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Relationships Among Employee Engagement, Communication Climate, and Employees' Communication Channel Preferences

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Relationships Among Employee Engagement, Communication Climate, and

Employees' Communication Channel Preferences

A proposal for a thesis to be submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

By

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ABSTRACT

Roberts, Jessica, Long M.S Department of Leadership Studies in Education and Organizations College of Education and Human Services, Wright State University, 2013. Relationships Among Employee Engagement, Communication Climate, and Employees' Communication Channel Preferences

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship among communication climate, employee engagement and employees' communication channel preferences. The research established a moderate relationship among communication climate and employee engagement. Although this finding aligns with the current literature, the study failed to establish a relationship between employee engagement and employees' communication channel preferences. The research did document that the top three communication channels for employees of all levels of engagement are face to face, email and poster/flyers/brochures.

While Chapter 2 reviewed past literature of communication climate, employee engagement and communication channel preferences it was noted that there is limited literature regarding their relationships. This research provided supporting data on the existence of a moderate relationship between communication climate and employee engagement. Acknowledging the relationship may prove to be useful information for leaders in developing engaged employees and sustaining successful organizations. Future research regarding the relationship will provide insight about other variables that might affect communication climate and employee engagement.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Results from research on organizations and corporations have established that there may be a strong link between employee engagement, employee performance, and business outcomes (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). The key drivers of employee engagement include communication, opportunities for employees to feed their views upwards, and the belief that managers are committed to the organization. There is a paucity of research regarding predictors of employee engagement and whether or not interventions, such as training managers on how to communicate effectively, could help to increase employee engagement.

It is important for research to focus on individual employee differences and whether variables such as personality impacts employee engagement (Kular et al., 2008). Unless employee engagement can be universally defined and measured, it cannot be managed, nor can it be known if efforts to improve employee engagement are working (Ferguson, 2007). Ferguson highlighted the problems of comparing measures of employee engagement that are caused by differences in definitions of the term. Furthermore, employee engagement has been defined in so many different ways, it is argued that the definitions often sound similar to other better known and established constructs such as 'organizational commitment' and 'organizational citizenship behavior' (OCB) (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004). Thus Robinson et al. (2004) defined

engagement as one step up from commitment. In addition, Field and Butendach (2011) reviewed recent employee engagement research documenting the fact that employee engagement and organizational commitment are positively correlated. Those who are highly engaged are usually highly committed. As a result, employee engagement has the appearance of being yet another trend, or what some might call---old wine in a new bottle.

Employee engagement has become an interesting topic in recent years (Kular et al., 2008). Despite the interest, there remains a paucity of critical academic literature on the subject, and relatively little is known about how employee engagement can be influenced by communication with management. Along with the interest in engagement, there is also a good deal of confusion. At present, there is no consistency in definitions, with engagement having been operationalized and measured in many disparate ways (Kular et al., 2008).Though communication has been identified as a factor affecting engagement, no scientific research has concentrated solely on the relationship between communication and engagement. Taking this into account this study purpose is to determine whether there is a relationship between communication climate and employee engagement.

The climate of an organization is more fundamental than communication skills or techniques in creating an effective organization (Redding, 1973). Communication climate involves employee perceptions of the quality of relationships and communication in the organization, and the degree of involvement and influence (Goldhaber, 1993). Redding (1973) proposed that communication climate consists of five factors: (1) supportiveness; (2) participative decision making; (3) trust, confidence, and credibility; (4) openness and candor; and (5) high performance goals. Past research has provided insight on internal

communication and employee engagement; however, there is limited empirical research that can support the link between communication climate and employee engagement (Hayase, 2009).

It is important for leaders to understand the relationship between communication climate and employee engagement because understanding the differences between highly engaged and less engaged employees may provide insights for leaders regarding how to improve employee engagement and organizational outcomes (Attridge, 2009). Understanding the attributes of individual employees regarding engagement practices is necessary for leaders. Yet, data aggregated at the individual level does not link engagement practices of the employee to larger company-wide success factors (p. 388). Attridge (2009) encouraged leaders to place high value on measuring employee engagement at the organizational level. Understanding the level of engagement of each employee is not the final solution. Determining/identifying the factors of organizational life that contribute to and deter employee engagement will help leaders develop and sustain engaged employees.

Communication technologies such as email and social media have been added to the communication channels used in organizations. Both involve technology. It is important to examine the impact of technology in the workplace and how technology affects communication with the employees; it is also important to investigate whether technology has replaced the traditional medium of communication, which is face-to-face (Ean, 2010). Understanding the importance of communicating with employees is necessary for developing effective communication (Hayase, 2009). There are limited

academic studies regarding the degree of the relationship between employee engagement and communication channel preferences.

Statement of the Problem

For this study, three problems will be addressed: (1) the lack of literature regarding the relationships among employee engagement, communicate climate, and communication channel preferences; (2) previous research sample size studying these relationships consists of undergraduate and graduate students with limited work experience; and (3) Hayase (2009) suggested that further research regarding relationships between employee engagement and communication should modify her instrument to include social media options and collect respondents' order of preference for communication channels in specific contexts.

Hayase's (2009) research included a population of undergraduate and graduate students with limited work experience. The current study expanded Hayase's research by collecting similar data from full-time employees of a 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S. By administering the study with a different population results the researcher sought to determine whether the findings were similar or different from the results gathered from Hayase's research. Similar results may contribute to the reliability of her research. Different results may provide opportunities for future research and contribute to the literature regarding employee engagement and communication. In addition, the researcher will update the Hayase's communication channel data collection instrument to include social media options and collect respondents' order of preference for communication channels in specific contexts.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were adopted for this study: (1) employees of the research organization will respond with honesty and integrity to the research surveys; (2) employees of the research organization are aware that there is no threat or repercussion for their participation in the surveys.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

The researcher will examine the relationship among employees' perception of communication climate in addition to their communication channel preferences in regards to their level of engagement in the organization.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between communication climate and employee engagement.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between communication climate and employee engagement.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between communication climate and employee engagement?

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations**.**

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations?

Significance of the Study

This researcher will investigate the relationships among employee engagement, employees' perception of communication climate, and communication channel preferences. An understanding of these relationships and preferences provides guidance for leaders in sustaining organizational effectiveness. This study contributed to the literature regarding the relationships among communication climate, channel preferences, and employee engagement. The findings expand upon the results documented by Hayase (2009).

Scope

The scope of this study is limited to full-time employees of the 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S. The level of experience and duration of employment will vary among members of the sample. The results cannot be generalized beyond the scope of the study. Insights gained from this study may be transferrable to other 24-hour helpdesk departments in the Midwestern U.S.

Definition and Operational Terms

Communication channels: Mediums such as email and face-to-face interactions used in transmitting information that can affect a receiver's interpretation of the information (Zmud, Lind, & Young, 1990).

Communication climate: Involves the perceptions employees have of the quality of relationships and communication in the organization, and the degree of involvement and influence (Goldhaber, 1993).

Employee engagement: Employees positive emotions toward their work, finding their work to be personally meaningful, considering their workload to be manageable, and having hope about the future of their work (Attridge, 2009).

Summary

Employee engagement is a valuable component of an organization. Understanding what impacts employee engagement provides guidance for leaders. Defining the relationship between communication climate and employee engagement adds to the body of knowledge for leaders. Identifying the relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement will enlighten and empower communication among leaders and employees

Overview

This research will be described in the following chapters. The focus of chapter 2 will be a literature review on communication climate, employee engagement, employee disengagement, communication channels, and communication and employee engagement. Chapter 3 presents the research design and methodology utilized in this research. Results of the study will be discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 5 outlines the discussion of results and suggestions for further research.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Understanding the relationship between employee engagement and communication climate can guide leaders in sustaining successful organizations. More specifically, understanding the importance of communication channels, for specific work-related communication will provide detailed guidance for organizational leaders regarding employee engagement and communication. Though there is an established literature base regarding the relationships between employee engagement and communication climate, this literature review provides perspectives about employee engagement, communication climate, and communication channel preferences to provide the theoretical framework for the research.

Communication climate

Communication climate includes the employee perceptions of the quality of relationships and communication in the organization, and the degree of involvement and influence (Goldhaber, 1993). Redding (1973) suggested that communication climate consists of five factors: (1) supportiveness; (2) participative decision making; (3) trust, confidence and credibility; (4) openness and candor; and (5) high performance goals. Redding (1973) stated supportiveness exists when employees perceive the communication relationships with their leaders as ones that help build and sustain a sense of personal worth and importance. A climate where employees are free to communicate upwardly with a true sense of encouragement is participative decision making. Trust,

confidence and credibility are extents to which message sources and/or communication events are judged to be believable. Regardless of the relationship type, openness and candor in the messages of telling and listening affect the communication climate. The last factor of communication climate is high performance goals, which indicates the degree to which performance goals are clearly communicated to employees.

Dennis (1975) added to Redding's research and defined communication climate as an individually experienced quality of the internal environment of an organization which embraces employees' perceptions of messages and message-related events occurring in the organization. Dennis (1975) tested the existence of Redding's five communication factors with a research of 353 supervisory personnel from a large automobile manufacturing company and a major insurance company. The results from Dennis' study supported four of the five factors (supportiveness, participative decision making, openness and candor, and high performance goals); no evidence was found to support trust, confidence and credibility as a major factor in communication climate.

A basic principle of communication climate is that employee's cognitive and affective perceptions of an organization influence that employee's behavior in the organization (Goldhaber, 1993). Major communication climate issues are centered on the following perceptions: communication sources and relationships in the organization, information available to employees, the organization itself and whether people are supported and rewarded for their efforts.

Communication climate is the concept of how communications are conducted within an organizational environment; it occurs on both the organizational and individual levels (Arif, Zubair, & Manzoor, 2012). Communication climate can affect employees'

productivity and retention (Salin, 2003). Additionally, communication which helps the employees identify with the organization may also motivate and stimulate organizational members to meet organizational goals (Smidts, Pruyn, & Riel, 2001). Moreover, communication climate that encourages employees to work strategically, collaboratively, cost-effectively, innovatively, and accountably creates an organization that empowers employee engagement (Ruth & Guzley, 1992).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a fairly new phenomenon that continues to gain the attention of organizations (Hayase, 2009). Research regarding employee engagement began in the 1990's by Kahn (1990). The author conceptualized member engagement as the 'harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). Attridge (2009) defined employee engagement as employees feeling positive emotions toward their work, finding their work to be personally meaningful, considering their workload to be manageable, and having hope about the future of their work. Kahn (1990) investigated three psychological conditions (meaningfulness, safety, and availability) that affect employees' involvement or engagement at work. Job improvement and work role fit were positively linked to psychological meaningfulness (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Rewarding employees and supportive leader relations were positively associated with psychological safety.

Psychological availability was positively related to resources available and negatively related to participation in outside activities (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). "People can use varying degrees of their selves, physically, cognitively, and emotionally,

in the roles they perform, even as they maintain the integrity of the boundaries between who they are and the roles they occupy" (Kahn, 1990, p. 692). The cognitive aspect of employee engagement concerns employees' beliefs, its leaders, and working conditions. The emotional aspect concerns employees' positive or negative attitudes toward the organization and its leaders. The physical aspect of employee engagement concerns the physical strengths exercised by individuals to accomplish their roles (Kahn, 1990). While Kahn's research reinforced psychological factors for engagement May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) introduced the concept of human spirit in the organization. May et al. described the addition of human spirit as the setting free of "the human spirit in organizations" conjuring "that part of the human being which seeks fulfillment through self-expression at work" (p. 12). The focus of research in employee engagement has changed from the 'role performance' lens to the 'three-dimensional' concepts. Attridge (2009) defined three-dimensional concepts of work engagement with three factors: a physical component (e.g., ''I exert a lot of energy performing my job''), an emotional component (e.g., ''I really put my heart into my job''), and a cognitive component (e.g., ''Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else'') (p.384).

Saks (2006) stated that there is little empirical research on the factors that predict employee engagement, though there are a number of potential antecedents to engagement in Kahn's (1990) model. Saks' research tested a model of the antecedents and consequences of job and organization engagements based on social exchange theory. Saks' research included measuring job and organization engagement as well as the antecedents and consequences of engagement. Saks (2006) researched 102 employees working in a variety of jobs and organizations. The average age was 34 and 60 percent

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were female. Participants had been in their current job for an average of four years, in their organization an average of five years, and had on average 12 years of work experience. Saks determined that job characteristics are a predictor of job engagement. In addition, Saks found job and organization engagement facilitated the relationships between the antecedents and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intentions to quit, and organizational citizenship behavior.

In recent years national and international companies have developed tools to measure employee engagement in order to understand what variables affect the concept. Consulting companies such as BlessingWhite, Gallup, Hewitt, Sirota, Towers Perrin, Valtera, and Watson Wyatt Worldwide have developed tools for measuring employee engagement (Attridge, 2009). The Towers Perrin (2006) research measured the differences between highly engaged employees and those reported as less engaged. In the research, five categories were utilized for comparison: company's products quality, customer service, costs of current position, loyalty to current position, and employee engagement. The results from the Tower Perrin research documented that highly engaged employees believed they would have a positive impact on the quality of company products and customer service compared to employees reported as less engaged. The results from the study also indicated that highly engaged employees were loyal to their current position and performed better at their job. Results from the Gallup Organization revealed that about twenty percent of U.S. organizational members are disengaged, fifty-four percent are neutral about their work, and twenty-six are actively engaged (Fleming, Coffman, & Harter, 2005).

Employee Disengagement

Employee disengagement is a serious organizational issue. According to the Gallup Organization disengaged employees cost U.S. companies between $250 and $350 billion a year (Rath & Conchie, 2009). In other recent employee engagement studies, employees who were disengaged cost organizations approximately 35% of their payrolls (Rivera & Flinck, 2011). Employee disengagement is purported to cost organizations $343 billion annually, including $65 billion of taxpayer dollars of lost employee productivity for the federal government alone (Rivera & Flinck, 2011).

Disengagement among employees can have a negative effect on employees' performance. Disengaged employees displayed incomplete role performances and were observed as effortless, automatic, or robotic (Kahn 1990). These employees demonstrated behaviors and attitudes that were negative, uncooperative, and even hostile (Kular, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). It is important for leaders at all levels to take employee engagement seriously to create a better quality of life for employees and higher profit for the organization.

Communication Channels

Understanding the importance of communicating with employees is necessary for developing effective communication channels (Hayase, 2009). Communication channels can be divided into three categories: advanced communication and information technologies (ACIT), traditional media, and face-to-face communication (p. 22). Hayase defined ACITs to include email, internet, intranet, online chats, voicemail, cellular

telephones, online databases, PDAs, instant messaging, videoconferencing, pagers, and fax. Traditional media can include memos, newsletters, and organizational member handbooks. The appropriate communication channel is dependent upon the receiver and type of information being disseminated.

Waldeck, Seibold, and Flanagin, (2004) examined the relationship among three communication channels (face-to-face communication, traditional media, and ACIT) for information-seeking and perceived socialization effectiveness. The researchers extended organizational research by examining a variety of socialization experiences and by considering ACITs as an additional channel for obtaining assimilation-related information. Studies of employees' assimilation-related information seeking have focused on traditional channels for uncertainty reduction (e.g., face-to-face communication and traditional technologies, like organizational members handbooks) and on the experiences of newcomers (p. 162 and 165). "Data gathered from 405 employees of four organizations were utilized to explore the relationship between three channels for information-seeking (face-to-face communication, traditional media, and ACIT) and perceived socialization effectiveness" (p.161). Results from the Waldeck et al. (2004) research indicated that face-to-face communication is the most important predictor of assimilation effectiveness, followed by ACIT use. Krell (2006), suggested that rather than e-mail, personal interaction and, if necessary, telephone conversations should be used when possible to communicate, especially between leaders and employees. Gooden, a management psychologist in a consulting firm posited that "e-mail communications pose

the greatest risk of unintended interpretation—followed by telephone and face-to-face exchanges, respectively" (Krell, 2006, p. 54). The author explained that a face-to-face exchange adds a personal element to communication and demonstrates engagement to the person you are talking to, leading to a strong argument to meet with people whenever it is possible (Krell, 2006).

Understanding the importance of communicating with employees is necessary for developing effective communication (Hayase, 2009). Further understanding the effectiveness of different communication channels also contributes to effective communication. There are limited academic studies that include the degree of the relationship among employee engagement and communication channel preferences.

Employee Engagement and Communication

There are many variables that encourage employee engagement. Examples include coaching, career development, recognition, rewards, accountability, satisfaction, meaningful work, perceived safety, adequate resources, individual attention, alignment with organization's values, opinion surveys, effective communication, management's interest in well-being, challenging work, input in decision making, clear vision of organization's goals, and autonomy (Baumruk et al., 2006; Kahn, 1990; Woodruffe, 2006). Internal communication serves as an avenue in which these variables may be supported, and encouraged. Hayase (2009) investigated the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement. The sample was comprised of 334 undergraduate and graduate university students recruited from communication,

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journalism, and media studies and business administration classes at University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Data was gathered using Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate survey and Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ).

The OCQ was created by Mowday et al. to measure the employee commitment in organizations. Hayase (2009) used the survey to measure employee's perceptions of their level of engagement. Hayase documented a positive and mutual relationship between members and leaders has an impact on employee engagement. Organizations that communicate effectively experience less turnover and resistance, higher shareholder returns, increased commitment and higher levels of employee engagement (Goodman & Truss, 2006; 11 Guzley, 1992; Sias, 2005; Yates, 2006). According to Yates, "effective communication practices drive employee engagement, commitment, retention, and productivity, which, in turn translate into enhanced business performance that generates superior financial returns" (p. 72). The Watson Wyatt Worldwide research (2002) documented that organization that included "highly effective communicators were 4.5 times more likely to have highly engaged employees, which positioned them for better financial results" (Yates, 2006, p. 73). Effective communication is demonstrated by employees engaging with others in ways which help them understand the importance and meaning of that engagement (Pace & Fauies, 1989). The Watson Wyatt research (2006) suggested that communication makes a positive difference in employee engagement. High-engagement employees receive communication from their leaders far more

frequently than low engagement employees. The relationship between communication and employee engagement is not a well-documented topic; understanding the relationship is an important aspect of effective leadership.

Summary

Employee engagement has been studied for over twenty years. The concept of employee engagement has shifted from a psychological aspect, to human spirit, to an emotional connection. Kahn (1990) introduced the psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability that affect employees' ability to be engaged. May et al. (2004) expressed that employee engagement is related to the human spirit in an organization. Attridge (2009) defined employee engagement as employees' feeling positive emotions toward their work.

The communication climate of an organization can have a positive or negative impact on employee engagement. A communication climate that is positive and open promotes productivity. A positive communication climate motivates and stimulates workers to meet organization goals. Communication climate involves communication channels, such as email and face-to-face. There is limited available literature on how communication climate and communication channel preferences are related to employee engagement. This study expands the literature of employee engagement and communication while defining and identifying the relationship among communication climate, communication channel preferences, and employee engagement.

III. METHODS AND DESIGN

There is little research available on the relationships among communication climate, communication channel preferences, and employee engagement. Past research documented a positive relationship between communication and employee engagement (Hayase, 2009). This study focused on the specific relationships among two aspects of communication and employee engagement. A non-experimental, correlational survey study was used to determine the relationships.

Population and Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 42 organizational members from the 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S. The employees surveyed included processors and specialists. The processor job description includes: answering the phone, logging trouble tickets, and writing work orders for equipment. The processors have one team lead and one supervisor. The specialist job description includes: working trouble tickets created by processors, taking immediate response calls, writing work orders, and answering the phone if necessary. There are three specialist team leads. Each team lead has between 14 and 15 specialists on his/her team. The specialist and specialist team leads report to the same supervisor. The researcher received written permission to survey the organizational members (see Appendix A).

Treatment

This research utilized the Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate survey (see Appendix B). The Communication Climate survey was designed to study the inner environment of an organization (Hayase, 2009). For the purpose of this study the instrument was used to measure employees' perception of the communication climate in the organization, as it relates to employee engagement. The survey identifies five factors: superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness/candor, opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of information (Dennis, 1974). The primary factor from the Communication Climate Survey used for this research is the superior-subordinate communication.

The survey contains 21 questions using a five point Likert scale for each question ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, coded by 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree (Dennis, 1974). Questions 19-21, pertaining to other organizational factors, were omitted because the information obtained would not contribute to answering the research questions. The researcher attempted to gain permission from Dennis to use the survey but was unsuccessful; numerous efforts were employed with the help of the university library as well as web searches.

To measure employee engagement, the Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (see Appendix C) was implemented. The OCQ was created by Mowday et al. to measure the commitment in organizations. Hayase (2009) used the survey to measure an employee's perceptions of the level of engagement. In the documentation for Hayase's research, the author stated that the OCQ "assessed the state of the participant's workplace communication and measured their level

of engagement as an employee" (p. 37). She further explained that the scales used in the surveys were designed to measure "the presence and level of employee engagement" (p. 37).

Further research about the feasibility of using self-reported employee commitment data to represent employee engagement yielded supporting documentation. Ferrer (2005) stated that "employee engagement has emerged as a further alternative to measuring employee commitment to organizations as a way of creating a more highly effective workplace" (p. 2). The author explained that employee engagement and commitment are cylindrical in that the perceived organizational support feeds employee engagement and vice versa. In addition, Field and Butendach (2011) reviewed recent research documenting the fact that employee engagement and employee commitment are positively correlated. Those who are highly engaged are usually highly committed. For these reasons, the researcher replicated Hayase's use of the OCQ instrument to measure the level of employee engagement.

The OCQ consists of 15 questions that focus on three areas representing employee engagement: a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to work hard on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. The OCQ uses a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, coded by the number 1 representing strongly disagree and the number 5 representing strongly agree. The instrument was not copyrighted to encourage its use by others in research. The OCQ legally exists in the public domain and no permission is needed for its use (see Appendix D).

For the measurement of communication channel preferences this researcher updated Hayase's (2009) communication channel instrument to include social networking options and included a request for respondents to prioritize communication channel preferences. Respondents were asked to rank communication channels as they relate to communication contexts using a three point Likert scale where 1 is most preferred and 3 is least preferred. The contexts provided included: customer service complaint, directions/instructions, organization policy, personnel announcements, and performance reviews. The revised instrument was pilot tested with members of three organizations to develop clarity (see Appendix E). Permission was obtained from Hayase (see Appendix F) to use the channel preference survey included in the 2009 publication.

Research Design

This was a non-experimental, correlational research to determine the relationships among employee engagement, employees' perception of communication climate, and communication channel preferences. The goal of this research was to determine the relationship among the three variables.

Data Collection

Qualtrics, an online survey tool, was used to distribute the surveys and collect the responses. All employees received an email invitation to complete the online survey (see Appendix G). Respondent identity was kept anonymous. An email reminder was sent three times over the four weeks after the initial email invitation was sent. The survey was closed after four weeks.

Analysis

Survey responses were exported from Qualtrics to an Excel spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics for all responses and the calculation of engagement for the respondent data were determined. Correlation calculations were completed using the Pearson's correlation with the significance level set as $\alpha = .05$. Frequency counts identified communication channel preferences according to the level of employee engagement. Ordinal levels of employee engagement (low, medium, and high) were determined using the employee engagement scores reported. Low was considered two standard deviations below the mean; medium was considered 1 standard deviation around the mean and high was defined as two standard deviations above the mean. To determine the relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement a table was compiled for each provided context comparing ordinal levels and communication channels preferences for each respondent.

Summary

A non-experimental, correlational survey study was used to determine the relationship between communication and employee engagement. Three surveys were used: the Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate Survey, the Mowday, Steers, and Porter

(1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and a modified Communication Channel Preferences Survey originally created by Hayase (2009). The sample for this research consisted of 42 employees from the 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S.

IV. RESULTS

Introduction

This was a non-experimental, correlational research to determine the relationships among employee engagement, communication climate, and employees' communication channel preferences. The results of this research establish the degree to which there is a relationship among communication climate, employees' communication channel preferences, and employee engagement among 42 organizational members from a 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S. Three surveys were conducted using the Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate Survey, the Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and a modified Communication Channel Preferences Survey originally created by Hayase (2009).

The survey responses were used to investigate the stated hypotheses (1) that there is a relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations, and (2) that there is a relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employees engagement in organizations. Analysis is provided for the three surveys and for each research question.

Survey Responses

Communication Climate Survey

The researcher sent an email invitation to 42 participants to participate in the research study. The response rate for the Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate Survey was 78% ($n = 33$). The researcher totaled each participant's responses to establish a participant total score. The score was used in the correlation calculation for research question one. The range for the responses to the survey was 60 ($M = 61.48$, $SD = 14.08$). Descriptive statistics and the response scores for the survey are included in Appendix H.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

The researcher sent an email invitation to 42 participants to complete the Organizational Commitment survey. The response rate for the Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was 83% ($n=35$). The range was 27 ($M = 60.18$, $SD= 6.56$). The researcher totaled each participant's responses to establish a participant total score. The researcher established ordinal levels of employee engagement (low, medium, and high) using the totaled score for each participant. The employee engagement score dataset appeared to be normal, using the descriptive statistics skewedness statistic (.46) and the histogram plot of the data (see Figure 1).). Low was considered two standard deviations below the mean; medium was considered 1 standard deviation around the mean and high was defined as two standard deviations above the mean. Descriptive statistics and the response scores for the survey are included in Appendix I.

Employee Engagement
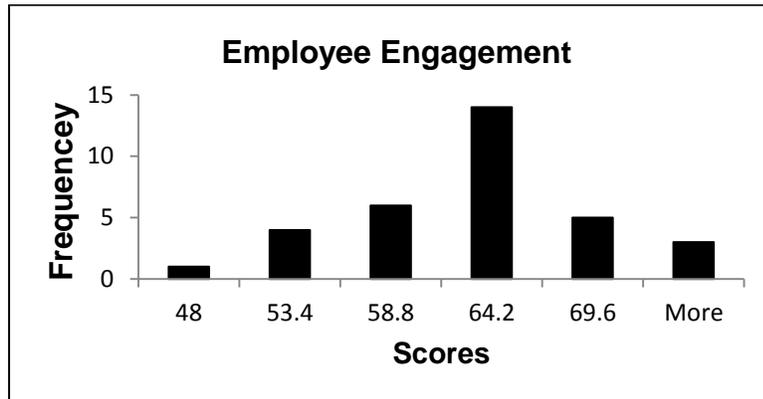
Figure 1 presents a histogram of the employee engagement scores. Ordinal values of low, medium and high engagement were determined using the standard normal curve standard deviation values.

Communication Channel Preferences Survey

The researcher sent an email invitation to 42 participants to complete the

Communication Channel survey. The response rate for the Communication Channel

Preferences Survey was 40% ($n = 17$). The survey provided 5 workplace contexts. A

frequency count of the communication channel preferences for each context is included

in Tables 1 - 5. Participants were asked to indicate their communication channel

preferences related to each of the 5 contexts. For the *customer service complaint* context,

respondents selected face-to-face (64%) and email (35%) as their first preferences (see

Table 1).

Table 1

Frequency Count of Responses for Customer Service Complaint Context

	Preference		
Communication Channels	1st	2nd	3rd
Face to Face	11	4	1
Email	6	9	2
Posters, Flyers, Brochures			
Facebook or Twitter			1
Training Classes			1
Meeting with Senior Management		1	4
Pre-shift information or Meeting		2	2
Printed Newsletter		1	3
Blogs			1
At Home Mailers			
E-Newsletters			2
Totals	17	17	17

For the *directions/instructions* context, respondents selected email as their first (41%),

second (24%) and third (24%) preferences (see Table 2). For the *directions/instructions*

context, email (24%) and poster, flyers and brochures (24%) were tied as respondents'

second preference.

Table 2

Frequency Count of Responses for Directions/Instructions Context

	Preference		
Communication Channels	1st	2nd	3rd
Face to Face	4	2	3
Email	7	4	4
Posters, Flyers, Brochures	2	4	1
Facebook or Twitter		1	
Training Classes	1		3
Meeting with Senior Management	2	1	3
Pre-shift information or Meeting	1	1	1
Printed Newsletter		2	
Blogs		1	
At Home Mailers			1
E-Newsletters		1	1
Totals	17	17	17

For the *organizational policy* context, email (35%) and poster, flyers and brochures (35%) were tied as respondents' first preferences (see Table 3). For the *new position or promotion opportunity* context, respondents selected email (47%) and printed newsletter (47%) as their first and second preferences respectively. For *new position or promotion opportunity* context (29%) of the respondents selected face-to-face as their third preference (See Table 4). Lastly, for the *performance review* context, respondents selected face-to-face(47%) and email (35%) tied as their first preferences and selected meeting with their senior management (29%) second preferences, and email (29%) as their third preference (See Table 5).

Table 3

Frequency Count of Responses for Organizational Policy Context

Communication Channels	Preference		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Face to Face	2	2	3
Email	6	4	3
Posters, Flyers, Brochures	6	1	3
Facebook or Twitter			
Training Classes		1	1
Meeting with Senior Management			1
Pre-shift information or Meeting	1	3	2
Printed Newsletter		3	1
Blogs	1	1	1
At Home Mailers			
E-Newsletters	1	2	2
Totals	17	17	17

Table 4

Frequency Count of Responses for New Position or Promotion Opportunity Context

	Preference		
Communication Channels	1st	2nd	3rd
Face to Face	1	2	5
Email	8	3	1
Posters, Flyers, Brochures	3	2	3
Facebook or Twitter		1	
Training Classes	1		
Meeting with Senior Management	2	1	1
Pre-shift information or Meeting			2
Printed Newsletter		8	2
Blogs			1
At Home Mailers	1		
E-Newsletters	1		2
Totals	17	17	17

Table 5

Frequency Count of Responses for Performance Review Context

Communication Channels	Preference		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Face to Face	8	1	
Email	6	3	5
Posters, Flyers, Brochures	2	4	1
Facebook or Twitter			
Training Classes			
Meeting with Senior Management	1	5	2
Pre-shift information or Meeting		3	4
Printed Newsletter			2
Blogs		1	1
At Home Mailers			1
E-Newsletters			1
Totals	17	17	17

Research Question 1

The first research question is: What is the relationship between communication climate and employee engagement? The null hypothesis stated that there is no relationship between communication climate and employee engagement.

Results

Using the data from participants who responded to both the communication climate and employee engagement surveys (n =33), a Pearson's correlation was determined to be .35, which is significant at α =.05. Values between 0.3 and 0.7 or -0.3 and -0.7 indicate a moderate positive (or negative) linear relationship (Ratner, 2013).

The correlation of .35 between communication climate and employee engagement is considered moderate. The research hypothesis was that there is a relationship. This result allowed us to reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis that there is a relationship between communication climate and employee engagement.

Research Question 2

The second research question is: What is the relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations. The null hypothesis is that there is no relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement.

Results

To determine the relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement, descriptive statistics of the responses were computed for respondents who completed both the Communication Channel Preferences and the Organization Commitment Questionnaire. Forty percent of the employees who were asked to complete the three surveys completed these two surveys. Descriptive statistics and the response scores for the surveys are included in Appendix I.

To understand preferred communication channels for each context, respondents selected first, second or third choice responses. For each channel type, a total number represents the number of respondents who selected the channel. For example, for *customer complaints*, 11 respondents' selected face-to-face communication as their first choice and 4 participants selected face-to-face communication as their second choice; 1 selected face-to-face for third choice. Summarily, the face-to-face preference for the *customer complaints* contexts was selected as first, second, or third preference 16 times.

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For the *directions/instructions* context, email was selected 7 times as first, 4 times as second and 4 times as third preferences. Summarily, email preference for *directions/instructions* contexts was selected as first, second, or third preference 15 times. Overall, face-to-face, email and posters, flyers and brochures were the most preferred regarding *directions/instructions*. For the *organizational policy* context respondents' selected email first 6 times, 4 times as second and 3 times as third preferences. For the *organizational policy* context email was selected as first, second, or third preference 13 times.

For the *new position or promotion opportunity* context email was selected 8 times as first preference. Similarly, for the *new position or promotion opportunity* context a printed newsletter was selected 8 times as second preference. Interestingly, for *new position or promotion opportunity* context, face-to-face was selected 5 times as third preference. Email was the most selected preference for communication for *performance review*. Respondents selected email as first preference 6 times, 3 times as second and 5 times as third preference. Finally, email preference for *directions/instructions* contexts was selected as first, second, or third preference 14 times. The Table 6 below indicates the total of selected preferences for each channel type by context.

Table 6

The total of selected preferences for each channel type by context.

Communication Channel Preferences	Context				
	Customer Service Complaint	Directions /Instructions	Organizational Policy	New Position or Promotion opportunity	Performance Reviews
Face to Face	16	9	7	8	9
Email	17	15	13	12	14
Posters, Flyers, Brochures		7	10	8	7
Facebook or Twitter	1	1		1	
Training Classes	1	4	2	1	
Meeting with Senior Management	5	6	1	4	8
Pre-shift information or Meeting	4	3	6	2	7
Printed Newsletter	4	2	4	10	2
Blogs	1	1	3	1	2
At Home Mailers		1		1	1
E-Newsletters	2	2	5	3	1

It is interesting to note that face-to-face, email, and poster, flyers and brochures are the top three communication channel preferences over all contexts.

The researcher investigated each respondent's total score from organizational commitment survey to the respondent's communication channel preferences selections for each context to determine a determine a relationship or trend (see Table 7).

Respondent's total score from organizational commitment survey to the respondent's communication channel preferences selections

	Org. Commitment	Rank	Customer Service Complaint		
1	48	L	Email	Face to Face	Printed Newsletter
2	49	L	Face-to-face	Pre-shift information or meeting	Email
3	59	M	Email	Face to Face	Blogs
4	59	M	Face-to-face	Email	Meeting with Senior Management
5	59	M	Face-to-face	Email	Printed Newsletter
6	60	M	Email	Face to Face	E-Newsletters
7	60	M	Face-to-face	Email	Pre-shift information or meeting
8	60	M	Face-to-face	Email	Training classes
9	61	M	Face-to-face	Email	Pre-shift information or meeting
10	64	H	Face-to-face	Email	Meeting with Senior Management
11	64	H	Face-to-face	Email	Facebook or Twitter
12	65	H	Email	Printed Newsletter	Face to Face
13	66	H	Face-to-face	Email	E-Newsletters
14	66	H	Email	Pre-shift information or meeting	Meeting with Senior Management
15	72	H	Face-to-face	Email	Meeting with Senior Management

16	74	H	Email	Face to Face	Printed Newsletter
17	75	H	Face-to-face	Meeting with Senior Management	Email

Note: L is Low, M is Medium, H is High referring to rank of organization.

There was no pattern or trend identified. Those respondents in the low, medium and high employee engagement groups generally ranked email, face-to-face and posters, brochures, and flyers as their top three communication channel choices. The researcher did not identify any relationships between the ordinal engagement ratings and channel preferences.

The hypothesis was that there would be a relationship. The researcher did not identify any relationships between the ordinal engagement ratings and channel preferences. This result allows us to fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement.

Summary of Results

From this non-experimental, correlational study it was determined that there was a moderately positive relationship between employee engagement and communication climate. The result allowed us to reject the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between communication climate and employee engagement.

The second hypothesis is that there is a relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement. The result allowed us to accept the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This research determined the degree to which there was a relationship among communication climate, communication channel preferences, and employee engagement by 42 organizational members from the 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S. The researcher conducted three surveys using the Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate Survey, the Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and a modified Communication Channel Preferences Survey originally created by Hayase (2009). This research investigated the stated hypotheses (1) that there is a relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations, and (2) that there is a relationship between employees' channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations.

In addition, the researcher expanded on Hayase's study by collecting data from a sample different from Hayase. The sample for this research included full-time employees of a 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S. The researcher updated the Hayase's communication channel data collection instrument to include social media options and collected respondents' order of preference for communication channels in specific contexts. Conclusions,

recommendations and limitations are presented in regards to each research question.

Conclusions

<h3 style="text-align:center">Research Question 1</h3>

For research question 1, the result allowed us to reject the null and accept that there is a moderate relationship (r = .35) between communication climate and employee engagement. This aligns with Hayase's (2009) result that a positive and mutual relationship between employees and leaders has an impact on employee engagement in the organization. The result also supports Kular et al. (2008) notion that one of the key drivers of employee engagement is communication.

The results also support Pace and Fauies' (1989) findings that effective communication is manifested when employees engage with others in ways which help them understand the importance and meaning of that engagement. Additionally, the results are congruent with Watson Wyatt (2006) that communication makes a positive difference with employee engagement and employees receive communication from their leaders more frequently than low engagement employees.

A possible explanation for the moderate relationship instead of a large relationship between communication climate and employee engagement may stem from other variables that contribute to employee engagement. These may include coaching, career development, recognition, rewards, accountability, satisfaction, meaningful work, perceived safety, adequate resources, individual attention, alignment with organization's values, opinion surveys, effective communication, management's interest in well-being, challenging work, input in decision making, clear vision of organization's goals, and autonomy (Baumruk et al., 2006; Kahn, 1990; Woodruffe, 2006). It is also possible that

among the population for this research, employee engagement is affected by undetermined variables conducive to a 24 hour service department; therefore having differing effects on engagement for employees working in the context of an 8-to-5 organizational environment. The nature of the service being provided requires employees to focus on communicating with the customers; perhaps the communication climate of a 24 hour service organization is not obvious, especially for the overnight shifts when supervisors are not present (Saks, 2005).

Research Question 2

Research question 2 hypothesized a relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and organizational member engagement. Hayase (2009) used the Communication Channel scale instrument to provide a comprehensive overview of employee satisfaction with 14 communication channels. The researcher added social media and a request for respondents to prioritize communication channel preferences. The researcher compared each respondent's total score from the Organizational Commitment Survey to the respondent's communication channel preferences selections to determine relationship (see Appendix K). Respondents in the low, medium and high employee commitment (engagement) groups generally ranked email, face-to-face and posters/brochures/flyers as their top three communication channel choices. The researcher did not identify any relationships between the ordinal ratings of participants' OCS scores to channel preferences. This result allows us to fail to reject the null hypothesis and accept that there is no relationship between communication channel preferences and employee engagement.

One finding among the results regarding channel preferences was that respondents selected email as one of their top three communication channel choices. This was confirmed in Hayase's (2009) results that email had a significant relationship to employee engagement. The results from this research did not align with Krell, (2006) who suggested rather than e-mail, personal interaction and, if necessary, telephone conversations should be used when possible to communicate, especially between leaders and employees. As suggested by Gooden, "e-mail communications pose the greatest risk of unintended interpretation—followed by telephone and face-to-face exchanges, respectively" (as cited in Krell, 2006: 54). It is possible the respondents worked in a highly technical environment where email– as a primary means of communication -- contributed to it being selected as a preferred communication channel.

Another finding concerned respondents selecting face-to-face as one of their top three communication channel choices. This finding supports the Waldeck et al. (2004) results that identified face-to-face communication as the most important predictor of assimilation effectiveness, followed by ACIT use. Similarly (Krell, (2006) suggested a face-to-face exchanges as adding a personal element to communication and as a means for demonstrating engagement. It is possible that there is not a relationship among employee engagement and communication channel preferences or the relationship was not present in this population.

Implications

The findings from this research document the relationship between engagement and communication climate, as documented in the literature. This relationship is one that can help leaders to improve or sustain employee engagement. Leaders can model and

maintain a good communication climate that may contribute to higher levels of employee engagement. Also, it is important for leaders to understand that email and face-to-face are the two most preferred channel preferences allowing for increased interaction between two or more organizational members. Understanding how communication contributes to employee engagement provides leaders with insight for developing and sustaining successful organizations and highly engaged employees.

The population for this study is a highly technical group using technology to communicate with their customers. It could be assumed that the respondents would be inclined to use social media to communicate in the contexts provided in the channel preference survey. The fact that the population did not embrace social media may also indicate that they preferred to use it for personal communication and not business communication.

Results from this study indicated that the population did not prefer social media but instead face-to-face as a strong preference among a group so skilled in technology based communication. Leaders in organizations requiring members to use technology as a primary means of communication in their work can learn from this finding. Even though technology is the channel of preference for the work among this population, it may not always be the preference for meaningful communication within the organization.

Although face-to-face is a strong preference for this population, they also selected email as one of the top three preferences. This finding may be due to the fact that this research was administered in a 24-hour helpdesk environment where email is the most preferred channel of communication. It is important to note that employees and leaders are not in the office at the same time for face-to-face conversations.

A good portion of this study is exploratory; it is clear that much more research is needed on the relationships among communication climate, employee engagement and employees' communication channel preferences. Understanding communication climate, employee's perception of the quality of relationships and the support they receive from their organization, is necessary for organizations wanting to increase employee engagement. Organizations can understand communication climate by administering surveys, focus groups, and suggestion programs addressing employees' needs and concerns. Improving the communication climate may encourage higher levels of employee engagements.

Limitations

Although this research covered a population that was comprised of 42 full-time organizational members of the 24-hour helpdesk department of a large retail, petroleum business located in the Midwestern U.S., it was able to provide several insights into the relationship between communication climate and employee engagement. One limitation of this research was the sample population. The results cannot be applied to the general public. The population is considered one of convenience due to being solely comprised of this group.

Another limitation involves the administration of the surveys as three separate instruments. This caused the response rate to vary among the surveys resulting in possible skewed results. The response rate for the Dennis' (1974) Communication Climate Survey was 78%. The response rate for the Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was 83%. The response rate for the Communication Channel Preferences Survey was 40%. Therefore, to produce more consistent results the

three surveys should be distributed as one instrument instead of distributing as three separate administrations.

Recommendation 1

While the concepts of communicate climate and employee engagement are heavily studied subjects individually, the results from this study provide a glimpse at the relationship between the two. Future research regarding the relationship will provide insight about other variables that may have an effect on the communication climate --- employee engagement relationship.

Recommendation 2

While the concept of communication channel preference is a fairly new topic of research, there is a need for additional research. One finding from this study indicated email as the third preferred communication channel among participants for the *performance* context. Qualitative research regarding communication channel preferences for performance reviews might provide insight into reasons for email being selected for such a context. Further insight could also be gained by exploring the contributions employee engagement has regarding specific channel preferences like email. This research did not find any relationship. Additionally, other channels of communication might be included in future research. For example, telephone conversations could be included as a channel preference among various organizational contexts and analyzed with regard to employee engagement. As technology evolves, it would be imperative to continue the exploration of how new and emerging communication channels affect employee engagement.

Recommendation 3

This study was conducted using a sample from one organization and administering three methods of measurement. A recommendation for future research is to use a sample comprised of several departments within an organization or a larger sample of participants from among several industries. The insight gained from using such samples may provide information that is not obtainable as one from the same environment. The desired communication climate for obtaining high employee engagement may differ among a sample comprised of several departments within an organization or a larger sample of participants across several industries.

Finally, this study was conducted in a Midwestern 24- hour department help desk. Future studies could involve more diverse populations including non 24-hour departments or international companies. With the globalization of the workplace it is important for leaders to understand how communication climate affects employee engagement among 24-hour departments that operate in a more global context.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship among communication climate, employee engagement and employees' communication channel preferences. The study established a moderate relationship among communication climate and employee engagement. Although this finding aligns with previous literature, the study failed to establish a relationship between employee engagement and employees' communication channel preferences. The research did document that the highest three communication channels for employees of all levels of engagement are face-to-face, email and poster/flyers/brochures.

While Chapter 2 reviewed past literature of communication climate, employee engagement and communication channel preferences it was noted that there is limited literature regarding their relationships. This research provided supporting data on the existence of a moderate relationship between communication climate and employee engagement. Acknowledging the relationship may prove to be useful information for leaders in developing engaged employees and sustaining successful organizations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Permission from Company to Conduct Survey

From: [NAME]. (Research Organization)
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 9:19 AM
To: [NAME] (Research Organization)
Cc: [NAME]. (Research Organization); [NAME]. (Research Organization)
Subject: RE: Requesting Permission to Conduct a Study

[NAME] I spoke with Brian and you have permission to survey everyone, but we want you to share your results.
 Thanks,
[NAME]

 From: [NAME] (Research Organization)
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 9:17 AM
To: [NAME] (Research Organization)
Subject: Requesting Permission to Conduct a Study
Importance: High
 Hello [NAME]
 I would like to thank you for verbally granting me permission to conduct my study. I hope the results will be helpful to you.
 Please reply to this email stating I have permission to survey 39 specialists for documentation purposes for IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval.
 Also, I just want to verify do I have permission for the 39 specialists and 16 processors or just the 39 specialists?
 Thanks,
 [NAME]

From: [NAME] (Research Organization)
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 12:45 PM
To: [NAME] (Research Organization)
Subject: Requesting Permission to Conduct a Study
Importance: High

Hello [NAME],

As you know I am currently in graduate school working on my Master in Leadership Development. For my thesis topic is the relationship between employee's communication channel (i.e. face to face, email, memo, and brochure) preference and employee engagement. I can provide my proposal for further information. I would like to use the specialists and processors (will be contacting [NAME] for permission) as my sample population.

The survey would only take approximately 5-10 minutes and consist of 3 parts; communication climate, employee engagement and communication channels preferences. The results will be compiled into a excel spreadsheet and will be provided to you. My goal is the results from my study will be beneficial to Research Organization.

Please let me know if you would authorize me conducting this study. Also, please let me know if there is anything you would like to have investigated and I could add it to my study and provide you with the results.

Thanks,

[NAME]

Phone:

Fax:

Appendix B

Communication Climate Survey

This questionnaire will ask you questions concerning internal communication within an organization. For the purpose of this study internal communication is defined as the exchange of information both informal and formal between management and organizational members. When reading each question think of your current job when answering. If you are not currently employed, think about your most recent job when answering. If you have more than one job, think about the job you consider most important. It is recommended that you write down the first response that comes to mind.

When answering the items below think about the company you currently work for, most recently worked for or consider most important.
Rate the following statements according to **how you feel about your relationship with your immediate supervisor.** Indicate your choice by placing an (x) under your answer choice.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 Your superior makes you feel free to talk with him/her.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. Your superior really understands your job problems.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. Your superior encourages you to let him/her know when things are going wrong on the job.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
4. Your superior makes it easy for you to do your best work.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. Your superior expresses his/her confidence with your ability to perform the job.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6. Your superior encourages you to					

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bring new information to his/her attention, even when that new information may be bad news

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

7. Your supervisor makes you feel that things you tell him/her are really important

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

8. Your superior is willing to tolerate arguments and to give a fair hearing to all points of view.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

9. Your superior has your best interests in mind when he/she talks to his/her boss.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

10. Your superior is a really competent, expert manager.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

11. Your superior listens to you when you tell him/her about things that are bothering you.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

12. It is safe to say what you are really thinking to your superior.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

13. Your superior is frank and candid with you.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

14. You can communicate job frustrations to your superior.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

15. You can tell your superior about the way you feel he/she manages your department.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

16. You are free to tell your superior that you disagree with him/her.

       ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

17. You think you are safe in communicating "bad news" to your

superior without fear of retaliation
on his/her part.

( )　　( )　　( )　　( )　　( )

18. You believe that your superior
thinks he/she really understands
you.

( )　　( )　　( )　　( )　　( )

Appendix C

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work, most recently worked or consider most important. Rate the following statements according to **how you feel about the particular organization for which you are now working, most recently worked for or consider most important.** Indicate your choice by placing an (x) under your answer choice.

Note: The answer choices in this section are different from the previous section. Please review the new answer choices prior to making your selection.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.					
4. The work I do is very important to me.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
5. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

6. I find my values and the
organization's values are very
similar.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

7. I am proud to tell others that I am
part of this organization.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

8. My job activities are personally
meaningful to me.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

9. I could just as well be working for
a different organization as long as
the type of work was similar.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

10. This organization really
 inspires the very best in me
in the way of job performance.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

11. It would take very little
 change in my present
circumstances to
cause me to leave this
organization.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

12. I am extremely glad that I
 chose this organization to
 work for over others I was
considering at the time I joined.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

13. There's not much to be gained by
staying with this organization
indefinitely.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

14. Often, I find it difficult to agree
with this organization's policies
on important matters relating to
its organizational members.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

15. I really care about the fate of this organization.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

16. The work I do is meaningful to me.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

17. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

18. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )   ( )

Appendix D

Permission to Use Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

From: [NAME]
To: [NAME]
Monday, November 19, 2012 4:18 PM
[NAME]

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was originally developed by [NAME]. He decided not to copyright the instrument to encourage its use by others in research. As a result, the OCQ legally exists in the public domain and you do not need permission for its use in your study.

Good luck on your research.

[NAME]

From: [NAME]
To: [NAME]
Sent Items
Monday, November 19, 2012 12:10 AM
Hello,
My name is [NAME] and I am working towards a Master of Science in Leadership Development at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio. I came across your Organizational Commitment Questionnaires (OCQ) during my research. I am requesting permission to use the survey for my thesis titled Relationships Among employees' Comunication Cimate, employee Engagement and Communication Channel Preferences.
 Thanks,
[NAME]
937-718-5750

Communication Channel Preferences Survey

Please select your top three communication channel preference for each context
**Place an X in the number 1 column for top preference, place an X in the 2
column for your second place preference and place an X in the 3 column for
your third place preference**

Constructive Criticism from Supervisor

Example: Customer Service Complaint

	1	2	3
Face to face			
Email			
Poster, Flyer Brochures			
Facebook or Twitter			
Training classes			
Meeting with Senior Management			
Pre-shift information or meeting			
Printed Newsletter			
Blogs			
At home mailers			

E-Newsletters

Directions/Instructions

Example: Troubleshooting

	1	2	3
Face to face			
Email			
Poster, Flyer Brochures			
Facebook or Twitter			
Training classes			
Meeting with Senior Management			
Pre-shift information or meeting			
Printed Newsletter			
Blogs			
At home mailers			
E-Newsletters			

Organization Policy

Example: New Hire/Dress Code

	1	**2**	**3**
Face to face			
Email			
Poster, Flyer Brochures			
Facebook or Twitter			
Training classes			
Meeting with Senior Management			
Pre-shift information or meeting			
Printed Newsletter			
Blogs			
At home mailers			
E-Newsletters			

Personal Announcements

Example: New Position or Promotional Opportunities

	1	2	3
Face to face			
Email			
Poster, Flyer Brochures			
Facebook or Twitter			
Training classes			
Meeting with Senior Management			
Pre-shift information or meeting			
Printed Newsletter			
Blogs			
At home mailers			
E-Newsletters			

Performance Reviews

	1	2	3
Face to face			
Email			
Poster, Flyer Brochures			
Facebook or Twitter			
Training classes			
Meeting with Senior Management			
Pre-shift information or meeting			
Printed Newsletter			
Blogs			
At home mailers			
E-Newsletters			

Appendix F

Permission to Use Channel Preference Survey

FROM: [NAME]
TO: [NAME]
Saturday, October 27, 2012 4:45 PM
 Hi [NAME] - You have my permission to use and modify my communication channel
survey.
Please do keep me posted on your progress and I would love to read your thesis once it's
completed.
[NAME]
Sent from my iPad

On Oct 27, 2012, at 10:33 AM, [NAME]
Hello [NAME]
We spoke on the phone a couple of weeks ago. I expressed my interest in your thesis
from 2009 on internal communication and employee engagement. Also, I asked you for
permission to use and modify your communication channels survey. This email is for
documentation purpose for my IRB approval. I really appreciate your willingness to
assist me in this journey. Please reply to this email granting me permission to use and
modify your communication channels survey.

Thanks,
[NAME]

Appendix G

Email Invitation to Participate

February 2013

My name is [NAME] and I am working towards a Master of Science in Leadership Development at Wright State University. One of the requirements is to complete a thesis which requires that I conduct a research project.

You are being asked to participate in an online survey. There are three short surveys. For each survey you will receive an email with a link. Each survey will take approximately 1-2 minutes to complete.

The purpose of the survey is to collect your feedback regarding communication in organizations. As a full-time organizational member, you are invited to participate in a research study to investigate the relationship between communication climate and employee engagement. Also, the study will investigate the relationship between employees' communication channel preferences and employee engagement in organizations.

Your participation is voluntary and your anonymity will be maintained as no identifiable information will be collected. There are no known risks and you will receive no direct benefit for your participation in this study. You are free to terminate your participation at any time and without prejudice. Completion of the surveys implies your consent.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact me at long.211@wright.edu or my faculty advisor, Dan Noel, Ph.D. at 937-775-3097. If you have general questions about giving consent or your rights as a research participant in this research study, you may contact the WSU Institutional Review Board at 937-775-4462

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete these surveys and submit your feedback for this research initiative.
Sincerely,

Appendix H

Communication Climate Dataset and Descriptive Analysis

Communication Climate Survey	
22	66
37	67
39	68
45	68
47	68
49	68
49	69
49	70
51	72
52	73
54	76
60	78
61	78
61	79
62	80
64	82
65	

Communication Climate	
Mean	61.48484848
Standard Error	2.444505749
Median	65
Mode	68
Standard Deviation	14.04261641
Sample Variance	197.1950758
Kurtosis	0.467014944
Skewness	-0.79061529
Range	60
Minimum	22
Maximum	82
Sum	2029
Count	33

Appendix I

Employee Engagement Ranking and Descriptive Analysis

Employee Engagment Ranking

Low	Medium	High
48	59	64
49	59	64
51	59	65
53	59	66
53	59	66
54	59	67
55	59	69
56	60	72
57	60	74
57	60	75
57	60	
	61	

Descriptive Analysis	
Mean	60.18181818
Standard Error	1.142709554
Median	59
Mode	59
Standard Deviation	6.564366618
Sample Variance	43.09090909
Kurtosis	0.118794946
Skewness	0.456972044
Range	27
Minimum	48
Maximum	75
Sum	1986
Count	33

Appendix J

Descriptive statistics of the responses that completed both the

Communication Channel Preferences and the Organization Commitment

Questionnaire

Descriptive Analysis	
Mean	62.41176
Standard Error	1.782387
Median	61
Mode	59
Standard Deviation	7.34897
Sample Variance	54.00735
Kurtosis	0.339131
Skewness	-0.18197
Range	27
Minimum	48
Maximum	75
Sum	1061
Count	17