Impact of Top Management Consciousness in Communication on Internal Communication Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction and Corporate Performance
Mitsutoshi Furuya*

Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to explore top management consciousness in internal communication and an impact of such consciousness on internal communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and corporate performance. Top management effective communication with employees is the key for business growth. Internal communication satisfaction perceived by an employee was defined in previous literatures and there were many empirical evidences to show positive relationship between internal communication satisfaction and other variables, such as job satisfaction, trust, empowerment, organizational commitment, productivity, and job performance. However, there were little researches to show the reason why internal communication satisfaction was low or high, in relation to top management consciousness, namely, how top management thought, was motivated and performed the communication effectively. Utilizing a concurrent triangulation approach in a mixed method research design, this study identified concepts of top management consciousness in communication and a framework, which explains the relationship among top management consciousness, behavior and process, and internal communication satisfaction. In qualitative study, top management interviews of 6 small and medium-sized Japanese firms were conducted, while Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire ("CSQ") was utilized for quantitative

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study. Synthesizing past researches, including Information processing theory, with the identified concepts and framework, direct and indirect impact of top management consciousness on the resultant satisfaction and corporate performance was obtained as a conclusion.

Keywords
Internal communication satisfaction, Job satisfaction, Corporate performance, CSQ, Information processing theory

1. Introduction
1.1 Background
In recent years, due to global competitions, it is more difficult to differentiate a business strategy, while human resource management is the more focusing point for a firm’s operation. As a performance of a firm is the sum of its employees’ performance, it is fundamental for a top management to solicit employees’ better job performance in the organization. Furthermore, the recent diversity of working styles of Japanese employees, such as a full-time employee, a part-time employee, and an employee dispatched from other company may influence his or her loyalty and/or commitment to the organization. It is more important for business leaders to properly manage and integrate such mixture of employees to one direction and vision.

Communication is the key for such management. Communication in the organization is called as internal communication. Internal communication is a complicated process and consists of top management communication to employees, vertical communication between a supervisor and a subordinate, and horizontal communication among employees in the organization.

Traditionally, in Japanese businessperson-society, “communication through an alcohol drinking after business hours”, so-called “nomini-cation” in Japanese is a lubricant oil in a working place to enhance a teamwork and a collaborative atmosphere. However, resent restructuring and movement of pursuit to higher productivity under global competitions cause less internal communication opportunities in the organization. Employees may be dissatisfied or exhausted with poorer information and larger volume of job than before.

Even under such severe circumstances, it is the fact that one firm grows steadily, while the other suffers from up and down sales. What brought such difference? One
answer is an operational excellence instead of an innovation itself (Collins and Hansen (2011)). Collins and Hansen showed evidences that an innovation was not a key of the success, while a daily discipline in operation was more important for constant growth by a comparative empirical research. In Japan, Konosuke Matsushita said, “People before Product”. Matsushita said, “a company must first learn to produce good human beings before it can produce good products and fulfill its mission.” (Matsushita (1978)), and advocated an importance of gathering wisdom of all employees and utilizing the wisdom for a daily management through communication.

Although there are many factors for a firm growth, the author focuses on the top management consciousness in internal communication. Internal communication, a bonding wire of top management and employees, and among employees, has been studied for many years. Since 1970s, measurement instrument of internal communication satisfaction has been invented. The positive relationship among internal communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, trust, empowerment, organizational commitment, productivity, and job performance have been empirically evidenced in various cases, as described in 2.1. However, previous researches focused on rather the variables relationship itself and there were little researches to explore causes, which yield differences, and reasons why one firm shows high internal communication satisfaction and the other shows low one.

1.2 Research questions and structure of this study

The author explores the causes and reasons, focusing on top management consciousness in internal communication and has research questions as below:

(Research Question)

1. What concepts of a top management consciousness in communication are there in a small to medium-sized firm, which shows high internal communication satisfaction? Are there any commonalities of top management consciousness in such firms? What does top management of such firm notice and care in internal communication?

2. How different are the identified concepts of top management consciousness in communication between a high internal communication satisfaction firm and a low one? Do concepts of top management consciousness explain why internal communication satisfaction of a firm is high or low?

The next chapter starts with a literature review regarding how an internal communication satisfaction study has been developed historically. Basic relationship
among internal communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and corporate performance is reviewed and presented, as well as prevailing measurement instruments of internal communication satisfaction (e.g. Downs and Hazen (1977)) as a survey tool and information processing theory (Daft and Lengel (1986)) as an analysis tool. The author defines top management consciousness in communication and a framework of internal communication satisfaction. A mixed research method, a concurrent triangulation approach (Creswell (2003)) and a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss (1967)) are adopted for data collection and analysis of 6 theoretically sampled small to medium-sized firms. Finally, identified concepts of top management consciousness in communication and an applicability of the proposed framework are discussed for future studies with limitation.

2. Internal communication as a management strategy
2.1 Variables positively relates to internal communication satisfaction

There are many researches in various industries, which empirically showed the positive relationship between internal communication satisfaction and other variables. Those include job satisfaction (Downs and Hazen (1977), Kongchan (1985), Pincus (1986), Gregson (1987), Goris (2006), Farr-Wharton and Brunetto (2007), Carriere and Bourque (2009)), trust (Zeffane, Tipu and Ryan (2011), Amine, Chakor and Alaoui (2012)), empowerment (Loughman, Snipes and Pitts (2009)), organizational commitment (Putti, Aryee and Phua (1990), Varona (1996), Carriere and Bourque (2009)), productivity (Clampit and Downs (1993), Hargie, Tourish and Wilson (2002), Farr-Wharton and Brunetto (2007)), and job performance (Pincus (1986), Goris (2006)). Among such studies, the relationship between internal communication satisfaction and job satisfaction has been the most focused area and many researchers in U.S.A., Europe, Australia and Asia provided quantitative data through surveys in each country. Owing to such previous researchers’ dedication, it is evident that job satisfaction is explained by internal communication satisfaction over 50% of variance (Furuya (2010)).

There are also many researches regarding job satisfaction (or employee satisfaction), which showed an indirect positive relationship between job satisfaction and corporate performance empirically. Typical mediators, which mediate job satisfaction (an antecedent) and corporate performance (a consequence) are organizational commitment (Rashid, Sambasivan and Johari (2003), Amine et. al (2012)), employee loyalty (Eskildsen and Nuessler (2000)), and customer satisfaction (Van der Wiele, Boselie, and Hesselink (2002), Fazlzadeh, Faryabi, Darabi and Zahedi (2012)).
Reviewing the above literatures, the author found that internal communication satisfaction has a direct positive relationship with job satisfaction and job satisfaction has an indirect positive relationship with corporate performance, mediated by organizational commitment, loyalty, and customer satisfaction. In summary, corporate performance (a consequence) has a relationship with internal communication satisfaction (1st antecedent), job satisfaction (2nd antecedent), organizational commitment, loyalty, and customer satisfaction (collectively “mediators”). Figure 1 explains the relationship, where a dotted line indicates an indirect positive relationship, mediated by mediators. As Job satisfaction is explained by internal communication satisfaction over 50%, the author presumes that internal communication satisfaction is a root key influencer to the final corporate performance and it is important for top management to control internal communication effectively.

**Figure 1. Internal Communication Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction and Corporate Performance**

2.2 Measurement instrument of internal communication satisfaction

In 1970s, many researchers mainly in U.S.A. proposed various survey instruments of internal communication satisfaction through quantitative and qualitative methodology (Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire; Downs and Hazen (1977), International Communication Association Audit Survey; Goldhaber (1976), Organizational Communication Development Audit Questionnaire; Wiio (1975), Organizational Communication Questionnaire; Robers and O’Reilly (1973)). Since 1980s, many case studies and surveys for comparison have been conducted empirically to validate each instrument (Greenbaum, Clampit and Willihnganz (1988), Zwije-Koning and de Jong (2007), Hargie and Tourish (2009), Carriere and Bourque, (2009)). The author presented that CSQ was the most suitable measurement instrument for the internal communication satisfaction survey in Japan through a validation by Japanese sample, total 115 employees in 15 Japanese firms (Furuya (2012)).

2.3 CSQ, a framework for entire internal communication

CSQ defines 8 dimensions as below (Downs (1988), Downs and Adrian, (2004)).
(8 dimensions of CSQ)

Satisfaction with____

1. Communication climate (CC)  5. Horizontal communication (HC)
2. Communication with supervisors (SC)  6. Organizational perspective (OP)
3. Organizational integration (OI)  7. Communication with subordinates (Sub)
4. Media quality (MQ)  8. Personal feedback (PF)

Top management broadcasts messages to employees ("OP"), which includes corporate values, vision, direction, target, budget, financial statement, and change. In parallel, top management leads the corporate integrity to cultivate "CC" and improves "MQ". In each division, a general manager sends messages ("OI"), including a divisional vision, direction, target, budget, financial statement, and change. Communication between a supervisor and a subordinate describes as a subordinate's perspective ("SC") and as a supervisor's perspective ("Sub"). "PF" is a person-to-person communication to feed back evaluation of a subordinate's job performance. Communication in peers is "HC", which may be intra-divisional and/or inter-divisional. OP, CC and MQ are related to top management communication and OI, SC, Sub, PF and HC are related to middle management communication with front line staff and staff-level communication. Also, OP, OI, CC and MQ are segmented to informational communication ("IC") for information transmit and receive, and SC, Sub, HC and PF to relational communication ("RC") for relationship building.

2.4 Information processing theory, a framework for top management communication

Regarding informational communication, there was an important contribution by Daft and Lengel (1986) and Legel and Daft (1988), where uncertainty and equivocality were defined as 2 fundamental forces of internal communication in transmitting and receiving information in the organization. Daft and Lengel advocated an organization should be designed to provide information with suitable richness to reduce equivocality, as well as to provide sufficient amount of data to reduce uncertainty, and showed empirical data to validate their theory.

Media selection, considering the media richness, is a key concept to select a suitable media for communication at every incident, which top management and a manager encounter in daily business. Physical presence such as a face-to-face meeting has the highest media richness, while impersonal static media such as a flyer, a bulletin, and a generalized computer report has the lowest. Daft and Lengel emphasized importance of a
face-to-face meeting for top management communication to extend his presence throughout the organization with emotional intensity and to implement a company strategy, with a powerful image that would change employees' behavior.

Information processing theory and media selection framework will be utilized to analyze concepts of top management consciousness in Chapter 4.2.

2.5 Top management consciousness in communication

The author defines top management consciousness in communication as an antecedent of internal communication satisfaction (a consequence). Consciousness is psychologically referred to as below:

“Consciousness has two aspects: By virtue of conscious awareness, we gain introspective access to the mental states – the cognitions, emotions, and motives - that cause us to behave the way we do; and by virtue of conscious control, we again voluntary control over the mental process that generate those states – and, as a consequence, our behavior as well.” (John, Robins and Pervin (2008))

In this study, the author defines top management consciousness in communication as below: a mindset of top management regarding internal communication, which motivates his communication behavior and controls his communication process. Such behavior and process are perceived as top management communication ways, styles and patterns. The relationship is indicated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Top Management Consciousness, Behavior/process and Employee Satisfaction in Communication

There have been little researches to study top management communication in terms of his consciousness referring to his communication behavior and process. Asif and Sargeant (2000), Saini (2001), Wieand (2002), Rhodes, Pitts and Kamery (2003) performed studies referring to an organizational structure and communication process, and presented models to describe components of internal communication process. However such researches have not focused on a consciousness in communication, namely why they performed such communication behavior and process, perceived as their unique ways, styles and patterns.
In Japan, “Manage the communication field (“Ba”) advocated by Itami (1999, 2005) is famous. Observing a communication style of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. and Seven & i Group, Itami presented a concept of Ba. Top management prepares Ba to solicit open internal communication and manages the process of Ba for positive and active internal communication. Sakane (2012) had achieved dramatic transformation of Komatsu Ltd. by his unique direct communication style to employees. He advocated importance of a positive message and a proactive communication performance to involve employees.

Above are good examples in large organizations, where top management had some intentions or consciousness to move the organization to change or forward via communication behavior and process. They may have a unique consciousness, which motivates their communication styles and patterns. Top management consciousness in communication is a psychological concept, which may exist in a deep place of top management mentality and affects a communication behavior and a process.

3. Method
3.1 Research design

A concurrent triangulation approach in a mixed method was adopted in this study. Qualitative research was performed to identify concepts of top management consciousness in communication through top management interviews of 6 firms. Quantitative research by CSQ in Japanese version (Furuya (2012)) was utilized for a triangulation purpose to validate the qualitative data analysis. The study was conducted in 2 phases. In the first phase, 6 firms were segmented by 2 groups, one high CSQ and the other low CSQ. In the second phase, key and common concepts of top management consciousness in communication were identified using the interview data, based on a grounded theory approach. 6 firms were selected through theoretical sampling, mainly from Mitsubishi-UFJ Junior Entrepreneur Seminar Group member firms (over 400 small-to-medium sized, financially healthy, owner or family companies). 6 sample firms were selected in terms of corporate performance, a sales growth in recent 5 years defined as below:

- High performer : steadily growing
- Middle performer: once suffered (sales down) at Lehman’s shock in 2008, but already recovered or steadily recovering to the past peak
- Low performer : staying, or once suffered and still struggling to recover (up and down)

The performance was confirmed in the interview and Table 1 shows the profile.
Table 1. Profiles of 6 sample firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Firm A</th>
<th>Firm B</th>
<th>Firm C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales (FY 2012.3)</td>
<td>1.1 bill yen</td>
<td>1.5 bill yen</td>
<td>3.2 bill yen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee (FY 2012.3)</td>
<td>40 (full-time)</td>
<td>100 (full-time)</td>
<td>85 (full-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 (part-time)</td>
<td>200 (part-time)</td>
<td>171 (part-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Original fusuma, a Japanese sliding door manufacturer by corrugated cardboards</td>
<td>Juku, preparatory school services from elementary to high school students, over 20 sites</td>
<td>Nation-wide toy retail chain stores, over 30 sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.Q. Place</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Saitama</td>
<td>Saitama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Private</td>
<td>Private company</td>
<td>Private company</td>
<td>Private company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of CEO</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO appointment</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation of CEO</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Firm D</td>
<td>Firm E</td>
<td>Firm F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales (FY 2012.3)</td>
<td>3.0 bill yen</td>
<td>0.7 bill yen</td>
<td>6.3 bill yen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee (FY 2012.3)</td>
<td>130 (full-time)</td>
<td>40 (full-time)</td>
<td>248 (full-time)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 (contracted)</td>
<td>50 (part-time)</td>
<td>41 (part-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Automobile parts manufacturer for commercial vehicles</td>
<td>Logistics, trucking &amp; delivery company</td>
<td>Specialized industrial glasses/mirrors manufacturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Tochigi</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Chiba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Private</td>
<td>Private company</td>
<td>Private company</td>
<td>JASDAQ in 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<td>Age of CEO</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO appointment</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation of CEO</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Procedure

In the quantitative phase by CSQ, the author handed over the paper-questionnaire to top management of 6 firms to request to collect answers from a mixture of directors,
general managers, managers, junior managers and front-line staffs. The answered-paper was mailed back to the author for analysis. Data collection and analysis were performed from June to September 2012. The returned data covered 15% to 33% of total employees in each firm, where 35% (Firm D) to 95% (Firm F) of answers were those from managerial staffs.

In the qualitative phase, based on a semi-structured interview guide, the author conducted top management interview, and asked ways, styles and patterns of top management communication to employees and the reason why they performed such communication behavior and process. Especially, their caring and focusing points, concerns, backgrounds, and intentions in daily internal communication with employees, were clarified through the interviews. The interviews were recorded by an IC-recorder for dictation. The dictated texts were used for an analysis purpose to identify key concepts of top management consciousness in communication.

4. Results
4.1 CSQ result and analysis
Scores of internal communication satisfaction (“ICS”), informational communication (“IC”), relational communication (“RC”), and job satisfaction (“JS”) were calculated. ICS, IC and RC are average scores of respective questionnaire in the communication satisfaction part and JS is an average score of overall job satisfaction. Those were calculated as below:

ICS = average of 8 dimensions (7 points Lickert-scale, very satisfied: 7)
IC = average of OP, OI, CC and MQ (7 points Lickert-scale, very satisfied: 7)
RC = average of SC, Sub, HC and PF (7 points Lickert-scale, very satisfied: 7)
JS = average of JS (7 points Lickert-scale, very satisfied: 7)

Table 2 shows the result. Figure 3 shows a relationship between ICS and JS, where the positive relationship was confirmed; the lowest Firm F (ICS, JS: 3.4, 3.8) to the highest Firm A (ICS, JS: 4.2, 5.2). The higher 3 Firms A, B and C are segmented as Group H, while the lower 3 Firms D, E and F as Group L. An overall score set of Group H is calculated as (IC, RC, ICS: 4.0, 4.0, 4.0) and (IC, RC, ICS: 3.3, 3.7, 3.5) for Group L. The difference of Group H and Group L is (diff-IC, diff-RC, diff-ICS: 0.7, 0.3, 0.5). The difference of IC was the biggest and OP, top management communication, in IC was the dominant (diff-OP: 1.1). This will be discussed in 5.
Table 2. CSQ result, 6 firm comparative data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firm</th>
<th>JS</th>
<th>OP</th>
<th>OI</th>
<th>CC</th>
<th>MQ</th>
<th>IC</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>Sub</th>
<th>HC</th>
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<th>RC</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
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<td>4.2</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. very dissatisfied; 7, very satisfied; M, mean; SD, Standard Deviation; Ave, Average of 6 firms
A-C, average of Firm A, B, C; D-F, average of Firm D, E, F; Diff, difference between A-C & D-F

Figure 3. Relationship between ICS and JS

![Relationship between ICS and JS](image)
4.2 Interview results and analysis

Through 45-60 minutes of interviews with top management, rich contents of CEO’s voice were obtained. Analyzing the voices of Group H CEOs, 4 concepts of top management consciousness were identified as per Table 3. Table 3 also shows voices of Group L CEOs related to each concept as a comparison.

“Let employees commit corporate values and customer orientation” causes a behavior and a process, “create a credo and teach repeatedly” and “repeat a message of customer orientation”. Both Group H CEOs and Group L CEOs created corporate values and a credo, but only Group H CEOs were zealous to let employees convince those. Further, Group H CEOs committed customer orientation and were eager to engender front-line staffs to take actions in accordance with hospitality to increase customer satisfaction. CEO of Firm C mentioned;

“Our corporate value is hospitality.” “We should contribute to the customer.” “We should find our own job by ourselves.” (CEO of Firm C)

“Think an employee’s individual successful job and life” causes “coach personally and directly” and “encourage an employee self-reliance”. Group H CEOs had a clear vision how an individual employee would have a happy life and were zealous to inspire and encourage an employee to be proud of his or her job and be reliant on himself or herself by their coaching. They enjoyed to energize an employee and to live together. CEO of Firm B mentioned;

“I don’t regard an employee as just a worker or a piece. I hire an employee as my colleague to work together.” (CEO of Firm B)

“Know each other among employees” causes “arrange direct talk opportunities among employees (“Ba”) and “exchange opinions and values among employees”. Group H CEOs arranged Ba for employees to know each other frankly and strengthened importance to exchange views and opinions. CEO of Firm C clearly mentioned his intention to arrange Ba;

“I arranged Ba, desiring employees could talk face-to-face each other.” “They became to be curious about other employees and started to ask personal questions each other.” “After that, communication among employees had improved very much.” (CEO of Firm C)

CEO of Firm A was unique and utilized a volunteer work as Ba. He mentioned;

“All employees visited to Tohoku area, where the east Japan big earthquake in March 11th, 2011 heavily damaged, and participated in a volunteer work by my order. Though some employees showed hesitation to participate, their hearts were surely moved after the
volunteer work. They discussed spontaneously and disclosed their deep feeling each other without hesitation. I was so surprised with their such big change before and after this volunteer work”. (CEO of Firm A)

“Avoid equivocality and uncertainty with employees” causes “make a speech with passion to all staff in one place”, “hold a frequent face-to-face meeting”, and “talk in a concrete manner and use plain words”. Group H CEOs preferred a face-to-face meeting to an email, even if it would be a big or small meeting, by broadcasting rich information and a message in an all-staff meeting and a regular face-to-face meeting. Group H CEOs held a frequent face-to-face meeting with employees to solve a problem and made a passionate speech to all staff, using plain words and simple sentences. Group H CEOs had a special attention to direct communication with employees. CEO of Firm A mentioned;

“I am so caring of talking to employees, words by words. I don’t use emails and try to have a face-to-face meeting. I am afraid that employees may misunderstand my message. It is very important to talk with them, seeing their face so that I can notice whether they understand or not.” (CEO of Firm A)

Meanwhile Group L CEOs didn't show such special concerns about an all-staff meeting and/or a face-to-face meeting. CEO of Firm F mentioned that he changed his attitude and paid more attention to external communication, just before IPO to JASDAQ market. Corporate performance of Firm F started to go downward after IPO.

“Honestly speaking, time for internal communication was so little during and after IPO period. I knew it, but I couldn’t share my time internally.” “I walked around the factory for 2 to 3 hours every day before IPO. I memorized pictures of employees’ face and said hello when I saw their face in the factory. It is the past story at such time.” (CEO of Firm F)

Identified 4 concepts of top management consciousness will be discussed in the next chapter.
Table 3. CEO voices and the identified concepts of top management consciousness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top management consciousness</th>
<th>Behavior and process</th>
<th>Group H CEO words</th>
<th>Group L CEO words (Comparison with Group H)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Let an employee commit corporate values and customer orientation | Create a credo and teach repeatedly | - Values should be shared between CEO and employee. (Firm A)  
- I talk about the ideal company to employee. (Firm B)  
- Employee read the credo together in a morning meeting. (Firm C) | - We have no credo. (Firm D)  
- I created credo and share with employee. (Firm E)  
- I created corporate values in 1995, but seized to explain the importance since 2006. (Firm F) |
| | Repeat a message of customer orientation | - We should give values to a customer. (Firm A)  
- You should do a good job to a customer. (Firm B)  
- You should consider hospitality. (Firm C) | - We should meet the delivery schedule. (Firm D) |
| Think an employee's individual successful job and life | Coach personally and directly | - CEO should be a manager of a football team. (Firm A)  
- I coach directly to the employee time to time. (Firm C) | - I used a big energy with employee 10 years ago. (Firm E)  
- I was zealous before IPO, but not now. (Firm F) |
| | Encourage an employee self-reliance | - You should think by yourself, live by yourself to be responsible for the society. (Firm A)  
- You should be successful through your job. (Firm B)  
- You should find your own job by yourself. (Firm C) | - You should understand your job is a good job to the society. (Firm E)  
- You should enjoy your exciting company's life. (Firm F) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know each other among employees</th>
<th>Arrange direct talk opportunities among employees (&quot;Ba&quot;)</th>
<th>Exchange opinions and values among employees</th>
<th>Avoid equivocality and uncertainty with employees</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I arrange Ba to talk directly and frankly. (Firm A)</td>
<td>- Volunteer work together (Firm A)</td>
<td>- 2 times a year, 2-3 hours hot speech (Firm A)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I meet and talk with small number of staff. (Firm B)</td>
<td>- Visit each sites 6 times a year (Firm B)</td>
<td>- 5 times a year, including an off-site, over night meeting. (Firm B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I arrange Ba to talk among employee together. (Firm C)</td>
<td>- Visit even local sites 2 times a year (Firm C)</td>
<td>- 4 times a year, including dense communication days, an off-site, over night meeting. (Firm C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- You should notice spontaneously your neighbor's problems in peers (Firm D)</td>
<td>- I rarely make a direct contact with employee. (Firm D)</td>
<td>- only 10-20 minutes speech monthly. (Firm D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I made a 2 to 3 hours walk around in a factory before IPO. (Firm F)</td>
<td>- I want to improve the relationship with employee. (Firm F)</td>
<td>- No all-staff meeting. (Firm E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>- 5-10 min. speech monthly. (Firm F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exchange opinions and values among employees</td>
<td>Make a speech with passion to all staff in one place</td>
<td>Hold a frequent face-to-face meeting</td>
<td>Talk in a concrete manner and use plain words</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- a regular meeting with 5-6 people. (Firm A)</td>
<td>- a regular meeting at each site including &quot;nomination&quot;, alcohol drinking. (Firm C)</td>
<td>- To avoid misunderstanding; talk carefully looking at employee's face. (Firm A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- a regular meeting at each site including &quot;nomination&quot;, alcohol drinking. (Firm C)</td>
<td>- I don't participate meetings (Firm D, F)</td>
<td>- I am cautious for individual understanding. (Firm B)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- I have an ad-hoc meeting to solve the problem. (Firm E)</td>
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<td>- I talk with comprehensive words for everybody. (Firm C)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- I am afraid of employee's misunderstanding of my thought. (Firm E)</td>
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5. Discussion

5.1 Internal communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and corporate performance

As explained in 2.1, internal communication satisfaction relates directly to job satisfaction and indirectly to corporate performance. Referring to 4.1, the positive relationship between internal communication satisfaction and job satisfaction was confirmed by CSQ.

Regarding corporate performance, the author found that Group H contained of 2 high performers and 1 middle performer, while 2 low performers and 1 middle performer for Group L. Middle performers, Firm A and Firm D, were once suffered in sales at Lehman's shock but recovered after that. CEO of Firm A explained their steady but rather slow recovery, due to an external environment, a continuous severe and cool domestic house industry market. Owing to a CEO’s transformation project and his positive involvement and strong messages yielded high CSQ. Meanwhile, CEO of Firm D explained their recent quick recovery in sales, due to a sudden increasing demand of commercial vehicles from Asian emerging markets. The CEO didn’t actively communicate directly with employee in front, but rather empowered middle managers. Such style yielded the low CSQ. Considering above, a tendency that a high CSQ firm showed high corporate performance and low CSQ firm, low corporate performance was confirmed.

5.2 Top management consciousness in communication and its impact

As described in 4.2, 4 concepts of top management consciousness were identified:

(Concept 1) Let an employee commit corporate values and customer orientation
(Concept 2) Think an employee’s individual successful job and life
(Concept 3) Know each other among employees
(Concept 4) Avoid equivocality and uncertainty with employees

Group H CEOs had above as strong common consciousness, while Group L CEOs didn’t. This is an apparent difference between Group H and Group L.

Concept 1 causes CEO’s strong and repeated message regarding customer orientation. Group L CEOs didn’t mention customer orientation explicitly. As explained in 2.1, corporate performance is affected by job satisfaction via customer satisfaction, a mediator. Concept 1 may differentiate corporate performance between Group H and Group L, via customer satisfaction.

Regarding Concept 2, two CEOs of Group H mentioned their current efforts of active communication through direct coaching, while two CEOs of 2 Group L
mentioned they did in the past but not now. Group H CEOs brought a good corporate culture to respect an employee, being eager to let an employee think his or her successful life as a social entity. Such culture may give an employee a psychological effect, where he or she feels to be cared and loved by CEO and the firm. Concept 2 may affect corporate performance, via trust, loyalty and/or motivation.

Regarding Concept 3, an apparent difference between Group H and Group L was top management consciousness of Ba. Two CEOs of Group H mentioned Ba explicitly, who controlled and managed Ba intentionally. Well-understandings each other owing to Ba brought an employee internal communication satisfaction. Surely, the gap of HC in CSQ was the biggest in RC, as per Table 2. Concept 3 may affect internal communication satisfaction, mainly on relational communication.

Concept 4, explainable by the information processing theory in 2.4, may bring the strongest effect on CSQ, because OP, top management communication, was the biggest gap between Group H and Group L. Group H CEOs utilized rich face-to-face media and could transmit their clear and important message and decision to employees’ heart, caring with possible equivocality and uncertainty. Concept 4 may affect mainly on informational communication.

Through above discussion, the author found that 4 identified concepts had affected internal communication satisfaction and other resultant satisfactions, although the strength of the influence of each concept to resultant satisfactions should be clarified in future researches.

5.3 CSQ as a probe of internal communication management

CSQ, utilized in this study was found to be very effective to segment high ICS firms against low one. By reviewing obtained scores, top management can recognize week points to improve. In addition to a snap shot, a longitudinal CSQ survey in a firm may bring a more precise data of ICS, as it will bring clear pictures of periodical tendency and change of an internal communication atmosphere. Effects of any changes of CEO’s communication behavior and process will be measured as a score explicitly and CEO will be able to think over how to improve his communication.

5.4 Framework of internal communication satisfaction

Referring to 5.2, the proposed framework, Figure 2 was found to explain a structure of internal communication satisfaction, namely why one firm’s CSQ is high and others low, and how such high/low CSQ are brought to the firm, clarifying concepts of top
management consciousness in communication. Top management consciousness causes top management visible behavior and process and then an employee’s perspective of his or her satisfaction level is affected by top management actions.

5.5 Maturity and scale of organizations

A maturity and a scale of 6 firms were different. Firm F, an only public company, had the highest maturity and the largest scale. For example, Firm A, D and F in manufacturing, employee numbers were 40, 138, and 248 as a full-time worker, while ICS in Table 3 were 4.7, 3.7, and 3.2. Firm F was 6 to 7 times larger than Firm A. It may happen that the organizational scale becomes the larger, CSQ has a tendency of lower. It is evident that a distance between CEO and an employee is larger for a bigger organization. That may affect a density of the internal communication and resultant lower CSQ. Middle management communication is a key in such occasion. CEO of growing firms should be more cautious about establishing a structure of effective communication by the middle, a possible evangelist of the CEO in communication, during its transition from small to medium, then to large, otherwise the growth engine will be stalled.

5.6 Limitations and future research directions

The limitation of this study is described in 3 major areas. The fist, the number of sample is limited. Further studies are required to secure a reliability and validity of the proposed framework. The second is an industry bias. CSQ score, an absolute number, may be differentiated by operational difference in each industry. Simple comparison by score may contain of some unique industry bias. The third, the data in this study is a snap shot. As a daily internal communication operation reflects the internal communication satisfaction, a longitudinal data is necessary to probe any changes of employees’ perspective as a result of CEO’s proactive communication performance. A middle leader may be a possible triangulation to increase data reliability, because he may have a unique perspective to top management communication.

There are 3 directions of future studies. The first is to evaluate the variance of identified concepts to CSQ. The second is to improve CSQ by adding questionnaires to measure satisfaction with media selection, identified its importance by Concept 4. The third is to explore a personality of CEO, which may affect his consciousness in communication.
6. Conclusion

This study explored the impact of top management consciousness in communication on internal communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and corporate performance. 4 concepts of top management consciousness were identified by a grounded theory approach of CEO interviews of 6 firms. By applying the identified concepts to the proposed framework of internal communication satisfaction as per Figure 2, the framework was found to be suited for the data. Top management consciousness affected his communication behavior and process, and then internal communication satisfaction. Meanwhile, the positive relationship between internal communication satisfaction and job satisfaction was confirmed by CSQ quantitatively. Further, it was found that high/low CSQ firms were high/low corporate performance firms in the qualitative study. Together with a literature review, the author concluded that top management consciousness impacted on internal communication satisfaction, job satisfaction and corporate performance directly and/or indirectly.

Researchers may utilize the framework of internal communication to analyze cause and reason why internal communication satisfaction of a firm is high or low. Concepts of top management consciousness in communication are usable for the analysis.

Top management may utilize CSQ as an effective probe, and concepts of the consciousness for analysis, in order to improve his internal communication.

Under a current Japanese economical situation, each firm suffers from global competition and/or local market shrink. Top management is required to manage employees effectively and to direct them towards the goal without equivocality and uncertainty. Internal communication by top management initiative is one of the first strategic maneuvers to change the corporate performance.

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