

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP OF COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION, JOB SATISFACTION, AND SELF-REPORTED ABSENTEEISM

by Lindsay Nicole Ehlers

The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between communication satisfaction of employees with co-workers, supervisors, and upper management, job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism. It is hypothesized that communication satisfaction has a positive influence on job satisfaction. Job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism were explored as well as the relationship of job satisfaction playing a mediating role between communication satisfaction and absenteeism. Results were analyzed with correlations, multiple regressions and t-tests. It was found that communication satisfaction with co-workers, supervisors and upper management have significant positive relationships with job satisfaction. The study found job satisfaction had no significant relationship to performing the mediating role between communication satisfaction and absenteeism. This paper also presents limitations and directions for further research.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION,
JOB SATISFACTION, AND SELF-REPORTED ABSENTEEISM

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Introduction

Jobs. What comes to mind when prompted with this word? Maybe money, long hours, co-workers, benefits, breaks, or livelihood. People spend over half of their lives at some sort of job. Most of the time people identify themselves with their occupation. Looking at how the organization affects the workers is something that scholars investigated for many years now. Yet, with all of the investigating and theorizing though it seems it is very tough to change the work atmosphere. For example, many people still work within very structured/vertical organizations that do not take into consideration the feelings of the employees. Since communication is downward and feedback is limited with such companies employees feel like they have no voice and are unimportant. Many employees within an organization such as this do not like working and find it hard to attend. Employees are not going to work because they want to do things in life that are more satisfying, so absenteeism is becoming an issue in many workplaces (“Study: Non-ill Sick”, 2002).

However, on the other side of the coin there are organizations that do take into consideration the employees’ feelings and thoughts. Maister (2001) discussed that an organization that works to satisfy and cares about employees will have employees reciprocate their actions by working harder and increasing profits. These companies have the philosophy that if employees are satisfied then more work can be completed and can lead to more profit. Employees might like the job because the organization is concerned with their thoughts and this might guide them into work more often because it is a place of enjoyment and fulfillment.

Interestingly, satisfaction is a concept that has been examined by organizational communication scholars because being satisfied is something people strive for within this society. Employees want to like their jobs. Usually, when employees are satisfied with their jobs then they will attend work more often.

Looking at the relationship between employee’s communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and absenteeism is something that merits one’s attention because organizations have to illustrate especially with the work environment that they are concerned about their employees. This concern can in turn help the organization in retention of the good employees and making it an organization that everyone wants to work for.

CHAPTER 1

Job satisfaction and job performance have been issues of concern in communication literature for quite some time. Management and communication scholars as well as practitioners have this interest because higher quality performance and the greater satisfaction of employees can lead to a better corporate culture and greater effectiveness in the organization (Gruneberg, 1979; Nemiroff & Ford, 1976; Pettit, Goris, & Vaught, 1997; Steers, 1977).

While, many studies have been conducted looking at both job satisfaction and performance, the focus of this study is job satisfaction. Prior research has illustrated a weak to moderate relationship between job satisfaction and job performance (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Pettit et al. 1997; Vroom 1964). Previous studies have covered job satisfaction and job performance very broadly because there has not been consistent definitions formulated as to what job satisfaction or job performance actually encompasses. Therefore, one must consider each singular realm first because when each definition is solidified more significant conclusions can be drawn. Focusing on job satisfaction is needed because examining this concept is important in understanding how employees act and feel in the workplace.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction's relationship with different variables has been studied and the results have illustrated mixed reports as to the actual relationship between them because of the lack of consistency as to what the definition of job satisfaction entails. Studies have looked at job satisfaction and its relationship to job commitment (e.g., Lodahl & Kejner, 1965; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979), loyalty to company (Trombetta & Rogers, 1988), the impact of positive and negative affectivity with relation to absenteeism and tardiness (Iverson & Deery, 2001) and communication apprehension (Richmond, McCroskey, & Davis, 1982). Some researchers found there is a positive relationship between employee satisfaction and productivity (Dunnette, Campbell, & Jaastad, 1976; King, 1970). Other researchers argue the relationship does not exist between these two variables (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Vroom, 1964). As the prior studies (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Dunnette, et al., 1976; King, 1970; Vroom, 1964) illustrate, job satisfaction has been investigated for quite some time yet the results are still not conclusive as to the relationship between job satisfaction and certain variables. The definition of job satisfaction will be addressed further into the study.

Job satisfaction is important to almost every employer in the United States. The reason is due to job satisfaction making a better working environment (Gruneberg, 1979; Nemiroff & Ford, 1976; Pettit et al., 1997; Steers, 1977). Also, working on increasing job satisfaction has been shown to correlate to financial success for organizations (Maister, 2001). All of these factors are important to shareholders as well as the company's reputation, because if the employees like working then they will have more positive things to say about the company, which is a good public relations move.

Additionally, job satisfaction has been linked to many different issues when considering employees. Studies have been performed to see what the predictor of job satisfaction is. Some of the studies conducted include looking at employee attitudes toward change (Vielhaber, 1983), the effect of gender (Serini, Toth, Wright, & Emig, 1997), the quality of friendships at work (Winstead, Derlega, Montgomery, & Pilkington, 1995), communication intervention with information regarding job and company (Hunt & Ebeling, 1983), and management communication style and its impact on employees (Richmond, McCroskey, Davis & Koontz, 1980).

The relationship between communication and satisfaction has been investigated by many communication scholars (Faicione, McCroskey, & Daly, 1977; Pettit et al., 1997; Pincus, 1986; Richmond & McCroskey, 1979; Wheelless, Wheelless, & Howard, 1984). It seems organizations are always stating in job descriptions that good communication is essential. Additionally, having communication consultants enter in to tell the company how to better communicate is a growing business. Clearly, good communication skills are essential to all employees; therefore the relationship between communication and satisfaction should be a something employers concentrate on more with employees in the workplace. There is a relationship between communication and satisfaction that needs to be of a greater importance for organizations to achieve a higher success.

Communication Satisfaction

Communication satisfaction in the organizational setting has been important in research. Studies completed in the late 1970s to early 1980s helped to recognize the significance of communication satisfaction (Faicione et al., 1977; Goldhaber, Porter, Yates, & Lesniak, 1978; Richmond & McCroskey, 1979). Communication satisfaction is studied in the workplace because employers want employees to be effective and efficient communicators for their

organization so they can perform their job. Also, communication satisfaction should be studied because employees should ideally be satisfied while working. Ultimately, better communicators create a more optimal workplace. Organizational communication scholars have analyzed the concept of communication satisfaction to consider employees' attitudes.

Goldhaber et al. (1978) contributed to the field of organizational communication by synthesizing and reviewing all literature in the area at the time. Goldhaber et al. (1978) defined two major research perspectives for communication within organizations. The first one is the information flow or process perspective which explains whether the communication flow is upward or downward in the organization. This perspective perceives an organization as more a machine rather than individual employees bringing their own unique characteristics to the table. Information flow or process perspective also examines the structure of the organization, the communication roles that are involved in the system, the channel, and message factors that play a role in how the organization functions (Goldhaber et al., 1978).

Goldhaber et al. (1978) defined the second research perspective as the perception/attitudes or the perception perspective. This perspective explains employees' attitudes about issues in the organization. As Goldhaber et al. (1978) state, "the basic tenet is that an individual's cognitive and affective perceptions of the organization will influence that individual's behavior in the organization" (p. 79). The factors involved with perceptual/attitudinal research include the perceptions of climate, information adequacy, and satisfaction (Goldhaber et al., 1978). The perception perspective with communication satisfaction emerges because it is a multidimensional construct that examines employees' perceptions about different forms of communication, which is one of the concepts involved with the present study.

As stated previously, absenteeism from work is a growing problem within the United States and it is costing organizations increasingly more money each year ("Study: Non-ill Sick", 2002). Since obtaining employee records could not be accomplished for this study, addressing self-reported absenteeism will be used to see how absenteeism plays a role with job and communication satisfaction.

The overall purpose of this study is to consider if job satisfaction is a mediating factor between communication satisfaction and self-reported job absenteeism. Past studies (Alder & Golan, 1981; Blau 1985; Sagie, 1998; Ulleberg & Rundmo, 1997) found job satisfaction to be an

influence in perceived absenteeism rates. These three studies of job satisfaction included communication aspects in their studies. However, the present study is going to separate the communication satisfaction and job satisfaction variables so that one can examine the actual relationship between communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism. It is hypothesized that communication satisfaction does play a role in job satisfaction for employees. Job satisfaction plays a role in the absenteeism of employees. Since absenteeism can cost organizations in work lost and time it is important to consider for this study (“Study: Non-ill Sick”, 2002). So, with this knowledge it seems that job satisfaction should be a mediating factor.

Since there has been quite a lot written about job and communication satisfaction the study will need to separate the literature into sections. The first section will be discussing literature involved with co-workers, which essentially are employees that are equal counterparts. Co-workers are usually the employees that spend the most time with one another as compared to the supervisors and upper management positions. After examining literature with co-workers, the study will address supervisors and their role in the communication and job satisfaction of employees. Since the employee will ask their supervisor for advice on their job, it is important for the communication of the employee-supervisor relationship to be examined. Lastly, upper management or the boss’s boss is another important aspect to consider because this management position can play a significant role in promotion ability and responsibility granted to employees. Examining the connection between an employee and boss’s boss will look at what type of impact truly exists with between these two people within an organization. Looking at literature describing job and communication satisfaction in relationship to co-workers, supervisors and the boss’s boss is necessary when developing this study since each one of these aspects needs to be considered separately because each one can have a different effect upon the employee.

Co-workers

Co-workers are people that an employee must interact with on a daily basis. The employee goes to their co-workers with minor questions or concerns before presenting them to their supervisors because they are perceived as being equal counterparts. Co-workers are the people in the organization that employees confide in, become close friends with, share lunch and breaks with and overall they are the people that employees spend most of their work days with. So, examining some research completed with job and communication satisfaction when it applies

to co-workers is important because if these are the people that employees spend most of their time with then looking at how the co-workers help or hinder job and communication satisfaction is essential.

Both job and communication satisfaction when pertaining to co-workers is examined in the Downs and Hazen (1977) study. Downs and Hazen (1977) developed a test that measures the employee's perception about the communication occurring within the organization. The analytic test exemplifies an individual's satisfaction with information flow and relationship variables. The Downs and Hazen (1977) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) has eight distinct dimensions:

- (1) communication climate (general response to the workplace on both organizational and personal levels)
- (2) supervisor satisfaction (employee's attitude about communication with immediate supervisor, including both upward and downward communication, openness to communication as well as listening by supervisor)
- (3) media quality (refers to items such as whether meetings are well organized and whether written communications are clear)
- (4) horizontal informal communication (employee's perceptions of grapevine, extent to which informal communication is accurate and free flowing)
- (5) organizational integration (employee's thoughts about information they receive about their job tasks and department policies)
- (6) personal feedback (refers to what an employee knows about his or her performance at the workplace)
- (7) organizational perspective (refers to the organization functioning as a whole)
- (8) subordinate communication (this section of the measure is only for the supervisory positions, it looks at communication both upward and downward for the supervisors with employees)

The Downs and Hazen (1977) CSQ has a multitude of aspects that it considers. The upper management communication, which is the boss's boss can also potentially play a role in the communication satisfaction of the employee. The CSQ (1977) does not take this variable into consideration when looking at the communication satisfaction of an employee. This

particular study examines too many variables that are closely linked to one another. High intercorrelations were found between the CSQ variables in Rubin, et al. (1994) study. Since the CSQ (1977) has been seen to have high intercorrelations it will not be utilized for this study. Instead, the present study's scales will focus on communication satisfaction and job satisfaction.

A study that has been widely used in employee communication research that is more focused on the communication relationship between people is Hecht's Interpersonal Communication Inventory (1978). Hecht's (1978) study is based in interpersonal communication, however the organizational communication scholars have used this to examine the interpersonal communication that occurs at work. This article's first purpose was to develop a reliable and consistent way of testing communication satisfaction for recalled conversations in any setting. Hecht (1978) utilized face-to-face interviews and questionnaires to help develop the initial items and then administered a test of 93 items to participants to cut the group down again. After the test, the items in the study were cut down and tested again with participants providing feedback on the different items that could be used. Factor analysis and correlations were performed on the data received from the participants and the scale was then narrowed to a 16 item and 19 item scale. A 16 item scale was developed in the case of studies needing a shorter version. Validity and reliability was illustrated from the content analysis with the participants already involved with the study and communication satisfaction inventory correlated with male and female faces. The scale consisted of a series of seven faces that went in range from a negative face sketch to a positive face sketch. The reliability and validity of the scale was illustrated from the tests on participants.

The Hecht's Interpersonal Communication Inventory (1978) has been used in many different contexts, such as examining police officers and citizens (Glauser & Tuller, 1985), physicians and patients (Buller & Buller, 1987), and communication in general (Rubin & Rubin, 1989). This scale focuses on the interpersonal communication that is occurring and since it has been effectively used in many different areas of communication study, then it can assess the communication satisfaction relationship between co-worker, supervisor and upper management with the employee. If an employee can talk with and get help from their co-workers then they will most likely be happy with their job. So, the hypothesis that looks at communication satisfaction and job satisfaction with co-workers is proposed.

H1a: Communication satisfaction with co-workers will be positively related to job satisfaction

Supervisors

When it comes to a job, employees want to keep their supervisors happy because if the supervisor is satisfied then most likely the employee's job will be much smoother for them. Being satisfied with your supervisor can play a major role in a person holding a job. If the supervisor is inattentive and does not listen to their employees their job can become meaningless to the worker. So, looking at how satisfied the employee is with communicating with the supervisor could potentially play a role in how satisfied the employee is with the job.

Communication satisfaction with the supervisor was researched in a study by Wheelless, et al. (1984). The study considered the relationship between four communication variables and their impact on employee satisfaction. The communication variables included in the study were employee communication satisfaction with supervisor, perceived receptivity with supervisor to ideas and/or information, employee participation in decision-making, and participation level. Communication satisfaction with supervisor was measured with Hecht's (1978) interpersonal communication satisfaction inventory. This measure examines the development of the personal relationship between the employee and the supervisor. Employee satisfaction was measured by their satisfaction with the following: pay, promotion, type of work, supervisor, and co-workers. Employee satisfaction was measured with the Job Description Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kenall, and Hulin (1969). The study surveyed 158 employees at an Eastern university. The result from the study was that the communication related variables accounted for 76% variance in the employee job satisfaction. Another conclusion from the study found communication satisfaction with supervisor and the supervisor receptivity proved to be important in predicting the job satisfaction of employees. When looking at how employees react to the supervisors it is important to consider the communication satisfaction as did this study.

Studies investigating job satisfaction have consisted of the subordinate's opinion toward his/her supervisor. However, there have been few studies that examined the superior's satisfaction levels with the subordinates. One study conducted by Infante and Gorden (1989) considered superiors' satisfaction level with subordinates when they became argumentative. Previous research as cited in Gorden, Infante, and Graham (1988) had found that subordinates were more satisfied when superiors encouraged their employees to argue their sides because they were able to voice their opinions in the work place. For their study, Gorden et al. (1988) used 146 supervisors in a variety of organizations in the Midwest. These supervisors received a

questionnaire and were asked about a subordinate of their own choosing. The results from this study found supervisors were more satisfied when they viewed their subordinates as being friendly and lacking verbal aggressiveness. Clearly, the supervisor-subordinate relationship is important to consider. However, the main thrust of research has been devoted to subordinates' thoughts on their supervisors' and this is what most practitioners concern themselves with as well. The study is questioned because instead of randomly assigning the supervisor a subordinate to think about during the study the supervisor consciously chose which subordinate they wanted to answer the questions about. This type of choosing does not insure randomness and the supervisors could have potentially chosen their favorites rather than just any employee. Interestingly, this study will examine the interpersonal communication that occurs between the supervisor and the employee. Looking at the overall interpersonal communication between these two people is one of the focuses of this study.

Communication satisfaction served as one of the organizational communication variables for a study conducted by Pettit et al. (1997). In their study Pettit et al. (1997) hypothesized that organizational communication which consisted of "trust in superiors, influence of superiors, desire for interaction, accuracy of information, satisfaction with communication, information load, and directionality of communication" would serve as a moderating factor between job performance and job satisfaction of employees (p. 85). Surveys from 302 employees at two manufacturing firms were collected. A weak to moderate relationship between job satisfaction and job performance was found. Pettit et al. (1997) concluded that overall organizational communication received weak support as being the moderating factor between job performance and job satisfaction of employees. However, when looking specifically at each of the communication dimensions the study found satisfaction with communication, trust in supervisors, desire for interaction, and communication load received strong support as a predictor of job satisfaction.

The prior research mentioned (Petit et al., 1997; Wheelless et al. 1984) illustrate the importance of communication satisfaction when it comes to supervisors. Understanding the impact of communication on job satisfaction is imperative to gaining greater benefits for both the employees and the organization. Hypotheses presented on communication satisfaction with co-workers, supervisors and upper management will all be grouped together under H1.

H1b: Communication satisfaction with immediate supervisors will be positively related to job satisfaction.

Another study that dealt with communication satisfaction and job satisfaction is one performed by Miles, Patrick, and King (1996). This study examined “whether job level significantly moderates the relationship between superior-subordinate communication and job satisfaction” (p. 278). To find out if there would be a difference in job satisfaction between the two types of employees 595 hourly employees and 118 first-line supervisors were surveyed. The results indicated the first-line supervisors had significantly greater job satisfaction than the hourly employees. The authors used role theory to explain the findings because the supervisors had more familiarity with their superiors, which “resulted in a freer exchange” (Miles et al., 1996, p. 280) of information. They also found that communication with an employee’s supervisor did prove to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction even when considering the job level.

Miles et al. (1996) demonstrated that supervisor communication with employees was an important variable to consider. Discovering that hourly and salaried employees have different interpretations when it comes to satisfaction with their respective jobs is a realm that must be considered. The aspect of whether or not the surveyed employee is on an hourly wage or a yearly salary will be examined in this study. Research questions are posed for examining to if there is a relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction.

RQ1: Is there a difference in co-worker communication satisfaction when looking at salaried vs. hourly employees?

RQ2: Is there a difference in supervisor communication satisfaction when looking at salaried vs. hourly employees?

Upper Management

Pincus (1986) investigated whether upper management played a role in communication and job satisfaction. The study evaluated the perceived communication satisfaction in relation to job satisfaction through questions included about upper management positions. The survey also asked employees about their overall communication satisfaction with their jobs. Pincus (1986) surveyed 327 hospital nurses and found communication satisfaction and job satisfaction had a stronger link than the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. Also, the relationship of the employee with the boss’s boss, or the upper management, was found to play

significant role in the satisfaction of the nurses in the study. As stated in the article by Pincus (1986) the importance of the upper management and their effects on the employee satisfaction level:

does not diminish the importance of employee-immediate supervisor communication relationship, but may suggest the emergence of a second, somewhat different vertical organizational communication relationship. (p. 414)

An important component in Pincus's (1986) study was including the upper management, which is the boss's boss, because the upper management makes position decisions regarding how the organization functions. The present study will investigate which position, the supervisors or the upper management (the boss's boss) have the greater influence on the employee and their communication satisfaction levels.

There is clearly a lot of research conducted in the communication satisfaction area. As Goldhaber et al. (1978) points out, the relationships within an organization are important to the atmosphere and the supervisor must contemplate this when looking at their workers. Looking at the different relationships that an employee has with his/her co-workers, supervisors and upper management plays an influential role in the communication satisfaction levels as Pincus (1986) points out. However, with this focus of the study examining the relationship between the communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism one must consider the Wheelless et al. (1984) study. Wheelless et al. (1984) utilized Hecht's (1978) scale and illustrates how satisfied employees were with their supervisors. Additionally, the Wheelless et al. (1984) study employed the JDI (1969) scale that explores job satisfaction, which is another area that must be considered. Wheelless et al. (1984) contributed greatly to the communication literature by placing the Hecht (1978) and the JDI (1969) within the organizational communication realm and using these scales will assist in the research that will be conducted in this study.

McFarlane Shore, Newton, and Thornton (1990), performed a study about how job satisfaction differentiates between the employee's organizational attitude and their job attitude. The employee's organizational attitude consists of the how the employee feels regarding the organization and the rules and norms of the organization. The job attitude includes the employees' thoughts on the particular job that they perform. The two variables, employees' organizational attitude and their job attitude, are usually not separated into two distinct categories

in research. Instead the two variables are usually grouped together in the job satisfaction category. McFarlane Shore et al. (1990) surveyed 157 males and 409 females about their attitudes regarding the organization they worked for and their attitudes regarding their particular job task. The authors defined organizational attitudes as organization satisfaction and organization commitment. Job attitudes were defined as job satisfaction and job involvement. The variables were also analyzed for how they affected turnover and absenteeism rates. The authors proposed that organizational attitudes were related to turnover intentions whereas job attitudes were related to absenteeism and performance intentions. The results from the study supported their hypothesis.

McFarlane et al.'s (1990) study explains that job satisfaction is valuable when looking at employees and their attitudes toward their jobs and the organization. Examining this study advances one's knowledge about employee attitudes because it separates job satisfaction into two distinct variables, the employee's job and the organization. Employees can potentially have very diverse opinions on these categories. For example, an employee can love his/her job but dislike the organization in which s/he is working. Measuring these two variables is important in considering employee job satisfaction levels.

A different study examined the communication variable of trust in performance appraisals and how it relates to job satisfaction. Reilly and Anderson (1980) surveyed 100 managers in a manufacturing firm and asked questions pertaining to feedback, trust, and job satisfaction. The job satisfaction section only "assessed satisfaction with work itself, supervision, pay, coworkers, and opportunities for advancement" (Reilly & Anderson, 1980, p. 292). The results from the study reveal that different amounts of trust (low or high) are related to job performance and job satisfaction. One of the more important findings was that employees with low trust in supervisors were found to have a strong relationship between the amount of communication during the appraisal and job satisfaction. So, when an employee has a low amount of trust with their superiors, the employee depends on the relevance and accuracy of feedback during performance appraisals to figure out how satisfied and how hard they will work. Reilly and Anderson (1980) agree that this finding is interesting because the employees with high trust look to other variables for satisfaction and performance whereas the low trust employees make the communication during the performance appraisal very important. As one can see, communication (i.e., the amount of and satisfaction) does play a role in the working

relationship between supervisor and subordinate. However, the job satisfaction scale that was utilized by the authors did not consider the upper management of the organization, which has been demonstrated to be an important predictor in job satisfaction. Not including the upper management in the scale is unacceptable when considering the employee's job satisfaction. Because upper management can play such an influential role in deciding policies for the workplace it will therefore be included in the present study. The Reilly and Anderson (1980) study also failed to consider the co-workers impact upon the amount of job satisfaction that the employees felt. The people that one interacts with on a daily basis will additionally have an effect on the how satisfied an employee is with the job. If the employee has people in his/her department that are difficult then it will most likely make the employee unhappy and dissatisfied. Including the impact of co-workers will also be implemented in this study for determining how satisfied the employee is with the workplace.

Rodwell, Kienzle, and Shadur (1998) examined employee's perceptions of communication in human resource management and how it related to job satisfaction and other variables such as teamwork, commitment and stress. The survey was conducted in an Australian information technology company and it unexpectedly found that more communication did not necessarily mean satisfied employees. The study demonstrated that the perception of more communication was negatively related to job performance. However, the study did find the role of communication was one of enhancing teamwork, job satisfaction and commitment (Rodwell et al., 1998). Hence, more communication can make the employee more satisfied, but it can lead to less work being performed. These conclusions the authors promote make sense because not as much work can be done due to all of the communication taking place. The authors agree that working to achieve the delicate balance between the correct amount of communication and the quality of communication is a task that must be accomplished to lead to communication satisfaction. Investigating what specific parts of communication between employees leads to communication satisfaction is needed to insure job satisfaction. As Rodwell et al. (1998) state, "managers need to move beyond the metamyth that more communication is better and focus more precisely on what forms of communication can actually be more effective" (p. 298).

Investigating how job satisfaction can have such an impact on the employees and their jobs is one of the reasons this study is being conducted. The studies (Pincus, 1986; Wheelless et al., 1984) has observed that both the supervisor and the upper management do have important

influences in the communication satisfaction of employees. The first hypotheses will mostly be a replication of prior studies to provide more support for the connection between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. With the literature reviewed (Infante & Gordon, 1988; McFarlane et al., 1990; Miles et al., 1996; Reilly & Anderson, 1980; Rodwell et al., 1998) one can see the importance of co-workers, supervisors and upper management in determining the impact of job satisfaction on employees. Each person though seems to have a different effect upon the employees and their job satisfaction.

H1c: Communication satisfaction with upper management (boss's boss) will be positively related to job satisfaction.

RQ3: Which of the following play a more influential role in the job satisfaction of the employee: the communication satisfaction with co-worker, immediate supervisor, or upper management?

Self-reported absenteeism with employees

Absent employees can lead to money being lost from the organization due to costs in time and frustration of the other employees for having to overcompensate for the particular employee being absent. Studies continued to be performed on absenteeism and the main objective of the studies is to answer the question, why do people not want to come to work?

Alder and Golan (1981) found employees with low job satisfaction had greater non-attendance behavior. The authors studied 131 female telephone operators and records were available over a 2-year period measuring lateness, and days absent with or without a medical excuse. Participants in this study responded to an attitude questionnaire that included measures of job and life satisfaction, work tedium, and work needs. It was found that lateness was a consistent pattern of behavior for the participants that were dissatisfied. Results also indicated job satisfaction and work tedium were generally significant predictors of lateness and to a smaller degree to absenteeism. Alder and Golan discuss that the findings illustrate unsatisfied employees within an organization may begin coming into work late and as their satisfaction decreases they will have greater absenteeism rates.

Blau (1985) examined whether extrinsic, intrinsic, or demographic predictors might have relationships to different types of employee withdrawal traits. These withdrawal traits included unexcused absence, excused personal absence, excused sick family absence, unexcused tardiness. The participants were 82 registered nurses. The study relied on records from the

hospital to examine the absenteeism rates. The extrinsic independent variables were promotion satisfaction, pay satisfaction, co-worker satisfaction, friendship opportunities, and dealing with others. These were measured using the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and a job characteristics inventory. The intrinsic independent variables were work satisfaction, job involvement, and career commitment. These were measured using the JDI and commitment and involvement scales. The study results indicated that extrinsic predictors produced a significant negative relationship to unexcused absenteeism, which means that if employees were satisfied with their promotions, pay, co-workers, friendship opportunities as well as getting along with the people at work then the employees would not be absent. This study supports the idea that a satisfied employee will want to come to work.

Sagie (1998) investigated job satisfaction and employee absenteeism. The author regarded absences in his study as either voluntary or involuntarily based. There were 140 clerks who participated in his study. Sagie (1998) hypothesized that voluntary absenteeism as opposed to involuntary absenteeism, would be predicted by job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and their interactive effect. The data collection for the study took place in two phases. During the second stage both objective (personnel records) and subjective (self-report) methods were used to collect absenteeism rates. Moderated multiple regression analyses of attitudes and objective (personnel records) or subjective (self-reported) absence data yielded support for the hypothesis. This study was interesting because instead of grouping all absences into group, Sagie (1998) looked at absences differently. The present study will only evaluate self-reported absences due to the unavailability of records regarding the absences of the employees.

In a synthesis of literature pertaining to job attitudes and employee absenteeism, Hackett (1989) examined three independent meta-analyses of the relationship between job satisfaction and employee absenteeism. Hackett found the strongest relationships were between absence frequency and work satisfaction, and absence duration and overall job satisfaction. Sagie (1998), Blau (1985) and Adler and Golan (1981) also have illustrated the importance of keeping employees satisfied with the organization.

With all of the literature presented, it is illustrated that communication satisfaction is related to job satisfaction and job satisfaction is related to absenteeism in the organization. Realizing that how employees communicate with their co-workers, supervisor, and boss's boss all play a very influential role in the satisfaction of the job. Additionally, job satisfaction has

been illustrated to play a part in absenteeism of employees. Examining job satisfaction as the mediating factor between these two variables can be beneficial because if found to have an effect, organizations can then utilize the findings and work towards having greater communication satisfaction amongst employees. Considering who in the organization influences communication satisfaction (co-workers, immediate supervisors or upper management) can lead to the greater overall satisfaction and less absenteeism.

H2: Job satisfaction will be a mediating factor between communication satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism.

With this study I will examine the dynamics between communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and self-reported absenteeism. To measure job satisfaction as the mediating factor between communication satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism a survey method will be used. The following is a discussion of what tests will be administered in the survey as well as the rationale of why these particular scales are imperative to this study.

CHAPTER 2

Participants

The subjects of this study consisted of 166 city employees that attended one of two employee social events. Participation was voluntary in this study. The sample was made up of 108 males and 58 females. The age range of the participants was 18 to 67 years old with the median age being 43 years. Participants had been employed by the city for 6 months to 9.5 years. The sample included 110 hourly paid participants and 40 salaried participants. Sixteen of the participants did not report whether they were hourly or salaried.

Procedures

Employees were invited to two different work-related social events. These events were sponsored by the city. The employees were approached by the author and asked if they would like to fill out questionnaires regarding how they communicate with people at work. When the second event occurred the participants were asked if they had already participated in this particular study; if so they were not given a questionnaire and were thanked for their time. If the participants agreed to be part of the study then they were provided with a written explanation of their rights as a participant within the study (Appendix A) and by completing the questionnaires they were consenting to the study. After reading over the written explanation the participants completed the questionnaires (Appendix B). At the end of the questionnaire each participant was given a written debriefing sheet that simply provided an explanation of the study's purpose (Appendix C). Any additional questions were answered and participants were then thanked for their time.

Measures

Communication Satisfaction

The Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory developed by Hecht (1978) has been widely used in the investigation of communication satisfaction (Wheless et al., 1984). The main purpose of the scale is to measure interpersonal communication satisfaction. The scale has been used in employee-employee relationships because of the interpersonal nature of communication that does occur between participants. Many workplace relationships are of an interpersonal nature, meaning two people communicating together. Hence, examining the interpersonal communication satisfaction of the participants is an effective way to get a glimpse into which of the people involved in work has a great effect on them. To use the scale in the

organizational communication context it must be modified. The original scale examines the last conversation the participant had just had with a friend or stranger. The modified version for this study asked participants about the latest conversation they had with the co-worker that he/she communicated with the most and the latest conversation with his/her immediate supervisor.

This 19-item questionnaire has produced a reliability of .84 to .97 and validity coefficients from .66 to .87 (Hecht, 1978). With solid reliability and validity scores, the Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory is certainly a good choice of measure to apply in the study. The alpha reliability in the present study for the co-worker communication satisfaction scale was .94, $M = 65.98$, and $SD = 12.99$. Additionally, the alpha reliability for the supervisor communication satisfaction in the present study was .92, $M = 61.98$, and $SD = 13.29$.

To measure communication satisfaction with upper management (an employee's boss's boss) a modified version of the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire Subscale (Spector, 1997) was used. The original subscale dealing with overall satisfaction consisted of three statements using a 7-point Likert-type scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The modification to the subscale was to have the focus be on communication satisfaction rather than overall satisfaction and have a concentration on the upper management positions. So, instead of the statement expressing, "all in all I am satisfied with my job" the statements in this study said, "all in all I am satisfied with the communication with my boss's boss" (Spector, 1997, pg. 19). Since the majority of employees do not communicate with the supervisor's boss on a regular basis, a simpler measure was needed. With the subscale being so short and straightforward it is very effective when using the questionnaire method. The reliability as reported by Spector (1997) is between .77 to .87. Alpha reliability for the revised scale in the present study was .80, $M = 9.89$, and $SD = 3.16$.

Job Satisfaction

The present study will be measuring job satisfaction using a modified form of the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969). The popular scale has been utilized by many organizational scholars. Validity of the JDI has demonstrated good evidence for its use. The reliability of the scales is acceptable as well as with previous research finding it to range from .73 to .92 (Wheless et al., 1984).

The scale measures five facets of job satisfaction. These facets include: work, pay, promotion, supervision, and coworkers. The original version of the JDI contained 72 total items

with either 9 or 18 items included in each section. According to Spector (1997), the items consisted of:

evaluative adjective or short phrase that is descriptive of the job. Responses are “Yes,” “Uncertain,” or “No.” For each facet scale, a brief explanation is provided, followed by the items concerning that facet. Both favorable or positively worded and unfavorable or negatively worded items are provided. (p. 13-14)

For this study, the modified version of the JDI scale (Smith, et al., 1969) includes the 30 items which are the evaluative adjective or short phrase of the job descriptive. The modified version has a Likert-type (strongly disagree to strongly agree) scale with a 5-point response format instead of the 3-point response format like the original form. Employing a Likert-type scale can potentially lead to an increased accuracy in the measurement of job satisfaction with the participants of the study (Wheeless et al., 1984). Table 1 presents the alpha reliabilities, means and standard deviations for the 5 facets of the scale.

Table 1 – Alpha Reliabilities, Means and Standard Deviations for the JDI scale

<u>JDI Scale Components</u>	<u>Alpha Reliability</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
JDI Work	.88	18.04	4.81
JDI Pay	.78	16.52	3.94
JDI Promotion	.81	15.07	4.56
JDI Supervisor	.89	16.25	4.91
JDI Co-workers	.83	17.08	4.12

An overall method of measuring job satisfaction was included in the study as well. The Job in General Scale (JIG; Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson & Paul, 1989) measures overall job satisfaction. The scale’s format is much like the JDI scale (Smith, et al., 1969) by stating an adjective or short phrase about the job. As reported by Ironson, et al., (1989) the JIG has good internal consistency reliability from .91 to .95. The JIG scale was modified to have 8 items on a 5-point Likert-type response format to have consistency through out the questionnaire being used for the study. Alpha reliability for the JIG scale was .88, $M = 27.87$, and $SD = 6.08$.

Absenteeism

The study will also include questions about absenteeism from work. Since there was not accessibility to employee records of absent days at work, the study will use subjective (self-report) measures of obtaining the information. The survey included five questions related to absenteeism. The questions asked how many days or hours employees took from work as vacation, sick leave, or personal leave. A second question asked if the employee had any unexcused absences. Table 2 offers the means and standard deviations for the four different types of absences for the employees recorded by hours.

Table 2 –Means and Standard Deviations for Absences (in hours)

<u>Types of absences</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Obtained range</u>
Vacation	49.96	38.59	0-196
Sick	29.75	43.53	0-240
Personal	8.76	9.19	0-48
Unexcused	1.35	6.69	0-56

Chapter 3

To examine the first three hypotheses, correlations among the variables were examined.

Correlations among all variables in the study are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3 –Correlations between Communication Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction

	Hecht's Communication Satisfaction with Co-workers	Hecht's Communication Satisfaction with Supervisor	Communication Satisfaction with Boss's boss	JIG Overall Job Satisfaction	JDI Work	JDI Pay	JDI Promotion	JDI Supervisor	JDI Co-worker
Hecht's Communication Satisfaction with Co-workers	--	.445**	.278**	.383**	.415**	.176*	.188*	.299**	.566**
Hecht's Communication Satisfaction with Supervisor		--	.451**	.429**	.463**	.256**	.114	.727**	.359**
Communication Satisfaction with Boss's boss			--	.176*	.267**	.138	.221**	.379**	.316**
JIG Overall Job Satisfaction				--	.650**	.254**	.121	.380**	.408**
JDI Work					--	.365**	.138	.451**	.415**
JDI Pay						--	.191*	.207**	.208**
JDI Promotion							--	.173*	.190*
JDI Supervisor								--	.380**
JDI Co-worker									--

Note: ** = correlation significant at the 0.01 level, * = correlation significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 – Correlations between Satisfaction and Absenteeism (reported in hours)

	Personal	Sick	Unexcused
Hecht's Communication Satisfaction with Co-workers	-.041	-.143	-.011
Hecht's Communication Satisfaction with Supervisor	.064	-.107	.017
Communication Satisfaction with Boss's boss	.024	-.194	.057
JIG Overall Job Satisfaction	-.165*	-.091	-.033
JDI Work	-.072	-.084	-.045
JDI Pay	-.043	.045	-.046
JDI Promotion	-.266**	-.091	-.009
JDI Supervisor	.160*	-.011	.007
JDI Co-worker	-.055	-.069	-.015

Note: ** = correlation significant at the 0.01 level, * = correlation significant at the 0.05 level

H1a proposed that communication satisfaction with co-workers would be positively related to job satisfaction. Correlational analysis indicated there is a positive significant correlation between communication satisfaction with co-workers and job satisfaction, $r = .38, p < .01$.

H1b claimed communication satisfaction with immediate supervisors would be positively related to job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported with communication satisfaction with immediate supervisor being positively correlated with job satisfaction, $r = .43, p < .01$.

H1c predicted that communication satisfaction with boss's boss would be positively correlated to job satisfaction. Reports of communication satisfaction with boss's boss were positively and significantly correlated with job satisfaction, $r = .18, p < .05$.

The first two research questions inquired about differences between hourly vs. salaried employees in regard to co-worker satisfaction and supervisor satisfaction. To address these research questions, t-tests were used with hourly and salaried employees serving as the independent variable. Results indicated that hourly employees reported greater communication satisfaction with co-workers ($M = 67.95, SD = 11.84$) than did salaried employees ($M = 62.63, SD = 14.83$) with $t = 2.04, (58.04) = p < .05$. The results from the second t-test indicated that there was no difference in satisfaction with supervisor between hourly employees ($M = 62.55, SD = 12.50$) and salaried employees ($M = 62.50, SD = 14.46$) with $t = .02 (148), p = .98$.

The third research question asked which of the following plays a more influential role in job satisfaction: the communication satisfaction with co-workers, supervisor, or upper management. To address this research question, multiple regression was used with job satisfaction serving as the criterion variable and satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with supervisor, and satisfaction with boss's boss serving as predictor variables. The predictor variables were entered into the regression model as a group. Regression analysis revealed a significant model, $F(3, 161) = 16.29, R^2 = .23, p < .001$. Supervisor communication satisfaction accounted for the most variance with $\beta = .34, t = 4.11, p < .001$. Co-worker communication satisfaction was also significant with $\beta = .24, t = 3.13, p < .01$. Lastly, satisfaction with boss's boss was not a significant predictor of employee in job satisfaction with $\beta = -.04, t = -.54, p = .59$.

Lastly, H2 proposed that job satisfaction would play a mediating role between communication satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism. Multiple regression analysis was used with unexcused absences serving as the criterion variable. The three satisfaction variables were entered into the model as a block and then followed by job satisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported. The regression model was not significant, $F(4, 152) = .20, R^2 = -.02, p = .94$. None of the satisfaction variables accounted for any variance in unexcused absences. Job satisfaction had a $\beta = -.04, t = -.45, p = .66$. Co-worker communication satisfaction had a $\beta = -$

.02, $t = -.17$, $p = .87$. Supervisor communication satisfaction had a $\beta = .02$, $t = .15$, $p = .89$.
Upper management communication satisfaction had a $\beta = .06$, $t = .67$, $p = .50$.

Chapter 4

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate how communication satisfaction with co-workers, supervisors, and upper management play a role in job satisfaction and employee self-reported absenteeism. Three research questions and two hypotheses were asked to investigate the relationship between the variables mentioned.

The findings indicate a positive relationship between co-worker communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. The co-worker is whom an employee interacts with more than any other person within the organization. It is logical to find a positive relationship between these variables since co-workers have to communicate so often. The findings from this study agree with previous research that has been conducted (Down & Hazen, 1977; Hecht, 1978; Pincus, 1984; Wheelless et al., 1984). This study enriches the job satisfaction literature because it provides more evidence for the connection between communication of employees and the degree of job satisfaction the employees have in their organization.

The understanding of satisfaction was extended by this study when comparing Hecht's (1978) Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire and the JDI's co-worker and supervisor descriptives. A positive significant relationship was found between these variables and it illustrates the connection between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. This finding demonstrates the importance of effective communication in the workplace in relation to being a more satisfied employee. Utilizing the findings from this study in training programs for organizations will assist in greater satisfaction.

Downs and Hazen (1977) also found a positive relationship between co-worker communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. The CSQ by Downs and Hazen (1977) consisted of eight dimensions of satisfaction that measured an individual's satisfaction with information flow and relationship variables. However, the CSQ is criticized because the interdependence of the eight variables that were used in their study. The inter-correlations that existed in the Downs and Hazen (1977) study did not illustrate the actual relationship between co-worker communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. With the present study a significant positive relationship was found. The data illustrate that employees' communication with co-workers plays a role in whether they are satisfied with their job. The satisfaction does not

necessarily mean that employees are always happy. Nonetheless, if the communication is effective then it has a relationship with employees being satisfied with their job.

Consequently, the present study found the strongest relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction occurred when asking employees about their communication with their immediate supervisors. Pettit et al. (1997) similarly found within their study of communication satisfaction that supervisors can be a strong predictor of an employee's job satisfaction. Knowing this type of information can assist organizations in developing better communication practices for the supervisory positions. When questions or issues arise at work the employee is supposed to go to his/her boss and voice the problem/s. However, if the employee thinks communicating with the boss is ineffective then all of said concerns will go unheard. Oftentimes, these concerns will lead to pent up frustration and eventually lead to job dissatisfaction. Since promotions and discipline usually come from the immediate supervisor it is easy to see why is an employee feels that s/he cannot discuss these issues with the supervisor, it would be difficult to be satisfied with one's job. It is imperative to learn from the results of this study so supervisors can keep an open line of communication with their subordinates.

Examining this issue further illustrates the importance of training and leadership abilities of the supervisory positions that occur within any organization. Also, training management positions to listen more effectively can prepare them for when subordinates come to them with questions or issues regarding their jobs. It is the supervisor's responsibility to listen to employees, understand the situation they are describing and make good decisions accordingly. Making a point to educate the management to recognize the importance of effective communication with their subordinates is imperative for the organization to be successful.

As found in previous research, once the employees are satisfied with their managers (McFarlane et al., 1990) then it will lessen absenteeism and improve the retention of employees. Data from this study however, found job satisfaction did not influence employees to come to work more often. Results indicated employees did not have an absenteeism problem and so attempting to measure why employees are absent was not possible. Using another sample could have demonstrated different results for the study.

After discovering that co-workers and supervisors play a significant role in the employee's communication satisfaction the next aspect to investigate was the boss's boss. Communication satisfaction with boss's boss did have a positive influence on employee job

satisfaction. However, when compared to the co-workers and immediate supervisor communication satisfaction scores, the upper management had the weakest relationship to job satisfaction. Employees of an organization still look to their boss's boss for guidance and support in their job except to a lesser degree. The findings from the present study agreed with Pincus's (1986) finding that upper management does play a significant role in the job satisfaction of an employee. But, results from this study were in disagreement with Pincus (1986) concerning upper management having a more influential role than the immediate supervisors. This could be due to the different data samples of the two studies. The participants used for this study were located in many different sites. Since this study's data sample was city employees, the location of their job is not confined to just one area. The participants involved included road, construction, and office workers. Therefore, employees might not interact with their boss's boss since their positions could be very mobile. Pincus (1986) used a hospital with one building and probably it was easier for the nurses to come into contact with the upper management. Having more contact with the upper management will lead to interaction and communication between these two positions. So, with Pincus's (1986) sample it is likely that upper management would have greater influence on the employees. Examining the different results between Pincus (1986) and this study has illustrated that proximity of employees to their boss's boss will have influence on their satisfaction rates.

This study does agree with Pincus (1986) in that organizations need to investigate the relationship between an employee and the upper management because it is a "different vertical organizational communication relationship" (p. 414). The research conducted in this study also illustrates this unique but often-overlooked communication relationship. With more research being completed on the subject of employee-upper management communication hopefully organizations will start to see why they should begin to focus on educating all of their employees on effective methods of communication.

The results from this study again demonstrate the importance of communication skills for the management positions. These members within an organization must possess to assist in keeping the satisfaction of the employees high. Employees must be able to communicate with their immediate supervisor and their boss's boss so these management positions can receive both complaints and praises. Training and obtaining individuals that have concern and understanding

for their subordinates will help to retain the employees. Also, helping all employees realize the value of communication will assist in the development of a more efficient organization.

Two of the research questions in the study dealt with hourly vs. salaried employees and the impact of co-worker and supervisor communication satisfaction. Interestingly, the first research question dealing with co-worker communication satisfaction found hourly employees reported greater communication satisfaction with co-workers than did salaried employees. Usually salaried employees hold more a supervisory position within organization than hourly employees. Consequently, hourly employees spend more of their time with their co-workers as compared to salaried employees who spend most of their time communicating with their subordinates. Developing an effective and efficient way of communicating for the hourly employees is an important task because of the amount of communication taking place. However, with the limited amount of research available on hourly vs. salaried employees and their satisfaction rates, more studies will need to be conducted to provide further evidence for these results.

Communicating with one's supervisor did not demonstrate a significant relationship to their overall job satisfaction. Hourly and salaried employees did not differ on this aspect of communication with their supervisors. Each employee, whether paid by hour or by salary still has a supervisor they must report to so, communication with the supervisor most likely will occur in the same way.

The final research question was imperative to ask because all organizations should want to know who in the organization plays the most influential role in job satisfaction: the communication satisfaction with the co-worker, supervisor, or the upper management. Understanding who within the organization is most influential in the job satisfaction will assist in determining where the focus should be in training the employees. For example, the analysis of the data revealed supervisor communication satisfaction accounted for 34% of the variance in job satisfaction. Since supervisors have the most influence over job satisfaction, then the focus of training on how to effectively communicate should be with the supervisors. Examining this information solidifies the idea that an employee's supervisor can either make someone's job a dream or their worst nightmare. Additionally, co-worker communication was found to be significant since it accounted for 24% of the variance of influence over employee job satisfaction. This is a reasonable conclusion to find given that employees interact so frequently

with their co-workers. Having a pleasant co-worker environment will lead to the employee feeling more satisfied with the job.

Although this study did not demonstrate evidence that job satisfaction to be a mediating factor between communication satisfaction and absenteeism, this is a topic that still must be studied. The Commerce Clearing House (CCH) studies have been conducted for the last twelve years and have shown that absenteeism is a growing problem. The CCH survey found that money lost to unscheduled absenteeism for each employee is at a record high with “an average of \$789 per employee on an annual basis, costing small companies as much as \$60,000 a year, while the largest employers ante up more than \$3.6 million” (“Absenteeism costs companies”, 2002). With this growth in absenteeism it is a topic that must still be examined and studied because there are expensive downfalls if the problem is not fixed.

Results from the study did not provide evidence for the last hypothesis because the organization that participated in the study did not have an absenteeism problem as reported by the subjects. Of the employees that participated in the study, 92.4% of them reported zero unexcused absences within the last six months, which would illustrate no significant absenteeism within the organization. The data from this study did not have enough variation to effectively test the hypothesis. Since there was a limited amount of variation the hypothesis could not be supported. This organization has worked to insure that absenteeism would not be problem by caring about their employees. Additionally, with the job market in such a slump many employees do not want to give their employers a reason to fire them from the job.

The results are not conclusive with the literature review that would illustrate the absenteeism would be related to both communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. However, this study did use the self-report method because of time constraints and confidentiality issues looking at the records of absences could not be utilized. One would like to believe that participants in the study would be honest or not forget about their absences, but with the results illustrating that absenteeism was not related, one might consider the reliability of the self-report method.

Limitations

Although this research study presented significant results to communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism, it is not without limitations. One limitation is the study only surveyed one organization; therefore it may have only offered the cultural identity of

that organization. Performing a larger study encompassing more organizations would alleviate this limitation and assist in making the results more generalizable. However, previous studies dealing with job satisfaction have been done in many different types of organizations such as a hospital (Pincus, 1986), telephone organizations (Alder & Golan, 1981), and university settings (Wheless, et al., 1984). Looking at the multitude of settings where these studies have occurred assist in looking at the generalizability of this study. Since the data population for this study was city employees it has added to the variety of organizations that have been surveyed. Examining these different types of organizations and arriving with the same conclusions about communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism has provided evidence in generalizing these results.

One aspect that cannot be overlooked is that the employees involved in this study reported their own absenteeism rates. Lying on the questionnaire or “forgetting” certain days that the employees were absent from work could have played a role in the study. One never knows if it did or not without access to names and their records at the organization. Confidentiality is always an issue with any study that uses self-report.

Additionally, communication satisfaction and job satisfaction are very complex concepts because definitions of satisfaction cannot be narrowed to certain variables listed by the researcher. Attempting to define these would be difficult because each individual has their own construct as to what satisfaction is to them. Therefore, finding what satisfies employees can be considered to be a little subjective.

Future research

Performing a longitudinal study would be beneficial because it would examine how long lasting the relationship is between communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and self-reported absenteeism. With the longitudinal study, a researcher can reach many interesting conclusions; this would be the next step in identifying how important communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and absenteeism are to employees.

Completing a study dealing with absenteeism and the communication and job satisfaction and having access to employee records confirming absenteeism could serve as a prospective study. Receiving access to a company’s personnel records could lead to more accurate data for absenteeism rates. Obtaining access to this data is difficult however, if it could be accomplished it could produce a solid study.

Additionally, looking at different factors that could potentially play a role in communication satisfaction and job satisfaction would be beneficial to researching what is truly important to employees. Understanding the factors that are involved in satisfaction is imperative when considering the volatility of the job market. The major downfall with examining the factors involved with satisfaction is each individual will have their own interpretation of their satisfaction. So, continuing to examine the factors that are involved with satisfaction is imperative since it is such an evolving phenomena due to the changing society in which people work. Also, looking at different aspects other than absenteeism would be beneficial because there are many other factors that organizations are trying to improve upon. Examples of these factors would include: turnover, job performance, organizational commitment, career advancement, stress levels or burnout.

Conclusion

The research conducted in this study illustrates the importance of clear and effective communication that needs to occur in the organizational setting. Since the majority of people work for over half of their life, trying to improve their satisfaction is important to consider. Working should not be perceived as being a negative environment. If communication is satisfying, it has been determined in this study to lead to the higher job satisfaction of the employees. Working towards educating organizations on the importance of job satisfaction and what specific variables that can assist in the leading employees to a better job and organizational environment.

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Appendix A

Dear City Employee,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study! This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes and is concerned with employee communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and absenteeism. Read directions for each section carefully. Some of the questions will ask you for your opinion, while others ask you more specific questions about missed work days. Please do *not* put your name or social security number on the questionnaire. **Your responses will NOT be shared with your supervisors or any other employee of the city.**

For each question, please indicate the response that most clearly matches your opinion. There are no right or wrong answers, as this study concerns only what you think. At times it may seem like the same question is being asked more than once. This is done on purpose because no single question will perfectly measure your opinion.

Your responses to this questionnaire will be completely anonymous. No one will be able to tell which questionnaire is yours. If you have questions, please feel free to ask.

As a participant in this research you have the following rights:

- By reading and completing the questionnaire, you are consenting to this study.
- You understand that the questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and that there are no foreseeable risks in completing the study.
- You may withdraw from this study at any point in time.
- The purpose of the study has been explained and you do understand the nature of the study.
- If you did not understand what the study is about you may have it explained to you until you are satisfied upon completion of the questionnaire.
- The data that you provide in this study may be used by other scientists for secondary analysis.
- You understand that a copy of the research report for this study will be made available upon request (sign up on the blue sheet of paper located on the table).

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a study participant, please feel free to contact the Office for the Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching at Miami University. If you would like to contact them, the phone number is 513-529-3734 or they can be reached by email, humansubjects@muohio.edu

Additional questions regarding this research project should be directed to Lindsay N. Ehlers or Dr. Ann Bainbridge Frymier. Ms. Ehlers' phone number is (513) 529-7182 and Dr. Bainbridge Frymier's phone number is (513) 529-7473.

Sincerely,

Lindsay N. Ehlers

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Appendix B

Directions: Below are questions concerning communicating at work. For this set of questions think of a conversation that you have had with your boss's boss. Please remember to be completely honest. **Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

STRONGLY AGREE = SA, AGREE = A, NEUTRAL = N, DISAGREE = D, STRONGLY DISAGREE = SD

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. All in all I am satisfied with my communication with my boss's boss. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 2. In general I do NOT like my communication with my boss's boss. | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 3. In general, I like communicating with my boss's boss. | SA | A | N | D | SD |

Think of the work you do at present. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your work?
Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Satisfying | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 2. Gives sense of accomplishment | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 3. Challenging | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 4. Dull | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 5. Uninteresting | SA | A | N | D | SD |

Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your present pay?
Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.

- | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Income adequate for normal expenses | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 2. Fair | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 3. Insecure | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 4. Well paid | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| 5. Underpaid | SA | A | N | D | SD |

Directions: Below are a set of questions concerning communicating at work. For these questions think of the latest conversation that you had with your immediate supervisor. Use the scale below each statement to rate how you feel. Please remember to be completely honest. **Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

STRONGLY AGREE = SA, AGREE = A, NEUTRAL = N, DISAGREE = D, STRONGLY DISAGREE = SD

1. My immediate supervisor let me know that I was communicating effectively.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Nothing was accomplished.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. I would like to have another conversation like this one.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. My immediate supervisor genuinely wanted to get to know me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. I was very dissatisfied with the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. I had something else to do.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I felt that during the conversation I was able to present myself as I wanted my immediate supervisor to view me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. My immediate supervisor showed me that he/she understood what I said.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. I was very satisfied with the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. My immediate supervisor expressed a lot of interest in what I had to say.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. I did NOT enjoy the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. My immediate supervisor did NOT provide support for what he/she was saying.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. I felt I could talk about anything with my immediate supervisor.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. We each got to say what we wanted.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. I felt that we could laugh easily together.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. The conversation flowed smoothly.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. My immediate supervisor changed the topic when his/her feelings were brought into the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. My immediate supervisor frequently said things which added little to the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. We talked about something I was NOT interested in.	SA	A	N	D	SD

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your opportunities for promotion? **Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

STRONGLY AGREE = SA, AGREE = A, NEUTRAL = N, DISAGREE = D, STRONGLY DISAGREE = SD

1. Good opportunities for promotion	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Promotion on ability	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. Dead-end job	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Good chance for promotion	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. Unfair promotion policy	SA	A	N	D	SD

Think of your supervisor and the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your supervision? **Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

1. Praises good work	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Tactful	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. Up-to-date	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Annoying	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. Bad	SA	A	N	D	SD

Think of the majority of people that you work with now or the people you meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these people? **Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

1. Boring	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Helpful	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. Responsible	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Intelligent	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. Lazy	SA	A	N	D	SD

Directions: Below are a set of questions concerning communicating at work. For the first set of questions think of the latest conversation that you had with the *co-worker* in which you communicate most with at work. Please remember to be completely honest. Thank you for your time and cooperation. **Circle the number that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

STRONGLY AGREE = SA, AGREE = A, NEUTRAL = N, DISAGREE = D, STRONGLY DISAGREE = SD

1. The co-worker let me know that I was communicating effectively.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Nothing was accomplished.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. I would like to have another conversation like this one.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. The co-worker genuinely wanted to get to know me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. I was very dissatisfied with the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. I had something else to do.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I felt that during the conversation I was able to present myself as I wanted the co-worker to view me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. The co-worker showed me that he/she understood what I said.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. I was very satisfied with the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. The co-worker expressed a lot of interest in what I had to say.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. I did NOT enjoy the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. The co-worker did NOT provide support for what he/she was saying.	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. I felt I could talk about anything with the co-worker.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. We each got to say what we wanted.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. I felt that we could laugh easily together.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. The conversation flowed smoothly.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. The co-worker changed the topic when his/her feelings were brought into the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. The co-worker frequently said things which added little to the conversation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. We talked about something I was NOT interested in.	SA	A	N	D	SD

Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time? **Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about the statement.**

STRONGLY AGREE = SA. AGREE = A. NEUTRAL = N. DISAGREE = D. STRONGLY DISAGREE = SD

1. Good	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. Undesirable	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. Better than most	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Disagreeable	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. Makes me content	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. Excellent	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. Enjoyable	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. Poor	SA	A	N	D	SD

1. How many vacation days have you taken in the last 6 months? ___ days
2. How much sick leave have you taken in the last 6 months? _____ days OR _____ hours
3. How many personal leave days have you taken in the last 6 months? _____ days OR ____ hours
4. How many unexcused absences have you had in the last 6 months? _____ days
5. Are you an hourly or salaried employee? _____
6. My age____
7. My sex (please circle) Male Female
8. How many years have you worked for the City? _____ years
9. Zip code of where you work _____

PLEASE PUT COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES IN THE PINK BOX LOCATED ON THE TABLE-----THANK YOU!!

Appendix C

People spend most of their day at work and this study is being performed to find out what employees think about their jobs and the people they work with. The focus of this study involves looking at how satisfied you are in your communication with coworkers, supervisor and your boss's boss. I am interested in how your satisfaction with your job and the people you work with might effect your absenteeism. Employees' satisfaction with their job has been found in previous research to be related to absenteeism. In this study I am looking at both job satisfaction and communication satisfaction in relation to absenteeism.

Please keep in mind that your responses will NOT be shared with your supervisors or any other employee of the city. The results from this study will be used to gain knowledge on jobs and employees. Also, this research will be used for a graduate thesis project.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please write your permanent address on the blue sheet that is attached to the table. Or you can contact: Lindsay N. Ehlers, 147 Bachelor Hall, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 45056. A copy of the results will be sent to you in approximately 6 months.

Thanks,

Lindsay N. Ehlers