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Satisfied Correctional Staff : A Review of the Literature on the Correlates of Correctional Staff Job Satisfaction

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SATISFIED CORRECTIONAL STAFF

A Review of the Literature on the Correlates of Correctional Staff Job Satisfaction

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During the past decade, there has been increasing pressure on correctional agencies to attract and keep quality staff. Raising worker job satisfaction is seen as a fundamental way of decreasing turnover. There has been a considerable amount of research in the area of the possible causes of correctional staff job satisfaction and, to a lesser extent, the possible consequences of job satisfaction. However, due to the numerous studies, some with conflicting results, it is difficult to understand clearly the factors associated with job satisfaction. A review of the literature is presented to provide a better understanding of correctional staff job satisfaction. Based on this review, correctional administrators are urged to concentrate more on improving the work environment rather than focusing on correctional staff characteristics.

In the past 20 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of research on the attitudes and behaviors of correctional staff. Although this growing body of correctional literature has studied a

wide range of feelings, attitudes, and behaviors of correctional staff, particularly correctional officers, job satisfaction has received the most attention in the literature. Job satisfaction is an important subject that needs to be fully understood. High levels of job satisfaction have been linked to positive behaviors, such as support for rehabilitation and performance, and low levels of job satisfaction have been linked to negative behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover. Increasing positive behaviors while reducing negative ones is very important for correctional administrators to focus on in an era of increasing demands for improved performance and strained budgets. Understanding the possible causes and effects of correctional staff job satisfaction is then very important for correctional administrators.

Although there has been an increase in research looking at correctional staff job satisfaction, it is unclear what the research tells correctional administrators and scholars. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to review the literature on the factors associated with correctional staff job satisfaction. First, the two major concepts that the article is built on, correctional staff and job satisfaction, are defined. Next, a review of the literature is divided into the following two sections: (a) the literature on various possible causes of correctional staff job satisfaction and (b) the likely consequences of correctional staff job satisfaction.

DEFINITION OF JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is a latent concept that has been frequently studied across a wide array of disciplines.[1] Spector (1996) estimated the current number of studies incorporating job satisfaction in some manner to be more than 12,400. Although there is no single agreed on definition of job satisfaction, there is general agreement that job satisfaction is an affective response by an employee concerning his or her particular job in an organization, and this response results from the individual's overall comparison of actual outcomes with those that are expected, needed, wanted, desired, or perceived to be fair or just (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992; Lambert, Barton, & Hogan, 1999). In other words, job satisfaction is a subjective, individual-level feeling

reflecting whether a person's needs are or are not being met by a particular job.

Although the definition of job satisfaction is generally agreed on in the correctional literature, the issue of measurement is not. The two primary approaches for measuring job satisfaction are faceted and global (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981; Cranny et al., 1992). Advocates of the faceted approach argue that job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept and, as such, must measure the multiple subdimensions that make up a person's satisfaction with his or her job. Therefore, faceted measures of job satisfaction focus on narrow areas of job tasks, such as satisfaction with the work performed, satisfaction with pay and benefits, satisfaction with promotional opportunities, satisfaction with work relationships, and satisfaction with supervision (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Those who champion the global approach also agree that job satisfaction is a multidimensional concept. However, they argue that it is up to the worker to decide his or her overall satisfaction with the job (Camp, 1994). Therefore, global or overall measures of job satisfaction are concerned with the broader domain of an individual's satisfaction with his or her overall job rather than with specific facets (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). Here, a worker is asked his or her overall satisfaction with the job.

There are both benefits and drawbacks in using either approach for measuring job satisfaction. A major strength of faceted measures of job satisfaction is the ability to identify specific problem areas, such as pay or supervision (Camp, 1994). This is not possible with a global measure. Nonetheless, global measures of job satisfaction have advantages as well. A global measure allows "respondents to assess mentally what they feel are relevant dimensions in formulating a response to the issue of job satisfaction" (Camp, 1994, p. 286). More importantly, facet-oriented measures are based on the crucial assumption that the composite scale includes all relevant aspects of job satisfaction for all the workers (Lambert et al., 1999). This assumption may be false. In the organizational literature, it is strongly argued that simply summing facet satisfaction scales to arrive at an overall measure of job satisfaction, even if weighted in some manner, is inappropriate and could produce a biased measure of overall job satisfaction (Balzer et al., 1997; Bedeian, Ferris, & Kacmar, 1992; Ironson, Smith,

Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989). According to D. Hall (1988), "Job facet satisfaction restricts the individual to a particular reference set when assessing job satisfaction" (p. 14). Therefore, global measures allow individuals to decide what facets of the job are most important to them when they arrive at their overall level of job satisfaction.

In a review of articles (Lambert et al., 1999), it was found that the majority of the correctional staff studies used global measures of job satisfaction (e.g., Brief, Munro, & Aldag, 1976; Britton, 1995, 1997; Camp, 1994; Camp & Steiger, 1995; Cullen, Latessa, Kopache, Lombardo, & Burton, 1993; Cullen, Link, Cullen, & Wolfe, 1989; Flanagan, Johnson, & Bennett, 1996; Grossi, Keil, & Vito, 1996; Hepburn, 1987; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Kane, Saylor, & Nacci, n.d.; Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986; Robinson, Porporino, & Simourd, 1996, 1997; Turner & Johnson, 1980; Walters, 1995; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Wright & Saylor, 1992; Wright, Saylor, Gilman, & Camp, 1997), whereas only a fraction employed a facet measure (e.g., Blau, Light, & Chamlin, 1986; Rogers, 1991; Stohr, Lovrich, Monke, & Zupan, 1994; Stohr, Self, & Lovrich, 1992; Wright, 1993).

The use of different measures could lead not only to differences in the type of satisfaction measured but could also affect the relationships being studied. This may explain in part the conflicting results found in the correctional job satisfaction literature. However, this is only a postulation at this time. No correctional study has directly tested how global versus facet measures of job satisfaction differ with the same correctional staff population. Therefore, it is difficult to precisely and firmly conclude whether each approach will produce significantly different levels of job satisfaction or whether each approach will arrive at different conclusions on the possible major causes of job satisfaction among correctional staff.

DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF CORRECTIONAL STAFF

The literature assessing correctional job satisfaction has been diverse and includes both correctional staff and specific worker populations (e.g., correctional officers, counselors). The concept of correctional staff is hard to define. In its broadest sense, it means all workers

employed for a particular correctional facility or agency. This would include a wide array of employees, such as correctional officers, counselors, medical personnel, industry supervisors, first-line and middle supervisors and mangers, and wardens. In a narrower sense, some use the term to mean correctional officers. To others, the concept of correctional staff implies line-level and middle workers but excludes those in upper management. In addition, correctional staff has been defined as both custody-oriented workers and noncustody workers. Custody-oriented workers have a primary focus on the security and control of the inmates. This would include correctional officers, first-line supervisors, and security management. Noncustody workers provide other services to aid in the operation of the prison or the care of the inmates. These workers include treatment, industry, education, medical, maintenance, kitchen, and business support staff.

The term *correctional staff* is not agreed on in the literature. Some correctional studies have only looked at correctional officers, whereas others have included a wide array of correctional staff excluding the top administration, and a few studies have looked at job satisfaction for top administrators (i.e., wardens). Although studying different groups of workers may present a problem with generalizability, a national study of workers from different organizations found that the variables included in job satisfaction studies tend to have the same impact on all workers (see Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001). Likewise, another study that focused on federal correctional staff found very little difference in job satisfaction between custody and noncustody workers (Lambert, 1999). Therefore, based on these findings across organizations, we take the position that there is little difference among correctional staff in their attitudes and behaviors when presented with similar conditions. In this article, we use the term *correctional staff* to mean persons employed at a correctional facility.

CORRELATES OF JOB SATISFACTION

Although the factors associated as possible causes of correctional staff job satisfaction are diverse, they can be divided into the two primary areas of personal characteristics and work environment.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Personal characteristics are the attributes individuals bring with them when they join a particular organization (e.g., correctional employment). These characteristics include an individual's background (e.g., education, place and type of upbringing, and so forth), demographic identity (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, and so forth), current situation (e.g., married, number of children, tenure, and so forth), and other domains (e.g., religion, distance living from work, total family income, and so forth) (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983). These personal attributes both affect how an individual views his or her world and represent other factors that shape an employee's perceptions. The previous research has primarily focused on attributes such as educational level, race, gender, age, and tenure as variables representing personal characteristics. A review of each variable is discussed below.

Educational level. During the past several decades, correctional administrators have focused on increasing the higher educational level of employees as a way to promote professionalization and job satisfaction of staff (Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985; Hepburn, 1989; Jurik, Halemba, Musheno, & Boyle, 1987; Poole & Regoli, 1983; Robinson et al., 1997). For example, some state correctional systems have affirmatively responded to the higher education recommendation for correctional workers by requiring pre-employment college credit hours. One such state, Michigan, requires that a correctional officer applicant successfully complete 15 college credit hours in the area of human service prior to employment (Maguire & Pastore, 1994).

Although many state correctional systems are moving in the direction of increasing staff educational levels, results of research assessing the impact between higher educational levels and job satisfaction have been mixed. For example, negative relationships between education level and job satisfaction were found among U.S. correctional staff in the West (Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Jurik & Musheno, 1986; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Jurik et al., 1987), the South (Cullen et al., 1985, 1989; Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, & Wolfe, 1991), and with federal correctional officers (Camp & Steiger, 1995; Rogers, 1991). Negative relationships were also found for males but not females in the Midwest

(Walters, 1993). In addition, these negative relationships were also experienced by correctional officers in Canada (Robinson et al., 1997). Rogers (1991) in his multivariate analysis of federal correctional staff further reported that job dissatisfaction was the highest among correctional officers with some college but no degree. In addition, he found that education only accounted for 3% of the variance in overall job satisfaction.

Conversely, a positive relationship between education and job satisfaction was found among correctional officers in Kentucky (Grossi & Berg, 1991), Alabama (Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986), and in the South (Grossi et al., 1996). However, no significant association was found between educational level and job satisfaction among correctional wardens (Cullen et al., 1993; Flanagan et al., 1996), New York Department of Corrections workers (Blau et al., 1986), and Arizona correctional staff (Hepburn & Knepper, 1993).

Although the results are far from conclusive, it would appear that education has a negative association with job satisfaction, especially among correctional officers. It is unclear, however, what type of effect educational level has on job satisfaction for correctional staff other than correctional officers, such as counselors, case workers, and medical personnel.

Race and ethnicity. Researchers have further postulated that race shapes an individual's job satisfaction in the field of corrections. Overall, research suggests no significant relationships between job satisfaction and race of correctional staff in Western (Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Jurik & Musheno, 1986; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Jurik et al., 1987) and Midwestern (Jacobs & Kraft, 1978; Walters, 1993) correctional facilities. In addition, in a national survey of prison wardens, neither Cullen et al. (1993) nor Flanagan et al. (1996) found a relationship between race and job satisfaction.

The results for Northern, Southern, and federal correctional systems, however, were mixed. For example, Blau et al. (1986) found non-Whites reported, on average, lower levels of job satisfaction than did White New York State correctional workers. However, this association disappeared after controlling for the location of the correctional facility. They found that most minorities worked at facilities in downstate New York, where overall morale of employees was generally

lower. In most instances, White Southern correctional officers tend to report higher levels of job satisfaction than all other minority categories (Cullen et al., 1985, 1989; Van Voorhis et al., 1991). Conversely, Grossi and Berg (1991), in their analysis of Kentucky correctional officers, found no significant relationship between minority status and overall job satisfaction.

For federal correctional facilities, Britton (1995, 1997) found that Black federal correctional officers reported lower levels of job satisfaction as compared to White officers, when controlling for evaluations of quality of supervision and officer's perceived efficiency in dealing with inmates. In two other surveys, however, Wright and Saylor (1992) and Camp and Steiger (1995) found no significant association between race and job satisfaction. More specifically, Wright and Saylor (1992) found no significant relationship between Hispanic ethnicity and job satisfaction. Similarly, Britton (1995) found that a positive correlation between Hispanic ethnicity and job satisfaction disappeared in a multivariate analysis. In addition, Wright and Saylor (1992) found no relationship between race and job satisfaction even after controlling for the percentage of minority staff composition and inmate racial composition at each institution. It should further be noted that neither minority staff nor inmate racial composition had a significant impact on job satisfaction. Wright and Saylor (1992) wrote,

> Much of the previous research that found higher levels of dissatisfaction among Black staff was conducted from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. It is possible that race relations may have improved during the years intervening between those studies and this one; however, we suspect this is not the case. (p. 70)

They concluded that the Federal Bureau of Prisons has better race relations than do many state correctional agencies.

Although the literature is not in total agreement on the association between race and correctional staff job satisfaction, a large proportion of the empirical findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between race and job satisfaction. Of the few that found a relationship, most were studies on Southern correctional officers. The bulk of the studies on Northern, Western, Midwestern, and federal

correctional staff found no significant relationship. Therefore, the relationship between race and job satisfaction may be a function of the region and correctional agency as suggested by Wright and Saylor (1992).

Gender. In the past 30 years, there has been a major effort to increase the number of females employed in the field of corrections (Horne, 1985; Philliber, 1987). Therefore, it is important to assess how gender and job satisfaction are related among correctional staff. Among Southern correctional officers, no significant relationship was found between gender and job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 1985, 1989; Van Voorhis et al., 1991). Similar findings of no relationship were observed among correctional officers in a prison complex in the Western United States (Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Jurik & Musheno, 1986; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Jurik et al., 1987), Midwestern correctional officers (Walters, 1992), New York State correctional staff (Blau et al., 1986), federal correctional officers (Britton, 1995; Wright & Saylor, 1991), Kentucky correctional officers (Grossi & Berg, 1991), Arizona correctional staff (Hepburn & Knepper, 1993), and Canadian correctional officers (Robinson et al., 1997). However, Merlak and Hepburn (as cited in Walters, 1993), Camp and Steiger (1995), and Britton (1997) all reported that female correctional officers had higher job satisfaction than male correctional officers. Finally, among prison wardens, no association was observed between gender and job satisfaction (Flanagan et al., 1996). In sum, the bulk of the empirical findings support the postulation that there is no relationship between gender and correctional staff job satisfaction.

Age and tenure. Another area of interest has been the relationship between tenure, age, and job satisfaction. In reviewing the research, a positive association between age and job satisfaction was observed among New York correctional staff (Blau et al., 1986) and federal correctional officers (Camp & Steiger, 1995; Rogers, 1991). However, no relationship between age and job satisfaction was found for Midwestern male and female correctional officers (Walters, 1993), Alabama correctional officers (Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986), Southern correctional officers (Cullen et al., 1989; Van Voorhis et al., 1991), correctional officers at a Western correctional complex (Jurik & Musheno, 1986; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Jurik et al., 1987), Canadian

correctional officers (Robinson et al., 1997), and wardens (Flanagan et al., 1996). Finally, Hepburn and Knepper (1993) detected no relationship between age and job satisfaction in their study of Arizona correctional staff. However, when they looked only at correctional officers, a positive relationship developed.

A mixed relationship has also been suggested between tenure and correctional staff job satisfaction. Among Kentucky correctional officers, a positive relationship between tenure and job satisfaction was found (Grossi & Berg, 1991), as well as with Southern correctional officers (Grossi et al., 1996) and federal correctional officers (Britton, 1995). However, in a 1994 sample of federal correctional officers across the entire federal prison system, a negative association between tenure and job satisfaction was indicated (Camp & Steiger, 1995). It is interesting to note that Camp and Steiger (1995) detected a negative association between tenure and job satisfaction but found a positive relationship between age and job satisfaction among federal correctional officers. Walters (1993), looking at correctional officers in four Midwestern prisons, found a negative relationship between tenure and job satisfaction among male but not among female officers. However, no association between correctional experience/tenure and job satisfaction was observed with Southern correctional officers (Cullen et al., 1985, 1989; Van Voorhis et al., 1991), with correctional employees at a Western correctional facility (Jurik & Musheno, 1986; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Jurik et al., 1987), or with Canadian correctional officers (Robinson et al., 1997). Likewise, among prison wardens, the research suggests no relationship between tenure and job satisfaction (Cullen et al., 1993; Flanagan et al., 1996).

It is clear that the results on the relationship between age and tenure on job satisfaction are mixed. It is unclear why the empirical results are so variant. Some studies have found positive relationships, others negative relationships, and still other studies have found no relationship. These mixed findings are across a wide array of correctional settings throughout the United States. However, there is more diversity in the empirical findings for tenure than there is for age. This is an interesting occurrence because age and tenure tend to be highly correlated with one another.

Other personal characteristics. To a lesser extent, the effects of other personal characteristics have been studied. In a study of correctional officers at four Midwestern prisons, Walters (1993) found no significant relationship between marital status and job satisfaction, even after controlling for gender. Among Kentucky correctional officers, it was found that family support had no significant impact on job satisfaction (Grossi & Berg, 1991). As previously indicated, the personal characteristics most frequently examined have been age, tenure, race, gender, and educational level. From the scarcity of results, it would appear that other personal characteristics are infrequently examined in the research on correctional staff. However, this is similar to research conducted on workers in other types of organizations that has also concentrated on these five variables.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Another area associated with job satisfaction to be examined in the correctional literature is measures of the work environment. The work a person carries out in the course of his or her job does not take place in a vacuum but in a setting known as the work environment. It is the area in which the employee carries out his or her job and is composed of much more than just physical elements (Mullins, 1989). In other words, the work environment includes the factors or characteristics that comprise the overall work conditions and situations for an employee, both tangible and intangible (Dawson, 1986). There are numerous dimensions of the work environment (Cammann et al., 1983; Cook et al., 1981; Essex & Lui, 1974; Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1957; Rousseau, 1978). Because work environment factors are as diverse as they are numerous, it is helpful to break them into two general categories.[2] The first concerns the organizational work environment as a whole (i.e., generally permeates all departments and work areas) and is typically referred to as the structure of the organization. Basically, organizational structure refers to how an organization arranges, manages, and operates itself (Miller & Droge, 1986; Oldham & Hackman, 1981; Ranson, Hinings, & Greenwood, 1980). In other words, a significant component of the work environment is the characteristics of the organization in which the job tasks are performed (Glisson & Durick, 1988). It is argued that rather

than using direct, coercive control, many organizations use structure to control and manage their employees (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1985; Mueller, Boyer, Price, & Iverson, 1994). According to Lincoln and Kalleberg (1985, 1990), organizations use several general areas of structure to control and influence employee bonds to the organization, such as centralization (i.e., employee participation in decision making), financial rewards, integration (i.e., creating group cohesion among the workers and departments in an organization), legitimacy (i.e., fairness in terms of workload, rewards, and punishment), mobility, and promotion. Therefore, organizational structure is a multidimensional concept that affects most or all employees in the organization (Oldham & Hackman, 1981).

The second area of work environment factors focuses on the characteristics of the job. These are factors that relate directly to the work being done by a particular individual (Cook et al., 1981; Glisson & Durick, 1988; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Examples of factors that fall in this area are job variety, skill variety, job stress, role conflict, role clarity, role ambiguity, task significance, task identity, and knowledge and skills (Griffeth & McMahan, 1994; Hackman & Lawler, 1971; Hackman & Oldham, 1974, 1975; London & Klimoski, 1975; Nadler & Jenkins, 1983; Quinn & Staines, 1979; Sims, Szilagyi, & Keller, 1976; Turner & Lawrence, 1965; Warr, Cook, & Wall, 1979). In the literature, these factors are sometimes referred to as intrinsic job attributes or characteristics, whereas structural factors are referred to as extrinsic characteristics or organizational factors. Finally, unlike organizational structure factors, not all employees in an organization experience the same type or magnitude of job characteristics. People have different positions/jobs within the same organization. However, for many organizations, stress permeates across these boundaries.

Stressors and work/job stress. Although there are numerous dimensions of a correctional work environment, the areas most frequently examined in correctional staff research have been work/job stress, work role stressors, job autonomy and participation in decision making, supervision, promotional opportunities, security level, and other inmate-related factors. Of these areas, the impact of work/job stress and stressors on job satisfaction have received the most attention in the correctional literature.

Most studies have found a negative relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among correctional employees. Grossi et al. (1996), in a study of Southern correctional officers, found that work stress (i.e., officer's feelings of anxiety and tension in the workplace) had an inverse impact on job satisfaction. Among Canadian correctional officers, a similar negative relationship was observed (Robinson et al., 1997). In another study of Canadian correctional workers, the largest reported source of dissatisfaction with the job was job-related stress (Karlinsky, 1979). Similarly, in another study on Southern correctional officers, Van Voorhis et al. (1991) reported that work stress was inversely correlated with job satisfaction. Among employees of the Kentucky Department of Corrections, a negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction was found (Dennis, 1998). Blau et al. (1986) found a negative relationship between work-related emotional stress (i.e., self-reported tension and anxiety from work) and job satisfaction among New York correctional employees. Walters (1993) found among correctional officers at four Midwestern prisons that job stress was negatively related to job satisfaction for male officers but not for female officers. However, in looking at Alabama correctional officers, Whitehead and Lindquist (1986) and Whitehead (1989) found no significant correlation between job stress and job satisfaction. Despite these findings, the vast majority of empirical results indicate that there is a negative relationship between work/job stress and job satisfaction among correctional staff, particularly with correctional officers.

In addition to work-related stress, stressors in the forms of role strain and role conflict have been examined in terms of their impact on correctional staff job satisfaction. Hepburn and Knepper (1993) found a negative relationship between role strain (i.e., composed of role ambiguity and role contradictions) and job satisfaction among Arizona correctional staff. Among Southern correctional officers, it has been found that role conflict negatively affects job satisfaction (Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986; Van Voorhis et al., 1991; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Finally, among Arizona correctional staff, a negative association has been observed between role conflict and job satisfaction (Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980). The empirical evidence strongly suggests that there is a significant negative relationship

between role stressors (e.g., role conflict and role ambiguity) and correctional staff job satisfaction.

Centralization, autonomy, and participation. Issues of job autonomy and participation in organizational decision making have received attention in correctional staff job satisfaction research. Job autonomy and participation in decision making are sometimes linked with the concept of centralization. Centralization is generally defined as the extent to which formal power and authority are concentrated in an organization (Hall, 1982). Among Alabama correctional officers, Whitehead and Lindquist (1986) reported that a lack of participation in decision making had a negative impact on job satisfaction. In a study of employees in the Kentucky Department of Corrections, Dennis (1998) reported that empowerment had the largest positive effect on job satisfaction. Hepburn and Knepper (1993) found that intrinsic job rewards/aspects (e.g., job autonomy and an opportunity to use one's skills) were positively related to job satisfaction, whereas extrinsic job rewards/aspects (e.g., pay, promotion, and fringe benefits) were not related to job satisfaction. Looking at jail management, Stohr et al. (1994) found that those jails with a more participatory management style had higher levels of employee job satisfaction. In a study of Alabama correctional officers, Lindquist and Whitehead (1986) found that greater participation in decision making was associated with higher levels of job satisfaction, and Hepburn (1987) found among correctional officers in prisons across four states that the perception of the ability to influence the prison structure was positively related to job satisfaction. For correctional officers at the Auburn, New York, prison facility, Lombardo (1978, 1981) found that powerlessness, in terms of lack of input into decisions, responsibility, and opportunity for input, was a major source of job dissatisfaction. Likewise, in researching the effects of decentralized prison management, Farmer (1994) concluded that the "results suggest that flattening an organizational structure without decentralization authority seems to have negative effects on staff supervisory relations and job satisfaction" (p. 117). Farmer (1994) further reported that the findings "lend support to theories that predict higher levels of job satisfaction when authority is delegated" (p. 117). In national surveys of prisons wardens, Cullen et al. (1993) and Flanagan et al. (1996) both found that professional job autonomy was positively related to job satisfaction.

However, looking at data from a sample of federal correctional staff aggregated to the institutional level, Wright et al. (1997) found that although job authority positively impacted job satisfaction, participation in decision making had no significant effect on job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the correctional empirical findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the domain of centralization, both in terms of participation in decision making and job autonomy, and employee job satisfaction.

Supervision and administration. Another dimension of the correctional work environment that has been studied in the correctional job satisfaction literature are the effects of supervision and administration. Jurik and Winn (1987) found that positive attitudes toward supervisors and the administration were positively correlated with job satisfaction among correctional staff at a Western correctional complex. Cullen et al. (1985), Van Voorhis et al. (1991), and Grossi et al. (1996) all found that perceived supervisory support was positively associated with job satisfaction among Southern correctional officers. Britton (1995) found that perceived quality of supervision was positively related to job satisfaction in her study of federal correctional officers. In addition, inconsistency and poor communication in terms of overall policies, rules and regulations, and supervision were identified as a source of job dissatisfaction of correctional officers at a New York prison (Lombardo, 1978, 1981). In sum, it appears that supervision and administration are important dimensions of the work environment accounting for correctional staff job satisfaction.

Position, security level, and dangerousness. Correctional staff job satisfaction has also focused on financial factors, occupational position, security level, perceived level of dangerousness, and inmate population characteristics. Hepburn and Knepper (1993) reported that extrinsic job rewards/aspects (e.g., pay, promotion, and fringe benefits) were not significantly related to job satisfaction among Arizona correctional staff. Camp and Steiger (1995) also found no significant relationship between yearly pay and job satisfaction among federal correctional officers. It would seem that financial factors may have little impact on correctional employee job satisfaction. In terms of position, Robinson et al. (1996) found among Canadian correctional staff

that job satisfaction varied by occupational group, with correctional officers having the lowest level of job satisfaction. Britton (1995) found that federal correctional supervisors on average had higher levels of job satisfaction than did correctional officers.

There has been much more research on security level, dangerousness of the job and other similar factors, and their impact on correctional staff job satisfaction. Grossi and Berg (1991), in their study of Kentucky correctional officers, found that security level and dangerousness of the job had no impact on job satisfaction. Grossi et al. (1996) found no relationship between perceived dangerousness and job satisfaction among Southern correctional officers. Similarly, Cullen et al. (1989) and Van Voorhis et al. (1991) found no relationship between working in a maximum-security-level facility and job satisfaction among Southern correctional officers. Britton (1995) and Camp and Steiger (1995) found in their studies on federal correctional officers that there was no relationship between security level and job satisfaction. Likewise, Hepburn and Knepper (1993) found no relationship between security level and job satisfaction among Arizona correctional staff, as well as finding no relationship for whether the officer worked in a female, male, juvenile, or adult facility. In a national survey of prison wardens, Cullen et al. (1993) found no association between security level or perceived inmate dangerousness and job satisfaction, whereas peer support had a positive effect on job satisfaction. Conversely, Cullen et al. (1985) found that perceived dangerousness of the job was positively correlated with job dissatisfaction among Southern correctional officers, and Lombardo (1981) reported that a major source of job dissatisfaction was inmate related, such as dangerousness of the job. On the other hand, no relationship was observed between the amount of inmate contact and job satisfaction among Alabama correctional officers (Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986) and federal correctional officers (Britton, 1995).

Looking at the institutional level (i.e., individual responses aggregated per each prison facility in the Federal Bureau of Prisons), Wright et al. (1997) found no relationship for the percentage of female staff, the percentage of inmates with violent histories, the percentage of non-White staff, the percentage of staff with 5 years or more tenure at the institution, staff-to-inmate ratio, and ratio of the inmate population to the facility's rated capacity to the average institutional level of

job satisfaction. Furthermore, Pelissier (1991), looking at a federal correctional facility, found no significant differences in staff job satisfaction before and after a rapid doubling of the inmate population. Among prison wardens, Flanagan et al. (1996) found no relationship between inmate population and job satisfaction. Finally, Jurik and Musheno (1986) found no correlation between attitudes toward inmates and job satisfaction among correctional officers in a Western state prison. In summary, the majority of the empirical correctional research shows no significant relationship between financial factors, security level, perceived dangerousness or related factors and job satisfaction of correctional employees across a wide array of correctional facilities and agencies.

Other dimensions of the work environment. Other dimensions of the work environment have been found to significantly impact correctional staff job satisfaction. Among Midwestern correctional staff, Brief et al. (1976) found that measures of skill variety, autonomy, and feedback were all positively correlated with job satisfaction. At a Western prison complex, Jurik and Halemba (1984), Jurik et al. (1987), and Jurik and Winn (1987) found that perceived working conditions, in terms of discretion, variety, authority, and learning opportunity, were positively related to job satisfaction. Jurik and Winn (1987) also found that perceived promotional opportunity was positively correlated with job satisfaction. Finally, Jurik and Halemba (1984) reported a positive relationship between perceived promotional opportunities and job satisfaction.

SUMMARY OF POSSIBLE CAUSES OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG CORRECTIONAL STAFF

In terms of personal factors, the vast majority of correctional staff research includes measures for race, gender, education, age, and tenure. Although far from conclusive, the research suggests that there is a negative association between education level and correctional officer job satisfaction. The correctional research, although again not in total agreement, indicates that there is no significant relationship between either race or gender and job satisfaction of correctional workers. In the correctional staff empirical literature, both age and tenure appear to have significant relationships with correctional staff job satisfac-

tion. However, the direction of the relationships is neither clear nor conclusive. It is should also be noted that these and other personal characteristics probably only account for a small variance in job satisfaction of correctional employees. In a study of federal correctional staff, it was found that personal characteristics (i.e., race, education level, gender, age, and tenure) only accounted for a small variance in job satisfaction (i.e., 5%), whereas work environmental factors (i.e., supervision, fairness, promotional opportunity, and operations) accounted for a far larger variance (i.e., 27%) (Lambert, 1999). In studies of job satisfaction outside the field of corrections, similar conclusions have been reached that personal characteristics account for only a small variance of job satisfaction, usually less than 5% (King, Murray, & Atkinson, 1982; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, & Meglino, 1979).

In addition to personal characteristics, the effects of the work environment on correctional staff job satisfaction have also been examined. The majority of studies have found role stressors and job stress both have a negative impact on job satisfaction. In addition, job autonomy, participation in decision making, promotional opportunity, and quality supervision all have been found for the most part to have a positive influence on job satisfaction of correctional workers. Finally, the work environment areas of pay, dangerousness, inmate population issues, and security level have generally been found to have little or no impact on correctional staff job satisfaction.

In terms of magnitude of impact on correctional staff job satisfaction, the empirical literature suggests that work environment factors generally have a far larger effect than do personal characteristics. For example, after looking at the effects of personal characteristics and work environment factors on job satisfaction, Britton (1995) reported that work environment structures are more important in shaping job satisfaction than are importation (i.e., personal) characteristics. Although not examining job satisfaction per se, Jurik (1985), after examining organizational, work, and personal factors, also concluded that organizational and work environment factors are more important than individual attributes in shaping correctional staff attitudes of inmates. The fact that the work environment has a larger influence on correctional staff job satisfaction than do personal factors is similar to that observed in other noncorrectional organizations (Glisson & Durick, 1988; King et al., 1982; Mobley et al., 1979).

THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG CORRECTIONAL STAFF

Although far more research has been conducted on the possible causes of correctional staff job satisfaction, some research has been done that has examined the possible consequences of correctional staff job satisfaction. The consequences of job satisfaction can be broken into positive and negative outcomes. Many organizational theories assert, and empirical research supports, that job satisfaction is linked to positive work attitudes and behaviors (Ostroff, 1992; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994). The general premise is that a satisfied worker will be more productive, creative, and motivated. Although very little correctional research could be found that examined the relationship between job satisfaction and positive work outcomes, a few correctional studies do support the premise that job satisfaction is probably linked to positive work outcomes among correctional staff. For example, Nacci and Kane (1984, p. 49) found that "when officers indicated greater job satisfaction, inmates were likely to say that their environment was more free from danger of sexual assault." Kerce, Magnusson, and Rudolph (1994) found among Naval correctional staff that those staff who reported higher levels of job satisfaction indicated a more positive view of incarcerated individuals and had a stronger attitude toward rehabilitation. Although Whitehead, Lindquist, and Klofas (1987) reported no relationship between job satisfaction and officer orientation toward inmates, Hepburn and Knepper (1993) found a positive association between job satisfaction and support for a human-service orientation among Arizona correctional security staff. Similarly, Farkas (1999) reported that among correctional officers at two Midwestern local correctional facilities, job satisfaction was negatively associated with a punitive orientation toward inmates. However, Farkas reported that higher levels of job satisfaction were related to greater social distance from inmates. In general, the literature suggests that higher levels of staff job satisfaction can lead to positive work outcomes that can benefit both staff and inmates through better staff-inmate relations (Koracki, 1991), better correctional standards and conditions (Styles, 1991), and even safer environments.

Similarly, low levels of job satisfaction are theorized to have significant effects on negative behaviors by employees. Empirical research

on noncorrectional organizations has found a strong link between low levels of job satisfaction and negative work behaviors, such as turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, psychological withdrawal from the job, and poor (and even hostile) relations between line staff and management. Negative employee work behaviors are detrimental and even devastating for correctional organizations because correctional facilities are dependent on staff to successfully complete the myriad tasks and responsibilities they are assigned (Lambert et al., 1999). Hulin, Roznowski, and Hachiya (1985) theorized that there are four general categories of negative employee behavior. However, they do not claim that these four general areas of work withdrawal are "definitive, exhaustive or mutually exclusive," nor do we. The four general categories are as follows:

1. Increased negative job outcomes: stealing, misusing company property, moonlighting on the job, personal tasks (e.g., phone calls to friends), and so forth.
2. Reduced job input: purposely missing meetings, long breaks, looking busy, intentionally failing to do quality work, and so forth.
3. Change with work situation: transfer, demotion, unionization, and so forth.
4. Reduced work inclusion: tardiness, absenteeism, early voluntary retirement, quitting, and so forth. (pp. 233-250)

Of these four areas, only the relationship between job satisfaction and reduced work inclusion in the forms of turnover and absenteeism has been explored to any degree in the correctional literature.

Turnover has long been perceived to be a problem for many correctional agencies. McShane, Williams, Schicher, and McClain (1991) wrote, "turnover rates vary in prisons across the country, from less than 1 percent annually in one state to 45 percent in another. The average of all states' rates is 17 percent" (p. 220). Because recruitment, testing, selection, and training of new staff is expensive (Gilbert, 1988), turnover is very costly for correctional organizations (Stohr et al., 1992). In addition to turnover, turnover intent has been examined as well in the correctional literature. Turnover intent is generally strongly linked to actual turnover (Steel & Ovalle, 1984).

A relationship between job satisfaction and turnover has been observed among correctional staff. Among correctional officers at a

Western prison complex, job satisfaction was found to have a negative association with willingness to change jobs (i.e., turnover intent) (Jurik & Winn, 1987). Jurik and Winn (1987) found that job satisfaction also had a negative association with actual correctional officer turnover. T. Wright (1993) found among juvenile detention center supervisory staff that job satisfaction negatively impacted voluntary turnover. Dennis (1998) reported in a study of employees of the Kentucky Department of Corrections that job satisfaction was inversely correlated with turnover. Job satisfaction was negatively correlated with turnover of Canadian correctional staff (Robinson et al., 1997). Conversely, Camp (1994), using data from a sample of staff working in institutions across the Federal Bureau of Prisons in October 1991, found that job satisfaction had no significant effect on voluntary turnover. However, using data from federal correctional staff aggregated to the facility level that was collected across 4 separate years, Camp, Saylor, and Gilman (1994) found that job satisfaction inversely affected both voluntary turnover rates and the overall facility separation rate[3] across all 4 years of data collection. In sum, the vast majority of empirical research indicates that job satisfaction has inverse impact on correctional staff turnover and turnover intent.

Only two studies could be found that examined the association between job satisfaction and absenteeism among correctional staff. Among correctional officers at the Auburn facility in New York, Lombardo (1978) indicated that job dissatisfaction was related to absenteeism. Lambert (1999) found that there was a negative relationship between job satisfaction and the number of sick days used by federal correctional staff. It is clear that additional research on the consequences of job satisfaction on correctional staff absenteeism is required.

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous research, job satisfaction is not an employee attitude that should be overlooked by correctional administrators. Job satisfaction is real in its consequences for correctional staff outcomes, both positive and negative. In an expanding job market with low levels of unemployment and an era of tightening budgets, it is important for

correctional administrators to improve employee outcome behaviors, such as productivity, creativeness, support for rehabilitation, and support for innovation, while reducing negative staff behaviors, such as absenteeism and voluntary turnover. One key way for administrators to do this is by improving the job satisfaction of personnel at their correctional facility. To affect staff job satisfaction, correctional administrators need to understand the factors that help shape and influence employee job satisfaction.

The review of the literature indicates that there are several possible causes of job satisfaction among correctional staff, and they can be generally divided into two areas, personal characteristics and work environment factors. Most research on the factors correlated with job satisfaction include personal characteristics, such as age, gender, and race. Although it is important to know how different personal characteristics are related to job satisfaction, correctional administrators should not focus much on these characteristics as a way to improve staff job satisfaction for two fundamental reasons. First, these are characteristics that cannot be changed, nor will society look favorably to excluding employment to individuals based on their gender, age, or race. Too often, correctional job satisfaction research focuses on personal characteristics and their relationship to staff job satisfaction. However, as Mathieu and Zajac (1990) argued, personal variables tend to be more descriptive than explanatory. Thus, although many correctional staff research studies have included measures of personal characteristics, these characteristics should be viewed more as either descriptive or control variables rather than as causal variables.

Second and more important, although personal characteristics appear to have some type of effect on job satisfaction, work environment factors, such as a paramilitary structure, appear to have a larger impact on correctional staff job satisfaction. Work environment is something that can be changed or addressed by most correctional administrators. Ultimately, by changing the work environment, correctional administrators should not only positively affect staff job satisfaction but staff behaviors as well. In addition, rather than concentrating on personal characteristics, future correctional staff job satisfaction research needs to focus more on work environment factors, particularly organizational factors.

According to the correctional job satisfaction research, there are several specific areas that correctional administrators need to focus on to improve worker satisfaction. Worker stress should be lowered. This can be done by reducing role conflict and role ambiguity for staff. Staff responsibilities should be clearly defined and should not be in conflict with one another. Administrators should also increase job autonomy and participation in decision making, while reducing the degree of centralization. There should be an improvement in the quality and openness of supervision and administration, as well as increased positive feedback. Finally, it is suggested that there be fair promotional opportunities for staff. By focusing on these areas of the work environment, correctional administrators should be able to increase the job satisfaction of correctional workers, which should ultimately increase positive and decrease negative work behaviors.

There is also a need for improvement in future correctional staff job satisfaction research. As previously mentioned, future research should focus more on work environment factors rather than personal characteristics as potential causes of job satisfaction. Second, the potential consequences of job satisfaction, both positive and negative, need to be explored in greater depth. A significant amount of the research to date has focused on the correlates and possible causes of correctional staff job satisfaction, particularly personal characteristics. Far less has explored the possible consequences of correctional staff job satisfaction, particularly positive outcomes. Moreover, the potential causes and consequences of correctional job satisfaction need to be examined from a comprehensive causal model point of view rather than in a piecemeal fashion. By looking at both the potential causes and consequences of job satisfaction together, a clearer understanding of the job satisfaction process will be gained. By using a comprehensive model, both the direct and indirect effects can be examined. In addition, almost all the research to date has been correlational. Correlational research does not allow for causal conclusions to be reached. No research thus far has followed the job satisfaction of correctional staff over time. Therefore, longitudinal studies of correctional staff job satisfaction would identify both the antecedents and consequences of correctional staff job satisfaction.

NOTES

1. It should be noted that much of the material presented in this section is based on an article published by the authors (see Lambert, Barton, & Hogan, 1999).

2. The separation of the work environment into two categories is done to simplify the definition and description of work environment as it is used in this article. It does not imply that no other dimensions of the work environment exist, such as the physical or social dimensions.

3. The separation rate used by Camp, Saylor, and Gilman (1994) was composed of both voluntary and involuntary turnover.

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