

Running Head: EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION AFFECTS ATTITUDE, HAPPINESS, AND
JOB
SATISFACTION

Effective Organizational Communication Affects
Employee Attitude, Happiness, and Job Satisfaction

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ATTITUDE, HAPPINESS, AND JOB SATISFACTION

We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Professional Communication

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Abstract

Organizations understand that effective communication at all levels of the organization improve organizational success and employee relations. Communication has been studied with regard to performance and job satisfaction, but the relationship with employee attitude and happiness has not been done in a higher education setting. The decision to be happy and have a positive attitude has been the subject of hundreds of books, articles, speeches, studies, and workshops. The value of communication in an employee's choice to be happy is explained as it affects the individual, team, and overall organizational culture. This paper contributes to the literature by demonstrating that effective bi-directional communication between employees, supervisors, and management improves attitude and happiness thereby affecting job satisfaction in one division at a small university. Participants are from the Enrollment Services Division of Southern Utah University; the majority was found to be satisfied with their jobs and consider themselves to be positive in nature and happy in their work.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Smart business leaders know that happy workers are productive workers and ultimately benefit their companies (Waggoner, 2013). Studies have shown that different aspects of effective organizational communication, such as high frequency, openness and accuracy, performance feedback, and adequacy of information about organizational policies and procedures are positively related to employees' feelings of happiness in the work place and job performance (Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska & Gulley, 2003; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; O'Reilly & Roberts, 1977; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1979; Snyder & Morris, 1984). A strong relationship has been found between managerial communication, perceived organizational support (POS), and employee performance (Allen 1992; Allen 1995; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). Positive POS was found to improve employee sense of well-being, happiness and job satisfaction (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995).

The most conscientious of employers recognize that bidirectional communication provides for avenues to recognize employee contribution and build organizational commitment. Studies show that open two-way communication contributes to happy employees, who are more successful in all aspects of life (Anchor, 2009; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995). Various studies have resulted in the supposition that employees develop beliefs concerning their value to the organization in order to satisfy socio-emotional needs and to determine the organization's readiness to recognize and reward increased work effort and performance (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995). Bi-directional communication promotes feelings of being valued and increases job satisfaction.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012) the unemployment rate was at an all-time high in 1983 at 10.4% and fluctuated at lower levels over the next seventeen years until 2010 when it rose to 9.7%. People across the country have been affected by the economy and jobless rate, causing depression, frustration, and stress (APA, 2012). In recent years, feelings of worry have permeated organizations. This would arguably indicate an overall sense of anxiety and worry among the workers in most organizations leading to the reasonable conclusion that many would benefit from improving employee relations, communication, and morale (Waggoner, 2013).

A Conference Board survey released in January of 2010 found that only 45% of workers surveyed were happy at their jobs (Anchor, 2009; (Allen 1992; Allen 1995; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). A large part of the problem is that managers have traditionally worked to improve employee productivity and job satisfaction by addressing problems in a negative manner (Anchor, 2009; Miller, 2006; Waggoner, 2013). However, Anchor (2009) concludes that if employers strive only toward eliminating undesirable workplace behaviors, such as procrastination, not meeting deadlines or poor customer relations, they will plateau at an average status, missing the opportunity for stellar achievement and success. While negative-oriented problem solving is a normal human response to difficulty in any aspect of life, companies and organizations that learn to focus on what is working, rather than what is not, will experience more long-term employee satisfaction (Anchor, 2009; Miller, 2006; Waggoner, 2013). This in turn will result in substantive organizational success (Anchor, 2009). Organizations that learn to focus on what is working and help employees to strive toward the positive will become more successful with more satisfied employees (Anchor, 2009; Leonsis, 2010).

The importance of a positive organizational culture is more than atmosphere, values, heroes, or the search for excellence (Allen 1992; Allen 1995; Miller, 2006; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). I propose that the purposeful cultivation of happiness and positivity in the workplace creates opportunities for improved satisfaction of individuals, teams, and entire organizations. Attitude and happiness have been recognized by communication scholars in the examination of organizational culture and emotion in the workplace (Anchor, 2009; Leonsis, 2010; Miller, 2006; Waggoner, 2013). Developing a culture that supports two-way communication with employees having a measure of control promotes happiness and job satisfaction.

Employers expect that frontline employees are cheerful and positive in the face of any situation. To have sincerely happy, cheerful, and positive employees, requires that owners, managers, and supervisors communicate effectively, learn happiness, and create a positive environment (Leonsis, 2010; Miller, 2006). Ultimately, it is reflected in the bottom line – organizational success (Leonsis, 2010; Miller, 2006).

Ted Leonsis (2010) emphasized the importance of happiness when he spoke of Google. He said that Google is “a prime example of ... a double bottom line company – an organization that measures its success by both its fiscal results and its positive impact on humanity” (Leonsis, 2010, p. 16). Leonsis (2010) said, “Google protected its status as a happy company at peace with its values – and happy companies are more, not less, likely to continue being successful” (p. 16).

Organizations such as Yahoo and Google cultivate work environments that encourage two-way communication and cultivate a sense of fun outside daily organizational activities and are finding they have more success when employees are happy (Waggoner, 2013). Cutting-edge

software companies have foosball tables in their break rooms, Yahoo has a massage parlor, and Google programmers bring their dogs to work (Anchor, 2009).

Organizations that foster a positive attitude and strive to promote happiness treat people with respect and trust, and, as a result, are significantly more successful than those that do not (Peters & Austin, 1985). “It’s just the Golden Rule!” That’s what extremely successful fortune 500 companies are telling Tom Peters and Nancy Austin (1985) about how they treat co-workers, associates, and employees. They explain that managers who engage their employees in decision making, problem resolution, goal setting, and day-to-day operations have more satisfied employees with higher levels of productivity and efficiency (Froman, 2010; Peters & Austin, 1985).

Communication with telecommuting or remote workers is a consideration that organizations must take seriously. More than 24 million people were working remotely in 2008 (WorldatWork, 2009) and that number is steadily rising. Teleworkers report feelings of isolation, uncertainty, a lack of trust, and lower organizational commitment with lower job satisfaction (Fay & Kline, 2011). Managers may not communicate the same way with remote workers as they do with employees who are in the work place each day. This creates feelings of disconnect and lowered morale for teleworkers and causes them to rely on coworkers for needed information (Fay & Kline, 2011). While informal coworker communication is essential for job satisfaction, it should not be the sole source of information from an organization.

Over the years I have conversed with people in the Cedar City community who have expressed dissatisfaction with the organizational culture, their employers’ management style, communication from and to management, or their working conditions. These conversations have occurred in various situations, from comments made by the cashier at a grocery store, to friends

and relatives' tales about their discouraging experiences, to discussions overheard in the SUU food court. The consistency of the criticisms has made an impact on me and I have concluded, through mere anecdotal experience, that low morale (Richards, 2013) is a problem that affects every aspect of life in this small community and the world at large.

Morale is defined as the spirits of a person or group as exhibited by confidence, cheerfulness, discipline, and willingness to perform assigned tasks (Definition of Morale, 2000). Morale can be the fuel that drives an organization forward or the fuel that feeds the fires of employee discontent, poor performance, and absenteeism (Ewton, 2007; Richards, 2013). According to Finger (2005), morale is more influenced from the top down than from the bottom up. In order to improve the culture of an organization, the morale of each individual in the group must be improved. Such an overall change is best achieved through the dedicated work of the manager (Finger, 2005) to improve two-way communication and create a positive atmosphere that fosters respect; however, this does not address the responsibility of the employee to improve their individual attitude.

In an attempt to help Southern Utah University Enrollment Management Division improve satisfaction and morale, staff members were asked to read "The Happiness Advantage" by Shawn Achor. Each office within the Division then presented two or three chapters to the entire group. This activity came at a crucial time for me in overcoming private difficulties. As I read the book, I was able to change my attitude and decide to be positive and cheerful regardless of the circumstances. As a result, I wanted to share the power of happiness and attitude with others and decided to study and build on the introduction Enrollment Management staff received last year.

Justification for this paper has been presented in Chapter 1 as the need for improved communication to improve attitude and increase job satisfaction which was linked with individual happiness and organizational culture. The strategies used by organizations and suggested by experts to improve communication, increase happiness, and elevate job satisfaction and morale will be examined in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will present the method used to conduct a study of Enrollment Management attitudes and Chapter 4 will present the results of the study and discuss those results. Finally, limitations, directions for future research, and the conclusions will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Bi-directional communication, individual happiness, and attitude have much to do with job satisfaction and the overall organizational culture, with most of the responsibility for improving employee job satisfaction resting on management. Employees are also responsible for improving their own attitudes and levels of happiness at work and in their private lives. In this chapter, the importance of effective organizational communication, the cultivation of a positive attitude, and the development of individual happiness in support of improved job satisfaction and organizational success will be presented.

Motivation Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg (1987) performed studies to understand the effect of attitude on employee motivation. The studies included interviews in which employees were asked what pleased and displeased them about their work. Herzberg (1987) found the factors causing job satisfaction, and presumably motivation, was different from factors causing job dissatisfaction. He developed the motivation-hygiene theory to explain these results. He labeled the satisfiers as motivators and the dissatisfiers as hygiene factors. The term hygiene describes maintenance factors necessary to avoid dissatisfaction but do not provide satisfaction by themselves (Herzberg, 1987).

Herzberg (1987) reasoned that because the factors causing satisfaction are different from those causing dissatisfaction, the two feelings cannot simply be treated as opposites of one another. The opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction, but rather, no satisfaction. Similarly, the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987).

The distinction between the two opposites may sound like a play on words, but Herzberg (1987) argued there are two distinct human needs portrayed. First, there are physiological needs

that can be fulfilled by money, for example, to purchase food and shelter (Herzberg, 1987).

Second, there is the psychological need to achieve and grow, and this need is fulfilled by activities that cause one to grow (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg (1987) explained that factors such as company policy is necessary to guide an organization and can lead to dissatisfaction, but does not necessarily create satisfaction as recognition or advancement would.

The motivating factors are achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement. These factors are intrinsic to the job itself and to job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). The hygiene factors of company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security are also intrinsic to the work; but are more likely to cause dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg (1987) explained that the motivators were the primary cause of satisfaction, while the hygiene factors cause dissatisfaction.

Herzberg (1987) referred to these hygiene factors as the KITA (kick in the ass) method, the process of providing incentives or punishment to cause someone to do something. KITA can be applied from the front or rear (Herzberg, 1987). He offers the example of training a dog. The dog can be kicked in the rear or bribed with a dog biscuit to get it to move; if the trainer wants the dog to move again, he must kick or bribe him again. Herzberg (1987) argues that punishment or incentive provide only short-run success because the motivating factors are not intrinsic to the job itself.

Herzberg (1987) likens this to charging a person's battery, then recharging it, and recharging it again. He states it is only when a person has a generator of his or her own that we can talk about motivation. A person then needs no outside stimulation; he or she wants to do it (Herzberg, 1987).

Herzberg (1987) argued that job enrichment is required for intrinsic motivation, and that it is a continuous management process. According to Herzberg (1987), the job should have sufficient challenge to utilize the full ability of the employee. Employees who demonstrate increasing levels of ability should be given increasing levels of responsibility. If a job cannot be designed to use an employee's full abilities, then the firm should consider automating the task or replacing the employee with one who has a lower level of skill. If a person cannot be fully utilized, then there will be a motivation problem (Herzberg, 1987).

Using the motivation hygiene theory, management not only must provide hygiene factors to avoid employee dissatisfaction, but also must provide factors intrinsic to the work itself in order for employees to be satisfied with their jobs (NetMBA, 2014). This places the burden of job satisfaction solely on the shoulders of management, inferring that there is no individual responsibility for a person's attitude on the job.

Other studies and experiences support Herzberg in studies that have shown that employees who experience higher POS in the form of open communication are led to increased performance (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012), positive attitude, and workplace happiness (Anchor, 2009; Froman, 2010; Peters & Austin, 1985). Neves & Eisenberger (2012) found that the causal link between managerial communication and employee performance to be two way. When managers openly communicate with employees and provide for upward and downward lines of communication, employees felt more support from the organization and managers, then increased performance and efforts to benefit the organization. This was consistent with previous studies showing that management communication is an important antecedent of job satisfaction and performance (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995).

Critics of Herzberg's theory argue the two-factor result is observed because it is natural for people to take credit for satisfaction and to blame dissatisfaction on external factors (NetMBA, 2014). Furthermore, job satisfaction does not necessarily equate to a high level of motivation or productivity.

Researchers conducting a study of teacher satisfaction in developing countries using Herzberg's two factor theory concluded the theory does not apply in today's economy (Evans & Olumide-Aluko, 2010). It was determined there is a higher degree of relationship with pay and job satisfaction (Evans & Olumide-Aluko, 2010). Herzberg's (1987) study was conducted in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States and the theory does not apply to all countries in the current economic situation. Evans & Olumide-Aluko (2010) found that one size does not fit all in employee motivation and job satisfaction. It is necessary to consider all organizational factors when determining the best method to use to motivate employees.

Communication and Organizational Outcomes

Satisfactory and effective communication contributes to an organization's success, employee attitude and morale, and customer satisfaction (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995; Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009). Communication is a means to improve commitment and to stimulate employees to achieve organizational goals (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009). Organizations and managers that openly share information and encourage bi-directional communication have a higher rate of employee job satisfaction (Allen 1992; Allen 1995; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012) and found that employees enjoyed improved sense of well-being, happiness and job satisfaction (Anchor, 2009; Eisenberger, Huntington,

Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995).

In their 2009 study, Tsai, Chuang and Hsieh found that employees do not always realize the importance of communication to organizational goals, or know how to establish and maintain healthy communication systems. It is the responsibility of managers to improve communication in the workplace, train employees in communication skills, and encourage informal communication (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009). It was found that job satisfaction was positively impacted by effective communication from supervisors regarding expectations and feedback on job performance (Tsai, Chuang & Hsieh, 2009).

Happiness in the Workplace

Shawn Achor (2009) states that people who put their heads down and wait for work to bring happiness are at a huge disadvantage; but those who capitalize on it come out ahead. If we learn to be happy and have a positive attitude, we may be more successful than if we expect happiness solely as a result of hard work (Anchor, 2009). Of course, this does not mean that we sit around being happy without working. It just means that our work will yield more success if we develop a positive attitude.

When Achor (2009) is presenting to various organizations about the Happiness Advantage, he tells them to remember the number 2.9013. He says this is the number that Marcial Losado arrived at after extensive mathematical modeling of negative and positive interactions (Anchor, 2009). Losado (2009) calculated that it took about three positive comments or experiences to counteract one negative. When organizations instructed team leaders to give more positive feedback and encourage more positive interactions, the positive ratio increased from 1.15 to 3.56 (Losado, 2009). The Losada ratio is the sum of the positivity in a system

divided by the sum of its negativity (Losado, 2009). Picture a straight line with regular intervals from one to ten with one being negative and ten being positive. The healthiest individual ratio would be between three and six. A simple questionnaire that readers may complete to view their ratio is found at <http://happierhuman.com/positivity-ratio/>.

Anchor (2009) further identified through his presentation and interview experience that along with the improvements in positive interaction after the team leaders increased positive feedback, production and overall work improved significantly (Anchor, 2009). Organizations experience improved productivity and bottom line success when management actively works to improve culture by improving attitudes and job satisfaction (Anchor, 2009; Keller, 2012). Managers and CEO's report that employees look at each other differently, trust each other more, and learned to disagree without being disagreeable. They care about the success of others and not only about personal success (Anchor, 2009; Keller, 2012).

The Neves and Eisenberger (2012) study supports Anchor's findings stating that organizations use open communication as an important human resource policy. Just like other practices, such as pay, promotions, job security, autonomy and training (Shore & Shore, 1995), open communication demonstrates the recognition of employee efforts to help the organization, thus contributing to job satisfaction and employee happiness, with positive consequences for performance. When there is open communication with management, work place happiness increases, and employees feel obliged to reciprocate with increased performance. Neves and Eisenberger (2012) suggest that communication between management and employees should be a key part of an organizations' strategic planning, and managers should receive training in order to maximize the potential of open communication in their organization.

Just being more positive and promoting happiness creates a completely different culture for companies than they may have experienced (Anchor, 2009). Employees learn to like their jobs and their coworkers, which translates into company success (Anchor, 2009; Fredrickson, 2009; Keller, 2012). The development of organizational culture starts with management and does not happen overnight. In addition to the cultivation of a positive attitude, management should review the work assignments and personalities of employees. Having the right person assigned to jobs that fit individual skills, abilities, and personalities is crucial to bottom line success (Anchor, 2009; Kerns, 2008).

Whether we like it or not we are susceptible to the feelings of people around us. Our brains subconsciously read and identify emotions in another person's face within 33 milliseconds, and then just as quickly prime us to feel the same way (Anchor, 2009; Hatfield, Cacioppo, Rapson, 1993). Emotional contagion theory explains that people automatically mimic the moods, attitudes, facial expressions, and verbage of people around us (Hatfield, Cacioppo, Rapson, 1993). The power of emotional contagion means that individuals or groups can be instantly affected by positive or negative emotions of others (Anchor, 2009, Keller, 2012; Kerns, 2008; Hatfield, Cacioppo, Rapson, 1993).

The effect of coworker attitudes is seen in teleworkers through informal communication methods when coworkers complain or relate negative information. Some forms of informal communication may develop common ground but would lead to decreased job satisfaction and commitment, particularly for high-intensity teleworkers (commuting 2.5 or more days per week) (Fay & Kline, 2011). Complaining, for instance, can convey dissatisfaction with aspects of work or relationships (Fay & Kline, 2011) that reinforce feelings of dissatisfaction about teleworkers'

jobs or with the organization (Fay & Kline, 2011; Sias, 1996). Gossip from coworkers can lower morale and productivity for teleworkers (Michelson & Mouly, 2002).

The decision to be happy and have a positive attitude can be learned. Jeff Keller (2012) was very unhappy in his job as a lawyer. He dreaded going to work each day, felt miserable, and physically ill. During a sleepless night, he saw an infomercial about a self-improvement product based on subconscious thought. He purchased the program and began to practice the lessons it contained. The first thing he did was “wash his window” – improved his attitude so he could see what he needed to change more clearly. His life changed quickly; he was happier at work and home; he could sleep, and his health improved (Keller, 2012). He says, very strongly, that “attitude is everything” (Keller, 2012, p. 14).

He goes on to tell us that if we change our attitude, we can change our lives (Keller, 2012). When a person changes his or her attitude, he or she is energized, sees new possibilities, and is able to achieve extraordinary results (Keller, 2012). People are able to set and accomplish goals that previously appeared to be unrealistic (Keller, 2012). Their hard work pays off in dividends (Keller, 2012). Of course, this does not happen overnight and is not free of stress or frustration; but success will come to those who consciously work to have a positive attitude (Keller, 2012).

Keller (2012) counsels people to choose to be around positive people both in the work place and socially. He writes about a man who works in a funeral parlor and is extremely happy and positive. It appears to be a strange place to find a positive person, but the man, Glen “Smokey” Stover, reports that human beings are like sponges (Anchor, 2009; Hatfield, Cacioppo, Rapson, 1993; Keller, 2012; Kerns, 2008). They soak up the attitudes of people around them. Smokey chooses to be around positive people and soak up the positive.

It is important to realize that while we may not have a choice of coworkers, we do not have to go out of our way to associate with negative people (Keller, 2012). We may have to work with them, but it is not necessary to have lunch with them or have casual conversations during breaks. Keller (2012) suggests that we should politely find ways to avoid unnecessary interaction.

Fredrickson's (2009) book, *Positivity*, starts with a story of a woman who wakes in the morning after oversleeping, missing her morning exercise, and running behind. She becomes grouchy, yells at the kids, and gets to work in a very negative mood. She encounters a co-worker who is always in a good mood and that only makes her feel worse. The negative emotions affected her relationships, her ability to do her job, and her health. Fredrickson (2009) then rewrites the story with a positive slant to show how the same morning can be dealt with in a more positive way that increases the power to succeed at home and at work. Each of us can rewrite our stories and change our attitude to improve happiness and job satisfaction.

Attitude is more important than facts, the past, education, money, circumstances, failure or success. Attitude can make or break a company or a home (Anchor, 2009; Keller, 2012; Swindoll, 2012). Happiness and attitude are choices that are made every day; individuals are in charge of their attitude and can choose to be happy in their jobs and lives (Swindoll, 2012).

Attitude and happiness build on each other (Fredrickson, 2009; Swindoll, 2006). People who develop a positive attitude and learn to react in a positive manner to life's events will become happier. This happiness affects the personal and work life, and people will see more success and have more satisfaction in all areas (Fredrickson, 2009; Swindoll, 2006).

Charles D. Kerns (2008) studied performance and happiness with the conclusion that they go hand in hand in making an organization successful. He stated that an organization is more

likely to achieve and sustain key results with both an appropriate performance management system and a positive approach to influencing people that increases job satisfaction (Kerns, 2008). He suggests that happy, high performing workers share key characteristics of having a clear direction that is motivating, focusing on what is important and what they can influence (Kerns, 2008). Additionally, he states that having the necessary resources to execute key actions, talking and acting in ways that promote performance and happiness, and being significantly engaged in their work elevate the happiness of high performing employees and increase success. Individuals that have more positive experiences than negative experiences at work, are grateful about the past and do not carry grudges, are optimistic, and happy about their workplace are able to achieve more and maintain a positive attitude (Kerns, 2008).

Kerns (2008) encourages managerial leaders to use the above characteristics to evaluate themselves. He suggests that when managers work toward personal growth, they are better able to help employees work toward higher job performance and satisfaction (Kerns, 2008).

Five-Factor Model. The five-factor model of personality (FFM) has been used for years in organizational settings to study the traits that make good employees. McCrae and John (1992) explain the five-factor model of personality is a hierarchical organization of personality traits in terms of five basic dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness.

Extroversion includes positive traits of a person who is enthusiastic, outgoing, talkative, energetic, and assertive (McCrae & John, 1992). These traits can be negative if over-done; employers must be aware of the level of extroversion and the position the person will occupy (McCrae & John, 1992).

Agreeableness is described as being appreciative, forgiving, generous, sympathetic, kind, and affectionate (McCrae & John, 1992). As with extroversion, agreeableness can be a negative if a person does not think for himself and is too afraid of disagreement to be effective at work (McCrae & John, 1992). Neuroticism is defined as tense, moody, anxious, touchy, unstable, and worrying and would be negative at any level (McCrae & John, 1992). A neurotic employee is not as effective and can have a drastic effect on the organizational culture and job satisfaction of others.

McCrae and John (1992) explained conscientiousness as a person who is efficient, organized, thorough, reliable, responsible, and plans tasks and assignments. Conscientiousness coupled with openness is a highly effective and efficient employee. A person who is artistic, curious, original, imaginative, and insightful is considered open and is a desirable employee in any organization (McCrae & John, 1992).

Researchers have studied various personality traits and found the five factors continued to emerge in the results (McCrae & John, 1992). Employers have used questionnaires for prospective employees to review personality traits and determine the best person for the job and the organization using the five factors as guidelines (Saari & Judge, 2004). Even though organizations cannot directly impact employee personality, the use of sound selection methods and a good match between employees and jobs will ensure people are selected and placed into jobs most appropriate for them, which, in turn, will help enhance their job satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2004).

After studying the controversy about happy employees being productive employees, Saari and Judge (2004) stated that a major gap in the knowledge about employee attitudes and job satisfaction is a person's disposition toward happiness and satisfaction. Even childhood

temperament was found to be statistically related to adult job satisfaction forty years later.

Disposition affects the different ways a person experiences emotionally significant events at work, which influences job satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2004). Personality traits such as self-evaluation, extroversion, and conscientiousness may be the best predictor of job satisfaction.

Saari and Judge (2004) acknowledge that organizations cannot impact employee personality, but should use selection methods and match the employee to the appropriate job to ensure greater satisfaction. They found that job satisfaction increases as workers are interested in and challenged by what they are doing, and, as a result, happy workers are more productive (Saari & Judge, 2004).

Attitude affects every aspect of a person's life: the spillover from a satisfied work life increases life satisfaction and vice versa (Bowling et al., 2010). The correlation goes both ways, a happy or unhappy life can spill over into the job experiences and satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2004). Job satisfaction does affect life satisfaction, and life satisfaction affects job satisfaction. It is important that organizations address low job satisfaction for their bottom line; but also because of the spillover causing low life satisfaction, depression, and general well-being, which ultimately, causes greater effect on work productivity (Saari & Judge, 2004).

Interestingly, Saari & Judge (2004) found that including employees in decision making increases work happiness, improves attitudes, and improves overall organizational performance. Involvement, development of plans, and participation in the implementation or action has shown to have the most impact (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Saari & Judge, 2004; Snyder & Morris, 1984). The increased sense of self-worth and contribution to the overall good of the organization improves the employee's attitude and increases job satisfaction impact (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Saari & Judge, 2004; Snyder & Morris, 1984). Judge, Heller, and Klinger (2008)

continued the study of the relationship of disposition to job satisfaction by comparing the three most commonly used methods of research studying personality and job satisfaction. This paper has previously explained the relationship that positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) have on a person's job satisfaction and overall happiness: the five-factor model of personality (FFM), and the core self-evaluations (SE) taxonomy individually. Judge and colleagues (2008) compared all three in a university setting. Emotional stability had a strong correlation with job satisfaction, but was not the best indicator of job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2008). The most significant correlation was positive affect and self-esteem as a predictor of job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2008). This is consistent with all of the literature and studies previously reviewed.

Self-Evaluation. Core self-evaluation is the newest taxonomy for studying attitude and job satisfaction. Bono and Judge (2002) determined there are four core traits that are self-evaluative, fundamentality, and scope: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control. Additionally, there was evidence that dispositional optimism and negative affectivity may be included in the core self-evaluation concept (Bono & Judge, 2002). Specifically, it was found that individuals with higher core self-evaluation scores report having more rewarding jobs and higher job satisfaction (Bono & Judge, 2002); thus, people with higher self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional stability, and more locus of control are more satisfied at work.

Bono and Judy (2002) determined that positive individuals actually obtain more challenging jobs. Employers may prefer individuals with positive core self-evaluations because they have better interpersonal relations, stress tolerance, and cope better with organizational change; as well as being more pleasant to be around (Bono & Judge, 2002). Judge and colleagues (2002) found a significant relationship between the core self-evaluation traits and life

satisfaction, happiness, job stress, and strain. This correlation also plays an important role in attitudes and behavior at work along with increased salary and responsibility (Bono & Judge, 2002).

There may be negative effects for people with positive attitudes in that they expect more and make changes in their lives more frequently (O'Neill et al., 2010). A study conducted by O'Neill, Stanley, and O'Reilly (2010) found that people with positive trait affect (PA) may have higher job turnover and lower satisfaction if their high expectations are not met.

Traits. Trait affect is described as the characteristic tendency to perceive the world positively or negatively (O'Neill et al., 2010). Basic emotions are experienced and expressed through the positive or negative view that is part of a person; as well as serving as a framework for work and life experiences (O'Neill et al., 2010). Individuals with high PA have a greater overall sense of well-being, higher self-esteem and a stronger sense of self-efficacy (O'Neill et al., 2010). They tend to be more optimistic and expect more out of life, and this has a direct effect on how often they make changes in their employment or personal lives (O'Neill et al., 2010).

Because there is a belief the grass is greener at another job with higher pay, or more attractive advancement opportunities, a PA person may always be looking for the greener pasture. Frequent turnover suggests a person may be unwilling to lower his/her expectations to a realistic level, which decreases life satisfaction (O'Neill et al., 2010). Over time, a PA person may have difficulty in making adjustments to new jobs and coworkers, and may experience greater dissatisfaction and disappointment (O'Neill et al., 2010). This may actually result in lower job satisfaction because of the stress that frequent turnover causes in the earlier stages of a person's career. As a person progresses through career stages, their focus may change from

salary to work-life balance, job security, and social life so that the PA individual may find more satisfaction with stable employment (O'Neill et al., 2010).

It is interesting that people with lower PA actually have higher job satisfaction with lower turnover (O'Neill et al., 2010). Low PA people have expectations that are not as high and are more easily met; resulting in more longevity and organizational loyalty. However, as employees high in PA stay in a job longer, they enjoy greater satisfaction, are better able to avoid and resolve conflicts, establish better relationships, and contribute more favorably to the organization (O'Neill et al., 2010).

Extending the high PA individual's tendency to make frequent changes in his/her personal lives may cause lower life satisfaction and more relationship strain (O'Neill et al., 2010). Not only do frequent job changes affect his/her personal life, but he/she may make frequent changes in his/her personal life because of unrealistic expectations of family and friends (O'Neill et al., 2010). Idealized visions of the perfect relationship can lead to frustration, depression, and psychological distress (O'Neill et al., 2010).

O'Neill and colleagues (2010) found that long-term satisfaction may be grounded in managing expectations, rather than pursuing unrealistic goals. This leads to the belief that job and life satisfaction is an end product of the conscious choice to be satisfied and happy (O'Neill et al., 2010). Individuals with high PA or low NA (negative affect) may choose to be more satisfied, happy, and positive with the situation in which they find themselves.

The inconsistencies found in studies of job satisfaction and life satisfaction, happiness, and positive attitude caused Nathan A. Bowling and colleagues (2010) to conduct a meta-analysis study to explore this relationship. Life satisfaction, happiness, positive affect, and negative affect were each examined separately in an attempt to determine the level of subjective

well-being. Bowling et al. (2010) found there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and happiness, as well as spillover into life satisfaction and subjective well-being. When a person is happy at work, they are more likely to be happy with life (Bowling et al., 2010).

Bowling and colleagues (2010) discussed the distinct dimensions of subjective well-being as life satisfaction, happiness, the presence of positive affect, the absence of negative affect and their relationship with job satisfaction. It was determined that the predisposition of a person toward positive affect and happiness influences satisfaction at work (Bowling et al., 2010; O'Neill et al., 2010).

The results of a study conducted by Sheila Henderson (2000) are that a combination of personality strengths, work circumstances, and choice influence happiness at work. Each of the participants in the study expressed frustration and difficulty at times, but all were tenacious and pushed forward toward their goals (Henderson, 2000). The knowledge of one's intelligence, intuition, ingenuity, and the determination to continue and overcome obstacles increased success, satisfaction and universal happiness (Henderson, 2000).

Qualities that stand out for those with a predisposition for happiness, job satisfaction, and success include a positive sense of self, self-determination, energy, strength of character, and relationships with others and the world (Henderson, 2000). Happy, successful people have a clear sense of competence and mastery in their work and have a high degree of self-awareness that allows them to identify and capitalize on their abilities (Henderson, 2000).

Organizations are becoming more aware of the importance of a manager's emotional and psychological well-being (satisfaction with life, high positive affect, and low negative affect) and how such attitudes enable him/her to meet their strategic organizational goals (Kerns, 2008; Swart & Rothmann, 2012). The value of happiness has been found to be emphasized in the

individual's sense of well-being that contributes to the commitment and involvement in a strategic approach to human resource management (Kerns, 2008; Swart & Rothmann, 2012).

Because happiness is subjective and is often criticized as unsuitable for scientific study, Swart and Rothmann (2012) conducted an empirical study by clearly defining concepts based on scientific models. It was proposed that happiness is a cognitive evaluation that one's life is moving in the right direction, pleasure from experiences, engaging in meaningful activities, meaning resulting from life goals, and more frequent positive experiences (Swart & Rothmann, 2012).

Positive affect or the orientation to a positive attitude is significant in the commitment to an organization. An individual's job satisfaction contributes to organizational commitment. Swart and Rothmann (2012) found that managers with positive PA and heightened sense of well-being have increased organizational citizenship behaviors (Swart & Rothmann, 2012). Organizational citizenship behaviors are described as altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue (Swart & Rothmann, 2012). These behaviors are not considered part of the normal job performance; but have an impact on job satisfaction and employee retention (Paille, 2011). Pascal Paille (2011) described organizational citizenship behaviors as helping. Giving and receiving help strengthens ties between employees, and promotes the desire to reciprocate (Paille, 2011). These five behaviors are motivated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment; thus, happy managers are more committed to the organization (Swart & Rothmann, 2012).

The results of the Swart and Rothmann (2012) study showed there is a direct connection with the orientation to happiness and job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. Swart and Rothmann (2012) found that managers who know what their strengths are and who

use them in the service of something they believe is bigger than what they are, experience high subjective well-being and get involved in assisting others and their organizations. Happiness and positive affect in the workplace leads to positive work place outcomes (Swart and Rothmann, 2012). Since happiness and positivity are contagious, it may be possible to project the happiness and positive organizational citizenship behaviors of managers to employees they supervise.

A New Way of Organizational Happiness

David Swanson returned from the Korean War in the early 1950's and got a job at Procter & Gamble (Bolman & Deal, 1997). After realizing the management style was similar to military type top-down command, he became discouraged. When the problem became so severe that dissatisfied employees went on strike, Swanson started his own business and built a new plant in Augusta, Georgia (Bolman & Deal, 1997). He retained Douglas McGregor as a consultant to design a new form of organization (Bolman & Deal, 1997). They started the business with the belief that people want to be productive and designed self-managing teams with open communication for good and bad news (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

This framework helped develop the human resource method of management, which recognizes that people's skills, attitudes, energy, and commitments can make or break an enterprise (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Organizations that truly want to improve production and bottom-line success will invest in employee satisfaction and happiness, encouraging managers to work to communicate effectively as they develop cohesive teams based on individual attributes and responsibilities (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Muchinsky, 1977).

Wise employers work to improve employee job satisfaction by promoting positive attitudes and happiness; this requires that organizations communicate effectively in two-way group and individual conversations (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Elwell, 2005). How much

communication is necessary for employees to do their job well and enjoy satisfaction in their work place? How do managers communicate to achieve organizational efficiency, productivity, longevity, and bottom line success? These are crucial questions that we must ask ourselves as we review communication and the effect on employee attitude and job satisfaction.

The many years of research in the field of communication, attitude and happiness detailed above demonstrate the effect of organizational communication on employee attitudes, organizational and personal success. It is obvious that all organizations benefit from employees who have increased satisfaction in their jobs. Some organizations may consciously work to improve job satisfaction by using motivation techniques that are consistent with Herzberg's theory or other activities suggested by more modern scholars or experts, but others do not.

Some of the articles available based on Herzberg's studies and other more recent publications about studies conducted with various types of companies on job satisfaction have been presented. Books, articles, and studies by experts who assist companies in trying to improve employee attitude, happiness, job satisfaction, morale, and productivity have also been reviewed. However, specific information or studies relating to attempts to improve employee attitude, raise happiness levels, and increase job satisfaction in higher education was not found.

The lack of information available that is specific to higher education student services has led to this study of the impact of effective two-way communication on employee attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction in a higher education setting. The Enrollment Management Division at Southern Utah University was studied to determine the degree that communication is used to promote organizational success, and the commitment by management and individuals to positive attitudes with the goal of increased job satisfaction.

RQ1: How does communication from the manager and the ability to provide feedback and suggestions affect the individual attitude of employees in the SUU Enrollment Management Division and contribute to job satisfaction?

RQ 2: How do conscious attempts at improving attitude increase job satisfaction?

RQ 3: How do SUU Enrollment Management supervisors' attitudes and happiness affect employee attitude, job satisfaction, and office culture?

Chapter 3: Method

The goal of this thesis was to determine how bi-directional communication affects the level of individual, team, and management job satisfaction, the commitment to a positive office culture, and how efforts to have a good attitude affect job satisfaction. A survey was conducted to gather information about the degree of two way communication in the Enrollment Management Division of Southern Utah University and individual perceptions of the positive or negative environment in which he or she works; as well as the trait affect of the individual, coworkers, and supervisor. Weekly tasks were provided to participants that would improve attitude and increase happiness. This chapter discusses the procedure, participants, and measures used in the study.

Participants

Fifty-one employees and supervisors in the Enrollment Management Division of Southern Utah University were invited to participate in a survey to determine the existing communication practices, levels of happiness and job satisfaction, and to perform tasks designed to increase happiness and improve attitude. Forty percent ($N = 20$) gave consent for their participation and responded to the survey. See Appendix A and B for the survey questions and tasks.

The number of participants was small; however, all levels of employees in the Division were represented. Some part-time, full-time, and managers chose to disclose their participation if they felt strongly about some of the questions in the survey or as they received the emails with tasks. Some disclosures included feelings or thoughts about the communication in the Division and how it impacted their ability to do their jobs and the ultimate job satisfaction.

Full-time and part-time employees in the SUU Enrollment Management Division participated voluntarily after receiving an invitation through email and/or in person during meetings. Employees willing to participate were equally divided between full-time and part-time staff; with ages ranging from 18 to over 51 years old. The majority (80%) of participants had been employed less than seven years and 60% were female ($N = 20$).

Procedure

Approval from the SUU Institutional Research Board (IRB) was obtained prior to inviting staff members to participate in the study. The approval included survey questions specifically designed to examine the effect of management's sharing of information and encouraging feedback, input, or suggestions from staff members on the overall Division culture and individual attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction.

Potential participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to determine the communication practices, level of happiness and job satisfaction individually and in their departments. They were also informed that participation was voluntary and that all responses were anonymous with no identifying information collected.

To encourage participation, the survey was short with only twenty-five questions. See Appendix A for exact wording of questions. The first four questions were demographic in nature to gather baseline information about persons willing to participate in this type of study. Two questions targeted social interaction with coworkers, with the remaining questions about environment, communication, attitude, job satisfaction, happiness of the participant, and his/her perception of coworkers' and supervisor happiness.

Participants were asked to mark the response that best described their work experience relating to communication, level of job satisfaction, trait affect, and office culture with relation to

various aspects of the work situation. A response to each question was not required and some participants chose not to answer some questions.

After the surveys were complete, tasks designed to promote a positive attitude and happiness were distributed weekly to all fifty-one staff members in Enrollment Management. The tasks, provided in Appendix B, were to: 1) Meditate to clear the mind, experience calmness, and feel contentment. Studies have shown that taking a few minutes to slow down and focus on breathing helps to relieve stress, heighten awareness and empathy, and raise levels of happiness ([Borchard](#), 2013; Brown & Gerberg, 2012). 2) Find something about which to look forward. Many times just anticipating a future event or reward will increase endorphin levels that work to improve attitude and increase. 3) Smile with the mouth and the eyes, and back it up with positive thoughts. People often find they are smiling with their mouths without really meaning it. Really smiling with the eyes and mouth improve mood and reduce distress. Including positive thoughts will increase happiness and improve attention. Positive thoughts lead to positive communication and interaction with others. 4) Replace negative comments, thoughts, and feelings with positive comments, thoughts, and feelings. Negative thoughts and feelings build on each other. The more negative we think, the worse we feel. Replacing the negative with positive comments, thoughts, and feelings will provide immediate improvement in mood and increase happiness.

Measures

Communication. Specific questions were asked to measure the amount of managerial communication, the opportunity to provide suggestions or feedback and to have input listened to and acted on; as well as the effect of communication on participants' happiness and job satisfaction. Participants were asked if their manager provided them with timely information and if feedback and suggestions were encouraged and acted on. Possible responses ranged from 1 -

no/never to 5 - always/very. Pearson's correlation tests were run to measure the significance of communication on individual attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .761$).

Attitude. Attitude was measured using a 5-point scale to determine correlations with responses to the survey. Participants were asked to select the level of variables in their work setting; then the independent variables were compared with the participants' attitude to determine what effect they may have. Attitude was also compared with responses about happiness and job satisfaction. Possible responses ranged from 1 - no/never to 5 - always/very. Pearson's correlation tests were run to measure the significance individual attitude on happiness and job satisfaction, and the effect of others' attitude on participants ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.021$).

Happiness. Happiness is subjective and difficult to measure, but assessment on a 5-point scale was used to determine correlations with responses to the survey. Participants selected the level of variables in their work setting; then the independent variables were compared with the participants' happiness at work to determine what effect they may have. Possible responses ranged from 1 - no/never to 5 - always/very. Pearson's correlation tests were run to measure the level of individual happiness on job satisfaction ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .718$).

Job satisfaction. Participants were asked how satisfied they were with their job; then job satisfaction was measured using a 5-point scale to determine correlations with dependent and independent variables using responses to the survey questions. Participants were asked to select the level of variables in their work setting; then the independent variables were compared with the participants' attitude to determine what effect they may have. Possible responses ranged from 1 - no/never to 5 - always/very. Pearson's correlation tests were run to measure job satisfaction on individual attitude and happiness ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .759$).

Chapter 4: Results/Discussion

The purpose of this project was to determine if employees in the SUU Enrollment Management Division feel that communication is effective and if managerial communication affects attitude, happiness at work, and job satisfaction. Results of the survey indicate the majority felt positive at work and with their jobs, which translates into happiness in the work place. In addition, respondents reported that they generally enjoy going to work and felt their coworkers are happy. Questions were not asked about the nature of the work and the impact it had on job satisfaction, instead focusing on the individual's attitude and happiness levels.

Survey responses that were 85% complete were used for analysis ($N = 20$); responses that were less than 85% complete were deleted from the data set. The majority of the surveys were completed in three or four minutes; however, there were some that took longer as it appeared the participant was distracted after opening the survey.

Tables with the number of responses by question and variable, as well as analysis of the variables, are provided in Appendix C. Pearson's correlation were done to determine the effect the variables had on other variables and the significance of communication on individual attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction.

The questions designed to determine how socialization affects happiness and job satisfaction resulted in a broad range of the number of friends at work, from one to more than thirteen. Socialization outside of work was rare-to-infrequent.

Research Question 1. How does communication from the manager and the ability to provide feedback and suggestions affect the individual attitude of employees in the SUU Enrollment Management Division and contribute to job satisfaction? The level that supervisor's provide information did not have a significant correlation with job satisfaction ($r = .072, p = .770, N =$

19), but did have a positive correlation with employees' happiness and attitude at work ($r = .504$, $p = .028$, $N = 19$). The majority, 58%, of respondents report that their supervisor often shares important information and 32% indicated that supervisors provided important information sometimes.

Fifty percent of staff often felt encouraged to provide input to their supervisor with another 35% sometimes able to give feedback and suggestions. Of the responses provided, 60% felt that their suggestions and opinions were listened to and acted on. Another 7% felt that sometimes their suggestions and opinions were listened to and acted. Over 85% of participants were provided with timely information at least sometimes and the same percentages felt they were encouraged to provide feedback, but only 67% felt that their suggestions and opinions were acted on. Responses demonstrate the majority (63%) felt that information is provided with the opportunity to provide feedback and input in departmental decisions, process, and procedures (60%), which has a positive correlation to their happiness at work ($r = .514$, $p = .020$; $N = 20$).

For the most part communication from managers seems to be acceptable; however, there is room for improvement. It was interesting that there was one participant who consistently reported negatively in all areas. At first, it was not known if it was the same person or multiple persons responding negatively to one or two questions. After the survey was complete, a participant (the gender is not indicated to protect the anonymity of the participant) talked to me about how he/she felt about the communication in his/her office and stated that his/her responses were almost all negatives. The reason he/she felt so negative and unhappy was because he/she felt that there was a lack of communication from the Division manager and his/her input was not solicited nor listened to when offered. This participant indicated that the lack of communication had a major impact on his/her attitude and job satisfaction.

Office culture had a significant relationship with coworkers' happiness ($r = .549, p = .012, N = 20$) and managers' happiness ($r = .741, p = <.001, N = 20$), but did not have a significant association with job satisfaction ($r = .209, p = .377, N = 20$). The greatest factors in the individual's happiness at work are the ability to have input into processes and procedures ($r = .514, p = .020, N = 20$), and to have their suggestions, opinions, and thoughts listened to and acted on ($r = .678, p = .001, N = 20$).

The relationship between participants' attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction with the managers' attitude and commitment to a positive environment and employee job satisfaction was significant. Managers with the commitment to a positive environment are sharing information and requesting input from employees. Effective two-way communication at all levels of an organization is a major factor in positive office and organizational culture and employee happiness at work.

Communication is necessary in any organization to develop organizational, team, and individual success. Effective two-way group and individual communication makes employees happier and creates higher job satisfaction; the manager will also find more satisfaction and be happier at work. Two-way communication is the tool that allows managers to delegate more effectively, create strategies for enhanced departmental success, and more appropriately align the goals of the department to the goals of the organization. As managers communicate and listen more, they may find increased communication improves their attitude and enhances the office culture.

The results of the survey support other research that shows employees who are informed and included in decision making enjoy greater job satisfaction, have a higher self-esteem, and feel valued at work. Enrollment Management supervisors that encourage employees to provide

suggestions and opinions may experience an increase in employee job satisfaction and higher productivity; which, speaking as a supervisor, improves the manager's attitude tremendously.

Research Question 2. How do conscious attempts at improving attitude increase job satisfaction? The survey did not ask specifically what participants did to improve their attitude or to improve job satisfaction, but did ask if the individual makes the effort. Eighty-nine percent of participants make an effort to be positive and happy at work, with a 100% trying to create a positive, happy workplace. Eighty-five percent of participants reported they enjoy going to work and are able to maintain a sense of happiness while at work. The correlation of efforts to be positive and happy with the office environment was not significant ($r = .113, p = .646, N = 19$); and the relationship of attempts to create a positive, happy workplace with the office environment was also weak ($r = .329, p = .170, N = 19$).

Fifty percent of participants are satisfied with their jobs; however, the correlation with attempts to improve attitude with job satisfaction is not significant ($r = .234, p = .334, N = 19$). At the same time, participants indicated that they enjoy going to work ($r = .462, p = .046, N = 19$) and are positive while at work ($r = .584, p = .009, N = 19$).

These results led to the conclusion that job satisfaction may be influenced by work assignments and whether individuals are challenged enough. It also supports research that predisposition for positive trait affect has positive correlation to overall happiness, at work and in life (Judge et al., 2008). Most participants, 75%, reported the environment in the office was somewhat positive or positive in nature, and that they were satisfied with their job. The range of job satisfaction was spread evenly from neutral through very satisfied.

People who consider themselves positive are happier at work with a positive correlation ($r = .775, p = <.001, N = 20$) and make a conscious effort to contribute to a positive, happy

workplace. Those that enjoy going to work have a positive association to those that try to create a positive happy workplace ($r = .462, p = .046, N = 19$) and are able to maintain a sense of happiness at work.

The majority of participants felt that coworkers were generally happy at work, which is beneficial because they also reported that attitudes and moods of others affect their attitude and mood; however, this relationship did not have a significant correlation ($r = -.085, p = .723, N = 20$) to each other. Responses support earlier discussion about choosing to be around positive people in order to maintain a sense of happiness.

Participants who were positive at work felt they had some control over their work environment. It is understood in some positions, such as student workers, there is very little control; however, feeling valued as an employee and feeling that one is contributing to the overall goals of the office, division, and organization are important in maintaining a positive affect and job satisfaction.

Since about half of the participants were part-time, it is assumed that the majority of the part-time staff was student workers and responded favorably to efforts to be positive and happy at work. In addition, because of the high number of participants who felt they had some control, it is assumed that even part-time student workers attitudes and job satisfaction was affected by having some level of control over their work environment or the ability to provide suggestions and feedback on processes and/or procedures. In my office, part-time student workers are treated as equals who have more expertise in many areas than full-time staff. This has encouraged them to think and act independently giving them a sense of power and control. Verbal responses from staff in my office after completion of the study confirm that my assumptions based on office

practices were correct. Information is shared regularly and frequently, with feedback and suggestions requested about all processes and procedures.

Some participants wanted to talk with me about the survey and the tasks. They indicated that they think happy thoughts, remember happy memories, and remind themselves of the things for which they are grateful. They say they try to remember to smile or laugh at the hard stuff and feel it does seem to help at times.

Research Question 3. How do SUU Enrollment Management supervisors' attitudes and happiness affect employee attitude, job satisfaction, and office culture? Seven questions were designed to determine the participants' feelings about management's communication of information, encouragement of employee input, attitude and commitment to a positive environment and employee job satisfaction. The majority of participants (65%) felt their supervisor was usually happy at work. The correlation of the managers' happiness at work with attitudes of SUU Enrollment Management staff was positive ($r = .445, p = .049, N = 20$); however, to relationship of the manager's trait affect and job satisfaction was weak ($r = .209, p = .377, N = 20$).

These results would indicate that the managers' attitude affected the participants' attitude; but did not affect the overall job satisfaction. Results correspond with the positive environment that most participants felt they enjoy and with the results of other research, and reminds me of the old saying "if mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." Mama in this case, being the manager and I have seen this in action in various offices within Enrollment Management. If the manager is unhappy or in a bad mood, the staff behave differently than if a positive environment exists.

Recently, one of the managers in the Enrollment Management Division left the University as a result of changes made University-wide. It was known that this manager was negative and did not communicate effectively nor allow suggestions from his/her staff. In addition he/she treated his/her staff in a very negative manner. The staff in his/her office was not happy, but made tremendous effort to remain positive and relate well to students and other staff. In the short time the manager has been gone the environment has completely changed with the staff relaxing and becoming more happy.

Participants were asked direct questions about management to determine if they felt their supervisor is concerned about employee happiness at work and their job satisfaction. Seventy-six percent felt that their supervisor was concerned about a positive work environment and employee job satisfaction, but tests show there is not a significant correlation between the supervisor's trait affect and the employee's job satisfaction ($r = .209, p = .377; N = 20$). There is a stronger correlation between management's concern for employee job satisfaction and the office culture ($r = .583, p = .014; N = 20$), and between the managers' trait affect and office culture ($r = .741, p = <.001; N = 20$).

Variables that have an effect on happiness are value ($r = .602, p = .005, N = 20$) and locus of control ($r = .630, p = .003, N = 20$). Sixty percent of participants felt valued at work the majority of the time, with five percent feeling valued sometimes. The correlation between those who feel valued at work and job satisfaction was weak ($r = .342, p = .140; N = 20$). The number of participants who do not feel valued at work is consistent with those who consider themselves negative and do not enjoy going to work; 10% consider themselves negative in nature and 15% do not enjoy going to work; with 15% who rarely or never feel valued at work.

Participants were asked if they felt their supervisors were responsible for creating a positive work environment. Seventy-five percent responded that it was the supervisor's responsibility, but this had a weak relationship to participants' job satisfaction ($r = -.043, p = .856; N = 20$). The association between managers' happiness and concern for a positive environment was positive ($r = .575, p = .016, N = 17$). The managers' happiness also has a positive association with employee attitude ($r = .445, p = .049, N = 20$) and had a positive correlation with the office culture ($r = .741, p < .001, N = 20$) and participants' enjoyment at work ($r = .669, p = .003, N = 17$).

Surprisingly, the correlation between a positive environment and job satisfaction was not significant ($r = .294, p = .209, N = .20$); however, the manager's attitude and happiness levels have a significant effect on the office culture ($r = .741, p < .001, N = 20$). This would indicate the office culture has little to do with an individual's job satisfaction and everything to do with the manager's attitude.

Sixty percent of employees in Enrollment Management felt they had input in to office processes and procedures a majority of the time and felt the office enjoys a positive culture ($r = .534, p = .015, N = 20$). Those who felt valued also reported having a positive attitude ($r = .602, p = .005, N = 20$). There is also support for supervisors' sharing information often in promoting a sense of control ($r = .462, p = .047, N = 20$). There is a positive association with participants' report of supervisors sharing important information and the ability to provide feedback ($r = .725, p < .001, N = 19$). The positive correlation of participants' responses that their input into processes and procedures would be acted ($r = .559, p = .013, N = 19$) leads to the conclusion that employees who feel they are equal team members have greater job satisfaction and are happier at

work, which supports results found in studies done in other situations (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Froman, 2010; Peters & Austin, 1985; Saari & Judge, 2004).

The responsibility to develop a positive organizational, office, or division culture starts with the manager, but individual employees also have a responsibility to contribute to the overall environment and to their individual satisfaction. It is always easier to say that it is someone else's job or blame others for failure; however, all employees must examine their attitudes and the contribution they make to the office culture. The importance of organizations and managers encouraging and acting on feedback, suggestions, and input from employees as indicated in other studies was strongly supported by this study (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Saari & Judge, 2004).

Limitations

The study was small and short in nature, targeting a specific group in order to determine communication practices and the level of happiness and job satisfaction in one division of Student Services of Southern Utah University. In an effort to encourage participation, the survey included few questions and no interviews. This limited the information that was gathered, processed, and used for comparison and analysis; however, the results have provided a basis upon which to build. It has also shown the significance of management communicating effectively with all staff and the necessity of providing avenues for two way communication.

Questions were not asked that targeted life satisfaction, discrimination, or other factors that may affect job satisfaction. The effect of other factors on attitude and job satisfaction can be significant and should be addressed in future studies. By studying just one university, it was not possible to compare the culture, attitude, and job satisfaction with other institutions; nor is it possible to generalize the results. It would have been advantageous in effecting improvements to have comparative information.

My position as a supervisor in the SUU division being studied may have inhibited some responses. The personalities and lack of cooperation of some employees in other activities should have been considered and incentives used that may have encouraged more participation.

Future Research

Future studies should include more survey questions and interviews. Having more information would have enabled the researcher to narrow down aspects of organizational culture and specific traits within the Division that may benefit future research or improvement for the Division.

It is also suggested that future studies include more than one university. Comparisons to Student Services Divisions in other schools may be considered to get a better perspective of overall attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction in higher education. This should be restricted to the same offices and divisions at each school so that similar comparisons are of similar areas of responsibility.

Since life satisfaction and job satisfaction affect each other so much, it may be desirable to determine the level of life satisfaction and how it contributes to job satisfaction and happiness in the workplace for participants. Questions should be included that would provide information to compare job and life satisfaction, such as, outside events or activities that carry over to work.

In order to effect change, follow up should be done to determine what changes could be made to improve the job satisfaction and attitudes of those that report negative attitudes and low job satisfaction. This may be best accomplished using interviews by an independent third party who would assign numbers instead of using interviewee names.

Conclusions

The most remarkable finding of this study is the relationship between participants' attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction with the level of communication from managers and the ability of employees to provide suggestions, comments, and feedback. The managers' attitude and commitment to a positive environment and employee job satisfaction impacted the office culture. Managers with that commitment are sharing information and requesting input from employees.

Participants who felt they had some control over their work environment were positive and contributed to the office culture. It is understood in some positions, such as student workers, there is very little control; however, feeling valued as an employee and feeling that one is contributing to the overall goals of the office, division, and organization are important in maintaining a positive affect and job satisfaction.

With the charge for managers to develop and maintain a positive attitude, managers may find increased communication improves their attitude and enhances the office culture. Bi-direction communication is necessary in any organization to develop organizational, team, and individual success. Effective two-way group and individual communication makes employees happier and creates higher job satisfaction; the manager will also find more satisfaction and be happier at work. Two-way communication is the tool that allows managers to delegate more effectively, create strategies for enhanced departmental success, and more appropriately align the goals of the department to the goals of the organization.

Research shows that employees who are informed and included in decision making enjoy greater job satisfaction, have a higher self-esteem, and feel valued at work. Enrollment

Management supervisors that encourage employees to provide suggestions and opinions may experience an increase in employee job satisfaction and higher productivity.

The combination of individual and supervisor responsibility to create a positive office culture shows favorable outcomes for an office in which all members work toward positive affect and happiness. This study has shown that a positive happy supervisor who communicates often and effectively affects employees' attitudes and job satisfaction. If supervisors are not currently happy at work and trying to have a positive attitude, they may consider making the effort in order to improve their office culture and employee job satisfaction.

Matching the person with the job is critical to job satisfaction and organizational success. Participants in this study enjoy going to work; but may be more satisfied if they were assigned different, varied, or more responsibilities. It may not be possible to completely change responsibilities, but attempts to vary or add more challenging tasks may be considered. Even boring routine jobs can be made more tolerable by finding ways to improve attitude just by management's recognition of the employee. Job satisfaction increases as workers are interested in and challenged by what they are doing, and, as a result, happy workers are more productive.

All participants have friends at work, but the majority socializes very little outside of work. This suggests that having co-workers to provide friendship, support, and understanding at work is more relevant to job satisfaction than socializing. Creating opportunities for social interaction at work may encourage co-workers to build or improve this support system.

Questions were not asked to determine the level of socialization with people who were not co-workers; nor were these questions used to determine how outside socialization affect general life satisfaction and job satisfaction.

Overall, employees in the Enrollment Management Division of Southern Utah University report satisfactory levels of bi-directional communication and are happy with a high degree of job satisfaction. Participants' positive affect and desire to be happy contribute to their job satisfaction, while those with a negative affect have lower satisfaction.

It is recommended that all managers develop effective communication strategies to provide frequent pertinent information and create avenues for suggestions, opinions, and feedback from staff. Employees often have expertise that should be utilized. Managers should also examine their attitude and job satisfaction with the understanding that attitudes and emotions are contagious to their staff.

Further, it is recommended that all people take responsibility for their attitude and happiness. It is possible for a person to change his/her basic nature from negative to positive to increase happiness on and off the job; however, individuals must be desirous of making the change, receptive to suggestions, willing to use available resources, and do the work necessary to realize the benefits of improved attitude and levels of happiness.

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No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

12. Do you make an effort to be positive and happy?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

13. Do you try to create a positive, happy workplace for yourself and others?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

14. How would you rate the level with which your supervisor shares important information within the office?

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

15. How would you rate the level to which you are able to provide input into processes and procedures?

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

15. Do you feel that you are valued at work?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

16. Do you feel that you contribute to the overall benefit of the organization?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

17. Are your suggestions, opinions, or thoughts listened to and acted on?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

18. Rate management's concern for a positive environment?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Slight Somewhat Moderate Very

19. Rate management's concern for employee job satisfaction?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Slight Somewhat Moderate Very

20. Do you feel that it is management's responsibility to create a positive work environment?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

21. Do you have control over your work environment?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

22. Do other's attitude or mood affect or change your attitude or mood?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

23. Are you able to maintain a sense of happiness at work?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

24. Do you feel that your co-workers happy at work?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

25. Do you feel that your manager is happy?

1 2 3 4 5

No Sometimes Usually Most of the time Always

Appendix B: Tasks

Task one: Meditate

Take five minutes each day to watch your breath go in and out. While you do so, try to remain patient. If you find your mind drifting, just slowly bring it back to focus. Meditation takes practice, but it's one of the most powerful happiness interventions. Studies show that in the minutes right after meditating, we experience feelings of calm and contentment, as well as heightened awareness and empathy. Regular meditation can permanently rewire the brain to raise levels of happiness, lower stress, even improve immune functions.

Get started:

Choose a quiet place to meditate and sit in a comfortable position. Sit in the traditional cross-legged posture or in any other position that is comfortable. The most important thing is to keep your back straight to prevent your mind from becoming sluggish or sleepy.

The first stage of meditation is to stop distractions and make your mind clearer and more lucid. Sit with your eyes partially closed and turn your attention to your breathing. Breathe naturally, preferably through the nostrils, without attempting to control your breath, and try to become aware of the sensation of the breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. This sensation is your object of meditation. We should try to concentrate on it to the exclusion of everything else.

At first, your mind will be very busy, and you might even feel that the meditation is making your mind busier; but in reality you are just becoming more aware of how busy your mind actually is. There will be a great temptation to follow the different thoughts as they arise, but you should resist this and remain focused single-pointedly on the sensation of the breath. If you discover that your mind has wandered and is following your thoughts, you should

immediately return it to the breath. You should repeat this as many times as necessary until the mind settles on the breath.

Task two: Find something to look forward to.

Often the most enjoyable part of an activity is the anticipation. Find something to look forward to and put it on the calendar – even if it’s a month or a year down the road. Then whenever you need a boost of happiness, remind yourself about it. Anticipating future rewards can actually light up the pleasure centers in your brain much as the actual reward will.

This can be as simple as thinking about TV. Just anticipating watching a favorite TV show can raise endorphin levels.

Task three: Smile when you don’t feel like it.

Smiling itself can make us feel better, but it's more effective when we back it up with positive thoughts, according to this study. Workers who smile as a result of cultivating positive thoughts – such as a tropical vacation or a child's recital – improve their mood and withdraw less. Of course it's important to practice “real smiles” where you use your eye sockets. It's very easy to spot the difference. Smiling makes you feel good which also increases our attentional flexibility and our ability to think holistically.

When this idea was tested by Johnson et al. (2010), the results showed that participants who smiled performed better on attentional tasks which required seeing the whole forest rather than just the trees. A smile is also a good way to alleviate some of the pain we feel in troubling circumstances: Smiling is one way to reduce the distress caused by an upsetting situation. Even forcing a smile when we don't feel like it is enough to lift our mood slightly (this is one example of embodied cognition).

Task four: Replace negative thoughts and feelings with positive

List Happy Thoughts: Take 30 minutes and list all the happy thoughts that come to mind. Just use a piece of paper and make a long list, give it a good 30 minutes. List people and places that make you happy; such as: good friends, favorite vacation spots, childhood memories and more. List things that make you happy; such as: puppies, babies, the smell of a new car, a lobster dinner, a day off relaxing by a pool. List anything and everything you can think of that makes you happy.

Be Aware of Negative Thoughts and Feelings: For the entire week, pay attention to your thoughts. Whenever you catch yourself thinking about or feeling anything negative, sad or stressful, label that thought “unhappy.” Don’t worry if you have a lot of unhappy thoughts and feelings throughout the day, that is perfectly normal. Just pay attention and label them.

Follow with a Happy Item: After you label an unhappy thought or feeling, follow it immediately with a happy item from your Happy List. You might pick one item to use all day long, or choose different ones each time you need them. Just bring the happy thing to mind for a second or two.

Commitment: This week I will label my negative or stressful thoughts and feelings and follow them with a happy thought.

Tips: Don’t judge yourself. Everyone has lots of unhappy and negative thoughts throughout the day. As you become more aware of them you might feel embarrassed or ashamed about how many you have. Don’t worry, it is perfectly normal to have all sorts of strange thoughts – we usually don’t pay so much attention to them.

Combine this task with smiling. Force a smile on your face as you bring your happy thought to your mind. This will help erase the effects of the negative thoughts.

After a few days, the number of negative thoughts and feelings often decreases. It's almost as if the brain gets bored being negative, because you replace the thoughts so quickly with positive ones.

Be sure to remind yourself to do this task throughout the day. Don't let a day go by without engaging with your negative thoughts and substituting positive ones.

Appendix C: Tables

Survey question responses

Table 1
Questions 7: The environment in your Department is:

Answer	Response	%
Negative	1	5%
Somewhat Negative	0	0%
Neutral	4	20%
Somewhat Positive	7	35%
Positive	8	40%
Total	20	

Table 2
Question 8: How satisfied are you with your job?

Answer	Response	%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2	10%
Neutral	4	20%
Somewhat Satisfied	4	20%
Satisfied	10	50%
Total	20	

Table 3
Question 9: At work, do you consider yourself:

Answer	Response	%
Negative	0	0%
Somewhat Negative	2	10%
Neutral	3	15%
Somewhat Positive	6	30%
Positive	9	45%
Total	20	

Table 4
Question 10: In your job, are you:

Answer	Response	%
Negative	0	0%
Somewhat Negative	0	0%
Neutral	4	20%
Somewhat Positive	10	50%
Positive	6	30%
Total	20	

Table 5
Question 11: Do you enjoy coming to work?

Answer	Response	%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	3	15%
Usually	3	15%
Mostly	11	55%
Always	3	15%
Total	20	

Table 6
Question 12: Do you make an effort to be positive and happy?

Answer	Response	%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	2	11%
Usually	3	16%
Mostly	9	47%
Always	5	26%
Total	19	

Table 7
Question 12: Do you try to create a positive, happy workplace for yourself and others?

Answer	Response	%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	0	0%
Usually	2	11%
Mostly	12	63%
Always	5	26%
Total	19	

Table 8
Question 13: How would you rate the level with which your supervisor share important information within the office?

Answer	Response	%
Never	0	0%
Rarely	1	5%
Sometimes	6	32%
Often	11	58%
All of the Time	1	5%
Total	19	

Table 9

Question 14: How would you rate the level to which you are able to provide input?

Answer	Response	%
Never	1	5%
Rarely	0	0%
Sometimes	7	35%
Often	10	50%
All of the Time	2	10%
Total	20	

Table 10

Question 15: Do you feel valued at work?

Answer	Response	%
Never	1	5%
Rarely	2	10%
Sometimes	5	25%
Often	8	40%
All of the Time	4	20%
Total	20	

Table 11

Question 16: Do you feel that you contribute to overall benefit of the organization?

Answer	Response	%
Never	0	0%
Rarely	0	0%
Sometimes	5	25%
Often	12	60%
All of the Time	3	15%
Total	20	

Table 12

Question 17: Are your suggestions, opinions, thoughts listened to and acted on?

Answer	Response	%
Never	1	5%
Rarely	0	0%
Sometimes	7	35%
Often	12	60%
All of the Time	0	0%
Total	20	

Table 13
Question 18: Rate management's concern for positive environment.

Answer	Response	%
Not at all	1	6%
Slight	1	6%
Somewhat	2	12%
Moderate	8	47%
Very	5	29%
Total	17	

Table 14
Question 19: Rate management's concern for employee job satisfaction?

Answer	Response	%
Not at all	1	5%
Slight	1	5%
Somewhat	3	15%
Moderate	13	65%
Very	2	10%
Total	20	

Table 15
Question 20: Do you feel that it is management's responsibility to create positive work environment?

Answer	Response	%
No	1	5%
Sometimes	4	20%
Usually	8	40%
Mostly	5	25%
Always	2	10%
Total	20	

Table 16
Question 21: Do you have control over your work environment?

Answer	Response	%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	5	25%
Usually	8	40%
Mostly	6	30%
Always	1	5%
Total	20	

Table 17

Question 22: Do others' attitude or mood affect or change your attitude or mood?

Answer	Response	%
No	1	5%
Sometimes	6	30%
Usually	9	45%
Mostly	4	20%
Always	0	0%
Total	20	

Table 18

Question 23: Are you able to maintain a sense of happiness at work?

Answer	Response	%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	3	15%
Usually	8	40%
Mostly	8	40%
Always	1	5%
Total	20	

Table 19

Question 24: Do you feel that your coworkers are happy at work?

Answer	Response	%
No	0	0%
Sometimes	6	30%
Usually	4	20%
Mostly	10	50%
Always	0	0%
Total	20	

Table 20

Question 25: Do you feel that your manager is happy at work?

Answer	Response	%
No	2	10%
Sometimes	5	25%
Usually	4	20%
Mostly	8	40%
Always	1	5%
Total	20	

Appendix D: Presentation to SUU Student Services Department Directors

Attitude, Happiness, and Job Satisfaction

Capstone project for MA in Professional
Communication
Presented to the Department Directors
in SUU Student Services
By Christine Proctor

What

- ▶ Research and study of organizational culture, individual happiness, attitude, and job satisfaction

Why

- ▶ To assess the level of happiness and job satisfaction in Enrollment Management
- ▶ Provide tools and encourage people to commit to their own happiness and job satisfaction by improving their attitude
- ▶ To learn to be happy - what's to lose?

The Happiness Advantage

- ▶ The value of choosing to be happy affects the individual, team, and overall organizational culture
- ▶ Positive emotions flood our brains with dopamine and serotonin
 - Chemicals that make us feel good and dial up the brain; which allows us to think more quickly and creatively
 - Antidote to stress and anxiety

Study of SUU's Enrollment Management

- ▶ Research of available resources, theories, and practices addressing attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction
- ▶ Study inviting 51 staff members in Enrollment Management to participate
- ▶ Questions were on a five-point scale ranging from Never to Always

Enrollment Management

- ▶ Admissions – Processing
- ▶ Admissions – Recruitment
- ▶ Enrollment Services One-Stop
- ▶ Financial Aid
- ▶ Registrar

Participants ($N = 20$)

- ▶ 10 full-time employees
- ▶ 9 part-time employees
- ▶ Years on the job:
 - 10 = 0-3 years
 - 6 = 4-7 years
 - 2 = 11-14 years
 - 2 with 15+ years
- ▶ Ages from 18 to 51+

Results ($N = 20$)

- ▶ 75% are positive at work
- ▶ 85% usually-to-always enjoy going to work
- ▶ 70% of coworkers are mostly happy at work
- ▶ 60% feel valued at work
- ▶ 75% have some control at work
- ▶ 60% provide input into policy and processes
- ▶ 63% supervisor shares important information

Do you feel that your manager is happy at work?

- ▶ 65% = Usually
- ▶ 25% = Sometimes
- ▶ 10% = Never

Do you feel that management is concerned about a positive environment?

- ▶ 29% = Very
- ▶ 47% = Moderate
- ▶ 12% = Somewhat
 - ▶ 6% = Slight
 - ▶ 6% = Not at all

Greatest factors that promote job satisfaction are:

- ▶ Happy manager who is concerned about environment and employee job satisfaction
- ▶ Have input into processes and procedures
 - ($p = .020, N = 20$)
- ▶ Suggestions, thoughts, and opinions are listened to, respected and acted on
 - ($p = .000, N = 20$)

Conclusion

- ▶ In order to improve staff happiness and job satisfaction, managers should:
 - Improve two-way communication; providing information to all staff and encouraging feedback, suggestions, thoughts, opinions from staff
 - Review individual strengths and personalities to ensure best job for happy successful staff members

Most Important for Supervisors

- ▶ Evaluate your own attitude and happiness levels
- ▶ Evaluate your commitment to a positive office culture and staff job satisfaction

