The Relationship Between Organizational Communication And Job Satisfaction: An Empirical Study Of Blue Collar Workers

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Abstract: While much is known about the dimensions of job satisfaction, the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational communication still remains relatively uncertain. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the dimensions of job satisfaction and organizational communication. A survey was conducted to the sample of 637 blue-collar workers and the data obtained from the sample, firstly, analyzed by the principal component factor-analytic method of Varimax and then an ordinary least squares regression estimation technique in order to identify the job satisfaction and communication relationship. The study revealed a clear relationship between job satisfaction and organizational communication. Upon regression analysis, communication was observed to predict all of the dimensions of job satisfaction but especially satisfaction with the supervisor was highly explained by communication. Whilst the female employees were more satisfied with the supervisor, work itself and the rewards and payments, the inexperienced workers differed significantly from the others nearly in all the dimensions of job satisfaction except the work itself. Moreover, females were also observed that they had more positive perceptions about communication in the workplace.

Keywords: Job satisfaction dimensions, organizational communication, job satisfaction and communication relationship, exploratory factor analysis, regression analysis.

Örgütsel İletişim Ve İş Tatmini Arasındaki İlişki: Mavi Yakalı Çalışanlara Yönelik Ampirik Bir Araştırma

Özet: İş tatminini ve iş tatmini boyutları ile ilgili oldukça fazla bilgiye sahip olunmasına rağmen, iş tatmini ile örgütsel iletişim arasındaki ilişki halen tam olarak bilinmemektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, iş tatmini ile örgütsel iletişim arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bu amaca yönelik olarak 637 mavi yakalı çalışanı kapsayan bir anket uygulaması sonrasında elde edilen veriler öncelikle Varimax metodu izlenerek faktör analizine tabi tutulmuş, daha sonra ise iş tatminini boyutları ile örgütsel iletişim ilişkisini incelemek üzere regresyon analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda iş tatmini ile örgütsel iletişim arasında belirgin bir ilişki olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Regresyon analizi sonuçları, örgütsel iletişim ile iş tatminine ait tüm boyutlar arasındaki ilişkiyi belirtirken, özellikle amirler ile ilişkiden doğan tatmin düzeyinin büyük oranda örgütsel iletişim ile açıklandığı görülmüştür. Bayan çalışanlar ile erkek çalışanlar arasında amirler ile olan ilişki, işin kendisi ve ödüller ile ödemeler boyutlarında anlamlı farklılıklar bulunduğu gözlenmiş, bayanlar bu boyutları erkeklere oranla daha olumlu algılarken, tecrübeye göre farlılık analizi sonuçları en az tecrübeye sahip olan çalışanların diğer tüm çalışanlara oranla işin kendisi haricindeki tüm boyutları daha olumlu

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algıladıkları sonucunu vermiştir. Ayrıca bayan çalışanların erkeklere oranla işyerindeki çalışma ortamını daha olumlu algıladıkları da gözlemlenmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İş tatmini boyutları, örgütsel iletişim, iş tatmini ve iletişim ilişkisi, açıklayıcı faktör analizi, regresyon analizi.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational communication, job satisfaction, job performance and their linkages have always been the organizational concepts that were of interest to management practitioners and researchers. Their interest emerges from the fact that the quality of organizational communication and job satisfaction may determine the quality of life, effectiveness and eventually, the level of job performance (Pettit, Goris and Vaught, 1997:81). While almost all of the research efforts were focusing on to explain the effects of organizational communication and job satisfaction on job performance, some firm studies (e.g., Jain, 1973; Pincus, 1986; Clampitt and Downs, 1993) found stronger links and relationships between communication and satisfaction than the one does exist between communication and performance.

The results of the studies which revealed the strong links between communication and satisfaction emerged a new argument about the issue; a moderating effect of communication on the relationships between job performance and job satisfaction rather than a direct effect on job performance. The implication of the findings about the moderator effect of organizational communication on satisfaction-performance relation is, to use communication effectively as a moderator in order to increase the level of job satisfaction which will eventually affect the job performance positively. According to Pettit et al. (1997:82), "theoretically, higher links of communication with satisfaction should increase the relationship between an employee's job performance and the satisfaction with that job". Although abundant research linking job satisfaction with job performance exists in the literature (e.g., Barney, 1986; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers and Mainous, 1988; Witt, 1989; Shalley, Gilson and Blum, 2000), the relationships among the organizational communication and job satisfaction are still not clear and much more empirical, focused research is needed to investigate the nature of these relations (Pearce and Segal, 1998). In this study, it is aimed to explore the relationship between organizational communication and job satisfaction based on empirical evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the 1970s, much attention has been paid on factors that might affect job performance. Among these factors based on the empirical evidence (Harris, 2002; Bush and Frohman, 1991; Barney, 1986; Podsakoff and

Williams, 1986; Oldham, 1980; Pierce, Dunham and Blackburn, 1979; Hackman and Pearce, 1976), especially, organizational communication and job satisfaction took an important role to explain the large proportion of the variation in job performance. Communication is one of the most elusive organizational variables and has a vital importance to all functions of organizations. Katz and Kahn (1978:430) suggest, "communication - the exchange of information and the transmission of meaning - is the very essence of a social system or an organization". In a similar vein, Scott and Mitchell (1976:192) notes, "Communication is the critical process in organizing because it is the primary medium of human interaction". According to Bush and Frohman (1991), communication is important in organizational functioning to bring greater organizational effectiveness. Lawler (1989:28) states that "sharing information is one of the easiest and most effective ways that managers can foster employee involvement within organizations".

Industry practitioners concludes that employees must be given information about the company, its activities, goals, and directions as well as be allowed to have channels through which to pass information up to management, for motivation and performance increase purposes (Rodwell, Kienzle and Shadur, 1998:279). Although "more communication is better" approach was strongly supported in the area, some academic scholars (Zimmerman, Sypher and Haas, 1996) debated on the issue for a number of outcomes. Zimmerman et al. (1996:189) argued that the point of how differences between organizations might impact on members' beliefs about the need for more communication remained unclear. Moreover, Pettit et al. (1997) searched the contribution of communication to performance but the studies did not produce clear results and found complex relationships. In another study, Pincus (1986) found the positive relation between organizational communication and job performance but the relationship was not as strong as the one existed between organizational communication and job satisfaction.

These results were congruent with the research findings of the other scholars. In the studies of Muchinsky (1977), O'Reilly (1980), Chewning and Harrell (1990), and Hwang and Lin (1999) significant relationships between accuracy of information with communication underload and overload and job satisfaction were found. These studies emphasized the importance of organizational communication and job satisfaction relationship since the job performance was the outcome of this interaction (Goris, Pettit and Vaught, 2002). For this reason, beyond the extensive research done about job performance in the past few decades, researchers intensified their work on the organizational communication and job

satisfaction construct (Walther, 1988; Pincus, 1986; Foehrenbach and Rosenberg, 1982; Goldhaber, Porter, Yates and Lesniak, 1978).

The prevailing evidence indicates these factors relate positively (Pearce and Segal, 1998:2). Pettit *et al.* (1997) supports that communication plays a major role in one's job satisfaction which usually measured in multidimensional terms. They explain this role as "how an employee perceives a supervisor's communication style, credibility, and content as well as the organization's communication system will to some extent influence the amount of satisfaction (morale) he or she receives from the job" (Pettit *et al.*, 1997:81).

Although the positive relationship between organizational communication and job satisfaction appears to be well documented, number of the studies which confirmed this specific correlation are only a few. The most promising studies on the issue came from Clampitt and Downs (1993), King, Lahiff and Hatfield (1988), Pincus (1986), and Wheeless, Wheeless and Howard (1983). Pincus (1986) conducted a research on 327 hospital nurses and measured nine communication factors which grouped into three dimensions; informational, relational and informational/relational. The results showed the significant positive relations between the organizational communication and job satisfaction/job performance, although, the communication and satisfaction link was much stronger, particularly in supervisor communication, compared to communication and performance link. The study confirmed "the vital importance of employee-immediate supervisor communication on employee job satisfaction" (Pincus, 1986:413).

The other communication dimensions that related to job satisfaction were communication climate of the organization, personal feedback and top management communication, respectively. So, the major contribution of the study was to reveal the most effective organizational communication dimensions on job satisfaction. Another study which was conducted by Wheeless *et al.* (1983) also reported "strong positive relationships between job satisfaction and communication satisfaction with the supervisor and his or her receptivity to information". And, King, Lahiff, and Hatfield (1988:36) concluded their study about the existence of "the consistently clear and positive pattern of relationships between an employee's perceptions of communications and his or her job satisfaction".

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Although job satisfaction is one of the concepts that received utmost attention from both scientists and practitioners, there are surprisingly few studies that explored the relationship between communication and job

satisfaction. Hence this study makes an important contribution to the literature by highlighting the effect of communication on job satisfaction. Another important contribution is the similar findings to the study that was conducted decades ago in a Western country. Obtaining consistent results in a study done in Turkey, not only pointed out the strong influence of communication on dimensions of job satisfaction once again but it also revealed the consistent nature of the influence across cultures and time.

Practitioners will also benefit from this study, as a result of being aware of the fact that high quality communication can improve their relationships with their employees; they can achieve more positive organizational outcomes by putting more effort to increase the quality of communication within the organization.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Seven hundred twenty seven (727) employees from six companies were identified originally to participate in the study. Twenty nine (29) of them were excluded because of sickness, vacation reasons and unwillingness to co-operate and sixty one (61) questionnaires filled were not usable. The response rate was relatively high (nearly 87.6 %) since the questionnaires were personally distributed and collected. So, the survey was conducted to the sample of 637 blue-collar workers at six manufacturing companies operating in four different industries which were textile, plastics, automotive, and food and beverage. While male respondents were at the majority with 79.8%, females comprised only 20.1% of the sample. A predominant 57.4% of the respondents were between 25-35 years of age, whereas, 26.7% were between 18-24 and 14.9% were between 35-45. The rest of the participants consisted of elderly workers (above 45) constituted only 1% of the total sample.

Measurement Instruments

A survey instrument was designed to measure the dimensions of job satisfaction and organizational communication. The questionnaire consisted of totally thirty eight (38) questions. Thirty four job satisfaction related questions were taken from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) "The Job Diagnostic Survey" and Weiss, Davis, England and Lofquist's (1967) "Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire". Among these thirty four questions; five items related with working conditions, seven items related with the work itself, ten items related with the supervisory satisfaction, five items related with peer satisfaction, and seven items related with payment and

rewards satisfaction. Four organizational communication related items were taken from Down and Hazen's (1977) "The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire". The questionnaire asked the respondents to indicate agreement or disagreement about the statements on a five point Likert scale.

RESULTS

The data was firstly analyzed by the principal component factor-analytic method of Varimax and then an ordinary least squares regression estimation technique was used to identify the relationships between organizational communication and job satisfaction dimensions. All statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS 15.0 program.

The exploratory factor analysis revealed six factors, five job satisfaction dimensions (working conditions, work itself, satisfaction with the supervisors, satisfaction with peers and satisfaction with payments and rewards) and organizational communication. Most of the dimensions yielded only one factor with eigen-values over 1.00. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for all the factors along with the Cronbach Alpha coefficients which state the inter-item reliabilities of all dimensions are shown in Table 1. Nunnaly (1978) noted that coefficient alphas greater than or equal to 0.70 are acceptable for research purposes and accordingly, the inter-reliability results of the dimensions were more than satisfactory.

Table 1. Factor Properties

Dimensions	KMO	Bartlett	Total Variance Explained	Cronbach Alpha
Working Conditions	0.81	χ ² :818.737 Df:10 p.: 0.001	53.7%	0.78
Work Itself	0.85	χ ² :1242.295 Df:15 p.: 0.001	54.2%	0.81
Satisfaction with the Supervisor	0.95	χ ² :41134.641 Df:45 p.: 0.001	63.1%	0.93
Satisfaction with Peers	0.85	χ ² :1529.501 Df:10 p.: 0.001	65.4%	0.86
Satisfaction with Payments and Rewards	0.89	χ²:2528.765 Df:21 p.: 0.001	61.3%	0.89

Communication	0.79	χ ² :745.722 Df:6 p.: 0.001	62.3%	0.80	
		p 0.001			

Pearson correlation test results (see Table 2.) showed that although working conditions dimension had relatively high correlations with other variables, none of the variables had correlations higher than acceptable levels (0.70).

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations

	Working Conditions	Work Itself	Superv.	Rewards	Peers	Comm.
Working Conditions	1					
Work Itself	.641**	1				
Supervisor	.621**	.625**	1			
Pay and Reward	.576**	.546**	.596**	1		
Peers	.401**	.485**	.510**	.368**	1	
Comm.	.630**	.577**	.784**	.619**	.539**	1

^{**} Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Upon regression analysis, communication was observed to predict all of the dimensions of job satisfaction. Among those, as it is shown in Table 3., communication was found to have the strongest impact on satisfaction with supervisor (β =0.78) and the weakest on satisfaction with peers (β =0.54).

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results

Dependent Variables	Adjusted R ²	F	Beta	p.
Supervisor	0.61	1013.17	0.78	0.01
Working Conditions	0.40	417.50	0.63	0.01
Pay and Reward	0.38	395.14	0.62	0.01
Work Itself	0.33	317.41	0.58	0.01
Peers	0.29	260.13	0.54	0.01

^{*} Predictors: (Constant), Communication

In order to investigate whether there was a difference between the perceptions of male and female employees in terms of job satisfaction dimensions and communication, the ANOVA test was conducted. According to the results of ANOVA, there was a significant difference between male and female respondents in terms of *supervisor*, *work itself* and *pay and reward* dimensions of *job satisfaction* and *communication* (see Table 4.).

Table 4. ANOVA Results for Gender Differences

		Levene's Equality	ty of	_	
		Variar	ices	t-test for Equ	ality of Means
		F	Sig.	df	Sig. (2-tail.)
Working Conditions	Equal variances	2.796	.095	635	.232
	No equality			217.585	.198
Work Itself	Equal variances	4.054	.044	635	.046
	No equality			210.965	.035
Supervisor	Equal variances	10.823	.001	635	.138
	No equality			222.483	.105
Pay and Reward	Equal variances	3.569	.059	635	.011
	No equality			205.189	.009
Peers	Equal variances	1.404	.237	635	.239
	No equality			190.027	.252
Communication	Equal variances	3.362	.067	635	.037
	No equality			209.603	.029

^{*} The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

When the group statistics and mean values of were calculated to investigate the gender differences it was seen that female employees were more satisfied with the supervisor, work itself and the rewards and payments. Moreover, females were also observed that they had more positive perceptions about *communication* in the workplace (see Table 5.).

Table 5. Group Statistics for Gender Differences

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Working Conditions	male	509	3.1894	1.02587	.04547
	female	128	3.3078	0.90071	.07961
Work Itself	male	509	3.5318	1.00802	.04468
	female	128	3.7279	0.91738	.08109
Supervisor	male	509	3.4521	1.10716	.04907

	female	128	3.6102	0.94817	.08381
Pay and Reward	male	509	2.7230	1.06861	.04737
	female	128	2.9900	1.00588	.08891
Peers	male	509	3.8566	0.95996	.04255
	female	128	3.7438	1.00077	.08846
Communication	male	509	3.3119	1.08785	.04822
	female	128	3.5332	0.99772	.08819

The inexperienced (less than 1 year) workers differed significantly from the more experienced ones nearly in all dimensions of job satisfaction except the work itself. This can be resulted since the new employees may have a positive attitude against their new job and organization especially in the first years. Their perception about the dimensions of job satisfaction may change as they get more familiar to the organization in the following years. The workers with the work experience less than one year also perceived the communication quality higher than the ones who had 2-5 and over 5 years of experience but the perception of the work itself did not differ due to experience (see Table 6.).

Table 6. ANOVA Results for Employee Experiences

Dependent Variable	(I) Exp	(J) Exp	Mean Diff. (I-J)	Std. Err.	Sig.
Working Conditions	<1	1-2	.46975(*)	.12032	.002
		2-5	.70290(*)	.10907	.001
		>5	.61828(*)	.10136	.001
Supervisor	<1	2-5	.63101(*)	.11877	.001
D 1D 1		>5	.54597(*)	.11038	.001
Pay and Reward	<1	1-2 2-5	.48475(*) .80285(*)	.12615 .11435	.002 .001
		>5	.74509(*)	.10627	.001
Peers	<1	2-5	.38512(*)	.10826	.006
		>5	.31497(*)	.10061	.021
Communication	<1	2-5	.38512(*)	.10826	.006
		>5	.31497(*)	.10061	.021

^{*} The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study show a clear relationship between organizational communication quality and all dimensions of job satisfaction. Especially satisfaction with the supervisor is highly explained by communication.

Previous studies also found strong relationships between satisfaction with communication from top management and from one's immediate supervisor with the perceptions of job satisfaction (Pincus, Knipp, and Rayfield, 1990). Therefore, if the employee perceives high quality of communication within the organization, it is likely to state that she/he will naturally be satisfied with one of the two important sources (top management and immediate supervisor) of information (Goldhaber *et al.*, 1978).

The model proposed by Lawler (1971; 1981) to explain the pay satisfaction was also supported by the results of this study. It is claimed that pay satisfaction is a result of the perceived discrepancy between the pay one expects and what one actually receives from the organization. The higher the actual pay received in relation to the pay expected, the higher the level of satisfaction. The same can be valid for rewards and payments as well; the higher the fit between the actual and the expected rewards will result to a higher the level of satisfaction. High quality communication may be instrumental in the formation of expectancies. Clear communication may result in more realistic expectations, which in turn may decrease the discrepancy between the expected payments and rewards and the actual ones. If the reasons of the deficiencies at workplace are explained well through the high quality communication, then the employees may realign their expectancies; thereby perceive their working conditions as satisfactory despite the short-comings.

Consequently, the findings of this research resemble the general tendency of prior empirical endeavors such as Muchinsky's. In Muchinsky's study (1977), organizational communication was most highly correlated with satisfaction with supervision but weakly with satisfaction with co-workers. Although the results of this research supported the previous academics' studies, it should be noted that because of the complex nature of organizational communication and job satisfaction relationship, more research into this area is needed especially by business communication scientists. The additional research efforts on the issue will surely be contributing to clarify the complex and dynamic process of communication and its relation with job satisfaction in the organizations.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This is a preliminary study that included the dimensions of job satisfaction only. In further studies, it is strongly advised to take the dimensions of communication into consideration to be able explore the relationships at the sub-levels. Another limitation is that the research was conducted only for blue-collar workers and it should be noted that the results of another research conducted on white-collar workers may differ. Additionally, further studies

should also include outcome variables such as performance and moderating or mediating variables such as perceptual biases or attributions.

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