

Volume 15, Number 1

ISSN 1948-3155

**Allied Academies
International Conference**

**New Orleans, LA
April 14-16, 2010**

**Academy of Organizational Culture,
Communications and Conflict**

PROCEEDINGS

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Volume 15, Number 1

2010

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INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION: THE INTERVENING ROLE OF GOAL ORIENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Extant research has shown that employees' intrinsic motivation influences their job satisfaction. This study goes beyond intrinsic motivation to determine whether the different self-regulation strategies of goal orientation, namely, learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation, will influence job satisfaction in addition to intrinsic motivation and whether goal orientation will moderate the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction. Specifically, if a person is learning goal oriented, does this improve their job satisfaction, and, if a person is performance goal oriented, does this decrease their job satisfaction. This is tested using moderated regression analysis and the results are presented herein.

Key words: intrinsic motivation, goal orientation, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

From a practical standpoint, is it important to know if a person who lacks internal motivation concerning his/her job experience greater job satisfaction if he/she has a learning goal orientation? The answer is yes, because goal orientation, while often considered a dispositional state can also be acted upon by management to create a different state-based goal orientation (O). Likewise, is it important to know that when a person relies on a performance goal orientation, if it negatively influences their job satisfaction, especially in cases when they lack intrinsic motivation? Again, yes, because management can take action to bring about a learning goal orientation state through communication and training. As such, the premise of this research is to explore the relationships between intrinsic motivation and goal orientation in terms of whether goal orientation has a moderating influence on the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, GOAL ORIENTATION AND JOB SATISFACTION

Intrinsic motivation has been defined as the activation or energization of goal-oriented behavior within an individual due to internal factors within a person rather than due some external factors acting on the individual (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation has been the focus of much organizational research, and it can be traced back to the 1970s with the research of Lawler (1969) and Deci (1972). Since that time, the impact of intrinsic motivation has been linked to many other dispositions as well as several aspects of employee behavior (e.g., Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Borzaga & Tortia, 2006; Gagne & Deci, 2005; Millette & Gagne, 2008; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007; Vansteenkiste, Ryan & Deci, 2008; Ward, 2008).

Goal orientation is a form of self-regulation that emerged from research on social-cognitive theory (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; VandeWalle, 1996, 1997). Goal orientation is defined as both a dispositional trait and also as a current state, with outside factors influencing the trait to bring about the current state (e.g., Butler, 1993; Dragoni, 2005; Stevens & Gist, 1997). There are three different strategies, a learning goal orientation in which person focuses on improving their abilities, a

performance prove orientation in which a person seeks to demonstrate their abilities successfully in order to gain a reward, and a performance avoid orientation in which a person seeks to avoid punishment by successfully accomplishing their tasks (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; VandeWalle, 1996).

Job satisfaction is defined as the enjoyment that employees experience by performing their jobs. It is considered an important outcome due to its links with job-related stress, turnover, absenteeism and similar outcomes.

For this study, the following hypotheses are offered:

- H1. Intrinsic motivation will be positively related to job satisfaction.*
- H2. Learning goal orientation will be positively related to job satisfaction.*
- H3. Performance prove goal orientation will be negatively related to job satisfaction.*
- H4. Performance avoid goal orientation will be negatively related to job satisfaction.*
- H5. Learning goal orientation will positively moderate the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.*
- H6. Performance prove goal orientation will negatively moderate the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.*
- H7. Performance avoid goal orientation will negatively moderate the relationship between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction.*

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

This study involved a pen and paper survey data collection consisting of 364 students in a small university in the Southeastern United States. The survey involved the collection of data through Likert-type scales.

Measures

All of the instruments used in this research were Likert-type scales with a 7-cell answer format. The measures chosen were all ones that are utilized within organizational research and published in peer-reviewed journals. These include:

Intrinsic motivation. The measure by Hackman and Lawler (1979) was chosen. It consists of 3 items, including "I feel a great sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well" and "Doing my job well increases my feeling of self-esteem." The coefficient alpha was .77.

Goal orientation. VandeWalle's (1997) measure for goal orientation was utilized. It consisted of items for learning goal orientation such as "I often read materials related to my work to improve my ability" and "I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge." The coefficient alpha was .86. For performance prove goal orientation it has items such as "I'm concerned with showing that I can perform better than my coworkers" and "I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others at work." The coefficient alpha was .77. For performance avoid goal orientation it had such items as "Avoiding a show of low ability is more important to me than learning a new" and "I'm concerned about taking on a task at work if my performance would reveal that I had low ability." The coefficient alpha was .84.

Job satisfaction. The measure created by Hopcock (1935) was used. It consisted of three items, including "All in all, I am satisfied with my job." The coefficient alpha was .90.

ANALYSIS

The correlation matrix is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlations		1	2	3	4
Variable		1	2	3	4
1. Intrinsic Motivation					
2. Learning Goal Orientation		.27**			
3. Performance Prove Goal Orientation		.03	.17**		
4. Performance Avoid Goal Orientation		-.15**	-.34**	.31**	
5. Job Satisfaction		.12*	.20**	-.06	-.19**

* p< .05. ** p<.01.

Results of the mean-centered regression analysis (Aiken & West, 1991) are in Table 2.

Table 2. Moderated Regression Analysis			
<i>Intrinsic Motivation and Learning Goal Orientation (LGO)</i>			
	Std. B		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Intrinsic Motivation	.12*	.07	.06
Learning GO		.19**	.19**
IM x LGO			.00
R-square	.01	.05	.05
Adj. R-Sq.	.01	.04	.04
<i>Intrinsic Motivation and Performance Avoid Goal Orientation (PAGO)</i>			
	Std. B		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Intrinsic Motivation	.12*	.12*	.12*
Performance Prove GO		-.06	-.06
IM x PPGO			-.07
R-square	.01	.01	.02
Adj. R-Sq.	.01	.01	.01

Table 2. Moderated Regression Analysis			
<i>Intrinsic Motivation and Performance Prove Goal Orientation (PPGO)</i>			
	Std. B		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Intrinsic Motivation	.12*	.09	.12*
Performance Prove GO		-.17**	-.17**
IM x PPGO			-.10
R-square	.01	.04	.05
Adj. R-Sq.	.01	.04	.04

*p< .05. **p< .01.

RESULTS

The moderation regression analysis revealed support for hypothesis 1, with a $\beta = .116$, $p = .03$. For hypotheses 2-4, for the main effects of all three goal orientations, significance was found for H3, learning goal orientation ($\beta = .186$, $p = .001$) and H5, performance avoid goal orientation ($\beta = -.169$, $p = .001$). No statistically significant results were found for H4, performance prove goal orientation ($\beta = -.064$, $p = .221$). For H5-H7, none of the interaction terms were significant, all with p-values above .10.

DISCUSSION

The results of this research suggest that while there is no moderating effect of goal orientation of intrinsic moderation, learning goal orientation and performance avoid goal orientations tend to influence job satisfaction beyond the influence of intrinsic motivation for the job. Specifically, this would suggest that when a person has a learning goal orientation, then even when they might not be intrinsically motivated, they might still be more likely to experience job satisfaction, not due to an internal desire for the job but rather due to an interest in learning. Conversely, this research also suggests that performance avoid goal orientation might be so worried about not making mistakes that it reduces the potential job satisfaction even when the person has a strong intrinsic motivation. In such a case, performance avoid goal orientation gets in the way of enjoying the job.

These results suggest that organizations should encourage employees to assume learning goal orientation strategies. Central to creating a learning goal orientation state among employees is creating a psychological climate for learning while reducing the psychological climate for avoiding failure (Dragon, 2005).

LIMITATIONS

This study has the limitation of generalizability in that the sample consisted of students. Many of the students were currently employed non-traditional students. The cross-sectional design of the study precludes any inference of causality, and even the directionality is not certain. Social desirability and CMV also represent potential issues.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In light of this study's findings, further consideration of the role of goal orientation as a moderator of other work-related attitudes, such as perceived organizational support, LMX, and work-life balance would be interesting. In addition, further research is needed in terms of comparing the psychological climates in which employees are embedded. Situations might exist in which the relationships found in this study for goal orientation might be reversed. For instance, performance avoid goal orientation might actually be found to have a positive relationship with job satisfaction in psychological climates in which mistakes and errors are either harshly reprimanded or have very serious ramifications. Likewise, learning goal orientation in such a climate might have a negative relationship since errors carry are more serious.

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PROACTIVE PERSONALITY AND GOAL ORIENTATION: A MODEL OF DIRECTED EFFORT

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Edward O'Donnell, Columbus State University**

ABSTRACT

This paper brings together two disparate areas of literature, namely, proactive personality and learning goal orientation, to examine how proactive personality translates a motivation to learn into actual effort and performance outcomes in teams. This study also examines the relationships of two other personality traits, conscientiousness and neuroticism, with learning goal orientation. This study is a response to a call for research (Deshon, Kozlowski, Schmidt, Milner, & Wiechmann, 2004; Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006). In answer, we specifically test a model in which we link conscientiousness and neuroticism to learning goal orientation, and learning goal orientation with proactive personality. In turn, proactive personality is linked to individual effort on a team, which, in turn, is linked with peer-evaluated individual performance on the team. Hypotheses are offered and tested using structural equation modeling.

INTRODUCTION

Prior research has strongly suggested that a learning goal orientation has positive benefits in the classroom and in the workplace in terms of improving individual performance. Similarly, learning goal orientation has been found to be helpful in teams as well. Similarly, proactive personality has been linked to positive work-related outcomes as well. Proactive personality defines the likelihood of taking personal initiative to get things done. Since both of these constructs have been found to be related to performance outcomes, the primary focus of this research is whether learning goal orientation and proactive personality function together in influencing performance.

Two articles from the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, one by Deshon, Kozlowski, Schmidt, Milner, and Wiechmann, (2004) and another by Major, Turner, and Fletcher (2006) provide the theoretical support for this model. Together, these two studies serve as the theoretical foundation for the structural equation model utilized in this study. The lynchpin for linking these constructs is the concept of applying proactive effort toward learning-oriented directional goals in order to achieve tangible performance results.

THE BIG FIVE AND LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION

The Big Five, a five-factor model of personality, has become the most popular conceptualization of personality (Zweig & Webster, 2004). Two of the five personality traits within the five factor model (e.g. conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and extroversion) have been found to be related to motivation to learn. Conscientiousness was found to be positively related, while neuroticism was found to be negatively related, to the motivation to learn (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000).

Within the social-cognitive approach, goal orientation has become a highly researched forms of self-regulation (Dweck, 1986, 1997). Individuals can choose from a learning orientation that focuses on increasing one's own abilities and a performance orientation that focuses on

demonstrating one's own abilities. Performance orientation is divided into performance prove and performance avoid orientations, the first to gain reward, the second to avoid punishment (c.f. Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996).

The following hypotheses are offered:

Hypothesis 1. Conscientiousness is positively related to learning goal orientation. The higher a person's level of conscientiousness, the higher their level of learning goal orientation will be.

Hypothesis 2. Neuroticism is negatively related to learning goal orientation. The higher a person's level of neuroticism, the lower their level of learning goal orientation will be.

LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION AND PROACTIVE PERSONALITY

Proactive personality is defined as a disposition relating to individual differences in people's proclivity to take personal initiative in acting to influence their environments in a broad range of activities and situations (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Individuals with strongly proactive personalities will demonstrate initiative, look for opportunities, take action rather than waiting and reacting, and will persevere until the change has been achieved (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Thus the following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 3. Learning goal orientation is positively related to proactive personality. The more learning focused a person is, the greater their proclivity for proactive behavior.

PROACTIVE PERSONALITY AND EFFORT

Since proactive people intentionally create change, influence their environments, and directly affect their situations, their efforts are typically directed toward some performance outcome (e.g., Dutton, Ashford, O'Neill, & Lawrence, 2001). Thus:

Hypothesis 4. Proactive personality is positively related to effort. The more proactive a person is inclined to be, the more effort they will put into their tasks.

MEDIATION BY PROACTIVE PERSONALITY

VandeWalle, Cron, and Slocum (2001) discovered that learning goal orientation had a significant positive relationship with effort, self-efficacy, and goal level. According to Latham and Locke's (1991) model of motivation sequencing, individual action and performance are the function of self-efficacy and goals/intentions, and goals control the direction, intensity, and duration of actions. Thus, the following hypotheses are offered:

Hypothesis 5. Proactive personality will partially mediate the relationship between learning goal orientation and effort.

Hypothesis 6. Effort will be positively related to individual performance.

METHOD

Participants and Setting

This study's participants consisted of 438 undergraduate seniors enrolled in a Strategic Management capstone course for all business students who were near graduation. The data was collected at a large Southeastern university from several sections of students over a period of eight semesters.

Factor Analysis

To assess model fit with the data for the proposed model, we used AMOS 5.0 for structural equation modeling (SEM). Following the procedure outlined by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we followed the two-step approach of: 1) assessing model fit by conducting confirmatory factor analyses, with the appropriate validity assessment, and 2) applying a path analysis to verify all the paths, including the mediation of learning goal orientation by proactive personality on effort.

Fitting the Structural Equation Model

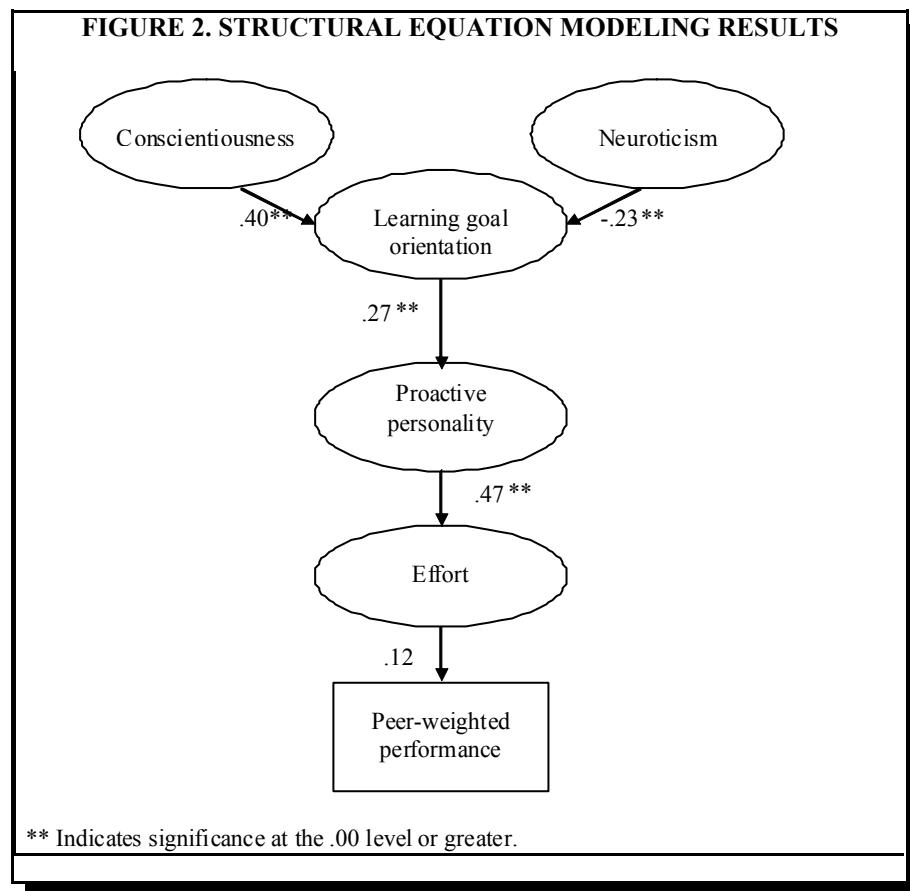
Fit indices. Following the suggestions of Hu & Bentler (1999), we report several relevant tests of model fit. First, we used the chi-square difference test, which is extremely sensitive to sample size (with greater than 3 as a good fit). Second, we used the comparative fit index (CFI), which compares fit of model with null/independence model, in which all correlations equal zero (the cut-off value is .95 according to Hu and Bentler (1999), and .90 according to Kline (2005). Bagozzi and Edwards (1998) have recommended the CFI as particularly useful for small sample sizes because it, unlike the chi-square statistic, operates independently of sample size. Third, we used the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), which is one of the most informative criteria in covariance structure modeling (Byrne, 2001). RMSEA has a cut-off value of .06 for a good fit, according to Hu & Bentler (1999) and .05 for a good fit, according to Kline (2005). Forth, we also used Sörbom's root mean squared residual (SRMR), which has a cut-off value of .10. Fifth, we used the Tucker-Lewis fit index, which has a cut-off value of .95.

Mediation. We hypothesized partial mediation by proactive personality on the relationship between learning goal orientation as the predictor and effort as the outcome. We tested this hypothesis for partial mediation using the mediational analyses originally defined by Baron & Kenny (1986), as described by Frazier, Barron & Tix (2004). The procedure involved four steps, performed as three regression equations, in establishing that the mediator mediates relationship between predictor and outcome variable. The first step was to show that a significant relationship exists between the predictor and the outcome. In this case, the relationship was significant ($\beta = .241$, $p = .028$). The second step was to show that the predictor is related to the mediator. Learning goal orientation was related to proactive personality ($\beta = .270$, $p = .027$). The third step was to show that the mediator is related to the outcome variable. Again, this was the case ($\beta = .462$, $p = .000$). The final step was to show that the strength of the relationship between predictor and the outcome was significantly reduced when the mediator is added. While only partial mediation had been expected, the results actually showed full mediation, thus more than supporting hypothesis 5. The relationship between learning goal orientation and effort became non-significant ($\beta = .137$, $p = .174$).

Model Validation

All hypothesized paths were positive and statistically significant, with the exception of performance, and all indices indicated an acceptable fit: ($\chi^2/df = 1.335$, $p > .000$, CFI = .955,

$\text{RMSEA} = .056$, $\text{SRMR} = .08$, and $\text{TLI} = .95$). We thus concluded that the originally-hypothesized model with full mediation of learning goal orientation's relationship to effort by proactive personality is the most accurate representation of the data. Path model results are depicted in Figure 2.



Comparison with other potential models. As suggested by Bentler and Bonnett (1980), we compared this model to other potential models of the data to assess its superiority. We placed proactive personality into the model as a predictor of learning goal orientation, with learning goal orientation as a predictor of effort. This model seems less supported in the literature, and the model fit degraded ($\chi^2/df = 1.442$, $p > .000$, $\text{CFI} = .94$, $\text{RMSEA} = .064$, $\text{SRMR} = .112$, and $\text{TLI} = .93$). In addition, we tried direct paths from conscientiousness and neuroticism to proactive personality, both of which were non-significant. We also tried a direct path from learning goal orientation to performance, which was also non-significant. We also considered other variables not included within this study, which also did not yield better results. In all cases, the models proved to be weaker fits to the data.

RESULTS

The results show support for hypotheses 1 and 2, that conscientiousness and neuroticism are both significant predictors of learning goal orientation ($\beta = .401$, $p = .002$ and $\beta = -.231$, $p = .041$, respectively). In addition, the results show support for hypothesis 3, that learning goal orientation

predicts proactive personality ($\beta = .271$, $p = .019$). Hypothesis 4 is also supported, in that proactive personality is a significant predictor of effort ($\beta = .472$, $p = .000$). While hypothesis 5 predicted that proactive personality would partially mediate learning goal orientation, the data actually supports full mediation, as previously stated, which was greater mediation than expected. Finally, hypothesis 6, which stated that effort would predict performance was not supported ($\beta = .271$, $p = .249$).

Discussion

Support was found for hypotheses 1 through 4. For hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, Conscientiousness positively, and neuroticism negatively, related to learning goal orientation, just as previous literature supports. For hypothesis 3, a positive relationship was shown form learning goal orientation and proactive personality. Additionally, for hypothesis 4, proactive personality was found to be positively related to effort. Surprisingly, while we predicted partial mediation of learning goal orientation's relationship with effort for hypothesis 5, we actually found full mediation, perhaps indicating the influence of proactive personality on pursuing learning goals is stronger than has been shown previously in the literature. This may also be because of the nature of the activity in which the participants were involved, since proactivity represents understanding "what is going on," and trying to measure market indicators and competitor strategies were very important.

Interestingly, however, hypothesis 6 was not supported. Individual effort on the team was not positively related to performance. This has been accredited to a few influencing factors not included within this study, namely previous experience with the computer simulation, comfort with accounting and Excel (since decisions were entered through an accounting formatted spreadsheet), and the general unpredictability of the simulation.

LIMITATIONS

Ideally, a longitudinal design would have better tested the hypotheses. Generalizability is always an important issue. Despite the issues of generalizability, the teams within the sample were stable in terms of membership, and all participants reported that they met in person at least once each week and that they all interacted with one another frequently.

REFERENCES

Available upon request

OSHA'S EFFECT ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Who is responsible for safety within the workplace or better yet; who defines a safe or unsafe work environment? The customer? The worker? The owners? The government? Who? Until the 1970's, promoting worker safety and occupational hazard prevention were shared responsibilities by the owners, managers, and employees. One particular stakeholder, Human Resources i.e. HR, has a highly complicated business function involving the juggling of employee rights and satisfaction versus assisting the organization in its ability to sustain itself financially and competitively. Thus, a regulation made by OSHA will not only affect the organization's structure and procedural methods, it will also affect employee training and development, monitoring, and controlling efforts. Human resource management is not confined to a specific department or unit; therefore, the human resource management team must ensure proper organizational policies are developed, understood, applied, and enforced by all in the organization. Methods of assessing HR effectiveness may be derived from various means; the most obvious way to assess legal compliance with OSHA would be to study fines and citation received by the organization from OSHA site visits. As accident and illness records are a requirement of the federal government (OSHA 300 Forms), The HR staff and the company's OSHA records should show a declining trend in workplace accidents, employee occupational health claims, and reduction in the number of OSHA fines and citations received.

This paper is intended to review the impact of Human Resources Management practices on the safety and welfare of the organization's employees. Review of OSHA and its mandates will be considered while looking at ways for HR to insure compliance with the federal statutes of this ACT.

INTRODUCTION

Who is responsible for safety within the workplace or better yet; who defines a safe or unsafe work environment? The customer? The worker? The owners? The government? Who? Until the 1970's, promoting worker safety and occupational hazard prevention were shared responsibilities by the owners, managers, and employees. As complaints mounted against organizations and their poor safety practices, the U.S. Government was called to action. In 1970, Congress considered the overall annual safety facts, including 14,000 workplace deaths, 2.5 million work-related disabilities and 300,000 new occupational diseases per year. (Goetsch, 2008).

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Business industries have had to evolve because of the dynamics associated with society, the marketplace, and governmental regulations. Evolution of industries meant adding functions to organizations and broadening the responsibilities of existing functions such as the personnel department to incorporate the concepts of strategy and human resource management. HR's Role in Adequate Staffing to Meet the Requirements of Regulatory Agencies.

Thus, a regulation made by OSHA will not only affect the organization's structure and procedural methods, it will also affect employee training and development, monitoring, and controlling efforts. Human resource management is not confined to a specific department or unit; therefore, the human resource management team must ensure proper organizational policies are developed, understood, applied, and enforced by all in the organization. An example of shared governance by HR and front-line management occurs when HR notifies the front-line managers of a new OSHA requirement. The new requirement could be a specific provision of an OSHA regulation, such as annual training and issuance of personal protective equipment. Once front-line management accomplishes this task (often with the help of other organizations (e.g., safety, or consultants), they provide HR with employee-signed documentation proving training was accomplished. This may seem like a simple, inexpensive task, but training supplies, education materials, equipment, and non-productive work hours can be costly to a business, which is the reason many small businesses struggle in their efforts to implement and maintain safety prevention programs.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Human Resource Management has experienced changes and rapid growth in its structure and duties since organizations have had to comply with 1974's Health and Safety at Work Act and 1999's Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations (Goldman & Lewis, 2005). These pieces of legislation require organizations to make certain employees know the standards expected by the government and employer concerning substance abuse when on the organization's time and premises.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Internal auditing performed by each organization involves the assessment of Human Resource Management's effectiveness in areas strategically tied to the organization's overall business strategy such as the ones listed below:

*Legal compliance with regulatory agencies such as OSHA, FMLA, etc., Training and development, orientation programs,
Confidentiality
Recruiting and selection processes,
Effective wage and salary system (Mathis & Jackson, 2003).*

Methods of assessing HR effectiveness may be derived from various means; the most obvious way to assess legal compliance with OSHA would be to study fines and citation received by the organization from OSHA site visits. As accident and illness records are a requirement of the federal government (OSHA 300 Forms).

Another way to compare industrial data, including safety statistics, was recently made available through the OSHA web site. Complete safety Statistics are available for any company by name.

OSHA: THE FOE

As mentioned earlier, OSHA is not considered by all to be the grand savior it would like. Many healthcare organizations, business firms, family members, employees, and politicians find it a nuisance and in desperate need of reform. This impacts HR because employees and directors have the potential to flood their offices with complaints or reasons why carrying out or conforming to OSHA regulations are impossible.

CONCLUSION

This paper has only scratched the surface of the responsibilities Human Resources Management takes care of for an organization, in dealing with OSHA and representing the business within society. OSHA has been a major player in the expansion and importance of HR as a necessary function of the business industry. necessary. Communication among those who understand the laws and those who do not will help all involved.

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DOES AGE MATTER IN JOB SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF U.S. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have examined the relationship between age and job satisfaction. These studies have revealed conflicting results. While some concluded that such relationship is positive and linear, others have concluded negative non-linear, U-shaped, or J-shaped, or no significant relationship. This study is to further investigate the impact of age on job satisfaction in a profession that has received less attention from researchers- that of information technology. A survey of 132 IT professionals in various Southern California organizations were conducted using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire "MSQ" short form to examine the effects of age on job satisfaction. This study accepted its null hypotheses that age does not play a role in job satisfaction among IT professionals in the United States. Suggestions for future research are also provided. This research contributes to job satisfaction literature by providing empirical findings regarding the relationship of age and job satisfaction.

The primary purpose of this study was to contribute to the literature on the effect of age on job satisfaction relationship (intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction) in the U.S. Through the use of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire "MSQ", the general satisfaction scale "the short form," this research examined the factors purported to influence job satisfaction in the technology industry.

Based on the use of a Chi-Square with a 95% confidence level and drawing an inter-correlation of this study variable (i.e. age) to all the 20 MSQ questions, the present study does not reveal conclusive and statistically significant results related to the role of age in job satisfaction. The findings do not support its hypotheses and concluded that age does not play a role in the outcomes of this study. Therefore, the study accepted all of its null Hypotheses stating there is no relationship between intrinsic, extrinsic, and overall job satisfaction and age among information technology professionals.

CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is almost certain to occur in work teams due to the fact that they are comprised of different people possessing different perceptions, personalities, and behaviors. Although incredibly effective, work teams may stumble upon barriers which must be overcome to allow for growth and continuation towards the common goals of the group. It is quite possible that a work team may perform without the presence of conflict, but oftentimes certain measures have been implemented to prevent such conflict from occurring. Occasional conflict, if managed appropriately, can lead to creativity, better decision-making, and improved results. However, too much conflict can lead to a decrease in performance and group cohesion. In global organizations there is an opportunity for cross-cultural differences that may increase conflict. Contained herein are both the positive and negative consequences of conflict, as well as courses of action to understand, prevent, and resolve conflict that occurs within work teams or groups.

THE VALUE OF WORK TEAMS

A work team is defined as an organized group, committed to the individuals within the group, whose members share the same intent of accomplishing a common goal. Managers have become more inclined to utilize work teams when presented with missions involving problem solving, solution development, and decision making. One advantage a team has over an individual is its diversity of resources, knowledge, and ideas (Townsley, 2009). Teams allow for greater creativity due to the eclectic styles of thinking that collaborate when groups are formed. Benefits derived from using teams include quality improvements and enhanced productivity gains obtained by bringing individuals with complementary skills together (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). Teams enable better outcomes since there is a combination of multiple experiences and knowledge bases joining together to resolve issues and make decisions. An example would be the development of a new car line by a major dealership. In order for the dealership to make the best decision possible, it should utilize members from all departments: marketing, finance, legal, production, engineering, etc., in order to develop the best overall plan for the company. This allows management to have knowledge obtained from every area within the organization that is potentially involved in determining the success or failure of the new product line. From the organized work team, all necessary information is provided and analyzed in order to effectively create the new line. As problems arise from a specific area, the team will be able to resolve issues more effectively by the input provided from the various departments. On the contrary, if the company were to choose a single individual to create the plan for the new line, he or she is unlikely to be capable of making such decisions alone. In most circumstances, work teams tend to be more successful at formulating these types of decisions because they use input from team members who may be experts in that field.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

Despite the recognizable improvements in the proficiency of organizations through the use of teams, there is also an increase in the likelihood of conflict occurring due to the presence of overall differences among members of a team. When individuals come together in work teams there are differences in terms of power, values and attitudes, and social factors that all contribute to the creation of conflict. Conflicting factors such as these may cause deviation from the key goals of the group and may generally fall into three categories: communication factors, structural factors and personal factors" (Townsley, 2009). Communication factors are often the primary source of disagreement among individuals. Barriers to communication can result from misunderstanding of information, differences in interpretation and perception, cultural differences among the team, as well as poor listening. Different communication styles, if not interpreted correctly, might also prove to be problematic. For example, problems arise when value judgments are made on the basis of different communication styles. If team members disagree and one represents views and feelings forcefully with a raised voice, another more restrained team member may see that as arrogant and aggressive. The same 'arrogant' team member may conclude that the restrained team member is untrustworthy because eye contact is not maintained (Ford, 2001). Such misinterpretation can easily trigger false opinions of the sender or receiver's intent. The second category, structural factors, can stem from elements such as the background of the team members, infrastructure issues, participation levels (within the team), or possibly the size of the team. Personal factors that could also promote the chance for conflict within a team include: individual values and goals, needs, self-esteem, or individual motives (Townsley, 2009). Furthermore, an individual's perception of the situation that is significantly different from that of another team member's may also bring about conflict.

With the increase in the globalization of organizations, a new source of conflict can come, not from just cross-functional team members, but cross-cultural members as well (Northouse, 2010). here are two cultural factors to keep in mind when considering conflict-causing factors. The first is internal group culture. There will always be variation within a group. However, "the majority of a group culture will conform to a dominant set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. But, there will be members of the cultural group that differ in significant ways from the norm" (Ford, 2009). Despite the internal group culture established, there may be individual cultural factors affecting differences among the group. These cultural differences may result from individuals within the team who come from different nationality groups, religious groups, ethnic groups, and organizations. Although the team has an inherent culture that is formed, the team must be cognizant of external cultural factors that differ from the norm of the team, or else conflict may occur. For instance, "the dominant culture in the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand is individualistic, while collectivism predominates the rest of the world" (Ford, 2009). Therefore, countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia are going to place more emphasis on autonomy, creativity and authority in decision making. Meanwhile, other countries focus more on a collectivist culture where group conformity and commitment are preserved at the expense of personal interests. These types of cultural differences can greatly impact the dynamics of a work team and must be understood and respected in order for the team to function successfully.

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

Conflict can produce either positive or negative results within work teams. An effective team is one where members are capable of handling conflict and drawing out the knowledge gained from disagreements to arrive at a better decision. However, negative consequences occur whenever conflict is not resolved by the team members. If conflict is not properly managed, the effects can be damaging to the team, as well as the organization. Oftentimes a work team may consist of individuals or groups of individuals from different areas within an organization. Thus, those groups

within the work team depend on one another for information to make the best possible decisions. Whenever there is conflict among these groups, it can either be classified as functional or dysfunctional. Positive functional conflict is a confrontation between groups that enhances and benefits the organization's performance (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). For instance, in the example mentioned previously about the dealership and its implementation of a new car line, individuals from the finance department may disagree with individuals from the marketing department on how to implement the marketing plan for the new line. As long as they are able to work through the conflict to derive the most optimum decision, then this can be considered functional conflict. Positive consequences of functional conflict include: awareness of problems, search for solutions, positive change and adaptation, as well as innovation. Thus, the absence of functional conflict in organizations might inhibit change from ever occurring and could cause a team to become stagnant and unproductive (Ivancevich, et al 2005).

Dysfunctional conflict is confrontation between groups that harms or hinders the goals of the organization (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). At this point functional conflict can lead to disruption of activities and extreme dissension among the team members when the conflict becomes dysfunctional. If the individuals within the team are not able to successfully resolve such conflict, it could prove damaging to the morale, relationships and goals of the group and the organization. Further consequences from a work team's inability to properly resolve conflict may include decreased group cohesiveness, damaged communication channels, a decline in innovation and idea creation, project cancellation, and possibly extreme profit loss. Hopefully, in order to prevent the occurrence of negative consequences from dysfunctional conflict, teams will practice good conflict resolution skills and will be well-prepared and properly trained on how to handle such disagreement within the team. However, if such is not the case, then conflict may become a direct cause for team failure instead of a positive influence in achieving optimal outcomes.

RESOLVING CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

Conflict resolution is an integral part of effective teams and organizations. Conflict is inevitable but the important takeaway is not necessarily knowing how to eliminate conflict all together, but to eliminate the problems before they begin or be prepared deal with the conflict as it is presented. There are several recommendations that prove effective in managing and resolving group conflict. The leader of the group should develop a strategy for training and preparing team members for group process, in particular, training to proactively manage or avoid conflict. Conflict management and resolution training is a great way for an organization to coach employees on how to prepare for resolving conflict when working in teams. It provides awareness of how conflict may arise and different methods of managing conflict to maximize effectiveness of the team. Such training allows the organization and its members an opportunity to develop strategies to effectively tackle conflict before it even occurs.

If the conflict can be traced to cultural differences between two or more group members, obtaining cultural synergy may be necessary (Adler, 2008). Cultural differences should be embraced, and used to enhance group performance. Ethnocentrism should be discouraged, as it tends to lift up one culture at the expense of another (Northouse, 2010). Open communication is necessary to resolve differences in perception and interpretation. Some sort of compromise between individuals or sub-groups may be necessary in order to move beyond the situation. Commonalities between members of different cultures should be emphasized and differences minimized.

At times facilitators should be designated to assist with managing and resolving group conflict. Implementing the use of a group facilitator can alleviate many problems resulting from conflict because he or she can coach the team(s) through dealing with conflict openly and successfully. This person can facilitate effective communication by intervening in conversation to allow for disagreements to be approached in a methodical and rational manner. Facilitators may also

help to resolve conflict in situations where members develop different conceptualizations of a conflict situation or event in the group. For instance, individuals may have unique internal frames of reference which cause them to interpret conversation differently than someone else (Mitchell, 2006). In addition to the implementation of conflict management training and the use of facilitators, other processes exist to aid in the practice of conflict resolution.

In an article written by Dr. Thomas Capozzoli, six processes are discussed that can be used when practicing conflict resolution. The first states that the group should explore the reasons for disagreement and if emotions are still high, continue only after emotions have calmed. Only at this point can groups make decisions rationally based on logic and thoughts versus emotional deterrents to communication. Within the first process, Capozzoli emphasizes the need for active listening and he also discusses the importance of refusing to criticize the perceptions of other group members. The second process deals with recognizing alternative solutions presented by different sides of the group, but only after the disagreement has been fully identified. Third, all the reasons for why each solution is appropriate should be explored. Then negotiations should begin to determine which solution seems most practical. Once the solution has been identified, it should be implemented with each party understanding its responsibilities. Once the fourth process has been completed in resolving conflict, the fifth one states that the group should thoroughly evaluate the chosen solution to ensure that it is most successful in solving the disagreement (Capozzoli, 1995). If the solution does not appear to be adequate in resolving the disagreement, another solution should be evaluated. The final step presented in the conflict resolution process is to continue practicing the conflict resolution process. This will enable team members of the organization to be more equipped when handling future conflicts.

Five generic approaches are mentioned when resolving intergroup conflict: dominating, accommodating, problem solving, avoiding, and compromising. The dominating approach requires that one group holds a balance of power so that it can force its resolution on the other group. This can be a successful approach when differences need to be resolved quickly or when unpopular actions need to be taken such as imposing new policy. The accommodating approach involves one group meeting the needs of another over its own. This can be beneficial when the issue is more important to the other group or when preserving peace is more important than maximizing one's own interest. The third approach, problem solving, involves collaborating and working together to maximize results for all involved. Out of these five intergroup conflict resolutions, problem solving is probably the ideal approach due to the collaboration of parties and the merger of insight, experience, knowledge and perspective. Avoiding conflict, the fourth approach, is only effective when used as a temporary method. Sometimes avoiding the conflict is necessary when other issues are more important, parties need an opportunity to cool down from a heated disagreement, or when additional time is needed to gather more information. Avoiding can be useful as long as it is used for a particular reasoning and not as a permanent solution to the conflict. When utilizing the fifth approach, known as the compromising approach, usually the resolution reached is not ideal for either group but a resolution is achieved through negotiation. Compromise is the middle-of-the-road approach and is a good backup strategy when other approaches fail at resolving conflict (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). Each of the five mentioned approaches could prove effective in resolving conflict in teams, depending on the situation.

CONCLUSIONS

Organizational work teams will inevitably encounter conflict whether the conflict exists among the individuals within the work team, or among multiple teams working together. Regardless, a good understanding of how conflict occurs, the consequences of conflict, and how to manage conflict, may allow groups to arrive at better solutions for the team and the overall organization. Learning how to manage and resolve conflict requires training and preparation, active

listening, open communication, as well as an understanding of the perceptions, personalities, and behaviors shared among the group. Leading a group requires an understanding of different cultural factors, both internal and external, are also helpful in managing conflict within a group. But most importantly, adopting good practices and approaches to conflict resolution will allow conflict to enhance the behavior of the group members and the work performance of the group.

References are available from the authors.

SINGLE MOTHERS - HOW ARE THEY DOING?

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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature was conducted to examine the status of single mothers. Are they thriving or merely surviving?

The purpose of this study was to discuss economic and social factors that affect low-income single mothers and their children. The first objective examined was the economic factors, such as sometimes-severe financial hardships, the children's cognitive development, poverty-level living conditions, and quality child care which effects labor force participation. Financial strain was shown to have unhealthy effects on single mothers and especially on their children.

The second objective examined was the social factors, such as absent fathers, below-level status, and possible behavioral problems. Single parents, whether mothers or fathers, have a difficult time maintaining an above-poverty-level lifestyle and raising their children to be healthy, well-adjusted, respectful, and successful adults.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1950's, traditional families have become increasingly rare with a boost in other types of family structures, specifically single parent households headed by women. For the past two decades, the number of single mothers has been increasing. These single parents are faced with economic and social obstacles as they try to care for their families.

From 1993 to 2003, the number of single mothers increased to approximately 77%. In 1993 the average number of single parents was 7.7 million compared to 13.7 million single parents in 2007 and approximately 84% of those parents were mothers. Single working mothers ages 55 to 64 total 31% and ages 15 - 24 total 4%. Single mothers are spread among all economic levels, ages, races, education, employment, and occupations (Grall, 2009).

Educators, lawmakers, and religious leaders continually express their concerns regarding the erosion and possible extinction of the traditional family (Moss, 2009). What's more alarming are the potential debilitating effects broken families have on children and their development. Wilcox (2009) argues that the children of divorced parents are two to three times more likely to suffer from serious social or psychological problems than children from intact marriages. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) found that 31% of adolescents with divorced parents dropped out of high school, compared to 13% of children from intact families; that 33% of adolescent girls from divorced families became teen mothers, compared to 11% from parents who were continuously married; and that 11% of boys from divorced families end up spending time in prison before the age of 32, compared to 5% of boys who come from intact homes. The consequences for children are immense. Some of these consequences include: 750,000 children have to repeat grades; 1.2 million school children are suspended; approximately, 500,000 acts of teenage delinquency are committed; 600,000 kids receive therapy; and, approximately, 70,000 kids commit suicide every year (Amato, Booth, Johnson & Rogers, 2007). Many children's lives would improve significantly if the family-stability clock could be turned back just a few decades (Amato, et al, 2007).

Many studies have been completed about children and their unfavorable behaviors because of being raised in single parent households. One research study concluded that children do worse when raised by single parents specifically low-income single mothers (Hofferth, Smith, McLoyd, & Finkelstein, 2000). Given their low wages, below average education, and harsh environment,

many single mothers look to the government for help. In turn, social programs are instituted in hopes of improving the plight of single parents and the general welfare of their children.

The purpose of this study was to discuss economic and social factors that affect low-income single mothers and their children. Economic factors such as sometimes-severe financial hardships, the cognitive development of their children, poverty-level living conditions, and quality child care which affects labor force participation were assessed. Social issues such as receiving little or no support from fathers, children's behavioral problems, and society's misconceptions about single mothers were examined. in the related literature.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

For the past two decades, single parent families have escalated while traditional two parent families have been on the decline. For married-couple families, both the poverty rate and the number in poverty increased from 4.9 percent (2.8 million) in 2007 to 5.5 percent (3.3 million) in 2008. The poverty rate and the number in poverty showed no statistical change in 2008 for female-householder-with-no-husband-present families (28.7 percent and 4.2 million) and for male-householder-no wife-present families (13.8 percent and 723,000) (US Census Bureau, 2008). These living situations make it difficult for families to remain healthy and in tact.

Many research studies have been conducted in the area of single mothers. One such study, lead by Aurora P. Jackson in 2000, demonstrated how economic hardships influenced parental psychological functioning and family relationships (Jackson, Brooks-Gunn, Huang, & Glassman, 2000). For example, her study showed that financial strain lead to depressive symptoms. In turn, those depressive symptoms disrupted effective parenting skills and, subsequently, children's behavior. The mothers tested in Jackson's study experienced several factors associated with economic hardships little or no monetary support from fathers, low wage jobs, and no education beyond high school (Jackson et al., 2000). These risks contributed to the mother's level of financial strain. Single mothers have a higher level of financial strain because, basically, they are the sole caretaker and the only source of income; therefore, depression is the result.

Financial strain was shown in Jackson's study to have adverse effects on children's development. For example, preschoolers displayed learning disabilities in addition to other behavioral problems (Jackson et al., 2000). To confer with Jackson's evidence, University of Michigan research scientist Sandra Hofferth et al (2000) argued that low-income parents simply do not have enough money to invest in books, educational activities, toys, and other advantages that require financial resources. The result is that their children's cognitive skills are lower, leading to lower levels of completed school; therefore, their children's achievement level correlated with their income level. The lower the household income, the lower the achievement levels for those children. The mother's depressive symptoms contribute to the child's behavioral problems as well, which in turn hinder family relationships from strengthening (Jackson et al., 2000).

A second study by Peter D. Brandon and Gene A. Fisher (2001) stated that insufficient income as a family stressor could affect the quality of care given to children. In addition, evidence exists to suggest that insufficient child care options could be a strong barrier to labor force participation and more of an employment barrier for public-housing residents and single parents (Kimmel, 1998). Author Elisabeth Porter (2001) of *The Journal of Gender Studies*, stated that poverty is due to women's lack of earning power, inadequate job skills, and scanty access to decent childcare. Thus, women are better off on welfare than in low-paying jobs (Porter, 2001). In contrast, Washington Post columnist Dan Froomkin (1998) wrote that economic hardships were not an excuse for people to live off government checks or for them to avoid unemployment. In a study conducted by Alexis J. Walker (2000), "employed" mothers actually found it more difficult to meet their everyday expenses. Because of expenses incurred because they had jobs, single mothers had little or no time to take on additional jobs (Walker, 2000). Many single mothers find themselves in a

Catch-22 situation; however, LaShunda Hall, government assistance recipient, proved critics wrong when she successfully completed Wisconsin Works Program (Hall, 2001).

LaShunda Hall (2001), single mother of two, participated in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded program, Wisconsin Works. Hall was provided counseling and a case manager. These two people enabled Hall to get her GED and to enroll in a four-year college, happily pursuing a Bachelor's of Science degree in Criminal Justice (Hall, 2001).

A study by researcher Linda McCreary (2000) stated that communication was a behavior associated with effective families and that this trait carried forward throughout adulthood. Effective family structure leads to well-behaved children at home as well as at school (Hofferth, et al., 2000). Additionally, single parents that participate in school activities help raise their children's achievement level, and it also strengthens the parent child bond (Sansom, 2001).

SOCIAL FACTORS

The emergence of the divorce and marriage dichotomy in America creates a host of other social problems. The breakdown of marriage in working-class and poor communities has played a major role in fueling poverty and inequality. Isabel Sawhill, a nationally known budget expert who focuses on domestic poverty and federal fiscal policy at the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution, has concluded that virtually all of the increase in child poverty in the United States since the 1970's can be attributed to family breakdown (Wilcox, 2009).

In addition to financial strain, single mothers are tested by their children's behavior or lack thereof. To make matters worse, single mothers are raising their children without support from their children's fathers. Many fathers have chosen not to be an active part of their children's lives. This decision has hardened the hearts of many single mothers.

Numerous children under the age of 18 will grow up without having their biological father or a father figure in their lives. Author Nancy Darling (1999) stated that uninvolved parenting could have detrimental effects on childhood development and could continue throughout adolescence and pre-adulthood (Darling, 1999).

Single mothers are faced with the dilemma of having the dual role of being sole family breadwinner and the sole resident care giving parent (Lockwood-Rayermann, 2000). When fathers are not around to share the child care, the full responsibility falls to the mother, increasing her sense of overwhelming obligation (Youngblut, et al., 2000).

Most children want their fathers involved in their lives. The amount of interaction between fathers and their children is very important. Children need their fathers in order to form a stronger definition of self.

Growing up in female-headed households can produce children that have difficulty adjusting in school and society (Jackson et al., 2000 & McCreary, 2000). Family structure plays a significant part in adolescents' grades and attendance according to some research findings. They found that adolescents from intact homes perform better academically and maintain better school attendance than do those students from either single-parent or remarried homes (Ham, 2004).

There have been conflicting studies showing whether children of single parents experience more behavioral problems than those growing up in two-parent households. "Single parents and their children live in a society that views their families as 'broken,' 'abnormal,' 'deviant,' and 'doomed to fail'" (Rhodes, 2000). Single mother is a phrase that conjures up poor, lazy individuals unwilling to be self-sufficient, and society should be especially wary of her children because they will never amount to anything.

Children are stigmatized and stereotyped by society because of the status of their mothers and society's perception of them. Author Carolyn Rogers (2001) wrote that children in single parent families tend to face more disadvantages than children in two-parent families. She added that single parent children might receive less attention and care from their parents. Additionally, these children

tend to have more school related health and behavioral problems which could lead to completing fewer years of schooling (Rogers, 2001).

Cornell University Professor Henry Ricciuti (1999) conducted a study that focused on 1,700 six- and seven-year old children residing in single mother households. He found that potentially adverse behavior of single parent children might not surface until later in childhood (Ricciuti, 1999). It is possible for children to perform and behave very well in school during the early years. However, as they grow and develop, conditions exist for them to react adversely to their home life-especially if that home life is filled with strife and instability. For example, before LaShunda Hall (2001) turned her life around, she was fiercely painting a path of destruction. She is an example of how economic and social issues can adversely affect the children of single parent-especially single mothers. Professor Ricciuti (1999) suggested that steps be taken when children are young before possible harmful effects of single parenthood emerge. These battles add to the war single mothers fight every day.

Behavioral problems and absent fathers add to single mothers' burdens. Additionally, single mothers must cope with some of society's negative perception of them. They have to cope with depression, low self-esteem, and the myths that society has generated about them and their children (Van Horn, 1999). With unlimited barriers, many single mothers still manage to persevere as in the case of LaShunda Hall (2001). Single parents must have the fortitude to endure the difficulty of raising children alone.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to discuss economic and social factors that affect low-income single mothers and their children. The first objective of this study was to discuss economic factors that affect low-income single mothers and their children. Researcher Jackson et al (2000) identified financial strain as a precursor to depression. Once depressive symptoms emerged, single mothers exhibited ineffective and potentially harmful parenting skills (Jackson et al., 2000). Additionally, economic hardships were magnified when single mothers had to contend with little or no monetary support from fathers and low paying jobs (Jackson et al., 2000). These issues disrupted single mothers' children's cognitive and social development (Jackson et al., 2000).

The second objective of this study was to discuss social factors that affect low-income single mothers and their children. Absent fathers, below-level status, and possible behavioral problems were some social issues discussed. Children of single parents often have behavioral problems (Jackson et al., 2000).

Single parents, whether mothers or fathers, have a difficult time raising their children to be healthy, well-adjusted, respectful, and successful adults. Coupled with economic hardships and social issues, single parents, mothers or fathers, often find themselves at the end of their rope. However, many single parents find the support and guidance needed to overcome their present situations.

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NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: ON-LINE POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT

The broad field of Non-Verbal Communication has many specialties. Researches focus on Facial Expressions, Posture, Gestures and a myriad of other things that we all do consciously or unconsciously. Being able to read a subtle expression or gesture is an advantage in any interaction. The goal in developing this model is to give the end user practical experience in reading the action of others. The model under development here, utilizes a flash interface to provide a rich media experience while learning about Non-Verbal Communication. This model provides an opportunity to view people in their natural habitat and make your own judgment on their intent. Content experts offer their analysis of the scene

THE IMPACT OF PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTIONS AND JOB SATISFACTION ON TURNOVER INTENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines individual biases in the attributions made for a generalized performance related event, and relates those attributional differences, along with job satisfaction, to the individual's turnover intentions. Initial results show that job satisfaction mediates between causality attributions, stability attributions, and turnover intentions. Both theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

"Voluntary turnover" has been one of the most salient topics in management research for at least the last half century (March & Simon, 1958, Hom & Kinicki, 2001). Every year, companies spend significant sums of money replacing employees who voluntarily separate from their organizations. The costs associated with voluntary employee turnover include disruptions of work, loss of knowledge, skills, and organizational memory (Griffeth & Hom, 2001). Extant research recognizes that attitudes and intentions explain around 5% and 15% of the turnover variance respectively (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000, Hom & Griffeth, 1995). Since one of the key determinants of turnover is the intention to turnover, a key question becomes "what causes an employee to decide that they want to leave?" The study that follows proposes that a key factor in this process is the style of attributions used by employees to explain their performance. We test a model which postulates that employees quit their jobs based on attributions they make regarding their performance.

ATTRIBUTION THEORY

Attribution theory has its roots in Heider's (1958) description of the "naive psychologist" who attempts to find causal explanations for events and human behaviors. Several models have been developed from this idea, which attempt to explain the process by which these attributions are made both in the case of self attribution (e.g. Weiner, 1974; Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978) and social attributions or attributions made regarding the behaviors and outcomes of others (e.g. Kelley, 1973, Thomson and Martinko, 2004).

Weiner (1974), in his development of the achievement motivation model of attributions, classified causal attributions across two dimensions; the locus of causality, and the stability of the cause. The first, locus of causality, originally proposed by Rotter (1966), is the degree to which the attributed cause is internal to the person, or part of the external environment. Internal attributions might include factors such as low intelligence, or lack of attention. External attributions could include weather conditions, or task difficulty. A second dimension, stability, refers to the degree to which the cause remains constant over time. The example of low intelligence would be stable, where the example of lack of attentiveness, would be unstable. Weiner (1979) and Zuckerman and

Feldman (1984) added the dimension of controllability to the achievement motivation model. This dimension focused on whether the cause of an event or behavior is controllable or uncontrollable.

McAuley, Duncan and Russell (1992) expanded the concept of controllability by proposing dual dimensions of personal and external control. For personal control, the attributor indicates that he or she either can or cannot personally control the outcome of the event. The external control dimension measures the degree to which the attributor sees the situation as being controllable by anyone else, such as a supervisor or co-worker. As Vielva and Iraurgi, (2002) point out, a response indicating external control, is different than a response indicating uncontrollability. This paper proposes that type of attribution made by an employee across these dimensions is likely to impact an employee's satisfaction with their job, as well as the likelihood that they will decide that they want to leave their position.

JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is the most studied variable in organizations. Job satisfaction has been defined as a pleasurable emotional state the results from the appraisal of one's job (Locke, 1976). In other words, job satisfaction describes an affective reaction to one's job as well as attitudes toward the job. This in turn suggests that job satisfaction is formed from affect, cognition, and ultimately will result in satisfaction contingent job-related behaviors. Some of the most commonly studied outcomes of job satisfaction are organizational citizenship behaviors, absenteeism and turnover (Organ & Ryan, 1995; Wegge, Schmidt, Parkes, & van Dick, 2007; Saari & Judge, 2004).

TURNOVER INTENTIONS

Voluntary turnover refers to an employee voluntarily leaving an organization. Early approaches such as March and Simon's (1958) contributions and inducements model have identified that job satisfaction determines the perceived desirability of movement, which ultimately determines whether an individual quits the job or not. In March and Simon's model job satisfaction is driven by the match between the job and the self-image, the match between the job and other roles, as well as the predictability of future relationships inside the organization. Additionally, based on the aforementioned dissatisfaction, quitting is contingent on an evaluation of the expected utility of the perceived alternatives.

Furthermore, Mobley (1977) suggested that job satisfaction follows an evaluation of one's existing job, which then triggers a sequence of cognitive and behavioral process leading to the quit/stay decision. It is however, essential to note that Mobley anchors his theory on the experience of job satisfaction-dissatisfaction.

Recent theorizing has included the role of job performance into the employee withdrawal process. Allen and Griffeth (2001) hypothesized and found evidence for the moderating effect of the ease of visibility on the relationship between performance and perceived ease of movement. They also found that rewards moderate the relationship between performance and the desirability of movement. It is important to note that not all voluntary turnover is bad. In fact, it would be desirable to most organizations for weak performers to quit.

Collectively, this leads us to ask whether the quit decision of employees is contingent on their implicit theories about the causes of their performance. In other words, we ask if the attributions employees make regarding their performance determined their levels of job satisfaction and ultimately their intentions to quit or remain with their respective organizations. In the following section we present specific research hypotheses grounded in attribution theory and based on a rich body of knowledge on voluntary turnover.

HYPOTHESES

Past studies have looked at the role of attributions in job satisfaction (McCormick, 1997, Norris and Niebuhr, 1984). Of specific relevance to this study, Norris and Niebuhr (1984) found that individuals who tended to attribute their performance to internal causes also had higher job satisfaction. Based on their findings, we hypothesize the following:

H1: Locus of causality will be related to job satisfaction with internal attributions leading to higher job satisfaction and external attributions leading to lower job satisfaction.

Additionally, there are numerous studies examining the role of job satisfaction on turnover intentions. Tett and Meyer (2006) provide a meta-analytical examination of past findings in this area and conclude that job satisfaction is very strongly related to turnover intentions, having a greater effect than organizational commitment. Therefore, based on their meta-analytical examination of 155 studies in the area we hypothesize:

H2: Job Satisfaction will be negatively related to turnover intentions.

A recent study by Harvey, Harris and Martinko (2008) examined the role of attributions as predictors of job satisfaction, stress and turnover intentions. This was one of the first studies to examine the roles of these variables simultaneously, and specifically to include attributions. While their focus was specifically on hostile attributions, the findings relate to our study as well. They found a relationship between hostile attribution styles and turnover intentions. Hostile attribution style is explained as “blaming others when things go wrong in their lives.” (Harvey, Harris and Martinko 2008) This relates to the CDSII dimensions as follows: Blaming others is external LOC, but also high external control and low personal control. Hostile attributions generally also indicate a bias toward high stability, as the “offender” is likely not to change. Based on their finding of a relationship between attributions and turnover intentions, we hypothesize:

H3: External LOC will be related to higher turnover intention

H4: High stability will be related to turnover intentions

H5: High external control will be related to higher turnover intention

H6: Low internal control will be related to higher turnover intention.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

Participants were 363 students at a regional state university located in the southeastern United States. The sample consisted of graduate and undergraduate students at the university's college of business. We distributed a survey instrument, cover letter and consent form. We asked the participants to read the cover letter and sign the consent form, if chose to participate. The cover letter explained the study and reiterated that participation was voluntary. We explained that incentives were (or were not) provided at the discretion of the respective course instructor.

51.2% of the participants were female, 47.1% were male; 1.7% did not respond. The average age was between 23 and 25 years of age with 9.9% of the sample age 35 or older. 56.5% were white (non-Hispanic), 30% African-American, 4.7% Hispanic, 3.6% Asian, .6% Native American, and

2.2% specified as "other". The average work experience of this sample was 6 years and 5 months. 92.4% of the respondents had at least one year of work experience, 83.6% reported work experience of at least 2 years.

MEASURES

Attributions

For the measurement of performance attributions, we used the Causal Dimension Scale II (CDS II), developed by McAuley, Duncan and Russell (1992). The CDS II consists of a 12 questions, which make up 4 scales, with three items per scale, which evaluated the attributional dimensions of (1) locus of causality, (2) external control, (3) stability, and (4) personal control. Reliabilities using the CDS II are generally reported to be high (McAuley, Duncan and Russell, 1992). The reliabilities of the scales in our sample are as follows: Locus of causality $\alpha = .74$, external control $\alpha = .7$, stability $\alpha = .6$, and personal control $\alpha = .83$

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured with 3 items from Hoppock (1935). Respondents rated the items on a 5-point Likert-type response scale (1 = "Strongly disagree"; 5 = "Strongly agree"). A sample item is, "All in all, I am satisfied with my job." This scale produced a coefficient alpha of .89.

Turnover intentions

Turnover intentions were measured with three items adapted from the scale developed by Hom and Griffeth (1991). The items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging (1 = "Definitely not"; 5 = "Definitely yes"). The scale produced a coefficient alpha of .92.

ANALYSIS

We conducted a series of regression analyses to examine the relationships between attribution styles, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions using SPSS. Means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations are reported in Table 1.

The initial results show that, as hypothesized in H1, based on the findings of Norris and Niebuhr (1984) locus of causality is significantly related to job satisfaction at $p=.01$. The standardized path coefficient for the relationship between locus of causality and job satisfaction was estimated to be $\beta=.20$. The remaining dimensions, external control, personal control, and stability were not statistically significant with respect to job satisfaction. However, external control could be described as marginally significant at $p=.08$ with a standardized path coefficient of $\beta=-.10$.

Further, we tested whether the attribution dimensions and job satisfaction were significantly related to turnover intentions. Supporting H3 and H4, the attribution dimensions locus of causality and stability were statistically significant at $p=.05$ and $p=.02$ respectively. External control and personal control failed to meet the significance threshold. The standardized coefficients were -.15 for locus of causality and -.14 for stability. This provides some preliminary evidence to the relationship between attributions and turnover intentions.

However, as indicated by H2, we were also interested to determine whether job satisfaction mediated between attributions and turnover intentions. Therefore, we included job satisfaction in the regression analyses and found that locus of stability was no longer statistically significantly related with turnover intentions. This led us to believe that the relationship between locus of

causality attributions and turnover intentions is fully mediated by job satisfaction. This result was confirmed with a Sobel-test indicating a one-tailed probability of $p < .01$. Further, the results of a Sobel test indicated that the relationship between stability attributions and turnover intentions was partially mediated by job satisfaction indicated by the one-tailed probability of $p = .01$.

H5 and H6 were not supported. There was no significant relationship found between either internal control or external control and turnover intentions.

DISCUSSION

While past studies have clearly delineated the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Tett and Meyer, 2006), very few have looked at attribution styles, and job satisfaction simultaneously as predictors of turnover intentions (Harvey, Harris and Martinko, 2008). This study builds on their findings, which tied hostile attributions to job satisfaction and turnover intentions by looking at more general patterns of attribution styles and relating them to job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

Not surprisingly, we found that job satisfaction was a strong predictor of turnover intentions. We also found that attributional tendencies or styles are a significant influence on job satisfaction. It was interesting to find that while the tendency toward stability attributions had a direct positive effect on turnover intentions, even when job satisfaction was included in the model, the impact of locus of causality attributions appears to be fully mediated through the variable of job satisfaction.

The failure to find the relationships predicted in H5 and H6 suggest an interesting interpretation of these findings. If neither high internal control nor high external control influenced turnover intention, then the remaining conclusion is that uncontrollable causes for performance related failures increase the intent to turnover. In other words, having your performance related outcomes depend on chance, luck or the whim of weather are more likely to cause you to want to leave your job than having your outcomes based on another person such as a supervisor.

This finding poses an interesting contrast to the findings of Harvey, Harris and Martinko, (2008). While hostile attributions would typically imply blaming the supervisor or other co-worker, these findings suggest that voluntary turnover is more likely to be caused by feelings of uncontrollability than feelings that another person controls the outcome.

References available upon request

Statistical tables available upon request

THE JOINT EFFECT OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION WINDOWS AND PROJECT RISK ON CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES: EVIDENCE FROM THE BALANCED SCORECARD

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of an experiment that tests hypotheses suggesting that people's willingness to undertake risky projects is affected by the performance evaluation window and the level of project risk. The independent variables, project risk (30 percent chance of succeeding or 70 percent chance of succeeding) and evaluation window (one or three year balanced scorecard) are manipulated between subjects. The independent variable is participants' willingness to accept a continuous improvement project that reduces current year profitability, but has the potential to increase future firm profitability. Results suggest that participants' willingness to accept a project is jointly affected by project risk and evaluation window. Specifically, while participants are more willing to undertake the higher risk project when they are evaluated over a three year window as opposed to a one year window, they are equally likely to accept the less risky project across evaluation windows. Hence, in certain situations, longer evaluation windows might be effective in encouraging employees to focus on long-term rather than short-term profitability.

THE JOINT EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND TENURE ON EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHANGE: SOME PRELIMINARY DATA AND FINDINGS

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the preliminary results of an experiment that tests hypotheses suggesting that people's willingness to participate in continuous improvement projects is affected by the organizational culture and the employee's tenure. The independent variables, culture (company has a culture of continuous improvement or uses a haphazard approach to continuous improvement) and employee tenure (two to eight years with the company) are manipulated between subjects. The dependent variable is participants' willingness to volunteer for a new continuous improvement initiative.

HOW SALES PERSONNEL VIEW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB SATISFACTION AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at the study of job satisfaction and the relationship to spirituality in the workplace. In addition, job satisfaction was studied as both intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction spirituality in the workplace was researched as standalone variables. The ultimate goal of this research was to examine the relationships of the variables that would lead to further growth in employee development, increased job performance, lower turnover rates, higher profits and employee retention as they relate to organizational goals and strategies. Research results suggest the following conclusions; among sales personnel 1) there is a relationship between spirituality in the workplace and intrinsic job satisfaction, 2) gender does not moderate the relationship, 3) age does moderate the relationship, and 4) there is no relationship between spirituality in the workplace and intrinsic job satisfaction.

This research indicated that there is a widespread belief that for companies to survive into the 21st century in the face of economical downturn and global competition, it is necessary for leaders and employees to tap into their spiritual resources. All the collected evidence from this research points to a strong and significant framework between the variables. The potentially groundbreaking nature of this research leaves no doubt that the intuitively positive relationship between spirituality in the workplace and job satisfaction have the ability to transform individual and organizational lives.

Key Words: *Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Spirituality, Sales Personnel*

SOURCES OF HUMAN CAPITAL ACCUMULATION FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS DURING THE 20TH CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

Economic power comes through possession of wealth and high incomes. If a person owns large amounts of property and capital, the yield of the capital can provide enormous incomes to the owner. The ownership may be direct as when one owns a factory or real estate that pays high rents or may be indirect through ownership of financial resources such as stocks. In this instance, we are talking about physical capital. However another form of capital is Human Capital which can also generate huge incomes. Consider Oprah Winfrey, one of the richest people in the world. The special talents and finely honed broadcasting skills are the source of Oprah's enormous income and wealth. The way she jump started Barack Obama's campaign for President is a perfect illustration of how wealth and income confer power.

On a lower or more prosaic level, we an adequate and decent income is empowering in conferring a certain amount of independence and security on an individual, even if the wealth is not sufficient to win friends and influence people.

Human capital can be defined as "the knowledge and skills that make a person productive" or alternatively as the "personal stock of knowledge, know-how, and skills that enables a person to be productive and this earn income" (McConnell, Brue, and Flynn, p. 509, 283).

The economist who fully developed the concept of human capital, Gary Becker, made the following observations, "Some activities primarily affect future well-being; the main impact of others is in the present. Some affect money income and others psychic income, that is, consumption. Sailing primarily affects consumption, on-the-job training primarily affects money income, and a college education could affect both. The effects may operate either through physical resources or through human resources... The many forms of such investments include schooling, on-the-job training, medical care, migration, and searching for information about prices and income", (Human Capital, p. 1).

Just as increases in the amount of physical capital that labor has to work with increases labor productivity and thus wages, human capital investment increases productivity and thus earnings of the person acquiring the capital. Indeed some individuals have such huge amounts of human capital embodied within them that they are able to command huge incomes as a return on their human capital.

Forms of human capital investment

1. Schooling
 - Knowledge, especially basic literacy, leads to greater productivity and earnings
2. On-the-job training
 - As important as education in explaining earnings
 - Education (schooling) and training together are greater than the sum of their parts
3. Medical care
 - Good health makes a person more productive
4. Migration

- Migration from areas of surplus labor to areas of labor shortages leads to higher productivity and higher earnings.
5. Searching for information about prices and income
- Through searching you find the job where your productivity is greatest thereby earning higher wages than you would have if you had not searched
 - Searching around for the lowest price stretches your money
6. Learning good work habits
- Good work habits such as punctuality and good attendance make for greater productivity

All of the above types of investments have led to improvements in the human capital endowment of African-American workers over the years.

Schooling

At the beginning of the 20th century, 44/5% of the black population was illiterate. The state of Louisiana had the highest illiteracy rate (61.1%) of all the states. A hundred years later, eighty percent of the Blacks were high school or college graduates

Population at least 10 years of age: 1900						
	Negro	White	Number Illiterate		Percent Illiterate	
	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White
Continental United States	6,415,581	51,250,918	2,853,194	3,200,746	44.5	6.2
Cities having at least 25,000 inhabitants	945,710	14,677,484	230,698	651,147	24.4	4.4
Country Districts	5,469,871	36,578,434	2,622,496	2,549,599	47.9	7.0

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1900

Educational Attainment by Race: 1960 to 2007				
Year	Persons 25 Years and over			
	Percent Distribution			
	High school graduate or more		4 or more years of college	
	Black	White	Black	White
1960	20.1	43.2	3.1	8.1
1970	31.4	54.5	4.4	11.3
1980	51.2	68.8	8.4	17.1
1990	66.2	79.1	11.3	22.0
2000	78.2	84.9	16.5	26.1
2005	81.1	85.7	17.6	28.0
2007	82.3	86.2	18.5	29.1

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2009

Migration

At the beginning of the 19th Century, 85.4% of the black population lived in rural areas or country districts (the country). A hundred years later (2000), 88% of the African-American population lived in Metropolitan Areas. In 1900, 89.6% of the African-American population lived in the South. By the year 2000, only 54.8% of the African-American population lived in the South.

Farm to City Migration

The migration from the farm to the city was a human capital investment because wages were higher in the city than in the country. During this period, the white population also shifted from the farm to the city. A surplus of farm labor was constantly being created by the huge increases in productivity in agriculture. Farmers were able to produce more and more food with fewer and fewer workers.

Migration from South to Northeast, Midwest, and West

This was a migration from a low wage area to higher wage area.

Occupation Improvement

In 1900, the most important occupation for African-Americans was farming. Below is the occupational distribution for African-Americans in 1900.

Agricultural Pursuits	58.21%
Professional Service	1.18%
Domestic & Personal Service	23.94%
Trade & Transportation	7.68%
Manufacturing & Mechanical Pursuits	9.02%

Thus we see that 82.15% of the African-American population was working in Agricultural Pursuits and Domestic & Personal Service, low wage occupations.

Though the occupational classifications have changed, we see that by 2000 occupationally the African-American population has diversified and shifted into more of the higher wage occupations. This change is displayed below.

Managerial & Professional Specialty	21.7%
Technical Sales & Administrative Support	29.0%
Service Occupations	22.6%
Precision, Production, Craft, & Repair	7.8%
Operators, Fabricators, & Laborers	18.1%
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	0.8%

Income-Saving-Wealth Connection

How economically empowered we become depends not only on the extent of our human and physical capital endowment, but also on how we use the income we earned. The life of Matel Dawson, Jr. perfectly illustrates this point. With saving, he became economically empowered, even though he never had more than a modest income.

DEVELOPING OPTIMISM TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE: A PILOT STUDY IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

An organizational model previously developed by the authors is re-tested as a pilot study using a new sample in a totally different industry. In a replication of a previous study, the constructs of optimism subculture and goal setting processes are investigated as antecedents to the level of employee optimism; individual performance is investigated as direct and indirect consequences of the level of employee optimism. Data related to the constructs were collected from a convenience sample of 27 full time-public school teachers in central Arkansas and tested using a path analysis methodology. Results indicate optimism subcultures directly and positively impacts goal setting, goal setting directly and positively impacts workplace optimism and workplace optimism directly and positively impacts individual performance.

INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, optimism is one's tendency to believe in the best possible outcomes in the face of uncertainty (Peale, 1956). It is the bias toward holding positive expectations across time and situations. Optimism is closely related to the concept of self efficacy, which is a person's belief about how successfully he or she can accomplish tasks (Gist and Mitchell, 1992). "Optimists, by definition, emphasize either or both favorable aspects of situations, actions, and events in the current world as well as believing in the best possible outcomes in the future world (Furnham, 1997).

Despite the intuitive link between optimism and performance, research in this area is relatively limited. Studies have examined the relationship in the area of salesperson performance, and studies have examined the link between academic performance and optimism. We conducted a previous study on the relationship between optimism and performance in the manufacturing sector, but it remains one of only a few. The purpose of this study was to replicate the previous study conducted in the manufacturing sector as a pilot study in the public education arena. Specifically, it was designed to investigate the concept of developing attitudinal optimism within public school teachers. In addition, it will examine the influence of optimism on teacher performance.

OPTIMISM SUBCULTURES

Culture has been described as having seven primary characteristics (O'Reilly, 1991). Of these, innovation and risk taking, outcome orientation, people orientation, and team orientation should all be related to the degree of optimism that exists within a unit or department. An "optimism subculture" is created when units encourage innovation, focus on results rather activities, consider the effect of outcomes on employees, and stress teamwork. It would be expected that within optimism subcultures, goal setting processes would be emphasized—developing measurable and achievable objectives, resource and leadership support toward the accomplishment of objectives,

and performance-based rewards when objectives are met. We posit that optimism subcultures will be characterized by a focus on organizational goal setting. This leads to our first hypothesis:

H1: Optimism subculture directly and positively impacts goal setting process.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL SETTING

Optimists naturally feel that they can succeed. This should be validated within organizations by accomplishing goals; therefore, effective goal setting within organizations should foster employee optimism. This is consistent with the findings of both Seligman (1990) who argued that salespersons' optimism can be influenced by his/her immediate supervisor, and Rich (1999) who found that leadership support improved the optimism of salespeople. This leads to our second hypothesis:

H2: Goal setting process directly and positively impacts workplace optimism.

OPTIMISM AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Intuitively, it is easy to accept a link between optimism and employee performance. In practice, this relationship has rarely been examined. Certainly studies exist that indicate that performance outside of the workplace (athletically, academically, etc.) is positively associated with optimism (Lee, et al., 1993; Windschitl, et al., 2003; Norem and Chang, 2002; Wilson, et al., 2002; Siddique, et al., 2006; Norlander and Archer, 2002). Studies that have focused on the optimism-performance link in the workplace have primarily been in the sales literature (Seligman and Schulman, 1986; Rich, 1999; Schulman, 1999; Scheier, et al., 1994; Sujan, 1999; Dixon and Schertzer, 2005; Strutton and Lumpkin, 1993). Each reports that positive performance outcomes are associated with salespeople who are optimists. Green, Medlin, and Whitten (2004) examined the relationship between optimism and performance in manufacturing settings. Results indicated that there is a "very positive link" between employee optimism and level of performance. This leads to our third hypothesis:

H3: Workplace optimism directly and positively impacts individual performance.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOAL SETTING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Concepts of effective goal setting and the positive impact of goal setting in improving employee performance is well documented (Locke, 1968; Latham and Yukl, 1975; Matsui "et al", 2001; Tubbs, 1986, 1993; Knight "et al", 2001). Dweck et al (1993) found that the concept of learning goals relates to the idea that one can change his/her competence. Sujan et al (1994) found that salespersons' desire to improve their abilities (accomplish learning goals) is an important element of their adaptation—which is a crucial factor in a salesperson's performance. Also, results indicated that performance goals that are accompanied by self efficacy also improve adaptive behavior and thus employee performance. This leads to our fourth hypothesis:

H4: Goal setting process directly and positively impacts individual performance.

METHODOLOGY

Data related to optimism subculture, goal setting, workplace optimism, and individual performance were collected from a convenience sample of 27 full-time public school teachers in central Arkansas. The data were analyzed using a path analysis methodology.

MODEL AND RESULTS

Table 1 displays reliability coefficients, descriptive statistics, and the correlation matrix. All scales have been previously used and validated. They exhibit sufficient reliability with alpha values greater than .70. All correlation coefficients are positive and statistically significant indicating support for the four study hypotheses.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix (N = 27)

Variables	Alpha	Mean	Std. Dev.	GS	EE	WO
Optimism Subculture (OS)	.91	3.93	1.39	1		
Goal Setting Process (GS)	.95	4.08	1.45	.814(**)	1	
Workplace Optimism (WO)	.97	4.67	1.76	.826(**)	.896(**)	1
Individual Performance (IP)	.97	5.01	1.71	.711(**)	.868(**)	.932(**)

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

Figure 1 illustrates the path model with beta coefficients. Three of the four coefficients are positive and statistically significant indicating support for three of the four study hypotheses.

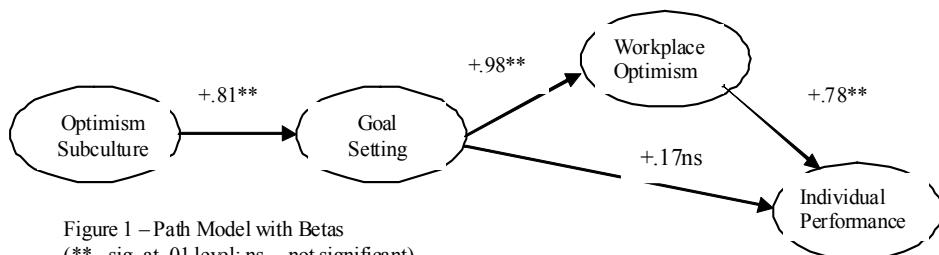


Figure 1 – Path Model with Betas
(** - sig. at .01 level; ns - not significant)

The results support three of the four study hypotheses: 1) optimism subculture directly and positively impacts goal setting, 2) goal setting directly and positively impacts workplace optimism, and (3) workplace optimism directly and positively impacts individual performance. Goal setting was not found to directly impact individual performance, however. Instead, goal setting indirectly impacts individual performance through workplace optimism. With the exception of this lack of support for the fourth hypothesis, these results parallel those found by Green et al. (2004).

CONCLUSIONS

There were two purposes to this pilot study: (1). to provide an initial investigation of the relationship between teacher optimism and performance, and (2) to initially examine whether schools can develop or impact the level of teacher optimism. The study provides positive results in both areas. Results indicate that there is a positive link between teacher optimism and level of

performance. This supports earlier findings of this same relationship in traditional business organizational settings (Green "*et al*", 2004). Results also indicate that schools that have optimistic subcultures (those that emphasize the goal setting process) positively impact teacher optimism.

Improving individual performance of workers is a critical challenge for all managers. The exact same thing applies to improving performance of teachers. The basic implication of this study is that overall performance of teachers should be positively impacted by increased levels of optimism. The managerial implication is that schools should 1. consider including selection criteria designed to determine the level of optimism of teacher candidates and 2. attempt to create "optimistic cultures" through formal, structured goal setting processes .

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HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT COMPATIBLE OR CONTRADICTORY PARADIGM?

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comparison of two management models. The first is a prominent Chinese model used in management and encouraged by both traditional cultural practices and modern political statements, often using the term "harmonious relationships." The second is the stakeholder management model, familiar to most Western management scholars.

Keywords: *Harmonious Relationships; Stakeholder Management; Chinese Management versus Western Management.*

INTRODUCTION

The stakeholder model (Freeman, 1984) is a dominant paradigm in the United States and Europe and in countries whose business models derive from these traditions, e.g., Australia, South Africa. These economies have been the most powerful in the world since the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, but they are now being challenged by emerging markets and especially by the rising economies of the East, particularly China and India. The extent to which the stakeholder model will be useful to these emerging markets and rising economies, particularly in China, is unclear.

Chinese business incorporates an alternative paradigm, one heavily influenced both by Confucian tradition and by government edicts issued in recent decades. This model revolves around the idea of "harmonious relationships." This concept fits well with the collectivist nature of Chinese society and with the continuing dominance of the Communist government. The central notion of the harmonious relationship model is that all business dimensions and considerations should contribute to the harmonious relationship of the whole business enterprise and of society as a whole.

The questions posed in this paper are these: To what extent can the ideas of harmonious relationship and stakeholder management be reconciled with one another, particularly with regard to conflict or congruity of the interests of particular constituencies? Is the concept of conflict inherent in stakeholder management? If so, can the notion of harmonious relationship be reconciled with the stakeholder management paradigm? Is the absence of conflict inherent in the harmonious relationship model? If so, can the stakeholder model be understood if we assume an absence of conflict?

Finally, we wish to explore the management applications of these questions. Managers in Western enterprises who operate based on an implicit stakeholder model may not understand how certain of their assumptions and practices may have to change when they are dealing with counterparts whose attitudes and actions are based more on a harmonious relationship model, while Chinese managers may find it illuminating to reconsider customary management practices based on harmonious relationships when they are dealing with Western business and managers oriented more towards stakeholder management.

The Harmonious Relationship Model. The idea of "harmonious relationship" has both a modern and an ancient component (O'Brien, 2007). The concept of harmony runs deep in both Confucian and Taoist traditions, and this connection has been accepted by Chinese commentators. In two explanatory articles published by the Institute of Law of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, authors referred to classical writings before placing the new movement in the context of development of socialism in China (Yan, 2005; You, 2005). Harmony is also an important element of the Buddhist tradition, which is still strong in China (O'Brien, 2007). These ancient traditions have recently been used by government officials in their efforts to modernize the Chinese economy, merging Communist ideology and capitalist enterprises. For example, in March 2005, at the 15th meeting of the National People's Congress, the Party Secretary-General, Hu Jintao, launched the new concept of creating a harmonious society. In April 2006, Hu Jintao addressed the National People's Congress and summed up the current ethical teaching in the "Eight Glories and Eight Disgraces"

Love the motherland. Do not harm it.
Serve the people. Don't deserve them.
Uphold science. Don't be ignorant.
Work hard. Don't be lazy.
Be united and help each other. Don't gain benefits at the expense of others.
Be honest and trustworthy. Don't profiteer at the expense of your values.
Be disciplined and law-abiding. Don't be chaotic and lawless.
Know plain living and hard struggle. Do not wallow in luxuries and pleasures.

("A Harmonious Society", 2006).

Thus, the idea of harmonious relationship is a very powerful organizing paradigm for Chinese society ("Harmonious relationship", 2006) and for the managers currently attempting to bring Chinese enterprise into the global economy. In the context of contemporary China, the use of the term "harmonious society" has political as well as managerial implications. The approach adopted as policy by Hu Jintao can be seen as an attempt to use cultural values to stop the populace from dissenting from the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Certainly, the way in which the official-speak is used suggests that "harmony" means that you line up behind the Party. Dissent is discouraged, at least public dissent. In the business realm, cooperation between business and government is encouraged, and the façade of cooperation is to be maintained even if the reality is more complex.

The question then becomes, does conflict have a place within the paradigm of harmonious relationship? The Chinese, historically and in recent times, have been renowned as effective warriors and, in the business context, as effective negotiators. Obviously, the paradigm of the harmonious relationship does not preclude the effective management of conflict. But it is often reported that, for the Chinese, acknowledgment of conflict in business conversation is avoided, deflected, obscured, evaded, or ignored. The pretense of harmony is to be maintained. What about the balancing of competing interests, so central to the stakeholder management model? The Chinese generally prefer to keep the exact nature of the trade-offs required relatively undefined and allow the particular choices made about the balance of interests to remain fluid, hence more changeable, more permeable, more open to continuous re-arrangement or, conversely, to lack of adjustment and stagnation.

The Stakeholder Management Model. The stakeholder model puts the organization at the center of an evolving matrix, with investors or lenders, employees, customers, suppliers, and various community interests represented in the paradigm. The business (or any organization) is conceptualized as the center of a vortex of competing interests. Investors want to realize a return on their investment, consumers want good products, employees want positive working conditions

and employee benefits, community interests want support of philanthropic efforts, the government wants to have jobs created and taxes paid, and the list goes on. Every stakeholder's demands cannot be satisfied simultaneously to the maximum degree. Improvements in consumer products may require investment in research and development that, for the time being, limits return on investment. Increased employee benefits may require higher prices for consumers or less return on investment for investors, at least for a particular time. Managing conflict between all these competing stakeholders is indeed the essence of effective management, according to this model.

The question then becomes, what place does the idea of "harmonious relationships" have in the stakeholder model? The stakeholder model often uses the ideas of power, legitimacy, and urgency as the prime determinants of whether a particular stakeholder is able to put forth its interests effectively (Mitchell, Agle, and Wood, 1997). Use of these concepts draws our attention to the conflicting motivations that various stakeholders may have, but there is a way to bring in the idea of harmonious relationships by emphasizing the relationship among stakeholders and particularly the ongoing evolution and devolution of network relationships. Investors may want to see high consumer satisfaction, even if it temporarily requires an increase in company resources going towards product development and marketing and a decrease in dividend yields. Employees want to see a company adequately capitalized, even if it requires concessions so that investors, for a time being, realize excellent return on investment. The managerial imperative then becomes to balance competing interests in a way that, over the long term, no important stakeholder is disproportionately disadvantaged in comparison with others. This is an approach that leads to financial viability and may be seen as the essence of "harmonious relationships" in the stakeholder model.

The issue arises as to the relationship with government officials, regulators, and legislators, and with the means by which managers using either model, or both, can accommodate both government and other constituencies, or stakeholders. This question is particularly salient when dealing with a Communist government, as is the case with China. What is the role of government, and under what conditions is the relationship between managers and government better understood with the stakeholder or the harmonious relationship model? Obviously, there are both conflicting and harmonious tendencies at play all the time in business-government relations. Effective managers will maintain a balanced relationship with government officials. At times and with certain governments little conflict will be overtly expressed, and this tendency is obviously preferred by the Chinese government. However, there are times when both business and government must bring conflict to the surface under either the stakeholder or the harmonious relationship model. For example, as consumer products made in China prove defective, as with the recent cases of pet food, toys, and infant formula, the government must insist that companies do more to uphold consumers' interests. The harmonious relationship model simply breaks down when the interests of the firm put the whole export economy of China at risk.

On the other hand, when serious crisis affects the firm operating along the stakeholder model, then government and business often find a way to work together harmoniously. For example, in the 2008 financial crises in the USA, the government provided help for a number of large financial institutions, sometimes rescuing them from certain failure, in the interest of maintaining a viable economy overall as well as simply serving the interests of particular firms.

Neither model depends exclusively on either accommodating or denying conflict, but the style and openness of expression of conflict is very different. The stakeholder model enables a clear and unequivocal manifestation of conflicting interests and demands to be represented, but the harmonious relationship model makes open acknowledgement a bit more difficult.

Management Implications. Chinese managers, when dealing with Western managers, should realize that Westerners take the existent of conflict between different stakeholders for granted. The Westerners will assume that good management consists of decision-making wherein the interests of one stakeholder or one set of stakeholders necessarily goes against the interests of others. Ethical decision-making will probably consist of being fair in resolving these conflicts, with fairness likely

to consist of balancing the risks and rewards due various stakeholders, or of making sequential trade-offs wherein the goals of different stakeholders will be given due consideration over a period of time, all the while acknowledging certain basic human rights, especially employee rights. The relative power of stakeholders will always be a consideration, but even less powerful stakeholders will be given due considerations and their rights will be respected. Stakeholders who clamor for more consideration, or for increased advantage for themselves as individuals or as members of stakeholder groups, will be regarded as expressing acceptable, even ordinary, human tendencies deriving from the individualistic ethos of Western society. Within the stakeholder framework all groups represented—employees, consumers, suppliers, etc.—are seen as distinct entities that are capable of playing roles, having motivations, developing strategies, even of having role conflicts, just as individuals might be prone to do in personal negotiation.

Within the stakeholder framework, harmony can be observed, but it is usually transitory and unstable. Put in system terms, stasis is unstable. New feedback, new inputs, new expectations—all of these factors lead to a constant re-negotiation of the stakeholder management reality. Conflict leads to an unfolding, evolving, dynamic operation of the firm. Indeed, a business with too little conflict is likely to become stale and outdated. Hence, competition between firms as well as competition among stakeholders is an essential economic principle in the stakeholder model.

Within the harmonious relationship framework, the reality of conflict may be accepted, but it will hardly be celebrated or encouraged. Even when there are conflicting tendencies, the general attitude often will be to pretend they do not exist. Thus, negative decisions are reported using terms such as, “We shall see” or “There may be difficulties.” Directly acknowledging the existence of conflict is generally not practiced. The façade is maintained that all demands can be considered, that the interests of all groups perhaps can be satisfied, that all considerations can be resolved without a frank admission that conflict is there. Indeed, the Chinese manager may be surprised that the Western manager is so rude as to openly identify irreconcilable demands, thinking it would be much more polite to gloss over issues where there is conflict.

With the intensification of global ties these cultural differences may diminish over time, but basic philosophical orientations have proven to have considerable endurance even though the material characteristics of society may be changing. What will probably occur is that managers from China and those from the West will become increasingly knowledgeable about and accommodating to their respective orientations. Western managers may find new elements of harmonization within the stakeholder model, while Chinese managers may become more comfortable with the more open acknowledgement of conflict characteristic of Western managers. Individual managers may do well to cultivate skills at doing business both ways, and maintaining personal flexibility, especially when conducting negotiations and in building relationships. Chinese managers will likely be comfortable taking a longer time to work through the details of a business arrangement so as to resolve any potential conflict before they become manifest. However, they will need to understand that managers accustomed to the stakeholder model consider conflict to be a rather normal part of business dealings and not be offended by the tendency of their Western counterparts to bring conflict out into the open and to move as rapidly as possible toward resolving conflict.

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CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Conflict is almost certain to occur in work teams due to the fact that they are comprised of different people possessing different perceptions, personalities, and behaviors. Although incredibly effective, work teams may stumble upon barriers which must be overcome to allow for growth and continuation towards the common goals of the group. It is quite possible that a work team may perform without the presence of conflict, but oftentimes certain measures have been implemented to prevent such conflict from occurring. Occasional conflict, if managed appropriately, can lead to creativity, better decision-making, and improved results. However, too much conflict can lead to a decrease in performance and group cohesion. In global organizations there is an opportunity for cross-cultural differences that may increase conflict. Contained herein are both the positive and negative consequences of conflict, as well as courses of action to understand, prevent, and resolve conflict that occurs within work teams or groups.

THE VALUE OF WORK TEAMS

A work team is defined as an organized group, committed to the individuals within the group, whose members share the same intent of accomplishing a common goal. Managers have become more inclined to utilize work teams when presented with missions involving problem solving, solution development, and decision making. One advantage a team has over an individual is its diversity of resources, knowledge, and ideas (Townsley, 2009). Teams allow for greater creativity due to the eclectic styles of thinking that collaborate when groups are formed. Benefits derived from using teams include quality improvements and enhanced productivity gains obtained by bringing individuals with complementary skills together (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). Teams enable better outcomes since there is a combination of multiple experiences and knowledge bases joining together to resolve issues and make decisions. An example would be the development of a new car line by a major dealership. In order for the dealership to make the best decision possible, it should utilize members from all departments: marketing, finance, legal, production, engineering, etc., in order to develop the best overall plan for the company. This allows management to have knowledge obtained from every area within the organization that is potentially involved in determining the success or failure of the new product line. From the organized work team, all necessary information is provided and analyzed in order to effectively create the new line. As problems arise from a specific area, the team will be able to resolve issues more effectively by the input provided from the various departments. On the contrary, if the company were to choose a single individual to create the plan for the new line, he or she is unlikely to be capable of making such decisions alone. In most circumstances, work teams tend to be more successful at formulating these types of decisions because they use input from team members who may be experts in that field.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

Despite the recognizable improvements in the proficiency of organizations through the use of teams, there is also an increase in the likelihood of conflict occurring due to the presence of overall differences among members of a team. When individuals come together in work teams there are differences in terms of power, values and attitudes, and social factors that all contribute to the creation of conflict. Conflicting factors such as these may cause deviation from the key goals of the group and may generally fall into three categories: communication factors, structural factors and personal factors" (Townsley, 2009). Communication factors are often the primary source of disagreement among individuals. Barriers to communication can result from misunderstanding of information, differences in interpretation and perception, cultural differences among the team, as well as poor listening. Different communication styles, if not interpreted correctly, might also prove to be problematic. For example, problems arise when value judgments are made on the basis of different communication styles. If team members disagree and one represents views and feelings forcefully with a raised voice, another more restrained team member may see that as arrogant and aggressive. The same 'arrogant' team member may conclude that the restrained team member is untrustworthy because eye contact is not maintained (Ford, 2001). Such misinterpretation can easily trigger false opinions of the sender or receiver's intent. The second category, structural factors, can stem from elements such as the background of the team members, infrastructure issues, participation levels (within the team), or possibly the size of the team. Personal factors that could also promote the chance for conflict within a team include: individual values and goals, needs, self-esteem, or individual motives (Townsley, 2009). Furthermore, an individual's perception of the situation that is significantly different from that of another team member's may also bring about conflict.

With the increase in the globalization of organizations, a new source of conflict can come, not from just cross-functional team members, but cross-cultural members as well (Northouse, 2010).

There are two cultural factors to keep in mind when considering conflict-causing factors. The first is internal group culture. There will always be variation within a group. However, "the majority of a group culture will conform to a dominant set of beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. But, there will be members of the cultural group that differ in significant ways from the norm" (Ford, 2009). Despite the internal group culture established, there may be individual cultural factors affecting differences among the group. These cultural differences may result from individuals within the team who come from different nationality groups, religious groups, ethnic groups, and organizations. Although the team has an inherent culture that is formed, the team must be cognizant of external cultural factors that differ from the norm of the team, or else conflict may occur. For instance, "the dominant culture in the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand is individualistic, while collectivism predominates the rest of the world" (Ford, 2009). Therefore, countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia are going to place more emphasis on autonomy, creativity and authority in decision making. Meanwhile, other countries focus more on a collectivist culture where group conformity and commitment are preserved at the expense of personal interests. These types of cultural differences can greatly impact the dynamics of a work team and must be understood and respected in order for the team to function successfully.

CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

Conflict can produce either positive or negative results within work teams. An effective team is one where members are capable of handling conflict and drawing out the knowledge gained from disagreements to arrive at a better decision. However, negative consequences occur whenever conflict is not resolved by the team members. If conflict is not properly managed, the effects can be damaging to the team, as well as the organization. Oftentimes a work team may consist of individuals or groups of individuals from different areas within an organization. Thus, those groups

within the work team depend on one another for information to make the best possible decisions. Whenever there is conflict among these groups, it can either be classified as functional or dysfunctional. Positive functional conflict is a confrontation between groups that enhances and benefits the organization's performance (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). For instance, in the example mentioned previously about the dealership and its implementation of a new car line, individuals from the finance department may disagree with individuals from the marketing department on how to implement the marketing plan for the new line. As long as they are able to work through the conflict to derive the most optimum decision, then this can be considered functional conflict. Positive consequences of functional conflict include: awareness of problems, search for solutions, positive change and adaptation, as well as innovation. Thus, the absence of functional conflict in organizations might inhibit change from ever occurring and could cause a team to become stagnant and unproductive (Ivancevich, et al 2005).

Dysfunctional conflict is confrontation between groups that harms or hinders the goals of the organization (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). At this point functional conflict can lead to disruption of activities and extreme dissension among the team members when the conflict becomes dysfunctional. If the individuals within the team are not able to successfully resolve such conflict, it could prove damaging to the morale, relationships and goals of the group and the organization. Further consequences from a work team's inability to properly resolve conflict may include decreased group cohesiveness, damaged communication channels, a decline in innovation and idea creation, project cancellation, and possibly extreme profit loss. Hopefully, in order to prevent the occurrence of negative consequences from dysfunctional conflict, teams will practice good conflict resolution skills and will be well-prepared and properly trained on how to handle such disagreement within the team. However, if such is not the case, then conflict may become a direct cause for team failure instead of a positive influence in achieving optimal outcomes.

RESOLVING CONFLICT IN WORK TEAMS

Conflict resolution is an integral part of effective teams and organizations. Conflict is inevitable but the important takeaway is not necessarily knowing how to eliminate conflict all together, but to eliminate the problems before they begin or be prepared deal with the conflict as it is presented. There are several recommendations that prove effective in managing and resolving group conflict. The leader of the group should develop a strategy for training and preparing team members for group process, in particular, training to proactively manage or avoid conflict. Conflict management and resolution training is a great way for an organization to coach employees on how to prepare for resolving conflict when working in teams. It provides awareness of how conflict may arise and different methods of managing conflict to maximize effectiveness of the team. Such training allows the organization and its members an opportunity to develop strategies to effectively tackle conflict before it even occurs.

If the conflict can be traced to cultural differences between two or more group members, obtaining cultural synergy may be necessary (Adler, 2008). Cultural differences should be embraced, and used to enhance group performance. Ethnocentrism should be discouraged, as it tends to lift up one culture at the expense of another (Northouse, 2010). Open communication is necessary to resolve differences in perception and interpretation. Some sort of compromise between individuals or sub-groups may be necessary in order to move beyond the situation. Commonalities between members of different cultures should be emphasized and differences minimized.

At times facilitators should be designated to assist with managing and resolving group conflict. Implementing the use of a group facilitator can alleviate many problems resulting from conflict because he or she can coach the team(s) through dealing with conflict openly and successfully. This person can facilitate effective communication by intervening in conversation to allow for disagreements to be approached in a methodical and rational manner. Facilitators may also

help to resolve conflict in situations where members develop different conceptualizations of a conflict situation or event in the group. For instance, individuals may have unique internal frames of reference which cause them to interpret conversation differently than someone else (Mitchell, 2006). In addition to the implementation of conflict management training and the use of facilitators, other processes exist to aid in the practice of conflict resolution.

In an article written by Dr. Thomas Capozzoli, six processes are discussed that can be used when practicing conflict resolution. The first states that the group should explore the reasons for disagreement and if emotions are still high, continue only after emotions have calmed. Only at this point can groups make decisions rationally based on logic and thoughts versus emotional deterrents to communication. Within the first process, Capozzoli emphasizes the need for active listening and he also discusses the importance of refusing to criticize the perceptions of other group members. The second process deals with recognizing alternative solutions presented by different sides of the group, but only after the disagreement has been fully identified. Third, all the reasons for why each solution is appropriate should be explored. Then negotiations should begin to determine which solution seems most practical. Once the solution has been identified, it should be implemented with each party understanding its responsibilities. Once the fourth process has been completed in resolving conflict, the fifth one states that the group should thoroughly evaluate the chosen solution to ensure that it is most successful in solving the disagreement (Capozzoli, 1995). If the solution does not appear to be adequate in resolving the disagreement, another solution should be evaluated. The final step presented in the conflict resolution process is to continue practicing the conflict resolution process. This will enable team members of the organization to be more equipped when handling future conflicts.

Five generic approaches are mentioned when resolving intergroup conflict: dominating, accommodating, problem solving, avoiding, and compromising. The dominating approach requires that one group holds a balance of power so that it can force its resolution on the other group. This can be a successful approach when differences need to be resolved quickly or when unpopular actions need to be taken such as imposing new policy. The accommodating approach involves one group meeting the needs of another over its own. This can be beneficial when the issue is more important to the other group or when preserving peace is more important than maximizing one's own interest. The third approach, problem solving, involves collaborating and working together to maximize results for all involved. Out of these five intergroup conflict resolutions, problem solving is probably the ideal approach due to the collaboration of parties and the merger of insight, experience, knowledge and perspective. Avoiding conflict, the fourth approach, is only effective when used as a temporary method. Sometimes avoiding the conflict is necessary when other issues are more important, parties need an opportunity to cool down from a heated disagreement, or when additional time is needed to gather more information. Avoiding can be useful as long as it is used for a particular reasoning and not as a permanent solution to the conflict. When utilizing the fifth approach, known as the compromising approach, usually the resolution reached is not ideal for either group but a resolution is achieved through negotiation. Compromise is the middle-of-the-road approach and is a good backup strategy when other approaches fail at resolving conflict (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2005). Each of the five mentioned approaches could prove effective in resolving conflict in teams, depending on the situation.

CONCLUSIONS

Organizational work teams will inevitably encounter conflict whether the conflict exists among the individuals within the work team, or among multiple teams working together. Regardless, a good understanding of how conflict occurs, the consequences of conflict, and how to manage conflict, may allow groups to arrive at better solutions for the team and the overall organization. Learning how to manage and resolve conflict requires training and preparation, active

listening, open communication, as well as an understanding of the perceptions, personalities, and behaviors shared among the group. Leading a group requires an understanding of different cultural factors, both internal and external, are also helpful in managing conflict within a group. But most importantly, adopting good practices and approaches to conflict resolution will allow conflict to enhance the behavior of the group members and the work performance of the group.

References are available from the authors.

VALIDATION OF THE INCLUSION SKILLS MEASUREMENT PROFILE: SUMMARY OF PHASE 1

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ABSTRACT

The Inclusion Skills Measurement (ISM) Profile was designed to assist in recognizing the skills gaps that exist in organizational members; such gaps must be recognized and addressed if inclusion is to be successfully embedded within organizations. Phase 1 involved the validation of the self-assessment tool which is designed to help individuals explore their values, beliefs and behaviors around diversity and inclusion. One hundred and ten working adults were surveyed using the ISM Profile and the data was analyzed, indicating concern with some items. Revision of the instrument based on the analysis is discussed. The dimensions of inclusion are described and future research is proposed.

INTRODUCTION

The U. S. Census Bureau expects that the United States will not be a Caucasian dominated country by 2050. These shifting demographics emphasize the business imperative for moving past diversity management to inclusion in order to be competitive in the global economy. A diverse organization realizes benefits from its ability to retain talent, to be in tune with market conditions, to work creatively and to innovate; such capabilities may be related to enhanced performance (Allen, Dawson, Wheatley, & White, 2008). Even though the imperative is recognized and desirable, in reality companies spend money and time on training for diversity, yet the organizational outcomes are less than expected (Chavez & Weisinger 2008). According to Sayed and Kramar (2009) both affirmative action and diversity management have fallen short of their objectives and, if the broader benefits of diversity can be achieved, it will happen with a multilevel approach to diversity. This multilevel approach will include not only the national, but also the organizational and individual levels.

Policies and procedures related to diversity have previously been the focus of many workplace diversity initiatives, yet less time is spent on the “norms and values” that can assist in embedding inclusiveness in the organization (Pless & Maak, p. 129). The Inclusion Skills Measurement (ISM) Profile was designed to assist in recognizing the skills gaps that exist in organizational members; such gaps must be recognized and addressed if inclusion is to be successfully embedded within organizations. The instrument consists of seven scales each of which addresses an aspect of inclusion. The first phase of the validation of the instrument is described below and further research is proposed.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Corporations spend millions of dollars every year training their employees to drive behavioral change. Employees are told in a myriad of ways what behavior is expected of them, from technical, professional and soft skills perspectives. Everything from policies and procedures,

employee handbooks, management directives, training programs etc. are designed to ensure employees integrate the messages of the corporate culture and behave accordingly.

Appropriate behavior is therefore an implicit and explicit part of the employer/employee contract. When addressing the subject of global inclusion and diversity however, the result of this training investment is often compliance and political correctness rather than true commitment to behavior change. There is not always congruence between an individual's values and beliefs and the behaviors they are being asked to demonstrate at work. For example, on the subject of sexual orientation it is quite common to hear people speak of their religious values and beliefs and their discomfort at being asked to "accept" openly gay people in the workplace. They will default to a reluctant acceptance that the company requires them to behave appropriately while insisting that they will not change their values or beliefs on the topic. While it may not be possible to change a person's values it is however imperative that individuals seeking to change the organizational culture and embed inclusion in their organizations more fully understand the values and beliefs that are at the root of any resistance to change.

The ISM profile seeks to explore values, beliefs and behaviors and to raise to consciousness some of the more hidden challenges. The ISM Profile has a balance of items addressing both topics. Based on the literature we propose the following assumptions:

Assumption 1: Individuals have skills gaps in their diversity awareness, sensitivity and interpersonal skills of which they may or may not be aware.

Individual behaviors have significant impact on the perception of an inclusive environment. Employees who are not consciously aware of their diversity competences are capable of saying or doing something that will negatively impact the work environment. Individual ego, the halo effect and the concept of unconscious incompetence are present to some degree in all individuals. Prior to embedding an inclusive environment, the organization is operating from an assimilation model where all employees work to fit in with the operating norms of the dominant culture(s). The first stage on the Diversity and Inclusion Journey is a state of oblivion where people do not realize that there is a need to be more sensitive. Skills gaps in all areas of diversity awareness are higher than people anticipate and require increased awareness and an ongoing commitment to personal growth. Individuals need to be open to learning about other cultures and to be sensitive to the micro-inequities that they may be perpetrating on others. Identification of these skills gaps is an essential part of the change process.

Assumption 2: Teams and groups acknowledge diversity while failing to fully capitalize on the richness that authentic diversity and inclusion can offer.

While much has been written on the benefits of diverse teams, the reality remains that teams function from an assimilation model and not a diversity model. Therefore, they fail to utilize fully the richness of diversity at their disposal.

A clear hierarchy of diversity issues exists ranging from topics that are non-contentious and not controversial, such as "diversity of thought," to topics that are contentious, sensitive and often controversial, such as sexual orientation and race. Diverse groups may be well intentioned and believe they are utilizing all of the diverse talent but often they are operating from an assimilation model that requires group members to comply with the norms set by the dominant culture. For example, women may adopt the male model for work styles in order to fit into the dominant group and People of Color will tend towards the Caucasian style of communicating.

Assumption 3: Organizations spend time and resources on diversity but often fail to create supportive systems necessary for authentic inclusion.

Much has been written about the money spent by corporations in an attempt to value diversity and change the organizational culture to one that values differences. Awareness and sensitivity workshops and skills/competency based training programs abound and some progress has been made. Resistances to change and to accepting differences are key factors in the struggle to truly embed inclusion. For authentic inclusion to be achieved, the organization must provide a supportive culture where there is congruence between values, beliefs and behavior. It is crucial that each level of the organization sees globalization and Inclusion as a business imperative and not just something nice to do. There must be congruence of thought and actions and consistency in the message; it will not work if, for example, you have the senior leadership and HR stating that diversity matters, the lower levels of the organization knowing at a visceral level that they want diversity to matter and the mid-level managers expressing not only resistance, but displaying behaviors that are not supportive. The “frozen middle” can and often does, create the barrier to embedding an inclusive environment. If there is lip service at the top and resistance in the middle, then all of the dollars spent on training will not accomplish the stated goal of embedding inclusion. The organization must, in addition to training, build a diversity infrastructure by providing strategic support, including a Diversity Council, Diversity champions and advocates drawn from senior leadership ranks and Employee Affinity groups

DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION

To become inclusive and reap the benefits of diversity, organizations must embed Inclusion in all levels of the system: individual (intra-personal and inter-personal), groups/teams and organization. The seven constructs comprising the ISM Profile each focus on a specific organizational level:

Figure 1	
INDIVIDUAL and ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS	DIVERSITY COMPETENCIES
Intra-personal	Diversity Sensitivity Integrity with difference
Inter-personal	Interacting with difference Valuing difference
Group	Team inclusion Managing conflict over difference
Organization	Embedding inclusion

Turnbull, Greenwood, Tworoger and Golden (2009) explain that each scale of the ISM Profile has a set of key diversity competencies and a series of items designed to explore the values, beliefs and behaviors of the individual. Each competence and the related items on the ISM Profile follow. Each item is further identified as focused on belief or behavior. The first two categories, Diversity Sensitivity and Integrity with Difference, address intra-personal competence and are devoted to providing measurement and feedback on how well individual are doing in the area of their own personal development (Turnbull et al 2009).

The second level of competence is in the area of inter-personal skills and the scales responding to these skills are: Interacting with Difference and Valuing Differences. These two

scales address inter-personal competence and are devoted to providing measurement and feedback on how well individuals are relating to others (Turnbull, et al., 2009).

The third category, which is crucial in the understanding of how to embed inclusion, is groups/teams and the two scales related to this topic are: Team Inclusion and Resolving Conflict over Difference. These two scales are devoted to providing measurement and feedback on how well diverse groups and teams are doing (Turnbull, et al 2009).

The final level, which is important to the change management process, is the Organization (impact of culture on organizations, and organizations on culture) and the scale dedicated to this topic is: Embedding Inclusion. This scale is dedicated to providing measurement and feedback on how well the overall organization is doing in its attempts to embed an inclusive environment and cause culture change (Turnbull, et al 2009).

VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENT

During Phase I, one hundred and ten currently employed adults were asked to take the ISM Profile questionnaire. All were over the age of 18 and asked to volunteer without compensation. Students with full time jobs who attend graduate business school weekend classes were asked to participate. The sample consists of 63 females and 47 males. When asked to self identify race, the largest groups were Hispanics (33%), African-Americans (27%), and Caucasians (24%). Forty-two percent of the sample identified themselves as being born in the US, with the remaining sample coming from over 30 different countries. Thirty-six percent of the sample identified themselves as Catholic and 39% as Christian. Ninety-seven percent of the sample reported themselves as Heterosexual.

After subjects volunteered, they were asked to sign a consent form and then given a paper copy of the questionnaire to fill out. The individuals rated themselves on a variety of questions related to the topic of attitudes towards diversity. The completed questionnaire answers were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2010) by student employees. The data was analyzed to insure the reliability of the questions, determine the ideal length of the test, and determine whether all scales are necessary in the final instrument. The instrument will be revised based on the statistical data analysis and future analysis.

RESULTS

Phase I data was analyzed using SPSS 17. Data for each of the scales was analyzed for internal reliability and determination of the optimal number of items for each scale. Item inter-correlations across and within the scales were used to determine which items to eliminate. Reliability data was used to eliminate items that showed unacceptable levels of test-retest reliability. Scale inter-correlations were used to determine if scales were redundant or actually measuring different things. Using this information, revisions to the questionnaire will be made with the goal of retaining the maximum information while reducing the overall number of items.

The scales overall were multi-dimensional, with average correlations among the items at approximately .30. Cronbach's alpha for the scales were low ranging from .45 to .66 with the exception of Resolving Conflict at .01, indicating that the scale as written performed randomly with no common material or concept. Item correlations with each scale total showed that 60 of the 73 items were placed on the correct scale with the major exceptions being the nine Resolving Conflict items. Table 1 presents the intercorrelations among the scales. Overall, the scales correlated moderately, with the Diversity Sensitivity scale showing the highest correlations.

DISCUSSION

The results of the validation process indicate that inclusion skills can be measured reliably. The seven scales are: Diversity Sensitivity, Integrity with Difference, Interacting with Difference, Valuing Difference, Team Inclusion, Managing Conflict over Difference, and Embedding Inclusion. Six of the seven scales associated with Inclusion exhibit acceptable reliability and one scale, Diversity Sensitivity, has good reliability. In general, complex constructs such as these will yield low Cronbach's alpha scores. However, a Cronbach's alpha of .01 for the scale Resolving Conflict indicates unacceptably low reliability. The entire scale and the items associated with it must be intensely examined, rewritten, and further tested.

Based on results of the intercorrelations across and within scales, six items will be removed from the instrument to improve reliability of the related scale. The scale Resolving Conflict over Differences showed the weakest results in the original reliability testing, therefore we will add new items to the second phase test. Results from Phase I indicated a need to do further analysis of the revised data. A sample of 400 more participants will be analyzed with the end goal of utilizing factor analysis to determine if the changes made to this instrument will then provide better reliability and validity for the self-assessment portion of the instrument.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations cited by Turnbull et al (2009) such as personal bias, the halo effect, frame of reference, perceptions, organizational morale, and the utilization of the instrument by each organization are still relevant. There are a number of additional limitations that should be noted.

We are aware that using adult students from a weekend MBA program may have impacted the results. The actual assessment will be used in corporations where employees will be asked to take it and will perhaps have different motivations for their answers. It is possible that some of the data has been skewed by the voluntary nature of the study and also by the fact that the respondents in this situation had no real commitment to the results of the research. This may have positively or negatively skewed the results as in some cases it will have freed people to tell their truth and in other cases there may have been a laissez faire approach to completion. As always, the problems of self-report exist in our study.

Prior to conducting Phase II of the research which addresses the peer review feedback section, we will undertake Phase IA, where we will seek another 400 respondents to take a revised version of the self assessment section. We will include the nine new questions from the Resolving Conflicts scale at the end of the survey list, and we will not, for now, remove the six questions that have been identified as not showing significant differentiation. The results of this second study will be examined using factor analysis to gain further insight about the validity and reliability of the ISM Profile instrument.

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Table 1: Correlations between Scales							
	Diversity	Integrity	Interaction	Valuing	Team	Resolving	Embedding
Diversity							
Integrity	.421**						
Interaction	.574**	.394**					
Valuing	.429**	.393**	.425**				
Team	.5502**	.345**	.488**	.485**			
Resolving	.374**	.325**	.370**	.284**	.209**		
Embedding	.591**	.251**	.469**	.401**	.441**	.367**	
df=108* p<.05							

THE ACRIMONIOUS DEMISE OF THE MIXED MOTIVE CASE UNDER THE ADEA

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ABSTRACT

*The U.S. Supreme Court has recently issued two holdings that have significantly altered the standards by which the employers' actions are scrutinized under the ADEA. In the first holding, *Smith v. City of Jackson* (2005), the Court, while recognizing the availability of disparate impact claims under the ADEA, expressly permitted employers to escape liability if they base their employment decision upon a reasonable factor other than age. In the second holding, *Gross v. Financial* (2009), the Court held that the employee must proffer sufficient evidence to satisfy the "but-for test". The but-for test requires the employee to establish that age was a determinant factor leading to the adverse employment decision. This new analysis replaces the motivating factor standard, eliminating the availability of a mixed motive case under the ADEA (Gross, 2009). In other words, the court held that age can be a factor in employment decisions, as long as it is not a determinate factor. As a result of these two holdings, employers have expansive latitude in making employment decisions which adversely affect the protections afforded to older workers.*

The purpose of this article is to discuss the viability of the ADEA as a protective mechanism for aging employees after the Gross and Smith holdings. Part II of this article will provide an overview of the ADEA, including the bona fide occupational qualifications (BFOQ) exception which permits employers to discriminate against a protected class, in limited situations. Part III will discuss both the disparate impact and disparate treatment forms of discrimination, as well as discussing the Smith case under the disparate impact section. Part IV will provide an analysis of the Gross case which changes the traditional judicial scrutiny afforded to disparate treatment claims. Part V will then focus on the practical applications of the two recent cases.

