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# Examination of the factors that predict job satisfaction.

Amani Shoman  
*San Jose State University*

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EXAMINATION OF THE FACTORS THAT PREDICT JOB SATISFACTION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Psychology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Amani Shoman

December 2009

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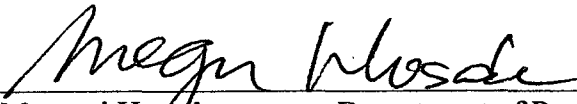
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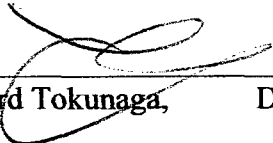
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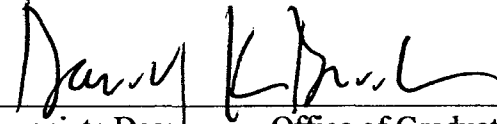
APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Megumi Hosoda, Department of Psychology Date 11/19/09

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Howard Tokunaga, Department of Psychology Date 11/9/09

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. Christina Jennings, Employee Research Principal Date 11/5/09

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean Office of Graduate Studies and Research Date 12/3/09

## ABSTRACT

### EXAMINATION OF THE FACTORS THAT PREDICT JOB SATISFACTION

by Amani Shoman

The purpose of this study was to determine the predictors of job satisfaction among three departments within an organization. The study used five predictors: leadership/top management communication with subordinates, feedback received from one's supervisor, training opportunities for employees, career opportunities within the company, and teamwork or cooperation among employees. Using data from 608 participants, the present study examined the relationships between each of these five predictors and job satisfaction. Consistent with hypotheses, each of these predictors was significantly related to job satisfaction. Moreover, leadership/top management communication with subordinates (except for one department surveyed), career opportunities within the company, and teamwork or cooperation among employees contributed most to the prediction of job satisfaction for all the departments. Implications of the findings are discussed.

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## Introduction

Job satisfaction is one of the most studied topics in the field of Industrial/Organizational (I/O) psychology (Spector, 1997). This is because job satisfaction (a) occupies a central role in many theories and models of individual attitudes and behavior in I/O psychology (e.g., organizational justice, turnover), (b) has been shown to be related to important behaviors that affect the functioning of organizations (e.g., turnover, absenteeism, organizational citizenship behavior, job performance), and (c) has practical applications for the enhancement of individual lives and organizational effectiveness (Spector, 1997). Indeed, research shows that the more satisfied employees are, the more effective organizations become (Volkwein & Zhou, 2003). Therefore, researchers have paid considerable attention to examine the factors that are related to job satisfaction and have studied both situational (e.g., job characteristics) and individual (e.g., personality attributes) characteristics as determinants of job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). For example, job characteristics (e.g., autonomy, feedback) as well as individual characteristics (e.g., locus of control, negative affectivity) have been shown to be related to job satisfaction (Spector, 1997).

A survey of employees found the five things that employees wanted most from their jobs were the opportunity for growth and development, improving skills with training, management communicating clear and measurable goals, belonging to a team, and receiving feedback from their supervisor (Heathfield, 2000). We assumed that these five factors might be also related to job satisfaction. Therefore, the present study examined whether and how leadership/top management communication, feedback from a

supervisor, opportunity to receive training, career/promotion opportunity, and teamwork/cooperation among co-workers would be related to job satisfaction.

## Literature Review

Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state from the appraisal of one's job or experiences (Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction is a multi-dimensional construct (i.e., extrinsic, intrinsic), and will be measured in this study with several variables that will be discussed further. Literature concerning the aforementioned factors that are posited as relating to job satisfaction is reviewed below.

### *Leadership/top management communication*

Supervisor-subordinate communication, also referred to as leadership communication, is essential to employees' satisfaction in the workplace (Pincus, 1986). Supervisor-subordinate communication is defined as exchanges of information between organizational members, at least one of whom has formal authority to direct and evaluate the activities of other organizational members (Jablin, 1979). Communication has been found to clarify the role of subordinates and remove obstacles in their paths (Schuler, 1979); if this is not done properly, employees are likely to be uncertain about their roles and face barriers.

When supervisors communicate with their employees, there is a mutual understanding of goals and the direction of the company, and those employees whose supervisors provide information are more satisfied with their jobs than employees whose supervisors do not communicate with them (Jablin, 1979; Pincus, 1986; Schuler, 1979; Shih, 2000; Wheelless, Wheelless, & Howard, 1983).

For example, Pincus (1986) examined the relationship between satisfaction with organizational communication and job satisfaction and job performance among 327

hospital nurses. They studied three dimensions of communication satisfaction: (a) the informational/relational dimension comprising of supervisor communication, communication climate, and personal feedback; (b) the relational dimension comprising of top management communication, horizontal communication, and subordinate communication; and (c) the informational dimension comprising of organizational integration, media quality, and organizational perspective. Overall results demonstrated that communication satisfaction with these dimensions explained 19.4% of the variance in job satisfaction, of which the majority (14%) was explained by the informational/relational dimension. Therefore, supervisor communication where immediate supervisors were open to their subordinates' ideas and listened to their problems, communication climate where there was a general response to a communication environment, where the supervisor-subordinate communication relationship was present at organizational and personal levels, and personal feedback where an individual knew about the effectiveness of his or her performance were more strongly associated with job satisfaction compared to the other dimensions of communication satisfaction. In addition, perceptions of top management communication were also found to be separately and substantially related to employee job satisfaction and job performance.

Likewise, Goldhaber, Yates, Porter, and Lesniak (1978) examined the relationship between organizational communication, demographics (e.g., age), and amount of information received about the organization with organizational outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction). The most important contributor to organizational outcomes was found to be

organizational communication relationships, which alone, accounted for 50.4% of the variance in job satisfaction. The amount of information received from one's supervisor about organizational policies and decisions accounted for an additional 9.2% of the variance in job satisfaction where employees were more satisfied with receiving information about topics related to the organization as a whole rather than with receiving information about more personal, job-related matters. Goldhaber et al. (1978) stated that employees generally want to receive information about the latter, but it is the former that apparently leads more directly to their overall job satisfaction.

Organizational communication, organizational climate, and job satisfaction among employees of a large public utility company were examined by Muchinsky (1977). Results showed that the dimensions of organizational communication, such as trust in the supervisor, perceived influence of the supervisor, desire for interaction with the supervisor, accuracy of communication, and lateral communication, were highly related to all or most of the dimensions of job satisfaction (i.e., work, supervision, pay, promotions, and co-workers). Furthermore, the degree to which employees were satisfied with the communication in their organization was significantly correlated with all of the five dimensions of job satisfaction, with satisfaction with supervisor having the highest correlation.

Moreover, Shih (2000) examined the effects of supervisor-subordinate communication and supervisor support on employees' psychological strain and job satisfaction among female employees from a health services department. Shih (2000) hypothesized that supervisor-subordinate communication would have direct effects on

female employees' work satisfaction as well as moderate the relationship between role stress and job satisfaction and psychological strain. Support for both hypotheses was found. More specifically, the positive work-related communication dimension (the frequency of positive work-related topics discussed with one's supervisor) had more effect on employees' job satisfaction and supervisor satisfaction than the negative work-related and non-work-related communication dimensions (the frequency of negative work-related or non-work-related topics discussed with one's supervisor).

Perceived participation in decision making, communication with supervisor, and employee characteristics (e.g., age, tenure, salary) were examined as contributors of employee job satisfaction among university nonprofessional employees (Wheless et al., 1983). Results supported the hypothesis that communication with supervisor would provide the greatest contribution to predicting job satisfaction. That is, the correlation between communication with supervisor and job satisfaction was significantly greater than the correlations between other variables (e.g., perceived decision participation, employment characteristics) and job satisfaction.

Miles, Patrick, and King (1996) studied employees at a manufacturing company researching the relationship between supervisor-subordinate communication and job satisfaction, moderated by job level. They measured four communication dimensions, including a positive relationship (where supervisors sought suggestions from subordinates and allowed them to contribute on important decisions), upward openness (the opportunity for subordinates to question supervisors' instructions and disagree with them), negative relationship (supervisors ridiculing subordinates in public and criticizing

them), and job-relevant communication (supervisor's feedback on performance, information about rules and policies, job instructions, work assignments, schedules and goals). Results showed a significant relationship between supervisor-subordinate communication and job satisfaction. Furthermore, for lower-level employees, all of the four communication dimensions were significantly related to job satisfaction, but for higher-level employees, only negative relationship and job-relevant communication were significantly related to job satisfaction. However, while supervisors reported receiving more positive relationship and more upward openness communication, these two dimensions were not significant predictors of their job satisfaction. Overall, Miles et al. (1996) concluded that supervisor-subordinate communication is a powerful predictor of job satisfaction and recommend that managers use communication as a means to improve the job satisfaction levels of their subordinates.

In sum, based on the studies reviewed above, it can be said that communication is a critical component in employee job satisfaction and findings have emphasized the importance of communication in the workplace. In this study, communication is measured as receiving information from top management and having an understanding of the company's goals and direction.

Hypothesis 1: Leadership or top management communication with subordinates will be positively related to job satisfaction.

### *Feedback*

Receiving feedback on one's job performance is also an important correlate of job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). If an employee receives constructive feedback

regularly from his/her supervisor, he/she is able to understand what actions need to be taken to improve his/her performance and consequently he/she can grow professionally. Indeed, receiving feedback from a supervisor has been found to increase employee morale and satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

Research shows that supervisory feedback is an important predictor of job satisfaction. For example, Anseel and Lievens (2007), using a longitudinal study, examined the impact of a feedback environment on job satisfaction among government employees. Job satisfaction and feedback measures were collected at two separate time periods, five months apart. Anseel and Lievens (2007) found the positive long-term effect of the feedback environment on job satisfaction. More specifically, an employee's perception of a feedback environment from his/her supervisor related strongly to the quality of the relation with his/her supervisor, which was then related to job satisfaction.

Other researchers also show that feedback is an important predictor of job satisfaction. For example, Chen (2008), using job characteristics of task identity, task significance, professionalism (defined as a meaningful task and highly important), feedback from a supervisor, and autonomy, examined how these job characteristics were related to job satisfaction among information systems (IS) employees. Results showed that all of these job characteristics were significantly and positively related to job satisfaction. Chen (2008) concluded that effective feedback from supervisors gave the IS employees personnel knowledge about the results of their work, information about the effects of their actions, and an understanding of how effectively they have performed. Such knowledge probably improves their effectiveness and their job satisfaction as



employees receive feedback on their performance and see the direction in which they are headed.

Furthermore, Sparr and Sonnentag (2008a) found that a feedback environment, measured as receiving feedback from one's supervisor, was positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to helplessness, job depression, and turnover intent. This highlights the importance of a supervisor-subordinate feedback environment for looking into well-being at work and job work outcomes such as job satisfaction. Similarly, Sparr and Sonnentag (2008b) found that an employee's perceived fairness of feedback from his/her supervisor was positively related to job satisfaction and feelings of control at work, and negatively related to job depression and turnover intent. Perceived fairness of supervisor feedback is crucial to an employee's work outcomes, as previous research has supported its relation to job satisfaction.

In sum, receiving feedback from one's supervisor is related to job satisfaction and this study measures feedback as supervisors providing subordinates feedback on their performance.

Hypothesis 2: Receiving feedback from one's supervisor will be positively related to job satisfaction.

### *Training*

Training is a systematic development of the knowledge, skills, and expertise required by a person to effectively perform a given task or job (Patrick, 2000). As employees try to keep up in this rapidly growing technology age, they need to continuously learn new skills and improve their current skills. Landy (1985) defined job

training as “a set of planned activities on the part of an organization to increase the job knowledge and skills or to modify the attitudes and social behavior of its members in ways consistent with the goals of the organization and the requirements of the job” (p. 306). Given that one of the top five things that employees want from their jobs is the opportunity for education and training to develop knowledge and advance their current skills (Heathfield, 2000), employees are likely to expect their companies to provide them with the opportunities to develop their skills.

Training benefits employees because they will acquire new skills and knowledge. Previous research has shown that employees who are able to improve their skills are more satisfied at work. For example, Bartlett (2001) examined the relationship between employee attitudes toward training and organizational commitment among registered nurses from five hospitals. Results showed that perceived access to training, social support for training, motivation to learn, and perceived benefits of training were positively related to organizational commitment. Furthermore, the relationship between perceived access to training opportunities and the affective form of organizational commitment was found to be moderated by job satisfaction. Nurses who had access to training had a higher commitment to the hospital if they were satisfied with their jobs. In addition, perceived access to training, social support for training, motivation to learn, and perceived benefits of training were all significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Based on these findings, Bartlett (2001) suggested that future research should investigate training factors as predictors of job satisfaction.

Egan, Yang, and Bartlett (2004) studied the relationship of organizational learning culture, job satisfaction, and organizational outcome variables (e.g., turnover) with a sample of information technology (IT) employees in the United States. Items that measured organizational learning culture were continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, team learning, embedded system, system connection, and empowerment. Results showed that organizational learning culture was positively associated with job satisfaction and motivation to transfer learning among the employees.

Given that some small to medium-sized companies are often unable to offer their employees a formal training program, they instead implement workplace learning, defined as a dynamic interaction between formal and informal learning by having the opportunity to learn new skills from on-the-job training. Rowden (2002) examined the relationship between workplace learning and job satisfaction in small to midsize businesses and found that workplace learning conducted formally, informally, or incidentally had a direct and positive relationship with job satisfaction. All of the job satisfaction measures (supportive environment, recognition, enjoyment, benefits and overall job satisfaction) were positively related to the workplace learning measures. Similar findings were also obtained by Rowden and Conine (2005), who examined the relationship between workplace learning and job satisfaction among small commercial U.S. banks.

These results clearly show that among small companies, even without the implementation of formal training programs, employees are still satisfied with their jobs due to the learning culture and the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Employees become more satisfied with their jobs through informal learning, which is just like on-the-job learning where another co-worker might show a new employee how to use a computer through an actual demonstration rather than through a classroom presentation.

In sum, training has been found to increase job satisfaction among employees who perceived that training was available to them and that they had the opportunity to improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities. This study measures training by examining employees who have the opportunity to improve their skills and receive training to do a quality job.

Hypothesis 3: Having the opportunity and receiving training will be positively related to job satisfaction.

#### *Career/promotion opportunities*

Employees typically desire to work for companies that provide them with the opportunity to move up within the company and/or have other career opportunities. Research has demonstrated that employees who feel they are capable of advancing their careers are more satisfied with their company than those who do not (Gaertner & Nollen, 1992). In addition, one of the top five things employees want most from their work has been shown to be the opportunity for career paths and progression into better jobs (Heathfield, 2000). It seems reasonable to expect that employees will be satisfied with their jobs if they believe that there are career opportunities within their company.

Research has shown that organizations providing their employees with career advancement and opportunities have positive work-related outcomes (e.g., job

satisfaction, lower turnover). For example, Bigliardi, Petroni, and Dormio (2005) found that design engineers reported lower levels of turnover intent when organizational socialization was prominent and an adequate range of opportunities that satisfied career aspirations existed within the organization. Organizational socialization was defined as having the following components: training, understanding an engineer's role and role of the company, co-worker support, and future prospects within the company. Bigliardi et al. (2005) emphasized that having a variety of career opportunities within an organization is important to reduce levels of turnover intent. Moreover, managers can improve the satisfaction of these design engineers by providing them with supervisor support for career development and by promoting organizational career opportunities for them (Bigliardi et al. 2005).

Gaertner and Nollen (1992) found that overall job satisfaction among employees who stayed in the company perceived higher internal career opportunities. However, those who left the company had lower job satisfaction levels due to the external career opportunities offered to them outside of their organization. The central role of a "good career company" may result in an employee staying and being satisfied with the company (Gaertner & Nollen, 1992).

Gardulf, Orton, Eriksson, Uden, Arnetz, Kajermo, and Nordstrom (2008) investigated factors related to job satisfaction among nurses at a university hospital. It was found that many nurses were dissatisfied with their work situation and reported lack of support given for their own professional development. The five factors that predicted job satisfaction among nurses were: making good use of professional competence,

satisfaction with an immediate supervisor regarding support for nursing research and development, opportunities for developing one's own competence for the current job, perception of career opportunities in one's own profession, and yearly dialogue for performance appraisal with an immediate supervisor. This gives support that employees who perceive future career opportunities in their organization are more likely to be satisfied at work.

In sum, employees who perceive or have the opportunity to advance their careers within their organizations are more likely to be satisfied at work, have a strong commitment to their organizations, and be less likely to quit their job. In this present study, career opportunities are measured by perceived opportunities to get a better job in one's current organization.

Hypothesis 4: Career opportunities within an organization will be positively related to job satisfaction.

#### *Teamwork/cooperation*

Teams add a powerful dimension to the workplace. A survey of 962 HR, training and operations leaders revealed that 84% of those organizations used teams to handle special projects, and 74% indicated that department teams and special teams handled innovations and improvements across the company (The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2006). Teamwork combines the skills and the creativity of a diverse number of people to produce an effective outcome (McGourty & De Meuse, 2001).

A team is a group of people, each of whom possesses a particular expertise, is responsible for making decisions; holds a common purpose; meets to communicate,

collaborate and consolidate knowledge, in order to make plans, determine actions, and influence future decisions (Brill, 1976). It has been found that one of the five things that employees want most from their jobs is to participate in a team environment and have opportunities to belong in a team (Heathfield, 2000).

Research shows that teamwork is positively related to job satisfaction. For example, Kruse (1986) investigated the relationship of teamwork and job satisfaction among county staff. Teamwork was measured by peer support (extent to which behavior of county staff encouraged their own feelings of self-worth), peer team building (extent to which behavior of county staff encouraged teamwork among themselves), peer goal emphasis (extent to which behavior of county staff generated contagious enthusiasm for effective performance), peer work facilitation (extent to which staff helped each other remove roadblocks to effective performance), and group functioning (extent to which staff functioned well as a group). Results demonstrated that teamwork had a positive relationship with the several aspects of job satisfaction (security, pay, growth, social, supervision, and general), with the strongest relationship being between teamwork and general satisfaction.

Lankau (1996) investigated the relationship of four teamwork dimensions with job satisfaction with a sample of 440 hospital employees. The four teamwork dimensions (team spirit, team workload sharing, team social support, and team cooperation) were significantly related to various attitudinal outcomes, including job satisfaction. More specifically, both team spirit and team social support were positively related to job

satisfaction. Therefore, Lankau (1996) concludes that increased team spirit and social support within teams were associated with increased job satisfaction.

Furthermore, Loyd (2005) explored the relationship between teamwork and job satisfaction among student affairs administrators. Three components of job satisfaction (intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and interpersonal satisfaction) and nine components of teamwork (a clear elevating goal, results-driven structure, competent team members, unified commitment, collaborative climate, shared standards of excellence, external support, recognition, and principled leadership) were studied to examine the correlation between teamwork and job satisfaction. Findings resulted in all three components of job satisfaction and all nine components of teamwork were positively correlated. In addition, all of the intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction correlations were significant to each of the nine teamwork components.

Hubbert (2003) studied teachers in urban middle and high school districts in Texas to determine if levels of job satisfaction were affected by the experience level of teachers (new, experienced, and close to retirement), school assignment (middle and high school), a team structure (informal, formal, and no team), and an interaction among them. Due to the high attrition rate among teachers in their first two years, Hubbert (2003) sought to identify and explore “team teaching” as a way for new teachers to become and feel like an integral part of the school. Team teaching is similar to mentoring and/or induction programs where assistance is given to newly hired teachers for them to understand the objectives of the school, specific job responsibilities, and school resources and facilities. Another approach to teaming would be placing an experienced person in



charge of newer employees “to inspire, to teach, to guide” (Reed, 1979, p. 69). Hubbert (2003) found that there was a significant main effect for experience of teachers (new, experienced, and near retirement), school assignment (middle and high school), and team structure (informal, formal, and no team) on level of job satisfaction for teachers. Results also showed that the informal team structure increased job satisfaction levels, regardless of the experience level of teachers.

When employees are given the option of working in teams and choosing their own method of working, they are likely to feel a sense of control and satisfaction. Nylenna, Gulbrandsen, Forde, and Aasland (2005) compared job satisfaction between Norwegian general practitioners and hospital nurses. It was found that the general practitioners reported greater satisfaction than did hospital nurses. This was mainly due to the general practitioners’ greater opportunity to use their abilities, cooperation with their colleagues and fellow workers, variation in work, and freedom to choose their own method of working compared to the nurses. Therefore, general practitioners cooperated with co-workers and had the opportunity of working in a team, which resulted in a higher level of job satisfaction compared to hospital nurses who reported lower ratings on the factors.

Scott, Bishop, and Chen (2003) studied Chinese manufacturing employees and found that perceived group support (perception that workgroup valued, cared, and was helpful), participation in decision making (perception of how much influence and decision making one had in job and workgroup), and perceived task interdependence (perception of working closely with others, consult and coordinate efforts with others)

were all positively related to job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction was negatively related to intention to quit and positively related to willingness to cooperate. Scott et al. (2003) suggested that companies should encourage employees to support each other on the job, involve them in decision making and design jobs that are interdependent with each other. Therefore, employees can then recognize the way their tasks are related to others, and managers should employ team building techniques to encourage employees to support each other.

In sum, employees who have the opportunity to work in teams within their organizations are more likely to be satisfied at work, less likely to quit and have a willingness to cooperate at work compared to employees who do not have the opportunity to work in teams. In this present study, teamwork is measured by the level of cooperation among team members within the organization.

Hypothesis 5: Teamwork/cooperation among employees within an organization will be positively related to job satisfaction.

Many factors can contribute to satisfaction in the workplace (individual characteristics, opportunities at work, co-worker support, and job characteristics). This study will investigate the five factors that might contribute to job satisfaction among three departments of a company that hold the same job responsibilities. By controlling for differences in jobs, this study will examine participants with the same job and job responsibilities. Factors considered and those that will be analyzed in predicting job satisfaction are the following: leadership or top management communication, receiving

feedback from supervisor, opportunity for receiving training, career opportunity, and teamwork or cooperation among co-workers.

## Method

### *Participants*

A total of 608 subjects were surveyed from three peer departments in one organization. The peer departments are lateral to one another and all report to the same hierarchy. The participant's job responsibilities are similar in nature and they all have direct contact with customers.

Department 1 had a total of 208 participants consisting of 72% ( $n = 133$ ) female and 28% male ( $n = 25$ ). The sample consisted of 54% ( $n = 88$ ) Hispanic, 35% ( $n = 58$ ) White, 7% ( $n = 12$ ) African American, 3% ( $n = 5$ ) Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.6% ( $n = 1$ ) Native American. Seventy-nine percent of the employees ( $n = 165$ ) worked for the company less than 10 years.

Department 2 had a total of 223 participants consisting of 68% ( $n = 130$ ) female and 32% male ( $n = 62$ ). The sample consisted of 39% ( $n = 66$ ) White, 26% ( $n = 44$ ) African American, 23% ( $n = 39$ ) Hispanic, and 12% ( $n = 21$ ) Asian/Pacific Islander. Eighty-eight percent of the employees ( $n = 197$ ) worked for the company less than 10 years.

Department 3 had a total of 177 participants consisting of 68% ( $n = 94$ ) female and 32% male ( $n = 44$ ). The sample consisted of 43% ( $n = 58$ ) Hispanic, 27% ( $n = 37$ ) White, 15% ( $n = 20$ ) African American, 13% ( $n = 17$ ) Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.5% ( $n = 2$ ) Native American. Ninety-four percent of the employees ( $n = 165$ ) worked for the company less than 10 years.

A closer look at Table 1 shows that all three departments seem to have a similar demographic breakdown in gender, ethnicity, and tenure. All departments had good minority representation, with over 60% of the sample being non-White in each department. In addition, the majority of participants in each department have been with the company less than 10 years, so they are fairly new.

Table 1

*Demographic Statistics for each Department*

	Department 1 ( <i>n</i> = 208)	Department 2 ( <i>n</i> = 223)	Department 3 ( <i>n</i> = 177)
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	28% ( <i>n</i> = 25)	32% ( <i>n</i> = 62)	32% ( <i>n</i> = 44)
Female	72% ( <i>n</i> = 133)	68 ( <i>n</i> = 130)	68% ( <i>n</i> = 94)
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	35% ( <i>n</i> = 58)	39% ( <i>n</i> = 66)	27% ( <i>n</i> = 37)
Hispanic	54% ( <i>n</i> = 88)	23% ( <i>n</i> = 39)	43% ( <i>n</i> = 58)
African American	7% ( <i>n</i> = 12)	26% ( <i>n</i> = 44)	15% ( <i>n</i> = 20)
Asian/Pacific Islander	3% ( <i>n</i> = 5)	12% ( <i>n</i> = 21)	13% ( <i>n</i> = 17)
Native American	0.6% ( <i>n</i> = 1)	0% ( <i>n</i> = 0)	1.5% ( <i>n</i> = 2)
<b>Tenure</b>			
Less than 12 months	18% ( <i>n</i> = 37)	11% ( <i>n</i> = 24)	15% ( <i>n</i> = 27)
1-5 years	40% ( <i>n</i> = 83)	50% ( <i>n</i> = 112)	58% ( <i>n</i> = 102)
6-10 years	21% ( <i>n</i> = 45)	27% ( <i>n</i> = 61)	21% ( <i>n</i> = 36)
11-15 years	13% ( <i>n</i> = 27)	5% ( <i>n</i> = 12)	2% ( <i>n</i> = 3)
16-20 years	0.5% ( <i>n</i> = 1)	2% ( <i>n</i> = 5)	0.6% ( <i>n</i> = 1)
More than 20 years	7% ( <i>n</i> = 15)	4% ( <i>n</i> = 9)	3% ( <i>n</i> = 6)

*Note.* Totals only include participants with demographic information.

### *Procedure*

In 2007, a web-based survey was distributed to all employees within the organization in order to measure job satisfaction. The survey is sent once a year to employees and developed by the organization, but responses are collected by a third-party vendor to maintain the confidentiality of responses. In addition, to keep surveys anonymous, the third-party vendor only provided the organization with aggregate data, for departments that have received 10 or more responses. For example, if a department had 15 employees but only 7 responded to the survey, the third-party vendor would not provide the results to the organization. Employees received the survey via email, with an introduction letter explaining the benefit of completing the survey and receiving valuable feedback for the organization to increase employee satisfaction. Participants were not given a consent form because the survey was not mandatory for them to complete. Participants were given the choice to complete the survey within four to five weeks, and were sent a reminder from the third-party vendor if they had not completed the survey. The third-party vendor then collected the data and did not provide an individual's name or information to the organization. The organization only received data for departments with 10 or more responses, and participants were numbered to ensure anonymity.

### *Measures*

The survey included more than 50 items measuring various concepts relating to job satisfaction and items that asked for the participant's demographic information (i.e., gender, ethnicity, and tenure). The survey was custom-made, thus survey items were not based on existing measures or scales.

As mentioned earlier, the constructs posited to be related to job satisfaction included leadership/top management communication, feedback from supervisor, an opportunity for receiving training, career opportunity, and teamwork/cooperation among co-workers. The survey items were examined and 30 face-valid items were selected to reflect the above five constructs. Cronbach's alpha was then used to compute the reliability of the items that measured these constructs.

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was measured with a four-item summated scale. Sample items are "How satisfied are you with your job?" and "How would you rate your overall satisfaction at the present time?" Participants responded to these items along a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *Very Satisfied*, 5 = *Very Dissatisfied*). Since items were reverse coded, the higher the score on the measure, the more satisfied respondents were with their jobs. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .90.

*Leadership/top management communication.* Leadership/top management communication was measured with an eleven-item summated scale. Sample items are "Top management communicates the laws and regulations in our organization." and "Top management communicates the direction and goals of the organization to employees." Participants responded to these items along a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). Since items were reverse coded, the higher the score on the measure meant respondents had a more favorable perception about leadership/top management communication. Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .85.

*Feedback from supervisor.* Feedback received from a supervisor was measured with a four-item summated scale. Sample items are "My supervisor provides feedback



on my performance.” and “My supervisor provides feedback and goals for my development plan.” Participants responded to these items along a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). Since items were reverse coded, the higher the score on the measure meant respondents had a more favorable perception about feedback from their supervisor. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was .69.

*Opportunity for receiving training.* Opportunity for receiving training in the workplace was measured with a three-item summated scale. Sample items are “I have received training to complete a quality job.” and “I am given the opportunity to improve my knowledge and skills at work.” Participants responded to these items along a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). Since items were reverse coded, the higher the score on the measure meant respondents had a more favorable perception about the opportunities for receiving training at work. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was .79.

*Career/promotion opportunity.* Career/promotion opportunity within the workplace was measured with a two-item summated scale. Sample items are “I am satisfied with my opportunity to get a better job within the organization.” and “I am given the opportunity to improve my skills within the organization.” Participants responded to these items along a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). Since items were reverse coded, the higher the score on the measure meant respondents had a more favorable perception about the career/promotion opportunities at work. The correlation between the two items is .71.

*Teamwork/cooperation.* Teamwork/cooperation among co-workers was measured with a six-item summated scale. Sample items are “Teamwork is encouraged within the organization.” and “There is good teamwork and cooperation within departments in the organization.” Participants responded to these items along a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = *Strongly Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Disagree*). Since items were reverse coded, the higher the score on the measure meant the respondents had a more favorable perception of teamwork/cooperation at work. Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was .86.

## Results

### *Descriptive statistics*

Means and standard deviations of the measured variables are presented in Table 2. Participants in all three departments seemed to have relatively positive attitudes towards leadership/top management communication, feedback received from their supervisors, training opportunities, career/promotion opportunities, and teamwork/cooperation to the same degree, and those in all departments were satisfied with their jobs. Those in Department 3 had the least favorable attitudes towards all of the five factors, in addition to the least favorable attitudes towards job satisfaction. A closer look at Table 2 also shows that those in Department 1 seemed to have more positive attitudes on these measured variables compared to those in Department 2 and Department 3.

Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations of Factors for Departments*

	Department 1		Department 2		Department 3	
	<i>(n = 208)</i>		<i>(n = 223)</i>		<i>(n = 176)</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Leadership/top management communication	3.89	.56	3.74	.61	3.73	.48
Feedback from supervisor	4.10	.63	3.90	.66	3.80	.70
Training opportunity	3.99	.84	3.70	.89	3.67	.81
Career/promotion opportunity	3.74	.97	3.37	1.07	2.98	1.15
Teamwork/cooperation	3.90	.69	3.59	.76	3.58	.70
Job satisfaction	4.38	.66	4.12	.71	3.96	.82

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine if there were differences in each of the measured variables across the three departments. Overall, results showed that there were significant differences among the three departments on leadership/top management communication  $F(2, 604) = 4.92, p < .01$ , feedback from supervisor  $F(2, 604) = 10.56, p < .001$ , training opportunity  $F(2, 604) = 8.65, p < .001$ , career/promotion opportunity  $F(2, 604) = 24.24, p < .001$ , teamwork/cooperation  $F(2, 604) = 13.33, p < .001$ , and on job satisfaction,  $F(2, 604) = 16.39, p < .001$ . Subsequent analyses showed that those in Department 1 had significantly higher scores on leadership/top management communication, feedback from supervisor, training opportunity, career/promotion opportunity, teamwork/cooperation, and job satisfaction than those in Department 2 and Department 3, which did not differ from each other. Moreover, those in Department 1 were most satisfied with their jobs, followed by those in Department 2, who were more satisfied with their jobs than those in Department 3.

Tables 3 to 5 present the correlations of the measured variables for each of the Departments. As can be seen from each table, each of the five factors was strongly and positively correlated with job satisfaction. Furthermore, these five factors were strongly correlated among themselves. Interestingly, none of the demographic variables (i.e., gender, ethnicity, and tenure) was related to job satisfaction, except that tenure was negatively related to job satisfaction ( $r = -.30, p < .01$ ) at Department 1. However, tenure was related to several factors across the Departments. For example, tenure was negatively related to leadership/top management communication ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ) and teamwork/cooperation ( $r = -.22, p < .01$ ) at Department 1. These results show that the

longer one works in the organization, the less one will perceive communication from their leaders and teamwork among their co-workers. Tenure was negatively related to leadership/top management communication ( $r = -.25, p < .01$ ), training opportunity ( $r = -.14, p < .05$ ), teamwork/cooperation ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ), and feedback from supervisor ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ) at Department 2. These results show that the longer one works in the organization, the less one will perceive communication from their leaders, training opportunities, teamwork among their co-workers, and feedback received from their supervisors. Lastly, tenure was found to be negatively related to teamwork/cooperation ( $r = -.17, p < .05$ ) at Department 3. These results show that the longer one works in the organization, the less one will perceive teamwork among their co-workers.

Table 3

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Factors for Department 1 (n = 208)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender										
2. Ethnicity			-.05							
3. Tenure	2.60	1.33	.11	-.05						
4. Leadership/top management communication	3.89	.56	.07	.02	-.20**					
5. Feedback from supervisor	4.10	.63	.08	-.07	-.08	.69**				
6. Training opportunity	3.99	.84	-.06	-.14	-.13	.64**	.66**			
7. Career/promotion opportunity	3.74	.97	-.03	-.09	-.10	.60**	.65**	.77**		
8. Teamwork/cooperation	3.90	.69	.02	-.07	-.22**	.77**	.71**	.70**	.66**	
9. Job satisfaction	4.38	.66	-.04	-.04	-.30**	.63**	.62**	.68**	.72**	.71**

\*\*  $p < .01$  level.

*Notes.* Gender (Male = 1, Female = 2). Ethnicity (White = 1, Hispanic = 2, Other (African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American) = 3). Tenure (Less than 12 months = 1, 1-5 years = 2, 6-10 years = 3, 11-15 years = 4, 16-20 years = 5, More than 20 years = 6).

Table 4

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Factors for Department 2 (n = 223)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender										
2. Ethnicity			.03							
3. Tenure	2.50	1.10	-.02	.08						
4. Leadership/top management communication	3.74	.61	.07	.01	-.25**					
5. Feedback from supervisor	3.90	.66	-.01	.03	-.20**	.68**				
6. Training opportunity	3.70	.89	-.05	.08	-.14*	.68**	.67**			
7. Career/promotion opportunity	3.37	1.07	-.01	.14	-.13	.67**	.64**	.77**		
8. Teamwork/cooperation	3.59	.76	.01	.11	-.20**	.75**	.77**	.72**	.73**	
9. Job satisfaction	4.12	.71	.02	-.02	-.13	.68**	.63**	.64**	.69**	.69**

\*\*  $p < .01$  level. \*  $p < .05$  level.

*Notes.* Gender (Male = 1, Female = 2). Ethnicity (White = 1, Hispanic = 2, Other (African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American) = 3). Tenure (Less than 12 months = 1, 1-5 years = 2, 6-10 years = 3, 11-15 years = 4, 16-20 years = 5, More than 20 years = 6).



Table 5

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Factors for Department 3 (n = 176)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender										
2. Ethnicity			-.05							
3. Tenure	2.60	1.33	.11	-.05						
4. Leadership/top management communication	3.89	.56	.07	.02	-.20**					
5. Feedback from supervisor	4.10	.63	.08	-.07	-.08	.69**				
6. Training opportunity	3.99	.84	-.06	-.14	-.13	.64**	.66**			
7. Career/promotion opportunity	3.74	.97	-.03	-.09	-.10	.60**	.65**	.77**		
8. Teamwork/cooperation	3.90	.69	.02	-.07	-.22**	.77**	.71**	.70**	.66**	
9. Job satisfaction	4.38	.66	-.04	-.04	-.30**	.63**	.62**	.68**	.72**	.71**

\*\*  $p < .01$  level. \*  $p < .05$  level.

*Notes.* Gender (Male = 1, Female = 2). Ethnicity (White = 1, Hispanic = 2, Other (African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American) = 3). Tenure (Less than 12 months = 1, 1-5 years = 2, 6-10 years = 3, 11-15 years = 4, 16-20 years = 5, More than 20 years = 6).

*Tests of hypotheses*

Hypotheses were tested using the correlations. Hypothesis 1 stated that leadership or top management communication with subordinates would be positively related to job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported; the correlation between leadership/top management communication with subordinates and job satisfaction was .63 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 1, .68 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 2, and .61 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 3. Hypothesis 2 stated that receiving feedback from one's supervisor would be positively related to job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported; the correlation between feedback from supervisor and job satisfaction was .62 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 1, .63 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 2, and .50 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 3. Hypothesis 3 stated that having the opportunity and receiving training would be positively related to job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported; the correlation between training opportunity and job satisfaction was .68 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 1, .64 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 2, and .62 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 3. Hypothesis 4 stated that having career opportunities within an organization would be positively related to job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported; the correlation between having career opportunities and job satisfaction was .72 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 1, .69 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 2, and .68 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 3. Hypothesis 5 stated that teamwork or cooperation among employees within an organization would be positively related to job satisfaction. This hypothesis was supported; the correlation between having teamwork/cooperation within an organization and job satisfaction was .71 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 1, .69 ( $p < .01$ ) for

Department 2, and .64 ( $p < .01$ ) for Department 3. All of the hypotheses presented were supported in relation to job satisfaction.

### *Multiple regression*

A multiple regression analysis was performed for each of the three departments to determine the contributions of the five factors for the prediction of job satisfaction. For Department 1, all five factors were entered into the equation as shown in Table 6. The five factors accounted for 62% of the variance in job satisfaction,  $F(5, 202) = 67.75, p < .001$ . Among these five factors, career/promotion opportunity and teamwork/cooperation contributed significantly in predicting job satisfaction.

Table 6

*Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis for Department 1 Predicting Job Satisfaction*  
( $n = 208$ )

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Leadership/top management communication	.11	.08	.09
Feedback from supervisor	.04	.07	.03
Training opportunity	.08	.06	.11
Career/promotion opportunity	.24	.04	.35**
Teamwork/cooperation	.28	.07	.29**

\*\*  $p < .001$ .

For Department 2, all five factors were entered into the equation as shown in Table 7. The five factors accounted for 59% of the variance in job satisfaction,  $F(5, 217) = 63.54, p < .001$ . Among these five factors, leadership/top management communication, career/promotion opportunity, and teamwork/cooperation contributed significantly in predicting job satisfaction.

Table 7

*Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis for Department 2 Predicting Job Satisfaction (n = 223)*

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$
Leadership/top management communication	.29	.08	.25**
Feedback from supervisor	.10	.07	.09
Training opportunity	.04	.06	.05
Career/promotion opportunity	.18	.05	.27**
Teamwork/cooperation	.17	.07	.19*

\*\*  $p < .001$ . \*  $p < .05$ .

For Department 3, all five factors were entered into the equation as shown in Table 8. The five factors accounted for 59% of the variance in job satisfaction,  $F(5, 170) = 48.74, p < .001$ . Among these five factors, leadership/top management communication, career/promotion opportunity, and teamwork/cooperation contributed significantly in predicting job satisfaction.

Table 8

*Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis for Department 3 Predicting Job Satisfaction**(n = 176)*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$
Leadership/top management communication	.46	.11	.27**
Feedback from supervisor	-.02	.08	-.02
Training opportunity	.09	.08	.09
Career/promotion opportunity	.26	.06	.36**
Teamwork/cooperation	.22	.09	.19*

\*\*  $p < .001$ . \*  $p < .05$ .

In sum, across the three Departments, career/promotion opportunity and teamwork/cooperation contributed for the prediction of job satisfaction. In addition, leadership/top management communication contributed to the prediction of job satisfaction for Departments 2 and 3. Therefore, these results suggest that the more career opportunities within the organization, teamwork among employees, and information received via top management communication, the more employees were satisfied at the workplace.

## Discussion

Job satisfaction is one of the most studied topics in the area of I/O psychology. Many studies have been conducted to determine the antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction. It has been consistently shown that both situational (e.g., autonomy, task variety) and individual (e.g., conscientiousness, positive affectivity) characteristics are related to job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). A more recent survey of employees found the five things that employees wanted most from their jobs were the opportunity for growth and development, improving skills with training, management communicating clear and measurable goals, belonging to a team, and receiving feedback from their supervisor (Heathfield, 2000). We assumed that these five factors might be also related to job satisfaction. Therefore, the present study was conducted to examine whether and how these five factors would be related to job satisfaction.

The present study showed support for all of the hypotheses. More specifically, leadership/top management communication to subordinates, feedback received from a supervisor, training opportunities, career/promotion opportunities within the organization, and teamwork/cooperation among employees were all positively related to job satisfaction. These five factors could be easily implemented in the workplace as they are all situational variables and under the influence of management. Thus, if organizations desire satisfied employees, they could look to implement these five factors in the workplace. For example, employees who perceive their leaders or top management communicating to them about the organization are more likely to trust them. Moreover, open communication is also likely to ensure that employees understand the organization's

goals, mission, and direction. Consequently, employees are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs. This finding emphasizes the crucial role for leaders and top management to have open communication with their subordinates in the workplace. This finding also supports previous research that has pointed to a relationship between employee perceptions of leadership communication and job satisfaction (Jablin, 1979; Pincus, 1986; Schuler, 1979; Shih, 2000; Wheelless et al., 1983).

The present study also found that employees who worked in teams or were able to cooperate with others on projects/tasks were more likely to be satisfied in the workplace. Teamwork benefits employees personally and professionally. While working as a team, employees' social or interpersonal skills are likely to be improved due to interaction or cooperation with other team members. They might be able to broaden their knowledge and skills by working with team members who have different expertise and perspectives. Thus, the more positive experience employees have with their teams, the more they are likely to be satisfied with their jobs (Hackman, 1987). This finding emphasizes the need for employees to work together towards a common goal, to which has been previously shown to increase job satisfaction (Kruse, 1986; Lankau, 1996; Loyd, 2005).

Consistent with past research findings (Gaertner & Nollen, 1992; Heathfield, 2000), this study found that employees who perceived career opportunities within the organization were more likely to be satisfied in the workplace than those who did not perceive career opportunities. This finding makes logical sense. If employees see opportunities to advance their careers in their organizations, they are likely to be satisfied with their jobs and work harder to advance their careers. Employees want to develop

professionally and get promoted within an organization, so those who perceive career opportunities will be more committed and satisfied in the workplace. This extends our understanding of providing opportunities for internal employees to increase their satisfaction in the workplace.

It was found that employees who perceived more training opportunities within the organization were more likely to be satisfied in the workplace. Previous research is consistent with this finding, as Bartlett (2001) found that employees who perceived access to training and perceived benefits of training were both significantly correlated to job satisfaction. This makes logical sense; as employees perceive more training opportunities within the organization, they can improve their professional skills and knowledge, and if there are advancement opportunities in the organization, they could use these newly acquired skills and knowledge to advance their careers. Consequently, they might be more satisfied with their jobs as they are learning new skills and expanding their knowledge around things they weren't familiar with coming into the organization.

In addition, this study found that employees who perceived receiving feedback from a supervisor were more likely to be satisfied in the workplace than those who did not perceive receiving feedback. Receiving feedback from a supervisor as to how one is doing is likely to help employees achieve their goals. Constructive feedback is beneficial to receive from a supervisor as employees are able to improve their performance and understand what they need to accomplish to achieve their goals. This is consistent with Anseel and Lievens (2007) where they found that an employee's perception of a feedback



environment from his/her supervisor related strongly to the quality of the relation with his/her supervisor, which was then related to job satisfaction.

The factors that were significant in the prediction of job satisfaction were leadership/top management communication, career/promotion opportunities, and teamwork/cooperation among employees. Therefore, these results suggest that the more employees received information via top management communication, had career/promotion opportunities within the organization, and had teamwork/cooperation among co-workers, the more employees were satisfied at the workplace. The reason why the remaining factors did not contribute to the prediction of job satisfaction was possibly attributable to multicollinearity. This may have occurred due to the strong correlations among each of the factors.

Interestingly, respondents in Department 1 had higher levels of all of the variables compared to those in Departments 2 and 3 which did not differ from each other. In other words, those in Department 1 perceived all of the variables higher in the organization and were more satisfied with their jobs than those in Department 2 and Department 3, despite the fact that those employees performed similar tasks and had similar levels of job responsibilities. One potential reason for such a difference might have to do with the location of each Department. According to U.S. Department of Labor (2007), the cost of living index in Department 1 was 12% less than that in Department 2 and 64% less than that in Department 3, with a difference of 52% between Departments 2 and 3. Respondents in Department 1 might not experience financial hardships as those in Department 2 or Department 3 since the cost of living in that location is less expensive.

Another reason might have to do with the climate of each Department. Department 1 might have a more supportive climate compared to Departments 2 and 3. However, the perception of the climate was not measured, thus this interpretation is speculative.

*Strengths and limitations of the study*

One strength of this study was the large sample size in each of the Departments. The significant relationships among the measured variables are probably due to statistical power, owing it to the large sample sizes. Furthermore, the data were collected from a third-party vendor and the confidentiality and anonymity of responses were secured. Thus, the issue of social desirability (participants responding in a socially desirable manner) was a less of concern for this study. One limitation of this study was that it used archival data. Thus, the researcher did not have control over the inclusion of the variables of interest. For example, there were only three demographic variables included, and the possibility of adding more was not an option. Furthermore, items were developed specifically for the organization's survey and they did not use established scales that were already measured for reliability. In addition, when using archival data, there is a limitation of not knowing the participants or work environment that they are working in. For example, it would have been beneficial to understand the climate of each of the locations to get a better understanding of the participants' responses.

Because this was a cross-sectional study, a causal inference cannot be made. Hence, the causal direction of the relationship between the measured variables and job satisfaction is not known. For example, the positive relationship between leadership/top management communication and job satisfaction was that employees who perceived

communication from top management were more satisfied in the workplace. It also could be that the more satisfied employees in the workplace perceive that leaders or top management communicate to subordinates more often than those who are less satisfied in the workplace.

*Future research and conclusion*

Future research should investigate the factors other than those examined in the present study to assess the relationship with job satisfaction. For example, future studies should look into the climate, external factors such as the cost of living, and possibly additional demographic variables such as generations and age.

In sum, a survey of employees found the five things employees wanted most from their jobs were the opportunity for growth and development, improving skills with training, management communicating clear and measurable goals, belonging to a team, and receiving feedback from their supervisor (Heathfield, 2000). The present study confirmed that these five factors are important variables; all of them being related to job satisfaction.

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