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OUTCOMES OF SUPERVISORY COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the communication competence of supervisors upon an employee's job satisfaction. Results obtained supported the 5 hypotheses proposed.

Findings indicated the importance of supervisory communication responsiveness in areas of listening, sensitivity, and expression of interest in subordinate's ideas and concerns in ensuring satisfaction with supervision received.

Support was also generated for the value of an "open" communication climate where continual feedback and idea exchange interact to produce organizational identification. Significant relationships were found to exist between communication climate and dimensions of the JDI: satisfaction with supervisor, work satisfaction, pay satisfaction, satisfaction with promotion opportunities, satisfaction with coworkers.

Finally, communication skills training for supervisors was recommended to animate organizational growth and development.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Investigation into the area of managerial communication behaviors has found employee morale to be closely related to the ways in which a superior communicates with his or her workers (Browne & Neitzel, 1952). Further, "communication climate" and "communication with superiors" are of utmost importance in determining satisfaction among employees (Baird & Bradley, 1978; Cline & Wilmoth, 1978; Downey, Sheridan, & Slocum, 1975; Downs, 1979; Pincus, 1986; Wheelless, Wheelless, & Howard, 1983), and in determining the quality of job performance (Anderson & Level, 1980; Baird & Diebolt, 1976; Jain, 1973; Pincus, 1986; Snyder & Morris, 1984). Job satisfaction has been related to the frequency of communication with the supervisor and the quality of the relationship with the superior (Baird & Diebolt, 1976; Burke & Wilcox, 1969; Infante & Gordon, 1979; Jablin, 1978). Quality in supervisory communication and communication in general have been studied under the topic of communication competence (McCroskey, 1982; McFall, 1982; Monge, Bachmen, Dillard & Eisenberg, 1982; Spitzberg, 1983; Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984; Walters & Snavelly, 1981; Wellmon, 1987;

Wiemann, 1977; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). Communication competence can be defined as the "ability to adapt messages appropriately to the interaction context" (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, p.63). This "ability," which is a product of the constructs of motivation, knowledge, and skills (Spitzberg, 1983), has as its ultimate purpose, appropriate goal achievement (Monge et al., 1982).

Goals and other company information are transmitted in organizations from management to employees. Katz and Kahn (1966) suggest that downward communication from superior to subordinate involves five topic areas: (a) job instructions, (b) job rationale, (c) organizational procedures and practices, (d) feedback about subordinate performance, and (e) indoctrination of goals. Other authors suggest a sixth area of communication, which is meeting the socioemotional needs of subordinates (Clampitt & Girard, 1986; Walters & Snavely, 1981). These studies of communication flow and competence suggest that the quality of supervisory communication should relate to an employee's overall satisfaction with his or her superior and job, and the adequacy of information diffusion in the organization.

The necessity for quality and quantity in information diffusion in an organization has been found to be related to performance (Baird & Bradley, 1978; Jain, 1973; Pincus, 1986). The frequency and amount of communication between supervisors and subordinates, and employee knowledge of

policies and procedures have also been both found to be tied closely to communication effectiveness (Jain, 1973).

Training within an organization has also been linked with increases in job performance (Goldstein, 1980; Schneider, 1985). The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the communication competence of supervisors upon employees' job satisfaction.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Communication Climate

Warrick (1972) describes ideal organizational communication as two-way, open, and genuine. The encouragement or inhibition of ideal communication within an organization is referred to as communication climate.

Communication climate includes communication on both the organizational and personal level (Clampitt & Girard, 1986; Pincus, 1986). The first level includes the use of communication by the organization to motivate and stimulate employees toward organizational goal attainment, to encourage employee identification with the company, and to estimate whether or not employee attitudes toward communication within the organization are healthy (Clampitt & Girard, 1987). Personal communication includes interaction between employees within an organization. This interaction is not necessarily job related but may have an ultimate effect on the organization in terms of socioemotional factors.

The overlapping of these effects can be seen when examining the communication climate variables of frequency of communication with supervisor, quality of relationship with supervisor, feedback opportunities, and the degree of openness in organizational communication. Frequency of communication with the supervisor is positively correlated with employee job satisfaction (Baird & Diebolt, 1976; Cline & Wilmoth, 1987; Infante & Gordon, 1979) and with communication satisfaction (Cline & Wilmoth, 1987).

Supervisory communication includes both upward and downward aspects of communicating with superiors. Three of the principal factors include: (a) The extent to which a superior is open to ideas; (b) The extent to which the supervisor listens and pays attention; and (c) The extent to which guidance is offered in solving job-related problems (Clampitt & Girard, 1987). These factors determine the "quality" of relationship with a supervisor, which has also been related to job satisfaction (Baird & Bradley, 1978; Baird & Diebolt, 1976; Brandt, 1979; Goldhaber, 1978; Infante & Gordon, 1979; Jablin, 1979; Remland, 1984), social attractiveness, and communicative effectiveness (Brandt, 1979). In a study by Pincus (1986), satisfaction with the supervisor was the major influence in the set of job satisfaction dimensions explored.

"Personal feedback is concerned with the workers' need to know how they are being judged and how their performance

is being appraised" (Clampitt & Girard, 1987, p.3). Feedback also had a positive correlation to job satisfaction (Jablin, 1979; Pincus, 1986). In addition, personal feedback was perceived as having the most significant impact on employee productivity (Clampitt & Girard, 1986). Studies have found that employees are more satisfied with their jobs when a greater degree of openness or candid disclosure exists between subordinate and superior in message sending and receiving (Brandt, 1979; Burke & Wilcox, 1969; Dillard, Wigand, & Boster, 1986; Jablin, 1978).

The link between communication climate and job satisfaction has been supported by various studies (Baird & Diebolt, 1976; Burke & Wilcox, 1969; Crino & White, 1981; Jablin, 1979; Pincus, 1986; Redding, 1972; Weitzel, Pinto, Davis, & Jury, 1973; Wheelless, Wheelless, & Howard, 1983). Openness has been shown to be an essential element for effective organizational climate or productivity in job performance (Burke & Wilcox, 1969; Jablin, 1978). In the study by Baird and Diebolt (1976), a positive correlation was found between communicative openness of the supervisor and the subordinate's job performance.

Generally speaking, an interactive style of supervision that is characterized by active listening, supportiveness of the communicational partner, openness and candor, and the ability to facilitate the interaction through control of information flow and maintenance of a relaxed climate tends

to contribute to a perception of communicative effectiveness (Brandt, 1979).

Communication Competence

The ability to communicate effectively is one of the central ideas of the concept of communication competence. Barnard (1936) was one of the early writers who recognized the importance of competence in the communication function of an organization. Barnard concluded that the primary responsibility of an executive is to develop and maintain a system of communication. Other more recent research has also examined competence as an organizational factor (Boyatzis, 1982; Gilbert, 1978).

Definitions of Communication Competence. As stated earlier, communication competence deals with "the ability to adapt messages appropriately to the interaction context" (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984, p.63; Wiemann & Kelly, 1981). Other competence definitions call for the successful accomplishment of the interpersonal goals of the interactants (Monge, Bachman, Dillard & Eisenberg, 1982; Parks, 1977; Weinstein, 1969; Wiemann, 1975; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980). It has even been argued that "in order for a person to function effectively in society, that person needs to achieve a certain level of competence in the use of language and nonlanguage behavior for the purpose of communication" (Wiemann & Backlund, 1980, p.186). Argyris

(1965) went a step further by stating that "the competence in a living organism means its fitness or ability to carry on those transactions with the environment which result in its maintaining itself, growing, and flourishing" (p.59). Heath (1977) defined competence as "adaptive effectiveness" (p.33). The definition "used by most communication researchers refers to the ability to interact interpersonally in ways that ensure the achievement of one's goals and the satisfaction of both interactants" (DeVito, 1986, p.61).

Behaviors associated with Communication Competence.

Communication behaviors considered relevant to competence include affiliation/support (Brandt, 1979; Wiemann, 1975; Wiemann, 1977; Wiemann & Backlund, 1980), social relaxation, empathy, behavior flexibility, and interaction management (Wiemann, 1977). Remland (1984) restated Stogdill's (1974) definition of affiliation/support as "behaviors that show concern for subordinates as people" (p.41). Examples of this concern would include caring, respecting, friendliness, and listening. Wiemann and Kelly (1981) stated that empathy "generally means to put oneself in the place of the other cognitively and emotionally (or, at least, to grasp the other's position) in an encounter" (p.294). Warrick (1972) equated behavioral flexibility with adapting leadership style to the situation. An adaptable leader is one who

takes the initiative to size up the context and then makes necessary changes in his or her style to facilitate goal achievement. Interaction management is concerned with the "procedural aspects of interaction--those elements which serve to structure and maintain it as an interaction, including such behaviors as initiation and termination of conversation, the allocation of speaking turns and selection of topic" (Wiemann & Kelly, 1981,p.292).

Competence and Job Satisfaction. Communication research shows a positive relationship between a manager's communication competence and employee job satisfaction (Baird & Diebolt, 1976; Weitzel et al., 1973). According to Baird and Diebolt (1976), job satisfaction is a direct result of frequency of communication between supervisor and employee, recognition from supervisor, and openness of communication channels within the organization.

Organizational, as well as employee performance, is also found to correlate to the variable of supervisory communication competence. In the context of hospitals, studies have found that "supervisory communication effectiveness is related to nurses' morale, their performance, and to patient recovery rates" (Jain, 1973, p.105). Redding (1972) stated:

...by and large, the better supervisors
(better in terms of getting the work done)
are--in a very general sense--those who are

more sensitive to their communication responsibilities. They tend to be those, for example, who give clear instructions, who listen empathically, who are accessible for questions or suggestions, and who keep their subordinates properly informed (p.56).

Communication Flow

Corporate information deals with the broadest kind of information about the organization as a whole. It can include items on notification about changes, information about the over-all policies and goals of the organization, and information about the organization's financial standing (Clampitt & Girard, 1986). Communication is a process that takes place throughout the entire organization between all individuals and departments in a flow both inwardly and outwardly through all echelons (Browne & Neitzel, 1952). It flows from a source to a receiver (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). Jain (1973) identified the following as channels of communication in the organizational setting: bulletin boards; supervisors; departmental meetings; employee magazines; and pay envelope inserts.

Porter and Roberts (1976) suggested that the employee's immediate supervisor acts as potentially the most important source of information in an organization. Heron (1942) stated that "no medium for carrying information can duplicate or displace the supervisor who lives with employees in their daily work" (p.12). The first-line supervisor has also been viewed as the common link downward

in serving as the channel for flow of information on goals and objectives and as the disseminator of policies and practices (Jain, 1973).

Greenberg (1964b) argued that the amount of interpersonal relaying that occurs in the case of news event diffusion is greatest when the event is of medium saliency. When a news event is either of very low or very high saliency (for example, in the case of a routine local government decision versus President Kennedy's assassination), mass media channels are of greatest importance. In an organization, this translates to mean that the day-to-day activities and demands would be most effectively transmitted by interpersonal means, worker-to-worker or supervisor to subordinate.

For effective transmission, it is necessary that there first exist a climate of belief. This concept is described by Jain (1973) as a sense of confidence and trust placed in leadership by employees due to leaders' "willingness to share information with their subordinates, consult them on matters of mutual interest and settle their grievances promptly" (p.112).

Information Typologies. Research by Baird and Bradley (1978) posited that giving the subordinate job instructions and allowing him or her to work unsupervised are both correlated with high relationship quality. But research

conducted in five large corporations showed that managers and subordinates differed markedly on such important topics as "the nature of the subordinate's job duties, the abilities required to perform the job, the problems he or she faces on the job, and the changes which are to occur in his or her job" (Maier, Hoffman, & Read, 1963, p.1). This congruency problem indicates the existence of serious communication problems between the two groups of workers.

Managerial communication that clarifies job objectives or provides job rationale increases satisfaction and promotes a high quality relationship between superior and subordinate (Baird & Bradley, 1978). Organizational procedures and policies must also be transmitted to employees and are best transmitted through supervisors, but supervisors can only pass on what they know (Jain, 1973).

One of the most important areas of consideration in the information flow process is feedback about subordinate performance. Clampitt and Girard (1986) found that personal feedback was perceived as having the most significant impact on employee productivity. Individuals who are relatively isolated in communication networks are expected to perform less well than communication participants who are more likely to have information available to guide their actions (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1979).

Indoctrination of organizational goals within employees is important for cohesiveness and organizational

effectiveness. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) stated:

...face-to-face exchange is more effective in the face of resistance or apathy on the part of the communicatee. It allows two-way exchange of ideas which would provide clarification or additional information from the source individual. Interpersonal exchange is also conducive to persuading the receiving individual to form or change strongly held attitudes (p. 252).

Employee socioemotional need fulfillment is one area often neglected in the organizational environment. Vroom (1964) called it "consideration" and cited it as a major determinant of job satisfaction. Likert (1961) stated that the most important prerequisite for the establishment of his "ideal" organizational system was the creation of a "supportive atmosphere". Baird and Bradley (1978) posited that managers who communicated in ways emphasizing group goals, participation, teamwork, and intermember relations usually had highly cohesive groups working under them. Studies have even shown that failure to include an employee in communication activity is related to feelings of alienation (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1979) and communication roles may also be related to an individual's affective responses at work (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Muchinsky, 1977).

Consequences of Communication Flow. Employees' perceptions of organizational communication are directly related to both their job satisfaction and job performance

(Pincus, 1986; Jablin, 1978), but communication flow also has an effect on the overall organizational performance. Managers and researchers apparently agree that communication processes underlie most aspects of organization functioning and are critical to organizational effectiveness (Snyder & Morris, 1984).

Employees are more satisfied with their jobs when openness of communication exists between subordinate and superior (Burke & Wilcox, 1969; Jablin, 1978), and openness of communication is directly correlated with organizational performance (Indik et al., 1961; Willits, 1967). Information accuracy and communication openness were the two aspects of group communication assessed to be most important for group performance (O'Reilly & Roberts, 1977). Communication, information, and performance were linked in a series of investigations by Roberts and O'Reilly (1979), and Jain (1973) specifically identified supervisor communication as a key contributor to organizational effectiveness. Decision-making performance was better with more frequent use of the supervisor as an information source and supportiveness was positively associated with reliance on the supervisor, which, in turn, is associated with improved performance (O'Reilly, 1977).

Apparently, the factors that contribute to good superior-subordinate relationships, communication, and job satisfaction also contribute to group cohesion (Baird &

Bradley, 1978). Group cohesion is recognized as an important factor in employee morale building. Communication within the superior-subordinate relationship has achieved increased recognition as a vital link to such important organizational outcomes as morale, job satisfaction, and job performance (Cline & Wilmoth, 1987). Five elements associated with high levels of employee morale include: showing concern; communicating comfortably; being attentive; listening carefully, and being friendly (Baird & Bradley, 1978).

Baird & Bradley (1978) concluded their research by stating:

when leadership is exerted, however, it should take the form of encouraging participation, providing information, stressing happy interpersonal relationships, emphasizing organizational goals, stressing conflict avoidance, encouraging teamwork, motivating employees to give their best effort, and providing them with reinforcement when they perform well (p. 53).

Low levels of job satisfaction have been consistently linked to increased absenteeism and turnover, which in the long run costs an organization money (Vroom, 1964). Some research has even shown that dissatisfaction can affect physical health, life expectancy, and mental health (Locke, 1976). Since research results have shown the importance of the communicative behavior of supervisors to their own performance and to their subordinate's morale and performance, then training in communication skills to

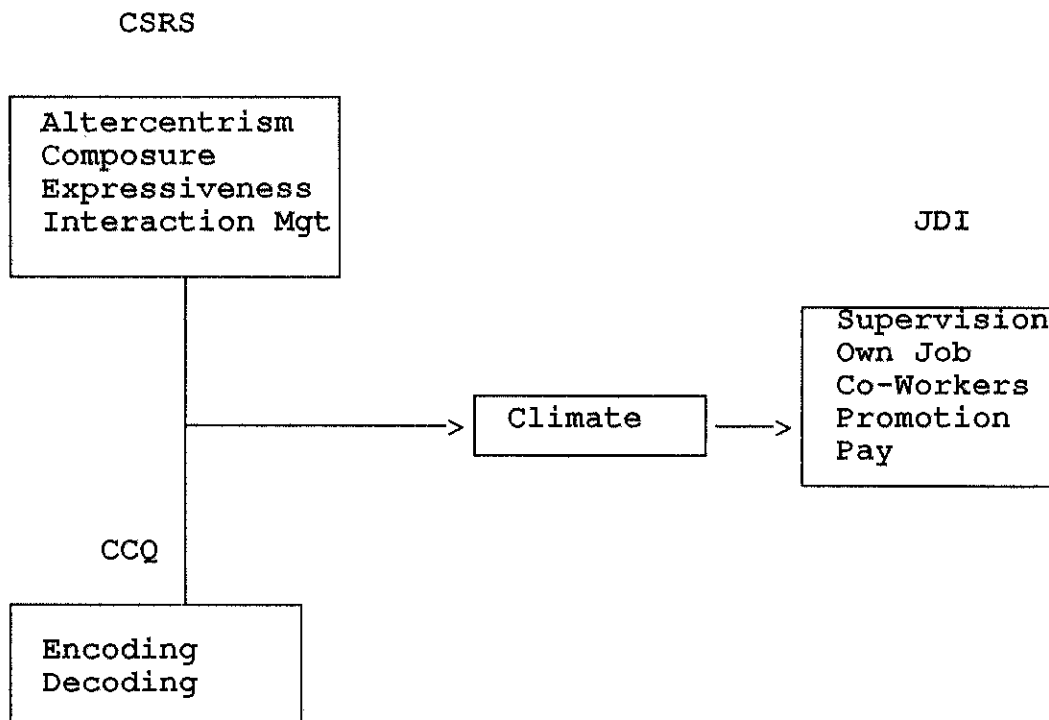
improve the communication attitudes and feelings of communication adequacy of supervisors toward their subordinates would seem warranted (Jain, 1973).

The following study will examine the significance of an employee's perception of supervisory communication competence upon his or her job satisfaction.

- H1: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by CSRS and each of the independent measures of JDI (pay, co-workers, promotion opportunities, the job itself, and supervision received).
- H2: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by the Communicator Competence Questionnaire (CCQ) and each of the independent measures of JDI.
- H3: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by CSRS and communication climate.
- H4: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by CCQ and communication climate.
- H5: There will be a positive correlation between communication climate and each of the independent dimensions of the JDI.

Since elements in an organization work systemically, an additional analysis will be done in this study to investigate how each of the above mentioned variables work together systemically in those dimensions shown above. The suggested model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
Relationships Among Communication Competence,
Communication Climate and JDI



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Subjects will be the 137 employees from a small Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex bank holding company. All employees will be included in order to examine all levels of supervisor/subordinate interaction. Five organizations will be involved: four banks and the holding company staff that is recognized as a separate entity. Each of the entities is directed by its own management team but all five groups are subject to holding company policies and procedures. Because of this common set of directions, it is felt that the sample may provide a more accurate reflection of the influence of managers in the workplace.

Measurement

The research will include four instruments (See Appendix). The first instrument will be the Communication Climate subscale from the Downs and Hazen Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (1977). The subscale has been used in two studies (Crino & White, 1981; Downs & Hazen, 1977) and has sufficient coefficient alpha reliability (.79)

to use in an effort to measure the concept of communication climate.

The second instrument will be a job satisfaction questionnaire, the Job Description Index (JDI) by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) and factor analyzed by Falcione, Daly, and McCroskey, (1977). The JDI measures satisfaction with five specific job factors: the type of work, the pay, the promotion opportunities, the co-workers on the job, and the supervision. The questionnaire provides a list of adjectives or short phrases for each of the five areas. Employees will be instructed to indicate the degree of applicability of those terms to the particular facet of their job in question. The instrument was found to have a corrected reliability estimate of .79 in preliminary studies with split-half estimates for the internal consistency of the JDI scales and .74 for the JDI scales using 168 Cornell students as subjects (Smith et al., 1969). Use of Nunnally's (1967) techniques yielded the following reliabilities for each of the dimensions of job satisfaction: own work=.81; supervisor=.80; co-workers=.93; and promotion=.82 (Hurt & Teigen, 1977, p.379). Split-half observation for internal consistencies found that all corrected estimates were over .80 (the correlations were corrected to full length by the Spearman-Brown Formula) (Smith et al., 1969). The JDI was compared to another proposed measure of satisfaction, a scale with five faces

ranging from unhappy to happy. The Faces Scale was previously shown to have convergent and discriminant validity (Smith et al., 1969). All items within each area were intercorrelated and also correlated with the Faces Scale for the appropriate area. All items retained were positively related to other items and to total score. The JDI has been validated in other studies with Cronbach's alpha in a range of .50 to .92 (Cline & Wilmoth, 1987; Ewen, 1967; Waters & Waters, 1972) and referenced in numerous other studies (Clampitt & Girard, 1986; Hulin & Waters, 1971; Payne, Fineman, & Wall, 1976; Pincus, 1986; Waneous & Lawler, 1972; Waters & Waters, 1972; Weitzel, Pinto, Dawis, & Jury, 1973).

A third measure, the Communicator Competence Questionnaire by Monge, Bachman, Dillard, and Eisenberg (1982) will be administered to the employees. This measure represents one of the first attempts to operationalize a definition of competence for research in the workplace and focuses on observable molar communication behaviors. The version of the questionnaire to be used in this study, consists of a series of questions that ask employees what perceptions they have of their immediate supervisor's general ability to communicate. The subject will be asked to reply with a continuum of responses: very strong agreement; strong agreement; mild agreement; neutral feelings or don't know; mild disagreement; strong

disagreement; very strong disagreement. This instrument stresses two factors: the Encoding Factor (command of the language, writing skills, people management abilities) and Decoding Factor (listening skills, sensitivity). The importance of the two factors has been supported by the work of others (Berlo, 1960; Farace, Taylor, & Stewart, 1978). Internal consistency of the items (Monge et al., 1982) were computed with Cronbach's coefficient alphas. Supervisory coefficients were .87 for the encoding factor and .85 for the decoding. For the subordinates, the coefficients for the two factors were .85 and .81, which indicated a high degree of internal consistency for each factor. Assessment of convergent validity produced correlations with a mean value of .74, thus providing evidence of convergent validity for this operationalization of communicator competence.

A fourth instrument, the Conversational Skills Rating Scale (CSRS) by Spitzberg (Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987) will be used to measure a subordinate's perception of a supervisor's communication competence skills. This instrument measures specific or molecular skills that have been determined to influence an observer's impression of competence in the speaker, rather than a general impression of overall competent behaviors. Employees will be asked to rate their immediate supervisor using a Likert scale of 1 - 5 (from inadequate to excellent). Ratings are given according to how skillfully the supervisor used, or did not use certain

communicative behaviors (such as use of eye contact, initiation of new topics, speaking rate) in their general conversations with that employee. Items loaded into four factors of communication competence skills: altercentrism, expressiveness, interaction management, and composure. The CSRS is comprised of relatively precise and clearly identifiable behavioral objectives for competency perception. In study one, the CSRS correlated .60 with self-rating of competence in a recalled conversation. A second study showed coefficient alpha reliability of the behavioral items to be .94, and .87 for the five molar items (Spitzberg & Hurt, 1987). Though the CSRS has been supported by research (Spitzberg, 1986b; Spitzberg, 1987; Brunner & Spitzberg, 1986; Powers & Spitzberg, 1986) and, despite its relatively objective item content, the research thus far suggests that raters apply subjective standards to the items, which could lessen the validity of the measure. However, since this research is interested in the role of supervisory behavior in producing employee perceptions of supervisory competence, the form should prove an effective instrument (Spitzberg, 1987). The variables of context evaluation, motivation, knowledge, and molar skills predicted over 35% of the variance in interactant satisfaction, over 27% of the variance in impressions of self-competence, and over 50% of the variance in impressions of conversational partner's competence (Brunner & Spitzberg,

1987). The use of a multiplexity of competence instruments, one measuring general impressions of overall competent behaviors and one measuring specific skills involved in the accomplishment of those competent behaviors should provide a useful base of data for support of the concept of supervisory communication competence.

Procedures

All research projects have limitations and this one is no exception. A concern is that the data will be generated using relatively small businesses in one metropolitan area. The generalizability to other areas might then be questionable. Nevertheless, these five companies do represent typical small financial organizations found in cities across the United States in that they are regulated by federal and state banking regulations, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation regulations, and are directed by local management under the direction of a Board of Directors. In spite of the small scope of sample selection, the results obtained should provide insights that may be generalized over a larger scope. This organization was selected due to the need to control variations in benefits, policies, and procedures so that the topic of supervision might be adequately explored as a unique factor within the work environment.

The four measures will be delivered to each subject in monthly employee meetings held in each entity. A sealable envelope in which to insert the completed questionnaire will be provided to each employee, along with the four instruments. A person (usually within the personnel function) within each organization will be designated to collect the sealed envelopes and to forward them to the researcher.

Statistical Analysis

All hypotheses were tested using step-wise linear regression or appropriate variations on that procedure.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Of the 137 total subjects included in this research project, 107 or 78% returned responses as requested.

Data Analysis

Table 1 summarizes the results generated by the stepwise regression procedure concerning satisfaction, including the competence predictors retained, their standardized beta weights, the statistical test of each, and the variance predictable (R^2) by the predictors retained. As noted in Table 1, statistically significant results were generated for four of the five dimensions of the JDI, only satisfaction with co-workers failed to generate predictor variable significance. The number of competence predictor variables retained from the original 6 (altercentrism, expressiveness, interaction management, composure, encoding and decoding) ranged from a high of 3 for satisfaction with supervision, to a low of 1 for satisfaction with pay and satisfaction with opportunities for promotion.

Testing results of each of the hypothesis posited in this research project will now be examined individually.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by CSRS and each of the independent measures of JDI (pay, co-workers, promotion opportunities, the job itself, and supervision received).

Table 1

Significant Relationships Generated by Stepwise Regression Procedures for JDI Components.

Criterion Variable	Predictor	Beta
Work ($F_2=5.39$, $p<.006$, $R^2=.09$)	Altercentrism	.23
	Expressiveness	-.40
Supervisor ($F_3=36.10$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.51$)	Altercentrism	.34
	Composure	-.28
	Decoding	.64
Pay ($F_2=13.01$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.11$)	Encoding	.33
Promotions ($F_2=21.98$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.17$)	Encoding	.42

Nine percent (9%) of the variance of work satisfaction or the job itself was explained by the CSRS variables, altercentrism and expressiveness. The former had a positive and the latter an inverse relationship. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the variance in satisfaction with supervision received was explained by a positive relationship to altercentrism and a negative relationship to composure. No

significant correlations were obtained between the satisfaction variables of pay, co-workers, and promotion opportunities and those communication competence variables as measured by the CSRS.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by the CCQ and each of the independent measures of JDI.

The competence variable, encoding, as measured by the CCQ had a positive relationship to and accounted for 11% of the variance in a subordinate's satisfaction with pay. Supervisor encoding skills also accounted for 17% of the variance in an employee's satisfaction with opportunities for promotion. Decoding competence had a positive relationship to satisfaction with supervisor and accounted for 41% of the variance. No relationship was obtained between measures of the CCQ and satisfaction with co-workers or the job itself.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by CSRS and communication climate.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a positive relationship between a linear composite of a supervisor's communication competence as measured by CCQ and communication climate.

Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive correlation between communication climate and each of the independent dimensions of the JDI.

Table 2 provides a summary of the results produced by stepwise regression concerning the construct of communication climate as generated through the competence predictors of the CCQ and CSRS. Only one predictor variable of the CCQ, decoding was significant and accounted for 14% of the variance. Also one predictor of the CSRS, altercentrism accounted for 5% of the variance in communication climate.

Table 2

Significant Relationships Generated by Stepwise Regression Procedures for Communication Climate.

Criterion Variable	Predictor	Beta
Climate ($F=17.55$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.14$)	CCQ-Decoding	.38
Climate ($F=5.22$, $p<.024$, $R^2=.05$)	CSRS-Altercentrism	.22

Table 3

Communication Climate Correlations To Independent Dimensions of the Job Description Index (JDI).

JDI Dimension	Climate
Work	.37, $p<.001$
Supervisor	.22, $p<.024$
Pay	.32, $p<.001$
Promotions	.32, $p<.001$
Co-Workers	.25, $p<.009$

Table 3 summarizes results generated in the Pearson Correlation Coefficients procedure and reveals significant relationships between communication climate and all five dimensions of the JDI.

Model Testing

The research model proposed and two other possible models were tested by using stepwise multiple regression. This procedure added one independent variable or clusters of competence or satisfaction variables at a time to a hierarchical multiple regression to account for the amount of variance that those independent variables explain in the dependent variable. The following results were obtained.

Research Model as Originally Proposed.

Independent Variables=CCQ, CSRS, Climate
Dependent Variable=JDI Dimensions

CCQ and CSRS----> Climate----> JDI Dimensions
(Step 1) (Step 2)

Table 4 indicates that measures of the CCQ (encoding and decoding), measures of the CSRS (altercentrism, expressiveness, interaction management, and composure), and climate when regressed onto the components of the JDI provided the following variance effects: 51% of satisfaction with supervisor; 16% of satisfaction with pay; 20% of satisfaction with opportunities for promotion; and 6% of satisfaction with co-workers.

Table 4

Model Generated by Hierarchical Regression Procedures:
Model as Proposed by Research Project

Criterion	Predictors	Beta
Work	Step 1: CSRS-Altercentrism	.23
	Expressiveness	-.40
	Step 2: Climate	.28
	(F=6.86, p<.001, R ² =.17)	
Supervisor	Step 1: CSRS-Altercentrism	.34
	Composure	-.28
	CCQ- Decoding	.64
	Step 2: Climate	-.04
(F=26.94, p<.001, R ² =.51)		
Pay	Step 1: CCQ- Encoding	.33
	Step 2: Climate	.23
	(F=9.64, p<.001, R ² =.16)	
Promotions	Step 1: CCQ- Encoding	.42
	Step 2: Climate	.19
	(F=13.40, p<.001, R ² =.20)	
Coworkers	Step 1: No variables entered	
	Step 2: Climate	.25
(F=7.02, p<.009, R ² =.06)		

As shown in Table 4, altercentrism and climate had a positive relationship to satisfaction with work; expressiveness had an inverse relationship. Decoding and

altercentrism had a positive relationship and composure had an inverse relationship to satisfaction with supervisor. Encoding and climate were both positively correlated to pay satisfaction and to promotion satisfaction. Climate was positively related to satisfaction with co-workers.

The next portion of this chapter deals with alternative model designs that were tested to ensure the best fit of the variables used in this research project.

Research Model #2.

Independent Variables=Climate, JDI Dimensions
Dependent Variables=CCQ, CSRS

CCQ and CSRS----> JDI Dimensions----> Climate
(Step 1) (Step 2)

Measures of the CCQ, measures of the CSRS, and the JDI components when regressed onto climate, accounted for 31% of the variance in the model. Individual items that were revealed as significant, included decoding ($p < .0352$) and work satisfaction ($p < .0098$).

Research Model #3.

Independent Variables=Climate, JDI Dimensions
Dependent Variables=CCQ, CSRS

Climate----> JDI Dimensions----> CCQ and CSRS
(Step 1) (Step 2)

When climate and the components of satisfaction were regressed onto the CCQ, 43% of the variance in encoding and 49% of the variance in decoding were suggested.

Communication climate and satisfaction with supervisor were the most significant predictors of both encoding ($p < .022$; $p < .001$) and decoding ($p < .002$; $p < .001$).

The independent variables accounted for the following variance in CSRS competence measures: altercentrism, 37%; interaction management, 26%; composure, 15%; and expressiveness, 25%. In all cases, the most significant predictor was satisfaction with supervisor.

Summary of Variable Differentiation

Multiple regression was performed to differentiate individual items or questions that comprise the competence variables that were acting as significant predictors of the dependent satisfaction variables tested. This step was taken in order to provide a more accurate descriptive statement of behaviors perceived by the subordinates to be important in predicting their satisfaction.

Individual items that are predictors of work satisfaction included CSRS2 ($B = .265$, $p < .006$), CSRS20 ($B = -.252$, $p < .002$), and CCQ8 ($B = .206$, $p < .001$). Those statements appear as follows:

CSRS2: Initiation of new topics
 CSRS20: Vocal Variety
 CCQ8: Supervisor expresses ideas clearly

Items that are predictors of satisfaction with supervisor include: CCQ2 ($B = .622$, $p < .001$), CSRS14 ($B = .323$, $p < .001$), CCQ6 ($B = .290$, $p < .001$), and CSRS9

($B = -.178$, $p < .001$). Those questions appeared as follows:

CCQ2: Supervisor is sensitive to others' needs
of the moment
CSRS14: Nodding of head in response to
subordinate's statements
CCQ6: Supervisor is a good listener
CSRS9: Articulation

Only one item was entered as being a significant predictor of pay satisfaction, CCQ10 ($B = .329$, $p < .001$).

That item states:

CCQ10: Supervisor generally says right thing
at right time

Questions CCQ10 ($B = .404$, $p < .001$) CSRS13 ($B = .226$, $p < .001$), and CSRS6 ($B = -.221$, $p < .001$) were found to significantly predict perceptions of satisfaction with opportunities for promotion. Those items stated:

CCQ10: Supervisor generally says right thing
at right time
CSRS13: Asking questions
CSRS6: Speaking rate

Satisfaction with co-workers was determined with only one significant item, CCQ8 ($B = .195$, $p < .044$) which reads:

CCQ8: Supervisor expresses ideas clearly

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Results obtained lend support for the hypotheses proposed in this research and provided a wealth of data regarding the relationships between supervisor behavior and subordinate satisfaction in an organizational setting. Due to the large number of relationships demonstrated, only the largest correlations are discussed.

"People responsiveness" or affiliation/support appears to be one of the most important traits needed by a supervisor to ensure the subordinate's acceptance of and satisfaction with a supervisor's leadership style. The variables, decoding and altercentrism were found to account for up to 51% of the variance (See Table 1) in a subordinate's satisfaction with supervision received in this organization. The kinds of behaviors reflected in this responsive style include sensitivity to others' needs, being a good listener, and an expression of interest in or recognition of the subordinate as displayed by nonverbal behaviors, such as head nodding in response to subordinate's statements. These results provide support for past research regarding the relationship of superior consideration and

subordinate job satisfaction. Responsiveness also seems to suggest an element of "being human" in that too much composure or formality in dealing with a subordinate has an inverse affect upon that employee's satisfaction with the superior. This finding would lend support to the curvilinear hypothesis of competence which suggests that too much of a good thing can be bad.

"People skills" which fulfill the socioemotional needs of the subordinate are also important in ensuring a subordinate's satisfaction with his or her pay and opportunities for promotion within an organization. Specifically, the skill of saying the right thing at the right time or behavioral flexibility was noted to significantly aid in the development of satisfaction in these two areas of concern to an organization. Just the act of a supervisor taking the time to clearly explain the reasons behind any pay or promotional changes or lack of such changes seems to confirm the felt satisfaction of the employee.

Specific supervisory behaviors that were related to an employee's satisfaction with his or her own job included the need for superiors to clearly express their own ideas, the need for superiors to encourage the subordinate to share their ideas, and the need for superiors to deal with co-workers effectively. The first two items describe an open communication system with continual feedback and

expression of ideas. Additionally, the initiation of new topics was also found to relate to a subordinate's satisfaction with their job. This possibly suggests a less monotonous and a more fulfilling job agenda with added variety, job enrichment, and challenge. It certainly again suggests the importance of openness in topic sharing within an organizational communication system.

The link between communication climate and job satisfaction was confirmed again in this study as it has been in past research. Significant correlations were found between communication climate and all five independent dimensions of the JDI: satisfaction with work, satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with opportunities for promotion, and satisfaction with co-workers. Communication climate was defined in this research as an organizational environment which motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for goal attainment and which encourages employee identification with the company. Also, communication climate concerns the extent to which people in the organization have communication abilities, the extent to which people receive in a timely manner the vital information needed to accomplish their jobs, and the extent to which appropriate conflict management is practiced by the organization.

The model proposed in this paper (Competence----> Climate----> Satisfaction) is also supported as being the

design that best accounts for each of the dimensions of satisfaction, especially a subordinate's satisfaction with supervision received. This would seem to suggest that those communication skills and dispositions that a supervisor brings into an organization affect the climate within the company, thus affecting the subordinate's perceptions of felt satisfaction.

Since the communication competence of a supervisor can ultimately affect the satisfaction of a subordinate, which in turn has been linked to attendance/absenteeism, turnover, tenure, and productivity, implications of the research suggest the necessity of training managers in communication skills. Ultimately, the productivity of the organization rests in the hands of managers who deal with subordinates on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, providing skills training for supervisors in communicating in a more competent manner should impact the bottom line of the organization and should help managers accomplish their primary responsibility which Bernard (1936) suggested was to develop and maintain a system of communication.

APPENDIX

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Answer the following categories as they apply to you.

(/ 1)

- (1-2) ID# __ (to be assigned by researcher)
- (3) Sex __ (1=Male; 2=Female)
- (4) Ethnic Group: __ (1=Asian; 2=Black; 3=Hispanic; 4=Caucasian; 5=Other)
- (5-6) Age (in years) _ _
- (7) Marital Status __ (1=Single; 2=Married; 3=Divorced/Separated)
- (8) How many children do you have? __
- (9) Do you own or rent your home? __ (1=own; 2=rent/lease)
- (10) Employment Status: __ (1=Part Time; 2=Full Time)
- (11) Division Status: __ (1=Operations; 2=Lending)
- (12-13) Primary Job Function: _ _
- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 01=Executive Officer | 06=Bookkeeper |
| 02=Officer (Manager) | 07=Machine Operator |
| 03=Officer (Other) | 08=Teller |
| 04=Non-Officer Supervisor | 09=Customer Service/New Accounts |
| 05=Secretary/Clerical | 10=Other _____ (specify) |
- (14-16) Total Months of Employment with Organization _ _ _
- (17-18) Gross Annual Salary _ _ _
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 01=Under \$10,000 | 06=\$30,000 - 34,999 |
| 02=\$10,001 - 14,999 | 07=\$35,000 - 39,999 |
| 03=\$15,000 - 19,999 | 08=\$40,000 - 44,999 |
| 04=\$20,000 - 24,999 | 09=\$45,000 - 49,999 |
| 05=\$25,000 - 29,999 | 10=\$50,000 and Over |
- (19) Education Level __
- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1=Less Than Twelve Years Completed | 4=Bachelors Degree |
| 2=High School Graduate/Diploma | 5=Masters Degree |
| 3=Associate Degree/Trade School | 6=Doctoral Degree |

COMMUNICATION CLIMATE SATISFACTION

Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following. Circle the number at the right with 1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Somewhat Dissatisfied, 4=Indifferent, 5=Somewhat Satisfied, 6=Satisfied, and 7=Very Satisfied.

- (20) Extent to which the company communication motivates and stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting its goals. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (21) Extent to which the people in my organization have great ability as communicators. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (22) Extent to which the company's communication makes me identify with it or feel a vital part of it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (23) Extent to which I receive on time the information needed to do my job. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (24) Extent to which conflicts are handled appropriately through proper communication channels. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

COMMUNICATOR COMPETENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

In this series of questions please describe how your supervisor communicates. Think about his/her behavior in general, rather than about specific situations.

In responding to the statements below, please use the following scale:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 = very strong disagreement | 5 = mild agreement |
| 2 = strong disagreement | 6 = strong agreement |
| 3 = mild disagreement | 7 = very strong agreement |
| 4 = neutral feelings or don't know | |

(/ 2)

- (28) My supervisor has a good command of the language.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (29) My supervisor is sensitive to others' needs of the moment.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (30) My supervisor typically gets right to the point.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (31) My supervisor pays attention to what other people say to him/her.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (32) My supervisor can deal with others effectively.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (33) My supervisor is a good listener.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (34) My supervisor's writing is difficult to understand.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (35) My supervisor expresses his/her ideas clearly.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (36) My supervisor is difficult to understand when he/she speaks.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (37) My supervisor generally says the right thing at the right time.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (38) My supervisor is easy to talk to.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- (39) My supervisor usually responds to messages (memos, phone calls, reports, etc.,) quickly.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS RATING SCALE

Ratee (ID): _____

Supervisor (ID): _____

Think back on conversations you have held with your immediate supervisor and rate that supervisor according to how skillfully he/she generally used, or did not use the following communicative behaviors in conversations. Rate your supervisor from 1 through 5, where:

- 1 = INADEQUATE (use was awkward, disruptive, or resulted in a negative impression of communicative skills)
- 2 = SOMEWHAT ADEQUATE
- 3 = ADEQUATE (use was sufficient but neither very noticeable nor excellent. Produced neither positive nor negative impression)
- 4 = GOOD
- 5 = EXCELLENT (use was smooth, controlled, and resulted in positive impression of communicative skill)

Circle the single most accurate response for each behavior:

(/ 2)

- (40) 1 2 3 4 5 Use of eye contact
- (41) 1 2 3 4 5 Initiation of new topics
- (42) 1 2 3 4 5 Maintenance of topics and follow-up comments
- (43) 1 2 3 4 5 Use of time speaking relative to partner
- (44) 1 2 3 4 5 Interruption of partner's speaking turns
- (45) 1 2 3 4 5 Speaking rate (neither too slow nor too fast)
- (46) 1 2 3 4 5 Speaking fluency (avoided pauses, silences, "uh", etc.)
- (47) 1 2 3 4 5 Vocal confidence (neither tense nor nervous sounding)
- (48) 1 2 3 4 5 Articulation (language is clearly pronounced and understood)
- (49) 1 2 3 4 5 Shaking or nervous twitches (weren't noticeable)
- (50) 1 2 3 4 5 Posture (neither too closed/formal nor too open/informal)
- (51) 1 2 3 4 5 Fidgeting (avoided swaying feet; finger-tapping; etc.)
- (52) 1 2 3 4 5 Asking questions
- (53) 1 2 3 4 5 Nodding of head in response to partner's statements
- (54) 1 2 3 4 5 Lean toward partner (neither too far forward nor too far back)
- (55) 1 2 3 4 5 Speaking about partner (involved you as a topic of conversation)
- (56) 1 2 3 4 5 Speaking about self (didn't talk too much about self/own interests)
- (57) 1 2 3 4 5 Encouragements or agreements (encouraged partner to talk)
- (58) 1 2 3 4 5 Use of humor and/or stories
- (59) 1 2 3 4 5 Vocal variety (avoided monotone voice)
- (60) 1 2 3 4 5 Vocal volume (neither too loud nor too soft)
- (61) 1 2 3 4 5 Expression of personal opinions (neither too passive/aggressive)
- (62) 1 2 3 4 5 Facial expressiveness (neither blank nor exaggerated)
- (63) 1 2 3 4 5 Use of gestures to emphasize what was being said
- (64) 1 2 3 4 5 Smiling and/or laughing

For the next five items, rate supervisor's overall conversational performance:

- (65) INCOMPETENT MANAGEMENT: 1 2 3 4 5 : COMPETENT MANAGEMENT
- (66) INEXPRESSIVE: 1 2 3 4 5 : EXPRESSIVE
- (67) INATTENTIVE: 1 2 3 4 5 : ATTENTIVE
- (68) ANXIOUS: 1 2 3 4 5 : COMPOSED
- (69) CONVERSATIONALLY UNSKILLED: 1 2 3 4 5 : CONVERSATIONALLY SKILLED

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