Michael J. Ozerkevich
Deputy Minister
Social Services

OUR FILE REFERENCE

YOUR FILE REFERENCE

TO Staff

DATE May 23, 1986

TELEPHONE

SUBJECT Thesis Project: Front Line Staff's Satisfaction With
Involvement in Creating Child Welfare Legislation

This is to advise all departmental staff that Sharon Heron, who is currently on a leave of absence from the Department to complete her masters degree in Social Work, has reviewed her thesis project with the Departmental Research and Ethics Review Committee and myself. I endorse her project and request that you assist her in obtaining the necessary data by completing the enclosed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. I also sanction the use of the department's mail system to return the responses to the student in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.



Michael J. Ozerkevich

MJO/jb

cc: Dr. Joe Hornick