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ABSTRACT

Portions of three earlier studies relating differences in employees to employee satisfaction and one study relating management communication style (MCS) to employee satisfaction were replicated across four organizational contexts. Major findings supported the generalizability of the results revealed in the earlier research. The role of superior/subordinate relations and their impact on employee satisfaction were examined through perceptions of employees with regard to the MCS of upper management and the task behaviors of their immediate superiors. The results supported the MCS conceptualization advanced in the earlier study and indicated that the MCS of immediate superiors and of upper management had their primary impact on different dimensions of employee satisfaction. Perceptions of superiors' task behaviors were found to have different impact on employee satisfaction for different organizational contexts. The variability in employee satisfaction predictable from individual employee differences and from superior/subordinate interaction was found to have little overlap. (Author/FL)

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AMONG EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION STYLE AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: REPLICATION AND EXTENSION

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Abstract

Portions of three previous studies (Falcione, McCroskey & D... Hurt & Teigen, 1977; and Richmond & McCroskey, 1979) relating ind... differences in employees to employee satisfaction and one study (... McCroskey, 1979) relating Management Communication Style to empl... faction were replicated across four organizational contexts. Ma... were supportive of the generalizability of the results observed i... vious studies. The interface of superior-subordinate relations a... impact on employee satisfaction were examined through perceptions ... with regard to the Management Communication Style of upper manage... task behaviors (supervision and administration) of their immediat... ...rs. Results were supportive of the MCS conceptualization advanced by ...nd and McCroskey (1979) and indicated that MCS of immediate superior an... ...f upper management had their primary impact on different dimensions of e... satisfaction. Perceptions of superiors' task behaviors were found to ...fferent impact on employee satisfaction for different organizational con... Variability in employee satisfaction predictable from individual emp... differences and that predictable from superior-subordinate interface w... ...und to have little overlap. It is recommended that both the individual ...rences (trait) and superior-subordinate interface (situational) approac... the study of communication in organizational contexts be continued s... ...e two generate independent predictions of unique variance.

Competitively selected paper presented at the Annual Eastern Communic... ion Association Convention, Pittsburgh, PA, April, 1981, (Top V).

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AMONG EMPLOYEES, MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION STYLE AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: REPLICATION AND EXTENSION

[illegible] body of literature indicates that employee satisfaction has [illegible] of scholars in a wide variety of disciplines for over half [illegible] Hoppock, 1935; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 19[illegible] Morse, 1953; [illegible] Locke, 1969; Falcione, 1974; Falcione, McCroskey & Daly, 1977; [illegible] 1979). Despite this proliferation [illegible] research, there is little [illegible] as to the causes or the nature of [illegible] satisfaction.

[illegible] of the research to date has been [illegible] the relationship [illegible] satisfaction and productivity [illegible] findings have been mixed [illegible] indicating a positive relationship (e.g., [illegible] Campbell [illegible] Locke, 1969; King, 1970) and some failing to find such a relationship [illegible] Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Vroom [illegible]. At best, the research [illegible] us to conclude that employee satisfaction may increase productivity [illegible] performance under some circumstances [illegible] some types of organizations [illegible] What contingencies must be present for [illegible] relationship to exist have [illegible] to be determined.

[illegible] association between satisfaction and productivity remains unclear, [illegible] substantial evidence to suggest that employee satisfaction is [illegible] related to absenteeism and turnover rat[illegible] (e.g. Daly & Hamblin, 1964 [illegible] Youngblood, 1975). The theoretical explanation for this association [illegible]--happy employees will want to come to work and it will take more [illegible] to quit or to take another position. A possible explanation for the lack [illegible] a similar association between satisfaction and productivity is that while moderately satisfied employees may be more productive than dissatisfied employees, extremely satisfied employees may form the type of work group known as the "happiness for lunch bunch" (McCroskey, Larson & Knapp, 197[illegible] and be more of a social group than a work group, hence lowering productivity. In any event, it would appear that the concern of both researchers and managers with employee satisfaction is not misplaced. Even if dissatisfied employees are not less productive, they are likely to increase problems with absenteeism and turnover, both of which are costly to organizations both in terms of finances and managerial effort.

Communication and Satisfaction

A number of variables operating within the organizational setting have been found to impact employee satisfaction. Many of these have, at most, a tangential relationship to communication among employees or between superiors and subordinates. Notable examples include working conditions (Roethlisberger [illegible] Dickson, 1939), job enlargement (Argyris, 1964), job enrichment (Herzberg, [illegible]66), and organizational innovativeness (Hurt & Teigen, 1977). Thus, it is clear that communicative relationships are not the only, and possibly are not even the most important, determinates of employee satisfaction. Nevertheless, research has indicated that communicative relationships do predict meaningful variance in employee satisfaction across a wide range of organizations.

Previous research which has examined the role of communication in predicting employee satisfaction can be divided into two primary categories: 1) research which has been directed toward individual differences in employees that are associated with variance in communicative behavior and 2) research which has been directed toward the communicative interface between superiors and subordinates.[1]

The present research effort was designed to replicate and extend some of the previous research efforts which have sought to link communication variables with employee satisfaction. Specifically, the present research examined both individual difference variables, which have been linked with communication behavior and satisfaction and decision making and communication style of superiors.

Individual Differences in Satisfaction

Several decades of research reported by personality psychologists indicate that people differ greatly in the way they respond to stimuli in their environments. Thus, even if all other factors in an organizational setting were constant (a highly unlikely occurrence), we should expect differential satisfaction among employees with differing personalities. In addition, it is likely that people with differing personalities will impact their work environment (their superiors and coworkers) in ways that can alter their own level of satisfaction.

Applying these two assumptions, researchers have isolated several individual difference variables related to communication and examined their relationship with employee satisfaction. Three which have been found to provide meaningful variance in satisfaction in an organizational setting are innovativeness, communication apprehension, and tolerance for disagreement.

Innovativeness. The construct of innovativeness was drawn from the research on diffusion of innovations and operationalized by Hurt, Joseph, and Cook (1977). Innovativeness represents the degree to which an individual is willing to accept change in the environment. Previous research has indicated that a person's level of innovativeness is associated not only with their orientations toward communication but also their level of satisfaction, at least in some organizational contexts (Hurt & Teigen, 1977; Richmond & McCroskey, 1979; Witteman & Anderson, 1976). Two research questions were posed for this investigation:

Q_1 Is innovativeness predictive of employee satisfaction across varying organizational contexts?

Q_2 With other individual difference variables and superior-subordinate relationship variables controlled, does innovativeness predict unique variance in employee satisfaction?

Communication Apprehension. Communication apprehension refers to the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated (oral) communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1970, 1977, 1978). Previous research has indicated that communication apprehension can have a major impact on human behavior (cf. McCroskey, 1977), particularly in an organizational environment (McCroskey & Richmond, 1979). Communication apprehension has been found to be negatively associated with employee satisfaction, at least in some organizational contexts (Falcione, McCroskey & Daly, 1977). Two research questions were posed for this investigation:

Q_3 Is communication apprehension predictive of employee satisfaction across varying organizational contexts?

Q_4 With other individual difference variables and superior-subordinate relationship variables controlled, does communication apprehension predict unique variance in employee satisfaction?

Tolerance for Disagreement. Tolerance for disagreement was conceptualized and operationalized by P. Knutson, McCroskey, T. Knutson & Hurt (1979). It is viewed as a continuum representing an individual's willingness to accept disagreement with another on substantive or procedural matters before moving into a state of conflict with the other individual. While research in this area is limited, results have indicated that tolerance for disagreement is associated both with other communication orientations and with employee satisfaction (P. Knutson, et. al., 1979; Richmond & McCroskey, 1979). Two research questions were posed for this investigation:

Q_5 Is tolerance for disagreement predictive of employee satisfaction across varying organizational contexts

Q_6 With other individual difference variables and superior-subordinate relationship variables controlled, does tolerance for disagreement predict unique variance in employee satisfaction?

It was recognized at the inception of this research that the choice of these three individual difference variables represented neither the full range of personality variability nor a representative sample of such variability. Rather these three variables were chosen because they had been demonstrated in previous research to be associated with both communication orientations and employee satisfaction. Although this selection process precluded any generalization to the association between overall personality and employee satisfaction, it did permit us to seek at least a tentative answer to the following research question:

Q_7 To what degree are a combination of communication-related individual difference variables predictive of employee satisfaction?

Superior-Subordinate Relationships and Satisfaction

The communicative relationship between superior and subordinate has considerable potential to impact the satisfaction of both. Communication is the vehicle for dissemination of information, instructions, and (possibly most important) affect. The importance of a positive communicative relationship between superior and subordinate is not at question here, its importance has been demonstrated in many previous studies (cf. Daly, McCroskey & Falcione, 1976; Falcione, McCroskey & Daly, 1977). The concern of the present investigation is superior behavior that may impact that relationship. Specifically, our concern was directed toward a superior's decision-making and communication style and the emphases the superior places on supervisory and administrative behavior.

Management Communication Style. The Management Communication Style (MCS) construct advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1979) is based on the earlier work of Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) and Sadler (1970). The originators of the MCS construct argue that certain communication behaviors are necessarily associated with certain approaches to decision-making. Thus, the selection of a style of decision-making will define to a major extent the communicative relationship between superior and subordinate. MCS is viewed as a continuum from an extreme "boss centered" or "Tell" approach to an extreme "subordinate centered" or "Join" approach. At the "Tell" end of the continuum, the communication primarily is downward, uni-directional, and noninteractive. At the other end of the continuum the communication primarily is horizontal, bi-directional, and highly interactive. Although MCS is viewed as falling on a continuum, there are four major points identified on the continuum, representing increasing levels of subordinate interaction with superior: Tell,

Sell, Consult and Join. (For a full enunciation of the MCS construct, see Richmond and McCroskey, 1979).

Based on earlier work examining employee involvement in decision making, Richmond and McCroskey (1979) hypothesized that subordinates who perceived their superior as employing a MCS that was more subordinate-centered would be more satisfied than other employees. Their results supported the hypothesis within the context of educational organizations, the only subordinate population studied. Thus, a major research question posed for this study was:

> Q_8 What is the relationship between MCS and employee satisfaction across varying organizational contexts?

MCS of Superior's Superiors. An important element in the original MCS construct was not addressed empirically by Richmond and McCroskey (1979). They note that the choice of decision making style, hence MCS, is not always left to the individual superior. As they state,

> An important implication of the above management styles is the communication styles that are imposed by the management style chosen. Clearly, if all decisions are made above a manager, he or she can only choose a Tell or Sell style, which would restrict the communication styles available for use. However, if the manager is given a great deal of autonomy, suggesting a Consult or Join style above, he or she has great flexibility in selecting a MCS for interface with employees. Thus . . . MCS is a function of a communication style preference of a manager and the management style imposed on the manager from above. (p. 363)

Richmond and McCroskey (1979) do not say whether they believe subordinates are able to make a clear distinction between whether their superior is behaving in a certain way through free choice or because of directives from above. If such a clear distinction can be made by subordinates, perceptions of a superior's MCS and the MCS of upper management may be independent predictors of employee satisfaction. If, however, subordinates see their superior's behavior simply as a reflection of upper management, the MCS of upper management may serve as a powerful mediator of any relationship between supervisor MCS and employee satisfaction. Thus, the following research questions were posed:

> Q_9 To what degree are subordinate's perceptions of their supervisor's MCS and the MCS of upper management related?
>
> Q_{10} What is the relationship between the MCS of upper management and employee satisfaction across varying organizational contexts?

Supervision and Administration. The term "superior" has been employed in this report to refer to a person holding the position in the organization immediately above the employee under study. Within a larger management context, such individuals may function primarily as supervisors, they may function primarily as administrators, or their task behaviors may reflect both functions to varying degrees. As conceived here, a superior who functions primarily as a supervisor is in a position to enjoy much greater oral communicative contact with the subordinate than is the superior who functions primarily as an administrator. The reverse pattern is more likely with regard to written communicative contact. Let us clarify the distinction we are making:

Supervisor--An individual who has frequent personal contact with the subordinate. This contact may include any or all of the following: observation of the subordinate's work, communication of orders or policy, enforcement of policy, assistance with subordinate's work, resolution of subordinate's problems in the work environment.

Administrator--An individual who is primarily responsible for facilitating the operation of the organization. This may include any or all of the following: budget planning, policy planning, hiring, development and maintenance of facilities, delegation of authority, structuring of units or departments, and maintaining relationships with individuals and agencies outside the organization.

Viewed from this vantage point, we believe a superior who functions primarily as a supervisor is in a position to impact the subordinate's satisfaction as a function of her/his MCS far more than the superior who is primarily involved in administrative tasks without clear, immediate impact on the employee. Consequently, the following research question was advanced:

Q_{11} To what extent do the subordinate's perceptions of the superior's task behaviors (supervisory or/and administrative) mediate the relationship between the superior's MCS and employee satisfaction?

METHOD

Samples

There were four samples employed in this investigation. The first sample consisted of 250 public school, elementary and secondary, teachers (190 females, 60 males) representing 39 school districts in Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. Participation was a result of being enrolled in a graduate class (six different courses offered in six different areas, enrollment voluntary) entitled "Communication in the Educational Organization". The second sample consisted of 45 supervisors in a product-based manufacturing organization. The company manufacturers faucets, tubing, bathroom and kitchen accessories. The third sample consisted of 23 service employees of the state of Pennsylvania. They were employed by the parks board, water board, aviation centers, criminal justice department, and state nursing and mental health facilities. All were supervisors who were responsible for state funded activities and had several subordinates under them. The fourth sample consisted of 102 subjects who were bank managers, cashiers, and upper management employees in the federal reserve system in the state of Virginia. The sample did not include tellers or accountants. All subjects were responsible for at least 15 subordinates. Participation of the subjects from samples 2, 3, and 4 was a result of being voluntarily enrolled in communication workshops directed by one of the authors.

As noted above, the samples employed were highly diverse, both in size and function. The first sample, teachers, represents employees near the bottom of the organizational ladder. Employees in the other samples represented middle to upper levels of management. The first sample was predominately female, the other three samples were predinately male. As we will indicate below, these sample differences are extremely important to the interpretation of the results of this investigation.

Measurement

The following instruments were employed to measure the variables included in this investigation:

Employee Satisfaction - The multiple factor approach was employed to measure employee satisfaction. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969) was employed. The JDI measures five dimensions of satisfaction: supervision, work, pay, promotion, and co-workers. Previous studies have revealed the JDI to be a factorially stable instrument with good reliability (Smith, et al., 1969; Falicone, et al., 1977; Hurt & Teigen, 1977; Richmond & McCroskey, 1979). Previously observed internal reliabilities have been satisfactory, eg., supervision, .92; work, .80; pay, .86; promotions, .80; and co-workers, .85. These reliabilities were obtained by deleting 14 of the 72 items with a lower than .50 item-total correlation and by deleting items which had face-validity problems (i.e. hot) (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979). In the present study, the same scales were used as were employed in the Richmond and McCroskey (1979) study. The obtained factor structures were virtually identical to those obtained in previous research.

Tolerance for Disagreement - The 20-item Tolerance for Disagreement scale (TFD) developed by P. Knutson, McCroskey, T. Knutson, and Hurt (1979) was employed to measure the employees' tolerance for disagreement. The obtained reliability for the TFD scale was .90 in a previous study (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979).

Innovativeness - The 20-item Innovativeness Scale (IS) developed by Hurt, Joseph, and Cook (1977) was employed to measure an individual's perceived innovativeness. Previous research has reported a .93 internal reliability estimate for the IS (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979).

Communication Apprehension - The 25-item Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) developed by McCroskey (1970; 1978) was employed to measure an employee's level of apprehension about communication. Previous research has indicated internal reliability estimates of .90 or better for the PRCA (McCroskey, 1978).

Management Communication Style - The Management Communication Style instrument (MCS) developed by Richmond and McCroskey (1979) was employed. It is a 19-point continuum ranging from Tell (10), through Sell (16), through Consult (22), to Join (28). Subjects in this study were asked to circle on the continuum the MCS (1) "under which you work" and (2) "the MCS at the top of your organization". Test-retest reliability for the MCS was .85 in a previous investigation (Richmond & McCroskey, 1979).

Degree of Supervision - A 5-item Supervision Scale (SS) was developed for this study. In order for the scales to be usable descriptions of the duties of a supervisor were given (see description given earlier in this paper). Subjects were asked to respond to the scales based upon how they felt their immediate supervisor fit the description provided. The following five, seven-point, bi-polar scales were used: Agree-Disagree; False-True; Incorrect-Correct; Wrong-Right; and Yes-No.

Degree of Administration - A 5-item Administration Scale (AS) was developed for this study. In order for the scale to be usable, descriptions of the duties of an administrator were given (see description given earlier in this paper). Subjects were asked to respond to the scale based upon how they felt their immediate supervisor fit the description provided. The following five seven-point, bi-polar scales were used: Agree-Disagree; False-True; Incorrect-Correct; Wrong-Right; and Yes-No.

Data Collection

The teacher sample was asked to complete the JDI, TFD, IS, and PRCA scales during the first of six class periods (each class was seven hours in length) before any content had been discussed. The other scales were administered prior to class exercises designed to teach content related to the constructs represented by the scales. The SS and AS were collected during the second class following a unit on supervision and administration. During the third class period, the Management Communication Style construct was introduced and the MCS scales were collected. At the beginning of the next class, the MCS was collected again for test-retest reliability purposes.

The management samples were asked to complete all the instruments as a take-home project during the communication workshops. The MCS, SS, and AS were explained on the instruments. The subjects were able to read the descriptions and were also able to ask the workshop instructor any questions.

All subject responses were anonymous. To insure anonymity, subjects were assigned random code numbers known only to themselves. They recorded their code numbers on each scale which permitted merging the data for analysis.

Data Analyses

Preliminary data analyses involved computation of means and standard deviations for each variable for each sample, correlations among predictor variables, correlations among criterion variables, and internal reliability estimates for the measures.

The preliminary analyses indicated that the sub-samples of managers differed on only one predictor variable but differed significantly on all five criterion (satisfaction) variables (see Table 1). The service personnel reported less communication apprehension than the other manager groups. They were also less satisfied on all dimensions than the other manager groups. Nevertheless, they were combined with the other manager groups for the next analysis. This analysis indicated that, as expected, the teacher group and the combined manager group differed significantly. The two groups were significantly different on all 7 predictor variables and 3 of 5 criterion variables (see Table 2). Since the groups were so markedly different, all subsequent analyses were conducted for each of the four samples separately, providing internal replications for this study.

The primary analyses included simple and multiple correlation (regression) analyses keyed to the research questions advanced above. Decomposition of multiple correlations (Seibold & McPhee, 1979) was performed when necessary for interpretation.

RESULTS

Reliabilities

The preliminary analyses indicated that the reliability of the instruments employed in this investigation were both satisfactory and comparable to those obtained in previous studies. The reliabilities for each sample for each instrument are reported in Table 3.

Correlations Among Predictor Variables

Correlations among predictor variables for all four samples are reported in Table 4. As has been the case in previous research, the three individual difference variables were found to be moderately intercorrelated for all of the present samples. No meaningful pattern of significant correlations was observed, however, between the individual difference variables and the other

predictor variables. MCS of superior and MCS of upper management were found to be significantly correlated for three of the four samples, with a nonsignificant correlation of .31 for the sample with lowest power (n=23). The association for the teacher sample, although significant, accounts for only a fraction of the shared variance compared to that of the banker and production samples. MCS of superior was positively associated with degree of administration for the banker and service samples but with degree of supervision for the teacher sample. MCS of upper management resulted in a strong positive association with both task behavior variables for the service sample, but with no or negative associations with the other samples.

In general, these results suggest comparability among the samples with regard to the individual difference variables but some striking differences among the samples on the other predictor variables.

Correlations Among Criterion Variables

There was an insufficient sample size in all but the teacher sample to perform a reliable factor analysis. An oblique analysis of that sample's criterion variables yielded a clear five-factor solution with low to moderate intercorrelations of the factors. The decision was made to use raw, summed scores for each of the dimensions of employee satisfaction for subsequent analyses. Correlations between these dimension scores for each sample are reported in Table 5.

For the teacher sample moderate correlations were observed among the supervision, work, and coworker dimensions and between the pay and promotion dimensions. For the banker sample moderate correlations were observed between the work and supervision dimensions and between the work and promotions dimensions. For the production sample moderate correlations were observed between the promotion dimension and all other dimensions, between supervision and work, and between work and coworkers. For the service sample significant correlations were observed between promotion and the supervision, work, and coworker dimensions as well as between the supervision and work dimensions.

An examination of the obtained correlations, across samples, indicates that all groups saw supervision and work to be associated as well as work and promotions. With these exceptions, it would appear that the four samples see the distinctions among the factors somewhat differently. Although few of the obtained correlations are high enough that one might wish to argue in favor of combining dimension scores, the wide variability in associations observed would suggest the lowered likelihood that any predictors could be expected to account for similar variance across these diverse samples. Simply put, it does not appear that these samples of subordinates see their satisfiers/dissatisfiers in the same ways.

Individual Differences and Satisfaction

The simple and multiple correlations between the individual difference variables and the employee satisfaction dimension scores are reported in Table 6. The first seven research questions were directed toward the unique and combined predictive power of individual difference variables with regard to employee satisfaction across diverse organizational settings. In general, the predictive power of these individual difference variables is less than striking. The tolerance for disagreement (TFD) variable generated no significant relationship on any of the five satisfaction dimensions for any of the four subject samples. Communication apprehension and innovativeness did only somewhat better. Communication apprehension was significantly associated with both supervision and work for the teacher sample, but accounted for only 2 percent shared variance in each case. For the banker sample communication apprehension accounted for 9 percent of the variance in work and 4 percent in promotions.

Granting that low power in the production and service sample analyses mitigated against obtaining significant results, the associations found with samples of sufficient power do not justify a strong claim for the importance of communication apprehension as a predictor of employee satisfaction.

A similar conclusion must be drawn with regard to innovativeness. IS accounted for 4 percent of the variance in work for the teacher sample, 6 percent of the variance in both supervision and work in the banker sample, and almost 12 percent of the variance in coworkers in the production sample.

Conclusions in terms of combined predictive power must also be drawn with caution. It would appear that communication apprehension and innovativeness combine to account for some variance in satisfaction with supervision, work, and promotions--from 2 to 11 percent--but for the most part that variance is predictable by one or the other variable in the given case. Generalization across samples clearly is not possible. This is not to say that these individual difference variables are not important within the organizational environment. Even 2 percent of the variance in satisfaction in a large organization, to say nothing of 11 percent, can be translated into a large financial impact. However, it would appear that these variables may interact with other context variables or supervision variables in producing their impact. We will address this concern in a later section.

Superior-Subordinate Relationships and Satisfaction

The simple and multiple correlations of the MCS and task behavior variables with the satisfaction dimension scores are reported in Table 7. Research questions 8, 9, and 11 were directed toward the unique and combined predictive power of the MCS and task behavior variables with regard to employee satisfaction across diverse organizational settings. In general, these variables were found to be meaningful predictors.

Although MCS of the immediate superior and MCS of upper management were found to be significantly associated for three of the four samples (research question 10, see Table 4), the results noted in Table 7 suggest that these two variables are differentially predictive of satisfaction. MCS of the immediate superior was found to be a significant predictor of satisfaction with supervision for all four subject samples, of satisfaction with work for the teacher and banker samples, of satisfaction with coworkers with the teacher and service samples, and of promotions with only the banker sample. There was no significant association with satisfaction with pay found for any of the samples. In contrast, MCS of upper management was found to be a significant predictor of satisfaction with pay for the teacher and production samples, of satisfaction with promotions for the banker and service samples, but of satisfaction with supervision and work for only the service sample. Satisfaction with coworkers showed no association for any of the samples.

Taken together, these results indicated that although perceptions of an individual supervisor's MCS and those of upper management's MCS are associated, as argued in the original Richmond and McCroskey (1979) conceptualization, they have differential impact on employee satisfaction across various organizational contexts. A more employee-oriented MCS of an immediate superior is associated with greater satisfaction with supervision and work. A similar association was found for satisfaction with coworkers for the teacher and service samples, but not the banker and production samples. A possible explanation for this difference is that in the teaching and service contexts immediate superiors often are engaged in tasks that are essentially the same as those of the subordinates. Thus "superiors" and "coworkers" are, in some measure, the same people.

In contrast, MCS of upper management is more predictive of satisfaction with pay and promotions. A more employee-centered MCS of upper management is

associated with increased satisfaction with pay and promotions. Thus, even though MCS of immediate supervisor and MCS of upper management are seen as related, the subordinates appear to sort out what elements within their environment each is responsible for. Immediate superiors often have little influence over either pay or promotions, thus their MCS has little influence on subordinate's satisfaction with these concerns. On the other hand, upper management often has much influence over pay and promotions but little direct impact on supervision or the precise work assigned, thus their MCS has impact on pay and promotions but little on supervision or work satisfaction. The deviant sample in this analysis is the service sample, for whom MCS of upper management was predictive of both supervision and work satisfaction. A possible explanation for this deviant finding is that several of these subjects came from small units where upper management was physically close, in some cases sharing the same office facility. In such a context, upper management might be expected to have more impact on satisfaction with both supervision and work.

Subordinate's perceptions of their supervisor's task behaviors appear to mediate the relationship between superior's MCS and satisfaction in some cases but not in others. None of the simple correlations between perceptions of either supervision or administration behaviors and satisfaction were significant for the production or service samples (see Table 7). Only the relationship between perceived administration behavior and satisfaction with supervision was significant for the banker sample. In contrast, seven of the ten relationships between perceived task behaviors and satisfaction were significant for the teacher sample. As noted in Table 7, the multiple correlations including MCS and the task behavior variables generally were meaningfully above the level of any of the simple correlations.

Decomposition of the multiple correlations which involved a significant MCS predictor and a significant task behavior predictor indicated the presence of some colinear variance in each case. For the banker sample, MCS of superior accounted for 12% of the variance in satisfaction with supervision, perception of administration accounted for 7% and jointly the two predictors accounted for 16%. For the teacher sample, MCS of superior accounted for 16% of the variance in satisfaction with supervision, perception of supervision accounted for 17%, and jointly the two predictors accounted for 25%. Including perception of administration added an additional 3% unique variance. For both of these samples, then, superiors who were perceived to use an employee-centered MCS and a higher amount of supervision generated more satisfaction with supervision. Decomposition of the remaining multiple correlations for the teacher sample, although involving smaller amounts of variance, uncovered similar patterns. More employee-centered MCS and higher scores on supervision and administration were associated with higher satisfaction. While each variable contributes some unique variance, there is also coliniarity among the predictors.

The lack of replication across subject populations in these analyses is apparent. The results for the teacher sample stand in sharp contrast to those for the other samples. While this sample is much larger, thus providing much more statistical power, it appears that the explanation for the widely deviant results may more likely be present in the nature of the samples themselves. The teacher sample is composed of employees at or very near the bottom of the organizational ladder, whereas the other samples range from middle to upper management. Examined in this light, it would appear reasonable to speculate that lower level employees may prefer superiors who are more active in both their supervisory and administrative roles, particularly in their supervisory ones. On the other hand, people in middle to upper management may prefer superiors who are more distant, who can be perceived as leaving them alone in

both a supervisory and an administrative sense. However, since the correlations between perceived task behaviors of superiors for the non-teacher samples were not significant at all, it is more likely that such perceptions are simply irrelevant for employees at these levels. Future research which examines employees at the various levels within the same organization should clarify the present results.

Individual Differences and Superior-Subordinate Interface

At the outset of this paper it was noted that much of the previous research attempting to relate communication to employee satisfaction could be placed in two categories: that which examines individual differences among employees and that which examines the interface between superiors and subordinates. The current investigation followed both of these paths in an attempt to replicate, with some extension, earlier findings. Although the variables selected for study in the present endeavor cannot be described as a random sample of all variables from either category, they are representative of current trends in the research. Therefore, it may be useful to compare the relative predictive power of variables from each group with regard to employee satisfaction. Table 8 summarizes the variance accounted for by each group of variables alone and in combination for each of the four samples under study.

An examination of Table 8 indicates that variables directed toward superior-subordinate interface generally are more predictive of employee satisfaction than are individual differences among employees. This is particularly true of satisfaction with supervision. However, the striking thing that emerges from an examination of this table is the fact that there appears to be very little predictive power shared by these groups of predictors. While the variance predictable by the individual difference variables generally is substantially smaller than that predicted by the other group, adding the individual difference predictors meaningfully increased the predictive power of many of the models (3-6% for supervision, 2% for work, 1-3% for pay, 1-3% for promotions, and 17% for coworkers).

These results present a fairly strong argument for the continuation of the two streams of communication research included in this investigation. Both were found to be predictive of employee satisfaction and the overlap of their predictive power is minimal. The individual difference approach essentially is a trait approach, the superior-subordinate interface approach essentially is a situational approach. As has been found in many other areas of inquiry, these two approaches, rather than being antagonistic or redundant, are complimentary. The combined knowledge generated by the two approaches can produce an understanding superior to that generated by either approach alone.

Discussion and Conclusions

One of the purposes of this investigation was to replicate previous research across organizational contexts. For the most part, when the samples in the present investigation were of sufficient size to provide adequate statistical power (the teacher and banker samples), the results obtained were similar to those observed in previous investigations.

Previous research has observed a significant relationship between innovativeness and satisfaction with work (Hurt & Teigen, 1977; Richmond & McCroskey, 197). A similar relationship was observed in the present study for both the teacher sample (subjects similar to those included in the previous research) and the banker sample. In the previous Richmond and McCroskey (1979) study a small relationship was observed between innovativeness and satisfaction with

supervision. No similar relationship was observed in the Hurt and Teigen (1977) study. In the present study no relationship was observed for the teacher sample, but a significant relationship was observed for the banker sample and similar, but non-significant, relationships for the other two samples. On the basis of these results we may tentatively conclude that innovativeness has a relationship with satisfaction with work across organizational contexts and may have a similar relationship with satisfaction with supervision.

In a previous study Falcione, McCroskey and Daly (1977) observed a small, but significant, negative relationship between communication apprehension and satisfaction with supervision (across two samples) and with satisfaction with work (one of two samples). In the present study a similar association was observed in all four samples for satisfaction with supervision (only that for the teachers was significant, however) and for three of the four samples for satisfaction with work (significant for both teachers and bankers). Once again, these results suggest some generalizability across organizational contexts. We may tentatively conclude that communication apprehension may have a small, negative association with satisfaction with supervision and work.

Richmond and McCroskey (1979) examined the relationship of both the tolerance for disagreement of the employee and that of the superior with satisfaction. Although they found significant relationships between tolerance for disagreement of the superior and four of the five dimensions of satisfaction, they found only one, small significant relationship between tolerance for disagreement of the employee and satisfaction, that being with satisfaction with coworkers. The present investigation did not observe any significant relationships between employee tolerance for disagreement and satisfaction for any of the four samples studied. These results indicate that either employee tolerance for disagreement has little, if any, association with employee satisfaction or the present measure of that construct is inadequate. Since the measure currently available has low isomorphism with the tolerance for disagreement construct, the latter possibility cannot be discounted.

In the only previous investigation employing the MCS construct, Richmond and McCroskey (1979) observed a moderately strong association between MCS and satisfaction with supervision (r=.46), a moderate association between MCS and satisfaction with work (r=.28), and a small, but significant, association between MCS and satisfaction with promotions (r=.17). In the present investigation, significant associations between MCS and satisfaction with supervision were observed for all four samples (r=.30 to .51). Significant associations were also observed for satisfaction with work for the teacher (r=.19) and banker (r=.28) samples and a comparable, but non-significant association for the service sample (r=.25). Moderate associations between MCS and satisfaction with promotions were observed for three samples (not the teachers), but the association was significant only for the banker sample (r=.38).

These results argue strongly for the generalizability of the association of MCS with satisfaction with supervision across organizational contexts. As MCS becomes more employee-centered, satisfaction with supervision increases. A similar, but not quite as strong, argument can be made for the generalizability of the association of MCS with satisfaction with work. Again, as MCS becomes more employee-centered, satisfaction with work increases. No clear picture emerges relating MCS to the other dimensions of satisfaction, thus no conclusions based on these studies seem warranted.

A second purpose of the present investigation was to extend previous research concerning MCS and to determine whether the task behaviors of superiors, as perceived by their subordinates, mediate the relationships between MCS and employee satisfaction. The results of this investigation provide support for the MCS conceptualization advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1979), that

is it was observed there was a significant association between employee's perceptions of their immediate supervisor's MCS and the MCS of upper management. Nevertheless, it was observed that MCS of immediate superior and MCS of upper management have differential associations with the dimensions of employee satisfaction. MCS of immediate superior appears to be most associated with satisfaction with supervision and work. MCS of upper management, on the other hand, was found to be mainly associated with satisfaction with pay and promotions. These findings, in retrospect, seem intuitive, since upper management indeed usually is most responsible for pay and promotions while immediate superiors engage in supervision of the employee's work. However, it is less intuitive to find that even though employees appear to recognize that the MCS of their immediate supervisor is influenced by the MCS of upper management, they are able to differentiate responsibility in terms of the dimensions of their satisfaction. This may, in part, explain why it is possible for many employees who are dissatisfied with their income, and consider their position a dead end, to maintain a good relationship with their immediate supervisor and continue to enjoy their work. This type of response often is characteristic of people in at least one of our sampled groups, teachers. This type of differentiation may be necessary to remain in some occupations, such as public school teaching.

The results of this study relating to subordinates' perceptions of their superior's task behaviors (supervision and administration) raise more questions than they answer. There was a clear lack of replication of findings across subject samples. The subjects in the teacher sample evidenced substantially more satisfaction when they perceived increased supervision and administration behavior on the part of their superior. Although none of the relationships were significant, a similar pattern appears to exist for the subjects in the very small service sample. Relationships in the other two samples generally were very weak. If we assume the absence of significance in the service sample to be a function of very low power, a possible explanation for these differential results may be suggested. The teacher and service samples both represent employees in bureaucratic organizations. The subjects in the other two samples represent employees in profit-seeking organizations. It may well be that superiors in bureaucratic organizations are much more laisez-faire than their counterparts in profit-seeking organizations. These results, then, may reflect the desire of employees in bureaucratic organizations for their superior to be more active and visable. If they were to become so, as may be the case in profit-seeking organizations, their activity may be either good or bad, thus eliminating any association between pure activity and satisfaction over a large group of employees. Lack of activity of superiors, however, may engender a feeling of abandonment in subordinates and lead to dissatisfaction. While this frequently may be the case in bureaucratic organizations, the present study is only suggestive and research specifically directed to this question must be awaited before a firm conclusion concerning this speculation can be drawn.

NOTES

[1]These two categories are not intended to be exhaustive, only representative of two major lines of current research.

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TABLE 1

Means of Manager Sub-Group

Variable	Group			
	Production	ervice	Bankers	F-ratio
PRCA	72.27	9.39	65.75	4.61*
Supervision	83.80	77.26	88.95	8.29*
Work	56.64	52.65	60.04	7.22*
Pay	28.53	20.65	30.49	13.05*
Promotions	32.53	24.83	36.81	18.48*
Coworkers	80.00	73.26	84.38	7.23*

*Significantly different, $p < .05$.

TABLE 2

Means of Standard Deviations of All Variables

Variable	Manager Sample		Teacher Sample		
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	t
Predicators					
MCS	18.31	5.26	16.75	4.42	3.28*
MCS-Upper	16.27	5.55	13.13	4.03	6.72*
Supervision	22.95	9.89	20.56	10.03	2.43*
Administration	25.70	8.84	27.30	7.39	2.02*
PRCA	66.61	17.51	75.83	17.33	5.36*
IS	111.37	12.56	103.45	13.85	5.98*
TFD	90.39	13.71	80.76	16.16	6.40*
Criteria					
Supervision	86.04	13.73	75.91	17.32	6.41*
Work	58.16	9.32	56.34	10.11	1.88
Pay	28.66	8.93	22.16	9.22	7.21*
Promotions	34.09	9.64	23.48	8.74	11.75*
Coworkers	81.75	13.66	80.50	15.17	.87

*Significantly different, $p < .05$.

TABLE 3

Obtained Reliabilities

Measure	Sample Teachers	Bankers	Production	Service
Predictors				
IS	.89	.92	.85	.87
PRCA	.93	.95	.97	.97
TFD	.88	.83	.81	.90
MCS	.87*	**	**	**
MCS-Upper	.86*	**	**	**
SS	.98	.97	.89	.97
AS	.98	.95	.94	.99
Criteria				
Supervision	.93	.86	.88	.96
Work	.90	.83	.87	.87
Pay	.77	.75	.67	.82
Promotion	.79	.90	.77	.80
Coworkers	.92	.90	.88	.91

*Test-retest reliability.
**Not available, single scale administered only once.

TABLE 4

Correlations Among Predictor Variables**

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IS (1)							
Teachers (T)	1.0	-.49*	.39*	--	--	--	.13*
Bankers (B)	1.0	-.52*	.34*	.24*	--	--	.12
Production (P)	1.0	-.40*	.36*	--	.19	--	.27
Service (S)	1.0	-.59*	.46*	--	--	-.35	--
PRCA (2)							
T	-.49*	1.0	-.33*	--	--	--	--
B	-.52*	1.0	-.35*	-.23*	--	--	-.17
P	-.40*	1.0	-.28	--	--	-.21	-.31
S	-.59*	1.0	-.56*	-.25	.20	.20	-.19
TFD (3)							
T	.39*	-.33	1.0	--	--	--	--
B	.34*	-.35*	1.0	.20*	--	-.12	.-
P	.36*	-.28*	1.0	--	-.12	-.24	.32*
S	.46*	-.56*	1.0	.23	-.15	--	.10
MCS (4)							
T	--	--	--	1.0	.19*	.32*	--
B	.24*	-.23*	.20*	1.0	.47*	-.11	.23*
P	--	--	--	1.0	.56*	-.18	.11
S	--	-.25	.23	1.0	.31	.32	.42*
MCS-Upper (5)							
T	--	--	--	.19*	1.0	--	--
B	--	--	--	.47*	1.0	-.20*	--
P	.19	--	-.12	.56*	1.0	.12	--
S	--	.20	-.15	.31	1.0	.65*	.45*
SS (6)							
T	--	--	--	.32*	--	1.0	--
B	--	--	-.12	-.11	-.20*	1.0	-.38*
P	--	-.21	-.24	-.18	.12	1.0	-.14
S	-.35	.20	--	.32	.65*	1.0	.14
AS (7)							
T	.13*	--	--	--	--	--	1.0
B	.12	-.17	--	.23*	.17	-.38*	1.0
P	.27	-.31*	.32*	.11	--	-.14	1.0
S	--	-.19	.10	.42*	.45*	.14	1.0

* Significant, $p < .05$.
** Correlations less than ± .10 are not reported.

TABLE 5

Correlations Among Criterion Variables**

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
Supervision (1)					
Teachers (T)	1	.32*	.16*	.19*	.33*
Bankers (B)	1	.48*	.16	.15	.17
Production (P)	1	.55*	—	.36*	.22
Service (S)	1	.58*	.38	.61*	.39
Work (2)					
T	.32*	1	.21*	.21*	.34*
B	.48*	1	—	.39*	.28*
P	.55*	1	.10	.53*	.53*
S	.58*	1	.27	.49*	.38
Pay (3)					
T	.16*	.21*	1	.33*	.21*
B	.16	—	1	.24*	.13
P	—	.10	1	.33*	.28
S	.38	.27	1	.25	.22
Promotions (4)					
T	.19*	.21*	.33*	1	.22*
B	.15	.39*	.24*	1	.15
P	.36*	.53*	.33*	1	.44*
S	.61*	.49*	.25	1	.50*
Coworkers (5)					
T	.33*	.34*	.21*	.22*	1
B	.17	.28*	.13	.15	1
P	.22	.53*	.28	.44*	1
S	.39	.38	.22	.50*	1

* Significant, $p < .05$.
** Correlations less than ± .10 are not reported.

TABLE 6

Simple and Multiple Correlations of Individuals Difference Variables with Satisfaction Dimensions**

Predictor	Supervision	Work	Pay	Promotions	Coworkers
IS					
Teachers (T)	--	.20*	--	--	--
Bankers (B)	.25*	.25*	--	.18	--
Production (P)	.26	.10	.14	.21	.34*
Service (S)	.17	--	--	--	--
PRCA					
T	-.14*	-.14*	--	--	--
B	-.12	-.30*	--	-.20*	--
P	-.19	-.17	--	-.10	-.25
S	-.20	--	--	--	.18
TFD					
T	--	--	--	.10	-.11
B	--	--	-.12	.16	-.15
P	--	--	--	--	--
S	--	--	--	-.13	--
Combined (Multiple Correlation)					
T	.15*	.21*	--	.15*	.12
B	.30*	.33*	.14	.22*	.15
P	.27	.18	.20	.22	.39*
S	.27	--	--	.15	.20

*Significant, $p < .05$.
**Correlation less than ± .10 are not reported.

TABLE 7

Simple and Multiple Correlations of MCS, MCS-Upper, SS, and As with Satisfaction Dimensions**

Predictors	Supervision	Work	Pay	Promotions	Coworkers
MCS					
Teachers (T)	.40*	.19*	.10	--	.16*
Bankers (B)	.35*	.28*	--	.38*	--
Production (P)	.30*	--	.25	.26	-.14
Service (S)	.51*	.25	.14	.21	.44*
MCS-Upper					
T	--	--	.19*	.12	--
B	.13	.18	.18	.24*	--
P	--	.14	.37*	.19	.03
S	.49*	.50*	.16	.42*	.33
Supervision (SS)					
T	.40*	.19*	--	.19*	.31*
B	--	--	--	-.10	.15
P	--	.13	--	--	.12
S	.21	.30	.24	.14	.27
Administration (AS)					
T	.17*	.13*	--	--	.15*
B	.26*	--	--	.17	--
P	.17	--	--	.22	--
S	.20	.14	-.20	.30	--
Combined (Multiple Correlation)					
T	.53*	.28*	.21*	.22*	.36*
B	.42*	.28*	.18	.40*	.19
P	.39*	.20	.39*	.34*	.21
S	.69*	.53*	.39	.46*	.59*

*Significant, $p < .05$.
**Correlations less than ± .10 are not reported.

TABLE 8

Variance Acocunted for by Predictor Variable Group with Employee Satisfaction

Sample/ Predictor Group	Supervision	Work	Pay	Promotions	Coworkers
Teachers					
Individual Differences (ID)	.02*	.04*	--	.02*	.01
Superior/Subordinate (S/S)	.28*	.08*	.04*	.05*	.13*
Combined (C)	.31*	.12*	.05*	.08*	.14*
Bankers					
ID	.09*	.11*	.02	.05*	.02
S/S	.18*	.08*	.03	.16*	.04
C	.24*	.17*	.05*	.18*	.06*
Production					
ID	.07	.03	.04	.05	.15*
S/S	.15*	.04	.15*	.12*	.04
C	.20*	.06*	.16*	.14*	.21*
Service					
ID	.07	--	--	.02	.04
S/S	.48*	.28*	.15	.21*	.35*
C	.53*	.31*	.18*	.22*	.40*

*Significant, $p < .05$.
**Variance < .01 is left blank.