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INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE ATTRIBUTES ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION AND  
EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN TIMES  
OF CHANGE

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THE MODERATING EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE ATTRIBUTES ON  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION AND  
EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN TIMES OF CHANGE

by

ASHLEY HALL

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Human Resource Development

Ann Gilley, Ph.D., Committee Chair

College of Business and Technology

The University of Texas at Tyler  
March 2016


The University of Texas at Tyler  
Tyler, Texas

This is to certify that the Doctoral Dissertation of

ASHLEY HALL

has been approved for the dissertation requirement on  
March 16, 2016  
for the Doctor of Philosophy degree

Approvals:



Dissertation Chair: Ann Gilley, Ph.D.



Member: Jerry Gilley, Ed.D.



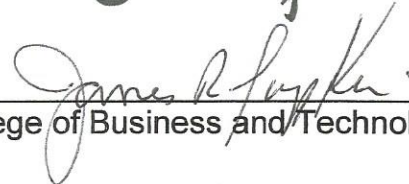
Member: Sherry Jackson, Ph.D.



Member: Paul Roberts, Ed.D.



Chair, Department of Human Resource Development



Dean, College of Business and Technology

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## Abstract

# THE MODERATING EFFECT OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE ATTRIBUTES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION IN TIMES OF CHANGE

Ashley Hall

Dissertation Chair: Ann Gilley, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Tyler  
March 2016

Change is common within organizations today, and companies are seeking employees who will adapt to the changes with a minimum level of disruption to the organization. Although a large literature base exists outlining ways to implement and manage change efforts from both research and practitioner perspectives, many change initiatives do not meet expectations. A lack of communication from management has been identified as a major contributor to resistance to change. As such, managerial communication plays an integral role in the change management process.

This study investigated the moderating role of three individual employee attributes (i.e., organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change) on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change. A sample of 324 surveys from students enrolled in master's and PhD programs in business and human resource development at three universities were used to test the hypothesized

relationships. While support was not found for the hypothesized moderating relationships, statistically significant correlations between constructs were found. The implications of this study's findings for research, theory, and practice are delineated, along with suggestions for future research studies.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

#### **Background to the Problem**

Global competition, new technologies, and economic conditions are a few factors stimulating organizational change today (Saruhan, 2014). For organizations to remain competitive in light of these conditions, they must change (Cohen, 1999). Given today's competitive business environment, organizations have a choice – change or become obsolete (Saruhan, 2014). As such, organizations often engage in planned change efforts through change management, which involves planned changes to a company's direction as a result of new challenges and/or opportunities (Hurn, 2012).

Multiple types of change have been described in practitioner publications and in academic literature. Weick and Quinn (1999) distinguished organizational change as being either episodic or continuous. Change that falls into the episodic category occurs infrequently and may be radical, while continuous change “may be incremental, emergent, and without end” (Gilley, Gilley, & McMillan, 2009a, p. 76). Gilley et al. (2009a) noted that change may also be categorized as transitional, transformational, or developmental. Transitional change consists of minor changes, while transformational changes are radical shifts (Gilley et al., 2009a). Developmental changes aim to avoid radical, sporadic changes by instead continually scanning the environment, both internal and external, and creating work environments that are motivational and reward growth (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000).

A substantial literature base exists concerning ways to implement and manage change efforts from both research and practitioner perspectives (Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007). However, many change initiatives do not meet expectations (Burke, 2002; Herold et al., 2007; Probst & Raisch, 2005). In fact, IBM (2004) found that less than ten percent of change programs are successful.

As organizational change becomes more common, organizations want employees who will adapt to the changes with a minimum level of disruption to the organization. However, “notions of resistance to change, burnout, cynicism about change, and dysfunctional effects of change on organizational commitment, turnover, morale, and performance seem to be far more prevalent than accounts of people readily embracing change” (Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004, p. 868). A lack of communication from management is identified as a major contributor to resistance to change (Gilsdorf, 1998; Murdoch, 1999). As such, managerial communication plays an integral role in the change management process (Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 1999; DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Frahm & Brown, 2007; Lewis, 1999; Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Pundziene, Alonderiene, & Buoziute, 2007; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991; Self, 2007; Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996).

Communication is defined as “the act of exchanging thoughts, messages, or information” and occurs through a variety of channels (Wickhorst & Geroy, 2006, p. 56). Effective managers must provide their subordinates with responsibilities, priorities, and extensive communication during change (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Effective communication, or communication that

achieves its intended purpose, is necessary for the change process to be successful. Managing the transition requires frequent communication, as does sustaining momentum during the change effort (Cummings & Worley, 2015). These communication objectives are paramount in the change management process. If communication is subpar, difficulty is encountered in achieving these important objectives essential to the effective implementation of change.

In situations in which communication is lacking or ineffective, negative repercussions are common. Cummings and Worley (2015) noted that when individuals are unsure of the consequences of the change, they often resist the change effort. In addition, when inadequate information is provided, rumors and gossip spread quickly, which increases the anxiety that typically accompanies change (Cummings & Worley, 2015). Effective communication may reduce the need for such speculation. Interestingly, Cummings and Worley (2015) contend that “communication is also one of the most frustrating aspects of managing change” (p. 183). Choosing the appropriate method to convey important information, as well as the amount of information that is shared and with whom, is crucial to the success of the message, as communication involves determining both the content of the message and the medium through which it is shared (Lehman & DuFrene, 2016). Wanberg and Banas (2000) found that employee perceptions of the timeliness, quality of information, and usefulness of information shared about changes within the organization positively impacted the employee’s evaluation of the change and the employee’s willingness to go along with the change initiative.



Managers play an important role in shaping the change outcomes through their communication. At times, the change to be implemented may be bad news (e.g., downsizing). According to Fransen and ter Hoeven (2011), organizations have a key role to play in molding employees' experiences based on the communication received, as well as impacting employees' responses to the negative news. Numerous studies have found that the conditions surrounding change predict various outcomes including job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and turnover intentions (Rush, Schoel, & Barnard, 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991).

Given the importance of communication during times of change and its impact on outcomes such as employee job satisfaction, it is also necessary to consider factors that impact the communication process. Business communication scholars recognize the impact of individual differences in people on the quality and effectiveness of a communication event (Lehman & DuFrene, 2016). As such, individual employee attributes should be considered in the communication process (Herold et al., 2007). Fransen and ter Hoeven (2011) noted that employee behavior is impacted by both the employee's personality and the situation at hand. They suggest, then, that managerial communication should be responsive to individual employee differences.

Resistance is a common occurrence during change efforts because change typically involves moving from what is known to what is unknown (Coghlan, 1993; Myers & Robbins, 1991; Nadler, 1981; Steinburg, 1992; Zaltman & Duncan, 1977). In addition, individuals have unique ways of experiencing

change (Carnall, 1986), and they often exhibit different levels of both ability and willingness to change (Darling, 1993). Previous research calls attention to the effects of and need for trust during times of organizational change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002). Strong, Ringer, and Taylor (2001) posited that quality communication is positively related to the perceived trust in the organization. This idea is important given that an employee's relationship with the organization shapes the interpretation of the organization's actions (Rousseau, 1995). In addition, an employee's perception of the trustworthiness of the organization and other employment relationship related factors, such as an attachment to the organization, impact the way in which an employee makes sense of the change effort (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). Dirks and Ferrin (2001) found that trust in management is a key indicator of the success of organizational change.

Other studies have also highlighted the critical nature of a trusting relationship between employees and their managers when organizational change efforts are undertaken (Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Simons, 1999). The results of Shah and Shah's (2010) study indicated that "employees are open and ready to accept change through supervisor and peer support" (p. 649). In a review of 60 years of quantitative studies on organizational change, Oreg, Vakola, and Armenakis (2011) found that "the factor that yielded perhaps the most consistent and strongest relationship (i.e., strongest effect size) with change reactions is the extent to which change recipients trust management" (p. 490; see also Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000; Oreg, 2006; Stanley, Meyer, & Topolnytsky,

2005). As such, both organizational trust and managerial trust are important elements to consider when researching organizational change.

In addition, the employee's openness to change is impactful as well. Bordia, Restubog, Jimmieson, and Irmer (2011) noted that adequate communication is positively related to openness to change. Attributes such as self-esteem (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), risk tolerance (Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999), need for achievement (Miller, Johnson, & Grau, 1994), and locus of control (Lau & Woodman, 1995) have been previously studied and linked with an employee's openness towards organizational change. As such, the individual attributes of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change, in conjunction with the communication received, impact the employee's perception of the change process and may impact the resulting level of job satisfaction.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Change management involves planned changes to a company's direction as a result of new challenges and/or opportunities (Hurn, 2012) and is a well-studied topic (see Oreg et al., 2011 for a review of 60 years of quantitative studies on organizational change). However, research shows that a large percentage of initiated change programs fail (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Patterson, 2000; Senge et al., 1999); and in most cases such failure is due to poor communication (Gilsdorf, 1998; Murdoch, 1999). Such poor communication negatively impacts employees' reactions to the change efforts. Conversely, effective communication may have positive impacts on various outcomes,

including job satisfaction (Rush et al., 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991).

However, the role individual attributes play in the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of change is virtually unknown.

As a result of their study, Herold et al. (2007) called for the broadening of change frameworks to more closely represent the conditions under which change occurs within an organization. Namely, the context of the change and the people involved matter in ways that extend beyond the basic what and how of change efforts. The success of organizational change is often determined by individual behaviors (Herold et al., 2007), and employees' attributes inherently impact their behaviors. McMillan and Albrecht (2010) posited that "the body of research examining the influence of change communication on attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes is not well developed" (p. 205). As such, there is a call for an increased focus on the role of individual differences in the change process (Herold et al., 2007; van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Bakker, 2014). Accordingly, the individual attributes of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change were tested to determine their impact on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of change, as

well as the moderating influences of three individual attributes: organizational trust; managerial trust; and openness to change.

### **Theoretical Underpinning**

Two theories underpinned this study – social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

According to Dasgupta, Suar, and Singh (2013), social exchange theory is one of the most influential theories in the understanding of workplace behaviors. The theory views the exchange of resources, both social and material, as a fundamental type of human interaction. According to Blau's (1964) theory, an exchange relationship is formed when one party provides a benefit to a second party. The result is an obligation for the second party to respond and provide a reciprocal benefit. Social exchange theory, as expressed by Whitener (2001), suggests that "employees interpret organizational actions... as indicative of the personified organization's commitment to them, ... [and] alter their perceptions accordingly in their own commitment to the organization" (p. 516). The relationship the employee has with the organization will shape his or her interpretation of the organization's actions (Rousseau, 1995).

Social exchange theory is widely used "to explain how individuals trust another individual or entity, based on what they put into and what they receive from a relationship" (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012, p. 1175). Previous researchers have noted that when people view the exchange as unbalanced and are dissatisfied, there is a decrease in trust (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002; Khazanchi & Masterson, 2011). McMillan and Albrecht

(2010) contended that social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is “a useful framework for understanding how organizational practices influence employee attitudes” (p. 202) and that the communication climate of an organization is “an important element of a social exchange system that can serve, in part, to explain employee attitudes and behaviors” (p. 205). Communication has been studied previously as an antecedent of trust (Hill, Bartol, Tesluk, & Langa, 2009). Given its relation to communication and trust, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is relevant to this study.

In addition, LMX underpinned this study. LMX contends that leadership is effective when leaders and their followers develop mature relationships or partnerships and experience the benefits of such relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Dienesch and Liden (1986) explained that low-quality relationships are marked by simple exchanges, which are characterized as basic contracts; however, high quality LMX relationships are marked by liking, professional respect, and a loyal relationship between the leader and the subordinate. As it relates to this study, the communication of information from the manager to the employee during times of change is an organizational resource to be exchanged. In return, the employee experiences higher levels of job satisfaction, which benefits the organization in many ways including higher levels of work quality, increased creativity, lower turnover intention, and an increase in voluntarily assisting other people (Bandura & Lyons, 2014).

Larkin and Larkin (1994) suggested that an employee’s relationship with his or her leader is helpful in the process of adapting to change. Tierney (1999)

found a correlation between high quality LMX relationships and an individual's receptivity to organizational change. In addition, trust in management builds credibility and acceptance among employees facing change (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). Literature support exists for LMX impacting job satisfaction (Ansari, Lee, & Aafaqi, 2007; Lo, Ramayah, & Hui, 2006). Similarly, scholars have found that the communication practices of supervisors and subordinates strongly influence job satisfaction (Goldhaber, Yates, Porter, & Lesniak, 1978; Miles, Patrick, & King, 1996; Mueller & Lee, 2002; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). Van Dam, Oreg, and Schyns' (2008) findings support the idea that changes are better implemented in instances of high-quality LMX relationships. While LMX is impactful on many constructs investigated in this study, van den Heuvel et al. (2014) noted that research investigating organizational change has not sufficiently discussed the role of LMX in the change process.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Four hypotheses were tested in this study. Previous research findings suggest that managerial communication in times of change positively influences an employee's level of job satisfaction (Rush et al., 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). In addition, both social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) underpin such a relationship between managerial communication and job satisfaction during organizational change. In both theories, a reciprocal exchange relationship occurs. As it relates to this study, the manager exchanges information and the employee exchanges a higher level of job satisfaction. Employees with higher levels of job satisfaction have been found

to offer their organizations higher levels of work quality, increased creativity, lower turnover intentions, and an increased propensity to voluntarily assist others (Bandura & Lyons, 2014). As such, the increase in job satisfaction benefits both the individual and the organization. As a result, the following hypothesis was developed for this study:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Managerial communication is positively related to employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change.*

The relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change is complex, and individual attributes and their impact on the relationship must be considered as well. As Herold et al. (2007) noted, the change frameworks need to be broadened to better align with the conditions under which change occurs within an organization. Specifically, the authors contended that the people involved in the change effort matter and impact the outcomes (Herold et al., 2007). Both existing literature and theory support the inclusion of trust in this study. H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> are formulated in accordance with previous research findings that suggest that trust plays an integral role in the success of the change effort (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Simons, 1999). In addition, both social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) provide support for the hypotheses as well.

When considering organizational trust, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is impactful. Whitener (2001) noted that “employees interpret organizational actions... as indicative of the personified organization’s



commitment to them, ... [and] alter their perceptions accordingly in their own commitment to the organization” (p. 516). As such, the level of trust an employee has in the organization will impact the relationship between the manager’s communication and the employee’s job satisfaction as well. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was tested in this study:

*H<sub>2</sub>: The individual attribute of organizational trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of organizational trust than when the employee has a low level of organizational trust.*

When considering managerial trust, LMX is relevant. LMX contends that leadership is effective when leaders and their followers develop mature relationships or partnerships and experience the benefits of such relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Larkin and Larkin (1994) suggested that an employee’s relationship with his or her leader is helpful in the process of adapting to change. In addition, trust in management builds credibility and acceptance among employees facing change (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). In a review of quantitative studies on organizational change, Oreg et al. (2011) found that “the factor that yielded perhaps the most consistent and strongest relationship (i.e., strongest effect size) with change reactions is the extent to which change recipients trust management” (p. 490; see also Eby et al., 2000; Oreg, 2006;

Stanley et al., 2005). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was developed for this study:

*H<sub>3</sub>: The individual attribute of managerial trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of managerial trust than when the employee has a low level of managerial trust.*

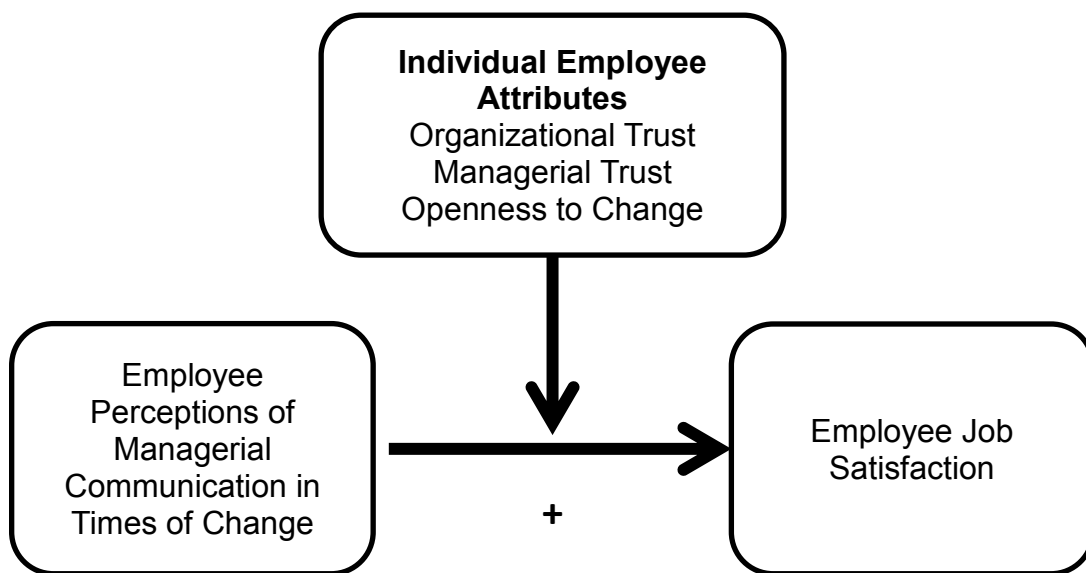
An employee's personal openness to change is crucial for the success of organizational change efforts (Bordia et al., 2011). Wanberg and Banas' (2000) study investigated whether there was a relationship between an employee's openness to change and job satisfaction and found that people with lower levels of change acceptance indicated having lower levels of job satisfaction. This finding highlights the impact of individual differences in the change process. Bordia et al. (2011) noted that adequate communication is positively related to openness to change. The exchange relationships inherent in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) are evident once again when considering the impact of an employee's openness to change on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change. Accordingly, this study's fourth hypothesis was proposed as follows:

*H<sub>4</sub>: The individual attribute of openness to change will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and*

*employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of openness to change than when the employee has a low level of openness to change.*

### **Research Model**

Figure one shows the research model tested in this study.



*Figure 1. Research model*

### **Overview of the Design of the Study**

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study. The convenience sample consisted of students enrolled in master's and PhD programs in business and human resource development (n = 324), because it was anticipated that these individuals would have a variety of industry experience, including varying occupations, tenure, and fields of employment. In addition, diversity in age and

gender were expected as well. Only students who worked at least part-time were included in the data analysis.

This study asked the participants to respond to questions about themselves as related to the individual attributes and job satisfaction elements of the study, as well as questions about how well their manager communicates during times of organizational change. Due to the prevalence of feedback methods such as 360-degree feedback, having employees assess their managers' effectiveness has become a more commonly used approach in research (Gilley et al., 2009a). Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan (1994) suggested that employees provide more accurate ratings of leader performance than the leader, which provides support for the use of subordinates' perspectives when researching managerial communication during times of organizational change.

The three types of change (i.e., small, moderate, and large) were briefly described and defined for the survey respondents. Given the prevalence of change within organizations, it was expected that most of the individuals would have experienced some level of change at their places of employment. However, the survey included a yes or no question asking whether the individual experienced moderate or large scale change at work within the last six months. Any respondents who answered "no" were excluded from the data analysis.

After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, faculty members teaching graduate business courses at three different universities in the southern part of the United States were contacted and asked to allow their students to participate in the study late in the Fall 2015 semester. The survey used

previously validated scales. Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh's (1983) job satisfaction scale was used to assess self-reported perceptions of job satisfaction. The Quality of Information scale (Miller et al., 1994; Miller & Monge, 1985) and NETMA, "No one ever tells me anything," (Miller et al., 1994; based on Peters & Waterman, 1982) were used as a proxy for measuring the employee's perception of the managerial communication that occurred during times of change. Trust was measured with Nyhan and Marlowe's (1997) Organizational Trust Inventory, which includes four questions related to organizational trust and eight questions related to managerial trust. Finally, Miller et al.'s (1994) Openness Toward Change scale was used in this study to measure an individual's level of openness to change. Typical demographic questions such as age, gender, education, job level, industry, and organizational tenure were asked as well, and some were used as control variables in the data analysis phase following the guidance of previously published research studies.

After the survey response period ended, the collected data was reviewed for completeness. Incomplete surveys were disregarded. The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS®). The analysis began with descriptive statistics, namely means, standard deviations, and correlations. For categorical data, the percentage breakdown for each category of response was computed as well. Next, reliabilities of the scales were tested, along with average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). To test for common methods bias, the Harman's single-factor test was performed. After that, the means of the items composing each scale were calculated to use

in subsequent data analysis. Then, the assumptions that are necessary for testing moderation using multiple hierarchical regression were tested. Because the moderators were continuous variables, standardizing was done prior to further statistical analysis. Finally, multiple hierarchical regression was used to test the role of the moderators, and the  $R^2$  values were analyzed. The SPSS® output informed the researcher whether the interaction was significant. The survey scale components have been previously validated and tested for internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha for this sample was computed as well. The face validity, or "that the measure apparently reflects the content of the concept in question" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 160), for the survey was reasonable, as the questions did seem to reflect the concepts being investigated.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study has implications for research, theory, and practice. This study adds to the knowledge base as it pertains to effective change management by considering the impact of managerial communication on employee job satisfaction, in addition to analyzing the employee's individual attributes of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change and their respective impact on the relationship. Because information received is processed by the individual before being acted upon, it is logical to surmise that individual attributes will impact the message's interpretation and, as a result, the behavioral outcome.

As noted earlier, van den Heuvel et al. (2014) contended that research investigating organizational change has not sufficiently discussed the role of LMX in the process. LMX is especially relevant to the constructs of managerial communication, organizational trust, and managerial trust under investigation in this study. Given LMX's underpinning of the study, this study's findings have theoretical implications as well.

Practically, if managers understand that the employee's personal attributes may impact the way information is processed, they may be able to communicate proactively or modify messages appropriately. Audience analysis is crucial in communication (Lehman & DuFrene, 2016). By considering their audience (employees), managers will be able to craft and deliver more effective messages, which might impact the level of job satisfaction exhibited by the employee. Change failure is unfortunately widespread, common, and costly (Wolf, 2006), and failed changes result in organizational losses in the resources of time and money, as well as morale and goodwill (Kotter, 1995). Accordingly, this study's findings can aid organizations in more successfully implementing change, and preserve resources as a result.

In addition, this study is relevant to the field of Human Resource Development (HRD), as well as broader business domains. Many managers scoff at the sentiment that HR is every manager's job; however, those closest to the employees do have an element of responsibility in overseeing their development (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). Gilley and Gilley (2003) used a pyramid model to outline six transformational roles of HR professionals in order to create

results-driven programs. The leadership roles are found at the top of the pyramid and include political navigator and change champion. Leadership roles allow an individual to “help guide the organization through difficult times” (p. 103) by utilizing his or her political expertise, as well as change management skills (Gilley & Gilley, 2003).

The role of change champion is one of two leadership roles that requires a high level of credibility (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). Self (2007) suggested that it is the responsibility of the change leader to guide employees towards embracing, instead of resisting, the change. Armenakis et al. (1999) highlighted five elements to create readiness for change: 1) the need for the change; 2) showing that it is the right change; 3) key people supporting the change effort; 4) confidence that success is possible; and 5) a response to the “what is in it for me?” question. As such, managers can use their communication with subordinates to assist in the change management process and, as a result, positively influence employee job satisfaction.

Watkins (1989) identified five metaphors for HRD: 1) organizational problem solver; 2) organizational change agent; 3) organizational designer; 4) organizational empowerer/meaning maker; and 5) developer of human capital. Accordingly, these roles can be applied to times of change within the organization as well. Swanson and Holton (2001) noted that HRD includes both defining and working to solve problems for organizational improvement. Hutchins and Wang (2008) argued that HRD professionals should be more focused on problem finding than problem solving. The authors suggested that “To do so,



they [HRD professionals] need to stay proactive by constantly and consistently scanning and evaluating how the change in the internal and external environments affects performance so as to identify issues that may threaten organizational sustainability” (p. 320).

The role of a change agent is critical for HRD professionals as well. Hutchins and Wang (2008) noted that “It is HRD professionals’ responsibility for educating organizational leaders and members on the change management process and seeking appropriate organizational development interventions that will facilitate change and help individuals and organizations better cope with the outcomes of crises” (p. 320). Understandably, this role is paramount in this study.

HRD professionals can also serve as organizational designers. In this role, they are able to visualize the connection between HRD and the work structure (Watkins, 1989). In light of organizational goals, HRD professionals will diagnose and choose structures and systems of authority, responsibility, and communication that will result in the achievement of organizational goals (Watkins, 1989).

Fostering long-term success through transforming people and organizations is the goal of the organizational empowerer/meaning maker HRD role (Watkins, 1989). A critical perspective is one mark of such a view of HRD’s role within the organization (Watkins, 1989). Hutchins and Wang (2008) posited that “HRD professionals who take the critical perspective must seek appropriate strategies to engage organizational leaders and members in collective sense making of, and critical reflections...” (p. 321) on organizational experiences.

Finally, developing human capital is the fifth role outlined for HRD professionals by Watkins (1989). This role emphasizes the importance of incorporating training and development activities to develop human resources (Hutchins & Wang, 2008). Hutchins and Wang (2008) argued that “training can be an effective tool to reduce, if not eliminate, the impact of elements that are likely to induce crises, such as technology complexity and human factors” (p. 322), and the same is true for organizational change initiatives. Based on these HRD metaphors and roles, it is evident that HRD professionals play an integral role in the change process and thus this study has implications for research, theory, and practice and is relevant to the field of HRD, as well as broader business domains.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are relevant to this study:

- Communication - “the act of exchanging thoughts, messages, or information” and occurs through a variety of channels (Wickhorst & Geroy, 2006, p. 56)
- Change management - planned changes to a company’s direction as a result of new challenges and/or opportunities (Hurn, 2012)
- Job satisfaction - “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience” (Locke, 1976, p. 1304)
- Trust - “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a

particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995, p. 712)

### **Summary of the Chapter**

In Chapter One, the background to the problem was discussed, along with the statement of the problem and the respective purpose of this study. This chapter outlined the theoretical underpinnings of the study as well. The hypotheses tested, the research model, and the design of the study were explained, in addition to the significance of the study for research, theory, and practice. This study’s relevance to HRD and business domains was delineated as well. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the limitations and delimitations inherent in this study and definitions of relevant terms.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation follows a traditional five chapter dissertation format. Chapter Two contains a representative review of the relevant literature. The literature domains reviewed include change management, managerial communication in times of change, employee job satisfaction, and individual employee attributes, namely organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change.

Chapter Three includes the research hypotheses tested in this study, along with an overview of the design of the study. Details of the instrument used, as well as the scales, and the target population and sample are also contained in

Chapter Three. The data collection and analysis methods are also outlined in the chapter. In addition, issues related to reliability and validity are discussed.

Chapter Four contains the analyzed results of the data collected for this study. Demographics are shared, as well as descriptive statistics related to the dataset. Assumption testing, reliability, and validity are discussed as well. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) are provided. To test for common methods bias, the results of the Harman's single-factor test are discussed. Then, the testing of the hypothesized relationships is explained and analyzed.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the study's results, as well as conclusions and implications. A brief summary of the study is provided before discussing the findings. Implications for research, theory, and practice are discussed, and recommendations for future research are made.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the related literature relevant to this study. Four broad domains of literature were reviewed and analyzed in preparation for this research study. The broader domain of organizational change was explored, along with change management, managerial communication, and employee job satisfaction. Literature related to individual employee attributes of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change were also included to frame the discussion of the study within the larger body of knowledge related to organizational change.

The review is organized into five broad sections. The first section discusses organizational change. Next, leadership and change are discussed. The third section of literature reviewed relates to managerial communication. Employee job satisfaction is the fourth category. The definition, its relation to managerial communication, and positive job outcomes related to high levels of employee job satisfaction are discussed as well. Individual employee attributes constitute the fifth section of this review of literature. Sub-domains investigated include organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change. The last section of this chapter contains the chapter summary.

For this literature review, the following databases were searched: Academic Search Complete; Business Source Complete; Emerald; LexisNexis Academic; ProQuest; and Psych Info. The search terms used included: “change

management;” “managerial communication” and “change;” “job satisfaction” and “change;” “employee characteristics” and “change;” “change readiness” and “individual;” “managerial change communication;” “change” and “organizational trust;” “change” and “managerial trust;” and “change” and “openness,” among others. Various plural forms and different spellings of the search terms were used to broaden the search results. The reviewed documents primarily included peer reviewed journal articles; however, books, dissertations, masters’ theses, and industry publications were included as well.

### **Organizational Change**

Global competition, new technologies, and economic conditions are a few factors stimulating organizational change (Saruhan, 2014). For organizations to remain competitive in light of these conditions, they must change (Cohen, 1999). Given today’s competitive business environment, organizations have a choice – change or become obsolete (Saruhan, 2014). As such, organizations often engage in planned change efforts. A 2006 IBM survey found that two-thirds of 765 corporate CEOs interviewed indicated that they needed to make significant changes to their business within two years. Change efforts can be pursued to increase operational efficiency and for strategic effectiveness (Daft, 1978); at times they are initiated proactively, although at other times they are forced due to external factors (Jacobs, Van Witteloostuijn, Christe-Zeyse, & Polos, 2013).

Multiple types of change exist. Weick and Quinn (1999) distinguished organizational change as being either episodic or continuous. Change that falls into the episodic category occurs infrequently and may be radical, yet continuous

change “may be incremental, emergent, and without end” (Gilley et al., 2009a, p. 76). Gilley et al. (2009a) noted that change may also be categorized as transitional, transformational, or developmental. Transitional change consists of minor changes, yet transformational changes are radical shifts (Gilley et al., 2009a). Developmental changes aim to avoid radical, sporadic changes by instead continually scanning the environment, both internal and external, and creating work environments that are motivational and reward growth (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000). The focus of this study is on moderate to high levels of change, not small change activities.

Cohen (1999) suggested that organizations stay competitive by implementing continuous, transformational change. Similarly, long-term organizational viability is often preceded by organizations that can anticipate change, adapt to it, and successfully execute change efforts (Conner, 1992; Cummings & Worley, 2015; Pfeffer, 2005). Kuhn (1970) argued that while change that is continuous or incremental is important to the sustainability of the organization, change that is transformational is necessary to see innovation within an organization. Likewise, Denning (2005) noted that disruptive change is necessary for innovation. Businesses that refuse to change often disappear (Lewis, Goodman, & Fandt, 2001); however, all too often, organizations go through the motions to implement change, while hoping that the change catalyst goes away (Conner, 1992).

Given the prevalence of change efforts, it is unfortunate that change management tends to be unsuccessful (Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990). IBM

(2004) found that less than 10% of change programs are successful. A substantial literature base exists that outlines strategies to implement and manage change efforts from both research and practitioner perspectives (Herold et al., 2007). However, many change initiatives do not meet expectations (Burke, 2002; Herold et al., 2007; Probst & Raisch, 2005). Herold et al. (2007) posited two explanations as to why change efforts often fail to meet expectations. One possible reason is that people do not apply what they know about change management. A second possible explanation is that other factors that impact responses to change are being overlooked. As a result of their study, Herold et al. (2007) call for the broadening of change frameworks to more closely represent the conditions under which change occurs within an organization. Namely, the context of the change and the people involved matter in ways that extend beyond the basic what and how of change efforts. The success of organizational change is often determined by individual behaviors (Herold et al., 2007).

Scholars are calling for an increased focus on the role of individual differences in the change process (Herold et al., 2007; van den Heuvel et al., 2014). In addition, after reviewing 60 years of quantitative studies on organizational change, Oreg et al. (2011) suggested that “although some conceptual work has been devoted to proposing the variables that might moderate the impact of organizations on individuals’ responses to change, little empirical work has been conducted to test such propositions” (p. 515). This study seeks to fill the identified gaps in the literature and knowledge base by testing the



role of three individual attributes on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during organizational change.

Change management involves planned changes to a company's direction as a result of new challenges and/or opportunities. Numerous forces motivate businesses to want to implement change. Examples include uncertain economic conditions, increased globalization, competition, political interests, government intervention, and technological developments (Hurn, 2012). When compared to organization development (OD), change management is viewed as a more ongoing process (Oswick, Grant, Michelson, & Wailes, 2005).

The change curve needs to be considered when researching change management. According to Bibler (1989), the change curve has four quadrants – denial, resistance, exploration, and commitment. Gilley, Quatro, Hoekstra, Whittle, and Maycunich (2001, p. 46) marked the change curve as starting with “uninformed enthusiasm,” then “informed cynicism,” followed by “hopeful adoption,” and finally “acceptance.” A critical point occurs between the resistance quadrant and the exploration quadrant. This stage, known as “anger” or “checking out” (Gilley et al., 2001, p. 46) occurs when employees check out mentally or physically. The authors contended that managers should seek to minimize the number of people who check out; however, in some cases, having some check out is the best option for all involved. The danger comes when employees mentally or emotionally check out, yet remain at the organization (Gilley et al., 2001). People can progress back and forth through the stages, and appropriate communications propel people through the process. Being aware of

the various responses at different levels of the change curve is important in targeting the communication with an individual based on his or her current stage. A person who is in the resistance stage needs different communication than one who is committed to the change effort (Gilley et al., 2001). Yet again, these concepts highlight the importance of the individual in the change process.

One element of the informal organization that must be considered is the organizational immune system. Gilley, Godek, and Gilley (2009c) noted that the organizational immune system exists to protect the organization from change by building barriers through people, organizational policies, procedures, and the culture. Even when the proposed organizational change is positive, the organizational immune system will perceive the change as a threat (Gilley, Godek, & Gilley, 2009b). Three options exist when encouraging people to accept change: conceal the change; modify behaviors; or disarm the immune system. When organizations conceal a change effort, they make the change seem less intimidating by implementing the change gradually and using nonthreatening communications. The second option, modifying behaviors, involves creating an organizational culture that encourages change, rewards change efforts, and assists people with their change skills. Finally, disarming the organization's immune system will necessitate communication with the employees (Gilley et al., 2009b). An organization's immune system, like the human one, protects against change (foreign objects or ideas) by building a powerful barrier in the form of people, policies, procedures, and the culture it creates to prevent change, regardless of the consequences (Gilley et al., 2009c). The organizational immune

system is part of the company's culture, and the culture significantly impacts "the overt and covert workings of individuals within any firm, as well as their acceptance of or resistance to change" (Gilley et al., 2009b, p. 7).

### **Leadership and Change**

Leadership styles also play an integral role in the change process. Employees often cite leadership as resisters or barriers to change efforts (Gilley, 2005; Schiemann, 1992), even though the leaders perceive things differently (IBM, 2006). Previous research has found that organizational change success is dependent upon the leadership and management of the change process (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). While transactional leadership is an exchange relationship whereby followers receive something for complying with the leader (Burns, 1978), transformational leadership, on the other hand, involves motivating followers to achieve higher levels of performance through the transforming of their attitudes and values (Bass, 1985). In essence, transformational leadership is not strictly compliance based (Bass, 1985). Rafferty and Griffin (2006) divided transformational leadership into two parts: developmental leadership and supportive leadership. Their study found that developmental leadership had a stronger relationship with job satisfaction than did supportive leadership. As such, leadership style impacts an employee's level of job satisfaction.

Gilley, Dixon, and Gilley (2008) posited that "given the critical nature of change in the global economy, leadership and management development should focus on change skills and abilities" (p. 166). Effective leadership should provide

support for employees that leads to changes in their values, attitudes, and beliefs to enable them to understand and accept change (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996). To foster acceptance for change, Santhidran, Chandran, and Borromeo (2013) contended that leaders must communicate. Similarly, Walker, Armenakis, and Bernerth (2007) have argued that employees must be prepared for change through communication that is both open and honest.

At times, the change to be implemented involves bad news (e.g., downsizing). According to Fransen and ter Hoeven (2011), “organizations play a significant role both in shaping an employee’s experience of negative communications and in determining the resulting responses of the employee” (p. 819). As such, it is important to consider how a change that includes negative consequences should be communicated. The framing of a negative situation has been shown to impact the level of acceptance on the part of the employees (see Kühberger, 1998 for a review). Brockner (2006) highlighted the importance of communication in situations involving bad news by demonstrating the employees’ increase in perceived process fairness when the organization clearly communicated the reasons and had senior managers ready and willing to answer questions throughout the whole process. Fransen and ter Hoeven (2011) also noted that maintaining a productive workforce after bad news is delivered is of increasing importance in a multitude of situations that occur company-wide. DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) suggested that change is a positive term for transitions that are often negative for employees (e.g., mergers, layoffs, cultural

changes, new technology) (see also Damanpour, 1987; Hunsaker & Coombs, 1988). Transitions such as these are stressful and can reduce morale and productivity within an organization, which in turn could impede the success of the change effort underway (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998).

Although distinctions are frequently made between leading and managing, change leadership tends to focus on the rhetorical distinctions (Kotter, 1990). Caldwell (2003) suggested that this is an unfortunate occurrence because leadership is necessary for the initiation of innovation, and managers play an integral role in the implementation of the change efforts (Kanter, 1989; Kirton, 1980). According to Kotter (1996), “leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen” (p. 35). Likewise, leadership is a necessary impetus for change; however, if the ability to generate and maintain a vision is lacking, change will fail (Caldwell, 2003). Although there are differences between leading and managing, previous scholars have noted that the terms have been used interchangeably in the literature (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992).

Previous researchers have argued that the organization’s leadership is the critical factor in supporting and motivating change efforts (Gilley, 2005; Gilley et al., 2001; Pfeffer, 2005). Because people by nature resist change, (Bovey & Hede, 2001a; Bovey & Hede, 2001b), the importance of the leader in implementing change is paramount (Gilley et al., 2008). As Gilley et al. (2008) acknowledged, “a primary reason for an organization’s inability to change and innovate lies with its leaders – the individuals who are responsible for leading

change efforts – and their lack of skill or will, impeding successful implementation” (p. 155).

Miles (2001) contended that regardless of a change’s size, it has a ripple effect throughout the organization. As a result, Gilley et al. (2008) suggested that leaders at various organizational levels will regularly face challenging change situations, while also being presented with opportunities to cultivate a work environment that supports change efforts and encourages innovation. Managers who adopt a proactive approach and act as champions of change tend to be more successful in preparing employees for change, as opposed to managers who only look for signs of resistance (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993).

Self (2007) argued that it is the responsibility of the change leader to guide employees towards embracing, instead of resisting, the change. Change is often not an orderly process (Cummings & Worley, 2015); however, there are still opportunities to be “thoughtful in planning the most effective communication to all who may be potentially impacted” (Ellis, 2012, p. 55), as failures of change efforts are often caused by poor communication (Gilsdorf, 1998; Murdoch, 1999). Armenakis et al. (1999) highlighted five elements to create readiness for change: 1) the need for the change; 2) showing that it is the right change; 3) key people supporting the change effort; 4) confidence that success is possible; and 5) a response to the question of “what is in it for me?”

Previous researchers have noted that middle managers are both the conduit for change as well as the object of change efforts (Newell & Dopson, 1996; Storey, 1992). As organizational hierarchies are flattened, managers are

often put in positions in which they must overcome boundaries and seek to bring people together to manage change and innovative undertakings (Rothwell, 1992). This challenge typically necessitates developing and applying soft skills such as “listening, communicating, team building, facilitating, negotiating and conflict resolution” (Caldwell, 2003, p. 287). Miller (2010) outlined strategies for managers to be more effective during change efforts. First, managers need to get themselves ready for the change; then they can better assist others in adapting to the change. Managers often have to make a case for organizational change efforts. Their role involves sharing the vision with others in a way that is relevant to their job and knowledge level (Miller, 2010). After preparing themselves, managers are also better suited to model new behaviors associated with the change. Because people tend to value what they create, managers have an important role to play in shaping the change process and getting employees involved (Miller, 2010).

Zorn and Cheney (2002) posited that it is crucial for leaders to generate buy in among employees for change efforts and to lead in such a way that employees stay committed to the organization. In addition, Barrett (2002) noted that communication is key to successfully impacting employee attitudes about change. Numerous studies point to the importance of communication during times of change. Empirical findings suggest communication influences an employee’s level of commitment, trust in management, participation in the change efforts, and a host of other change related attitudes and behaviors (Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Gopinath & Becker, 2000). Ellis (2012) noted that

plans for change communication typically include “specific, focused key messages for the various target audiences. These key messages are then timed to be delivered when each message would have the most impact” (p. 55). According to McMillan and Albrecht (2010), “given that failed organizational change frequently occurs as a result of poor people management practices, there is a need for researchers to further investigate the conditions that influence employee behaviors and attitudes toward change” (p. 202). As such, this study’s investigation of the impact of individual attributes on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction is needed.

### **Managerial Communication**

Communication is defined as “the act of exchanging thoughts, messages, or information” and occurs through a variety of channels (Wickhorst & Geroy, 2006, p. 56). In managerial communication, the manager is the sender of the information, and the employee is the receiver (Elving, 2005).

**Communication framework.** Shannon and Weaver (1949) developed a theoretical model of communication that includes the sender, the message, the receiver, feedback, and interference. One type of feedback the organization may seek is that of the employee voice. The employee voice allows employees to provide input into the decision making process; this can occur through multiple formats, including both formal and informal channels. One-on-one discussions, feedback systems, and consultation processes are all ways for employees to provide input (Farndale, Van Ruiten, Kelliher, & Hope-Hailey, 2011). Allowing employees to contribute to change efforts generates buy in and allows people the



chance to share their opinions and feel their contribution is valued (Farndale et al., 2011). Oreg et al. (2011) noted that “although change recipient reactions have been extensively addressed, studies have generally ignored the role of the change agents’ responses to these reactions. How managers and change agents respond to change recipients’ reactions is likely to have a direct influence on the change progress and on the ultimate success of the change initiative” (p. 515). Managers also must be involved in two-way communication. It is recommended that managers listen to objections and discuss appropriate responses, in addition to being the change champions who encourage a vision for the future that can be clearly articulated (Hurn, 2012). Through it all, people play a key factor in the change management process (Hurn, 2012).

The medium through which information is shared has been shown to impact the way the information is interpreted (Nelson, Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Ramsay, 2007). The sender must decide between a formal or informal communication channel. Informal channels, including networks and the grapevine, do not follow the organizational hierarchy as they are not established by management. Typically the informal communication channel is less structured and is faster (Fisher, 1993; Saruhan, 2014). On the other hand, formal channels, including memos, newsletters, and information distributed in other ways by the organization, are more structured. The formal communication channel established by the organization is used to convey information formally about the firm’s activities. In this type of channel, the organizational hierarchy is followed (Saruhan, 2014).

Communication can flow in three directions – downward, upward, or horizontal (Saruhan, 2014). For the purposes of this study, the focus was primarily on downward communication. Upward communication is discussed to a lesser extent, as the scope is limited to managerial communication, which includes both the information shared down to the employees, as well as the opportunity for the employees to provide feedback.

Downward communication travels from a higher level to a lower level. Communication from the manager to his or her employees is an example of downward communication. This type of communication enables employees to understand their responsibilities and can include face-to-face conversations, email, or memos (Saruhan, 2014). Upward communication is transmitted from a lower level to a higher one, such as an employee communicating with his or her manager (Saruhan, 2014).

The organization's culture also plays an essential role in the communication encounters that take place. Schein (1982) posited that communication functions as a symbol of the organization's culture. Accordingly, "if the existing organizational culture does not value information exchange and processing, then it is unlikely that the managers will deviate from the norm" (Frahm & Brown, 2007, p. 381). An organization's culture, or the way they do things, is very resistant to change (Hurn, 2012) and can only be modified with significant amounts of appropriate communication from the identified change agents (Chiang, 2010; Jorritsma & Wilderom, 2012; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006).

Russ (2008) outlined two theoretical categories into which communication related to organization change can fall: programmatic and participatory. These categories are distinguished as follows. A programmatic approach “emphasizes the transmission of monologic communication about organizational change in a top-down manner to generate stakeholder compliance and/or stimulate desired positive attitudes and beliefs about the planned change” (Russ, 2008, p. 200). On the other hand, “the participatory approach leverages dialogic communication so as to involve most or all stakeholders through solicitation of their ideas and input about the change and the implementation process” (Russ, 2008, p. 200).

Programmatic change communication utilizes a “telling and selling approach” (Russ, 2008, p. 200) whereby “implementers (who are the formal decision-makers or at least have an alliance with them) hold the power and that gaining stakeholders’ compliance is of utmost importance” (Russ, 2008, p. 200). The compelling force behind this method is that “the ‘right’ message communicated using the ‘right’ approach may diminish or circumvent implementation challenges” (Russ, 2008, p. 200). Examples of programmatic change communication include “presentations; general information meetings; memos; newsletters; pamphlets/brochures; posted information (e.g., posters, signs, bulletin boards, charts, dashboards, scorecards, and so on); one-way media (e.g., websites, listservs, video, and podcasts); and informal small group information meetings as well as word of mouth” (Russ, 2008, p. 201). The objective of such activities is not the solicitation of input; rather the goal is “to convince the target population to comply with the planned change and to

communicate what 'right' looks like; that is, the implementers' (leaders') desired vision for the change" (Russ, 2008, p. 202).

Programmatic change communication has some notable limitations, including questions of effectiveness, misunderstandings of the messages, emphasizing conformance (rather than performance), unnecessary communication, and the lack of consensus building (Russ, 2008). However, there are benefits to programmatic communication. Previous research supports the claim that "disseminating formal, quality information from organizational leadership is an important variable during planned change efforts" (Russ, 2008, p. 203). In addition, with this communication approach information is shared fairly with all employees, regardless of their role, and is highly efficient in terms of speed and cost (Russ, 2008).

Participatory approaches are another form of communication strategy that may be used to communicate change. As the name suggests, these types of approaches "invite input, using involving and empowering methods to gain the insights of various stakeholders to shape the change programme and not merely to 'receive it'" (Russ, 2008, p. 204). The rationale for participatory methods is that "employees' participation [will be] perceived as the catalyst for implementing sustained organizational change" (Russ, 2008, p. 204). Participatory communication models are distinguished by multiple levels of involvement and input from stakeholders at different organizational levels (Russ, 2008). In addition, change is not viewed as a static event, rather a dynamic process. Open

forums, informal conversations, and opinion surveys are examples of participatory communication (Russ, 2008).

### **Managerial communication in times of organizational change.**

Effective implementation of organizational change efforts must involve communication (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). Saruhan (2014) noted that communication “plays a strategic role” (p. 148) in implementing change and in organizational continuity. Accordingly, Saruhan (2014) proposed that managers should view communication as a strategic issue and integrate communication into the organization’s overall strategies. A variety of communication techniques are necessary for innovation (Denning, 2005), and according to Luecke (2003), communication can motivate employees who are involved in change efforts. Allen and Meyer (1990) suggested that managerial communication that is open and contains accurate information increases the level of trust. Effective communication, which is the way in which organizations compete and survive, is a goal for all organizations (Spillan, Mino, & Rowles, 2002), and communication plays an integral role in a company’s success or failure (Raina, 2010).

**Change implementation.** Russ (2008) contended that “implementation is perhaps the most critical phase of change” because it is in that phase that “organizations put ideas, designs, and visions to work” (p. 199). Researchers agree that providing information through communication is a key element in a successful change implementation plan (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007; Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). Jorritsma and Wilderom

(2012) posited that employees rarely change automatically and rarely improve their daily job task performance when asked to change. The authors suggested that to assist non-managerial employees with changes to the work environment, companies must effectively communicate the news of change among units (Jorritsma & Wilderom, 2012). In addition, managers and supervisors have to understand the role they play in leading employees through change efforts (Potosky, 2010). However, even though communication is seen as important, the communication strategies often fail to provide valuable information to employees during periods of change (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Smeltzer, 1991).

Communication aids employees in coping with uncertainty (Allen et al., 2007; Hoag, Ritschard, & Cooper, 2002) and thus helps overcome resistance (Dawson, 2008). Previous researchers have posited that organizations that communicate change efforts well are better suited to manage the change expectations of employees (Heracleous & Langham, 1996; Jorritsma & Wilderom, 2012). Indeed, Covin and Kilmann (1990) noted that “failure to share information or to inform people adequately of what changes are necessary and why they are necessary is viewed as having a highly negative impact” (p. 239). It is unfortunate, then, that previous studies have found that many organizations do a poor job of keeping managers and employees informed about change efforts (Allen et al., 2007; Lewis, 2002). In fact, Allen et al. (2007) noted that change within an organization is a communicative challenge.

Oreg (2006) suggested that “the amount and quality of information that is provided can also influence how organizational members will react to change” (p.

81). Indeed, Wanberg and Banas (2000) found that employees who received timely, useful information about the change effort viewed it more positively and were more willing to go along with the change. Previous research supports the idea that a communication climate that is positive and informative predicts an individual's readiness to change (Armenakis, Bernerth, Pitts, & Walker, 2007; Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007).

Previous studies have revealed numerous positive outcomes as a result of quality communication during times of change. Realistic, supportive, and effective communication was associated with a higher level of change acceptance and support for change (Axtell et al., 2002; Gaertner, 1989; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). When communication is lacking, employees may feel a heightened sense of uncertainty, which can impede the change process (Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991).

Saruhan (2014) noted that "effective communication is the glue that holds an organization together and during major change that glue must be even stronger" (p. 159). Communication about the change can assist or hurt the change process (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Richardson & Denton, 1996). Overcoming resistance to change and gaining acceptance necessitates consultation with employees at various levels (Hurn, 2012). As such, Hurn (2012) contended that effective change management necessitates large amounts of discussion regarding the proposed change with key stakeholders in advance of the change. DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) argued that managing uncertainty

properly is the distinguishing factor between effective and ineffective change communication.

Lewin (1951) established a well-known three step model related to change: 1) unfreeze; 2) move; 3) refreeze. Hurn (2012) noted that the unfreezing stage involves communicating both the reason change is needed as well as the advantages that will occur as a result. The movement phase involves “nurturing the desired change of attitude through consultation with the support of key change agents” (Hurn, 2012, p. 44), and the refreezing stage necessitates the need to reinforce and sustain the change efforts through procedures or policies that support the change (Hurn, 2012).

Pundziene et al. (2007) identified communication needs based on the three phases of the Lewin (1951) model. During the unfreezing stage, the following communication needs should be targeted: “explaining issues, needs, rationale; identifying and explaining directives; identifying and explaining first few steps; reassuring people” (Pundziene et al., 2007, p. 62). During the moving stage, the communication needs shift to include: “informing employees of progress; getting input as to effect of the progress; developing sophisticated knowledge among all supervisory management personnel; challenging misconceptions; continual reassurance of personnel; delineating and clarifying role relationships and expectations” (Pundziene et al., 2007, p. 62). Finally, during the refreezing stage, the communication needs include touting the success of the change initiative and sharing the news with employees (Pundziene et al., 2007). Kotter (1995) later extended this model to include eight



stages: 1) create a sense of urgency; 2) form a strong team to lead the change; 3) create a vision and strategy for change; 4) communicate the vision and strategy to achieve the desired goal; 5) overcome resistance to change; 6) emphasize short-term attainable goals; 7) reinforce the vision; and 8) develop a corporate culture. Once again, communication is viewed as essential throughout the change process.

**Importance of managerial communication.** The way in which a change effort is communicated impacts the manner in which it is received (Gilley et al., 2008). Specifically, Gilley et al. (2008) recognized that “effective management of change (managing individual resistance through communications) has proven to be an essential contributor to the success of a change initiative” (p. 156). In addition, Gilley et al. (2008) found that communications are critical for a person’s success in leading change and that a failure to communicate explains numerous failures in organizational change efforts. Consequently, it is unfortunate that organizational communication strategies are not relied upon when considering change motivation and receptivity (Argenti, Howell, & Beck, 2005).

When managing change, effective managers must “provide employees with clear responsibility and priorities, including extensive communication and freedom to improvise” (Cummings & Worley, 2015, p. 179). In order for managers to motivate change and create a vision, they must be effectively communicating with their employees. Communication is also essential to developing the necessary political support to successfully implement change. Managing the transition requires frequent communication, as does sustaining

momentum. When communication is lacking or ineffective, there are negative repercussions. Cummings and Worley (2015) noted that “people resist change when they are uncertain about its consequences” (p. 183). Such uncertainty is often a result of poor communication. When change efforts are related to modifying the individual tasks of employees, communication regarding the change effort and related information must be shared with the employees (Elving, 2005). Accordingly, Elving (2005) contended that communication should be considered an important, integrative part of the organization’s change strategy.

Communication plays an integral role in the change process and has been considered critical during various phases of change including planning, implementation, and managing the change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Lewis, 1999; Lewis & Seibold, 1998; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). Witherspoon and Wohlert (1996) contended that the degree of success of a change initiative depends on the success of the change communication. Frahm and Brown (2007) posited that organizational change communication plays a key role in an employee’s receptivity to the change effort. In addition, Parish, Cadwallader, and Busch (2008) recommended that the change implementation plan should include “open and timely communication about the reason for change initiatives” (p. 45). Choosing the appropriate method to convey important information, as well as the quantity of information that is shared and with whom, is crucial to the success of the message (Lehman & DuFrene, 2016).

**Quality managerial communication.** When analyzing managerial communication in times of change, Elving (2005) argued that whether the

information regarding the change was provided in a timely fashion, was accurate, and was understandable to the employees must be considered when determining the effectiveness. The information provided by the organization should address why the change is being implemented, as well as the initial concerns of the employee (Elving, 2005).

Based on a surprising finding in Oreg's (2006) study, which indicated that additional information regarding the change corresponded with negative evaluations of the change effort, the importance of the quality of communication is highlighted. The amount of information alone is not sufficient for determining an individual's response to the change. The content shared is important as well. Similarly, Barrett (2002) noted that communicating with employees plays a larger role than simply sending a message. Accordingly, Oreg et al. (2011) contended that "the overall picture concerning the role of information may be more complex than has been initially proposed" (p. 492) and suggested that future studies focusing on change communication take into account "possible moderators that will reveal a more complex picture than has been considered to date" (p. 516). As such, this study's examination of the impact of moderators will contribute to the knowledge base.

**Effective communication competencies.** Based on previous research related to communication in times of change, Pundziene et al. (2007) identified the following six key competencies for change communication: use appropriate language; engage in active listening; encourage feedback; develop a trusting climate; influence others; and understand the various communication channels.

DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) suggested implementing effective communication strategies during times of change, including the following recommendations:

- “announce change early, even if incomplete
- establish an information time-line
- comment on the inability to give further information
- establish an open and collective planning process surrounding the change (i.e., involve those affected by change in as much planning as possible)
- clarify values and protocol for change decisions, and
- engage in actions facilitative of trust (e.g., inform employees prior to media, tailor announcements to address concerns peculiar to each audience)” (p. 301).

Their research findings supported the theme of “honest, frequent, and consistent” communication efforts during organizational change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998, p. 301).

Practically speaking, management-driven change occurs often, and the communication from management surrounding it is poor (Birken, Lee, & Weiner, 2012; Tucker, Yeow, & Viki, 2013). Previous studies have found that many large organizational changes fail as a result of poor communication (Elving, 2005; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006). Various researchers have discovered that “the communications about change seem to be more successful in gaining employee understanding when they make reference to internal or external factors that are driving decision making and, more importantly, to ideological matters such as shared values and superordinate goals” (Tucker et al., 2013, p. 204). In

summation, “any form of organizational change needs to be carefully planned; communicating that change is no less important” (Tucker et al., 2013, p. 204).

Allen et al. (2007) contended that “the reason why many organizations may encounter difficulties in reducing employee uncertainty during change is the often one-way nature of communication strategies, and a predominate focus on providing employees with information regarding strategic issues” (p. 207).

According to the researchers, this approach is not effective throughout the change process, as the employees’ concerns shift from strategic issues to job-related issues (Allen et al., 2007). This calls attention to the individual-level impact of change efforts and suggests that communication strategies should be adjusted accordingly.

**Social accounts, motivated reasoning.** To understand the way in which employees interpret the reasons provided for change, social accounts must be discussed. Social accounts theory is focused on the reasons as a form of managerial intervention (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). The manager’s justifications and excuses used to explain certain actions constitute social accounts (Sitkin & Bies, 1993). Sitkin and Bies (1993) outlined three types of social accounts: mitigating responsibility; exonerating motives; and reframing outcomes.

The way in which the manager’s social account influences the employee’s response is based upon the employee’s perceived adequacy or credibility of the reasons, as well as the sincerity of the manager (Bies, 1987). According to Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1999), “accounts play the role of excuses or

justifications used to influence a person's perceptions of responsibility for action, the motives behind it, and its unfavorability" (p. 515). The level of trust that exists between an employee and management impacts the employee's likelihood to accept the manager's account as adequately justifying the change effort (Bies, 1987). If the employee trusts his or her manager, the manager's account will likely be viewed as more credible (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999).

Social accounts theory provides a framework for understanding the manner in which the reasons shared by management for a change are viewed by the employees (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1999) found that the managerial account more effectively justified the change; however, the managerial accounts were not always received or remembered in the ways that the managers intended. Social accounts research indicates that high trust between the employee and manager should result in a greater acceptance of the explanations offered by the manager (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999).

**Sensemaking, sensegiving, and sensebreaking.** Sensemaking is the process of interpreting various inputs (Maitlis, 2005; Steigenberger, 2015; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005) and has been defined as "a process, prompted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cues can be drawn" (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014, p. 67). It allows people to preserve their ability to act in uncertain or confusing situations by developing a plausible story as to the meaning and cause of a development, as well as its

consequences and the appropriate action in response to the development (Steigenberger, 2015).

Previous researchers have found that the outcome of sensemaking can lead to either positive or negative views of a proposed change and impact the individual's openness or resistance to change (Bartunek, Balogun, & Do, 2011). Organizational change results in tension between the old and the new (Lockett, Currie, Finn, Martin, & Waring, 2014). Through sensemaking, "actors work through a process of social construction, whereby they interpret and explain the information that they receive in order to produce what appears to them to be a plausible account of the world to enable action" (Lockett et al., 2014, p. 1103). A variety of information is involved in sensemaking during organizational change including the employee's understanding of the change, the employee's determination of whether the implementation follows the plan shared, and how the change impacts the employee personally (Bartunek, Rousseau, Rudolph, & DePalma, 2006). In addition, the employee's level of involvement impacts the sensemaking about the organizational change effort (Bartunek et al., 2006).

According to Weick's (1995, p. 17) sensemaking model, sensemaking is "1) grounded in identity construction; 2) retrospective; 3) enactive of sensible environments; 4) social; 5) ongoing; 6) focused on and by extracted cues; and 7) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy." The way in which an individual derives meaning from a situation is dependent upon his or her past experiences and understandings (Thurlow & Mills, 2009). In addition, "language and events in

the past that have been created as meaningful for an individual will help to shape that individual's sensemaking of future events" (Thurlow & Mills, 2009, p. 462).

Because change efforts disrupt the status quo and new orientation schemes must evolve and eventually develop new routines (Jarzabkowski, Le, & Feldman, 2012), the way in which employees make sense of the change is crucial. Organizational change undermines the "existing schemata, which serve as the interpretive frames of reference through which to make sense of the world" (Lockett et al., 2014, p. 1102; see also Moch & Bartunek, 1990). As a result of this ambiguity, an individual must develop new schemata, which is done through the sensemaking process (Bartunek, 1984). Such developments do not occur by themselves (Taylor & van Every, 2000; Weber & Glynn, 2006); individuals engage in sensemaking from various personal backgrounds and previous experiences that impact their sensemaking about the change effort (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gephart, 1993; Weick, 1995).

Numerous studies have indicated that changes often result in resistance behaviors from the stakeholders (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012) because they have to modify their routines (Becker, Lazaric, Nelson, & Winter, 2005). In addition, the individual's identity may be disrupted by the change effort (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2013). According to Steigenberger (2015), the way in which a person responds to a change, either with support or with resistance, depends on his or her perception and interpretation of the effort. The interpretation involves both cognitive and affective processes to derive meaning (Steigenberger, 2015) and is, to an extent, socially constructed, meaning that there is an element of both



individual and group-level sensemaking behind the interpretation of the proposed change (Balogun & Johnson, 2005; Bovey & Hede, 2001a; Canato, Ravasi, & Phillips, 2013; Huy, 1999).

On the individual level, intra-personal sensemaking often occurs automatically and subconsciously (Steigenberger, 2015) and is realized retrospectively (Sonenshein, 2007; Weick et al., 2005). The way in which individuals act and their decision making process are based on their interpretation of what is occurring (Volkema, Farquhar, & Bermann, 1996). Structuring reality is the basis of sensemaking (Steigenberger, 2015). Groups can also be engaged in sensemaking. If it is required that the group act in some coordinated manner, they too will have to make sense, collectively, of information that is puzzling or incomplete (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia & Poole, 1984; Weick, 1993). Sensemaking, whether intra-personal or inter-personal, is focused on revising an emerging story with the goal that “it becomes more comprehensive, incorporates more of the observed data, and is more resilient in the face of criticism” (Weick et al., 2005, p. 415).

The frameworks used by employees to understand change are often not understood, even though previous research shows that the way in which employees interpret the reasons behind the change influences their reactions to the change (Shapiro, Buttner, & Barry, 1994). The way in which the organization frames the change impacts the employees’ responses (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Pondy, 1978); however, previous studies have found that employees do not find

all the reasons used to explain change efforts to be credible or acceptable (Bies & Moag, 1986; Bies & Shapiro, 1993).

Previous researchers have coined the term “sensegiving” to depict the role managerial communication plays in transmitting new beliefs and meanings to subordinates (Fiss & Zajac, 2006; Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Labianca, Gray, & Brass, 2000; Mantere, Schildt, & Sillince, 2012). Sensegiving is the “process of attempting to influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organization reality” (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442) and involves executing power through both leadership and negotiation (Steigenberger, 2015). This activity is undertaken in both planned change events (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) and as a response to situations when the staff relies on managers to assist in providing meaning during times of change (Corley & Gioia, 2004). Sensegiving from managers to subordinates is viewed as successful when employees develop a sensemaking scheme that is aligned with the manager’s goals (Mantere et al., 2012).

At times, in order to construct new meanings through communication, managers must engage in sensebreaking to facilitate change. Sensebreaking has been defined as a practice that destroys meaning (Pratt, 2000). By undercutting existing meaning, they make change possible (Mantere et al., 2012). Sensebreaking and sensegiving complement one another (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008; Pratt, 2000), while sensebreaking includes the

“destructive aspects of reorganizing that must take place if change is to be successful” (Biggart, 1977, p. 410).

**Ineffective communication.** Poor communication has been found to lead to greater strain for employees (Riulli & Savicki, 2006) as a result of an increase in uncertainty (Paulsen et al., 2005) as well as perceived injustice (Fugate, Prussia, & Kinicki, 2012). Campbell-Jamison, Worrall, and Cooper (2001) found that employees who survived their organization’s change to privatization were angry and bitter in response to the way managers treated the employees through poor communication, unclear procedures, and a perceived lack of support. Indeed, previous research on organizational stress has focused on the impact of both poor management as well as inadequate communication during the change process (Faragher, Cooper, & Cartwright, 2004; Riulli & Savicki, 2006).

In a qualitative study about employees’ stress before, during, and after organizational change, Smollan (2015) found that some participants resented the poor communication they received regarding the purpose of the change and the way the change effort was perceived to impact them and their co-workers. Some employees were allowed to provide input into the change process, while others were not. When the employees felt that their input was not valued and that management planned to take the actions they wanted, regardless of the employees’ opinions, the employees reported being cynical and angry (Smollan, 2015). Pick, Teo, and Yeung (2011) also found that university staff resented receiving inadequate information during change, as well as being excluded from the decision making process.

When inadequate information is shared with employees or the wrong communication channel choice is made, ineffective communication occurs (Saruhan, 2014). Poor communication is a main antecedent of an employee's resistance to the change effort (Miller et al., 1994; Rogers, 2003; Saruhan, 2014; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). In addition, Nelson et al. (2007) found that if employees view the information shared as being either inadequate or irrelevant, they will be suspicious of the change and typically respond negatively. Kilbourne, O-Leary-Kelly, and Williams (1996) claimed that the amount of information the organization shares, the level of employee participation, and whether employees see the need for change are key elements in whether the employees perceive their workplace to be fair. As such, the quality of managerial communication in times of change is very important to the change process and its outcomes.

In their study, Witherspoon and Wohlert (1996) found that information was shared downward and differentially. In addition, information was viewed as a resource that needed to be guarded, and the flow of information ceased once it reached the supervisor level within the organization (Witherspoon & Wohlert, 1996). In Frahm and Brown's (2007) study, managers were perceived to be the reason for communication breakdowns and participants noted that, in their experience, formal communications were lacking. The participants preferred face-to-face communication, yet they were often unable to engage in such interactions. In addition, the researchers also found that opportunities to provide feedback were limited, communication typically flowed in one direction

(downward), and that the informal network, including rumors, addressed the void left by the lack of formal communication (Frahm & Brown, 2007).

**Rumors.** DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) asserted that higher levels of uncertainty and pervasive rumors occur as a result of poor communication. The informal communication network, including the grapevine, is often an important source of information during times of change (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993). Richardson and Denton (1996) highlighted a paradox of communication during times of change – employees desire more information at a time when managers often cannot provide it. DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) found that “the uncertainty created by this ‘don’t talk ‘till you’ve got all the facts’ approach was apparently worse than disbursing partial information and resulted in a loss of morale, feelings of anger, loss of team spirit, and reduced productivity” (p. 298).

Change communication that is lacking or of poor quality often results in rumors, the employees resisting the change effort, and an exaggeration of negative aspects related to the change (DiFonzo, Bordia, & Rosnow, 1994; Smeltzer & Zener, 1992). Cummings and Worley (2015) noted that inadequate information fuels rumors and gossip and adds anxiety to the change process. Effective communication can reduce the need for such speculation. Interestingly, Cummings and Worley (2015) contend that “communication is also one of the most frustrating aspects of managing change” (p. 183).

DiFonzo and Bordia (1998) identified seven poor communication strategies during times of change:

- “delaying announcement of change

- concealing information related to change and not commenting on why it is concealed
- maintaining a closed change planning process
- issuing discrepant reports of change
- arranging unexpected media reports of change
- issuing an indefinite change announcement time-line, and
- saying 'no-comment' when information is requested" (p. 301).

To engage in effective communication during organizational change, these behaviors and actions should be avoided.

### **Employee Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a commonly studied element of human resource management. The concept has been defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience" (Locke, 1976, p. 1304). The benefits of higher levels of job satisfaction are not limited to the individual employee; rather the organization also benefits from higher levels of job satisfaction among employees in the form of higher levels of work quality, increased creativity, lower turnover intention, and an increase in voluntarily assisting other people (Bandura & Lyons, 2014).

Previous studies have found that the conditions under which change occurs predict outcomes including job satisfaction (Rush et al., 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). In a review of organizational change research, Oreg et al. (2011) found that many studies investigated the impact of change on job satisfaction (e.g., Amiot, Terry, Jimmieson, & Callan, 2006; Axtell et al., 2002;

Gardner, Dunham, Cummings, & Pierce, 1987; Judge et al., 1999) and that it was the second most commonly studied change consequence. Given the prevalence of organizational change, researchers often seek to measure the impact of the change effort on the level of employee job satisfaction as it impacts both the individual employee and the organization.

Empirical support exists for the idea that uncertainty is negatively related to job satisfaction (Nelson, Cooper, & Jackson, 1995; Rafferty & Griffin, 2006). Given the uncertainty often inherent during periods of organizational change, this negative consequence is impactful for both employees and the organization. Cullen, Edwards, Casper, and Gue (2014) found that the employee's perception of the level of organizational support plays a major role in the level of change-related uncertainty experienced, which influences the employee's job satisfaction and level of performance. The researchers noted that "most explanations of stressor-strain relationships have examined appraisals individuals make about themselves, including the extent to which they have personal control in the situation that will allow them to address the stressor" (Cullen et al., 2014, p. 276). In contrast Cullen et al. (2014) focused on employee appraisals of the organization to explain the relationship. This approach highlights the importance of the organization in the change process and links the actions of the organization to the employee's response. As it relates to this study, the communication the employees receive could impact the level of job satisfaction by reducing the uncertainty experienced by the employees. Previous research has linked managerial communication in times of change with employee job

satisfaction (Rush et al., 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). As such, this study will seek to confirm that finding, in addition to testing the moderating impact of three individual attributes – organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change.

### **Individual Attributes**

People tend to be creatures of habit who do not readily accept changes to their daily routine, work practices, work environment, responsibilities, or power within organizations (Mullins, 2005). This is problematic given the rate of change occurring within organizations today, and the recognition that the success of organizational change is often determined by individual behaviors (Herold et al., 2007). Cullen et al. (2014) argued that “ultimately, employees are responsible for implementing workplace changes and their perceptions and individual differences are likely to play an important role in this process” (p. 270). While Cullen et al. (2014) acknowledged the impact of organizational actions such as change-related communication on the success of the change effort, they claimed that the employees’ perceptions of the environment and their individual predispositions are necessary elements to consider when attempting to understand how employees perceive the actions of the organizations. Additionally, such perceptions impact their job related attitudes and performance. Accordingly, the success of a change effort is impacted by both the actions of the organization and individual employee differences (Cullen et al., 2014).

Because employees play a vital role in the successful implementation of change programs (Kotter, 1995), a considerable amount of research has focused



on better understanding factors that impact an employee's receptiveness to change within the organization (Jimmieson, Peach, & White, 2008; Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths, 2005; Miller et al., 1994; Oreg, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). It has been noted that a person's response to change is at least partially change-specific and dependent on the particular change effort underway (van Dam et al., 2008), yet Oreg (2003) recognized that differences exist among individuals as to how they typically respond to change efforts. The need to consider the role of previous events in impacting the responses exhibited by employees towards organizational change efforts has been established as well (Bordia et al., 2011; Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001). In their study on the impact of change history implementation and the resulting impact on change attitudes, Bordia et al. (2011) claimed that ineffective change management not only impacts the current change, it can negatively affect future changes as well.

Employees' responses to change efforts play a key role in organizational change (Bartunek et al., 2006; Oreg et al., 2011; Vakola, 2014). Previous research suggests that the level of acceptance or support of change exhibited by employees is partially a function of the way in which the change impacts them individually (e.g., their own or their unit's work) (Caldwell et al., 2004; Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006; Herold et al., 2007). Studies have indicated that many change efforts fail as a result of management not realizing the importance of understanding and accurately predicting what the employee reactions will be during the change process (Armenakis & Harris, 2002; Chawla & Kelloway, 2004; Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Saruhan, 2014). Indeed,

when Oreg et al. (2011) reviewed 60 years of literature on the topic, they found that the perceived benefit or harm of the change effort had numerous impacts on the employee, including job satisfaction and openness to change. Oreg (2006) found that employees' personalities and contexts were significantly related to their attitudes about large-scale change efforts, which were significantly related to their job satisfaction and other outcomes (e.g., commitment to the organization or intention to leave).

Herold et al. (2007) called for a broadening of change frameworks in an effort to "more closely approximate the realities of change in organizational settings – context and people matter, beyond the what and how of organizational change" (p. 948). As a result of Herold et al.'s (2007) study, conventional wisdom about change was supported in that their findings indicated that individual differences can impact a person's commitment to change and interact with the setting to impact change outcomes. Herold et al. (2007) noted that individual behaviors ultimately determine the rate of success of most organizational change efforts, and they continued the call for change research focused on the role individual differences play in impacting the response to change. The researchers note the hesitancy of organizations to focus too much on such individual differences, recognizing that it may make managerial decision making more difficult. However, given the far-reaching implications of change management, such a focus may be worthwhile (Herold et al., 2007). While individual attributes have been studied in a change management context, as well as in the communication literature, the two have not been linked. This gap is significant,

given the role individual attributes play in the interpretation of change communication in addition to change-related outcomes. This study answers the call within the literature to focus on the impact of individual differences on the change process (Herold et al., 2007; van den Heuvel et al., 2014).

Because employees are not passive recipients of change, they can determine their own interpretations of what is occurring and act on their perception of the change effort (Shapiro, Lewicki, & Devine, 1995). For this reason, motivated reasoning needs to be considered as well when investigating the change process. In situations when the explanation provided by managers “may not be believed, heard, understood, or recalled” (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999, p. 516), the employee will engage in motivated reasoning. Because individuals want explanations for events that are out of the ordinary or unexpected (Weiner, 1985), at times they may seek understanding on their own. Even though managers may provide a social account for the reasons behind their action, other factors impact the way in which the employees process the information including the opinions of those they work with and previous experiences with managers (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). In fact, the variety of backgrounds among employees can lead employees to varying explanations for the same event (McGill, 1995).

Palmer (2004) posited that employees are the cornerstone of organizational change and that their resistance is a major challenge in organizational change efforts. Yet Dent and Goldberg (1999) suggested that employees tend to resist negative consequences of change, not the change

effort itself. Results of Oreg's (2006) study suggested that "some employees are more likely to experience negative emotions and more likely to act against organizational changes because of their dispositional inclination, independent of the particular nature of the change at hand" (p. 92). Thus the importance of considering individual employee attributes is highlighted once again. Through it all, people play a key factor in the change management process (Hurn, 2012). As such, scholars are calling for an increased focus on the role of individual differences in the change process (Herold et al., 2007; van den Heuvel et al., 2014). This study considered specifically an employee's level of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change and investigated the impact of these three individual attributes on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change.

**Trust.** Trust is an important element to consider when studying organizational change and change communication. Trust, or "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712), has also been shown to be important in the organizational change communication context (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). Previous research calls attention to the effects of and need for trust during times of organizational change (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998; Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002). Because trust is related to past experiences with the trustee (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Mayer et al., 1995),

previous change experiences can have an impact on the current level of organizational and managerial trust exhibited by the employee. Hubbell and Chory-Assad (2005) noted that numerous scholars differentiate between organizational and managerial trust (e.g., Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Ellis & Shockley-Zalabak, 2001). Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak (2001) studied both managerial and organizational trust and found that job satisfaction and the communications received were better predictors of organizational trust than of managerial trust, thus reinforcing the idea that the two constructs are distinct.

**Organizational trust.** Strong et al. (2001) posited that quality communication is positively related to employees' perceived trust in the organization. In addition, such communication should be timely, honest, and exude empathy from the organization (Strong et al., 2001). Bordia et al. (2011) tested the hypothesis that a low level of organizational trust leads to lower levels of job satisfaction, and found it to be supported. The rationale behind the hypothesis was that an employee who does not trust the organization will be unsure whether his or her "job-related interests will be looked after by the organization" (Bordia et al., 2011, p. 197). Similarly, trust has been found to be positively related to employee job satisfaction (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

An employee's relationship with the organization shapes the interpretation of the organization's actions (Rousseau, 1995). An employee's perception of the trustworthiness of the organization and other employment relationship related factors, such as an attachment to the organization, impact the way in which an employee makes sense of the change effort (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999).

Change within the organization has been previously linked to lower levels of organizational trust (Kiefer, 2005). In addition, previous studies have found that organizational trust is positively related to the employee's level of job satisfaction (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2006; Edwards & Cable, 2009; Montes & Irving, 2008; Restubog, Hornsey, Bordia, & Esposito, 2008). Similarly, lower levels of job satisfaction have been reported when organizational trust is not high (Driscoll, 1978). Communication is also an antecedent to organizational trust (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). Korsgaard and Roberson (1995) noted that employee voice is related to trust because of the perceived potential to influence decision making.

When organizations establish policies and employees are allowed the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed changes, employees see their contributions as valued (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995). Higher levels of organizational trust among the employees may thus result. Farndale et al. (2011) argued that this outcome is due to the fact that employees are confident that senior leadership will implement decisions that will not be detrimental to the interests of employees. When employees view the organization as trustworthy, the number of conflicts between employees and the managers decreases (Hodson, 2004). Riolli and Savicki (2006) found that when an employee has a poor relationship with the organization or with his or her supervisor, stressful experiences increase when changes are being implemented. As such, managerial trust is an important consideration in change management.

**Managerial trust.** Hubbell and Chory-Assad (2005) noted that “to be trustworthy, superiors or managers must follow through and keep their word and/or promises. They must act as they say they will. Thus, trust is predicated on prior relationship experiences or at least the belief that the individual to be trusted will continue to act in a positive way” (p. 51). According to Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), “communication between the trustor and trustee also plays a key role in the development of interpersonal trust at the individual level” (p. 1185). Bovee, Thill, and Schatzman (2003) contended that with good communication and social interaction, cooperation and interpersonal relationships occur more easily. Similarly, Norman, Avolio, and Luthans (2010) posited that leaders who communicate positively and transparently with employees have a high level of trust with the followers. Salem (2008) commented that strategic initiatives often fail when there is distrust among organizational members or the change agents. Additionally, it was noted that during planned organizational change, employees often have a low level of managerial trust (Salem, 2008). Furthermore, managers who are seeking to improve trust in management during periods of change should focus on their commitment to shared values (ideological) and long term objectives (Tucker et al., 2013).

Gopinath and Becker (2000) also found a positive relationship between communication and trust in management. Tucker et al. (2013) contended that large scale events, such as changes within an organization, cause employees to reassess the trust relationship (see also Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). Similarly, Dirks and Ferrin (2001) found that trust in management is a key indicator of the

success of organizational change, as employees differentiate between exchanges with supervisors and with organizations collectively (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997).

The importance of establishing trusting relationships and a belief that managers will do what is in the best interest of the organization and its stakeholders are recurring themes in organizational change management (Kotter, 1995; Oreg, 2006; Zander, 1950). Li (2005) noted that in order for changes to succeed, employees must be confident in the reliability and integrity of management and must accept the vision for change held by the management. Numerous studies have focused on the need for a trusting relationship between employees and their managers, especially during times of change (Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Simons, 1999). Oreg's (2006) study found that trust in management impacted resistance and the employee's view of the change effort. In essence, "lack of faith in the organization's leadership was strongly related to increased reports of anger, frustration, and anxiety with respect to the change, to increased actions against it, and in particular to negative evaluations of the need for, and value of, the organizational change" (Oreg, 2006, p. 93).

Erturk (2008) found that trust in supervisors mediates the relationship between managerial communication and an employee's openness to change. The results of Shah and Shah's (2010) study indicated that "employees are open and ready to accept change through supervisor and peer support" (p. 649). In a review of quantitative studies on organizational change, Oreg et al. (2011) found that "the factor that yielded perhaps the most consistent and strongest



relationship (i.e., strongest effect size) with change reactions is the extent to which change recipients trust management” (p. 490; see also Eby et al., 2000; Oreg, 2006; Stanley et al., 2005).

A key aspect of trust is the perceived frankness and honesty one person has of the other (Mishra, 1996). Indeed “undistorted communication reinforces trust, whereas lies and distortions decrease it” (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999, p. 516). The nature of the relationship impacts whether the manager’s account is both received and believed, and legitimizes the account. Trust can promote a willingness on the part of the employee to pay attention to the manager’s communication, and increases the believability of the explanations provided, even if they might otherwise be perceived as unclear, confusing, or imprecise (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999).

Communication also has the goal of creating a community (De Ridder, 2003). The trust that exists between management and employees influences the way an employee feels about whether he or she belongs to a community in the organization (Elving, 2005). Trust assists an individual in evaluating a person’s future behavior, as well as making sense of past actions (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). As such, the level of trust guides an individual’s actions in ambiguous situations (Elving, 2005). Based on the findings of Vakola’s (2014) study, the author suggested that “organizations should foster perceptions of trust among employees by encouraging open communication, with emphasis on feedback, accurate information, adequate explanation of decisions, and open exchange of thoughts and ideas” (p. 204). This concept highlights both the importance of

communication in times of change, and the integral role of trust in the change management process.

Previous researchers have found that employees who have high levels of trust in management and who view their leadership as supportive and respectful are more receptive to change efforts and have a greater willingness to go along with the change (Coyle-Shapiro & Morrow, 2003; Cunningham et al., 2002; Eby et al., 2000; Kiefer, 2005; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). However, individuals who view their environment as unsupportive are more likely to exhibit cynical reactions and have negative emotions surrounding the change effort that lead to rejecting the change (Kiefer, 2005; Martin, Jones, & Callan, 2005; Stanley et al., 2005). An employee's perception of the level of competence of his or her manager plays an important role in the change process as well. Lok, Hung, Walsh, Wang, and Crawford (2005) and Amiot et al. (2006) found that employees' perceptions of their managers' commitment to the change impacted outcomes such as implementation of the change and lowered the level of stress associated with the change. Similarly, Stanley et al. (2005) found that the perception of managers being competent with change was negatively related to the employees' skepticism towards the change.

Parish et al. (2008) noted that employees with quality relationships with their managers often feel an increased desire and duty to support organizational change efforts. Accordingly, the authors suggested forming relationships based on commitment, satisfaction, and trust among employees. In addition, organizations should measure employees' feelings about the relationships and

investigate ways to further develop them. Once managers learn such information, it is essential that they act upon it (Parish et al., 2008). As a result, both managerial and organizational trust are important to consider when researching change.

**Openness to change.** An employee's personal openness to change is crucial to the success of organizational change efforts (Bordia et al., 2011). According to Miller et al. (1994), there are two elements of openness to change: 1) being willing to support the change; and 2) positive views on the potential outcomes of the change. Bordia et al. (2011) noted that increasing amounts of research are aimed at understanding the antecedents of openness to change and that adequate communication is positively related to openness to change. Previous studies have found that individual traits can predict an employee's openness to change. Traits studied include self-esteem (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), risk tolerance (Judge et al., 1999), need for achievement (Miller et al., 1994), and locus of control (Lau & Woodman, 1995). However, these studies considered the way people responded to change, and the traits "have not been conceptualized with the purpose of assessing the dispositional inclination to resist change" (Oreg, 2006, p. 76), or in this case, to be open to change efforts. Chawla and Kelloway (2004) found that an employee's openness to change was impacted by the manager's communications. As such, this study's findings add to the knowledge base.

## **Relevance to HRD and Business Domains**

This study is relevant to HRD, as well as broader business domains. Watkins (1989) identified five metaphors for HRD: 1) organizational problem solver; 2) organizational change agent; 3) organizational designer; 4) organizational empowerer/meaning maker; and 5) developer of human capital. Accordingly, many of these roles can be applied specifically to times of change within the organization. Swanson and Holton (2001) noted that HRD includes both defining and working to solve problems for organizational improvement. Hutchins and Wang (2008) argued that HRD professionals should be more focused on problem finding than problem solving. The authors suggested that “To do so, they [HRD professionals] need to stay proactive by constantly and consistently scanning and evaluating how the change in the internal and external environments affects performance so as to identify issues that may threaten organizational sustainability” (p. 320).

The role of a change agent is critical for HRD professionals as well. Hutchins and Wang (2008) noted that “It is HRD professionals’ responsibility for educating organizational leaders and members on the change management process and seeking appropriate organizational development interventions that will facilitate change and help individuals and organizations better cope with the outcomes of crises” (p. 320). Understandably, this role is paramount in this study’s research.

HRD professionals can also serve as organizational designers. In this role, they are able to visualize the connection between HRD and the work structure

(Watkins, 1989). In light of organizational goals, HRD professionals will diagnose and choose structures and systems of authority, responsibility, and communication that will result in the achievement of organizational goals (Watkins, 1989).

Fostering long-term success through transforming people and organizations is the goal of the organizational empowerer/meaning maker HRD role (Watkins, 1989). A critical perspective is one mark of such a view of HRD's role within the organization (Watkins, 1989). Hutchins and Wang (2008) posited that "HRD professionals who take the critical perspective must seek appropriate strategies to engage organizational leaders and members in collective sense making of, and critical reflections..." (p. 321) on organizational experiences.

Finally, developing human capital is the fifth role outlined for HRD professionals (Watkins, 1989). This role emphasizes the importance of incorporating training and development activities to develop human resources (Hutchins & Wang, 2008). Hutchins and Wang (2008) argued that "training can be an effective tool to reduce, if not eliminate, the impact of elements that are likely to induce crises, such as technology complexity and human factors" (p. 322), and the same is true for organizational change initiatives. Based on these HRD metaphors, it is evident that HRD professionals play an integral role in the change process.

Many managers scoff at the sentiment that HR is every manager's job. However, those closest to the employees do have an element of responsibility in overseeing their development (Gilley & Gilley, 2003). Communication is essential

to selling change, as well as involving various individuals in the change effort. In *Strategically Integrated HRD*, Gilley and Gilley (2003) used a pyramid model to outline six transformational roles of HR professionals in order to create results-driven programs. At the base of the pyramid is the partnership role consisting of being a relationship builder. The middle of the pyramid contains professional roles: organizational architect; strategist; and performance engineer. Technical expertise, along with organizational understanding and analysis skills are demonstrated in these roles. The leadership roles are found at the top and include political navigator and change champion. Leadership roles allow an individual to “help guide the organization through difficult times” by utilizing his or her political expertise, as well as change management skills (Gilley & Gilley, 2003, p. 103).

The role of change champion is one of two leadership roles that requires a high level of credibility. Gilley and Gilley (2003) noted that “regardless of the strategic roles embraced, change champions function first as members of the management team, and second as advocates of performance, productivity improvement, and organizational development through learning, performance, and change” (p. 227). As such, change champions have established a high level of credibility. Gilley and Gilley (2003) outlined seven important actions for change champions:

- “Communicating the urgency for change
- Providing leadership for change
- Creating ownership and support for change

- Creating shared vision for change
- Implementing and managing change
- Integrating change into the organizational culture, and
- Measuring and monitoring change” (p. 80)

Communicating the urgency for change is the first step to successfully transform HRD. Colleagues need to “realize that, absent their immediate action and support, HRD will never be perceived as vital to achieving the mission of the organization, and that it is simply a matter of time before the organization outsources or eliminates the HRD program” (Gilley & Gilley, 2003, p. 81). The goal here is to create momentum for change and provide evidence that speaks to the lack of effectiveness of activity-based HRD programs. Once again, the importance of communication is highlighted in the change process.

Providing leadership for change, step two, entails creating a guiding coalition of people who have position power, expertise, credibility, and leadership (Kotter, 1996). The third step is to clearly articulate the reason behind the change and “align the rationale for change to the organization’s business goals and objectives” (Gilley & Gilley, 2003, p. 85). Step four involves creating a shared vision for change that clarifies the transformation, motivates individuals to change, and coordinates the activities toward a common goal. The fifth step is implementing and managing change. This step will involve proactively managing throughout the change curve, as previously discussed.

Step six involves integrating the change into the organizational culture. According to Burke (1992), change initiatives should not be viewed as permanent

until the change alters the organizational culture. Measuring and monitoring change is the seventh step that involves evaluating the impact of the change on the culture of the organization (Gilley & Gilley, 2003).

Similar to the Gilley and Gilley (2003) model previously discussed, Ulrich (1997) outlined a model for human resources with multiple roles. Ulrich's (1997) model contains two axes. On the horizontal axis is processes/people, and on the vertical axis is future/strategic focus and day-to-day/operational focus. The result is four types of roles. When a HR professional is concerned with both people and the strategic focus, he or she is said to be involved in "management of transformation and change." When the individual is strategically focused yet primarily concerned with processes, he or she is engaged in "management of strategic human resources." The last two roles involve being focused on day-to-day operations. If the HR professional is more concerned about people, he or she is in the quadrant of "Management of Employee Contribution." If the professional is more concerned about processes, the role of "Management of Firm Infrastructure" is being employed (p. 24).

Ulrich (1997) posited that the following equation is true: "Business Partner = Strategic Partner + Administrative Expert + Employee Champion + Change Agent" (p. 37). As such, an HR business partner will add value to the organization in multiple ways including the execution of strategy, administrative efficiency, the commitment of employees, and cultural changes. It is argued that "each of the four roles is essential to the overall partnership role" (Ulrich, 1997, p. 38). Ulrich's (1997) discussion of the role of change agent bears similarity to that



of Gilley and Gilley (2003). According to Ulrich (1997), the following critical factors are related to change initiatives: leading change; creating a shared need; shaping a vision; mobilizing commitment; changing systems and structures; monitoring progress; and making change last.

### **Chapter Summary**

In Chapter Two, the broad domains of scholarly literature related to organizational change, leadership and change, managerial communication, employee job satisfaction, and employee attributes of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change were reviewed. In addition, the study's relevance to HRD and business domains was discussed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology of this research study. The purpose of the study, research hypotheses, and design of the study are discussed, as well as the targeted population and sample, measurement instruments, and control variables. Data collection procedures will be outlined, along with data analysis procedures and issues concerning reliability and validity. Limitations of the study are also identified.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, as well as the moderating influences of three individual attributes: organizational trust; managerial trust; and openness to change.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

Four hypotheses were tested in this study. Previous research findings suggest that managerial communication in times of change positively influences an employee's level of job satisfaction (Rush et al., 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). In addition, both social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) underpin such a relationship between managerial communication and job satisfaction during organizational change. In both theories, a reciprocal exchange relationship occurs. As it relates to this study, the manager exchanges information and the employee exchanges a higher level of

job satisfaction. Employees with higher levels of job satisfaction have been found to offer their organizations higher levels of work quality, increased creativity, lower turnover intentions, and an increased propensity to voluntarily aid others (Bandura & Lyons, 2014). As such, the increase in job satisfaction benefits both the individual and the organization. As a result, the following hypothesis was developed for this study:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Managerial communication is positively related to employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change.*

The relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change is complex, and individual attributes and their impact on the relationship must be considered as well. As Herold et al. (2007) noted, the change frameworks need to be broadened to better align with the conditions under which change occurs within an organization. Specifically, the authors contended that the people involved in the change effort matter and impact the outcomes (Herold et al., 2007). Support for including trust in the study is available from both existing literature and theory. H<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>3</sub> were formulated in accordance with previous research findings that suggest that trust plays an integral role in the success of the change effort (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Simons, 1999). In addition, both social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) provide support for the hypotheses.

When considering organizational trust, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is impactful. Whitener (2001) noted that “employees interpret

organizational actions... as indicative of the personified organization's commitment to them, ... [and] alter their perceptions accordingly in their own commitment to the organization" (p. 516). As such, the level of trust an employee has in the organization will impact the relationship between the manager's communication and the employee's job satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was tested in this study:

*H<sub>2</sub>: The individual attribute of organizational trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of organizational trust than when the employee has a low level of organizational trust.*

LMX is relevant when considering managerial trust. LMX contends that leadership is effective when the leaders and their followers develop mature relationships or partnerships and experience the benefits of such relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Larkin and Larkin (1994) suggested that an employee's relationship with his or her leader is helpful in the process of adapting to change. In addition, trust in management builds credibility and acceptance among employees facing change (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1999). In a review of 60 years of quantitative studies on organizational change, Oreg et al. (2011) found that "the factor that yielded perhaps the most consistent and strongest relationship (i.e., strongest effect size) with change reactions is the extent to which change recipients trust management" (p. 490; see also Eby et al., 2000;

Oreg, 2006; Stanley et al., 2005). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was developed for this study:

*H<sub>3</sub>: The individual attribute of managerial trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of managerial trust than when the employee has a low level of managerial trust.*

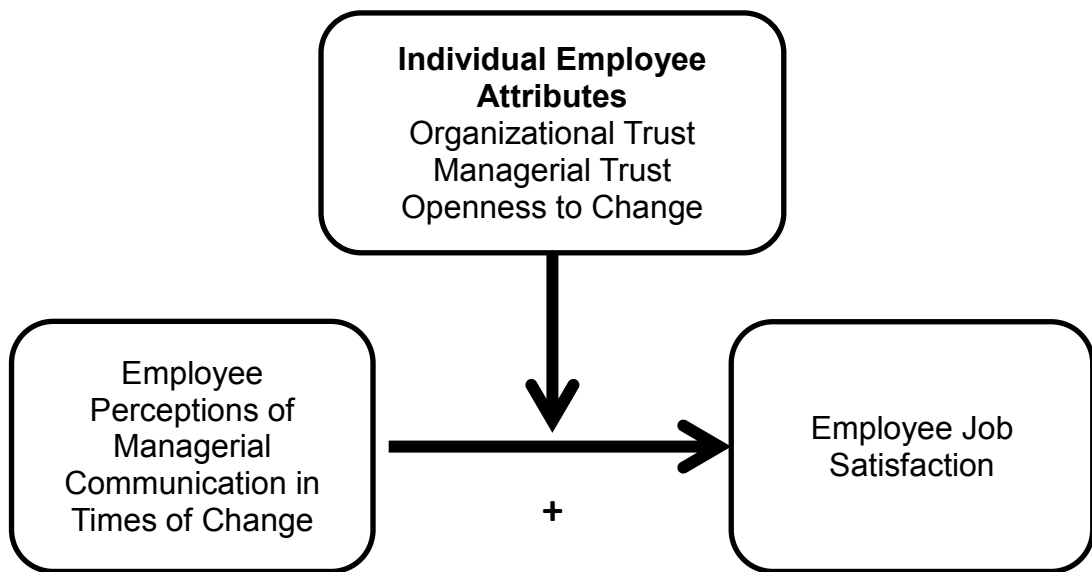
An employee's personal openness to change is crucial for the success of organizational change efforts (Bordia et al., 2011). Wanberg and Banas' (2000) study investigated whether there was a relationship between an employee's openness to change and job satisfaction and found that people with lower levels of change acceptance indicated having lower levels of job satisfaction. This finding highlights the impact of individual differences in the change process. Bordia et al. (2011) noted that adequate communication is positively related to openness to change. The exchange relationships inherent in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and LMX (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) are evident once again when considering the impact of an employee's openness to change on the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change. Accordingly, this study's fourth hypothesis was proposed as follows:

*H<sub>4</sub>: The individual attribute of openness to change will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and*

*employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of openness to change than when the employee has a low level of openness to change.*

### **Research Model**

Figure two below visually depicts the research model tested in this study.



*Figure 2. Research model*

### **Design of the Study**

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study. Because this study is based on existing research, as opposed to theory building, a quantitative design was appropriate. Bryman and Bell (2011) noted that using a quantitative study design is acceptable when established theories related to the phenomenon of interest exist. In addition, this approach was suitable for the study because the data could be measured by numbers and is structured (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Although a cross-sectional survey is subject to the opinions and beliefs of the respondents, the quantitative data collected allows for “precision offered by measurement” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 412). Given the dependent variable being studied and that all the variables have been previously studied using measurement scales, a quantitative approach allowed for a rigorous measurement utilizing previously validated scales, which increased the reliability of the instrument. A cross-sectional survey design involves collecting data from multiple people at a single point in time in an effort to collect data related to two or more variables so that patterns of association can be detected (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Because specific hypotheses guided this study, a deductive approach was used, and relationships between variables were tested. As such, a cross-sectional design was appropriate.

### **Population and Sample**

Individuals from multiple organizations were invited to participate in the study in an effort to increase the external validity and avoid the possibility of bias inherent with including participants from only one organization (Geddes, 1993). The convenience sample consisted of students enrolled in master’s and PhD programs in business and human resource development from three universities. It was anticipated that these individuals would have a variety of industry experience, including varying occupations, tenure, and fields of employment. In addition, diversity in age and gender were expected as well.

Faculty members teaching graduate business courses at three different regional universities in the southern part of the United States were contacted via

email and asked to allow their students to participate in the study late in the Fall 2015 semester. At university one, 15 instructors were contacted regarding their 28 classes. At university two, eight instructors were contacted about their eight classes. Finally, at university three, 11 instructors were contacted regarding their 16 classes.

For face-to-face or hybrid classes, the researcher sought to administer the survey face-to-face during the designated meeting time. For solely online classes or when a face-to-face administration was not feasible, an electronic version of the survey was prepared in Qualtrics and the link was sent out by the professor inviting students to participate. Because it was possible that students were enrolled in more than one class in which the researcher administered the survey, participants were informed, both orally when instructions were given and in writing at the top of the survey, that should they choose to participate, they should only complete one survey. Data collection occurred late in the Fall 2015 semester after IRB approval was secured from The University of Texas at Tyler, as well as the institutions involved in the study, if their policies dictated institution-specific IRB approval was required.

### **Measurement Instruments**

The survey used previously validated scales. In accordance with previous literature (Wanberg & Banas, 2000), the scales were modified to ask questions regarding change in general, as opposed to a specific change effort as originally included in the scale. Aligned with Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) suggestion, questions measuring the dependent variable (i.e., job satisfaction) were asked



before questions related to the independent variables (i.e., employee perceptions of managerial communication and individual attributes) to reduce the risk of bias as a result of common method variance. Employees responded to questions about themselves as related to the individual attributes and job satisfaction elements of the study, as well as questions about how well their manager communicates during times of change. Due to the prevalence of feedback methods such as 360-degree feedback, having employees assess their manager's effectiveness has become a more commonly used approach in research (Gilley et al., 2009a). Hogan et al. (1994) suggested that employees provide more accurate ratings of leader performance, which provides support for the use of subordinates' perspectives when researching managerial communication during times of organizational change.

A screening question asked participants if they worked part-time, full-time, or not at all within the past six months. Any responses from individuals not employed were excluded from data analysis. Answers to this question were coded zero for part-time work or one for full-time work to allow for subsequent analysis to test for differences in responses by the two types of employees.

In addition, the three types of change (i.e., small, moderate, and large) were briefly described and defined for the survey respondents on the survey instrument. Given the prevalence of change within organizations, it was expected that most of the individuals would have experienced some level of change at their place of employment. The survey included a yes or no question that asked whether the individual experienced moderate or high levels of change at work in

the last six months. Any respondents who answered “no” were excluded from the data analysis.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked general demographic questions, some of which served as control variables following the guidance of previously published research studies. These multiple choice questions related to gender, age, education, organizational tenure, job level, and industry. In addition, participants were asked whether they were currently in a master’s or a PhD program. The response to that question was coded zero for master’s students and one for PhD students to allow for subsequent analysis to test for differences in responses by the two categories of respondents. The only open-ended question that was included in the survey asked the participant to identify a change he or she has experienced at work. This was included in an effort to guide his or her thinking when responding to the change-related survey questions. Copies of the complete scales are included in Appendix A, and the survey instrument for this study is found in Appendix B.

**Job satisfaction.** Cammann et al.’s (1983) job satisfaction scale was used to assess self-reported perceptions of job satisfaction. This validated scale consists of three items to measure job satisfaction. Scale items consist of “All in all, I am satisfied with my job,” “In general, I don’t like my job,” and “In general, I like working here” (p. 84). A seven-point Likert scale was used in which one was strongly disagree and seven was strongly agree. The second item of this scale is reverse coded. Previous studies utilizing this scale have computed alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values ranging from .67 to .95 (Hochwarter, Perrewé, Ferris, & Brymer, 1999;

McFarlin & Rice, 1992; McLain, 1995; Pearson, 1991; Sanchez & Brock, 1996; Siegall & McDonald, 1995).

**Managerial communication.** The Quality of Information scale (Miller et al., 1994; Miller & Monge, 1985) and NETMA, “No one ever tells me anything,” (Miller et al., 1994; based on Peters & Waterman, 1982) were used as a proxy for measuring the employee’s perception of the managerial communication that occurred during times of change. The NETMA (Miller et al., 1994) consists of four statements including “I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about what’s going on at \_\_\_ [company name]” and “The people who know what’s going on here at \_\_\_ [company name] do not share enough information with me” (p. 68). Participants responded to the items on a scale of one – seven (one: strongly disagree; seven: strongly agree). One item is reverse coded on the original scale; however, because the scale was used in this study to measure managerial communication, not the absence of communication, three of the four scale items were treated as reverse coded items.

A modified version of the Quality of Information scale items asked questions regarding change communication in general, as opposed to a specific change effort as originally included in the scale. The scale consists of six items. The original wording from Miller et al. (1994) and the rewording for this study are included below.

<b>Original Wording (Miller et al., 1994, p. 68)</b>	<b>Revised Wording</b>
“The information I have received about the implementation of work teams has been timely.”	The information I have received about the change has been timely.
“The information I have received about	The information I have received about

the implementation of work teams has been useful.”	the change has been useful.
“The information I have received about the implementation of work teams has adequately answered my questions about the change.”	The information I have received about the change has adequately answered my questions about the change.
“The information provided about the implementation of work teams was positive.”	The information provided about the change was positive.
“The information provided about the implementation of work teams was favorable.”	The information provided about the change was favorable.
“The way in which the information about the implementation of work teams was communicated appropriately.”	The way in which the information about the change was communicated was appropriate.

*Table 1. Quality of Information revised wording*

This scale utilizes a seven point Likert scale for responses, and none of the items are reverse coded.

**Individual attributes.** This study investigated the impact of three individual attributes on the relationship between managerial communication and job satisfaction in times of change: organizational trust; managerial trust; and openness to change.

Trust was measured with Nyhan & Marlowe’s (1997) Organizational Trust Inventory, which includes 12 questions related to both managerial and organizational trust. Questions pertaining to the supervisor or manager include “My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ [supervisor’s name] will follow through on assignments is \_\_\_\_” and “My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ [supervisor’s name] will make well thought out decisions about his or her job is \_\_\_\_” (p. 630). Respondents then selected a response from a one – seven scale with one being

“nearly zero” and seven being “near 100%.” This scale does not contain any reverse coded items. This scale also includes questions that measure organizational trust such as “My level of confidence that this organization will treat me fairly is \_\_\_” (p. 630) and these questions also utilize the same one – seven scale mentioned above. Once again, no reverse coded items are included.

A modified version of Miller et al.’s (1994) Openness Toward Change scale was also used in this study. The original verbiage and the modified verbiage for this study are shown in the table below.

<b>Original Wording (Miller et al., 1994, p. 68)</b>	<b>Revised Wording</b>
“I would consider myself to be ‘open’ to the changes the work teams will bring to my work role.”	I would consider myself to be “open” to changes at work.
“Right now, I am somewhat resistant to the proposed changes in work teams.”	Right now, I am somewhat resistant to the changes at work.
“I am looking forward to the changes in my work role brought about by the implementation of work teams.”	I look forward to the changes in my work role brought about by organizational change.
“In light of the proposed changes in the work teams, I am quite reluctant to consider changing the way I now do my work.”	In light of the proposed changes at work, I am reluctant to consider changing the way I now do my work.
“From my perspective, the proposed changes in the work teams will be for the better.”	From my perspective, the proposed change will be for the better.

*Table 2.* Openness Toward Change revised wording

The five item scale utilizes a seven point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (one) to strongly agree (seven). Two of the items are reverse coded.

### **Control Variables**

Three control variables were used in this study: age; education; and organizational tenure. Age was used as a control variable in this study, as

previous literature links age with an individual's acceptance of change (Cordery, Barton, Mueller, & Parker, 1991). In addition, employees with higher levels of education have been found to have more confidence in their ability to manage uncertainties (Cordery et al., 1991). Accordingly, education was controlled for as well. The third control variable was organizational tenure. Broadwell (1985) found that employees with lower tenure are more likely to accept change.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Written permission was sought from the instructor of record of each targeted class in which the survey was distributed. Procedures depended on whether the class met face-to-face or online. For face-to-face classes, the researcher and instructor worked to find a mutually agreeable time for the researcher to administer the paper survey in the classroom. A brief overview of the study was provided, and all potential respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary, their responses were confidential, and their lack of participation would not negatively impact their grade in the course.

The paper survey took approximately five to ten minutes to complete. Participants were informed that they could decline to participate or withdraw their consent at any time without penalty. If a student did not wish to complete the paper survey, he or she simply did not take a copy as it was distributed. If a participant chose to participate in the study initially and later decided not to participate, he or she could opt out by not submitting a completed survey. After those that self-selected finished the survey, the surveys were collected and

anonymous responses were entered into a results spreadsheet for subsequent data analysis.

For online classes, the researcher drafted an email for the instructor to send to the students requesting their participation in the study (see Appendix C). A follow-up email was sent one week after the initial email. The emails contained the link to the electronic survey instrument via Qualtrics. Once again, potential respondents were notified that their participation was voluntary, all responses would be kept confidential, and results would be reported at aggregate, not individual, levels. In addition, students were informed that a lack of participation would have no negative impact on their grade in the course.

The electronic survey was accessible via any web browser and took approximately five to ten minutes to complete. Participants were informed that they could decline to participate or withdraw their consent at any time without penalty. Once potential participants clicked the survey link contained in the email from their instructor, they viewed the Informed Consent. After reading through the purpose of the study, the potential benefits and dangers, and the contact information for the researcher and The University of Texas at Tyler's IRB office, participants were required to choose between agreeing to participate in the study or not agreeing to participate in the study. If not agreeing was selected, the survey automatically closed. If a participant chose to participate in the study on the Informed Consent page and later decided not to participate, he or she could exit the survey by simply closing the browser. Incomplete survey results were excluded from analysis.

To incentivize participation among students in online classes, there was a drawing for one \$100 Amazon.com gift card per university participating in the electronic survey method of data collection. At the end of the survey, participants had the option to enter the drawing for the gift card giveaway for their school. If they chose to enter, respondents provided their name and email address to enable the winner to be contacted. In order to maintain confidentiality, the respondents' names were not linked to their survey responses. If the participant did not wish to disclose his or her name or email address, he or she could opt not to enter the drawing. After the data collection period ended, a random number generator was used to determine each university's drawing winner and the winners were contacted via the email address they provided. The Amazon.com gift cards were delivered electronically to the winners at the email address of their choice.

Survey responses were kept confidential and viewed only by the researcher and members of the dissertation committee. No identifying information was collected (e.g., participant's name, IP address, etc.), unless participants who completed the electronic survey opted to provide their name and email address to be entered into the drawing for the Amazon.com gift card. Even then, names were not linked to responses. A separate Qualtrics report was generated to provide a list of names for inclusion in the drawing only. The collected responses were kept secured and private. The instructors of the classes surveyed did not have access to the data unless they were serving on



the dissertation committee. The study was conducted under the oversight of the IRB office at UT Tyler and the other universities, if required.

To improve the rigor of the study, detailed records were kept regarding the number of participants who received the survey, the number who started the survey, as well as the number of participants who completed the survey. For the paper survey, the researcher documented the number of students present during the face-to-face administration, the number of surveys returned to the researcher, and the number of those that were completed by participants who work and have experienced moderate to high change at their organization within the last six months (i.e., the number of useable responses). For the electronic surveys, the researcher tracked the number of people who received the link, the number who started the survey, the number who finished the survey, and the number of useable responses. The face-to-face survey data was coded zero and the electronic survey data was coded one to allow for comparison between the two groups. In addition, the response rate and percentage of completed surveys out of the total number of surveys received were calculated.

The minimum number of survey respondents needed for this study was 55, as calculated using the G\*Power 3.1 online tool (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). While a minimum sample size of 55 was determined, to improve the rigor of the study a larger sample was desired. The researcher sought to obtain approximately 300 completed surveys from individuals enrolled in master's and PhD programs in business and human resource development at three regional universities in the southern part of the U.S. This figure was more closely

aligned with the general rule of thumb of ten responses per question. The survey instrument contained 30 questions, excluding demographic questions, which called for approximately 300 completed surveys.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

After the two week survey response period ended, the collected data was reviewed for completeness. Any incomplete surveys were disregarded in the data analysis phase. The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS®). The analysis began with descriptive statistics, namely means, standard deviations, and correlations. For categorical data (i.e., age, education level, and organizational tenure), the percentage breakdown for each category of response was computed as well.

Next, assumption testing was performed. Reliabilities of the scales were tested first by computing the Cronbach's alpha for each scale. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) were calculated. For the AVE, the loading of each item on a scale was squared, then the loadings squared were added together. Finally, the sum (i.e., variance extracted) was divided by the number of items to determine the AVE. This process was carried out for the following scales: job satisfaction; organizational trust; managerial trust; openness to change; and managerial communication. To calculate the CR, the loadings of each item of a scale were added together and squared, then divided by the sum of the loadings squared added to the expected value (EV).

To test for common methods bias, the Harman's single-factor test was performed. This statistical test is "one of the most widely used techniques that

has been used by researchers to address the issue of common method variance” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 889). In the Harman’s single-factor test, all of the study’s variables are loaded onto one variable. Podsakoff et al. (2003) noted that “the basic assumption of this technique is that if a substantial amount of common method variance is present, either (a) a single factor will emerge from the factor analysis or (b) one general factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the measures” (p. 889).

Following the common methods bias testing, the means of the items composing each scale were calculated to use in subsequent data analysis. This procedure generated an averaged numerical value for the job satisfaction questions, the employee’s perception of managerial communication, the organizational trust items, the managerial trust questions, and the employee’s openness to change.

As the next step, the assumptions necessary for testing moderation using multiple hierarchical regression were tested. First, the linearity of the relationship between dependent and independent variables must be confirmed (Hayes, 2013). To do so, the data was plotted to visually confirm that there was a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Nau, n.d.). Second, there must be independence of the errors (Hayes, 2013). The Durbin-Watson test and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were used to test this assumption. The ideal Durbin-Watson value is two; however, values between one and a half and two and a half are acceptable (Durbin & Watson, 1971; Ryan, 1997). Generally, the VIF should be less than ten to indicate independence of the

errors (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995; Kennedy, 1992; Marquardt, 1970; Mason, Gunst, & Hess, 1989; Menard, 1995; Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner, 1989). Third, the homoscedasticity assumption was tested (Hayes, 2013) using the Levene statistic. The Levene statistic's significance ( $p$  value) should not be statistically significant. In essence, it is desired that  $p > .05$  (Levene, 1960). Finally, the normality assumption was tested (Hayes, 2013). The histogram output was produced for visual confirmation and the skewness and kurtosis were examined (Nau, n.d.). The skewness should be in the range of negative one to one (Hotelling & Solomons, 1932), and the kurtosis value should be between negative three and three (DeCarlo, 1997).

After the assumptions were tested, multiple hierarchical regression was used to test the role of the moderators. Moderators affect the direction and/or strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Holmbeck, 1997; James & Brett, 1984) and typically answer "when" or "for whom" a relationship exists (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003) outlined three types of moderation patterns: enhancing interactions; buffering interactions; and antagonistic interactions. Enhancing interactions occur when both the independent variable and the moderator affect the dependent variable in the same direction and have a stronger effect together than simply an additive effect. Buffering interactions, in contrast, exist when the moderator weakens the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Antagonistic interactions occur when the

independent variable and moderator have the same effect on the dependent variable, yet the interactions are in opposite directions.

Because the moderators and independent variable are continuous variables as determined by their use of Likert scales (Clason & Dormody, 1994), standardizing was done prior to further statistical analysis. In SPSS® this created a new variable in the data file. The categorical control variables (i.e., age, education, and organizational tenure) were recoded to start with zero. After standardizing, the interaction terms were computed. This computation involved multiplying the standardized moderators by the standardized independent variable. Thus, there were interaction terms between organizational trust and managerial communication, managerial trust and managerial communication, and openness to change and managerial communication. Then the regression was performed. The averaged response to the job satisfaction questions was entered into SPSS® as the dependent variable. After that, the independent variables were entered. In block one, the recoded control variables were entered. In block two, the standardized managerial communication independent variable was entered, along with one moderator (i.e., organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change) at a time. Finally, in block three, the interaction term between the moderator entered in block two and the standardized managerial communication value was entered. Thus, three regressions were performed as there were three moderators in the study.

Ideally, the  $R^2$  change of the interaction terms would be statistically significant. The  $R^2$  value is the amount of variance explained in the dependent

variable by the independent variable (Hayes, 2013). Unlike other statistical tests that have ideal or good values, the significance of the  $R^2$  value is most important. If the value is significant ( $p < .05$ ), then the  $R^2$  value is acceptable. A higher  $R^2$  value indicates that more of the variance in the dependent variable is explained; however, the significance is paramount.  $R^2$  values are typically not high in research related to predicting human behavior (Frost, 2013).

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are important elements to consider in research studies. Reliability considers the consistency of measures, and validity is concerned with whether a measure truly measures the concept it is supposed to measure (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The survey scale components have been previously validated and tested for internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha for this sample was computed as well. The face validity, or "that the measure apparently reflects the content of the concept in question" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 160), for the survey is reasonable, as the questions do seem to reflect the concepts investigated.

### **Limitations**

The study's use of self-reported data serves as a limitation, as it has the possibility of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003); however, Doty and Glick (1998) posited that such a bias rarely impacts the study's findings in a significant way. Bryman and Bell (2011) also highlighted the potential risk inherent in cross-sectional studies that there are other explanations for the observed relationships other than those considered in the study. In addition, the

existence of various types of change efforts could impact the results. The use of master's and PhD level students who have varying work experiences could limit the findings as well, as it is possible that the respondent does not have extensive work experience to inform his or her survey responses. Alternatively, Gilley et al. (2009d) suggested that "due to the nature of their studies, these respondents may be more sensitive to leadership and change issues and, thus, may be acutely critical of their leaders" (p. 44). The use of three universities located in the southern part of the United States also limits the generalizability of the study results. The level of personal involvement with the change effort, as well as how the change impacted them personally might also affect the respondents' ratings (Gilley et al., 2009d). Finally, while self-selection may skew the study's findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the inclusion of multiple groupings of participants was utilized in an effort to mitigate the risk.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter provided an overview of the methods used to carry out the study. The purpose of the study was outlined, as well as the hypotheses tested. The design of the study was explained, in addition to the targeted sample and data collection methods. Scales used and control variables were also described. Data analysis and the limitations of the study were presented as well.

## Chapter Four

### Findings

#### Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the data collected and analyzed for this study. A pilot test was completed first to test the scales, and the resulting Cronbach's alphas are provided. The chapter then presents the results of the data collection, including demographics, assumption testing, reliability, and validity. After that, the tested hypotheses and the findings are discussed. Finally, the chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

#### Pilot Testing

Prior to administering the survey in the targeted master's and PhD-level courses, a pilot survey was completed in an effort to ensure the quality of the scales being used once they were combined into a single survey instrument. The electronic pilot survey was completed by 20 people who are current PhD candidates or recent PhD graduates. The Cronbach's alphas for each scale are included in the table below.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Job satisfaction	.861
Managerial trust	.958
Organizational trust	.876
Openness to change	.906
Quality of information	.902
NETMA	.733

*Table 3. Pilot testing Cronbach's alphas*



As shown in Table Three, all of the Cronbach's alphas were above the minimum necessary value of .70 (Cohen et al., 2003). As such, the survey was administered using the identified scales to gather data. Those invited to complete the pilot survey were not included in the actual data collection for this study.

### **Demographics**

A total of 34 faculty members from three universities were contacted via email to inform them of the research study and to request their assistance in sharing the survey opportunity with their classes. Of those, 25 agreed to inform students of the study. The 25 faculty members taught a total of 35 master's or PhD level classes. Enrollment in the 35 classes totaled 1,272, though many students were enrolled in more than one course, thus receiving more than one survey invitation. Students and faculty were informed that respondents should only complete one survey, and the appropriate Qualtrics option was selected to prevent people from completing the survey multiple times from the same IP address. After the data collection period ended, the names provided for inclusion in the gift card giveaway were reviewed to manually catch any duplications, which were subsequently deleted. Of the 1,272 students enrolled in the targeted graduate classes, 627 participated in the survey, which is a response rate of 49.29% of the number of students enrolled. In actuality, the response rate is a higher percentage due to students being enrolled in multiple graduate courses yet only completing the survey once.

## Online Surveys

From university one, 503 electronic surveys were started and 471 were completed, thus the completion rate was approximately 94%. From university two, no online surveys were administered as the classes met face-to-face only and paper surveys were administered. Finally, from university three, 52 electronic surveys were started and 46 were completed, representing a completion rate of approximately 88%.

## Paper Surveys

Table Four shows the breakdown of information regarding face-to-face administration of the paper survey.

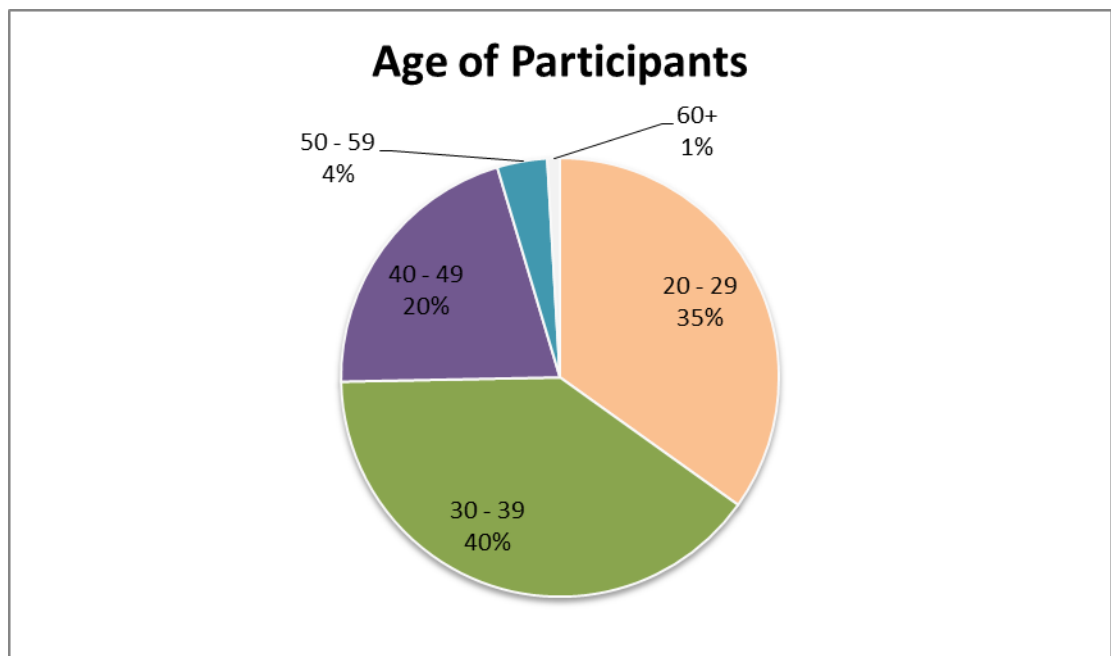
University	Class	Number Present	Surveys Received	Response Rate	Number of Useable Surveys
University 1	Class 1	21	20	95%	14
University 2	Class 1	12	9	75%	3
	Class 2	20	14	70%	5
	Class 3	10	10	100%	7
	Class 4	13	8	62%	5
	Class 5	28	11	39%	3

*Table 4. Face-to-face survey responses*

A total of 589 completed surveys were received during the survey response period. After reviewing the data collected, 265 surveys were excluded from subsequent data analysis, as the participant either did not work at least

part-time in the previous six months, or the participant indicated he or she had not experienced moderate or large scale change at work in the last six months. After the noted exclusions, 324 useable survey responses were left for data analysis.

Of the analyzed survey participants, 7.7% worked part-time, while 92.3% worked full-time. The gender breakdown was 35.5% male and 64.5% female. Figure three shows the age distribution of the participants.



*Figure 3. Age of participants*

As shown in figure three, there was diversity in age among the survey participants. Students enrolled in master's and PhD programs were included in this study, with the majority (96.3%) currently enrolled in a master's program. This response breakdown is understandable, given that only one university included in this study offers a PhD program within the business or human

resource development domain with a relatively small number of students enrolled in PhD programs.

Most of the participants (49.4%) reported having been with their organization for one to five years, though there was diversity among the respondents in job longevity. Figure four shows the response breakdown among participants when asked about their organizational tenure.

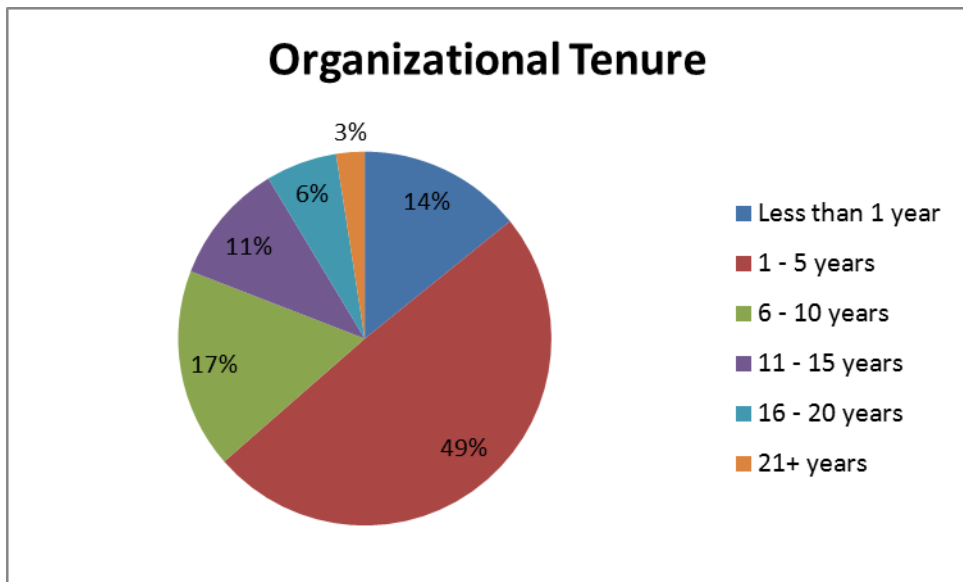


Figure 4. Organizational Tenure

The most common job level reported was front-line employee (32.7%), while 25.9% of the respondents reported being a supervisor or team leader, 29.3% were mid-level managers, and 12% were senior/executive managers. The healthcare industry was the most commonly reported industry among participants (47.2%).

Table Five contains demographic data of participants divided by their program. The percentages included show the breakdown of each response for the respective graduate program.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Master's Program</b>	<b>PhD Program</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	109 (34.94%)	6 (50%)
Female	203 (65.06%)	6 (50%)
<b>Age</b>		
Under 20	0	0
20 – 29	113 (36.21%)	0
30 – 39	122 (39.10%)	7 (58.33%)
40 – 49	63 (20.19%)	4 (33.33%)
50 – 59	11 (3.52%)	1 (8.33%)
60+	3 (0.96%)	0
<b>Organizational Tenure</b>		
< 1 year	46 (14.74%)	0
1 – 5 years	154 (49.36%)	6 (50%)
6 – 10 years	52 (16.67%)	4 (33.33%)
11 – 15 years	34 (10.90%)	0
16 – 20 years	18 (5.77%)	2 (16.67%)
21+ years	8 (2.56%)	0
<b>Job Level</b>		
Front line employee	102 (32.69%)	4 (33.33%)
Supervisor or team leader	82 (26.28%)	2 (16.67%)
Mid-level manager	94 (30.13%)	1 (8.33%)
Senior/executive	34 (10.90%)	5 (41.67%)

manager		
<b>Industry</b>		
Healthcare	149 (47.76%)	4 (33.33%)
Manufacturing	25 (8.01%)	0
Service	42 (13.46%)	2 (16.67%)
Education	28 (8.97%)	2 (16.67%)
Professional	37 (11.86%)	2 (16.67%)
Government	21 (6.73%)	1 (8.33%)
Nonprofit	10 (3.21%)	1 (8.33%)
<b>Employment</b>		
Part-time	25 (8.01%)	0
Full-time	287 (91.99%)	12 (100%)
	n=312	n=12

*Table 5. Program-specific demographics*

Of the 324 useable surveys, 85.8% were from university one, 6.5% from university two, and 7.7% from university three. Approximately 10% of the surveys were from face-to-face administrations, while approximately 90% were from electronic distributions of the survey instrument.

### **Reliability and Validity**

The scale reliabilities were tested using Cronbach's alpha. The responses to the job satisfaction questions, managerial communication questions, organizational trust questions, managerial trust questions, and openness to change questions were averaged and used in subsequent data analysis. Table

Six shows the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients of this study's variables. The reliabilities of the scales are listed across the diagonal in parentheses. As shown in Table Six, the Cronbach's alphas for the scales ranged from .802 to .972, all of which were above the minimum necessary value of .70 (Cohen et al., 2003).

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	1.96	.89	-							
2. Education	1.20	.45	.190**	-						
3. Tenure	1.52	1.19	.489**	.103	-					
4. Job Satisfaction	5.57	1.34	.104	-.124*	.145**	(.880)				
5. Managerial Communication	4.33	1.39	-.046	-.114*	.034	.507**	(.923)			
6. Organizational Trust	4.81	1.10	-.040	-.139*	.051	.584**	.597**	(.877)		
7. Managerial Trust	5.14	1.37	-.085	-.070	.022	.469**	.474**	.562**	(.972)	
8. Openness to Change	5.29	1.08	.090	-.092	.079	.424**	.534**	.449**	.366**	(.802)

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 6. Correlation coefficients for variables

The structure coefficients were also examined. A five-factor correlated measurement model was drawn in SPSS® AMOS®, and the implied correlations matrix was used to determine the structure coefficients. The structure coefficients of each item (cf. Graham, Guthrie, & Thompson, 2003), as shown in Table Seven, were found to correlate most highly with its appropriate factor. That is, each item's structure coefficient was highest for the appropriate construct in the model.

Construct Variable	Job Satisfaction	Managerial Communication	Organizational Trust	Managerial Trust	Openness to Change
Job Satisfaction					
Item 1	.889	.482	.583	.468	.451
Item 2	.749	.406	.484	.394	.380
Item 3	.903	.490	.574	.475	.458
Managerial Communication					
Item 1	.427	.787	.522	.380	.502
Item 2	.453	.835	.554	.403	.533
Item 3	.463	.853	.566	.412	.545
Item 4	.441	.813	.539	.392	.519
Item 5	.424	.781	.518	.377	.499
Item 6	.444	.818	.543	.395	.522
Item 7	.332	.611	.405	.295	.390
Item 8	.445	.820	.544	.396	.523
Item 9	.222	.409	.272	.198	.261
Item 10	.346	.638	.423	.308	.407
Organizational Trust					
Item 1	.524	.538	.811	.495	.459
Item 2	.572	.587	.885	.541	.501
Item 3	.469	.482	.726	.444	.411
Item 4	.502	.515	.777	.474	.440



Managerial Trust					
Item 1	.469	.431	.545	.892	.389
Item 2	.492	.452	.571	.935	.408
Item 3	.462	.424	.536	.878	.383
Item 4	.473	.434	.550	.900	.393
Item 5	.492	.452	.572	.936	.408
Item 6	.471	.432	.546	.894	.390
Item 7	.468	.429	.543	.889	.388
Item 8	.467	.428	.542	.887	.387
Openness to Change					
Item 1	.301	.378	.336	.259	.593
Item 2	.312	.393	.349	.269	.616
Item 3	.429	.541	.480	.369	.847
Item 4	.231	.291	.258	.199	.456
Item 5	.414	.521	.463	.356	.816

*Table 7. Structure Coefficients*

The standardized regression weights generally suggest the measurement model is acceptable. A majority of the factors were above the .5 minimum, with most above the higher recommended minimum value of .7. In addition, all of the factor loadings were less than .95 (cf. Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Kline, 2011).

As shown in Table Eight, the composite reliability (CR) ranged from .805 – .972, and the average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from .464 – .813. All of the correlations between factors were lower than the square root of the AVE for

each individual factor, which indicates discriminant validity. Because the structure coefficients loaded most heavily on their respective factor, all the items were retained and the measurement model was deemed sufficient.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Job Satisfaction</b>	.850				
<b>2. Managerial Communication</b>	.543	.749			
<b>3. Organizational Trust</b>	.646	.663	.802		
<b>4. Managerial Trust</b>	.526	.483	.611	.902	
<b>5. Openness to Change</b>	.507	.639	.567	.436	.682
<b>CR</b>	.886	.925	.878	.972	.805
<b>AVE</b>	.722	.560	.643	.813	.464

*Note.* Square root of AVE along the diagonal

*Table 8.* Implied Correlations, AVE, and CR

### **Assumptions**

The four assumptions necessary for multiple hierarchical regression were tested. First, the linearity of the relationship between dependent and independent variables must be confirmed (Hayes, 2013). To do so, the data was plotted to visually confirm that there was a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Nau, n.d.). As the plot was roughly linear, this assumption holds.

Second, there must be independence of the errors (Hayes, 2013). The Durbin-Watson test and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were used to test this assumption. The computed Durbin-Watson value for this data was .760. All of the VIFs were less than 2 for this dataset. Accordingly, the errors and the independent variables are independent.

Third, the homoscedasticity assumption was tested (Hayes, 2013) using the Levene statistic. The Levene statistic's significance ( $p$  value) should not be statistically significant. In essence, it is desired that  $p > .05$  (Levene, 1960). While some variables failed this assumption, the sample size is large enough to counteract problems that could possibly occur.

Finally, the normality assumption was tested (Hayes, 2013). The histogram output was produced for visual confirmation, and the skewness and kurtosis were examined (Nau, n.d.). The skewness should be in the range of negative one to one (Hotelling & Solomons, 1932), and the kurtosis value should be between negative three and three (DeCarlo, 1997). The results fit the necessary criteria for this requisite assumption to hold true.

### **Common Method Variance**

To test for common method variance, the Harman's single-factor test was performed. This test constrains the number of factors to one and examines the solution. As no single factor accounts for the majority of variance, this test suggests a low risk of bias from common method variance. In addition, several of Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) procedural suggestions to reduce the risk of common method variance were utilized in this study. Examples include using existing scales, some of which included reverse coded items, asking questions about the dependent variable first, and the use of concise survey questions that are simple and clear (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The researcher attempted to lower the risk of social desirability bias (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998) by informing the survey respondents that their responses would be kept confidential, stored away from

their organizations/professors, and that the data analysis would be conducted and reported at aggregate, not individual, levels.

### **Data Analysis**

Because the independent variable and moderators are continuous variables as determined by their use of Likert scales (Clason & Dormody, 1994), standardizing was done prior to further statistical analysis. In SPSS® this involved analyzing the descriptive statistics and saving the standardized values as variables, which created a new variable in the data file. The categorical control variables (i.e., age, education, and organizational tenure) were recoded to start with zero. After standardizing, the interaction terms were computed. This involved multiplying the standardized moderators by the standardized independent variable. Thus, there were interaction terms between organizational trust and managerial communication, between managerial trust and managerial communication, and between openness to change and managerial communication.

To perform multiple hierarchical regression, the averaged response to the job satisfaction questions was entered into SPSS® as the dependent variable. Next, the independent variables were entered. In block one, the recoded control variables were entered. In block two, the standardized managerial communication independent variable was entered, along with one moderator (i.e., organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change) at a time. Finally, in block three, the interaction term between the moderator entered in block two and the standardized managerial communication value were entered.

Thus, three regressions were performed as there are three moderators in this study.

### Analysis of Hypothesized Relationships

Four models were tested in this study – one linear regression and three hierarchical regressions. The results of the four models are shown in Table Nine.

Independent Variables	Model 1 B(SE)	Model 2 B(SE)	Model 3 B(SE)	Model 4 B(SE)
Constant	3.373 (.306)	5.402 (.197)	5.415 (.206)	5.507 (.210)
Managerial Communication	.481 (.046)	.746 (.258)	.575 (.243)	.858 (.327)
Organizational Trust *		-.088 (.053)		
Managerial Communication Managerial Trust *			-.018 (.044)	
Managerial Communication Openness to Change *				-.060 (.058)
Managerial Communication				
$R^2$	.287***	.410 ns	.358 ns	.315 ns
Adjusted $R^2$	.279	.399	.346	.302
$F$	108.948**	2.825 ns	.171 ns	1.053 ns

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , ns = not significant

Table 9. Model results

H<sub>1</sub> predicted that managerial communication would be positively related to an employee's level of job satisfaction during times of organizational change. This relationship was tested using a regression. The findings indicate a statistically significant  $R^2$  value of .287 ( $p < .001$ ). Thus, H<sub>1</sub> is supported.

H<sub>2</sub> predicted that organizational trust would moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change, such that the relationship would be stronger when there were higher levels of organizational trust. To test this hypothesis, multiple hierarchical regression was used. The  $R^2$  value was not statistically significant ( $p = .094$ ). Thus, H<sub>2</sub> is not supported.

The moderating role of managerial trust was predicted in H<sub>3</sub>. According to this hypothesis, managerial trust would moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change, such that the relationship would be stronger when there were higher levels of managerial trust. Once again, multiple hierarchical regression was used to test this hypothesis. The  $R^2$  value was not statistically significant ( $p = .680$ ). As such, H<sub>3</sub> is not supported.

The moderating role of an employee's openness to change was predicted in H<sub>4</sub>. According to this hypothesis, openness to change would moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change, such that the relationship would be stronger when there were higher levels of openness to change. A third multiple hierarchical regression was performed to test this hypothesis, with the findings indicating a nonsignificant  $R^2$  value ( $p = .306$ ). Accordingly, this hypothesis is not supported.

A summary of the results of the hypotheses testing are contained in Table Ten.

<b>Hypothesis Number</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Findings</b>
H <sub>1</sub>	Managerial communication is positively related to employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change.	Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	The individual attribute of organizational	Not supported

	trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of organizational trust than when the employee has a low level of organizational trust.	
H <sub>3</sub>	The individual attribute of managerial trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of managerial trust than when the employee has a low level of managerial trust.	Not supported
H <sub>4</sub>	The individual attribute of openness to change will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational	Not supported

	<p>change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of openness to change than when the employee has a low level of openness to change.</p>	
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*Table 10.* Hypotheses testing results

### **Post-Hoc Testing**

To further analyze the data collected, differences based on employment type, program type, and type of survey completed were considered. Survey responses received from individuals who worked part-time were coded zero, while responses from people who worked full-time were coded one. This coding allowed the researcher to test for differences in responses by the two types of employees. Similarly, survey responses received from individuals enrolled in master’s programs were coded zero, while responses from people enrolled in PhD programs were coded one. This coding allowed the researcher to test for differences in responses by the two categories of respondents. Finally, paper survey responses were coded zero, while electronic survey responses were coded one. This coding allowed the researcher to test for differences in responses between the two groups. Results are summarized in Table Eleven.



Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis	Segment of the Sample	Findings
H <sub>1</sub>	Managerial communication is positively related to employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change.	Part-time workers	Supported $R^2 = .251$ ( $p < .05$ )
		Full-time workers	Supported $R^2 = .290$ ( $p < .01$ )
		Master's students	Supported $R^2 = .489$ ( $p < .01$ )
		PhD students	Supported $R^2 = .529$ ( $p < .05$ )
		Paper survey	Supported $R^2 = .206$ ( $p < .05$ )
		Electronic survey	Supported $R^2 = .322$ ( $p < .01$ )
H <sub>2</sub>	The individual attribute of organizational trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the	Part-time workers	Not supported
		Full-time workers	Not supported
		Master's students	Not supported
		PhD students	Not supported
		Paper survey	Not supported
		Electronic	Not supported

	relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of organizational trust than when the employee has a low level of organizational trust.	survey	
H <sub>3</sub>	The individual attribute of managerial trust will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of managerial trust than when the employee has a low level of managerial trust.	Part-time workers	Not supported
		Full-time workers	Not supported
		Master's students	Not supported
		PhD students	Not supported
		Paper survey	Not supported
		Electronic survey	Not supported

H <sub>4</sub>	The individual attribute of openness to change will moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change, such that the relationship will be stronger when an employee has a high level of openness to change than when the employee has a low level of openness to change.	Part-time workers	Not supported
		Full-time workers	Not supported
		Master's students	Not supported
		PhD students	Not supported
		Paper survey	Not supported
		Electronic survey	Not supported

*Table 11. Post-Hoc Analysis Results*

Given the large percentage of respondents who reported working in the healthcare industry, a t-test was also conducted to test for differences based on whether a participant was employed in the healthcare industry. The results indicate  $t(322) = 2.04, p = .042$ . As such, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the level of job satisfaction based on if the respondent was employed in the healthcare industry was not supported. This means there is a

statistically significant difference in the level of job satisfaction between healthcare and non-healthcare workers included in this study. The mean level of job satisfaction of those who reported working in the healthcare industry was 5.73 (SD = 1.25), while the mean level of job satisfaction of those who reported working in other industries was 5.43 (SD = 1.41).

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter discussed the results of the data analysis. First, scale reliability was discussed as determined through the pilot testing of the survey instrument. Then the demographics associated with the data collected were discussed, followed by the confirmation of the assumptions necessary for multiple hierarchical regression. The descriptive statistics were provided, including the means, standard deviations, reliabilities of the scales, and correlation coefficients. In addition, reliability and validity were discussed, along with a discussion on common method variance. Finally, the results of the testing of the hypothesized relationships were discussed and summarized, followed by post-hoc analyses.

## Chapter Five

### Discussion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in times of change, as well as the moderating influences of three individual attributes: organizational trust; managerial trust; and openness to change. This study found support for the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction; however, the moderating roles of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change were not supported. This chapter provides conclusions related to the study's findings, as well as implications for research, theory, and practice. Future research directions are also outlined, and the chapter concludes with a summary.

#### **Hypothesis One: Managerial communication, employee job satisfaction, and organizational change**

H<sub>1</sub> predicted that managerial communication would be positively related to an employee's level of job satisfaction during times of organizational change. The findings indicate a statistically significant  $R^2$  value of .287 ( $p < .001$ ). Thus, H<sub>1</sub> is supported. Results of this study concur with previous research on managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change (Rush et al., 1995; Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). This finding is important for managers, organizations, and the field of HRD.

Managers need to understand the connection between their communication and an employee's level of job satisfaction during times of

organizational change. Given the prevalence of change that occurs within organizations today, such an understanding is crucial. Previous research has highlighted the benefits associated with higher levels of job satisfaction for both the employee and the organization (Bandura & Lyons, 2014). Accordingly, managers should aim to increase the amount and quality of their communication activities with employees during times of change. This finding can also help managers and organizations better prepare employees for change efforts. Audience analysis is crucial in communication (Lehman & DuFrene, 2016). By considering their audience (employees), managers will be able to craft and deliver more effective messages, which may impact the level of job satisfaction exhibited by the employee during these tumultuous times.

The organization should work to establish a positive communication climate from the top-down. Such an approach could impact the organizational culture and encourage managers to communicate more frequently with their subordinates. This finding also has practical implications for organizational activities including training, recruitment, selection, and retention. Since organizations frequently undergo change and a link has been established between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction, companies need to prioritize developing improved communication skills among their managers. For existing managerial employees, this might mean undergoing additional training, participating in leadership development programs, or being involved in executive coaching.

In addition, when organizations seek to hire new managers, whether from their internal employee base or through external recruitment efforts, they should seek out managerial candidates with strong communication skills. By hiring or promoting managers with excellent communication skills, the organization may be setting the groundwork for smoother change processes in the future, as change failure has been previously linked to poor communication (Gilsdorf, 1998; Murdoch, 1999). In terms of retention, organizations should seek to properly recognize and reward effective managerial communication as a core managerial competency. Through elements such as including effective communication competencies on performance appraisals or tying communication to compensation and rewards, organizations are further emphasizing the importance of this skill. Doing so will encourage managers in this practice while also building an organizational climate that fosters effective managerial communication. This may, in turn, benefit employees as well.

**Hypothesis Two: Organizational trust, managerial communication, and employee job satisfaction in times of change**

H<sub>2</sub> predicted that organizational trust would moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change, such that the relationship would be stronger when there were higher levels of organizational trust. To test this hypothesis, multiple hierarchical regression was used. The  $R^2$  value was not statistically significant ( $p = .094$ ). Thus, H<sub>2</sub> is not supported. Of the three moderators tested in this study, organizational trust scored the lowest with a

mean response of 4.81 on a seven point scale. This finding was surprising given that previous research suggested that trust plays an integral role in the success of the change effort (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Simons, 1999).

This result might be explained by the fact that organizations are complex and involve many different parts and people. As such, there are a variety of variables at play during times of organizational change. Given this study's investigation of moderate and large scale change efforts, it is likely that such organizational modifications were driven by the organization's upper leadership. Perhaps employees view such change as so traumatic that their level of organizational trust does not significantly impact their job satisfaction. This puts the focus back on the change effort itself. Bordia et al. (2011) posited that ineffective change management not only impacts the current change, it can negatively affect future changes as well. As such, the importance of the change implementation process and its impact on an individual's change attitudes is highlighted. Accordingly, organizations need to carefully examine what is taking place within the company, as poor change implementation can have far-reaching implications and influence the success of future change initiatives as well. This reinforces the need to recruit, hire, train, and reward managers who will effectively communicate with their subordinates during times of organizational change.

Although the top leadership of an organization is likely driving moderate or large scale change efforts, the management team plays an integral role in



carrying out the implementation of the change initiative. As such, managerial communication is crucial. Managers can help shape employees' responses to change efforts through their communication. Through managerial communication, employees can better understand how the change influences them specifically, as well as what their role is in the change implementation process.

### **Hypothesis Three: Managerial trust, managerial communication, and employee job satisfaction in times of change**

The moderating role of managerial trust was predicted in H<sub>3</sub>. According to this hypothesis, managerial trust would moderate the positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change, such that the relationship would be stronger when there were higher levels of managerial trust. Once again, multiple hierarchical regression was used to test this hypothesis. The  $R^2$  value was not statistically significant ( $p = .680$ ). As such, H<sub>3</sub> is not supported. As with organizational trust, this finding was surprising given that previous scholars have found that trust plays an integral role in the success of the change effort (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Simons, 1999).

Change is often very disruptive to employees and can be perceived as painful and overwhelming. As such, the pain of change can overshadow the existence of managerial trust between the employee and his or her supervisor. Once again, this emphasizes the need for organizations to carefully consider their planned change initiatives and the history of change implementation.

Although the average response to the managerial trust survey questions was 5.14 (on a seven point scale), the managerial trust variable did not statistically significantly moderate the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction in this study. This means that participants scored their level of managerial trust fairly high, yet it did not significantly answer the *when* or *for whom* questions, as moderators do (Frazier et al., 2004). Such a finding suggests that although people report trusting their manager, managerial trust does not strengthen the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change.

This finding could perhaps be explained by the reality that organizational change affects employees at all levels of the organization. As such, the manager is subject to the change efforts underway as well. In turn, the manager's communication may be directed by the organization, perhaps resulting in a positive spin placed on the organizational change efforts taking place. As a result, the employees could perceive their manager's communication as a representation of what the upper executives want to be shared with employees and view their manager as subject to the organization's change efforts dictated from above. In response, the mentality could be that there is only so much the manager, as an individual, can do during the organizational modification process and that the managers may not be able to speak openly and honestly about changes within the organization.

Organizations can use this finding to develop higher levels of managerial trust among employees, in addition to ensuring managers receive sufficient communication from their superiors. Managerial communication breakdowns could be due to the manager not receiving adequate information from the upper leadership, thereby limiting what the manager can share with his or her subordinates. Additionally, if the change effort is driven by the organization's top leadership with little or no input from those the change will impact the most, ingrained resistance could be festering beneath the surface. In such an instance, the manager may be communicating change-related information to the employees, yet through words or actions could be sharing a message of distaste, lack of approval, or frustration regarding the most recent change activity. As a result, the manager is communicating with employees; however, it is not in such a way that supports the change effort or helps the employees successfully navigate the change. Buy in from employees is needed to carry out the change related activities; however, buy in from the managers is needed in order to help the change effort be communicated in such a way that the employees are encouraged to support the modification. While organizations need to hire and retain managers who communicate effectively, they also need to ensure that managers are armed with ample communication from above.

**Hypothesis Four: Openness to change, managerial communication, and employee job satisfaction in times of change**

The moderating role of an employee's openness to change was predicted in H4. According to this hypothesis, openness to change would moderate the

positive relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change, such that the relationship would be stronger when there were higher levels of openness to change. A third multiple hierarchical regression was performed to test this hypothesis, with the findings indicating a nonsignificant  $R^2$  value ( $p = .306$ ). Accordingly, this hypothesis is not supported. This result was surprising given Wanberg and Banas' (2000) finding that people with lower levels of change acceptance had lower levels of job satisfaction.

Scholars have previously noted that an increasing amount of research is aimed at understanding the antecedents of openness to change and that adequate communication is positively related to openness to change (Bordia et al., 2011). Similarly, Chawla and Kelloway (2004) found that an employee's openness to change was impacted by the manager's communications. As such, it may be that an employee's openness to change is impacted more by the communication received as opposed to the individual's inherent openness to change affecting the relationship between managerial communication and employee job satisfaction. This may explain why the moderating relationship tested in this study was not supported. Instead of viewing an employee's openness to change as a set quality, managers can instead work to impact it by frequently communicating quality information with employees.

The communication culture of an organization is also important to consider. Communication is one symbol of the organization's culture (Schein, 1982). Aligned with this idea, Frahm and Brown (2007) commented that "if the

existing organizational culture does not value information exchange and processing, then it is unlikely that the managers will deviate from the norm” (p. 381). As such, organizations can play a role in fostering effective communication by directing and/or encouraging managers to share information with their subordinates. By setting an open communication tone from the top, managers will be more likely to communicate with their employees, as doing so is aligned with the organization’s culture.

In order to better understand the perceived communication climate, the organization may need to take time to examine the existing systems and seek feedback from the employees. By surveying the workers, the organization can gain a better understanding of the level of trust that employees have with both their manager and the organization, as well as the level of job satisfaction among employees. Additionally, organizations can investigate the employees’ perceptions of the communications received from both the organization and the manager, as well as their opinion on how the change was implemented and ways the company can improve future change implementation efforts. By allowing employees the opportunity to provide feedback and share their insights, their level of job satisfaction may increase, as well as their willingness to support organizational change efforts. Once organizations gather such information, it is essential that they act upon it, as failing to do so could be detrimental to an employee’s sense of job satisfaction and willingness to support change efforts, in addition to negatively impacting his or her willingness to candidly share information with the company in the future.

In conjunction, the organization needs to encourage communication by selecting managers who will effectively communicate and rewarding such behavior, especially during times of organizational change. If managers know that managerial communication competencies will be included on their performance appraisals, they are more likely to ascertain the priority the organization places on communication. Additionally, if 360 degree feedback elements are included in the organization's performance appraisal system, this would provide opportunities for the receivers of managerial communication (the employees) to rate their manager's communication effectiveness.

This is also an opportunity for managers to work closely with their subordinates to determine the employees' views of effective change management. By seeking feedback, managers can determine how the employees perceive the manager's skills and what is important to the employee. In response, this could allow managers to more specifically target their communication with their audience. In addition, feedback on how the employees perceive their manager, as well as suggestions for how the organization can be more effective, especially as it relates to implementing change, can be solicited. Armed with such knowledge, the organization and the manager can communicate with the employees more strategically during times of organizational change.

### **Implications for HRD**

This study's findings have numerous implications for the field of HRD. In particular, HRD professionals can work with the organization to help successfully

implement change. HRD practitioners can serve as executive coaches, partner with upper management to incorporate key skills identified in this study into strategic planning efforts, work to promote strategic communications, and play an integral role in the design of leadership development programs and compensation and rewards systems, as well as recruitment and retention efforts.

The Society for Human Resource Management (n.d.) defines performance management as “the process of maintaining or improving employee job performance through the use of performance assessment tools, coaching and counseling as well as providing continuous feedback.” HRD professionals play an integral role in the performance management system and can work to partner with both managers and executives to enhance their skills for the benefit of the entire organization. Unfortunately, organizational executives often fail to communicate strategically, so through targeted development activities focused on effective communication, this shortcoming could be improved. HRD roles can also include executive coaching. Given the role executives play in implementing change efforts and leading the organization through times of change, this endeavor is crucial. In addition, HRD professionals can also provide feedback to managers to encourage them to proactively communicate during organizational change efforts. By targeting both managers and upper executives, HRD can significantly impact the change management process.

Specifically, this study’s finding that managerial communication is positively related to employee job satisfaction in times of organizational change has implications for the field of HRD as well. Development programs designed by

HRD professionals within organizations may need to focus additional efforts on improving communication skills. One such type of program is a leadership development program. Pernick (2001) noted that “most organizations need a vigorous and deliberate way to improve the skills of supervisors, managers, and executives” (p. 429). Leadership development programs are one such way to do so. HRD professionals are often involved in the design and implementation of programs such as these, which have far-reaching implications. Pernick (2001) posited that leadership development programs are sound investments because “well-led organizations tend to attract quality applicants, produce satisfied employees, incur less unwanted turnover, engender loyal customers, and yield impressive financial returns” (p. 429). As such, the organization has much to gain by implementing programs such as these.

Holt’s (2011) study of a global pharmaceutical company found that communication was a crucial skill for leaders and he recommended that it be included in leadership development programs. Aligned with Holt’s (2011) suggestion, HRD professionals can tailor development opportunities focusing on communication skills based on the employee’s level within the organization. For upper management, HRD practitioners could engage in executive coaching focusing on effectively communicating the leadership’s strategic plan and the change efforts underway. For managers, the training may look different since the manager’s role is to interpret the direction received from the top and carry out the change. Such a process involves explaining it to the subordinates, as well as answering questions they may have about the change effort and how it impacts



them or their work specifically. These varying communication roles necessitate targeted development opportunities, and thus HRD has much to contribute. Likewise, communication competencies can also be integrated into leadership development programs. Regardless of the type of development activity employed, there should be a focus on both the sending of messages and the receiving of feedback. Communication is a two-way process, and employee voice is important in organizational change (Frahm & Brown, 2007). As such, development programs that do not cover soliciting feedback from employees will do a disservice to the trainees.

This study's findings also emphasize the importance of managing change in such a way that individuals are set up for success, both in the current change effort as well as in future organizational modifications. A key way to increase the likelihood of employees buying in to change efforts is through communications received from their manager. There are numerous ways for HRD to support this effort, including training activities, leadership development programs, including managerial communication on performance appraisals, and even tying it to compensation plans. Gilley, Boughton, and Maycunich (1999) contended that "employee performance increases dramatically if an organization links that compensation and reward program to employee performance growth and development activities" (p. 139). This idea is based on the premise that focusing on performance, and not growth and development, will eventually stall or decline (Gilley et al., 1999). As such, HRD can work to include elements necessary to

effectively leading organizational change on developmental performance reviews and link compensation and rewards to it.

One of the roles HRD professionals can take is that of a change agent. In this role, they are responsible for “educating organizational leaders and members on the change management process and seeking appropriate organizational development interventions that will facilitate change and help individuals and organizations better cope with the outcomes of crises” (Hutchins & Wang, 2008, p. 320). As such, HRD professionals can work with the organization’s leadership to try and get managers on board with change efforts so that their communication with employees will not undermine the change effort underway. If managers are allowed to provide feedback on a proposed modification, perhaps they will afford their subordinates the same opportunity. Similarly, employee feedback sessions can be impactful as well. HRD professionals can help foster employee feedback throughout the process by establishing open forums or other channels through which employees can voice concerns, have questions answered, or provide feedback to help shape the change implementation process. By involving both the upper management and managers in activities such as these, the importance of two-way communication will be highlighted.

Fostering long-term success through transforming people and organizations is the goal of the organizational empowerer/meaning maker HRD role identified by Watkins (1989). One way HRD professionals can transform organizations is through the creation of corporate cultures that encourage open and honest communication between all levels of employees. By facilitating both

downward and upward communication, organizational change efforts can be enhanced. In light of the impact that current changes have on employees' views of future change efforts (Bordia et al., 2011), establishing a communicative climate within the company can help to foster long-term success.

Gilley and Gilley (2003) identified "change champion" as a transformational role for HRD practitioners. Accordingly, it can be said of these individuals that "Regardless of the strategic roles embraced, change champions function first as members of the management team, and second as advocates of performance, productivity improvement, and organizational development through learning, performance, and change. Change champions demonstrate that human resources are critical assets to the organization" (Gilley & Gilley, 2003, p. 227). As it relates to this study's findings, HRD professionals need to be champions of change and help individuals through the oftentimes tumultuous process. Though there are a variety of ways in which this can be accomplished, communication is a crucial common thread. As a member of the management team, HRD practitioners can be involved in strategic planning efforts and provide input on the direction of the company and if the proposed changes are needed. Once the organization has decided to pursue change efforts, HRD professionals should play a key role in developing appropriate communication strategies to help employees navigate the change process. They can work to improve employee performance and productivity by ensuring the employees have received sufficient communication about the change, in addition to having an opportunity to have their questions answered or concerns addressed.

HRD professionals impact the learning culture of the organization as well and can shape the training and development opportunities afforded to employees. Regardless of whether the employee is a member of the upper management or a front-line worker, HRD plays a critical role in the individual's development through the design of training programs, coaching, and performance evaluations.

Gilley et al. (1999) described performance coaching as “a person-centered management technique that requires face-to-face communications, personal involvement with employees, and establishment of rapport” (p. 75). As such, it is based on a “synergistic relationship” between the manager and employees (Gilley et al., 1999, p. 75). By implementing performance evaluations that include a developmental component, the organization is encouraging growth among employees. According to Gilley et al. (1999), “developmental evaluations are a vehicle for discussion of future growth and development activities that will enhance employees' abilities and competencies as well as advance their careers” (p. 91).

Given the rate of organizational change taking place today, HRD should push to utilize developmental evaluations that help the employee grow. Through such a process, the manager or organization may be able to track trends among employees that identify areas where additional training is needed or more personalized coaching would be beneficial. If many employees struggle with similar things during times of organizational change, HRD can work to assist both the employees and their managers, if it is determined that there is more the

managers could do to alleviate the problem. For example, if many employees are struggling with something in response to a lack of communication received, HRD can work with the managers to improve their communication skills. This would develop the manager while simultaneously helping employees as well. Through a variety of methods, HRD can work to develop the organization's human resource assets in order to successfully navigate organizational change.

### **Correlations**

As indicated in the correlation table (Table Four), there is a statistically significant correlation between job satisfaction and managerial communication, organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change. Similarly, the correlations between managerial communication and organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change are also statistically significant. Organizational trust is statistically significantly correlated with managerial trust and openness to change. Finally, openness to change and managerial trust are also statistically significantly correlated. All of the correlations are significant at the .01 level. Although the moderating relationships tested in this study were not supported, the correlations between constructs, while not an indication of causation, provide support for the idea that the variables are related.

Organizations striving to increase employee job satisfaction during times of organizational change may benefit from focusing on the level of trust that exists between employees and managers and between employees and the organization. In addition, the organization can use communication activities to

help employees be more open to organizational change through communication from both the organization and the manager.

### **Post-Hoc Analysis**

H<sub>1</sub> was supported for both full- and part-time workers, for master's and PhD students, and for those who completed paper and electronic surveys. Full-time workers had a higher  $R^2$  value than did part-time workers. This means that more of the variance in job satisfaction during times of organizational change is explained by managerial communication for full-time workers. This is understandable given the likely work conditions. Since full-time workers spend more time with their managers, it is likely that they receive more communication from them. In addition, full-time workers may experience a closer relationship with their manager. It is unfortunate that part-time workers are often treated differently within organizations. Many times these employees do not receive the same level of concern or dignity as their full-time counterparts and can lack feeling connected to the organization. All of these situations can contribute to the decreased influence of managerial communication on employee job satisfaction. For organizations that employ part-time workers, this finding suggests a more concerted effort is needed to communicate effectively with this subset of the workforce. By hiring managers who are able to effectively communicate with their subordinates and emphasizing the need for information to be shared with all employees, organizations are helping to establish workplace systems that will set all employees up for success during organizational change. Similarly, managers

need to ensure they are communicating information appropriately and effectively to all employees, not just full-time employees.

Additionally, PhD students had a higher  $R^2$  value than did master's students. As such, more of the variance in job satisfaction during times of organizational change is explained by managerial communication for PhD students. Given the advanced studies of PhD students, it is possible that they desire additional information about what is going on within their organization to help them understand the organizational strategies being employed by the upper management. This is aligned with previous research's finding that employees with higher levels of education have more confidence in their ability to manage uncertainties (Cordery et al., 1991). Based on this increased level of confidence during uncertain times, it is likely that the employees will have higher levels of job satisfaction as well.

The post-hoc analysis also revealed that participants who completed the electronic survey had a higher  $R^2$  value. This finding could be attributed to respondents answering more honestly on an electronic survey that they perceived to protect their anonymity more so than a paper survey.

H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>, and H<sub>4</sub> were not supported in any of the post-hoc testing. As such, the implications previously discussed related to these hypotheses hold true regardless of whether all of the survey responses were analyzed together, or whether the responses were analyzed based on employment type, graduate program, or type of survey completed. Accordingly, organizations, managers, and HRD professionals should seek to apply the implications of this study's

findings to their workplace in order to help employees with the change process through communication and experience an impact on their level of job satisfaction in response.

Given the large percentage of survey respondents who were employed in the healthcare industry (47.2%), a t-test was conducted. The results indicate  $t(322) = 2.04, p = .042$ . As such, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the level of job satisfaction of respondents employed in the healthcare industry as compared to those in other industries was not supported. This means there is a statistically significant difference in the level of job satisfaction between healthcare and non-healthcare workers included in this study. The mean level of job satisfaction of those who reported working in the healthcare industry was 5.73 (SD = 1.25), while the mean level of job satisfaction of those who reported working in other industries was 5.43 (SD = 1.41) using a seven point Likert scale.

This finding could possibly be explained by the working environment of the industry. Given the variety of conditions that occur on a daily basis, flexibility is key to successfully working in the healthcare industry. As such, these individuals may be more apt to adjust to change, as it is so common in their daily work lives. In response, their level of job satisfaction during times of organizational change may be higher than employees in other industries. In addition, the nature of the healthcare industry could also contribute to this finding. The nature of the work involved, including the ability to help people and save lives, is typically very rewarding for individuals. Similarly, many people choose to pursue a career in the healthcare industry out of a sense of calling or desire to give back. As such, a



culture of helping may be fostered within such organizations, thus resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction. The level of job satisfaction experienced by healthcare workers has far-reaching implications. According to García-Peña, Reyes-Frausto, Reyes-Lagunes, and Muñoz-Hernández (2000), the job satisfaction of healthcare professionals is reflected in their performance and the satisfaction of their patients. Since previous findings suggest that the quality of service delivered is related to the employee's job satisfaction (García-Peña et al., 2000), organizations and managers should work to establish corporate climates that foster higher levels of job satisfaction among healthcare workers. Although change does not negatively impact the employees' level of job satisfaction as much, healthcare organizations should still work to effectively communicate with employees, especially during times of organizational change. This can be achieved through recruiting, hiring, retaining, and rewarding high quality managers who will effectively communicate with all employees.

### **Theoretical Implications**

As previously noted, van den Heuvel et al. (2014) contended that research investigating organizational change has not sufficiently discussed the role of LMX in the process. LMX is especially relevant to the constructs of managerial communication, organizational trust, and managerial trust that were investigated in this study. Given LMX's underpinning of the study, the findings have theoretical implications as well. The correlations between constructs add to the understanding of the role of LMX within organizational change. Increased levels

of managerial communication are being exchanged with higher levels of trust and employee job satisfaction.

### **Limitations**

As with every research study, this study has limitations. The use of self-reported data serves as a limitation, as self-reported data has the possibility of common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003); however, Doty and Glick (1998) posited that such a bias rarely impacts the study's findings in a significant way. Bryman and Bell (2011) also highlighted the potential risk inherent in cross-sectional studies that there are possibly explanations for the observed relationships other than those considered in the study. Given this study's use of master's and PhD students, the findings are not generalizable to all organizations. In addition, the fact that there are various types of change efforts could impact the results.

The use of master's and PhD level students who have varying work experiences could limit the findings as well, as it is possible that at least some respondents would not have sufficient work experience to inform their survey responses. Alternatively, Gilley et al. (2009d) suggested that "due to the nature of their studies, these respondents may be more sensitive to leadership and change issues and, thus, may be acutely critical of their leaders" (p. 44). The inclusion of respondents from three regional universities located in the southern part of the United States also limits the generalizability of the study results. The level of personal involvement with the change effort, as well as the impact the change

had on them personally might also impact the respondents' ratings (Gilley et al., 2009d).

### **Future Research**

Future research is needed to further explore this topic. Although the moderating hypotheses were not supported with this sample, it is possible that the results could differ if a non-graduate student sample was used. A sample of one organization's employees who are currently undergoing change could also provide an additional perspective, as this would allow the researcher to understand the type of change efforts occurring within the organization, as well as the level of personal involvement the respondent had with the change initiative. Gathering more data about the type of change underway could result in different findings, as well as provide researchers with a richer understanding of the change context. While this study focused on moderate and large scale change, research could also investigate smaller scale change efforts to see if the results differed. Managers could also be surveyed in an effort to better understand how they perceive their own communication with their subordinates, as well as the communication they have received from their superiors. It may be that the manager lacks information to share with employees, not that the manager is intentionally withholding information. Qualitative studies could also be conducted to better understand the view of employees and managers during periods of organizational change.

While this study focused on managerial communication that travelled downward (i.e., from the manager to the employee), research could also be

carried out to understand the role of employee feedback in the change process and to investigate if the opportunity for employees to contribute their opinions to the organization made a difference in their perspective on the quality of the managerial communication or their level of job satisfaction during times of change. Researchers could also investigate possible differences between the communication that comes from the managers and communication that comes from higher level executives within the organization to see if the messages are consistent and/or received differently by the employees. Given the failure rate of organizational change initiatives, this domain is fertile ground for future studies with implications for research, theory, and practice.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

This study adds to the knowledge base as it pertains to effective change management by considering the impact of managerial communication on employee job satisfaction, in addition to analyzing the employee's individual attributes of organizational trust, managerial trust, and openness to change. While the moderating hypotheses were not supported, this research still contributes to the literature and provides assistance to future researchers investigating organizational change, the role of individual employee attributes, or managerial communication during times of change. Change failure is unfortunately widespread, common, and costly (Wolf, 2006), and failed changes cost organizations losses in the resources of time and money, as well as morale and goodwill (Kotter, 1995). Accordingly, this study's findings can aid organizations in more successfully implementing change, with the preservation of

resources as a result. Chapter Five discussed relevant conclusions related to this study's findings. The implications of the study for research, theory, and practice were outlined, along with limitations and future directions for research.

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## Appendix A: Complete Scales

### **Job Satisfaction** (Cammann et al., 1983)

- All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
- In general, I don't like my job. (R)
- In general, I like working here.

### **Quality of Information** (Miller et al., 1994; Miller & Monge, 1985)

- The information I have received about the implementation of work teams has been timely.
- The information I have received about the implementation of work teams has been useful.
- The information I have received about the implementation of work teams has adequately answered my questions about the change.
- The information provided about the implementation of work teams was positive.
- The information provided about the implementation of work teams was favorable.
- The way in which the information about the implementation of work teams was communicated appropriately.

### **NETMA** ("No one ever tells me anything") (Miller et al., 1994; based on Peters & Waterman, 1982)

- I feel like no one ever tells me anything about what's going around here.
- I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about what's going on at \_\_\_\_\_. (R)

- My performance and/or my team's performance would improve if I received more information about what's going on.
- The people who know what's going on here at \_\_\_\_ do not share enough information with me.

**Organizational Trust Inventory** (Nyhan & Marlowe, 1997)

- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ is technically competent at the critical elements of his or her job is
- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ will make well thought out decisions about his or her job is
- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ will follow through on assignments is
- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ has an acceptable level of understanding of his/her job is
- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ will be able to do his or her job in an acceptable manner is
- When \_\_\_\_ tells me something, my level of confidence that I can rely on what they tell me is
- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ to do the job without causing other problems is
- My level of confidence that \_\_\_\_ will think through what he or she is doing on the job is
- My level of confidence that this organization will treat me fairly is
- The level of trust between supervisors and workers in this organization is
- The level of trust among the people I work with on a regular basis is

- The degree to which we can depend on each other in this organization is

**Openness Toward Change** (Miller et al., 1994)

- I would consider myself to be 'open' to the changes the work teams will bring to my work role.
- Right now, I am somewhat resistant to the proposed changes in work teams. (R)
- I am looking forward to the changes in my work role brought about by the implementation of work teams.
- In light of the proposed changes in the work teams, I am quite reluctant to consider changing the way I now do my work. (R)
- From my perspective, the proposed changes in the work teams will be for the better.

Appendix B: Survey Instrument

**Organizational Change Survey**

Change has been described as being small, moderate, or large in scale.

**Small-scale change** – gradual, incremental changes in the workplace

**Moderate-scale change** – substantial changes in the workplace

**Large-scale change** – radical changes in the workplace

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• All in all, I am satisfied with my job.							
• In general, I don't like my job.							
• In general, I like working here.							

4a. Have you experienced moderate or large scale change at work in the last six months?

Yes	No
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4b. If yes, briefly describe the most significant change you have experienced.

Considering the identified change, please respond to the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The information I received about the change was timely.							
6. The information I received about the change was useful.							
7. The information I received about the change adequately answered my questions about the change.							
8. The information I received about the change was positive.							



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. The information I received about the change was favorable.							
10. The way in which the information about the change was communicated was appropriate.							
11. I feel like no one ever tells me anything about what's going on at work.							
12. I am thoroughly satisfied with the information I receive about what's going on at work.							
13. My performance and/or my team's performance would improve if I received more information about what's going on.							
14. The people who know what's going on at the company do not share enough information with me.							

Nearly 0      Very Low      Low      50-50      High      Very High      Near 100%  
 1                  2                  3                  4                  5                  6                  7

15. My level of confidence that my manager is technically competent at the critical elements of his or her job							
16. My level of confidence that my manager will make well thought out decisions about his or her job							
17. My level of confidence that my manager will follow through on assignments							
18. My level of confidence that my manager has an acceptable level of understanding of his or her job							
19. My level of confidence that my manager will be able to do his or her job in an acceptable manner							
20. When my manager tells me something, my level of confidence that I can rely on what he or she tells me							

21. My confidence in my manager to do the job without causing other problems							
22. My level of confidence that my manager will think through what he or she is doing on the job							

Nearly 0    Very Low    Low    50-50    High    Very High    Near 100%  
 1            2            3            4            5            6            7

23. My level of confidence that this organization will treat me fairly							
24. The level of trust between supervisors and workers in this organization							
25. The level of trust among the people I work with on a regular basis							
26. The degree to which we can depend on each other in this organization							

Strongly Disagree    Disagree    Somewhat Disagree    Neither Agree nor Disagree    Somewhat Agree    Agree    Strongly Agree  
 1            2            3            4            5            6            7

27. I consider myself to be "open" to the changes in my work role.							
28. Right now, I am somewhat resistant to the proposed changes.							
29. I look forward to the changes in my work role brought about by the change.							
30. In light of the proposed changes at work, I am reluctant to consider changing the way I now do my work.							
31. From my perspective, the proposed change will be for the better.							

32. **Within the past six months, I worked**

Part-time	Full-time	Not employed
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33. **Gender**

Male	Female
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34. **Age**

Under 20	20 – 29	30 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 59	60+
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35. **Indicate the highest level of education completed**

High school	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
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36. **Program currently enrolled in**

Master's	PhD
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37. **Organizational tenure**

< 1 year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21+ years
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38. **Job level**

Front line employee	Supervisor or team leader	Mid-level manager	Senior/executive manager
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39. **Industry**

Healthcare	Manufacturing	Service	Education	Professional	Government	Nonprofit
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## Appendix C: Participant Recruitment Email

Dear {class} students,

My name is Ashley Hall and I am a PhD student in the Human Resource Development program at UT Tyler. For my dissertation research, I am surveying graduate students about their experiences with organizational change in the workplace. Would you mind taking approximately 5 minutes to complete this brief electronic survey by {deadline to participate}: {link}? Your participation is voluntary and the responses will be anonymous. Once you complete the survey you will have the option to provide your name and email address to be entered into a drawing for one \$100 Amazon.com gift card. One lucky {university} survey participant will win!

If you have questions, feel free to contact me at [ahall26@patriots.uttyler.edu](mailto:ahall26@patriots.uttyler.edu).

Thanks,

Ashley Hall