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Perceptions of Job Satisfaction in an ICF/MR Environment

Thesis submitted to
The Graduate College
Of
Marshall University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

M.A.
in
Psychology

By

Jeffrey Shrewsbury

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Job Satisfaction in an ICF/MR Environment

Jeffrey Shrewsbury

This paper examines the relationship between perceived communication between employees, their supervisor, and the effect of perceived communication on overall job satisfaction of the employee in an ICF/MR environment. The paper also examines the length of time in a particular job and the potential effects of time as a predictor of overall job satisfaction. Benefits and communication are also examined in an attempt to determine which of the two makes the better predictor of overall job satisfaction for employees working in an ICF/MR environment. The subjects examined came from respondents to an employee attitude survey conducted by a large provider of residential services to people with mental retardation in a rural Eastern state in the fall of 2000. The respondents came from four geographic regions within the state and comparisons between the regions were made. Differences between management and direct care employees were observed. Some differences between the two were noted with time as a predictor of overall job satisfaction and with satisfaction with supervisors.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

ICF/MR is an intermediate care facility for people with mental retardation.

Perceptions of Job Satisfaction in an ICF-MR Environment

Introduction

Job satisfaction is a set of favorable or unfavorable attitudes employees hold about their work (Lowenburg, Conrad, 1998). These attitudes are considered to be beliefs, feelings, and action tendencies constitute a judgement of one's environment. Lock described job satisfaction as an affective evaluation of the job environment (Mitchell, 1979). Locke (1976) also described job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal one makes of his or her job experiences.

Others such as Dawes and Lofquist (1984) saw job satisfaction as a feeling based on the worker's estimate of the extent to which the work environment fulfills one's needs. Business wants to measure job satisfaction because of the assumed relationship between job satisfaction and short term goals such as increased individual productivity, reduced absences, errors, and turnover (Smith, 1992).

Little work has been done regarding job satisfaction of employees specific to the Intermediate Care Facility for People with Mental Retardation, commonly referred to as an ICF/MR. In regards to group homes and other institutional settings for people with disabilities, Maslach (1976) and Maslach & Jackson (1978) indicated that low morale and job satisfaction can be linked to "burnout". Rusch, Hall and Griffin (1986) have shown that work related stress associated with "burnout" is likely to diminish quality of care and is related to abuse of residents in residential settings for people with disabilities.

This paper will examine several studies done in residential settings for people with disabilities. Similarities between services provided between nursing homes and group homes for people with disabilities will be reviewed. Research specific to these two

residential settings will be used whenever possible

With so much at stake, it is crucial that service providers in residential settings for people with disabilities and nursing homes pay particular attention to job satisfaction and how it relates to care for those people being served. Residential settings are not manufacturing jobs. The implications are much greater in a residential setting. Abuse, neglect and hope for the future are all dependent upon the effort put forth by the employee in any residential setting.

Supervisor

Leadership Styles

Research conducted by Packard & Kauppi (1999) examined the relationship between leadership styles and an employees job satisfaction. Packard & Kauppi (1999) looked at business organizations serving people with disabilities with vocational or educational services, providing chemical dependency treatment, or mental health services. These organizations could further be described as service organizations or rehabilitation agencies. Packard & Kauppi (1999) were interested primarily in two leadership styles; an autocratic style and a democratic style. The autocratic style is a leader-dominated style and the democratic style is a style of leadership where subordinates involvement in decision making and the maintenance of a cohesive group is emphasized (Longest, 1976; McCool & Brown, 1977).

Packard & Kauppi (1999) reported based on their research, there was a difference in job satisfaction reported by subordinates between the autocratic style and the democratic style. As reported by Packard & Kauppi (1999) it appears that subordinates with supervisors aspiring to democratic leadership styles, reported the highest levels of

job satisfaction.

Research conducted by Aiken et al. (1972) reported that leadership styles that emphasized production and structure was not related to job satisfaction in rehabilitation counselors (Packard & Kauppi, 1999). Relationship-oriented behavior has been found to have a positive relationship with satisfaction and performance (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Wilkenson & Wagner, 1993; Yukl, 1989). Whereas high structure and low consideration for relationship styles has been associated with lower job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment (Goodson, McGee, & Cashman, 1989).

Support

Workplace support from supervisors has been shown to be negatively correlated to emotional exhaustion among mental health professionals (Dietzel & Coursey, 1998). “Burnout” first discussed by Freudenberger (1974), is commonly regarded as a negative emotional response to stressful stimuli or excessive job demands (Stevens & O’Neil, 1983). In human service workers, burnout has been associated with absenteeism, turnover, depression, anxiety, as well as other personal and organizational problems (Kahill, 1998; Maslach & Florian, 1988; Riggan, Garner & Hafer, 1984).

Findings suggest that satisfaction with supervisors’ support, also contributed to high levels of job satisfaction and low levels of emotional exhaustion (Dietzel & Coursey, 1998). To be more specific, in the study with non residential staff in a mental health organization discussed above, Packard & Kauppi’s (1999) data suggests that specific feedback from supervisors about work performance along with practical advice and instruction on how to do the job, were preferred over emotional, non-directional support. Also suggested in this study and backed by research by Kilpatrick (1989) is a positive

correlation existing between burnout and education. As education increased, so did burnout and emotional exhaustion.

Shadrock & Hill (1998) reported that human service workers with supportive relationships reported lower levels of burnout than those with less supportive relationships. This supportive relationship not only includes family members but as also described by Etzion (1984) and Leiter & Meechan (1986), the support from supervisors and colleagues (Shadrock & Hill, 1998).

Workplace social support, particularly from supervisors, has also been consistently shown to be negatively related to emotional exhaustion among a range of mental health and other human services workers (Carney et al., 1993; Dietzel, 1996; Maslach & Florian, 1988; Penn, Romano & Foat, 1988). Razza (1993) found that job satisfaction of staff in group homes was related to the extent to which the job was consistent with personal goals and values, burnout, satisfaction with supervision and the perseverance of workers, i.e., those who changed jobs infrequently reported higher satisfaction. Research has also drawn attention to the importance of human service workers experiencing stable and supportive relationships, because they appear to be associated with lower burnout scores (Shaddock, Hill, & Limbeek, 1998).

In research published by Jagdip (2000), a positive correlation between supervisor support and a perception of less stress on the part of frontline employees in service industries were found. Those employees that felt support from their supervisor were less likely to have work related stress (Jagdip, 2000).

Communication

Richmond and McCrosky (2000) reported in their March 2000, *Communication*

Monographs, that research has established that communication skills employed by supervisors has an effect on the employees perception of the supervisor and the subordinates job satisfaction. In the same article, it was reported by Richmond and McCrosky (2000) that research indicates those employees that are more highly motivated and that are satisfied with their jobs, are both more motivated to do high quality work and less likely to leave their jobs (Baum & Youngblood, 1975; Day & Humbling, 1964; Student, 1968).

Richmond and McCrosky (2000) hypothesized that as the supervisor of an organization's use of positive non-verbal immediacy goes up, so will the employee's use of positive non-verbal immediacy, as well as the employee's positive perceptions of the supervisor (Richmond & McCrosky, 2000). Non verbal immediacy was described as supervisors putting themselves in proximity to the employee, smiling, handshakes or other appropriate touching as well as any positive behavior that puts the supervisor in a position to notice the employee (Richmond & McCrosky, 2000).

In a similar study, Grieshaber, Parker and Deering (1995), conducted research between nursing homes. One nursing home was located in an affluent suburban neighborhood with another home in a poor urban facility. In discussing the results of this research, Grieshaber, Parker and Deering (1995), indicated that one key component of jobsatisfaction was communication. Pincus (1996) indicated that among nurses, communication was positively and significantly correlated to job satisfaction.

Specific communication indicated by Pincus (1996), was communication with supervisor, communication climate, and personal feedback. Accurate communication about the nature of the job was inversely related to turnover (Ruble, 1986). Considering

Fronz's (1978) recommendation to integrate good communication systems between supervisors and aids in nursing homes, nursing assistants should be included in the caregiver team and should be provided with larger roles in determining goals and objectives for patients and residents (Brannon, Smyer & Cohn, 1992).

Feedback

As reported by Blau (1999), it is not necessarily a bad evaluation given by a supervisor that decreases job satisfaction, but the perception of the evaluation as being an unfair assessment by the employee (Bretz et al., 1992). The process used to determine the evaluation is more important to the employee than the evaluation itself (Folger, 1998). This indicates what could be perceived as trust in the relationship between the employee and the organization. As reported by Organ (1988), employee job satisfaction is logically related to "fairness". Policies generated by an organization can also be a sore spot for employees, if employees do not feel policies are fair, complete and are administered effectively across the board; dissatisfaction can occur (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1999).

To further illustrate the effect of supervisors on the effect of an individual's performance, examine the research conducted by Fleming, Oliver, & Bolton (1996). Two group homes for people with mental retardation consisting of 4 supervisors and 4 paraprofessional staff were used in the study. The 4 supervisors were trained for 5 hours on how to provide feedback to staff, modeling, role-play, and to use selected performance antecedents and consequences. Research prior to this study indicated that effective managers spend significantly more time monitoring the work of subordinates, Komaki (1996).

Reid (1989), reports that an effective manager in the residential setting should

clearly describe and provide a rationale for the behaviors to be trained, physically demonstrate the behaviors, monitor trainee practice of the behaviors, and provide feedback based on observed performance until preset competency is met. Baldwin & Ford (1988) identified supervisor prompting, modeling, reinforcing, and goal setting as variables likely to motivate trainees to generalize skills learned off the job, to the actual work setting.

In Fleming, Oliver & Bolton's (1996) research, the 4 supervisors were given 5 hours of training related to how to provide role modeling, feedback, coaching and rationale for training to paraprofessional staff. Over the next 8 weeks the interactions between the supervisors and the 4 employees chosen for the study were taped and reviewed for effectiveness of coaching on the part of the supervisor as it relates to an increase in effective teaching strategies on the part of the paraprofessional staff.

Results indicated that the paraprofessional performance improved and that gradually the supervisors could decrease the attempts of coaching and role modeling as the paraprofessionals learned and used the teaching strategies. Satisfaction surveys after the 8-week period indicated that the paraprofessionals felt their methods of teaching consumers would remain changed based on the instruction received during the study, and that more frequent supervision would be helpful. Overall, the research conducted by Fleming, Oliver & Bolton (1996) indicated that paraprofessionals work behavior is influenced by the behavior of the supervisor and changes the supervisor may make in coaching, role modeling, feedback and observation and inspection of subordinates work.

Organization

Communication

Shauder, Kienzle & Rodwell (1999), found that organizational climate played a role in employee involvement. Shauder, Kienzle & Rodwell (1999) hypothesized that employee satisfaction would be positively related to decision making, teamwork and communication.

Shauder, Kienzle & Rodwell (1999) found that a supportive climate from the organization was a constant significant predictor of decision making, teamwork and communication. Communication in particular was found to be highly related to a supportive climate (Shauder, Kienzle & Rodwell, 1999). Eisenberg & Witten (1987), found that an individual's willingness to communicate was significantly related to organizational climate, including the closeness or shared history between employees or relational factors, organizational restraints on communication related to the job or constraints on an organization's internal and external communication.

Support and Commitment

Support and commitment significantly predict an employee's perception of communication (Shauder, Kienzle & Rodwell, 1999). Zeffane (1994) suggested that when proposing answers to questions about employee commitment, morale, loyalty, and attachment to the job, not only should you examine what you should add to the organization, but also what you should take away, that inhibits communication. When examining this line of reasoning, organizations should consider those aspects of the company that prevent open and honest communication as well as what can be added to the company to increase communication.

The Job

Input

In a study by Friedman, Daub, Cresci & Keyser (1999), comparing satisfaction in nursing homes and PACE programs. The PACE program is an alternative to nursing home care where the elderly person stays home while care providers make regular visits to see to the patients needs. Results indicated that the PACE employees were more satisfied (Friedman, Daub, Cresci & Keyser, 1999). In both environments, PACE and nursing homes, respect for suggestions was a predictor of job satisfaction in employees (Friedman, Daub, Cresci & Keyser, 1999). Other aspects of the job that were held in high regard by both groups of people were receiving positive feedback, getting help from peers, and the chance to organize my daily work load (Friedman, Daub, Cresci & Keyser, 1999).

Out of 11 elements measured in the two groups, the PACE grouped scored higher in 6 elements with no significant difference in the remaining 5. The 6 elements that scored higher in the PACE programs were: chance to maintain closer relationships with my patients, variety in my work, respect for my suggestions, chance to use my judgement, chance to discuss my patients with team members, and respect for the types of assignments I get.

One reason the PACE employees may have felt greater job satisfaction is that they worked without direct supervision, unlike the nursing home employees. It is important to note that Friedman, Daub, Cresci & Keyser (1999) reported no difference in the demographics between PACE employees and the nursing home employees involved in the study.

Similar findings were reported by Caudill & Patrick (1989), in which nursing assistants that had input into planning of care for their patients were slightly more likely to stay with their jobs. Monahan & McCarthy (1992) in a study with nursing assistants found that employees liked supervisors that were flexible and listened. Holtz (1982) indicated that nursing assistants cited interpersonal relationships as important to their job satisfaction.

Relationships

Schaffer & Moos (1996) reported that stresses associated with relationships had a greater effect on job satisfaction and quitting than tasks performed on the job (Jinnett & Alexander, 1999). This suggests that greater performance could be obtained from employees with positive relationships at work than with employees with poor relationships.

Jinnett & Alexander (1999), reported that research conducted by them in conjunction with research provided by others, indicates that group satisfaction could have more of an impact on individual job satisfaction than individual job tasks performed. Subsequent intentions to quit had a higher correlation with the group satisfaction as a whole than with the employees own job satisfaction (Jinnett & Alexander, 1999). Based on this conclusion, the relationship an individual has with their workgroup appears to have a significant effect on the individual.

In research conducted by Dietzel and Coursey, (1998), it was found that in non-residential employees providing services to people with disabilities, staff reported above average satisfaction with the helping and people oriented aspects of the job. Shadrock and Hill (1998), discussed after their research that the organizations working in residential

services may ultimately benefit from recognizing the significance of relationships to the employee and work toward keeping relationships intact, whether those relationships be at home or at work. A link between job satisfaction and burnout was also found in Shadrock & Hill's (1998) research.

Empowerment

Support

In an English study by Moniz-Cook, Woods & Gardner (1999) examining behavior problems in 14 residential settings across England, those staff most effective in dealing with problem behaviors, were those staff with less anxiety, staff perceiving support from supervisors and the perception of the staff toward a person centered, individualized approach to residential care. In this same report by Moniz-Cook et al. (1999), it was reported that staff complaints and actual admissions to psychiatric wards fell dramatically when staff were informed that future hospital admissions would be easier to facilitate, even if actual admissions were not pursued. It was suggested by Moniz-Cook et al. (1999), that the perception of staff having support from the organization actually contributed to the perception of the staff toward the resident as having more manageable behavior. It would appear that in some cases, anxiety about future behavior issues could diminish with the perception of support. Moniz-Cook et al. (1999) did link anxiety with staff as indicators of future behavior issues between staff and residents in residential settings. The perceived support an employee has from an organization can have an effect on the quality of services provided to consumers with behavior issues.

In the 1998 article by Dietzel & Coursey, the research indicated a strong positive relationship between the number of difficult consumers or clients with difficult behaviors

and emotional exhaustion. It is important to note that the research did not suggest that client contact was correlated with emotional exhaustion, but that the quality of contact between staff and difficult consumers was correlated with emotional exhaustion.

Dietzel & Coursey's (1998) work is consistent with research conducted previously by (Coady, Kent, & Davies, 1990; Koeske & Koeske, 1989b; LeRoy & Rank, 1986; Savicki & Cooley, 1987), which suggested that there is no significant relationship between client contact and burnout or between caseload size, work hours and burnout (Lawson & O'Brien, 1994). It appears that if difficult behavior does exist with clients, having support from the organization could reduce burnout and or increase the employees' perception of support and reduce anxiety about the behavior. Dietzel & Coursey (1998) pointed out that the severity of the consumers needs and behavior issues (frequency of behavior) were more important to job satisfaction and burnout than staffing levels alone.

Industries that empower employees to act when the boss is not there are more likely to provide quality services continuously, and more likely to be referred to others for business. Jagdip (2000) linked quality in frontline employees to supervisor support. If a business connection to quality has been linked to supervisor support, it would only seem logical to assume that providers in service industries must work with supervisors to empower employees so that not only quality is improved, but the actual recommendation of the service provider for business to perspective customers is made by employees.

Decision Making

Those people that reported that they had limited control over participation and outcome of decision making (Farber, 1983), also reported higher levels of burnout (Shadrock & Hill, 1998). Research by Shadrock & Hill (1998), suggest that there is a

significant difference between burnout scores with those employees that indicated they wanted to leave their job and those employees that stated they did not want to leave their job. Higher burnout scores were associated with those that said they wanted to leave the job. Those employees that stated that “ I am involved in decision making”, reported lower burnout scores (Shadrock & Hill, 1998).

Task Control

Jagdip (2000), reported research that indicated that task control on the part of the employee had even more of a shielding effect from stress on frontline employees than even boss support. Reasons cited by Jagdip (2000), to explain why supervisors do not let frontline employees have more control are: perceptions that frontline employees in service industries cannot handle the responsibility, i.e. because they are less educated with less income. In turn supervisors feel the need to shelter their employees from the responsibility that adds to empowerment (Jagdip, 2000).

Employees that are empowered are more likely to have greater job satisfaction and be more beneficial to work productivity (Koberg, Boss, Senjem & Goodman, 1999). In situations where employees have great amounts of task control, the employee is likely to have greater amounts of job satisfaction (Sargent & Terry, 1998). However, greater roles of task control with employees that perceive themselves to be overqualified, are not associated with increases in job satisfaction, but are actually possibilities for increased dissatisfaction (Sargent & Terry, 1998).

Responsiveness

Expanding upon the topic of empowerment, research by Enz & Siguaw (2000) linked responsiveness on the part of the employee to increased customer satisfaction. Their

research indicated those empowered employees in the hotel and food business increased customer satisfaction by responding quickly to customer needs. If employees do not feel as if they can respond to customers and be backed by management, they are less inclined to act (Enz & Siguaw, 2000). In work related to residential providers of services, in particular nursing homes, it was found that people that felt the quality of work in nursing homes was good were more likely to refer that nursing home to others for services (Becker & Kaldenberg, 2000).

The approachability of the group leader was also associated with empowerment in a hospital setting (Koberg, Boss, Senjem & Goodman, 1999). In this same hospital setting, empowerment was also associated with the tenure of an individual; as tenure increases, so do personal feelings of empowerment. Koberg et al (1999), agreeing with previous researchers, also reported that based on their hospital research, that managers and supervisors can help employees feel empowered by providing them with the necessary means and authority to achieve success (Donavan, 1994; Hayes, 1994; Labianca, Gray, & Brass, 1997; Smits, McClean & Tanner, 1993).

Commitment

Retention

In an article addressing the adverse effects of retention in the health care industry, Brownson & Harriman (2000), suggested that retention comes from building emotional bonds between the workers and the supervisors and those emotional bonds are strengthened when managers and supervisors pay attention to issues that are important to workers. On the other hand, tight ship supervisors, that do not allow much feedback or participation on the part of subordinates could cause dissatisfaction on the part of

employees that could result in high turnover (Brownson & Harriman, 2000).

Jinnett & Alexander (1999) reported after research they conducted examining quitting intentions in long term mental health care settings that group satisfaction and intentions to quit, played a role in an individuals desire to quit. Research prior to their study had indicated that a person's negative feelings about their work environment tended to come from the interpersonal relationships and interpersonal problems between coworkers and supervisors while a persons' positive feelings came from challenging job tasks (Jinnett & Alexander 1999, Guppy & Gutteridge, 1991; Cohen & Mansfield, 1989; Zautra, Eblen, and Reynolds, 1986).

Benefits

To add on the previous topic of supervisors, and in an attempt to broaden the topic of perceptions and feelings about commitment on the part of the employee, Eisenberger (1986,1990), argued that commitment of the organization to the employee is crucial in regards to a mutual effective relationship (Baruch, 1998). Cole (2000) suggested not progressing to elaborate systems to encourage employees to stay with the organization until you have met basic needs such as employee benefits, secure work environment and equitable pay.

Burnout

Burnout as described by Daley (1979), Deutsch (1984), Maslach (1978, 1982) & Ratliff (1988) is a negative reaction to psychological stress. This psychological stress can lead to the depersonalization of clients in social workers in residential and case management roles (Acker, 1999). Since the client should be at the center of any treatment or outcomes provided, any depersonalization of the client is harmful to treatment

outcomes.

Morale, absenteeism and high turnover have all been associated with burnout (Acker, 1999). Social support (Pines & Maslach, 1978; Poulin & Walter, 1993; Winnibust, 1993), as well as a lack of organizational resources (Poulin & Walter, 1993) was linked to feelings of burnout. As far as social workers are concerned, their commitment to the services they provide to people with disabilities is related to the social support they receive and organizational resources (Acker, 1999).

Tenure

Newer Employees

Tenure is the amount of time an employee spends in a particular job. In an article regarding tenure and job satisfaction, Traut, Larsen and Feimer (2000), found that newer employees were more satisfied than older employees in a medium sized fire department. On all five aspects surveyed in the study, including satisfaction with supervisor, satisfaction with agency relationships, satisfaction with job training, satisfaction with job content and overall satisfaction; employees with more time in service were less satisfied.

Older Employees

Some researchers have found a “U” shaped relationship regarding job satisfaction, Clark (1996). Herzberg (1957), reported a U shaped curve representing the relationship with employees job satisfaction regarding time related variables in an Israeli study regarding work with kibbutz workers (Simcha, 1978). New employees are happy and enthused, employees in the middle take a dip in satisfaction and longer-term employees start to rise again in satisfaction (Traut, Larsen & Feimer, 2000).

Older employees could have less opportunity to seek employment elsewhere or older employees may possess more traditional commitment roles or values (Ting,1997). Schneider (1987), when discussing empowerment in tenured employees said “ more tenured individuals, presumably having adapted to the work situation, learn through experience that effort and persistence can lead to feelings of competence and performance, and thereby, they are likely to experience feelings of empowerment”.

Loyalty

It would not be hard to link loyalty to tenure. It would be natural to assume that employees that are committed would feel a natural loyalty to the company or organization for whom they work. Retention would be highly related to commitment and loyalty. Johnson & Johnson (2000), reported that employees that felt overqualified or were not meeting their work objective goals as far as advancement was concerned, did not report that they were happier as age and pay increased.

They also did not report an increase in satisfaction with their supervisor as time passed (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). The lack of fulfillment of work expectations lead to feelings of work deprivation, as well as feelings of dissatisfaction at work (Johnson & Johnson, 2000). It appears as people advanced in their positions in the Johnson & Johnson (2000) study, there was a feeling of dissatisfaction if personal goals were not met. In general, research suggests that older employees are more satisfied with work than younger employees (Cambell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976; Felton, 1987; Glenn, 1980; Hulin & Smith, 1965; Janson & Martin, 1982; Kalleberg, 1977; Kalleberg & Loscocco, 1983; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Quinn, Staines & McCullough, 1974; Vollmer & Kinney, 1955; Weaver, 1980; Wright & Hamilton, 1978).

Purpose of the Study

Lack of ICF/MR Information

Because the purpose of the ICF/MR facility is to deal directly with the complicated issues surrounding the training and medical needs of people, it is imperative to understand the employees that are providing those services to the consumer. The previous studies and research examined the job satisfaction of employees in ICF/MR environments and similar fields. It is important to continue to try to understand the aspects of the job in the ICF/MR environment so that the potential for harm is decreased to the people that receive the services in the ICF/MR environment. Research specific to the ICF/MR environment is limited. Further research is needed to ensure that the needs of the employees providing services in those environments are understood.

The following hypotheses are proposed for examination in an attempt to broaden topics reviewed and to expand upon the limited information specific to the ICF/MR environment.

Hypotheses

Null Hypothesis 1:

Length of time in a particular job in an ICF/MR environment will not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 1:

Length of time in a particular job in an ICF/MR environment will serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Null Hypothesis 2:

Communication will not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an

ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 2:

Communication will serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Null Hypothesis 3:

Benefits will not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 3:

Benefits will serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Null Hypothesis 4:

There will be no difference between communication and benefits when predicting overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 4

Communication will serve as a better predictor of overall job satisfaction than benefits in an ICF/MR environment.

Null Hypothesis 5:

Length of time with the same supervisor will not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 5:

Length of time with the same supervisor will serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Null Hypothesis 6:

Communication will not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with a supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 6:

Communication will serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with a supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Methods

Subjects

Subjects were selected from an existing data set derived from the results of an employee attitude survey completed in the Fall of 2000 by a large provider of residential services to people with mental retardation in West Virginia. The company has given permission for the data set to be examined as long as the data set is maintained confidentiality and the name of the provider is not known. A total of 946 employees responded to the Fall 2000 survey. This was a 66% return rate.

Instruments

The tool used by the company to obtain the opinions of employees consisted of 62 questions broken down into the following domains:

Pride in company, state management, district management, the company, communications, treatment, opportunity for advancement, compensation, benefits, working conditions, fellow employees, the job, work objectives, your supervisor, freedom to perform, personal growth, safety, and customer focus.

The employees were asked to answer 1 to 5, on a 5 point Likert scale how they felt about particular topics based on the above domains. The Likert Scale correlated to 1-

strongly disagree, 2 –disagree, 3 - neutral, 4 - agree and 5 - strongly agree.

Four additional questions were asked to determine how long the employees have worked in their current position, how long they have had their current supervisor, what job category they belonged to (management, positions in direct contact with the consumer and support services such as HR) and finally, which of the four districts in the region they belonged to.

Analysis of Data

The data was analyzed using regression techniques. Each domain consisted of at least 3 questions rated 1 to 5 by the respondents. The data was entered in the data set as 1 to 5. Each question in each domain was added to the other questions in each domain so that an overall score was obtained for each domain. All the domains were added together to get an overall job satisfaction score. The domain scores could then be analyzed using regression, to determine if they could predict the other domain scores with significance. Each domain score could also be analyzed to determine if a particular domain score could predict the overall job satisfaction score with significance. The SPSS 10.0 statistical package was used to complete the regression analysis.

Review of the data did indicate that 5 questions worded in the reverse of the other questions, to keep the respondents attention, were answered inconsistently with questions in the same domain. Those 5 questions were removed from data analysis. The questions were 12, 16, 18, 54 and 61 on the assessment tool.

Limitations

The study is limited to ICF/MR industry and may not be suitable for comparison to other industries. Because the data set is already obtained, specific hypotheses have to be

limited to the data set as it was recorded. Some demographic data such as sex, married or unmarried and age of the employee were not obtained. Hypotheses specific to these demographics cannot be examined.

Results

Results of the survey are given for the data set as a whole and then broken down into four data sets representing four geographic regions.

Null Hypothesis 1:

Length of time in a particular job in an ICF/MR environment will not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 1:

Length of time in a particular job in an ICF/MR environment will serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Results all data sets combined

Length of time was a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction with the data sets when used as a whole. The adjusted R square for the combined data set was .014.

Results from Northeast

Results in the Northeast indicate that length of time on the job was a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for direct care employees. The adjusted R square is .025. Satisfaction started out low and peaked at 8 months. A gradual decrease was noted until month 72 and then a sharp increase in satisfaction occurred.

Results were not the same for management employees. Months on the job was not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for managers in the Northeast area.

Results from Northwest

In the Northwest data set, months on the job did not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in direct care employees. Months on the job was also not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for management employees.

Results from Southeast

Months on the job was a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for direct care employees in the Southeast data set. The adjusted R square is .058 for direct care employees; satisfaction decreased as time on the job increased. Months on the job was not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for management employees.

Results from Southwest

In the Southwest data set, months on the job was not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in the direct care employees or the management employees.

Null Hypothesis 2:

Communication will not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 2:

Communication will serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Results all data sets combined

Communication was significant as a predictor of overall job satisfaction when all data sets were combined. The adjusted R square for all data sets combined when communication was used as a predictor for overall job satisfaction was .617.

Results from Northeast

Results from the Northeast data set indicate that communication served as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for direct care employees. The adjusted R square was .510. Communication also served as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for management employees with an adjusted R square of .372. As communication increased, so did overall job satisfaction.

Results from Northwest

Results from the Northwest data set indicate that communication was a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction with direct care employees. The adjusted R square was .634.

Communication was also a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for management employees in the Northwest data set. The adjusted R square for the Northwest was .694.

In both direct care employees and management job categories, as communication increased, so did overall job satisfaction.

Results from Southeast

Results in the Southeast data set indicate that communication was a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in both direct care employees and management. The adjusted R square in the direct care employees was .686. The adjusted R square in the management employees was .549. In both categories, as communication increased so did overall job satisfaction.

Results from Southwest

In the Southwest data set, communication was also a significant predictor of overall

job satisfaction for direct care and management employees. The adjusted R square for the direct care employees was .600. For the management employees the adjusted R square was .649. As communication increased so did overall job satisfaction.

Null Hypothesis 3:

Benefits will not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 3:

Benefits will serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Results all data sets combined

Benefits was significant as a predictor of overall job satisfaction when all data sets were combined. The adjusted R square for all data sets combined was .340.

Results from Northeast

Benefits were a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for both direct care and management employees. Benefits were a much better predictor for the direct care employees overall job satisfaction than for the management team. The adjusted R square for the direct care employees was .422. The management employees had a significant adjusted R square, but it was less powerful at .167. As positive feelings regarding benefits went up, so did overall satisfaction.

Results from Northwest

Benefits were a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction for both direct care and for management employees. The adjusted R square for the prediction in the direct care employees was .158. The adjusted R square for the management employees was .254. As

positive feelings toward benefits went up, so did overall job satisfaction.

Results from Southeast

Benefits were significant as a predictor of overall job satisfaction for both direct care and management employees. The adjusted R square for the direct care employees was .380 and for the management employees .104. Benefits were a better predictor for direct care than for management employees. As positive feelings about benefits went up, so did overall job satisfaction.

Results from Southwest

Benefits were significant as a predictor for overall job satisfaction in both direct care and management employees. The adjusted R square for the prediction in direct care employees was .313. The adjusted R square for the prediction in management was .435. In both job categories as positive feelings toward benefits went up, so did overall job satisfaction.

Null Hypothesis 4:

There will be no difference between communication and benefits when predicting overall job satisfaction in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 4

Communication will serve as a better predictor of overall job satisfaction than benefits.

Results Communication vs Benefits

When all data sets were combined and when data sets were broken down into districts, communication was the best predictor of overall job satisfaction. With all data sets combined, communication had an adjusted R square of .617 and benefits had an adjusted

R square of .340. Comparisons between district data sets are listed below. In each case communication is the better predictor of overall job satisfaction.

Table 1.1

	Communication	Benefits
<u>Northeast</u>		
Direct Care	.510	.422
Management	.372	.167
<u>Northwest</u>		
Direct Care	.634	.158
Management	.694	.254
<u>Southeast</u>		
Direct Care	.686	.380
Management	.549	.104
<u>Southwest</u>		
Direct Care	.600	.313
Management	.649	.435

In each case communication was a better predictor of overall job satisfaction than benefits. Both communication and benefits were significant in each category of each data set.

Null Hypothesis 5:

Length of time with the same supervisor will not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 5:

Length of time with the same supervisor will serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Results all data sets combined

Length of time did not serve as a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction when all data sets were combined.

Results from Northeast

Length of time with the same supervisor was significant in predicting the level of satisfaction with that supervisor in both direct care and management employees. In direct care the adjusted R square was .029. In management the adjusted R square was .161.

There is one significant difference. The satisfaction got higher in the end for management and lower in the end for direct care.

Results from Northwest

In the Northwest data set length of time with the same supervisor did not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in either the direct care employees or the management employees.

Results from Southeast

Length of time with the same supervisor did not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in either the direct care or management employees.

Results from Southwest

Length of time with the same supervisor did not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with that supervisor in either the direct care or management employees.

Null Hypothesis 6:

Communication will not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with a supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Alternative Hypothesis 6:

Communication will serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with a supervisor in an ICF/MR environment.

Results all data sets combined

Communication served as a significant predictor of satisfaction with a supervisor when all data sets were combined. The adjusted R square was .282.

Results from Northeast

In the Northeast data set communication was a significant predictor of satisfaction with supervisors. As communication went up, satisfaction with supervisors went up. The adjusted R square was .277. In management employees the satisfaction with supervisors could not be predicted by communication.

Results from Northwest

Communication was significant as a predictor for satisfaction with supervisors in both management and direct care employees. The adjusted R square for communication as a predictor of satisfaction with supervisors in direct care employees was .238. In management employees the adjusted R square was .155. As communication went up, so did positive feelings toward supervisors.

Results from Southeast

Communication was significant as a predictor of satisfaction with supervisors in the Southeast data set. The adjusted R square for this prediction in direct care employees was .392 and .167 in management employees. As communication scores went up, so did positive feelings toward supervisors.

Results from Southwest

In the Southwest data set communication was significant as a predictor of satisfaction with supervisors for direct care employees. As communication scores went up, so did positive feelings toward supervisors. The adjusted R square for this prediction was

.259. However, communication was not significant as a predictor of satisfaction for management employees in the Southwest data set.

Conclusion

Tenure

Tenure was significant as a predictor of overall job satisfaction when all data sets were combined. The adjusted R square was low at .014. This indicates the predicting power as being minimal.

When the data sets were broken down into job categories, months on the job was not a significant predictor of overall job satisfaction in management employees. The data does not support a hypothesis that suggests as time goes by, supervisors are more satisfied with their current job.

Direct care employees in two data sets were affected as tenure increased. In one of those data sets satisfaction increased for the first 8 months and then decreased for the next 5 ½ years. A gradual increase was then noted. These results were consistent with Herzburg's (1957) study when the same kind of effect was reported in an Israeli study involving Kibbutz workers. In the other data set in which tenure predicted overall satisfaction, direct care employees gradually decreased in satisfaction over time. Traut, Larsen & Feimer (2000) had similar results when they examined tenure as it related to employees in a medium sized fire department.

None of the data sets indicated that management employees were affected by tenure. This indicates there might be a difference between management employees and direct care employees as it relates to tenure and job satisfaction. The data indicates that time may play a factor for direct care but does not serve as a predictor for management

employees.

Communication

Communication was significant as a predictor of overall job satisfaction across all job categories and all regions. In two data sets the direct care employees overall satisfaction was influenced more by communication and in two data sets management employees overall satisfaction was more affected by positive feelings toward communication. In all cases as positive feelings toward communication went up, so does overall job satisfaction.

Communication and work objectives were both powerful predictors of overall job satisfaction in all data sets. Both of these measures of job satisfaction are measuring the same kinds of qualities. Understanding what work objectives you are responsible for would come from good communication.

The research conducted prior to the analysis of the data suggested that communication was linked to an employee's perception of job satisfaction.. This was backed up by the data from this analysis. Fronz (1978), Rublee (1986), Pincus (1996), Grieshaber, Parker and Deering (1995), Richmond & McCrosky (2000) all suggested that as positive perceptions of communication increased, so does the overall job satisfaction.

Benefits

Benefits was significant as a predictor of overall job satisfaction across all job categories and across all districts. As positive feelings toward benefits went up, so did overall job satisfaction. In two districts, manager's overall job satisfaction could be predicted better than the direct care in that district with their perception of benefits. In two other districts direct care employee's perception of benefits was a better predictor of

overall job satisfaction than the managers in those districts.

Benefits vs. Communication

Benefits and communication were both significant predictors of overall job satisfaction across all regions and categories. In all cases communication was the more powerful predictor.

This suggests that benefits may be something that is only thought about when it is needed or when the organization is enrolling people in programs. Communication is something that occurs daily within all job categories and is probably a measure of job satisfaction that every employee can identify with daily.

Satisfaction & Tenure with the same Supervisor

Only one regions' data suggested a relationship between satisfaction with a supervisor and the length of time spent with that supervisor. There is a distinct difference that should be noted. Within that region the direct care employees satisfaction decreased as time passed with the same supervisor while the management teams' satisfaction increased over time.

Jinnett & Alexander (1999) suggested that the relationship an employee has with their workgroup has an effect upon the employee. Jinnett & Alexander were not looking at the significance of a relationship between an employee and their supervisor, but more at the employees workgroup. They found that as the relationship with the workgroup improved so did retention. Management employees in this study may have felt more a part of the group with their supervisor and therefor had a higher satisfaction. Direct care employees will be supervised by another employee categorized as a manager and therefore not in their group. The difference in satisfaction with the supervisor over time may have

something to do with the feeling of whether the supervisor is in the same group.

Length of time with the same supervisor had no significant predictive power in three of the regions examined. The data studied does not strongly support a theory that suggests employees feel more positive about supervisors over time. Over time, employee's may feel that they are as capable as their supervisor, but still not given the same position or organizational respect.

If you compare this information to the first hypothesis, which questioned whether job satisfaction increased over time, you can see that if anything, direct care employees tend to decrease in job satisfaction over time and management employees may increase. More work should be conducted to see if management employees feel differently over time because they see their supervisor as part of their group.

Communication with Supervisor

In all data sets direct care employee's satisfaction with their supervisor increased as their satisfaction with communication increased. In two data sets, managers' satisfaction with supervisors increased as communication scores went up. However, in two data sets communication did not serve as a significant predictor of satisfaction with supervisors among managers.

Further Research

There seems to be a difference between direct care employees and management employees. It appears that as tenure increases, there are differences that develop between direct care employees and management. Research designed to discriminate between perceptions of supervisors between direct care and management and perceptions of overall job satisfaction between the two categories as tenure increases, may shed light on

these two issues.

This paper examined how benefits predicted overall job satisfaction and how communication predicted overall job satisfaction. Future research should be conducted to see if similar results are found. Very little research could be found that examined those two variables.

Little research specific to ICF/MR sites has been completed as it relates to job satisfaction. The number of people living in the ICF/MR environment should also be considered. Large settings with as many as 40 to 50 people may live in an environment categorized as ICF/MR and other ICF/MR environments may consist of 4 to 8 people. The number of people served may have an effect on the employees in a residential setting.

The capabilities of consumers served may also have an effect on the satisfaction of employees providing services in an ICF/MR environment. When employees are working with people that are less capable, the satisfaction of the employees might be affected differently than when the person served is more capable.

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