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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

LEADERS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MANAGER-STAFF RELATIONSHIP

A dissertation proposal presented in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Richard Martin

June, 2013

Michelle Rosensitto, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chair

This dissertation, written by

Richard Martin

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the importance of the manager's relationship with frontline staff. There continues to be a need for top leadership to understand clearly and value this relationship and provide managers with the support they need to deliver on their visions, missions, and corporate goals. The manager-staff relationship sets the tone for the frontline staff and creates an environment of trust. The communication the manager provides is pivotal to helping staffs understand the goals and vision top leadership established. In addition, the positive atmosphere created by this relationship helps to cement the staffs' commitment to the organization and reduces the turnover rate because job satisfaction increases. The positive impact on the morale of staffs by the manager-staff relationship is well documented in the literature. In a high-performing organization, communication flows both vertically and laterally (Robbins & Judge, 2010). That is, leaders and managers pass communication downward to groups in lower levels and these groups provide feedback to higher-up staffs.

## Chapter 1: Background

Lee (1997) wrote, “The great leaders are like the best conductors—they reach beyond the notes to reach the magic in the players” (p. 272). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there appears to be a limited number of great corporate leaders who have the skill or talent to bring out the best in staffs. In addition, they lack key knowledge about the most important relationship in any business or company: the relationship between the manager and the frontline staff. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) wrote:

Research yielded many discoveries, but the most powerful was this: A talented staff may join a company because of its charismatic leaders, its generous benefits, and its world-class training programs, but how long that staff stays and how productive he is while he is there is determined by his relationship with his immediate supervisor. People may join a company because of its brand identity, but how long they stay depends on the quality of the manager. (p. 11)

The idea of creating a healthy work environment to support staffs by having leaders and managers who are engaged, supportive, and communicate effectively with frontline staffs has been around for a long time. Henri Fayol, who was born in 1841, developed the 14 principles of administration, which were published in 1916. Two of Fayol’s (as cited in Wood & Wood, 2002) principles are: (a) equity, fairness, and a sense of justice should pervade the organization in principle and practice; and (b) esprit de corps emphasizes the need for building a maintaining harmony among the workforce, teamwork, and sound interpersonal relationships. He argued against the culture of memo writing as opposed to verbal communication, which he considered to be necessarily divisive. As Agarwal (1982) found, the ability of an organization to respond to its

environment depends on the “strategic choices” (p. 108) that it makes. These strategic choices or decisions determine organizational goals, its form and structure, and the manner in which it adapts and influences its environment. The strategic choices and goals cannot be delivered or achieved without the support of an engaged work force.

As Wagner and Harter (2006) noted, the anecdotes and, more important, analyses of manager performance point out that one of the best things a senior executive can do to motivate the entire population in a company is first to look out for the enterprise’s supervisors. Before people can deliver what they should as managers, they must first receive what they need as staffs. Abiodun (2010) found that a successful organization is one that believes in the collective skills of its workers. Shared governance is a practice that helps integrate all available skills in an organization. It is a practice that stands on one principle: the professional contributions from all its players.

Another key area of focus is the relationship between the manager and frontline staff, which has an impact on morale. Bowles and Cooper (2009) found that the measurement of morale has been around for a long time, starting in earnest in the postwar United States, around 1947. This means that plenty of time has passed for the meaning of this word to be transformed, and for it to be used in many different settings and for new ideas. Manning and Curtis (2003) found that all great leaders recognize the importance of morale. Napoleon (as cited in Manning & Curtis, 2003) once wrote, “An army’s success depends on its size, equipment, experience, and morale and morale is worth more than all of the other elements combined” (p. 155).

Staffs morale is correlated to turnover and a financial impact on organizations. Manning and Curtis (2003) also noted that turnover has a significant economic impact on

the organization, both in direct and indirect costs. Dell and Hickey (as cited in Manning & Curtis, 2003) found that translating turnover into numbers executives understand is essential because they need to appreciate the true costs. In the 21st century employment world, we must look at the foundations of retention through the eyes of potential staffs. They are recognized as the customers for a company's available jobs. If a company does not prepare a good foundation, it cannot expect staffs to stay with the organization. Staffs no longer endure what they do not like in their employment situation. They know they have the power and knowledge of their abilities along with the confidence in their value in a competitive marketplace. Staffs have greater loyalty to their career and their skills than to their employers. If they are not satisfied in the workplace, they simply move on (Dibble, 1999).

As organizations understand the impact to the bottom line that staff morale and retention have, there continues to be a renewed focus on these topics. Finnegan (2010) emphasized that staff retention is an assignment for all seasons, in good times and bad. The United States has faced two recessions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and both times good workers have continued to find jobs because work force shortcomings involve both quantity and quality. There has always been a good reason to believe that in bad times only the good workers resign from a job. Retaining a company's good workers is an everyday duty, regardless of the economy or a company's current profitability. In the competitive global market, the business and employment environment can change suddenly without notice. There has been one constant throughout the century, which is that corporate leadership focuses on the wants and needs of staffs in direct proportion to the scarcity of labor (Kiechel, 2012).

Managers and companies must think differently about their staffs and staffing than they have in the recent past. The role of staffing is not just to fill a specific position, but also to ensure that the position remains filled by a productive staff. Companies need to make a conscious effort to retain the manpower that they have in place (Ghuman, 2010).

As we continue to progress through the recovery from this current recession, companies are downsizing to meet the challenges and be more productive. Managers must be attentive to two major trends that affect their staffs' performance and morale: absenteeism and turnover. According to a Harris Interactive survey (as cited in Gitman and McDaniel, 2008, some 2.4% of workers at 305 for-profit and nonprofit entities nationwide called in sick each day . Each of these two trends has an impact on a company's finances in addition to their impact on staff morale. Management's function is carried out in the context of an organization. The development of coherent theories to explain organizational performance has moved away from the approaches that relied purely on a consideration of structural or human relations issues in favor of more comprehensive perspectives. Many early management ideas were propounded at a time when organizations were thought of as machines requiring efficient systems to enable them to function effectively. Current theorists have focused their approach on social and environmental as well as technical factors in the workplace. The emphasis is as much on staff satisfaction as on organizational effectiveness (Cole, 2004).

Executives have not previously been too interested in the issues involved in managing people. This has been generally because executives were judged primarily in terms of quarterly financial reports and the company's stock price. The link between

financial outcomes and the effective management of people was not immediately obvious to the financial bottom line (Bardwick, 2008). However, then the Sears organization commissioned a study of causal links among staff's attitudes, customer responses, and financial outcomes. Rucci, Kim, and Quinn (1998) found that for every 5% improvement in the staff's sense of satisfaction, there was a corresponding increase of 1.3% in the customers' degree of satisfaction. This resulted in a 0.5% increase in the Sears store's revenues. This was one of the initial studies that linked customer satisfaction with the behavior of staffs and a definitive financial outcome. The results of the Sears study created a more enhanced interest in the impact that staff satisfaction and morale have on customer satisfaction, productivity, absenteeism, turnover, retention, and other indirect costs-benefits to an organization.

Management thought is spreading to wherever capitalism and more-or-less free markets find a home. The capitalism and the managerial ideas that struggle to make it more productive have indisputably rendered the world richer and better educated. In the world of offices, factories, stores, and even cubicle farms, particularly those of large organizations, people expect to be treated with fairness and respect even if their long-term job security is less assured in challenging economic times (Kiechel, 2012). As we continue to move forward into the 21st century, the focus on retaining talented staffs is of crucial importance for growth and development of any company, and staff retention depends on the individual staff's job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Organizations benefit from a stable work force as the staffs gain experience and remain in the organization (Nagendra & Manjunath, 2008).

## **Statement of Problem**

In this current recession, which is the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression, the demands and pressures of jobs and personal life have been magnified. The stress at work from this economic environment is affecting all levels of every company, whether it is large or small. The pressures in the boardroom transcend downward to all levels of the company, as profits and financial reserves continue to decline. Leadership continues to lack understanding and undervalues the importance of the relationship between the manager and staff (Ranganayakulu, 2005). This relationship is key to staff morale and retention and it is especially critical within an uncertain economic environment. Wagner and Harter (2006) found that company performance starts with the most basic act: showing up for work. Engaged staffs average 27% less absenteeism than those who are actively disengaged. In a typical 10,000-person company, absenteeism from disengagement costs the business about 5,000 lost days per year, worth \$600,000 in salary paid where no work was performed. Managers who maintain higher levels of engagement in their teams spare their companies the cost of what are sometimes euphemistically called mental health days. Therefore, business and corporate leaders need to have a thorough understanding of the relationship between managers and staff, which has a key influence on staff morale and retention (Manning & Curtis, 2003).

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine the perceived nature of manager-staff relationships. When leaders understand and value the manager-staff relationship as a key element to a company's success, they are likely to want to provide appropriate support to

the manager to enhance this relationship by improving staff morale and by increasing retention. A highly effective leader must take certain actions in order to promote effective and open communication within his or her organization. These leaders must explain the rationale for decisions or any new order (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In addition, as the world becomes more interconnected and business becomes more complex and dynamic, work must become more “learningful” (p. 4). It is no longer sufficient to have one person learning for the organization. It’s just not possible any longer to figure it out from the top and to have everyone else following the orders of the “grand strategist” (p. 4).

The organizations that will truly excel will be the organizations that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels of the organization (Senge, 2006). Leaders and managers at all levels must coach, mentor, and communicate with the frontline staff to achieve the goals for any organization to be successful. They must encourage open communication to engage frontline staff and implement the sharing of knowledge at all levels. They must identify what knowledge is important within the organization and make that information readily available to the people who need it most, via computer networks and databases or other means (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

Leaders must utilize emotional intelligence to understand better the value of relationships. As Goleman (1998), companies and managers with high emotional intelligence can be tracked by the success in business performance of the company, (satisfying and desirable companies to work for demonstrate elements of high staff satisfaction, low turnover, high retention, and low vacancy rates). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to demonstrate the importance of manager-staff relationships.



## **Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail business environments?
2. What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff retention in health care, communications, and retail business environments?

## **Significance of the Study**

This research is significant because it provides data regarding one of the key relationships in any business or corporation that has an impact on the corporation's ability to achieve its mission and goals. Good people stay on board longer when they like and respect their supervisor, as revealed in "Nine Steps Toward Creating a Great Workplace" (Wardell, 2005, p. 14). In addition, the financial impact to businesses is significant and merits additional study to measure fully the impact of this relationship between manager and staff.

The study focuses on health care, communications, and retail businesses that are diverse companies and have different delivery models for their services. Consumers continue to look for value from all three types of these companies and all three know they have to have a strong focus on customer service to stay competitive in the open market. These types of companies were chosen for this study because the work force for each of these companies provides a diverse range of staffs regarding gender, age, educational

levels, work experience, and commitment to customer service.

As Wagner and Harter (2006) highlighted, company performance starts with the most basic act: showing up for work. Engaged staffs average 27% less absenteeism than those who are actively disengaged. In a typical 10,000-person company, absenteeism from disengagement costs the business about 5,000 lost days per year, worth \$600,000 in salary paid where no work was performed. Managers who maintain higher levels of engagement among their teams spare their companies the cost of what are sometimes euphemistically called mental health days. Additionally, this study adds to the research currently available in the field and highlights its importance for leaders so that they can increase focus on the resources needed to support managers. As noted in the literature review, retention has a financial value for all companies. Two of the sentinel timeframes are the retention rate at 1 year of employment, which is the transition year for all staffs in companies. The next timeframe is at 5 years of service when staffs feel a level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a company.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited to health care, communications, and retail businesses; the survey sample is limited in size. In addition, survey ratings are self-reported, and this study assumes that participants are honest and accurate in their responses. In addition, the number of staff quits is at the lowest level since 2001, as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics noted. This is indicative of staffs not willing to change jobs in the middle of the worst recession in U.S. history. As a result, staffs may remain with companies even though they may have low morale and are dissatisfied with their current job or company.

## **Definitions of Terms**

The study utilized the following definitions:

**Communication:** High-performing organizations exhibit effective and open communication. Effective communication must include both the transfer and the understanding of meaning (Berlo, 1960). Without effective and open communication at all levels, it is highly likely that an organization will struggle to meet its desired goals and peak performance.

**Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence is defined as one's ability to detect and manage emotional cues and information. It is composed of five dimensions: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-assessment, (c) self-motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skills (Robbins & Judge, 2008).

**Hires:** Monthly hires are all additions of personnel to the payroll during the reference month, and annual hires are all additions to the payroll during a given year. (deWolf & Klemmer, 2010).

**Innovation:** An innovation is a specialized kind of change. According to Robbins and Judge (2008), "Innovation is a new idea applied to initiating or improving a product, process, or service" (p. 243). If organizations are to be successful and relevant in the global arena, they must foster innovation and change.

**Job Openings:** Monthly job openings are defined as the number of openings on the last day of the reference month (deWolf & Klemmer, 2010).

**Layoffs and Discharges:** involuntary separations initiated by employers (deWolf & Klemmer, 2010).

Leadership: Northouse (2010) defined the term as a “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3).

Manager: Mintzberg (2009) defined the term as “someone responsible for a whole organization or some identifiable part of it” (p. 12).

Morale at Work: Bowles and Cooper (2009) define the term as a general psychological state of well-being.

Quits: cases in which people left a job voluntarily but did not retire or transfer (deWolf & Klemmer, 2010).

Retention: Identified as the percentage of staffs remaining in the organization. High levels of retention are desired in most job groups and organizations (Phillips & Connell, 2003).

Total Separations: Monthly total separations are the number of staffs separated from payroll during the reference month, and annual total separations are the number separated during a given year. Separations are classified as quits, layoffs, and discharges and other separations (deWolf & Klemmer, 2010).

Turnover: The opposite of retention; it refers to the percentage of staffs leaving the organization for whatever reason or reasons. “Avoidable” (p. 2) turnover is distinguished from “unavoidable” (p. 2) so that the proper emphasis can be placed on the avoidable portion (Phillips & Connell, 2003).

Vision: A vision is a long-term strategy on attaining a goal or goals. This vision provides a sense of continuity for followers by linking the present with a better future for the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2008).

### **Organization of the Study**

This quantitative study is structured in 5 chapters:

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** Chapter 1 provides an introduction and background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, definitions of terms, and organization of the study.

**Chapter 2: Literature review.** Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to communication, trust, staff morale, managers' influence, emotional intelligence, communicating a vision, key characteristics, learning, nonfinancial measures, health care, retail, and telecommunications. The literature review focuses on the key elements within organizations of leadership and management and how they have a direct influence on the frontline staff (staffs). The chapter concludes with telecommunications. In addition, it highlights the additional impact on staffs related to the current bad economy, which could create additional influences and stressors on an staff's decisions about his or her job and his or her organization.

**Chapter 3: Methodology.** Chapter 3 describes the research design and outlines the methodology used in this study. The quantitative approach with the research instrument that was used is outlined in this chapter. The nature of the study, objective, analysis unit, population and sample, characteristics studied, definition of characteristics, data collection, analytical techniques, and summary are included.

**Chapter 4: Results:** The results of this study are outlined in Chapter 4. The data are analyzed and presented using the appropriate statistical figures and tables to answer the original proposed research questions.

**Chapter 5: Findings, conclusions, and recommendations.** Chapter 5 outlines the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

Conclusions related to the importance and how key the relationship is between the manager and frontline staffs are confirmed. These have a direct impact on staff morale and staff turnover. Each of these has a definitive measurable cost to a company.

### **Summary**

This chapter is the introduction for the complete dissertation proposal and outlines all the key elements. The study focuses on enhancing our knowledge and understanding of the relationship between managers-supervisors and frontline staff. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of fostering this relationship and providing support to managers and staff to strengthen this relationship. The study also identifies the value of this relationship with a direct impact on morale, retention, staff satisfaction, financials, and staff turnover.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature**

As John Quincy Adams once said, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader” (as cited in Williams, 2002, p. 49). The purpose of this chapter is to review the specific literature on theories, concepts, and research related to the study of managerial-staff relationships and the effects they have on leadership. Many leaders undervalue the importance of the relationship between managers and their frontline staff, which impacts the staff’s morale, turnover, and support of the company’s mission and goals. Top leaders’ lack of understanding of the manager-staff relationship limits effective two-way communication from leaders to management, which would support the flow of information and support the manager-staff relationship. In addition, this lack of understanding of the manager-staff relationship minimizes the support manager-level positions need to meet the needs of frontline staff and to deliver on the company goals. Likert (1961, 1967) identified managers as linchpins with key functions. As linchpins, managers make the connection between a group that is composed of a manager’s superior and his or her peers and a group that is composed of a manager and his or her subordinates.

This chapter provides a review of literature related to the relationship between the manager and frontline staff in three major business environments: (a) health care, (b) communications, and (c) retail. In addition, this chapter explores both morale and staff retention, as they relate to the relationship between managers and frontline staff.

### **Communication**

High-performing organizations exhibit effective and open communication. Effective communication must include both the transfer and the understanding of

meaning (Berlo, 1960). Communication can be looked at on an interpersonal, as well as on an organizational level. Without effective and open communication on all levels, it is highly likely that an organization will struggle to meet its desired goals and peak performance. In a high-performing organization, communication flows both vertically and laterally (Robbins & Judge, 2010). That is, leaders and managers pass downward communication to groups in lower levels and these groups provide feedback to higher-ups. Additionally, communication takes place among members at the same level. This kind of lateral communication often saves time and facilitates coordination. Within a high-performing organization, communication takes place both in formal and informal networks. The formal networks may include a rigid chain of command, a wheel network—where a strong leader acts as the conduit—and an all-channel network—where self-managed teams and members are all free to contribute. High-performing organizations might utilize several formal networks simultaneously, for varying purposes. These organizations would also exhibit informal communication networks, often referred to as grapevines (Gitman & McDaniel, 2008). Effective leaders use these networks to gather information about morale and staff concerns or anxieties.

A high-performing organization also has a knowledge management process for organizing and distributing its collective wisdom, so the right information gets to the right people at the right time. Knowledge management serves as a powerful catalyst for the organization's competitive edge and effective use of resources (Liyanage, Elhag, Ballal, & Li, 2009). The structure and culture of the organization must support this sharing of information in order for these benefits to be realized.

A highly effective leader must take certain actions in order to promote effective



and open communication within his or her organization. He or she must explain the reasons and rationale for decisions, or any new order (Bolman & Deal, 2008). He or she must encourage open communication and the sharing of knowledge (Argyris, 1994). He or she must identify what knowledge is important within the organization and make that information readily available to the people who need it most, via computer networks and databases, or other means (Robbins & Judge, 2010). He or she must support the use of vertical, lateral, and informal communication networks and channels, and he or she must use communication to reduce ambiguities and clarify group goals (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The effectiveness and openness of communication within an organization may be measured in a number of ways, including observation, questionnaires and surveys, and member interviews. While the data from these methods might not accurately reflect the level of effective and open communication, they can provide some insight into the organization's practices and the attitudes and beliefs of its members. The obvious solution to making the staff feeling valued is communication. Branham (2001) outlined the advantages managers gain by developing and communicating with their staffs. Increased communication will keep staffs from leaving the organization before they realize what plans their managers have for them. Regular discussions can help detect and revitalize any staffs who may have reached a plateau, may be restless, or might be disengaged. Succession planning will be made easier, which is especially important to the manager who must develop a successor before becoming promotion eligible. Active listening is another important trait that successful managers need to have to be successful and meet the needs of their frontline staffs to keep them engaged. Rogers and Farson (as

cited in Osland, Kolb, & Rubin, 2001) outlined how to engage in active listening, the challenges of active listening, and how active listening can help a company achieve its organizational goals.

According to Hopkins, there are 12 essential elements of a successful internal communication strategy (as cited in Walker, 2011): (a) Effective staff-directed communications must be led from the top; (b) The essence of good communications is consistency; (c) Successful staff communications owe as much to consistency, careful planning, and attention to detail as they do to charisma or natural gifts; (d) Communication via the line manager is most effective; (e) Staff communications are not optional; they are part of business as usual and should be planned and budgeted for as such (f) There must be integration between internal and external communications (g) Timing is critical; (h) Tone is important; (i) State your message from your audience's point of view; (j) Communications is two-way process; (k) A single key theme or a couple of key themes are a means of giving coherence to a range of diverse staff communication initiatives; (l) Set standards and stick to them.

Communication is not merely an activity that occurs within an organization, nor is communication merely a tool for managerial control. Instead, all of the human processes that define an organization arise from communication. The relationships among individual organization members are defined through communication. The key linkages and interactions among subsystems depend on communication and information flow. All the feedback processes involve communication (Daniels, Papa, & Spiker, 2008).

Argenti (2007) clearly highlighted that as companies around the world focus on retaining a contented and satisfied work force given changing values and demographics,

they have to think strategically about how the organization communicates with staffs at all levels through internal communication methods. Argenti went on to note that strong internal communications have always generated a more engaged, productive, and loyal work force. Effective communication continues to be vital for the success of all organizations and necessary to meet managers' and staffs' needs. Information allows organizations to meet their vision and goals.

### **Trust**

Trust across both horizontal (coworkers, peer groups) and vertical (leadership and subordinates) dimensions is an essential element of any high-performing organization or team. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) argue that members of high-performing teams hold themselves collectively accountable, a condition that requires trust in the individual abilities of team-members to meet their obligations. Tan and Lim (2009) define trust in coworkers as the willingness of a person to be vulnerable to the actions of fellow coworkers whose behavior they cannot control. They assert that trust between coworkers, without the power imbalance of a hierarchical relationship, directly influences the trust in organizations, which in turn, influences outcomes and performance at an organizational level. Trust in coworkers is asserted to be a function of the ability (skill, competence), benevolence (good intentions, positive orientation), and integrity (level of adherence to a set of acceptable principles) of their peers, each attributes that can be developed within teams that are committed to developing a climate of trust, leading to high performance. As an organization begins to develop a culture of trust, unbiased, timely, and relevant information begins to flow freely within an organization, which further solidifies the trusting relationship. As Bennis (2009) identifies, this free flow of information is an

essential element of understanding, responding to stakeholder needs, and for teams to function efficiently, each critical to maximizing performance and long-term corporate success. Covey (2006) elaborates that there is a “trust Tax” (p. 72) or “trust dividend” (p. 72) at play in every organization. He estimates that significant mistrust doubles the cost of doing business and triples the time it takes to get things done. The dividend to those who create trust within their teams is the inverse, with reduced cycle time and costs, significant enough to make the difference between being competitive or not.

Trust in our companies and business leaders has eroded in the past few years. The public is demanding more transparency from companies and leaders at all levels, including managers. U.S. citizens and workers tend to have a high level of trust in leaders and also have a high forgiveness factor (Covey, 2006).

An organization striving to develop a culture of trust must first assess the level of trust that exists. This intangible measure can be obtained directly, by survey, or questionnaire of individual’s behavioral components that constitute trust (e.g., reliability, sincerity, loyalty, integrity, competence). For some organizations, less direct methods such as deploying teams to evaluate the systemic organizational root causes of competitive-performance gaps (project schedule slips, quality issues, cost overruns) may provide more reliable insights into more deeply rooted issues related to organizational trust. Human Resources and Legal departments might also be able to provide summary insights on issues of trust from their internal investigations. Whatever the outcome, the level of trust both inherent and desired within each organization is unique, and is driven by the corporate, social, and environmental factors in which it operates. There has been considerable study of trust in organizations within the business literature and it has

provided an abundance of sound, simple truths and guidelines for both individuals and organizations to utilize as they strive to increase their level of trust, as identified by Bennis, Goleman, and O'toole (2008) identify eight recommendations that corporations and, in particular, corporate leadership can apply to develop a culture of trust and candor. Covey (2006) identifies 13 similar behaviors that managers and staffs must actively demonstrate in a balanced manner, using both their character and competence to build a culture of trust. From a leader's perspective, honesty at the top is the first and most important step, but true and sustained organizational transformation requires a collective effort and constant vigilance. In order to support the role of the manager, we must understand the differences between the leader (manager) and follower. As Burns (1978) noted, leaders and followers may be inseparable in function, but they are not the same. Leaders take the initiative in making the leader-led connection; it is the leader who creates the links that allow communication and exchange to take place. Finally, and most important by far, leaders address themselves to followers' wants, needs, and other motivations, as well as to their own, and thus they serve as an independent force in changing the makeup of the followers' motive base through gratifying their motives.

In today's world, of all the failures in banking on Wall Street and the mortgage companies, just to name a few, trust has been severely eroded in the public and staff's eyes. Branham (2005) highlighted the need for company senior leaders to create a culture of trust and integrity that strengthens the bonds of staff engagement. While managers and every staff share this challenge, it is incumbent on senior leaders to set the tone and the example. If the bonds of trust are weak, even gifted people managers' best efforts will not be enough to attract, engage, and keep the people needed for the business to achieve its

goals. As Bennis and Nanus (2003) noted, trust is the emotional glue that binds followers and leader together. It cannot be mandated or purchased; it must be earned. Trust is the basic ingredient of all organizations; it is the lubrication that maintains the organization.

Another less encountered form of compromising trust and frankness in an organization or department is a manager who shuts down feedback through kindness and courtesy. As Bell and Cohn (2008) found, the phenomenon of the manager who shuts down staff candor through kindness and courtesy is less common but just as serious as the ranting boss who manages through scare tactics. The staff of a “loving” (p. 88) boss also experiences a powerful form of fear. It is the fear of losing the boss’s regard and affection. Somewhere in their relationship the message was never sent or received that the boss’s good feelings aren’t going to evaporate just because an staff candidly shared bad news, an unpopular idea, or problem of some kind.

### **Staff Morale**

According to Bowles and Cooper (2009), morale measurement has been around a long time. That means plenty of time has passed for the meaning of this word to be transformed, for it to be used in many different settings, for new ideas and words to emerge that challenge its usefulness, or create more focus on a particular aspect. They go on to define morale at work as a general psychological state of well-being.

The universal feeling is that morale and productivity go together. The higher the morale, the higher the productivity and vice versa. Though empirical verification of this statement is lacking, many research studies support the view that morale and productivity are positively related. To put it bluntly, absolute correlation between these two concepts is yet to be proved. One point is correct; that is, an increase of 40% in morale does not

necessarily result in an equal increase in productivity (Kansal & Rao, 2006).

Low morale and motivation also have an impact on variable performance that occurs when staffs are constantly faced with the demands that exceed their resources (Spiers, 2003). The numbers and demand for staff attitude surveys gives an indication that there is an interest and value in assessing both staff morale and commitment (Gennard & Graham, 2005). The importance of morale is identified throughout the literature, and key characteristics can be identified. Ranganayakulu (2005) identifies the characteristics of morale as; (a) psychological concept—it is the sum of several psychic qualities that include, courage, fortitude, resolution and confidence; (b) multidimensional concept, which is a mix of several elements such as feelings, attitudes, devotion, confidence, etc.; (c) group phenomenon—it consists of a pattern of attitudes of members of the group. It also refers to the spirit of the organization and managerial climate; (d) teamwork—it is a state of attitude of a member in a group where teamwork is a condition. Good morale is helpful in achieving teamwork. Teamwork is not always possible when morale of a group is low; (e) long-term condition—this refers to the rate of balance and health within an organization. It must be viewed from a long-term vantage point. Raising morale among persons or groups is possible in the long-run and cannot be achieved in the short-run by one short action; (f) high or low—as with health, morale varies and is expressed in terms of degree, say high or low. High morale is a hallmark of sound climate. Low morale is indicated by inefficiency, waste, indiscipline, disputes, confrontations, etc.; (g) different from motivation—the effects of morale and motivation are similar. Morale and motivation are different conceptually. Morale describes a state of complex attitudes and feelings about work situations whereas motivation is a function of

wants and needs. Motivation refers to mobilization of energy and morale is treated as “mobilization of sentiments” (p. 165).

### **Manager-Staff Relations and Retention**

The impact of transformational leadership on commitment, involvement, loyalty, and satisfaction are well documented. Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that transformational leadership clearly affects the performance of work groups and organizations; transformational leadership’s strongest effects seem to be on followers’ attitudes and their commitment to the leader and the organization. Moreover, it may be that it is the extraordinary commitment of followers of transformational leaders that underlies the exceptional performance of many groups. Schein (2004) states that a group or team’s shared assumption concerning what symbolically and actually is defined as a reward or punishment constitute some of the most important elements of an emerging culture in a new organization. Schein also advocates that change in the reward and punishment system is one of the quickest and easiest ways to begin to change some elements of an organization’s culture. An organization seeking to improve its performance and value creation must carefully assess how it utilizes staff incentives and rewards to drive a culture of excellence. Unintended, often suboptimizing results can easily occur if practices are not clearly thought out in terms of the behaviors and cultures they will create across an organization.

Staff motivation in the workplace remains fundamentally governed by the more generalized human motivational theory Maslow, Herzberg, and McGregor applied to an increasing diversity of human perspectives across widening generational demographics and individual needs. Hewlett, Sherbin, and Sumberg, (2009) studied the motivational



differences across our increasing multigenerational work forces, with boomers and their Gen-Y children. This study illustrates some practical recognition preferences that leaders may use to tailor incentive programs to their teams. The intense and increasing work-force variability means that one size of reward-incentive certainly does not fit all. An organization must first and foremost understand the personal motivations of its human capital, and clearly understand the desired effects, business strategy, and cultural shifts its incentive programs should drive. Understanding the motivational status and needs of the individuals within an organization can be fairly easily ascertained via survey or interview. These surveys will typically assess key aspects of overall motivation such as staff engagement, satisfaction, and commitment, along with some inquiry to what motivates each staff specifically. This must then be blended with an understanding of the unstated organizational norms of behavior (known patterns of behavior proved to be successful) that directly affect motivation within an organization. These organizational unwritten norms may require trained organizational development consultancy support to extract and articulate them.

Incentive-reward alternatives available to organizations are widespread and include elements such as scope and type of work assignments, assignment to special teams, promotion and formal position, physical work environment (larger corner office), personal and public recognition, special privileges (e.g., the ability to attend a conference), and the more conventional direct economic incentives (salary and bonus pay). Some staffs might additionally value and be rewarded by time off to perform community service, flexible schedules, and the knowledge and ability to work on programs with a focus on improving the environment. A plan for motivating a team of

senior and longtime staffs within today's difficult economic environment may shift its focus back to Maslow basics—simple elements that reassure key individuals and teams of job stability, rather than any monetary incentive. A few years ago, during a talent war, incentives and rewards at these same firms may have had a very different focus (Schein, 2004).

It does appear that barring special situations, high-performing, value-creating teams do tend to differentiate themselves in the types of motivational incentives and rewards they seek. High-performing teams are characterized by a culture of organizational agility, with the ability to sense quickly and respond; to unfreeze, adapt, and change; and rebuild new norms of behavior required for maximum innovation and performance. As Schein (2004) indicates, members of such teams must have a willingness to be concerned for the organization above and beyond the self, and to communicate dedication or commitment to the group above and beyond self-interest. This would advocate a more Theory-Y or self-actualized view of the individuals participating within these workgroups. Bolman and Deal (2008) documented several case studies of high-performing teams at Data General and Cisco, where “All personnel are driven by the desire to be part of a winning organization” (p. 187).

Classical motivational theory has been augmented by modern brain science research, which has identified four basic emotional needs or drives that motivate all people. The results of this Nohria, Groysberg, and Lee (2008) study liken these emotional needs to an organizational lever and give some specific examples of actions that can be used to operate these levers. The needs are our drive to acquire, drive to bond, drive to comprehend, and drive to defend. The authors advocate that we need to address all four

needs in concert to engage fully our staffs. Nohria et al. also identify that an immediate manager has just as much impact as the organization in determining staff motivation and fulfilling staff drive. The belief is that staffs strongly feel that a manager has control over how company processes are interpreted and implemented within his or her sphere of influence. Allen and Wilburn (2002) focused on the need to understand that the staff's overall relationship with his or her immediate supervisor is often strongly related to his or her overall staff satisfaction. Murray, Poole, and Jones (2005) argued that regardless of the controversy surrounding staff satisfaction-performance relationship that some researchers debate, job satisfaction is an important aspect of staff well being and, as such, deserves management and leadership's attention.

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1993) found in their extensive review of literature, the concept of "staff-centered supervision" (p. 10). They noted that the idea has grown that a supervisor is successful to the degree to which he focuses on the needs of his subordinates as individuals rather than the goals of production. This continued to be reflected throughout the research. Kurtz and Boone (2009) continue to emphasize that staff motivation is the key to effective management. They also noted that high morale is a sign of a well-managed organization because the workers' attitudes toward their jobs affect the quality of their work. In addition, it was found that high morale comes from an organization's understanding of human needs and its success at satisfying those needs in ways that reinforce organizational goals. As Manning and Curtis (2003) noted, the task of leadership is to manage morale. They found that by adhering to the following proven tips for being an effective leader, the leader can keep morale high and performance up in the work group and organization: (a) be predictable, (b) be understanding, (c) be enthusiastic,

(d) set the example, (e) show support, (f) get out of the office, (g) keep promises, (h) praise generously, (i) hold your fire, and (j) always be fair. Cook (2008) identified key learning points for managers and leaders, which include when senior managers become directly and actively involved in the listening process and empower staffs to act on recommendations, engagement levels rise; it is useful to hold senior managers accountable for staff involvement activities by building this into their objectives; and providing training to managers in communication skills and facilitation techniques can help improve their ability to involve staff and others.

One of the key elements that managers can impact directly is staff engagement. This is the source of behaviors that can be both profitable or costly because they influence the quality of interactions with customers. Staffs who are strongly engaged with their organizations are better able to involve emotionally a customer and create strong connections with a customer. It is important to note that customers do not have interactions with an abstraction such as an organization. They have interactions with people, one-on-one; that is, staffs who are pleasant and helpful or the opposite (Bardwick, 2008). As Drucker (as cited in Levoy, 2007, p. 1) said, "Of all the decisions a manager makes, none are as important as the decision about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organization". The manager also has a key role in staff relations. Hannaway and Hunt (1992) emphasized that there is always a potential conflict between organizational goals and the personal goals and expectations of individual members of a department or work area. It was noted that if this is not resolved, staff relation challenges and difficulties will develop. These types of difficulties might result in poor performance, in increases in absenteeism and staff turnover, and also in

dysfunctional behavior among various team members. Staff relations management is, therefore, a part of all managers' jobs.

The manager's role continues to be noted as a key when it comes to meeting the needs of the frontline staffs and retaining staff. Meeting the needs of the frontline staff influences how well the organization will achieve its vision and goals. Barker and Angelopulo (2007) found that all organizations have the potential to experience growth and develop. The choice of a best management approach within them lies with management. Although many organizations still have a pyramid shape, with the major authority situated at the top, the difference between bureaucracy and humanism lies primarily with the management and its communication styles. Barker and Angelopulo also highlighted that organizational structures, which are controlled by the organization's management approach, has a direct affect on staffs.

Meister and Willyerd (2010) illuminated that all the major elements that define the 2020 workplace are already in play. Future new staffs, whom they call Generation 2020, are in their middle school years. The technologies that will define the 2020 workplace are in design stages. Emerging large-scale economies are rapidly entering as major forces. The workplace of tomorrow is being shaped today, driven primarily by globalization, the introduction of new ways of working, the use of emerging technologies, and shifting workplace demographics. Meister and Willyerd go on to note that the best companies are already preparing their strategies to win the quest for top talent. The 2020 workplace will be defined by this acute vision—20/20-vision with regard to recruiting strategies, customizable staff development and benefits, agile leadership, and the power of social networks. All of these are essential to engaging the

workforce and retaining the best staff needed to meet the challenges in this new global economy.

One of the key essentials for all organizations and businesses around the world as stated, continues to be the need to invest in staffs and truly acknowledge they are one of the key assets to any organization. Nandan Nilekani, (as cited in Jackson, Schuler, & Werner 2012, p. 192) former Chief Executive Officer of Infosys, said, “Our people are our capital. The more we invest in them, the more they can be effective” . It is incumbent upon all managers to meet the needs of the frontline staff who are on the cutting edge and meeting the needs of customers in all settings.

Brandon (2001) describes “The Age of the Disposable Staff” (p. 20), when many companies, starting in the late 1980s and continuing through the mid-1990s, tried to become lean, mean machines by cutting jobs, downsizing, reorganizing, and ostracizing staffs. We have seen a resurgence of this way of thinking in the last couple years, but not to the degree of the 1980s and 1990s. As Brandon outlined, companies need to recruit indispensable staffs and consider a few of these future strategic issues for managers and how they handle them: (a) plan for labor shortages (succession planning and forecasting); (b) articulate the changing staff-employer contract; (c) incorporate the contingency work force-telecommuters; (d) help manage diversity-globalization issues; (e) Move workers from specialists to generalists; (f) instill an attitude of lifelong learning to keep a job; (g) reward performance without necessarily providing job advancement; (h) become more flexible and help staffs balance work, family, and personal life; (i) managers need to become mentors and career coaches while realizing that staffs will fly from the nest; (j) build a global workforce and understand the needs of domestic and international workers;

and (k) cultivating school-to-work partnerships

### **Emotional Intelligence**

We continue to learn that if managers treat staffs with fairness and respect and foster their sense of teamwork, staffs reward them with increased commitment and higher productivity (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). Emotional intelligence is defined as one's ability to detect and manage emotional cues and information. It is composed of five dimensions: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) self-motivation, (d) empathy, and (e) social skills (Robbins & Judge, 2008). Emotional intelligence, with its five dimensions, has been identified as playing an important role in job performance. One illuminating study looked at the successes and failures of 11 U.S. presidents. It was found that the key quality that differentiated the successful from the unsuccessful was emotional intelligence. Evidence continues to mount indicating that successful high-performing organizations have an increased degree of emotional intelligence. This is demonstrated in feedback from the interactions with staffs, managers, executives, customers, and vendors who interact with the corporation. The behavioral descriptions of emotional intelligence can best be demonstrated and observed by the five basic emotional and social competencies of Goleman (1998): (a) self-awareness: knowing what we are feeling in the moment and using those preferences to guide our decision making; having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and well-being grounded sense of self-confidence; (b) self-regulation: handling our emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals; recovering well from emotional distress; (c) motivation: using our deepest preferences to move and guide us toward our goals, to help us take initiative and strive to improve, and persevere

in the face of setbacks and frustrations; (d) empathy: sensing what people are feeling, being able to take their perspective, and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people; (e) social skills: handling emotions in relationships well and accurately reading social situations and networks; interacting smoothly; using these skills to persuade and lead, negotiate, and settle disputes for cooperation and teamwork.

Leaders with a high degree of emotional intelligence demonstrate self-motivation with the ability to persist in the face of setbacks and failures, show their empathy and sense how others are feeling, and are highly effective in social skills, which enable them to handle the emotions of others in the company. In general, the measures of emotional intelligence are diverse, and researchers have not subjected them to rigorous study as much as they have measures of personality and general intelligence. Emotional intelligence appears to be highly correlated with measures of personality and, especially, emotional stability. However, there hasn't been enough research on whether emotional intelligence adds insight beyond measures of personality and general intelligence in predicting job performance (Robbins & Judge, 2008). As Goleman noted, emotional intelligence can be tracked by the success in company business performance, as demonstrated by elements of high staff satisfaction, low turnover, high retention, and low vacancy rates.

Buckingham and Coffman (1999) highlighted the manager's role in facilitating actions when he noted, in a sense, the manager role is the catalyst role. As with all catalysts, the manager's function is to speed up the reaction between two substances, thus creating the desired end product. Specifically, the manager creates performance in each staff by speeding up the reaction between the staff's talents and the customers' needs.



When hundreds of managers play this role well, the company becomes strong, one staff at a time. Bass and Bass (2008) highlighted the importance of understanding the manager's purpose, which requires consideration of the planning, organizing, and controlling functions of the manager for whom supervision and leadership might often be the most important but not the only aspect of his or her responsibilities. In addition, Bass and Bass noted there is an overlap between managing and leading. This overlap is seen most clearly when one considers the human factor and the interpersonal activities involved in managing and leading. Skill as a leader and in relating to others is the most important requirement at all levels of management. It is clearly recognized at the first level of supervision; it is not as well recognized at the top of the organization.

### **Communicating the Vision**

A vision must be effectively communicated to the frontline staff to attain understanding and develop support to achieve goals. This vision provides a sense of continuity for followers by linking the present with a better future for the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2008). The effective leader creates an agenda for change with two major elements: a vision balancing the long-term interests of key parties, and a strategy for achieving the vision while recognizing competing internal and external forces (Kotter, 1988). A related characteristic explicit in some of the leadership studies (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) and implicit in others is the ability to communicate vision effectively, often through the use of symbols (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The vision in a high-performing organization would be clearly articulated and demonstrate a link with a better future for the organization. Once the vision is established, the leader communicates high-performance expectations and expresses confidence that followers can attain them. This

enhances follower self-esteem and self-confidence. In addition, the leader conveys, through words and actions, a new set of values and, by his or her behavior, sets an example for followers to imitate (Robbins & Judge, 2008). Vision can be measured against other high-performing organizations to determine if it is clear and definitive. In addition, a vision can be evaluated to determine the level of understanding and buy-in among all individuals at all levels who will need to support and deliver on the vision. This also confirms how well the vision has been articulated within the company as well as to those outside the company who interact with the organization on a regular basis. In major studies done on leadership, no characteristic is universal, but vision and focus show up most often. Effective leaders help articulate a vision, set standards for performance, and create focus and direction (Bolman & Deal, 2008). All of the cultural factors can be benchmarked against other successful high-performing companies to determine the level of compliance and to what degree these are a part of the company foundation.

In their list of competencies for leadership, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) identified inspiration as one of the traits of a leader who both creates resonance and moves people with a compelling vision or shared mission. Such leaders embody what they ask of others and are able to articulate a shared mission in a way that inspires others to follow. They offer a sense of common purpose beyond the day-to-day tasks, making work exciting. De Vries, Roe, and Taillieu (1998) developed and validated a scale of Need for Supervision that can differentiate between conditions when staffs need to be supervised and conditions when they do not. Porter (as cited in Bass and Bass, 2008) found that supervisors do make a difference in staffs' sense of equity in the workplace

and are more important than issues of pay and long working hours. The Gallup Organization (1995, 1998) Workplace Audit, administered to two million staffs in 61 countries and supported by focus groups, identified five statistical factors associated with high-quality work environments. Two of these factors were one's immediate supervisor and the overall leadership in the firm.

Becker (1992) noted that compared with their commitment to the organization, staffs' commitment to their supervisors and to top management was more highly related to their job satisfaction, their intention not to quit, and their prosocial behavior. In addition, Becker, Billings, Eveleth, Gilbert (1996) demonstrated that staffs' commitment to their supervisors was more strongly associated with the staffs' performance than was their commitment to the organization. For too long, managers have seen emotions at work as noise cluttering the rational operation of organizations. However, the time for ignoring emotions as irrelevant to business has passed. What organizations everywhere need is to realize the benefits of primal leadership by cultivating leaders who generate the emotional resonance that lets people flourish (Goleman et al., 2002).

The changing economic climate and the movement to a global economy are changing the relationship between employer and staff. As Cappelli (1999) emphasized, most companies' attempts to draw up a new contract represent wishful thinking. Their managers seek simply to lower the expectations of staffs by limiting the employer's obligations on job security and career development, the dreaded employability doctrine that pushes responsibility for careers onto staffs while assuming that most other aspects of the relationship, including high levels of staff performance, will continue. In fact, virtually every aspect of employment changes when the market governs this relationship.

This change demands a strong, honest, and open relationship between the manager and staff.

If staffs are to be effective in a competitive environment, they need to have excellent information on customers, on internal processes, and on the financial consequences of their decisions (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Companies pour large amounts of money into communication, but yet not into staff communication. Advertising usually gets the most significant share of the budget allocated to communication. Advertising creates awareness of a company's products or services, leading targeted customers to differentiate those products from what the competition offers. It creates brand, which is generally defined as the way someone feels about a company or its offers. However, the fact is, media relations efforts or any of the other kinds of communication will not succeed if staffs don't understand and agree with the messages the company is delivering, and act accordingly (Holtz, 2004). Staffs need effective communication to feel a part of the organization and to feel valued. They also want to be asked for their input and to be heard.

One of the challenges to leadership is to see staff engagement as a way of management or as a philosophy that influences the way managers and supervisors exercise a more inclusive style of decision making. Staffs work in small spaces called teams and their world of work is largely dictated by the habits and beliefs of their manager or supervisor (Smythe, 2007). This emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the manager-supervisor and frontline staff. The staff members rely on manager-supervisor communication to give them a clear understanding of the organizational changes, goals, and philosophy. Cook (2008) also found that the style of

leadership senior managers at the top of the organization demonstrated in turn influences managers' behaviors throughout the organization. Leadership is also the driver of the organization's vision, strategy, and values. These in turn influence policies and processes as well as management behavior, communication, and teamwork.

### **Key Characteristics**

Managers have to have characteristics of leadership such as the ability to motivate subordinates to be successful in their roles. The Path-Goal theory, as Northouse (2010) described, focuses on the underlying assumption that is derived from expectancy theory, which suggests that subordinates will be motivated if they think they are capable of performing their work, if they believe their efforts will result in a certain outcome, and if they believe that the payoffs for doing their work are worthwhile. The manager-leader needs to use a leadership style that best meets subordinates' motivational needs. This is done by choosing behaviors that complement or supplement what is missing in the work setting. Leaders try to enhance subordinates' goal attainment by providing information or rewards in the work environment (Day & Antonakis, 2012). In addition, middle managers are crucial in strategic change. Williams (2001) noted the primary role of middle managers in strategic change is to plan, organize, and provide resources for the change effort; to coordinate ongoing logistics and actions; and to produce orderly results. Both leaders and managers are essential to successful change efforts. When the roles get confused, change efforts stumble.

Mintzberg (2004) describes managing as largely a facilitating activity in which managers have to know a lot and they have to make decisions based on that knowledge. However, especially in large organizations and those concerned with "knowledge work"

(p. 12), managers have to lead better, so that others can know better and, therefore, act better. They have to bring out the best in other people to achieve the goals of an organization. Taylor (2002) noted that it is useful for managers who are seeking an increase in their staff retention rates to take the time to understand the real drivers of turnover in their departments. The manager will be able to take the information he or she gains from identifying the drivers of turnover and develop an action plan to address the key issues that have the greatest impact on staff dissatisfaction. Then they will be able to correct those issues together with input from the staff for each area.

A Local Government Management Board study (as cited in Rees & Porter, 2008) found that management is best defined not as a limited number of “top” or “leading” (p. 8) positions, but as a set of competencies, attitudes, and qualities broadly distributed throughout the organization. Management skills are not the property of the few. Management happens at all levels of an organization in a formal manner and also with informal leaders, who many times have a significant amount of influence that can have an impact on staff morale and turnover.

Great managers also have high levels of emotional intelligence. Buckingham (2005) identified that great managers know and value the unique abilities and even the eccentricities of their staffs, and they learn how best to integrate them into a coordinated plan of attack. Managers also understand the motivators in their subordinates at many levels. They realize, as Pfeffer (1998) stated, “People do work for money but they work even more for meaning in their lives” (p. 98). In fact, they work to have fun. Companies that ignore this are essentially bribing staffs and will pay the price in a lack of loyalty and commitment.

Successful organizations need a sense not just of where they are, but of where they are heading. This demands a subtle appreciation for human relations and awareness that manipulating sociability on one hand and solidarity on the other involves very different challenges (Goffee & Jones, 1996). Managers need to have open communication and support from leaders. As Agarwal (1982) identified, a manager acquires power of sanctions from the authority that he has in relation to his subordinates. He may also acquire and use his power of expertise, referent power arising out of the will of subordinate to identify with his superior, and power arising out of the leadership abilities and human relations skills. It is well noted that the most influential leaders in private companies, public sectors, and even world politics are the ones with human relations skills. Walker (2002) highlighted the need for organizations to support their new managers by helping them to develop the skills of delegating, thinking strategically, and communicating. These skills will have surprising advantages over the competition. The importance of investing in and educating managers is important for all companies. Griffin (2003) also identified this, stating that prospective managers fall short because companies don't recognize the degree to which personal characteristics, ideologies, or behaviors affect an individual's ability to lead. The truth is, people don't check their individuality at the door before leaping into the great corporate melting pot, nor do they all fit a single leader-in-training profile. Managers need the support of leaders to enhance their education and learning opportunities. The traditional theory of management is that at each organizational level, managers play similar roles and have similar responsibilities, only for a different size of scope and activities (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1997). The current thinking is beginning to acknowledge a clearer understanding and appreciation of the

manager role and the impact and influence it has on the company and many levels, which can be both positive and negative. As Argyris (1991) pointed out, the key to any educational experience designed to teach managers how to reason productively is to connect the program to real business problems. The best is for busy managers to see how training can make a direct difference in their own performance and in that of the organization. This will not happen overnight. Managers need plenty of opportunity to practice the new skills. Once they grasp the powerful impact that productive reasoning can have on performance, they will have a strong incentive to reason productively, not just in a training session, but in all their work relationships. The importance of managers having the skill and talent to translate knowledge into actionable items for implementation is necessary for the success of all organizations. Shipper and Davy (2002) noted that a complex set of relationships exists among self and other's attitudes and managerial performance. These relationships and perceptions many times are key for the frontline staff and continue to influence staff morale and job satisfaction. Turning knowledge into action, on which Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) focused, underscored that organizational performance often depends more on how skilled managers turn knowledge into action than on knowing the right thing to do. Knowledge and information are obviously crucial to performance. Establishing learning goals for leadership and management to develop strategies and processes to enhance the desired results in communicating with frontline staff can prove invaluable (Seijts & Latham, 2005).

Kurtz and Boone (2009) outlined how Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, goal setting, job design, and manager's attitudes have an influence on staff motivation. Staff motivation starts with good staff morale. Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs theory states that



all people have basic needs (physiological and safety) that they must satisfy before they can consider higher order needs (social, esteem, and self-actualization). Goal-setting theory, job enlargement, and job enrichment are three ways managers can motivate staffs and satisfy various levels of needs. In addition, they noted that the managers' attitudes can also affect staff motivation. As the quality of an staff in the form of a knowledge worker has become a key competitive advantage in the current business scenario, retaining staffs who add significant value to the organization has become a key challenge. Staff retention not only ensures the continuous availability of the required manpower, but it also reduces the cost that is associated with recruitment, selection, placement, induction, and training (Ghuman, 2010).

Schein (2004) found that it is essential for organizations to develop some consensus on what their assumptions are regarding human variability in staffs, because management strategies and practices reflect those assumptions. Both the incentive and control systems in most organizations are built on assumptions about human nature, and if organization managers do not share those assumptions, inconsistent practices and confusion will result. It is also important for managers to understand what motivates staffs and the importance of focusing on the individual human needs. Price (2011) outlined that different people had their own ways of performing effectively; they worked more efficiently when allowed to vary their own working methods. It was also clear that money was not the sole motivator for the majority of working individuals; the social relations between workers influenced their attitude toward the job and their own productivity. Staffs are human beings and should be treated as such.

## **Learning**

In the competitive global economy, the importance of educating a company's workforce continues to grow. In addition to meeting the needs of the corporation, it is an staff satisfier, which makes the individual staff feel as if his or her company and manager values him or her enough to invest in training and education. Closer alignment between training and desired competencies leads to workers who become more competent and capable in the workplace. Competencies can be developed to suit specific organizational needs, thereby increasing the relevance of training to staffs (Holton, Coco, Lowe, & Dutsch, 2006). The key role in assessing learning and designing training many times falls to the manager in most organizations. The identification of stated competences can be conducted by a single manager, a group of managers, a cross-sectional group of managers, or through a participatory approach. Regardless of the manner in which the competencies are determined, ensuring that the competencies reflect the desired outcomes of the organization is imperative.

Within an organization, competencies are directly tied to critical outcomes (Ricciardi, 2005). As with breathing, learning is a normal function of living, and learning can be hindered by inadequate activities and impaired resources or enhanced by appropriate activities and adequate resources (Mackeracher, 2004). High-performing organizations exhibit effective and open communication.

In today's economic environment, there is added focus on having a return on investment for all aspects of a company, and educational programs for staffs are not exempt. The evaluator must determine how effective the program is in teaching skills and

knowledge and in ensuring those skills and knowledge are transferred to the participants' work environment. The challenge is to design instruments for measuring learning and job performance and to analyze the data acquired from these instruments in a comprehensive yet practical way (Hodges, 2002).

One example of measurement is outlined in the following format. The evaluation process starts with the needs assessment, which produces the clear definition for the program objectives. Then in a formative evaluation component, a prototype program undergoes the rigors of usability engineering and quality-assurance testing. For instructor-led programs, designers check the program material to ensure it meets established standards. Then a summative evaluation, which includes reaction evaluation in which the evaluator determines if the participants were satisfied with the learning event, a learning evaluation to determine the extent to which the program has met its learning objectives, and a performance evaluation to determine the extent to which the program has met its performance objectives. This evaluation determines the extent to which program participants have been able to apply or transfer the knowledge gained, or skills acquired, to the job; impact evaluation determines the degree to which the program has met its business objectives and the degree to which the clients' expectations have been met (Hodges, 2002). Just as learning initiatives must include the various stakeholders, so too must the evaluation effort include the organization stakeholders. In essence, the training function must be a business partner in the organization in order to deliver successfully its products.

The comprehensive training measurement will provide for a closer link to the organization's strategic goals and initiatives. Measurement will also allow line managers

to see the results as well as the potential from training efforts, and this will lend itself to stronger partnerships (Phillips & Stone, 2002).

The reason for evaluating is to determine a training program's effectiveness. When the evaluation is done, we can hope that the results are positive and gratifying, both for those responsible for the program and for upper-level managers who will make decisions based on the program evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Organizational learning is a process of detecting and correcting errors. Single-loop learning is a process organizations use to correct matters in order to achieve stated objectives. In double-loop learning, problems are examined and corrected even though corrections challenge underlying policies and objectives. When policy or objectives are not questioned, organizational behavior might camouflage errors. Organizational games and norms prevent people from speaking out (Argyris, 1977). The role of training is increasingly a shared responsibility among managers, staffs, and trainers to identify and ensure the development of new skills that enhance staff involvement (Charney & Conway, 2005).

### **Nonfinancial Performance Measures**

Mauboussin (2012) noted that companies also use nonfinancial performance measures, such as product quality, workplace safety, customer loyalty, staff satisfaction, and a customer's willingness to promote a product. Ittner and Larcker (as cited in Mauboussin, 2012) found that most companies have made little attempt to identify areas of nonfinancial performance that might advance their chosen strategy. Nor have they demonstrated a cause-and-effect link between improvements in those nonfinancial areas and in cash flow, profit, or stock price. The researchers suggest that at least 70% of the

companies they surveyed didn't consider nonfinancial measures persistence or its predictive value. Nearly a decade later, most companies still fail to link cause and effect in their choice of nonfinancial statistics.

The nonfinancial measures continue to be used and typically remain as internal measures or metrics at the departmental levels. Staff turnover and staff morale are sometimes measured via turnover data, but the cost of turnover isn't usually budgeted or planned for as an expense on an annual basis. Staff morale, which has a direct impact on productivity and turnover, can be identified in a satisfaction survey, attendance patterns, or low productivity, but the correlation and cost to the company is only identified on a limited basis. There can be significant pressure for managers and supervisors to improve these measures, but there isn't a clear linkage to the goals and strategic plan in terms of financial outcomes for a company. Kaplan and Norton (1996) noted that the staff satisfaction objective recognizes that most organizations considered staff morale and overall job satisfaction highly important. Satisfied staffs are a precondition for increasing productivity, responsiveness, quality, and customer service. They also found that staff morale is especially important for many service businesses where, frequently, the lowest-paid and lowest-skilled staffs interact directly with customers. Koontz and Weihrich (2008) continue to note the importance; The selection and hiring of new staff involve manager time and have a cost associated with making these personnel decisions. It is key to identify factors such as advertising expenses, agency fees, cost of test materials, time spent in interviewing candidates, costs for reference checks, medical exams, start-up time required for the staff to get acquainted with the job, relocation, and new staff orientation. They went on to note that when recruiting costs are recognized, it becomes evident that

staff turnover can be very expensive.

Retaining an adequate and qualified work force is a prerequisite for a well-functioning organization, but it is sometimes difficult to realize when conditions such as a good economic situation, a tight labor market, and an aging work force tend to increase turnover. For these reasons, attention paid to staff job satisfaction might prevent future staff shortages and might even cut costs (van Saane, Slulter, Verbeek, & Frings-Dresen, 2003). Meyer (2002) highlighted that the dissatisfaction with current corporate measurement systems or scorecards has to do with the ongoing search for nonfinancial financial performance predictors: “Yesterday’s accounting results say nothing about the factors that actually help grow market share and profits, things like customer service innovation, R&D, effectiveness, the percent of first time quality, and staff development” (p. 1).

Staff satisfaction continues to be noted as a nonfinancial measure that has an impact on customer service and productivity. As Gabarro (1991) found that gaining an staff’s satisfaction with rewards is not a simple matter. Rather, staff satisfaction is a function of several factors that organizations must learn to manage: (a) the individual’s satisfaction with rewards is, in part, related to what is expected and how much is received. Feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction arise when individuals compare their input, job skills, education, effort, and performance with output and the mix of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards they receive; and (b) staff satisfaction is also affected by comparisons with other people in similar jobs and organizations. In effect, staffs compare their own input and output ratio with that of others.

Evans and Jack (2003) found that process performance is correlated significantly

with staff satisfaction as a dependent variable and noted product quality and market performance as an independent variable. Staff satisfaction is driven by process performance and product quality. They noted that staff satisfaction, work systems improvements, and process performance drive product quality. Product quality was noted to drive customer satisfaction and financial performance.

The study focuses on health care, communications, and retail companies that are diverse companies and have different delivery models for their services to consumers. Consumers continue to look for value from all three types of these companies and all three know they have to have a strong focus on customer service to stay competitive in the open market. These types of companies were chosen for this study because the work force for each of these companies provides a diverse range of staff demographics, including gender, age, educational levels, work experience, and commitment to customer service.

### **Health Care**

Health care faces its own distinctive challenges in the economic recession in addition to the challenges health care reform presents. The increasing demand for services is closely related to increasing numbers of older people in the population. A combination of rapid expansion, high staff turnover, and an increasingly ageing work force has contributed to significant projected staff shortfalls of registered professionals and other staff in countries such as the U.S. (Walshe & Smith, 2011). The shortages of qualified health care workers continue, and Buchbinder and Shanks (2012) identified that any strategy that improves nursing staff retention saves the organization the costs of expensive supplemental outside resources such as agency or traveler nurses, replacing

lost nurses and training new ones, as well as the loss of productivity from burdening the remaining staff.

Health care organizations are human resource intensive organizations. A very large portion of revenue is spent on people, far in excess of the proportion in most other industry sectors. How well these resources are managed and how efficiently they are employed determine service efficiency. The reduction in staff turnover, increased activity, optimized cooperation, and goal achievement all lead to more and better patient care. The importance of achieving this human resources efficiency is an ethical imperative. Leaders and managers have a personal duty to enable maximum, harmonious performance for the benefit of the consumer-patient (Wheeler & Grice, 2000). As in other industries and businesses, Burns, Bradley, and Weiner, (2012) found that to improve productivity, management must attend to a new set of considerations beyond monetary incentives and top-down control. They identified that managers must instead understand the informal organization of workers (groups, group sentiments, team work), the need of workers to be listened to and participate in the design of their work (participation and self-governance), and the importance of morale and satisfaction as worker effort motivators.

Communication with staff continues to be key in any organization and is just as important in health care organizations. Goldsmith (2005) noted that the ability of a manager to interpret information received from staff was probably one of the most critical activities associated with processing. An effective manager does not simply react to what is said, but rather attempts to understand what is meant by what is said. This skill in communication can be developed and is invaluable to a manager. Managers must also



be in tune to the signs of low morale in health care organizations. High absenteeism might also be a symptom of other problems such as job dissatisfaction, tension at work, and low morale. No matter what the reason, absenteeism is a costly and disruptive problem facing managers. When an staff is absent, it disrupts the workflow, and the quantity and quality of output is likely to decline (Muller, Bezuidenhout, & Jooste, 2006). In addition, informal communication is an effective avenue of spreading information to staff within an organization. According to Gurbutt (2011), informal communication flows between networks. This is via staff alliances and relationships that transcend formal structures and operate outside them. The grapevine or rumor mill is often grounded in uninformed analysis rather than evidence, but none-the-less an important system of communication.

### **Retail**

The retail business also has identified its indirect costs and is beginning to put more focus on them. Wrice (2004) highlighted that there can be no dispute that staff injuries, ill-health, and deaths represent the greatest insurance cost to management. On top of these direct costs, loss of morale and loss of productivity are two key contributors to this added expense. In addition, these costs are uninsured and are covered by the company or the individual worker. This reminds managers of the need to address staff satisfaction and any impacts on staff morale to avoid potential absenteeism and reduced productivity. As Lincoln and Lashley (2003) noted, staff turnover continues to be a contentious issue in the licensed retail industry. Many managers see the process of staff leaving and being replaced as a natural and inevitable feature of retail industry employment. Provided they can continue to recruit people when needed, this is “just the

way things are” (p. 97). It is common practice for many retail organizations to keep no record of the number of staff members who leave and are replaced, and it is rarer still for organizations to cost staff turnover, or value the benefits of staff retention.

Lincoln and Lashley (2003) also found an increasing number of managers in large licensed retail organizations beginning to recognize labor turnover as both being costly and creating operational difficulties, particularly when trained or frontline staff leave the business. They also argued that staff turnover represents a considerable additional cost to the retail business, which managers can reduce. The organization and top leaders need to understand the causes and costs of staff turnover and the value of staff retention.

A Blake (2000) study for the Coca Cola company found that the annual cost of staff turnover in the supermarket industry exceeds the entire industry’s annual profit by more than 40%. The cost is hard to manage for many companies in part because, unlike other supermarket costs, it does not show on the profit and loss statement. The study outlined two key areas on which supermarket retailers should focus to address their high turnover rates: (a) the ability to estimate quickly their company’s turnover costs to see the size of the opportunities, and (b) actions to take that will increase staff retention and reduce staff turnover.

As Dunne, Lusch, and Carver (2011) were able to identify, just hiring the right staffs and attracting the best customers is not enough. The retailer must prepare programs for training staffs to meet current or future job requirements. Staffs feel empowered and maintain higher job satisfaction when they have the knowledge required to do the job. Lashley (2000) noted that the crucial point for improving communication is that a shared mutual understanding is one of the foundations for developing trust and loyalty.

Managers must understand the need to keep staffs informed and to build these mutually trusting relationships.

There is a significant connection between staff satisfaction and customer satisfaction. How staffs feel about their individual job and the company they work for is reflected in their customers' interactions. McNealy (1998) noted that the empowerment of frontline, customer contact staffs for achieving customer satisfaction represents the second highest point total in the Category Seven (Customer Satisfaction) in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. The developers and proponents of this prestigious award recognized the incredible impact these individuals can have in customer "Moments of Truth" (p. 141). Federal Express Chairman and CEO Frederick W. Smith stated, "Customer Satisfaction begins with staff satisfaction" (as cited in McNealy, 1998, p. 141). Staffs are the primary focus of the company's people, service, and profit philosophy for which quantifiable measures are set each year and on which bonuses depend if these objective are achieved.

McNealy (1998) also highlighted two other retailers who understand the need for staff satisfaction to be able to deliver consistent customer satisfaction. L.L. Bean and Harry and David are both mail-order catalogue and retail store organizations that have been a successful part of American and International shopping practices for more than 70 years. Both organizations' founders focused on customer satisfaction and they survived the Great Depression by intensifying this customer focus. In recent years, both companies have survived the significant recession in the 21st century.

### **Communications**

Armstrong and Brown (2006) identified that considerable attention has been

devoted to rewarding and motivating knowledge workers, but much less advice and research is evident for the rapidly expanding and larger population of frontline customer service staff. However, the job of answering the phones in a call center might be less complex and less well paid than that of an individual developing software and systems that support them. In addition, Armstrong and Brown identified a rise of the service economy, which has seen the emergence of flatter structures and large numbers of frontline customer service staff that are critical to the delivery of organizations' customer-focused business strategies in a very competitive global market.

Katz (1997) noted that if management in communications companies is emulating any one model of employment practices, it is the cost-cutting and downsizing approach many communications companies around the world adopted. This approach creates enormous tensions in the employment relations, as morale declines and staffs fear even further downsizing, restructuring, or corporate mergers and acquisitions. This approach also continues in the 21st century telecommunications business.

Kerzner (2010) found that when management demonstrated visible respect for the staffs' technical expertise, morale and trust improved and it often allowed project managers to renegotiate proactively deadlines for staged deliverables.

The ongoing challenge for telecommunications in the 21st century is the rapid growth, constant mergers and acquisitions, and job stability uncertainty. This creates a consistent level of stress that impacts morale and staff (Madden, 2003). Leaders in communications have typically focused on fast growth and profits. Cook (2008) highlighted that most leaders buy in intellectually to the notion that they need to promote well-being, inform, promote fairness, and involve staff. However, a meaningful dialogue

about where they need to change and grow can only begin if they reflect on their personal actions in these areas.

In the 21st century, there is a different mind-set among all staffs and workers at various levels in companies. As Stahl (2004) noted, the changing nature of the employment relationship affects staff turnover. During the past decade, commitment to the employment relationship has eroded. The focus for employers in the “new” (p. 170) workplace is “What can you do to earn your keep today?” (p. 170). Conversely, staffs tend to focus more on advancing their self-interests and careers, even if it means switching jobs frequently. This new mind-set has intensified the challenge for all companies to manage and reduce turnover as well as retain their best staffs in a very competitive employment market.

### **Summary**

As noted throughout this literature review, the importance of the manager’s relationship with frontline staff is key to organizational performance. However, it was also noted, there continues to be a need for top leadership to understand clearly and value this relationship and provide managers with the support they need to deliver on the corporate vision, mission, and goals (Shipper & Davy 2002). The manager-staff relationship sets the tone for the frontline staff and creates an environment of trust. The communication the manager provides is pivotal to helping staffs understand the goals top leadership has established (Likert 1961, 1967). In addition, the positive atmosphere this relationship creates helps to cement staffs’ commitment to the organization and reduces the turnover rate when job satisfaction increases. The positive impact on staff morale the manager-staff relationship has is well documented in the literature.

As noted in Chapter 1, the study focuses on health care, communications, and retail industries, which are diverse companies and have different consumer services delivery models. Consumers continue to look for value from all three types of these companies and all three know they have to have a strong focus on customer service to stay competitive in the open market. These types of companies were chosen for this study because the work force for each of these companies provides a diverse range of staff demographics, including gender, age, educational levels, work experience, and commitment to customer service.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology used in this study. This dissertation focuses on the relationship between the manager and frontline staff in three different companies, representing health care, communications, and retail businesses. The purpose of the study is to determine the level of importance the manager-staff relationship has on staff morale and retention.

The study uses quantitative survey research as the strategy of inquiry to provide a comprehensive analysis of this research problem. The study utilizes a survey measure design that includes a reliable and valid survey tool to assess the defined population. This chapter details the quantitative approach used to analyze the survey tool results and includes descriptions of the sample, research participants, data collection, validity and reliability, and other procedures used throughout the study (see Appendix A: Alignment Chart).

This dissertation focuses on the relationship between the manager and frontline staff in for-profit companies. The purpose of the study is to determine the level of importance this relationship has on the morale and retention of frontline staffs.

#### **Restatement of Research Questions**

This study is designed to answer the following questions as they relate to the working relationships with frontline managers (supervisors) and staff:

Research question 1: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail business environments?

Research question 2: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers

and staff have on staff retention in health care, communications, and retail business environments?

### **Protection of Human Subjects**

The purpose of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to protect human subjects, which includes both minors (children) and adults, while conducting research. The highest forms of ethical principals must be enacted and adhered to during the complete of the study. IRB is a process that graduate students go through in order to ensure the protection of individual's rights, confidentiality, and anonymity as human subjects in a research study. The main priority is to do no harm in conducting research. The Pepperdine Graduate and Professional Schools' (GPS) IRB (2009) website states:

The primary goal of Graduate and Professional Schools' Institutional Review Board is to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in research activities conducted under the auspices of Pepperdine University.

Applications submitted to GPS IRB generally encompass social, behavioral, and educational research and are usually considered medically non-invasive. (para. 3)

The primary objective of the Pepperdine University IRB is to protect the welfare and dignity of human subjects. However, the policies and procedures manual claims, "by addressing the human subjects concerns in an applicant's proposed research, the IRB also works to protect investigators from engaging in potentially unethical research practices" (Graduate School of Psychology IRB Policy, 2009). In addition, the IRB policy states, "In the review and conduct of research, Pepperdine University is guided by the ethical principles set forth in the Belmont Report (i.e., respect the persons, beneficence, and justice)" (p. 1). The researcher will take additional safeguards to protect the rights and



privacy of human participants by completing the National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research National Institutes of Health Web-based training course Protecting Human Research Participants.

The researcher filed an expedited application along with the application for waiver or alteration of informed consent procedures with GPS IRB Manager, Dr. Doug Leigh (see Appendix B & C). Once the expedited application and alteration of informed consent were approved and modifications were made, a copy of the IRB approval letter was placed in (Appendix D).

This study is made up of questionnaires given to 25 to 50 frontline staff employed in one of the following business environments: health care, communications, and retail business. The three companies' appropriate leadership provided on-site retention data for the second research question at the time of the participant interviews. Company leadership was asked for a simple, standard percentage of staff retention for the previous 2 fiscal years. Permission to collect data has been granted by each company

The minimal risk that each participant may experience is that each individual completing the survey questionnaire must take time out of his or her schedule to do so. Any other risk would be no more than foreseeable in the average participant's day, as completing this survey simply involves completing paperwork for 10–15 minutes. (The risks have been included in the Consent Form).

The activities included on this list were eligible to be reviewed by the expedited review procedure (Not sure what this means. Consider revising.). Although these activities are not exhaustive, that they are listed does not constitute them being of minimal risk. It should be noted that the activities listed are eligible to be reviewed as

long as the circumstances of this research involves minimal risk to the participants.

### **Security of the Data**

Only the principal researcher will handle the data. The principal investigator will put all data under lock and key for 5 years after the study has taken place.

All handwritten, as well as all computer files, portable electronic drives, and notes will be kept in a safe in the researcher's home office for a period of 5 years and destroyed thereafter. Data stored in the researcher's personal computer will be transferred to an external jump drive, which will be kept in the safe as well, and then destroyed in 5 years.

The data will be kept on the researcher's personal computer in the researcher's locked home office during the questionnaire period. After all questionnaires were completed, all data were transferred to a portable jump drive and put in the safe, which will be kept in the researcher's home office for 5 years, at which time all supporting data for this analysis will be destroyed.

In compliance with IRB, the principal investigator will take the following measures to ensure confidentiality: (a) There will be no participants' names identified in the study; instead of names, each questionnaire was given a code not associated with a participant name. The consent documents will not be linked by any identifiers to the participants study questionnaire; (b) paper copies of the data files will be kept in a safe in the investigator's home office; (c) electronic statistical and quantitative data will be stored on a jump drive and accessed on the researcher's personal computer, which is password protected; (d) all information collected will be backed up on an external jump drive, which is stored in the principal investigator's home office safe when not in the principal investigator's direct control and possession; (e) only the principal investigator

will have access to the research data; (f) sensitive materials will be stored according to IRB requirements and files will be kept in safe in the principal investigator's home office for 5 years; and (g) after 5 years, the principal investigator will crosscut shred information collected in the study and destroy all electronic files using an appropriate magnet to completely erase the files. If a participant wishes to give permission to share his or her individual data, he or she will sign the consent form accordingly (see Appendix B).

Electronic statistical and quantitative data will be stored on a jump drive and on the principal investigator's personal computer, which is password protected. All information collected (computer drive, notes, and handwritten data) will be backed up on a jump drive, which is stored in the principal investigator's home office safe. Sensitive material will be stored according to IRB transcription coding sheets and files will be kept in a safe at the principal investigator's home office for 5 years. After 5 years has expired, the principal investigator will shred information collected in the study.

### **Minimizing Risks**

The principal risk to the participant is any potential harm as a result of a breach of confidentiality. Participation in this study was associated with no more than minimal risks and/or discomfort. Minimal risk is described in the GPS IRB manual as the probable harm that the activities in the research will cause the participant, which should be no greater than when performing normal activities, or when undergoing psychological or physical testing.

Risks was minimized in the following ways: (a) participants' identities and companies they worked for are known only to the researcher and were not used in this

study; (b) no specific identifying information is used or reported in any way except for staff 1 to 50 and company 1, 2, 3; (c) if the participant experienced exhaustion, fatigue, or irritability while completing the survey questionnaire, a break was provided. Participants will be clearly made aware that their participation in this study is completely voluntary. The participants had the option to discontinue the survey at any time without penalty. The researcher secured informed consent from all participants, which explained that the participants had the right to withdraw at any time, understand their participation was strictly voluntary, agree to the confidentiality measures that were taken, and are able to review the results of the study for accuracy. Last, participants were made aware of their rights and are provided with the Dissertation Chairperson Dr. Michelle Rosensitto's contact information as well as the IRB Chairperson Dr. Doug Leigh's contact information

### **Confidentiality**

Once participants agreed to participate in the study, their identities and responses will be kept confidential. The principal investigator implemented the following measures to ensure confidentiality: (a) there were no names of study participants taken or recorded on the survey questionnaires. The consent document was the only form linking the subject to the research. In order to maintain the participants' anonymity, each participant will be referred to by staff 1 to 50 and company 1, 2, and 3; (b) hard copies or data files are kept in a safe at the primary investigator's home office; (c) electronic statistical and quantitative data are stored on a jump drive and accessed on the primary investigator's personal computer, which is password protected; (d) all information collected is backed up on a separate jump drive, which is in a safe at the primary investigator's home office; (e) only the primary investigator has access to the quantitative data; (f) sensitive material

is stored according to IRB requirements and files are kept in a safe at the primary investigator's home office for 5 years; and (g) after 5 years has expired, the primary investigator will crosscut shred all information collected in the study and destroy all electronic files using an appropriate magnet.

The participants were given the informed consent prior to completing the survey questionnaire. The primary investigator reviewed the consent form with the participant to ensure clear understanding of the voluntary nature and anonymity of the research. The participant was asked to review and sign the informed consent form prior to starting the survey questionnaire (see Appendix B).

The following safeguards were employed to protect the participants' rights (Creswell, 2009): (a) the research objectives were articulated verbally and in writing so the participants clearly understand them; (b) participants were provided with principal investigator, dissertation chairperson Dr. Michelle Rosensitto, and IRB Chairperson, Dr. Doug Leigh's contact information if they had questions, comments, concerns, or complaints regarding their rights or research practices; (c) written permission to proceed will be articulated from the dean; (d) a research expedited application and application for waiver or alteration of informed consent will be filed with the IRB; (e) the participants were informed of data-collection tools such as the hard copy survey questionnaire; (f) Data reports will be made available to the participants; and (g) The participant's rights, interests, and wishes were considered when choices were made regarding reporting the data. Finally, before and during the data collection process, participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or retaliation.

## **Population Sample**

Once the protection of human subjects was ensured, as well as the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher utilized a randomized sampling method to identify 25 to 50 participants from three different companies representing health care, communications, and retail businesses in a strict voluntary method with no limiting restrictions on age or gender. The participants were frontline staffs who have no direct reports in the job or department hierarchy. The frontline staffs are from departments with more than five people and companies with more than 50 staffs. These three types of companies were chosen for this study because the work force for each of these companies provides a diverse range of staffs regarding gender, age, educational levels, work experience, and commitment to customer service.

This study used Singh's (2007) randomized sampling method. According to Singh, the main characteristics of a good sample are: (a) a good sample is the true representative of the population corresponding to its properties; (b) the population is a known aggregate of certain properties and the sample is called a subaggregate of the universe; (c) a good sample is free from bias; the sample does not permit the investigator's prejudices, preconception, or imagination to influence its choice; (d) a good sample is objective; it refers to objectivity in selecting a procedure or the absence of subjective elements in the situation; (e) a good sample maintains accuracy. It yields an accurate estimates or statistics and does not involve errors; (f) a good sample is comprehensive in nature. This feature is closely linked with true representativeness. The investigation's specific purpose controls comprehensiveness, which is a sample quality.

A sample might be comprehensive but might not be a good representation of the population. In randomized sampling (Kumar, 2011), the accuracy of one's findings largely depends upon the way the sample is selected. The basic objective of any sampling design is to minimize, within the limitation of cost, the gap between the values obtained from the sample and those prevalent in the study. Creswell (2009) notes that individuals in a random selection process have an equal probability of being selected, ensuring that the sample will be representative of the study population.

There were minimal risks in this study, as it was an investigation that did not jeopardize the participant's physical, emotional, or economic well-being. Risks were minimized in the following ways: (a) participants' identities and companies they worked for were known only to the researcher and were not used in this study; (b) no specific identifying information was used or reported in any way except for staff 1 to 50 and company 1, 2, 3; (c) if the participant experienced exhaustion, fatigue, or irritability while completing the survey questionnaire, a break was provided. (d) participants were clearly made aware that their participation in this study was completely voluntary. The participants had the option to discontinue the survey at any time without penalty.

Computer files, jump drives, and hard copy handwritten data or notes (information) will be kept in a safe in the investigator's home office where the investigator has sole access to all information from this study. The main criteria for this study's participant selection are: (a) currently employed, (b) frontline staff with no direct reports in the job or department hierarchy, (c) male or female, (d) no age restrictions, (e) staffs from departments with greater than five people, (f) a company with more than 50 staffs.

The total sample population was 50 frontline staffs from three companies, one from each of the following business environments: (a) health care, (b) communications, and (c) retail businesses. The principal investigator will look for a balance in gender and age.

### **Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion of Participants**

1. The subjects will be currently employed frontline staff in a company with more than 50 staffs.
2. Subjects will be excluded if their individual departments did not have more than five staffs.
3. Subjects will be excluded if they had direct reports (other staffs reporting to them).
4. The study will engage frontline staffs as the key population.

### **Characteristics Studied**

The Job Descriptive Index-abridged Job in General (aJIG) survey tool records various demographic characteristics, notably the staff's age, gender, years of employment, and educational level. In addition, the study looks at work relationships, job satisfaction, feelings about the job (work), motivation, morale, and leadership-manager factors.

### **Definition of Characteristics**

The definitions identify the two key individuals at this level of a company or organization who facilitate and deliver the necessary work and outcomes to achieve the organizations' vision and goals. Middle managers are crucial in strategic change. Williams (2001) noted the primary role of middle managers in strategic change is to plan,



organize, and provide resources for the change effort; to coordinate ongoing logistics and actions; and to produce orderly results. Both leaders and managers are essential to successful change efforts. When the roles get confused, change efforts stumble.

Great managers also have high levels of emotional intelligence. Buckingham (2005) identified that great managers know and value staffs' unique abilities and even eccentricities, and they learn how best to integrate them into a coordinated plan of attack.

Managers also understand the motivators in their subordinates at many levels. They realize, as Pfeffer (1998) stated, "People do work for money but they work even more for meaning in their lives" (p. 112). Managers have to have leadership characteristics such as the ability to motivate subordinates to be successful in their roles. The Path-Goal theory, as Northouse (2010) described, focuses on the underlying assumption that is derived from expectancy theory, which suggests that subordinates will be motivated if they think they are capable of performing their work, if they believe their efforts will result in a certain outcome, and if they believe that the payoffs for doing their work are worthwhile.

**Frontline Staff:** Individual staff who is directly involved in the hands-on work assignment and has no direct reports.

**Manager-Supervisor:** Individual who has responsibilities for a department or division or company service line, has one or more direct staff reports, and has responsibility to do that staff's annual performance review.

**Motivation:** An intrinsic feeling to achieve a goal or task and move forward.

### **Survey Instrument**

The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG was designed to assess overall job satisfaction

rather than facets. Its format is the same as the Job Description Index, and it contains 18 items. The total score is a combination of all items. The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG uses three response choices. For each item, respondents are asked if they agree (yes), aren't sure (?), or disagree (no). Negatively worded items are reverse-scored, and the total score is the sum of responses. The instrument focuses on areas of assessment over which the manager has direct or indirect influence and that impact the feelings and perceptions of the frontline staff.

Table 1

*The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG*

Focus Area	Response
<b>People on Your Present Job</b>	
Think of the majority of people with whom you work or meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words describe these people?	Boring Slow Responsible Smart Lazy Frustrating
<b>Job in General</b>	
Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time?	Good Undesirable Better than Most Disagreeable Makes me content Excellent Enjoyable Poor
<b>Work on Present Job</b>	
Think of the work you do. How well does each of the following words describe your work?	Fascinating Satisfying Good Exciting Rewarding Uninteresting
<b>Pay</b>	
Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your present pay?	Barely live on income Bad Well paid

	Underpaid Comfortable Enough to live on
Opportunities for Promotion	
Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these?	Good opportunities for promotion. Opportunities somewhat limited Dead-end job Good chance for promotion Fairly good chance for promotion Regular promotions
Supervision	
Think of the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe this?	Praises good work Tactful Influential Up to Date Annoying Knows job well

### Data Collection

This study used a randomized sampling method to identify 25 to 50 participants in strictly a voluntary method, with no limiting restrictions on age or gender. The sample population will be approximately 25 to 50 frontline staffs from each of the following business environments: health care, communications, and retail business. The participants will be frontline staffs with no direct reports in the job or department hierarchy. The frontline staffs will be from departments with more than five people and companies with more than 50 staffs. The individual human resources company leader of the company was asked to supply a list of staffs who were willing to participate in the survey process. A random sampling from that staff list was identified to achieve a total of 50 participants. The participants were asked to complete a 15-minute paper survey the researcher administers. An incentive to participate in the study was provided by giving the survey participant the opportunity to be randomly selected to receive a \$100 American Express

gift card, which was awarded to one individual from a random drawing of the 50 participants in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

The survey instrument that was generated for this study was the Job Descriptive Index-aJIG scale, which Bowling Green State University owns. The data will be entered into a database once the staff groups complete the surveys. For the dependent and independent variables, each participant completed the aJIG, which yielded standardized measures of each of the satisfaction elements. The primary independent variables for this study will be the participants' gender and years of service with the company. In brief, the combination of demographic variables with the aJIG scores was combined to predict frontline staff satisfaction ratings based on gender, age, years of service, and educational level.

The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG was designed to assess overall job satisfaction rather than facets. Its format is the same as the Job Descriptive Index, and it contains 18 items. Each item is an adjective or short phrase about the job in general rather than a facet. The total score is a combination of all items. The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG uses three response choices. For each item, respondents are asked if they agree (yes), aren't sure (?), or disagree (no). Negatively worded items are reverse-scored, and the total score is the sum of responses. The aJIG had good internal consistency reliability. The aJIG has a reported internal consistency coefficients from .91 to .95 across several samples. It was also reported that the aJIG correlates well with other global measures of job satisfaction (Spector, 1997).

In addition, aJIG scale was analyzed and reviewed against 28 other job

satisfaction instruments to compare psychometric quality, especially the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha), the test-retest reliability (Pearson correlation), and the construct validity of existing job satisfaction instruments to determine which of them provide evidence of responsiveness (van Saane et al. 2003). The aJIG was the only instrument to provide information on responsiveness. The aJIG is used in a heterogeneous population and was found to have reliability of 0.91, a validity of 0.66-0.80 compared with Brayfield-Roth Scale, and a 0.76 compared to the Adjective Scale.

### **Analytical Techniques**

The study reviews the relationship and job satisfaction of frontline staff in relation to their direct manager-supervisor. The sample population will be approximately 25 to 50 frontline staffs total from three companies, from each of the following business environments: (a) health care, (b) communications, and (c) retail business. The population will have no restrictions on it in relation to age, gender, race, years of employment, or education. According to Singh (2007), the main characteristics of a good sample are: (a) a good sample is the true representative of the population corresponding to its properties; (b) the population is a known aggregate of certain properties and the sample is called a subaggregate of the universe; (c) a good sample is free from bias; the sample does not permit the investigator's prejudices, preconception, or imagination to influence its choice; (d) a good sample is an objective one; it refers to objectivity in selecting a procedure or the absence of subjective elements in the situation; (e) a good sample maintains accuracy.

The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG, which is designed to assess overall job satisfaction rather than facets, was utilized as the survey instrument. Its format is the

same as the The Job Descriptive Index, and it contains 18 items. Each item is an adjective or short phrase about the job in general rather than a facet. The total score is a combination of all items. The Job Descriptive Index aJIG uses three response choices. For each item, respondents are asked if they agree (yes), aren't sure (?), or disagree (no). The instrument takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The aJIG has a scoring guide that is utilized to analyze the instrument results outcome. Bowling Green State University owns the aJIG and provides the scoring guide.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 provided a restatement of the research questions, the population, and sample studied. In addition, the quantitative primary survey instrument use was discussed. Finally, data collection procedures, recording methods, and analytical techniques were identified. This research explores the relationship between managers and frontline staffs as a key influence on staff morale and job turnover. When leaders understand and value the manager-staff relationship as a key element to the company's success, they are likely to want to provide appropriate support to the manager to enhance this relationship and improve staff morale and increase retention. A highly effective leader must take certain actions to promote effective and open communication within his or her organization. He or she must explain the reasons and rationale for decisions, or any new order (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In addition, he or she must encourage open communication and the sharing of knowledge.

The objective of the study is to demonstrate how crucial the relationship is between the manager and frontline staff for the success of any organization or company. The hypothesis is that top leaders undervalue this relationship and, thus, do not provide

enough support, resources, and education to the manager.

The research questions were restated in this chapter. The results and analysis of this data are presented in Chapter 4, in addition to addressing the research questions relative to the study results.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

### **Restatement of Problem**

In this recent recession, which is the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression, the demands and pressures of jobs and personal life have been magnified. The stress at work from this economic environment is affecting all levels of every company, whether it is large or small. Leadership continues to lack understanding and undervalues the importance of the relationship between the manager and staff (Ranganayakulu, 2005). This relationship is key to staff morale and retention and it is especially critical within an uncertain economic environment. Wagner and Harter (2006) found that company performance starts with the most basic act: showing up for work. Managers who maintain higher levels of engagement in their teams spare their companies the cost of what are sometimes euphemistically called mental health days. Therefore, business and corporate leaders need to have a thorough understanding of the relationship between managers and staff, which has a key influence on staff morale and retention (Manning & Curtis, 2003).

### **Restatement of the Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to examine the perceived nature of manager-staff relationships. When leaders understand and value the manager-staff relationship as a key element to a company's success, they are likely to want to provide appropriate support to the manager to enhance this relationship by improving staff morale and by increasing retention. A highly effective leader must take certain actions in order to promote effective and open communication within his or her organization. These leaders must explain the rationale for decisions or any new order (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In addition, as the world



becomes more interconnected and business becomes more complex and dynamic, work must become more “learningful” (p. 4). It is no longer sufficient to have one person learning for the organization. It’s just not possible any longer to figure it out from the top and to have everyone else following the orders of the “grand strategist” (p. 4).

The organizations that will truly excel will be the organizations that discover how to tap people’s commitment and capacity to learn at all levels of the organization (Senge, 2006). Leaders and managers at all levels must coach, mentor, and communicate with the frontline staff to achieve the goals for any organization to be successful. They must encourage open communication to engage frontline staff and implement the sharing of knowledge at all levels. They must identify what knowledge is important within the organization and make that information readily available to the people who need it most, via computer networks and databases or other means (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

### **Summary of the Data**

Table 2 displays the frequency counts for selected variables. Ages of the respondents ranged from 20 to 59 years old ( $M = 39.08$ ,  $SD = 11.50$ ). There were twice as many women (68.0%) as men (32.0%) in the sample. Years in the company ranged from 1 to 30 ( $M = 8.46$ ,  $SD = 7.39$ ). Of the sample, 30% had only a high school diploma, while 48.0% of respondents had earned at least a bachelor’s degree. Of the sample, 66% was Caucasian with fewer respondents who were Hispanic (18.0%), Asian (12.0%), or African American (4.0%).

Table 2

*Frequency Counts for Selected Variables*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Age <sup>a</sup>			
	20 to 29 years	14	28.0
	30 to 39 years	13	26.0
	40 to 49 years	12	24.0
	50 to 59 years	11	22.0
Gender			
	Female	34	68.0
	Male	16	32.0
Years with Company <sup>b</sup>			
	1 to 5 years	22	44.0
	6 to 9 years	9	18.0
	11 to 19 years	15	30.0
	20 to 30 years	4	8.0
Education			
	High school	15	30.0
	Associate degree	11	22.0
	Bachelor's degree	22	44.0
	Master's degree	2	4.0
Race/Ethnicity			
	Caucasian/White	33	66.0

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
	Hispanic/Latino	9	18.0
	Asian/Pacific Islander	6	12.0
	Black/African-American	2	4.0

Note.  $N = 50$ .

<sup>a</sup> Age:  $M = 39.08$ ,  $SD = 11.50$ .

<sup>b</sup> Years:  $M = 8.46$ ,  $SD = 7.39$ .

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for selected variables. These variables included the 2-year retention rate ( $M = 89.09$ ) and the total satisfaction score ( $M = 2.19$ ) in addition to the six satisfaction subscale scores. Among those six satisfaction scores, highest levels of satisfaction were found for the job in general score ( $M = 2.47$ ) while the lowest levels of satisfaction were found for the opportunities for promotion score ( $M = 1.45$ ).

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Selected Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Low	High
2-Year Retention Rate	89.09	2.14	87.00	91.50
Total Satisfaction	2.19	0.58	0.53	3.00
People on Your Present Job	2.43	0.64	0.50	3.00
Job in General	2.47	0.66	0.00	3.00
Work on Present Job	2.30	0.81	0.00	3.00
Pay	2.02	0.91	0.00	3.00
Opportunities for Promotion	1.45	1.08	0.00	3.00

Supervision	2.40	0.80	0.33	3.00
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Note.  $N = 50$ .

Table 4 displays the intercorrelations among the six satisfaction subscale scores. For the resulting 15 correlations, 11 were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The three strongest correlations were between: (a) the work on the present job score with the job in general score ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ); (b) work on the present job score with opportunities for promotion score ( $r = .65, p < .001$ ); and (c) the opportunities for promotion score with the supervision score ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ).

Table 4

*Intercorrelations Among the Six Satisfaction Subscale Scores*

Variable	1		2		3		4		5		6
People on Present Job	1.00										
Job in General	.12		1.00								
Work on Present Job	.17		.62	****	1.00						
Pay	.22		.51	****	.36	**	1.00				
Opportunities for Promotion	.34	*	.47	****	.65	****	.43	***	1.00		
Supervision	.48	****	.49	****	.48	****	.23		.52	****	1.00

Note.  $N = 50$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .005$ . \*\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

### Answering the Research Questions

Research question 1 asked: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail

business environments? To answer this question, Table 5 displays the Pearson correlations between the supervision satisfaction score and six other measures of satisfaction. Inspection of the table found five of the six correlations to be statistically significant, with the strongest correlations being for supervision satisfaction with total satisfaction ( $r = .73, p < .001$ ) and supervision satisfaction with opportunities for promotion ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ).

Research question 2 asked: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff retention in health care, communications, and retail business environments? To answer this question, Table 5 displays the Pearson correlation between the supervision satisfaction score and the 2-year retention rate. Inspection of the table found a significant positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = .34, p < .05$ ).

Table 5

*Pearson Correlations for Selected Variables With Supervisor Satisfaction, 2-Year Retention Rate and Total Satisfaction*

Variable	1		2		3	
Supervision Satisfaction	1.00					
2-Year Retention Rate	.34	*	1.00			
Total Satisfaction	.73	****	.59	****	1.00	
People on Your Present Job	.48	****	.33	*	.50	****
Job in General	.49	****	.23		.76	****
Work on Present Job	.48	****	.56	****	.78	****
Pay	.23		.34	*	.66	****
Opportunities for Promotion	.52	****	.68	****	.82	****

Age	-.04		-.27		.02	
Gender <sup>a</sup>	-.02		-.39	***	-.20	
Years with Company	.03		.22		.20	
Education	-.02		.07		-.08	
Caucasian <sup>b</sup>	-.26		-.70	****	-.47	****

Note.  $N = 50$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .005$ . \*\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Gender: 1 = Female 2 = Male.

<sup>b</sup> Coding: 0 = No 1 = Yes.

### Additional Findings

Table 5 also displays the correlations for 11 additional variables with the 2-year retention rate. Seven of the 11 correlations were significant, with the two largest correlations being for 2-year retention rate with the opportunities for promotion score ( $r = .68, p < .001$ ) and the 2-year retention rate with race-ethnicity where non-Caucasians had a higher 2-year retention rate ( $r = -.70, p < .001$ ).

Table 6 displays the results of the stepwise multiple regression model predicting the 2-year retention rate based on 12 candidate variables. The 12 candidate variables were the seven measures of satisfaction and the five demographic variables. Stepwise multiple regression was chosen instead of standard multiple regression because of the high correlations among the satisfaction scores (multicollinearity). Inspection of the table found the final three variable model to be significant ( $p = .001$ ) and accounted for 67.4% of the variance in the 2-year retention rate. The 2-year retention rate was higher for: (a)

non-Caucasians ( $\beta = -.42, p = .001$ ); (b) higher opportunities for promotion scores ( $\beta = .39, p = .001$ ); and (c) female respondents ( $\beta = -.30, p = .001$ ).

Table 6

*Stepwise Multiple Regression Predicting 2-Year Retention Rate Based on Selected Variables*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Intercept	90.98	0.77		.001
Caucasian <sup>a</sup>	-1.86	0.48	-.42	.001
Opportunities for Promotion Score	0.77	0.21	.39	.001
Gender <sup>b</sup>	-1.35	0.39	-.30	.001

Note. *N* = 50.

Final Model:  $F(3, 46) = 31.64, p = .001, R^2 = .674$ . Candidate variables = 12.

<sup>a</sup> Coding: 0 = No 1 = Yes.

<sup>b</sup> Gender: 1 = Female 2 = Male.

Table 7 displays the results of the standard multiple regression model predicting total satisfaction based on the five demographic variables. The final model was significant ( $p = .001$ ) and accounted for 25.1% of the variance in total satisfaction. Inspection of the beta weights found total satisfaction to be higher for non-Caucasians ( $\beta = -.48, p = .002$ ).

Table 7

*Standard Multiple Regression Predicting Total Satisfaction Based on Demographic Variables*

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
Intercept	2.56	0.44		.001

Age	0.01	0.01	.11	.49
Gender <sup>a</sup>	-0.16	0.17	-.13	.35
Years with Company	0.00	0.01	-.01	.93
Education	0.00	0.09	.01	.96
Caucasian <sup>b</sup>	-0.59	0.18	-.48	.002

*Note.*  $N = 50$ .

Full Model:  $F(5, 44) = 2.95, p = .001. R^2 = .251$ .

<sup>a</sup> Gender: 1 = *Female* 2 = *Male*

<sup>b</sup> Coding: 0 = *No* 1 = *Yes*.

This study examined the perceived nature of manager-staff relationships for 50 respondents. The relationship between managers and staff was significantly correlated with both staff morale and staff retention (Table 4). In the final chapter, these findings will be compared to the literature, conclusions and implications will be drawn, and a series of recommendations will be suggested.



## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications**

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived nature of manager-staff relationships. The study used the Job Descriptive Index-aJIG as the study instrument. Three diverse companies were used as study sites with the study participants being frontline staff with no direct reports. The three companies were health care, retail, and communications with a mix of gender, age, years of service, education years with the company, and ethnicity.

This chapter presents an overview of the study and the conclusions derived from the study instrument. This chapter concludes the study by presenting an overview of the findings, highlighting those that are reflective of the ones in the literature review and noted in Chapter 2. In addition, implications are identified with the recommendations for further research on this topic.

### **Overview of the Study**

The evidence and literature support the relationship and importance between the frontline staff and managers-supervisors. The literature highlighted the following: as Wagner and Harter (2006) noted, the anecdotes and, more important, analyses of manager performance point out that one of the best things a senior executive can do to motivate the entire population in a company is first to look out for the enterprise's supervisors. Before people can deliver what they should as managers, they must first receive what they needs as staffs. Abiodun (2010) found that a successful organization is one that believes in the collective skills of its workers. Shared governance is a practice that helps integrate all available skills in an organization. It is a practice that stands on one principle: the professional contributions from all its players.

Many company leaders continue to lack key knowledge about the most important relationship in any business or company: the relationship between the manager and the frontline staff. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) wrote:

Research yielded many discoveries, but the most powerful was this: A talented staff may join a company because of its charismatic leaders, its generous benefits, and its world-class training programs, but how long that staff stays and how productive he is while he is there is determined by his relationship with his immediate supervisor. People may join a company because of its brand identity, but how long they stay depends on the quality of the manager. (p. 11)

The idea of creating a healthy work environment to support staffs by having leaders and managers who are engaged, supportive, and communicate effectively with frontline staffs has been around for a long time.

For the purpose of this study, leadership is defined as a “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p. 3). Manager is defined as “someone responsible for a whole organization or some identifiable part of it” (Mintzberg, 2009, p. 12). Morale at work is defined as a general psychological state of well-being (Bowles & Cooper, 2009). Retention is identified as the percentage of staffs remaining in the organization. High levels of retention are desired in most job groups and organizations (Phillips & Connell, 2003).

Presenting conclusions and implications for corporate leaders, managers, and supervisors as well as providing recommendations for future research, the following section identifies each of the two research questions, with the conclusions identified from the study and the implications for corporate leaders, managers, and supervisors.

When leaders understand and value the manager-staff relationship as a key element to a company's success, they are likely to want to provide appropriate support to the manager to enhance this relationship, thus improving staff morale and increasing retention. A highly effective leader must take certain actions in order to promote effective and open communication within his or her organization. These leaders must explain the rationale for decisions or any new order (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In addition, as the world becomes more interconnected and business becomes more complex and dynamic, work must become more "learningful" (p. 4). It is no longer sufficient to have one person learning for the organization. It's just not possible any longer to figure it out from the top and to have everyone else following the orders of the "grand strategist" (p. 4).

The organizations that will truly excel will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels of the organization (Senge, 2006). Leaders and managers at all levels must coach, mentor, and communicate with the frontline staff to achieve the goals for any organization to be successful. They must encourage open communication to engage frontline staff and implement the sharing of knowledge at all levels. They must identify what knowledge is important within the organization and make that information readily available to the people who need it most, via computer networks and databases or other means (Robbins & Judge, 2010).

Leaders must utilize emotional intelligence to understand better the value of relationships. As Goleman (1998) noted, companies and managers with high emotional intelligence can be tracked by the success in business performance of the company, (satisfying and desirable companies to work for demonstrate elements of high staff satisfaction, low turnover, high retention, and low vacancy rates).

According to Bowles and Cooper (2009), morale measurement has been around a long time. That means plenty of time has passed for the meaning of this word to be transformed, for it to be used in many different settings, for new ideas and words to emerge that challenge its usefulness, or create more focus on a particular aspect. They go on to define morale at work as a general psychological state of well-being.

The universal feeling is that morale and productivity go together. The higher the morale, the higher the productivity and vice versa. Though empirical verification of this statement is lacking, many research studies support the view that morale and productivity are positively related. To put it bluntly, absolute correlation between these two concepts is yet to be proved. One point is correct: that is, an increase of 40% in morale does not necessarily result in an equal increase in productivity (Kansal & Rao, 2006).

Low morale and motivation also have an impact on variable performance that occurs when staffs are constantly faced with the demands that exceed their resources (Spiers, 2003). The numbers and demand for staff attitude surveys gives an indication that there is an interest and value in assessing both staff morale and commitment (Gennard & Graham, 2005). The importance of morale is identified throughout the literature, and key characteristics can be identified. Ranganayakulu (2005) identifies the characteristics of morale as: (a) psychological concept—it is the sum of several psychic qualities that include, courage, fortitude, resolution and confidence; (b) multidimensional concept, which is a mix of several elements such as feelings, attitudes, devotion, confidence, etc.; (c) group phenomenon—it consists of a pattern of attitudes of members of the group. It also refers to the spirit of the organization and managerial climate; (d) teamwork—it is a state of attitude of a member in a group where teamwork is a

condition. Good morale is helpful in achieving teamwork. Teamwork is not always possible when morale of a group is low; (e) long-term condition—this refers to the rate of balance and health within an organization. It must be viewed from a long-term vantage point. Raising morale among persons or groups is possible in the long-run and cannot be achieved in the short-run by one short action; (f) high or low—as with health, morale varies and is expressed in terms of degree, say high or low. High morale is a hallmark of sound climate. Low morale is indicated by inefficiency, waste, indiscipline, disputes, confrontations, etc.; and (g) different from motivation—the effects of morale and motivation are similar. Morale and motivation are different conceptually. Morale describes a state of complex attitudes and feelings about work situations whereas motivation is a function of wants and needs. Motivation refers to mobilization of energy and morale is treated as “mobilization of sentiments” (p. 165).

The impact of transformational leadership on commitment, involvement, loyalty, and satisfaction are well documented. Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that transformational leadership clearly affects the performance of work groups and organizations; transformational leadership’s strongest effects seem to be on followers’ attitudes and their commitment to the leader and the organization. Moreover, it may be that it is the extraordinary commitment of followers of transformational leaders that underlies the exceptional performance of many groups. Schein (2004) states that a group or team’s shared assumption concerning what symbolically and actually is defined as a reward or punishment constitutes some of the most important elements of an emerging culture in a new organization. Schein also advocates that change in the reward and punishment system is one of the quickest and easiest ways to begin to change some elements of an

organization's culture. An organization seeking to improve its performance and value creation must carefully assess how it utilizes staff incentives and rewards to drive a culture of excellence. Unintended, often suboptimizing results can easily occur if practices are not clearly thought out in terms of the behaviors and cultures they will create across an organization.

Staff motivation in the workplace remains fundamentally governed by the more generalized human motivational theory Maslow, Herzberg, and McGregor applied to an increasing diversity of human perspectives across widening generational demographics and individual needs. Hewlett et al. (2009) studied the motivational differences across our increasing multigenerational work forces, with boomers and their Gen-Y children. This study illustrates some practical recognition preferences that leaders may use to tailor incentive programs to their teams. The intense and increasing work-force variability means that one size of reward-incentive certainly does not fit all. An organization must first and foremost understand the personal motivations of its human capital, and clearly understand the desired effects, business strategy, and cultural shifts its incentive programs should drive. Understanding the motivational status and needs of the individuals within an organization can be fairly easily ascertained via survey or interview. These surveys will typically assess key aspects of overall motivation such as staff engagement, satisfaction, and commitment, along with some inquiry into what motivates each staff specifically. This must then be blended with an understanding of the unstated organizational norms of behavior (known patterns of behavior proved to be successful) that directly affect motivation within an organization. These organizational unwritten norms may require trained organizational development consultancy support to

extract and articulate them.

Incentive-reward alternatives available to organizations are widespread and include elements such as scope and type of work assignments, assignment to special teams, promotion and formal position, physical work environment (larger corner office), personal and public recognition, special privileges (e.g., the ability to attend a conference), and the more conventional direct economic incentives (salary and bonus pay). Some staffs might additionally value and be rewarded by time off to perform community service, flexible schedules, and the knowledge and ability to work on programs with a focus on improving the environment. A plan for motivating a team of senior and longtime staffs within today's difficult economic environment may shift its focus back to Maslow basics—simple elements that reassure key individuals and teams of job stability rather than any monetary incentive. A few years ago, during a talent war, incentives and rewards at these same firms might have had a very different focus (Schein, 2004).

It does appear that barring special situations, high-performing, value-creating teams do tend to differentiate themselves in the types of motivational incentives and rewards they seek. High-performing teams are characterized by a culture of organizational agility, with the ability to sense quickly and respond; to unfreeze, adapt, and change; and rebuild new norms of behavior required for maximum innovation and performance. As Schein (2004) indicates, members of such teams must have a willingness to be concerned for the organization above and beyond the self, and to communicate dedication or commitment to the group above and beyond self-interest. This would advocate a more Theory-Y or self-actualized view of the individuals

participating within these workgroups. Bolman and Deal (2008) documented several case studies of high-performing teams at Data General and Cisco, where “All personnel are driven by the desire to be part of a winning organization” (p. 187).

Classical motivational theory has been augmented by modern brain science research, which has identified four basic emotional needs or drives that motivate all people. The results of this Nohria et al. (2008) study liken these emotional needs to an organizational lever and give some specific examples of actions that can be used to operate these levers. The needs are our drive to acquire, drive to bond, drive to comprehend, and drive to defend. The authors advocate that we need to address all four needs in concert to engage fully our staffs. Nohria et al. also identify that an immediate manager has just as much impact as the organization in determining staff motivation and fulfilling staff drive. The belief is that staffs strongly feel that a manager has control over how company processes are interpreted and implemented within his or her sphere of influence. Allen and Wilburn (2002) focused on the need to understand and that the staff's overall relationship with his or her immediate supervisor is often strongly related to his or her overall staff satisfaction. Murray et al. (2005) argued that regardless of the controversy surrounding staff satisfaction-performance relationship that some researchers debate, job satisfaction is an important aspect of staff well being and, as such, deserves management and leadership's attention.

Herzberg et al. (1993) found in their extensive review of literature, the concept of “staff-centered supervision” (p. 10). They noted that the idea has grown that a supervisor is successful to the degree to which he focuses on the needs of his subordinates as individuals rather than the goals of production. This continued to be reflected throughout



the research. Kurtz and Boone (2009) continue to emphasize that staff motivation is the key to effective management. They also noted that high morale is a sign of a well-managed organization because the workers' attitudes toward their jobs affect the quality of their work. In addition, it was found that high morale comes from an organization's understanding of human needs and its success at satisfying those needs in ways that reinforce organizational goals. As Manning and Curtis (2003) noted, the task of leadership is to manage morale. They found that by adhering to the following proven tips for being an effective leader, the leader can keep morale high and performance up in the work group and organization: (a) be predictable, (b) be understanding, (c) be enthusiastic, (d) set the example, (e) show support, (f) get out of the office, (g) keep promises, (h) praise generously, (i) hold your fire, and (j) always be fair. Cook (2008) identified key learning points for managers and leaders, which include when senior managers become directly and actively involved in the listening process and empower staffs to act on recommendations, engagement levels rise; it is useful to hold senior managers accountable for staff involvement activities by building this into their objectives; and providing training to managers in communication skills and facilitation techniques can help improve their ability to involve staff and others.

One of the key elements that managers can impact directly is staff engagement. This is the source of behaviors that can be both profitable or costly because they influence the quality of interactions with customers. Staffs who are strongly engaged with their organizations are better able to involve emotionally a customer and create strong connections with a customer. It is important to note that customers do not have interactions with an abstraction such as an organization. They have interactions with

people, one-on-one; that is, staffs who are pleasant and helpful or the opposite (Bardwick, 2008). As Drucker (as cited in Levoy, 2007, p. 1) said, “Of all the decisions a manager makes, none are as important as the decision about people because they determine the performance capacity of the organization”. The manager also has a key role in staff relations. Hannaway and Hunt (1992) emphasized that there is always a potential conflict between organizational goals and the personal goals and expectations of individual members of a department or work area. It was noted that if this is not resolved, staff relation challenges and difficulties will develop. These types of difficulties might result in poor performance, in increases in absenteeism and staff turnover, and also in dysfunctional behavior among various team members. Staff relations management is, therefore, a part of all managers’ jobs.

The manager’s role continues to be noted as a key when it comes to meeting the needs of the frontline staffs and retaining staff. Meeting the needs of the frontline staff influences how well the organization will achieve its vision and goals. Barker and Angelopulo (2007) found that all organizations have the potential to experience growth and develop. The choice of a best management approach within them lies with management. Although many organizations still have a pyramid shape, with the major authority situated at the top, the difference between bureaucracy and humanism lies primarily with the management and its communication styles. Barker and Angelopulo also highlighted that organizational structures, which are controlled by the organization’s management approach, has a direct affect on staffs.

Meister and Willyerd (2010) illuminated that all the major elements that define the 2020 workplace are already in play. Future new staffs, whom they call Generation

2020, are in their middle school years. The technologies that will define the 2020 workplace are in design stages. Emerging large-scale economies are rapidly entering as major forces. The workplace of tomorrow is being shaped today, driven primarily by globalization, the introduction of new ways of working, the use of emerging technologies, and shifting workplace demographics. Meister and Willyerd go on to note that the best companies are already preparing their strategies to win the quest for top talent. The 2020 workplace will be defined by this acute vision—20/20-vision with regard to recruiting strategies, customizable staff development and benefits, agile leadership, and the power of social networks. All of these are essential to engaging the workforce and retaining the best staff needed to meet the challenges in this new global economy.

One of the key essentials for all organizations and businesses around the world, as stated, continues to be the need to invest in staffs and truly acknowledge they are one of the key assets to any organization. Nandan Nilekani, (as cited in Jackson et al., 2012, p. 192) former Chief Executive Officer of Infosys, said, “Our people are our capital. The more we invest in them, the more they can be effective”. It is incumbent upon all managers to meet the needs of the frontline staff who are on the cutting edge and meeting the needs of customers in all settings.

Brandon (2001) describes “The Age of the Disposable Staff” (p. 20), when many companies, starting in the late 1980s and continuing through the mid-1990s, tried to become lean, mean machines by cutting jobs, downsizing, reorganizing, and ostracizing staffs. We have seen a resurgence of this way of thinking in the last couple years, but not to the degree of the 1980s and 1990s. As Brandon outlined, companies need to recruit

indispensable staffs and consider a few of these future strategic issues for managers and how they handle them: (a) plan for labor shortages (succession planning and forecasting); (b) articulate the changing staff-employer contract; (c) incorporate the contingency work force-telecommuters; (d) help manage diversity-globalization issues; (e) move workers from specialists to generalists; (f) instill an attitude of lifelong learning to keep a job; (g) reward performance without necessarily providing job advancement; (h) become more flexible and help staffs balance work, family, and personal life; (i) managers need to become mentors and career coaches while realizing that staffs will fly from the nest; (j) build a global workforce and understand the needs of domestic and international workers; and (k) cultivating school-to-work partnerships

### **Summary of Findings**

Using the Job Descriptive Index-aJIG as the study instrument which was designed to assess overall job satisfaction rather than facets. Its format is the same as the Job Description Index, and it contains 18 items. The Job Descriptive Index-aJIG uses three response choices. For each item, respondents are asked if they agree (yes), aren't sure (?), or disagree (no). The instrument focuses on areas of assessment over which the manager has direct or indirect influence and that impact the feelings and perceptions of the frontline staff as outline in Table 1.

**Research question 1.** What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail business environments?

**Research question 2.** What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff retention in health care, communications, and retail business

environments?

Among those six satisfaction scores, highest levels of satisfaction were found for the job in general score while the lowest levels of satisfaction were found for the opportunities for promotion score (Table 2).

Inspection of the table found five of the six correlations to be statistically significant with the strongest correlations being for supervision satisfaction with total satisfaction and supervision satisfaction with opportunities for promotion (Table 4).

Research Question One asked, “What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail business environments?” To answer this question, Table 4 displays the Pearson correlation between the supervision satisfaction score and the 2-year retention rate.

Inspection of the table found a significant positive correlation between the two variables,

Table 4 also displays the correlations for 11 additional variables with the 2-year retention rate. Seven of the 11 correlations were significant with the two largest correlations being for 2-year retention rate with the opportunities for promotion score and the 2-year retention rate with race-ethnicity where non-Caucasians had a higher 2-year retention rate.

Table 5 displays the results of the stepwise multiple regression model predicting the 2-year retention rate based on 12 candidate variables. The 12 candidate variables were the seven measures of satisfaction and the five demographic variables. Stepwise multiple regression was chosen instead of standard multiple regression because of the high correlations among the satisfaction scores (multicollinearity). Inspection of the table found the final three variable models to be significant and accounted for 67.4% of the

variance in the 2-year retention rate. The 2-year retention rate was higher for: (a) non-Caucasians, (b) higher opportunities for promotion scores, and (c) female respondents.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a summary of the findings from the study done at three different diverse companies in health care, retail, and communications. The findings were discussed in relation to the body of literature on this topic as well as previous research. This study reinforced the information for companies and leaders to focus on the areas of supervision that are important to frontline staff and have an impact on morale and retention. Although it was not a primary focus of this study, it was interesting to note that retention was higher for non-Caucasians, higher for promotion, and female respondents.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study were limited to three companies and a total of 50 frontline nonsupervisory respondents. A statistical analysis of the quantitative data was conducted; the relatively small sample size is not statistically representative of the larger employed population. Recommendations for future research include:

1. Increase the sample size to be significant to each company in the study.
2. Equalize the respondents' gender mix.
3. Increase the number of respondents to have an increased balance for each ethnic population in the study.
4. It would be of significance also to survey the managers of the frontline staff involved in the study and correlate each group's priorities.
5. Do a deeper analysis on the different responses by gender, age, ethnicity, years with the company, and education level.

6. Research leadership's understanding of the cost to the company of low staff retention and what factors continue to influence retention with each generation.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

It is my fervent hope that this study will encourage company leaders to commit more resources to educating and training their managers to meet the needs of the frontline staff, thereby, understanding that this commitment up front will have a significant return on investment by increasing staff morale and increasing staff retention.

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## APPENDIX A

## Alignment Table

Research Questions	Survey Item	Analytical Technique
1: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail business environments?	1. abridged Job in General Scale (aJIG) . a. People on your present job. b. Job in general. c. Work on present job. d. Opportunities for promotion. e. Supervision	Data tabulated, median scores measured and analyzed, then charted and graphed. Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Medium, Mode. Information presented in tables, charts, and figures.
1a: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff morale in health care, communications, and retail business environments?	1a. Demographic form: data input into Microsoft word.	Simple descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and Spearman rank-order correlations displayed in tabular form.
2: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff retention in health care, communications, and retail business environments?	2. abridged Job in General Scale (aJIG) a. People on our present job. b. Job in general. c. Work on present job. d. Opportunities for promotion. e. Supervision	Data tabulated, median scores measured and analyzed, then charted and graphed. Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Medium, Mode. Information presented in tables, charts, and figures.
2a: What effect, if any, does the relationship between managers and staff have on staff retention in health care, communications, and	2a. Demographic form: data input into Microsoft word.	Simple descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and Spearman rank-order correlations displayed in tabular form.

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retail business  
environments?

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## APPENDIX B

### Research Informed Consent

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to allow us to use the information we gain through the use of the abridged Job In General scale (aJIG) survey questionnaire today in our research and scholarly work at Pepperdine University.

The purpose of survey today is to learn about the perceptions of staff in relation to their jobs and the characteristics on the job relationships that influence those perceptions and feelings. This study will allow us, and those who read our research, to gain a better understanding of the relationships within a company and the impact they have on job satisfaction and morale. A total of 50 participants have been asked to participate in this study. In order for me/us to use what we learn from you today in our research and publications, our University requires that I/we read to you the following statement and ask for your permission. I would like to ask you if you would agree with one of the following to arrangements:

I agree to permit the researcher to use my responses to the survey questionnaire in the aggregated data. My name is not being requested and will not be utilized in any format. I agree to permit the researchers to refer to my responses as part of the total number of respondents from a “generic organization.” I understand my identity and the name of my organization will be kept confidential at all times and in all circumstances any research based on this survey questionnaire is presented.

You should be aware that your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with me/this group or Pepperdine University. You will be eligible for a drawing for \$100 American Express card. In addition, if the you withdraw from the study before completion, you will remain eligible for the drawing. The records of this study will be kept private. No words linking you to the study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only the principal investigator will have access to the records. You have the right to get a summary of the results of this research if you would like to have them. Upon your request, I will provide a copy of any published papers, dissertations or professional presentations that take place as a result survey questionnaire.

Each individual completing the survey questionnaire will be at no greater risk than possibly being bored while taking the paper survey, and possibly getting a paper cut. Risks to participants are no greater than that which they would assume during a regular day of work.

At this point, I am required to ask you if you fully understood my statements and if so, to initial next to the agree statement and sign this form. I understand that my participation is strictly voluntary. My decision regarding my participation will not affect my current or future relations with Pepperdine University. If I decide to participate, I am

free to refuse to answer any of the questions that may make me uncomfortable. I can withdraw at any time without my relations with the university, job, benefits, etc., being affected. I can contact Dr. Michelle Rosensitto, Chairperson at [REDACTED] michelle.rosensitto@mac.com and Rick Martin, Principal Investigator at [REDACTED] 714-309-8788 martinrik@yahoo.com or IRB Chairperson Dr. Doug Leigh at [REDACTED] doug.leigh@pepperdine.edu with any questions about this study.

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and Certified by the Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University. For research-related problems or questions regarding participants' rights, I can contact the Institutional Board at Pepperdine University.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form. By signing this document, I consent to participate in this study.

---

Principal Investigator's Signature Date

---

Participant's Signature Date

## APPENDIX C

## Pepperdine IRB application for Approval of Research Project

Date: March 22, 2013

IRB Application/Protocol #:

**Principal Investigator: Richard Martin**

	Faculty	Staff	(X) Student	Other	
School/Unit:	GSBM	GSEP	Seaver	SOL	SPP
	Administration		Other:		

Street Address:

City: Santa Ana

State: CA

Zip Code:

Telephone (work):

Telephone (home):

Email Address:

Faculty Supervisor: **Dr. Michelle Rosensitto** (*if applicable*)

School/Unit:	GSBM	(X) GSEP	Seaver	SOL	SPP
	Administration		Other:		

Telephone (work):

Email Address:

**Project Title: Leaders and the Importance of the Manager-Staff Relationship**

Type of Project (Check all that apply):

(X) Dissertation	Thesis
Undergraduate Research	Independent Study
Classroom Project	Faculty Research
Other:	

Is the Faculty Supervisor Review Form attached? (X) Yes No N/A

Has the investigator(s) completed education on research with human subjects? (X) Yes

No

Please attach certification form(s) to this application. -attached

**Is this an application for expedited review? (X) Yes No**

If so, please explain briefly, with reference to Appendix C of the Investigator's Manual.

**This Study meets the requirements for expedited status under the federal regulations (45CFR46).**

[http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46\\_fr8392.html](http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46_fr8392.html);

(A) Research activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the following categories, may be reviewed by the IRB through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. Research activities that govern the protection of human subjects. (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

This study will be made up of individual staffs of three companies taking a 10 to 15 minute survey questionnaire (abridged Job In General scale – aJIG).

The 'minimal' risk that each individual completing the survey questionnaire is that people might see them completing the survey questionnaire. Another risk is the possible imposition on the participant's time.

The activities listed should not be deemed to be of minimal risk simply because they are included on this list. Inclusion on this list merely means that the activity is eligible for review through the expedited review procedure when the specific circumstances of the proposed research involve no more than minimal risk to human subjects.

1. Briefly summarize your proposed research project, and describe your research

goals and objectives: The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived nature of manager-staff relationships. This research is significant because it provides data regarding one of the key relationships in any business or corporation that has an impact on the corporation's ability to achieve its mission and goals. Good people stay on board longer when they like and respect their supervisor, as revealed in "Nine Steps Toward Creating a Great Workplace" (p. 14) (Wardell, 2005). In addition, the financial impact to businesses is significant and merits additional study to measure fully the impact of this relationship between manager and staff.

As highlighted by Wagner and Harter (2006), company performance starts with the most basic act: showing up for work. Engaged staffs average 27% less absenteeism than those who are actively disengaged. In a typical 10,000-person company, absenteeism from disengagement costs the business about 5,000 lost days per year, worth \$600,000 in salary paid where no work was performed. Managers who maintain higher levels of engagement in their teams spare their companies the cost of what are sometimes euphemistically called mental health days. Additionally, this study will add to the research currently available in the field and highlight the importance for leaders so that they can increase focus to the resources needed to support their managers.

2. Estimated Dates of Project:

From: March 1, 2013

To: March 30, 2013

3. Cooperating Institutions and Funded Research. Circle and explain below; provide address, telephone, supervisor as applicable.

- 3.1 Yes  No This project is part of a research project involving investigators from other institutions.
- 3.2 Yes  No Has this application been submitted to any other Institutional Review Board? If yes, provide name of committee, date, and decision. Attach a copy of the approval letter.
- 3.3 Yes  No This project is funded by or cosponsored by an organization or institution other than Pepperdine University.

Internal Funding (indicate source):

External funding (indicate source):

Funding Status: Funded Pending Explain, if needed:

#### 4. Subjects

- 4.1 *Number of Subjects: 25 to 50 Ages: 18 and older*  
*Discuss rationale for subject selection.*

The main criteria for the selection of participants for this study will be (a) currently employed; (b) frontline staff with no direct reports to them in the job or department hierarchy; (c) male or female; (d) no age restrictions; (e) staffs from departments with greater than five people; (f) a company with greater than 50 staffs total.

The total sample population will be approximately 25 to 50 frontline staffs from three companies, one from each of the following business environments: health care, communications, and retail business environments. The principal investigator will look for a balance in the gender and age.



4.2 *Settings from which subjects will be recruited. Attach copies of all materials used to recruit subjects (e.g., flyers, advertisements, scripts, email messages): attached*

4.3 Criteria for inclusion and exclusion of subjects: (1.) The subjects will be currently employed frontline staff in a company with greater than 50 staffs, (2.) Subjects will be excluded if their individual department does not have greater than five staffs, (3.) Subjects will be excluded if they have direct reports (other staffs) reporting to them.

(4.) The study will be aimed to engage frontline staffs as the key population.

4.4 (X) Yes No Will access to subjects be gained through cooperating institutions? If so, discuss your procedures for gaining permission for cooperating individuals and/or institutions, and attach documentation of permission. **You must obtain**

**and document permission to recruit subjects from each site.**

The principal investigator has received approval from the leadership of each of the three organizations in the study to allow the frontline staffs to participate in the study by completing the survey instrument questionnaire. (see Appendix E, F, G )

4.5 (X) Yes No Will subjects receive compensation for participation? If so, discuss your procedures. An incentive to participate in the study will be provided by giving the subject participants the opportunity to be randomly selected to receive a \$100 American Express gift card, which will be awarded to one individual from a random drawing of the 50 participants in the study. If the participants withdraw from the study before completion, they will remain eligible for the drawing.

4.6 Describe the method by which subjects will be selected and for assuring that their participation is voluntary. A randomized sampling method to identify 25 to 50 participants in a strict voluntary method with no limiting restrictions on age or gender. The total sample population will be approximately 25 to 50 frontline staffs from three companies, from each of the following business environments: health care, communications, and retail business environments. The participants will be frontline staffs with no direct reports to them in the job or department hierarchy. The frontline staffs will be selected from departments with greater than five people within companies with greater than 50 staffs total. The individual company leadership will be asked to supply a list of front line staffs who meet the study criteria. A random sampling from that staff list will identify a total of 50 possible participants. When the researcher arrives on site on the day of data collection, the participants will be asked to complete a ten to fifteen-minute paper survey administered by the researcher.

Upon arrival at each company, the researcher will meet with participants briefly (10 minutes) in a common room to read an introductory script, describing the nature of the study and ensuring participant confidentiality, and allowing time for participants to sign the consent form. A copy of the script appears in Appendix J. There will be two ways to ensure the voluntary nature of the survey participants, as follows: (1) If the participant shows up and completes the survey questionnaire, this will ensure if their participation is voluntary. (2) The participants will be asked to sign a voluntary consent form (See Appendix A). The researcher will go over the consent form with the participants, outlining that the procedure for completing the questionnaire. By signing the voluntary consent form, the investigator will ensure that the participant is participating on a voluntary basis.

## 5. Interventions and Procedures to Which the Subject May Be Exposed

- 5.1 Describe specific procedures, instruments, tests, measures, and interventions to which the subjects may be exposed through participation in the research project. Attach copies of all surveys, questionnaires, or tests being administered.

Data will be gathered by asking the participant to complete a survey questionnaire on paper which takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. (See Appendix H or the survey instrument). In addition, demographic data will be collected for each participant by having them complete the demographic form when they complete the survey questionnaire but there will be no linkage other than aggregated data. (see Appendix I or the Demographic Data sheet). The timeframe of the survey questionnaire will be (1) once IRB approval is achieved until (2) one year from that date. The survey will be completed at the work site for the participants. The method of obtaining informed consent will be by having the participants fill out an informed consent form (See Appendix A).

The Retention data for the second research question will be requested from and provided by the appropriate leadership of each of the three companies on site at the time of the participant interviews. Company leadership will be asked for a simple, standard percentage of staff

retention for the previous two fiscal years. Permission to collect data has been granted by each company (see Appendix E, F, and G).

5.2 Yes  No Are any drugs, medical devices or procedures involved in this study? Explain below.

5.3 Yes  No No Are the drugs, medical devices or procedures to be used approved by the FDA for the same purpose for which they will be used in this study? Explain below.

5.4 Yes  No Does your study fall under HIPAA? Explain below.

6. Describe all possible risks to the subject, whether or not you consider them to be risks of ordinary life, and describe the precautions that will be taken to minimize risks. The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to the subject's dignity and self-respect, as well as psychological, emotional, and behavioral risk. Discuss the procedures you plan to follow in the case of adverse or unexpected events.

There are minimal risks in this study, as it is an investigation that does not jeopardize the participant's physical, emotional or economic wellbeing. Each individual completing the survey questionnaire will be at no greater risk than possibly being bored while taking the paper survey, and possibly getting a paper cut. Risks to participants are no greater than that which they would assume during a regular day of work.

The participants completing the survey questionnaire will not be identified by name. Risks will be minimized in the following ways: (1) Participant's identity will be confidential and not used in the study, (2) No specific identifying information will be used that can be linked back to the individual's responses on the survey questionnaire, (3) If the participant experiences exhaustion, fatigue, or irritability while completing the

survey questionnaire, a break will be provided.

All survey questionnaires will be kept in a safe in the investigator's home office where the investigator will have sole access to the information.

7. Describe the potential benefits to the subject and society.

Participants may feel good about themselves by being able to participate in a research project. This could cause them to want to be involved in more research and read further on the study topic.

Organizations in society will benefit by gaining a better understanding of the importance of the relationship between frontline staff and managers. This will enhance the need to focus on this key relationship in any company and may have an impact on staff morale and turnover (costs).

8. Informed Consent and Confidentiality and Security of the Data

8.1 Yes  No  Is a waiver of or alteration to the informed consent process being sought? If yes, please attach the **Application for Waiver or Alteration of Informed Consent Procedures form**. If not, describe the ability of the subject to give informed consent. Explain through what procedures will informed consent be assured.

8.2 Attach a copy of the consent form. Review the *Instructions for Documentation of Informed Consent* in Section VII.A of the Investigator Manual.

8.3 Yes  No  Is the subject a child? If yes, describe the procedures and attach the form for assent to participate.

8.4 Yes  No  Is the subject a member of another vulnerable population? (i.e., individuals with mental or cognitive

disabilities, educationally or economically disadvantaged persons, pregnant women, and prisoners). If yes, describe the procedures involved with obtaining informed consent from individuals in this population.

- 8.5 If HIPAA applies to your study, attach a copy of the certification that the investigator(s) has completed the HIPAA educational component. Describe your procedures for obtaining Authorization from participants. Attach a copy of the Covered Entity's HIPAA Authorization and Revocation of Authorization forms to be used in your study (see Section XI. of the Investigator Manual for forms to use if the CE does not provide such forms). If you are seeking to use or disclose PHI without Authorization, please attach the **Application for Use or Disclosure of PHI Without Authorization** form (see Section XI). Review the HIPAA procedures in Section X. of the Investigator Manual.
- N/A
- 8.6 Describe the procedures through which anonymity or confidentiality of the subjects will be maintained during and after the data collection and in the reporting of the findings. Confidentiality or anonymity is required unless subjects give written permission that their data may be identified. Confidentiality is required at all times. No personal identifiers such as name or address are requested. The principal investigator will take the following measures to ensure confidentiality: (1) No personal identifiers will be requested (name or address), (2) hard copies of data files will be kept in a locked safe in the investigator's home office. (#) Electronic statistical and quantitative data will be stored on a jump drive and accessed on the researcher's personal computer which is password and screen saver protected, (5) All information collected will be backed up on an external hard drive which is also password protected, at the principal

investigator's residence; (6) Only the researcher will have access to research data; (7) After five years, the researcher will crosscut shred information collected in the study and destroy all electronic files using a magnet.

8.7 Describe the procedures through which the security of the data will be maintained.

The principal investigator will put all data under lock and key for five years after the study has taken place.

All hand-written data, as well as any electronic data or notes (information) will be kept in a safe in the researcher's home office for a period of five years and destroyed thereafter. Data stored in the researcher's personal computer will be transferred to an external jump drive, which will be kept in the safe as well, and then destroyed in five years. The data will only be kept on the researcher's personal computer in the researcher's locked office during the survey period.

I hereby certify that I am familiar with federal and professional standards for conducting research with human subjects and that I will comply with these standards. The above information is correct to the best of my knowledge, and I shall adhere to the procedure as described. If a change in procedures becomes necessary I shall submit an amended application to the IRB and await approval prior to implementing any new procedures. If any problems involving human subjects occur, I shall immediately notify the IRB Chairperson. I understand that research protocols can be approved for no longer than 1 year. I understand that my protocol will undergo continuing review by the IRB until the study is completed, and that it is my responsibility to submit for an extension of this protocol if my study extends beyond the initial authorization period.

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*Principal Investigator's Signature*

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*Date*

---

Faculty Supervisor's Signature

---

Date

## APPENDIX D

## IRB Approval Letter

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

April 1, 2013  
Richard Martin  
13671 Jenet Circle  
Santa Ana, CA 92705

**Protocol #: E0213D04**

**Project Title: Leaders and the Importance of the Manager-Staff Relationship**

Dear Mr. Martin,

Thank you for submitting your revised IRB application, *Leaders and the Importance of the Manager-Staff Relationship*, to Pepperdine's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB has reviewed your revised submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. As the nature of the research met the requirements for expedited review under provision Title 45 CFR 46.110 (research category 7) of the federal Protection of Human Subjects Act, the IRB conducted a formal, but expedited, review of your application materials.

I am pleased to inform you that your application for your study was granted **Full Approval**. The IRB approval begins today, **April 1, 2013** and terminates on **April 1, 2014**.

Your research documents have been stamped by the IRB to indicate the expiration date of study approval. One copy of the stamped documents is enclosed with this letter and one copy will be retained for our records. **You can only use copies that have been stamped with the GPS IRB expiration date for your research.**

Please note that your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the GPS IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For *any* proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for expedited review and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB. If contact with subjects will extend beyond **April 1, 2014**, a **Continuation or Completion of Review Form** must be submitted at least **one month prior** to the expiration date of study approval to avoid a lapse in approval. These forms can be found on the IRB website at <http://services.pepperdine.edu/irb/irbforms/#Apps>.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will

ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to “policy material” at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DL', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Doug Leigh, Ph.D.  
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB  
Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education & Psychology  
6100 Center Dr. 5th Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Doug.Leigh@pepperdine.edu  
W: 310-568-2389  
F: 310-568-5755

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives  
Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs  
Dr. Michelle Rosensitto, Graduate School of Education and Psychology



## APPENDIX E

## Certificate of Completion Protecting Human Research Participants

**Subject:** Protecting Human Research Participants

**Date:** June 18, 2011 at 5:45 PM PST

**From:** Saved from Safari (Internet)

**Certificate of Completion**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Richard Martin** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 06/18/2011

Certification Number: 654815

## APPENDIX F

Permission to use abridged Job in General Scale



Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Office  
214 Psychology Building  
Department of Psychology  
Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, OH 43403

October 25, 2012

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and family of measures – including the Job In General scale (JiG), abridged Job Descriptive Index (aJDI), abridged Job In General scale (aJiG), Trust in Management scale (TiM), Intent to Quit (ITQ), Stress in General (SiG) scale, and Survey of Work Values, Revised, Form U. (SWV) are owned by Bowling Green State University, copyright 1975-2012.

Permission is hereby granted to **Rick Martin** to use these measures in his or her research.

The aforementioned scales may be administered as many times as needed in this course of this research.

*Chris Chang*

Chris Chang  
JDI Research Assistant  
Tel: 419.372.8247  
Fax: 419.372.6013 [jdi\\_ra@bgsu.edu](mailto:jdi_ra@bgsu.edu)

## APPENDIX G

## Site Approval

Letter of Support

Letter of Support from \_\_\_\_ Company

December 10, 2012

Rick Martin,  
Doctoral Candidate, Organizational Leadership, Pepperdine University

Dear Mr. Martin

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Company, I am writing this letter to confirm our consent to your doctoral dissertation study: Leaders and the Importance of the Manager-Staff Relationship.

As you have explained, the purpose of this study is to understand the importance of the relationship between the frontline Manager and frontline Staff. This study will help to develop an understanding of the effect of this relationship on Staff retention and Staff morale. Any data collected, including the output of the questionnaire will be owned by \_\_\_\_\_ company and used solely for the purpose of completing this study for your doctoral dissertation.

The identity of participants will be kept confidential by you, and original data will be kept in a secure location and then destroyed 5 years following completion of the study. As you have outlined, the expectations of the staffs that agree to participate in your study are as follows:

Signing of Informed Consent form acknowledging that participation in this study is voluntary. Completion of an approximately 10 minute survey questionnaire. I understand the survey questionnaire cannot be scheduled until approval is secured from Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) protecting human subject research participants. Participation by \_\_\_\_ staffs will in fact be voluntary and I cannot assure you their availability or willingness to participate.

Should you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ COMPANY

APPENDIX H

Abridged Job in General Scale

Questions 1 and 2

**People on Your Present Job**

Think of the majority of people with whom you work or meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these people? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

- Y for "Yes" if it describes the group well in almost all cases
- N for "No" if it does not describe them
- ? for "?" if you cannot decide

- \_\_\_\_\_ Being
- \_\_\_\_\_ Slow
- \_\_\_\_\_ Responsible
- \_\_\_\_\_ Serious
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lazy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Frustrating

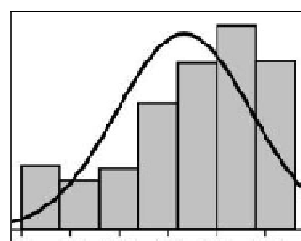
**Job in General**

Think of your job in general. All in all, what is it like most of the time? In the blank beside each word or phrase below write

- Y for "Yes" if it describes your job
- N for "No" if it does not describe it
- ? for "?" if you cannot decide

- \_\_\_\_\_ Good
- \_\_\_\_\_ Unstable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Better than most
- \_\_\_\_\_ Frustrating
- \_\_\_\_\_ Makes me nervous
- \_\_\_\_\_ Easy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enjoyable
- \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

**ABRIDGED  
JOB DESCRIPTIVE  
INDEX**



2009 Revision

including

**Abridged Job in General Scale**

**BGSU**<sup>®</sup>

Bowling Green State University

The Job Descriptive Index,  
© Bowling Green State University  
1975-2005

The Job in General Scale  
© Bowling Green State University  
1962-2009

Abridged Job in General Scale  
Questions 3 and 4

**Work on Present Job**

Think of the work you do at present.  
How well does each of the following  
words or phrases describe your  
work? In the blank beside each word  
or phrase below, write

Y for "Yes" if it describes your work  
N for "No" if it does not describe it  
? for "?" if you cannot decide

- Fascinating
- Satisfying
- Good
- Exciting
- Rewarding
- Uninteresting

**Pay**

Think of the pay you get now. How  
well does each of the following  
words or phrases describe your  
present pay? In the blank beside  
each word or phrase below, write

Y for "Yes" if it describes your pay  
N for "No" if it does not describe it  
? for "?" if you cannot decide

- Barely live on income
- Bad
- Well paid
- Underpaid
- Comfortable
- Enough to live on

Abridged Job in General Scale  
Questions 5 and 6

**Opportunities for Promotion**

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

Y for "Yes" if it describes your opportunities for promotion  
N for "No" if it does not describe them  
? for "?" if you cannot decide

- Good opportunities for promotion
- Opportunities somewhat limited
- Dead-end job
- Good chance for promotion
- Fairly good chance for promotion
- Regular promotions

**Supervision**

Think of the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe this? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

Y for "Yes" if it describes the supervision you get on the job  
N for "No" if it does not describe it  
? for "?" if you cannot decide

- Praises good work
- Tactful
- Influential
- Up to date
- Annoying
- Knows job well

## APPENDIX I

## Demographic Data

Age\_\_\_\_\_

Gender \_\_\_\_\_

Years with the Company\_\_\_\_\_

Highest Level of Education:

- (a.) High School
- (b.) Associate Degree
- (c.) Bachelors Degree
- (d.) Masters Degree
- (e.) Doctorate

Ethnicity

White/Caucasian\_\_\_\_\_

Hispanic/Latino\_\_\_\_\_

Asian/Pacific Islander\_\_\_\_\_

Native American Indian\_\_\_\_\_

Black /African American\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX J

## Script Used to Recruit Subjects

Mr. Richard Martin (I am) a third year Doctoral student in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University as is seeking voluntary participants in his research study.

**Title of the Study:** Leaders and the Importance of the Manager-Staff Relationship

**Overview of the Study:**

The manager-staff relationship sets the tone for the frontline staff and creates an environment of trust. The communication the manager provides is pivotal to helping staffs understand the goals and vision top leadership established. In addition, the positive atmosphere created by this relationship helps to cement the staffs' commitment to the organization and reduces the turnover rate because job satisfaction increases.

**Purpose of the Study:**

The purpose of the study is to examine the perceived nature of manager-staff relationships.

**Population:**

Mr. Martin is looking for voluntary participants who are frontline staffs with no direct reports to them in their job or department hierarchy. Frontline staffs who participate will need to be from departments with greater than five people total. You will not be identified by your name or staff number if you decide to participate in the study. Your participation and individual responses to the study questions will be kept confidential and all data will be reported as aggregate data.

Thank you for your consideration.