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With the trend toward self-management comes increasing accountability of individuals to their coworkers and organizations. There is an implicit assumption that workers like self-management and the accompanying accountability, despite little supporting empirical evidence. This study examines the idea that workers' perceptions of their level of accountability are related to their job satisfaction. A significant correlation was found between job satisfaction and perceived accountability to coworkers and perceived accountability to management. In addition, we found that accountability to both coworkers and management was positively related to trust in supervisors and managers. However, only two aspects of accountability—manager and coworker awareness—seem to explain the variance in job satisfaction and trust. Practical applications of the findings are explained.

Manz and Sims (1993) have suggested that every major corporation is seriously considering implementing self-managed work groups. Beckham (1998) predicted that by the year 2000, 40 percent of U.S. employees would be working on self-directed teams. Although these projections may have been overly optimistic, they indicate the level of attention given to self-management in the 1990s. HRD specialists frequently act as the change agents involved in the implementation of new approaches to management (Harris and DeSimone, 1994), and self-managed teams are no exception (Yeatts and Hyten, 1998). Accountability is a key characteristic of work on self-managed teams (Harrell and Alpert, 1979; Manz, Mossholder, and Luthans, 1987; Waitley, 1995). Workers on self-managed teams make decisions and are held accountable for the consequences of their decisions. That change in the level of accountability in organizations typically requires extensive training when the teams are implemented (Yeatts and Hyten, 1998).

Frink and Klimoski (1998) suggest that organizations have universally intuited the requirement for accountability despite a lack of empirical evidence from the academic community. We found no previous research that explored linkages between accountability and job satisfaction. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to test the relationship between workers' perceptions of their accountability to their managers and coworkers and their job satisfaction. In addition, we want to explore additional relationships between accountability, job satisfaction, and trust. First, we discuss the accountability construct and the extent to which employees may view accountability requirements to supervisors and/or coworkers positively or negatively, as well as the potential implications of this view for job satisfaction. Next, we discuss the importance of trust for organizations and the extent to which accountability requirements may promote trust.

Accountability

Frink and Klimoski (1998) call accountability the most fundamental factor in organizing and organizations, yet it is the most underinvestigated and under-conceptualized factor. Having a better understanding of accountability is important for managers implementing self-managed work teams because a key characteristic of self-management is that workers perform functions traditionally done by managers and are held accountable for how well their units perform. With self-managed work teams, the emphasis changes from trying to perform one's own job well to being directly responsible for the unit's performance. In some instances, workers may take on responsibilities typically done by managers, such as setting production schedules or selecting employees. And in other situations, workers' tasks may not change, but workers no longer have managers monitoring their work and behavior. In either such case, however, accountability increases because the layer of management between workers and executives and/or customers is gone. Workers themselves monitor and report performance. By the same token, the number of responsibilities may go up or down. Taking on tasks previously done by managers may mean reduction or elimination of tasks previously performed by the workers. Obviously, the level of perceived accountability will vary, depending on how self-management is defined and implemented in each organization.

Accountability has been defined as the extent to which actions are evaluated by an external constituency who is believed to have reward and sanction powers that are contingent on this constituency's view of those actions. (Ferris and others, 1997; Frink and Klimoski, 1998). A worker's actions could include performance methods or results. Inherent in this notion is the belief that others will know how one performs in order to evaluate the performance. As Frink and Klimoski (1998) state, people are influenced by the potential for scrutiny and evaluation. Organizational mechanisms such as formal reporting relationships, performance evaluations, personnel manuals, and group norms constitute examples of accountability sources (Frink and Klimoski, 1998).

Accountability has valuable organizational outcomes, such as performance, precision, and focus. Research has indicated that individuals who were held accountable to their supervisors for their performance were more likely to be high performers, develop greater accuracy, and be more attentive to the needs of others than individuals who were not held accountable (Fandt, 1991). Theorists have also pointed out that workers often have accountability to multiple constituencies (Carnevale, 1985; Frink and Klimoski, 1998; London, Smither, and Adsit, 1997). The accountability requirement may have different effects, depending on the constituency. A worker who feels accountable to coworkers as well as to a supervisor may find work more motivating, since feedback on his or her performance may come from many more sources.

Frink and Klimoski (1998) point out that there are many secondary outcomes that managers and coworkers may consider when accountability is increased. These secondary outcomes are the consequences for workers of high accountability and would include subjective feelings, quid pro quo arrangements, awards, and performance ratings, to name a few. Simonson and Nye (1992) found that accountability effects in decision making are driven by the desire to receive positive evaluations and to avoid criticism.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents a person's evaluation of his or her job and work context (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). Job satisfaction has been found to reduce absenteeism (Breaugh, 1981) and turnover (Arnold and Feldman, 1982) and to improve organization citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988). As the demand for skilled workers increases, creating a satisfied workforce has important implications for organizations and for human resource professionals. Employees in general appear to have some deficit in their job satisfaction. For example, a recent Gallup survey reported that only about 40 percent of respondents reported that management cared about them (Moore, 1997).

Research focused on the antecedents of job satisfaction has suggested that the causes of job satisfaction can be divided into two dimensions: events and agents (Ben-Porat, 1981). Events include such things as the level of responsibility one is given on a job, whereas agents include such aspects of the job as one's coworkers or supervisor (Pinder, 1998). Framing the causes of job satisfaction in this way suggests that accountability may play a role in workers' level of job satisfaction. An accountability requirement or an employee's relationship with an accountability agent can affect the employee's satisfaction with his or her job or job context. Conceptual work on accountability has suggested that accountability affects an individual's thoughts, feelings, and identity (Weigold and Schlenker, 1991). Some research has shown that personality influences accountability effects (Tetlock, 1992). Tetlock (1985) suggests that accountability influences our decisions and behaviors because of the role that evaluations by others play on our need to build image and status.

On the negative side, Argyris (1998) notes that employees desire empowerment as long as they are not held personally responsible. London, Smither, and Adsit (1997) comment that people want high accountability from others but low accountability for themselves. Frink and Klimoski (1998) propose that evaluation apprehension plays a role in accountability processes. Individuals are reluctant to be found lacking. They often seek approval from their audience (Baumeister and Leary, 1995) and when the view of the person to whom they are accountable is known, they tend to shift their own views toward that view (Klimoski and Inks, 1990; Tetlock, Skitka, and Boettger, 1989). This motivation to preserve one's identity explains why research has shown that accountability results in increased stereotyping (Gordon, Rozelle, and Baxter, 1988), increased stress (Frink and others, 1995), increased impression management (Frink, 1994; Frink and Ferris, 1998), increased information manipulation (Fandt and Ferris, 1990), greater use of defensive information (Fandt and Ferris, 1990), wasted resources (Adelberg and Batson, 1978), and inaccurate performance evaluations (Klimoski and Inks, 1990). Frink and Klimoski (1998), however, point out that in situations where accountability is increased, problems can occur because a manager enforces inappropriate expectations, his or her practices are not sensitive to individual differences, or the strategies he or she uses for the implementation of increased accountability are flawed.

Dose and Klimoski (1995) propose three ways in which accountability can help resolve the dilemma of how internal control and external control can effectively coexist. Success depends on (1) how well expectations are structured, (2) the significance of the task or decision, and (3) the quality of the relationship between the individual being held accountable and the person to whom he or she is accountable. Empirical research shows that these qualities are also instrumental in job satisfaction. In a study by Kahn and others (1964), ambiguity and lack of structure resulted in low job satisfaction, whereas well-structured expectations reduced evaluation apprehension, stress, and impression management strategies of the individual being held accountable. Ferris and others (1997) also found job ambiguity to be negatively related to accountability. It was found that setting task or role boundaries within which employees have autonomy is beneficial (Slocum and Sims, 1980). Thus, clear expectations are key. Haccoun and Klimoski (1975) found that increased accountability of the negotiator to bargaining teams leads to enhanced satisfaction after solutions are negotiated.

The almost universal use of accountability in organizations and its potential benefits suggest a need for further investigation of the relationship between accountability and job attitudes. Frink and Klimoski (1998) point out that most research has not examined individual differences carefully, if at all. Instead, research has looked at personality constructs. In addition, most research on accountability has been done in laboratory settings, and few of these studies have examined accountability in work-like contexts (Frink and Klimoski, 1998). Recent research (Steel and Rentsch, 1997) has suggested that

job satisfaction may be both situational and dispositional. It appears that some people may have more of a tendency to be satisfied with their jobs and, also, with life in general. However, work characteristics also affect job satisfaction.

Frink and Klimoski (1998), in their role theory model of accountability, have emphasized that accountability forces operate within interpersonal relationships. The role theory approach implies that accountability is part of a relationship between workers, managers, and coworkers, making it a complex, subjective experience that will vary, based on feelings and attitudes about the relationship. Where good interpersonal relationships exist, accountability will increase for those workers and job satisfaction will be high. In addition, if good interpersonal relationships exist, there are likely to be shared expectations for accountability (Frink and Klimoski, 1998). Shared role expectations for the accountability relationship will also allow employees to be more satisfied. Thus:

HYPOTHESIS 1. *There is a significant positive relationship between an individual's accountability to coworkers and job satisfaction.*

HYPOTHESIS 2. *There is a significant positive relationship between an individual's accountability to management and job satisfaction.*

Trust

As with job satisfaction, conditions of trust within an organization bode well for organizational health. Trust has been called a foundation for social order within and beyond organizations, having significant impact on maintaining the successful cooperative relationships required for an increasingly complex, global, fast-paced business environment (Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies, 1998). Previous research already has established a link between trust and job satisfaction (Driscoll, 1978), but little has been stated about a potential link between accountability and trust. Although a variety of definitions of trust have been proposed (Bigley and Pearce, 1998), Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) propose that the most widely held view about trust is that it is "a psychological state [consisting of] the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (p. 395). Dose and Klimoski (1995) suggest that trust within an accountability relationship is dependent on the individual's perception of the motivation of the person to whom he or she is accountable, as well as the use of power, openness, and honesty. The perception that coworkers and managers have a legitimate interest in employees' behavior will lead to trust. There is evidence that individuals' trust levels are initially high and then drop when trust is misplaced, rather than trust starting out low and having to be built up (Klimoski and Karol, 1976; McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany, 1998). This implies that one might expect a relatively high level of trust in most organizations unless the psychological contract has been violated.

Research on leadership also implies that high-quality leader-member exchange relationships, including open and honest communication, are indicative of high trust levels (Graen and Schiemann, 1978). Higher accountability suggests more frequent communication with coworkers and managers. Promoting accountability in this type of relationship requires less frequent monitoring as well (Dose and Klimoski, 1995). Accountability, paired with less frequent monitoring, has positive implications for organizational structure and trust. Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, and Werner (1998) propose that decentralized, less formal, less hierarchical organizations have higher levels of trust. When accountability is initiated effectively, the more accountability a worker has, the less formal is the structure and the higher is the level of trust that we would expect to find.

In addition to the characteristics of self-managed teams that might influence trust, Frink and Klimoski (1998) suggest that the duration, quality, and predictability of the relationship between an individual and his or her manager will make a difference in accountability outcomes. The duration, quality, and predictability of relationships are elements of trust in any working relationship. More than that, they predict that accountability requirements for behavior or performance will vary, based on the relationship between a manager and a subordinate. Thus:

HYPOTHESIS 3. *There is a significant positive relationship between an individual's accountability to coworkers and management and trust in his or her supervisor.*

HYPOTHESIS 4. *There is a significant positive relationship between an individual's accountability to coworkers and management and trust in management.*

Although we expect a moderate but significant relationship between accountability and job satisfaction and between accountability and trust overall, the literature suggests that there are aspects of accountability that people find negative as well as those that they find positive. For example, the implication that coworkers or supervisors are interested in or aware of the work that an employee is doing is likely to be perceived more positively than the requirement that they justify their position to these persons. Thus, we also decided to explore whether individuals do in fact view accountability as multidimensional and whether there are certain aspects of accountability that are more satisfying or are more associated with trust.

HYPOTHESIS 5. *Accountability is a multidimensional construct with dimensions that vary in the strength and direction of their relationship to job satisfaction and trust.*

Method

This study was conducted in a small manufacturing company located in a small town in the Midwest. At the time of the study, the company had begun to implement self-managed work teams. One of the three facilities in this

company was totally transformed, and the other two were in various stages of transformation, depending on the managers' and workers' willingness that workers assume management tasks. The teams were designed to be completely self-managed and to perform such tasks as setting production standards, hiring new workers, and solving problems. Depending on the supervisor and the facility, workers had varying levels of accountability at the time of the study, based on their supervisors' approaches to management and whether self-managed work teams had been implemented in their departments. Because of other changes in management practices, all of the workers had more accountability than they had had the year before. All of the workers were aware that they would be involved in self-management in the future. This site was chosen because the implementation of self-managed work teams varied by unit, thereby creating varying levels of accountability, and because this organization is typical of the many small manufacturing companies found across the United States that are attempting to implement current approaches to management.

Participants and Procedure. The manufacturing manager sent a memo inviting all of the 275 workers in three manufacturing plants to attend one of a series of meetings in groups of twenty. Most of the workers chose to participate. At these meetings, a company representative introduced one of the researchers, encouraged workers to participate in the study, and then left the meeting room. The university researcher explained the survey instrument and gave a general explanation of the study. The workers had the option of participating in the research, leaving the room, or staying in the room and relaxing. The company provided refreshments and the time was paid.

Measures. The participants completed a questionnaire that measured their job satisfaction, accountability to coworkers, accountability to management, trust in their supervisor, and trust in management.

Job Satisfaction. The measure of job satisfaction used in this study was the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) scale, created by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967). This measure of job satisfaction has been widely used in academic research for over thirty years. In addition to the evidence of its validity, provided in Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist's scale manual, Scarpello and Campbell (1983) further tested and validated the MSQ scale. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("very dissatisfied") to 5 ("very satisfied"). Two of the items were (1) "The chance to do different things from time to time" and (2) "The chance to work alone on the job." We tested for reliability and found a Cronbach's alpha of .88. This suggests that the items on the scale were consistent and were measuring the same construct.

Accountability to Coworkers and Accountability to Management. The Accountability to Coworkers scale was originally developed by R. J. Klimoski (personal communication, 1992). It asks about accountability to coworkers. A second scale containing the same items was created by substituting the

words *company management* for *coworkers*. The participants rated each item from 1 ("great extent") to 5 ("not at all") on a five-point Likert scale. An additional rating of "not sure" was also used. Accountability was measured at the individual level. The questions on the scales included the following:

- To what extent are your coworkers (or "is company management") interested in how well you perform your job?
- To what extent are your coworkers (or "is company management") interested in the methods you use to perform your job?
- To what extent does your level of performance of your job have an impact on your coworkers (or "company management")?
- To what extent are your coworkers (or "is company management") aware of the methods you use to perform your job?
- To what extent are your coworkers (or "is company management") aware of the effectiveness of your performance of your job?
- To what extent do you have to justify the methods that you use in performing your job to your coworkers (or "company management")?
- To what extent do the methods that you use to perform your job have an impact on your coworkers (or "company management")?
- To what extent do you have to justify your effectiveness in performing your job to your coworkers (or "company management")?
- In performing your job, to what extent are you consciously aware of the concerns of your coworkers (or "company management")?

Trust in Management and Trust in the Supervisor. The Trust in Management scale was developed by Roberts and O'Reilly (1974). We simply substituted the words "your immediate supervisor" for "management" to adapt the original scale to measure "trust in supervisor." The participants rated the items from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") on a five-point Likert scale. Two of the items from each of the two trust scales were "I trust my immediate supervisor" and "I trust management."

Results

Two hundred and sixty-four factory workers chose to participate in the research, which was a 96 percent response rate. Ninety-one percent of the participants were male, 96 percent were white, 59 percent were high school graduates, the average age was forty-one, and the average tenure with the organization was sixteen years. Age ($r = -.19$, $p < .05$) and tenure ($r = -.20$, $p < .001$) were significantly negatively correlated with trust in the supervisor, but not with any other variables of interest. Factor analysis results, using an oblique rotation method, confirmed that our managerial accountability and coworker accountability scales are separate dimensions. Simple linear

regression was done to test the first four hypotheses. Means, standard deviations, reliability coefficients for all measured variables, and Pearson zero-order correlations between the variables of interest are presented in Table 1.

All of these hypotheses were supported. As suggested in hypotheses 1 and 2, the correlations between job satisfaction and accountability to coworkers and managers were significant. As proposed in hypotheses 3 and 4, the more accountable the participant felt toward coworkers, the higher his or her job satisfaction, trust in management, and trust in the supervisor. The more accountable the participant felt toward management, the higher his or her job satisfaction and trust in management. Please note that since the accountability scale was scored from high to low, we eliminated the negative signs in Tables 1 and 3 for ease of understanding.

In order to test the fifth hypothesis, we first conducted separate principal factors analyses on the accountability to coworker and accountability to management scales. Since any additional factors are likely to be correlated, Promax rotation was used. Table 2 shows the results of this analysis. Items from the different constructs separated cleanly, and no item from one construct had a loading of greater than 0.5 on a factor associated with another construct. We examined the scree plot, which suggested that a three-factor solution was viable for both the coworker accountability and the management accountability scales. The eigenvalues for each of the subscales were above.0.1 in all cases, and the reliability estimates showed fairly strong correlations.

The factor analysis of the accountability to coworkers scale suggested a three-factor solution. The first factor included four items that involve coworkers being aware of and interested in how employees perform their jobs. Awareness of job performance is implied in the definition of accountability. In order for managers and coworkers to evaluate one's performance, they must be aware of it. The second factor included three items having to do with whether employees have an impact on coworkers. Finally, the third factor considered whether employees have to justify their work to coworkers. Means, standard deviations, and reliabilities are shown in Table 3.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelation Matrix

Variable	M	S.D.	N	1	2	3	4	5
1. Job satisfaction	70.85	10.08	256	(.88)				
2. Accountability to coworkers	2.86	0.67	229	.21[b]	(.86)			
3. Accountability to management	2.86	0.77	231	.34[b]	.46[a]	(.90)		
4. Trust in supervisor	3.55	0.75	264	.64[b]	.16[a]	.17[a]	(.78)	
5. Trust in management	3.13	0.62	263	.57[b]	.20[a]	.43[b]	.44[b]	(.73)

Note: Reliability estimates, in parentheses, are coefficient alphas.

[a]$p < .01$; [b]$p < .001$

Table 2. Standardized Reliability Estimates and Factor Loadings for Accountability Scales

Items	Factor 1 Awareness	Factor 2 Impact	Factor 3 Justification
Accountability to coworkers—alphas	.82	.77	.79
1	0.66	0.09	−0.00
2	0.56	0.09	0.05
4	0.66	−0.03	0.07
5	0.72	0.06	0.02
3	0.20	0.58	−0.04
7	0.05	0.63	0.07
9	−0.02	0.63	0.12
6	0.01	−0.05	0.74
8	0.03	0.13	0.70
Accountability to management—alphas	.81	.78	.79
6	0.68	0.04	0.04
7	0.37	−0.06	0.33
8	0.71	0.10	0.02
9	0.54	0.07	0.07
1	0.02	0.65	0.08
2	0.13	0.54	0.17
3	0.25	0.40	0.00
4	0.01	0.20	0.64
5	0.21	0.23	0.49

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelation Matrix for Factors Making Up the Accountability Scales

Variable	M	S.D.	n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Factors of the accountability to coworkers scale												
1. Awareness	3.00	0.80	242	(.82)								
2. Impact	2.51	0.81	246	.58^c	(.77)							
3. Justification	3.16	0.96	251	.42^c	.53^c	(.79)						
Factors of the accountability to management scale												
4. Awareness	3.16	0.92	247	.35^c	.22^c	.26^c	(.66)					
5. Impact	2.56	0.91	251	.38^c	.37^c	.26^c	.71^c	(.78)				
6. Justification	2.98	0.84	243	.25^c	.42^c	.42^c	.68^c	.67^c	(.81)			
7. Job satisfaction	70.85	10.08	256	.28^c	.13^a	.02	.40^c	.36^c	.23^c			
8. Trust in supervisor	3.55	0.75	264	.23^c	.13^a	.02	.25^c	.21^c	.10	.64^b		
9. Trust in management	3.13	0.62	263	.23^c	.10	.13^a	.50^c	.41^c	.28^c	.57^b	.44^b	

Note: Reliability estimates, in parentheses, are coefficient alphas.
$^a p < .05$; $^b p < .01$; $^c p < .001$

The factor analysis for the accountability to management scale also suggested three factors. The first factor had to do with employees perceiving that others are aware of their work. This awareness means that people believe or know that other people, both managers and coworkers, know what they do and how well they perform. The second factor, labeled "Impact," concerned perceptions that management is affected by and interested in employees' work. The third factor, labeled "Justify," primarily involved whether employees have to justify their work to management. Means, standard deviations, and reliabilities are shown in Table 3.

A multiple regression analysis showed that only the factors having to do with coworkers being aware of employees' performance and management being aware of the employee's performance had a significant relationship to job satisfaction (see Table 4). Since the accountability scale was scored from high to low, the negative signs that resulted from the analysis were changed to positive for items related to accountability for ease of understanding. Regression analyses were also conducted for trust in the supervisor and trust in management. Again, only the factors having to do with coworkers and managers being

Table 4. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Accountability and Job Satisfaction and Trust

Variable	β	t
Job satisfaction as the dependent variable		
Awareness of coworkers	2.84	2.53[a]
Impact on coworkers	0.07	0.06
Justification to coworkers	1.09	1.23
Awareness of management	2.52	2.24[a]
Impact on management	0.81	0.74
Justification to management	0.44	0.38
Trust in supervisor as the dependent variable		
Awareness of coworkers	0.20	2.30[a]
Impact on coworkers	0.03	0.35
Justification to coworkers	0.10	1.52
Awareness of management	0.17	1.99[a]
Impact on management	0.05	0.59
Justification to management	0.08	0.82
Trust in management as the dependent variable		
Awareness of coworkers	0.06	0.88
Impact on coworkers	0.06	0.94
Justification to coworkers	0.03	0.70
Awareness of management	0.31	4.66[b]
Impact on management	0.09	1.38
Justification to management	0.07	0.89

[a]$p < .05$; [b]$p < .001$

aware of employees' performance had a significant relationship to trust in the supervisor. Only the factor involving managers being aware of performance showed a significant relationship to trust in management.

Discussion

These findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between one important aspect of accountability and job satisfaction. We would expect that workers who believe that coworkers and managers are aware of their work have higher job satisfaction than workers who do not believe so. Awareness is an aspect of accountability that is implied, but not articulated, in discussions of accountability. One cannot, with validity, evaluate another's work without knowing about it. This awareness, which refers to the actual or perceived knowledge that others have regarding one's performance, is consistent with a study done by Ward, Smith, and Sharpe (1997), which found that athletes performed at higher levels when specific measures were posted publicly. Our results suggest that with regard to job satisfaction and trust, awareness is the most important aspect.

Consistent with previous research, our results indicate a significant relationship between job satisfaction and trust in the immediate supervisor and in management. In addition, our results demonstrate a significant relationship between perceptions of awareness of one's work and trust. However, does accountability lead to trust or does trust lead to accepting more accountability? Our study does not answer that question. We would expect that increasing accountability would give workers a better understanding of the problems faced by management and might therefore contribute to trust and that trust would make workers more willing to take on additional responsibilities that involve higher accountability. We speculate that cause and effect would be very difficult to tease out of this relationship with much certainty, since too many variables could moderate or mediate the relationship. Nonetheless, future research needs to explore the possibilities. Trust is a very important issue today because employees tend not to stay with the same organization over the length of their careers as they once did. Employers are faced with the dilemma of whether to invest effort in employee development, since employees may leave. This implies a decrease in trust and commitment, because neither party believes that the other has his or her best interests at heart. However, self-managing teams or accountability between employees and their supervisors may lead to increased trust by building relationships and knowing that there are others who are taking an interest in their work.

An exploration of whether people perceived accountability to have different aspects revealed that factors do exist and that some have a stronger relationship to job satisfaction and trust than others do. The perception that

coworkers and managers are aware of employees' work is the most important aspect of accountability, according to our findings. It is somewhat puzzling that the factor assessing whether one must "justify" work to coworkers and managers was not significant, since that seems to be a large piece of how accountability is typically defined. We might speculate that justifying work implies having to make a case (or perhaps even argue a case) to support one's work behavior, which may be perceived as a burden. Knowing that others are aware that one is working is quite different from having to influence others.

To date, accountability has been treated as a unidimensional contract, although it has been recognized that accountability can be "done well" or not. Some of this discussion has involved organizational structure as well as whether accountability is viewed by employees as a means of increasing self-control or as just another of management's external control mechanisms. A multidimensional view, however, recognizes that even in a well-designed accountability system, individuals are more receptive to some aspects than others. Employees wish to know that their contributions are valued but do not take kindly to being "checked up on."

Limitations. First, this study is limited by the potential for common method variance, since the data were all self-reported. There is the possibility that the subjects tried to respond in a consistent or socially desirable manner. Because the measures used in this study were randomly placed into a twelve-point-scale questionnaire gathering several different types of information, it is unlikely that the participants would have been able to easily manipulate their answers to duplicate previous items. However, that possibility exists. In addition, the data were correlational; no causation was established. Third, the homogeneous nature of the sample, in terms of gender, race, and education, could also raise questions about the generalizability of the findings, because of implications of restriction of range. Fourth, the subscales for coworker and management accountability have not been refined or validated. We believed that once the initial analyses were examined, it would be necessary to search for further explanations of the results. To verify our findings, additional research is needed to explore the multidimensionality of accountability. Finally, all of the data were gathered in one organization. This raises the possibility that other factors, specific to this organization, affected the results. These factors could include things like the relationships between managers and workers, the reward structure, and the average age and tenure of the workers. Again, generalizability may be limited.

Future Research. In addition to further examining the multidimensionality of accountability, future researchers should examine possible causal links between job satisfaction, accountability, and trust. It is possible that trust may moderate or mediate the relationship between accountability and job satisfaction. Since it is unlikely that we could ever say with absolute conviction that

increased accountability leads to higher job satisfaction, we could look at generally satisfied and dissatisfied workers and see what effect increased accountability has on them separately. In addition, Frink and Ferris (1999) found that accountability moderated the relationship between conscientiousness and job performance. That finding suggests that accountability and its relationship to other variables may interact with personality dimensions. Finally, HRD professionals and academics can study different types of self-management strategies, as they are implemented, to test for the impact on satisfaction and trust. The common belief that increased accountability is positive for workers, whether through self-management or some other participative strategy, must be tested further in order to solve the intricate puzzle that is job satisfaction and how it varies among workers.

Applications for Managers and HRD Professionals. Many HRD professionals are faced with the task of implementing self-managed work teams and other participative management strategies that lead to increased employee accountability, whether or not this is the intended outcome. As with any development program accompanying a new organizational structure, training on self-management must include information about how and why the approach is going to help the organization. Often, executives mandate changes in organizational design based on their reading of the most recent book on leadership. It is left to the HRD and organizational development specialists to make the new structures work. This research suggests that people's perceptions of coworker and manager awareness are related to job satisfaction. Employees operating at arm's length and not believing that their coworkers and managers know what they are doing could have a negative rather than positive impact on job satisfaction. Managers need to understand that interventions that increase levels of accountability should include raising coworkers' and managers' awareness of the quality and quantity of work completed.

Such strategies as performance tracking charts, announcements in team meetings, and consistent reward structures are ways to increase awareness of performance by workers. In addition, self-managed teams can be taught to use frequent meetings to report on progress toward goals, share performance data, and brainstorm solutions to problems. These approaches not only increase awareness but also indicate the value that the manager and coworkers place on the performance. Because of this awareness, managers could see enhanced job satisfaction and trust among workers when accountability levels go up. Managers must understand that forming self-managed teams does not automatically ensure increased job satisfaction or trust. The design of the teams and the strategies used for implementation are critical. As HRD professionals work on self-managed work team implementation strategies, fine-tuning the design and process of teams to generate greater awareness can provide beneficial outcomes to both individuals and organizations.

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