HOW A MANAGER’S COMMUNICATION STYLE AFFECTS AN EMPLOYEE’S JOB SATISFACTION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

COMMUNICATION

MAY 2022

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Keywords: communication styles, communication skills, managers, employee motivation, employee job satisfaction
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Abstract

This research study gains a better understanding and examines the type of communication style that a manager uses to motivate their employees to improve job satisfaction within the workplace. This study uses both a mixed methods approach of close-ended surveys administered with Qualtrics. Due to the COVID pandemic and challenges meeting face-to-face with the participants in the in-depth interviews, the interviews were facilitated through the use of a video technology platform such as Zoom to support the hypotheses and answer the research questions pertaining to how employees’ perceptions of their manager’s communication styles shape their job satisfaction within the workplace.

Close-ended survey results showed that the passive communication style was negatively associated with job satisfaction, whereas the assertive communication style was positively associated with job satisfaction. Also, thematic analyses of qualitative in-depth interviews showed that leading by example in communication, communicating expectations clearly to subordinates, openness in communication, and managers supporting their employees were factors that helped employees to feel satisfied in their jobs. Implications of these findings are discussed.
1. Introduction

Many studies have underscored the importance of examining how management styles impact employee motivation and job satisfaction. The term motivation is related to an employee’s job satisfaction, purpose for coming to work each day, and their overall attitude toward work after exchanging in communication with their manager (Kroth, 2007). Whereas Locke (1976) articulates that the meaning of job satisfaction is when an employee focuses on a sense of a common purpose within the workplace. Caldarescu (2022) articulates that employee job satisfaction is an emotional state that is unable to be measured, but is demonstrated by the employee’s work behaviors, and work performance (p. 2). In order for an employee to experience job satisfaction, the employee needs to find meaningful work where they demonstrate enthusiasm and interest in their work. Clampitt and Downs (1993) indicate that manager communication and employee communication are two important attributes that interacted the most significantly with job satisfaction. Most importantly, one key aspect of a leader’s communication style is how they communicate with their employees.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 85% employed were managers in 2020 that had people reporting to them within an organization. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) found from a survey, confirmed the adage that employees leave managers not companies, determining that 84 percent of employees within the United States report that poorly trained managers generate large amounts of unnecessary work and stress. Additionally, in the survey it was found that 57 percent of U.S. workers indicate that managers would benefit from training on how to be a better people manager, as well as 50 percent of the U.S. workers feel that their own job satisfaction would improve if their manager received additional training in
people management skills. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S workers feel that the top 5 skills that managers could improve were communicating effectively 41%, developing and training the team 38%, managing time and delegating 37%, cultivating a positive and inclusive team culture 35%, and managing team job satisfaction 35%. Clearly, the top skill for managers to improve is communicating effectively with their employees.

The communication interaction is a critical point between the manager and the employee and depending on how the manager articulates their communication style to the employee during the conversation will impact the outcome of the employee’s job satisfaction (Dasgupta et al., 2013, p. 174). The outcome of the manager and employee communication could be a delicate situation that will either motivate the employee or could be a deal breaker for the employee to look for other opportunities to provide their services either within the company or outside of the company (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). High turnover of employees and retraining is very expensive to corporations, and they should strive to do their best to retain highly motivated and high performing employees (Dasgupta et al., 2013, p. 174).

As such, this research study explores what type of manager communication styles motivate and inspire employees to want to come to work every day and have high job satisfaction. Specifically, this study adds to the growing body of organizational communication research in the following ways. First, unlike previous studies (e.g., Dasgupta et al., 2013) which have used management communication styles as mediating variables, this study examines the various management communication styles as direct predictors of job satisfaction. Second, unlike many previous research studies that have utilized one methodological approach (e.g., Bicer, 2020; Dasgupta et al., 2013), this research study relies on both close-ended surveys and in-
depth interviews to obtain a more nuanced and valid picture of how employee management styles shape job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizations as Demographically Diverse Entities

The United States is a melting pot of diverse cultures and companies are composed of many different types of ethnicities that make-up managers and employees within an organization. There are many different communication styles between managers and employees, as well as cultural differences either from an individualistic or collectivistic culture. There are gender and generational differences between managers and employees.

With the vast array of different cultures and ethnicities within the workplace, there are also a wide range of age groups and generations that work and communicate together on a daily basis. Francis and Hoefel (2018) state that there is a large population in the workforce that are the baby boomer age group that were born between 1946 to 1965 that may be reporting to a manager that is from a different generation such as: Generation X born between 1965 to 1980, Generation Y Millennials born between 1981 to 1997, Generation Z born between 1998 to 2015, and Zillennials born between 2016 to present (p.2). In the year of 2021 during COVID and multi-cultures and multiple generations are working together in the workplace, there is a strong need for improving communication styles to help improve the workplace culture to help cultivate and build strong working relationships that will help motivate the employees to be happier and provide high quality products to their customers. Each employee wants to feel valued and have the ear of their manager to feel like they are making a difference and are doing work that is meaningful with a purpose (Flynn, 2016, p. 7). There is a saying that employees typically do not leave their jobs at the workplace, they generally leave their managers (Flynn, 2016, p. 25).
2.2 Transformational and Transactional Managers

The type of manager and their communication styles are important to the success of the employee’s future at the company. Casey and Grzywacz (2008) state that there are two distinct types of managers. There are Transformational managers that “create a different working environment, increase the visibility of company goals, improve employee job satisfaction, and motivate employees to put the best interest of the company over their own interests. The Transactional managers reward, and discipline employees based on their job satisfaction (p. 139).” There is much more alignment with Transformational managers and managers with assertive communication styles than with Transactional managers. Transformational managers have more empathy, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness. Based on the varying degree of managers and employees from different types of cultures with different communication styles, it is critical for employees to be assigned to managers with similar communication styles so that they are more than likely to thrive and be more motivated at work.

2.3 Manager-Subordinate Communication

The working relationship with a subordinate’s manager is critical to the success of the subordinate, as well as their manager within an organization (Callan, 1993, p. 14). An employee’s relationship with their manager is an important factor in determining whether an employee feels motivated and being more satisfied with their desire to stay employed within the organization (Callan, 1993, p. 14). How can a manager help a subordinate feel motivated and satisfied within an organization? Hatfield and Huseman (1982) found that congruence in manager-subordinate communication correlated with subordinates’ higher level of job satisfaction by simply how a manager communicated with them.
There was study by Callan (1993) where there was research with manager-subordinate perceptions about same-sex and opposite-sex dyads. The research consisted of male and female managers adopting a relationship-oriented management style, instead of a task-oriented management style with their subordinates (Callan, 1993, p. 15). As well as a study on the influence of subordinates’ perceptions of communication and the compatibility of the manager-subordinate perceptions and the subordinates’ levels of satisfaction with their work within the organization (Callan, 1993, p. 15). The study found that the male and female managers had the same perceptions about the quantity of communication that they provided to their subordinates, but the subordinates' perception of the quantity of communication by their managers were much different. It was found that male subordinates who had female managers felt they had more opportunities to discuss their opinions than the female subordinates who were under male and female managers (Callan, 1993, p. 24). It was found by La Rouche and Ryan (1984) that one reason could be the relationship-oriented style by the female managers where they demonstrate care, informality, and more personal attention to their subordinates. Watson (1988) articulates those male subordinates are encouraged by female managers with their use of participative style of management where the female managers encourage their subordinates in problem-solving activities and styles of discussions. Whereas the female subordinates felt that their male and female managers gave them few opportunities for discussion and fewer opportunities to provide their opinions to their managers (Callan, 1993, p. 24). The female subordinates felt confused getting direction from their female managers because these managers combined both task and person-oriented management styles. According to Mayes (1979), the female subordinates also disagreed with their male managers because these managers adopted more of a task-oriented management style, which the female subordinates perceived as being aggressive, competitive,
and less interested in the female subordinates’ opinions. Basically, the study indicated that the subordinates who were more satisfied with their jobs, had the perception that they had more opportunities for discussion with their managers, more recognition of their opinions and greater opportunities for self-disclosure with their managers (Callan, 1993, p. 25).

Osborne and Hammoud (2017) articulate that when productivity by an employee has been decreasing, one factor could be related to negative interpersonal behaviors between employees and their manager (p. 51). Due to a deficiency in effective communication between managers and their employees, it was found from Bersin (2014) that only 13% of the global employees are fully engaged within the workplace. Managers within the workplace that utilize effective communication to their employees experience higher levels of productivity and employees with higher morale.

It was found from Welch (2012) that effective communication increases the positive bond between manager and employee and improves the employee’s success within the organization. When managers have effective communication styles that resonate with their employees, this improves the employee’s job satisfaction and morale within the workplace. Managers that demonstrate communication styles that are effective to the employee are perceived by the employee to support good interpersonal interactions (Lwehabura & Matovelo, 2000). Such employees tend to ascribe positive traits such as honesty, objectivity, openness, tolerance, accuracy, self-expression, and respect for self and others to such managers.

Although this study does not derive research questions or hypotheses from any given theory, it is important to acknowledge that certain key communication theories explain that the ways in which managers communicate with subordinates could result in varied workplace outcomes, depending on the manager’s communication style.
For example, the motivating Language Theory (MLT) is a model that understands how managers communicate with their employees impacts at the workplace (Sullivan, 1988). There was a study of 164 nursing staff within a government health care facility located in the southeastern United States found that a manager’s use of motivating language was strongly related to employee’s job satisfaction and job satisfaction (Mayfield et al, 1998, p. 237). According to Densten et al, (2013) when a manager is able to develop a variety of communication style approaches within their specific industries, they will be able to have better outcomes with their employees (p. 236). For example, managers' communication style approach within the service industry is much more different than management communication being used in corporate finance, education, health, or law. Similarly, manager communication styles are different by other demographics such as gender, age, organization size, location either domestic or international (Mohr and Wolfram, 2008). In a research study measuring gender differences in leadership styles and management skills conducted by Burke and Collins (2001), it was found that females reported higher perceived effectiveness in the management skills of communicating, coaching, and developing their employees within the workplace (p. 252). There are many communication styles variables regarding demographics that are critical to be effective between the manager and their employees.

Furthermore, according to the Leader Member Exchange (LMX) model, managers have leadership relationships with employees where there are daily interactions and communication exchanges where the leader communicates instructions, orders, explanations, inquiries, reports, coordination, motivational messages, and vision sharing to the employees (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). During the current days of COVID, these types of communication exchanges by the leader to the employees are by video web conferencing with technology platforms such as Zoom,
emails, instant messaging, phone calls, meetings, and face-to-face. Brown, Paz-Aparicio and Revilla (2019) indicate that the employees’ perception of highly effective leaders, have excellent interpersonal and communication skills (p. 233). Also, leaders with strong interpersonal and communication skills make an impression on the employees that they have a level of empathy, friendliness, politeness, and supportiveness to the needs of the employees (Karasek et al, 1982). When a leader or manager is transparent within their communication to their employees, it strengthens their integrity and trust to the employees, where the employees feel more engaged with higher morale and have higher job satisfaction within the workplace (Vogelgesang et al, 2013). The effectiveness of the Leader Member Exchange (LMX) demonstrates how leader communication styles project the commitment and culture of the workplace, because these leaders demonstrate qualities of leadership that are highly valued that convey charismatic leadership (Brown et al, 2019, p. 250). According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), they emphasize the power of strong communication styles within leadership and how the use of Leader Member Exchange (LMX) strengthens relationships with employees, a culture of openness, trust, and empathy within the workplace. The manager’s ability to communicate with a style that is characterized by expressiveness, precision and questioning makes it easier to build high quality Leader Member Exchange (LMX) relationships with their employees (Brown et al, 2019, p. 251).

Additionally, the face negotiation theory (FNT) summarizes the cultural, individual, and situational based factors that impact communication styles when dealing with misunderstanding between managers and employees within the workplace. According to Ting-Toomey (2015) there are “seven core assumptions of Face Negotiation Theory: 1) People in cultures attempt to preserve and negotiate face in all communication situations, 2) the concept of face is difficult in
emotionally threatening circumstances when the recognition of the person is challenged, 3) the cultural value of either individualism or collectivism culture of the person form the facework styles of the person, 4) individualistic and collectivistic values of the person form preferences for self-oriented face versus other-oriented or mutual-oriented, 5) small and large power distance value shapes members preferences horizontal facework versus vertical facework, 6) a person’s value influences their facework behavior based on their cultural values, 7) intercultural facework is the integration of knowledge and communication skills managing conflict situations.” (p. 2)

Ting-Toomey (2015) states that during challenges within communication styles between two or more people, usually a person’s face image is being threatened where a person may feel emotions such as anxiety, frustration, anger and hurt (p. 3). Ting-Toomey (2015) also articulates that when there are people from different cultures experiencing challenges within communication styles, they follow the Face Threatening Process FTP where tension between both cultures of people creates a deep divide between the cultures and decrease in trust (p.3). In a tension situation between two or more people, Self-Face becomes important during the face threatening process. This is where a person feels obligated to perform a specific action by another person that was not planned. The following face concern styles mentioned by Ting-Toomey (2015) are “self-face where a person is only concerned by their own identity during communication challenges, other-face concern is when a person is concerned with the other person’s identify during tension, and 3) mutual-face is when both people are concerned for the other’s personal identity (p. 4).” The determinant of which type of face concern a person utilizes during a communication difference is based on a person’s cultural values and beliefs managing conflict.
Furthermore, many global organizations are composed of different types of cultures and communication styles between managers and their employees. According to Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) theory of independent and interdependent self-construal, “employees from Western, primarily individualistic cultures have independent self-construal, where the employee is unique and is less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against a social natural background” (p. 226). Whereas employees from “many non-Western, primarily Asian collectivistic cultures have interdependent self-construal, where the employee is not as separate from social context, but rather more connected and less differentiated from other employees” (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p.227). Basically, Markus and Kitayama’s (1998) view the theory of independent and interdependent self-construal as the degree to which people within a given society view the self as being separate and distinct from others and the social world (p. 72-73). According to Singelis (1994), there is an individual difference measure between independent and interdependent self-construal that has a relationship between the individual from an individualistic culture and the collective from a collectivistic culture. Interestingly, it was found by Markus and Kitayama (1991) that independent self-construal individualistic employees were more accustomed to setting personal goals, than collectivistic employees with interdependent self-construal. The interdependent self-construal collectivistic employees are more focused on the needs for their team around them (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, p.227). The independent and interdependent self-construal behaviors with communication styles between employees and managers shape how their interpersonal relationships form their perceptions and behaviors within the workplace.
2.4 Communication Style Types Between Managers and Subordinates as Predictors of Employee Job Satisfaction

There is a current need to improve the workplace culture, especially during COVID and many employees work onsite as well as offsite from home. It is thus important to test hypotheses regarding how a manager’s communication style affects an employee’s job satisfaction at work. The word ‘Motivation’ is focused on the employee’s job satisfaction factors, willingness to want to come to work every day, and the demeanor of the employee when engaging with colleagues (Kroth, 2007). The significance of employee job satisfaction is that it influences the behaviors of employees within the workplace to behave in a specific manner that decides the success or failure of an organization (Kim, 2006, p. 20). It is important that Kovach (1987) articulates if an organization is able to fully understand why its employees are punctual to work every day, are dedicated to the organization for their entire career, and are highly productive, then the organization would have a competitive advantage over their competitors that suffer from employee absenteeism, the expense of re-training employees, and lower performance levels (p. 58). The success of the organization which is relevant to employee job satisfaction is highly dependent on their managers and understanding what motivates their employees (Kim, 2006, p. 21).

There are motivating factors that employees value within the workplace (Wiley, 1997). The motivating factors for employees change from time to time based on economic conditions within the market. Overall, Wiley (1997) identified the top ten motivating factors for employees within the workplace are: full appreciation of their work done, feeling of being included in decisions, sympathetic help with personal problems, job security, competitive wages, interesting work, promotion and growth in the organization, personal loyalty and recognition to employees,
good working conditions, and being treated fairly. When managers understand what motivates each individual employee and they provide the motivational factors to them, then it is a win-win for the employee as well as the organization.

Importantly, one of the effective ways that managers effectively lead and motivate their employees is through communication (Holladay & Coombs, 1993). According to Norton (1983), communication styles are different methods that managers interact with subordinates either verbally, non-verbally, para-verbally through voice inflection to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood by the employee (p. 58). Research has identified a few key communication styles in which managers communicate with their subordinates such as aggressive, passive, and assertive communication styles (Newbold, 1997). Sultanow et al (2013) focuses on manipulative communication style, Bicer (2020) focuses on passive-aggressive communication style, and Arredondo (2003) focuses on assertive communication style between managers and their subordinates within the workplace.

2.4.1 Passive Communication Style

Newbold (1997) articulates that the **passive communication style** is where managers avoid expressing their needs, feelings, and are timid to protect their rights. Managers with passive communication styles are typically not supporting their employees’ needs to meet their goals. Passive managers typically find it challenging to fully communicate their message to their employees, which causes irritation, delays, and rework. Newbold (1997) indicates that passive communication by managers is where they agree to what their employees want rather than aligning with the goals and objectives within the workplace. Passive managers keep their opinions to themselves, even if they do not agree with the employees, which causes passive aggressive communication within the workplace. Managers with passive communication styles
typically keep their opinions to themselves and support their employees' input even if they do not agree with their views and ideas (Sias, 2009). When a manager’s communication style is passive, they are typically insecure and demonstrate nonverbal communication expressions with minimal eye contact, shrugging their shoulders, soft handshakes, and unable to provide their critical feedback to the employees. Further, Newbold (1997) found that managers with passive communication styles are unable to effectively share their thoughts and ideas with the employees which demonstrates a lack of confidence of the manager. This study thus hypothesizes that:

H1: The extent to which employees feel that their managers use passive communication styles will negatively affect the employee’s job satisfaction to perform well at work.

2.4.2 Aggressive Communication Style

The aggressive communication style is when a manager expresses their feelings and opinions and recommends them for their needs in a way that violates the rights of employees (Newbold, 1997). Aggressive managers are more focused on results than their relationship with their employees, which is effective only for the short-term. Managers that demonstrate an aggressive communication style are viewed as controlling and demanding with the employees. Dasgupta et al (2013) indicate that managers with an aggressive communication style fail to establish relationships with their employees because they are typically rude, derogatory, and sarcastic which increases employee anxiety level within the workplace (p. 176). The manager with an aggressive communication style is skillful at intimidating their employees so that they can get their way because the employees are too timid to speak up against them in order to maintain employment within the workplace. The aggressive communication style reduces the opportunity for the employees to share their ideas and have an honest conversation and creates a lack of trust with their manager. From this, when managers apply aggressive management style
while engaging with employees, they feel that their managers express their own feelings and opinions and disregard the employees input which will result in lower job satisfaction of the employee.

H2: The extent to which employees feel that their managers use **aggressive communication styles** will negatively **affect** the employee’s job satisfaction at work.

### 2.4.3 Manipulative Communication Style

The **manipulative communication style** is when managers demonstrate astute and calculating behavior to achieve the outcomes, they need for themselves. They are likely to have strong influencing skills which enable them to control others to their own advantage. Their spoken words hide an underlying message, of which the other person may be totally unaware. According to Sultanow et al (2013), manipulative communication is when a manager puts himself above the employees and tries to influence them without their agreement (p. 28). Managers with manipulative communication styles are out for their own personal gain and motivations by skillfully influencing their employees to follow their direction and requests (Redkozubova, 2017). Employees have a lack of trust with a manager that has manipulative communication style which not only reduces productivity, but it also lowers morale within the workplace. When a manager is manipulative and controlling it not only divides the employees with lack of trust it also decreases collaboration, teamwork, and strong working relationships. Thus, it is likely that employee morale will decrease when managers apply a manipulative communication style while engaging with employees. With this, I hypothesize that:

H3: The extent to which employees feel that their managers use **manipulative communication styles** will negatively **affect** the employee’s job satisfaction at work.
2.4.4 Passive-Aggressive Communication Style

According to Bicer (2020), **passive-aggressive communication style** is when managers control other employees’ emotions and behaviors to manipulate them as they think or wish at workplaces in many indirect ways (p. 671). An example of an indirect passive-aggressive behavior by a manager is when he or she loses their calmness and becomes angry, hostile, or punishing behavior to an employee (McIlduff & Coghlan, 2000, p. 727). Managers that have passive-aggressive tendencies appear passive on the surface but are actually acting out their anger in indirect or secretive ways. These managers are often resentful and motivated to undermine the contributions made by their employees, even if it ends up negatively affecting the employee’s visibility. Passive-aggressive employees demonstrate externally that they are complying with their manager by completing tasks late intentionally and exhibiting verbal outbursts that could impact their career (Jen Su & Wilkins, 2010, p.1). Passive-aggressive behavior within the workplace between managers and/or employees creates toxic relationships where the culture creates high employee burnout and employee turnover within the workplace (Bicer, 2020, p. 676). To help reduce passive-aggressive behaviors within the workplace, managers need to set expectations, limits, and deadlines in advance so that the employee has complete understanding and direction from the manager (Bicer, 2020, p. 676). It is a logical inference that when managers apply passive-aggressive communication style while engaging with employees, the employee(s) will suffer internally thereby resulting in lower job morale.

H4: The extent to which employees feel that managers use **passive-aggressive communication styles** will negatively affect the employee’s job satisfaction at work.
2.4.5 Assertive Communication Style

The assertive communication style is when a manager respects the needs of the employees and goes through the mental processes of assessing what they need to know and how (Arredondo, 2003). The research further indicates from Newbold (1997) that assertive managers have the skills and confidence to challenge ambiguity and any misunderstandings from employees. Managers with an assertive communication style are the most effective when communicating with employees and peers. According to Dasgupta, Suar and Singh (2013), managers with assertive communication styles have the ability to communicate their honest thoughts in a polite and respectful way that is open to employees’ ideas and solutions (p. 177).

Managers with assertive communication styles have the skillful ability to respect the values, thoughts, and ideas of the employees, while they are typically calm and make eye contact with their employees when they speak. Managers with assertive communication styles are open to ideas and are transparent which build strong working relationships with their employees, peers, and customers (Dasgupta et al, 2013, p.178). When the communication style of managers is straightforward and accurate, employees view managers as trustworthy, and they feel that the manager has their best interest within the workplace (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). This openness facilitates employees’ understanding of tasks and enables responsible decision making within the workplace (Moye & Henkin, 2006). It is reasonable to expect that when managers apply the assertive communication management style while engaging with employees, employees will experience greater job satisfaction.

H5: The extent to which employees feel that their managers use assertive communication styles will positively affect the employee’s job satisfaction at work.
Although this study has identified five specific communication styles that can predict employee job satisfaction, the term ‘communication styles’ is very broadly defined. It is very plausible that other types of communication mannerisms or styles could shape employee job satisfaction.

There are advantages for conducting qualitative in-depth interviews regarding the different communication styles that manager’s use to motivate their employees for improved job satisfaction. There is flexibility in the ability to ask questions to the respondents, listen carefully to their responses, and clarify what has been communicated back to the respondent. There is the ability to frame the interview questions by peeling the onion and probe more to find out about a particular response or redirect the respondent to an area that is more relevant for inquiry. Due to the highly contagious COVID-19 pandemic, the qualitative in-depth interview will be performed with video technology such as Zoom, instead of face-to-face interview at the company site. The in-depth interview will be semi-structured where there will be an interview guide of mostly open-ended questions to the respondent. The in-depth interview questions will be mapped to the research questions.

Using close-ended survey research, there is the ability to measure the different communication styles assertive, passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and manipulative which are independent variables, as well as the dependent variable with job satisfaction. The main limitation to close-ended surveys is the structuring of the responses to each survey question. This is where the respondent is asked to select an answer from a list and the respondent is unable to express their opinion to the particular question (Babbie, 2014, p. 249).
Thus, in addition to a close-ended survey, this study also seeks to use qualitative in-depth interviews to have a broader understanding of how communication styles shape employee job satisfaction. This study also proposes the following research question:

RQ: What type of communication styles can managers apply to improve employee’s job satisfaction within the workplace?

3. Methods

3.1 Survey

In order to answer my hypotheses and RQ, I used a mixed methods approach of close-ended surveys, as well as in-depth interviews with a video technology platform such as Zoom. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that is highly contagious, it was prudent to minimize risk and get somewhat of the same result on Zoom as I would in a face-to-face interview. The in-depth interview sample size was significantly less than the close-ended survey sample size. The thought is with the close-ended online surveys, I was able to reach a larger number of employees and managers dispersed geographically within the state of Hawaii, as well as participants located within the mainland.

Furthermore, I used the semi-structured in-depth interviews to gain more in-depth information related to my study’s goals. It was interesting to understand at a deeper level what communication styles motivate employees' job satisfaction within the workplace. As opposed to close-ended surveys, in-depth interviews provide participants with the space and leeway to respond. As such, in-depth interviews yielded interesting responses that were not captured in close-ended surveys.
3.1.1 Survey Sample

The sample of participants was obtained by a combination of non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive and snowball sampling. First, participants were selected for the close-ended survey based on judgment where the participant meets the criteria for the research (Babbie, 2014, p. 187). The type of participants selected for this research were employees of diverse cultural backgrounds that report to managers both in Hawaii and on the U.S mainland. These types of participants are important to this research because these types of respondents will help provide data to hypotheses 1-5 on how various specific communication styles predict workplace satisfaction. Next, I used snowball sampling to increase my sample size by asking eligible participants such as employees from my organization or other initially contacted employees to forward my survey to their other similarly eligible friends and contacts. I used Qualtrics to administer an online survey to my participants. The benefit of the online close-ended survey is that surveys are excellent for testing the hypotheses of this research, great during COVID where sample participants are geographically dispersed, and online surveys are much less expensive than mail or face-to-face surveys.

A total of 143 survey responses were obtained. I deleted 5 respondents who either spent too much or too little time on the survey, leaving a total of 138 usable responses. The usable response rate was approximately 97%. The average time taken to complete the survey was 13 minutes and 6 seconds. In terms of sample demographics, of the 138 usable responses, 72.2% were males, 27.1% were females, 0.8% were other, the 5 remaining responses did not enter a gender. The race of the usable responses was a majority with 47.1% White Caucasian, 31.9% Asian, 6.5%, Two or More Ethnic Groups, 5.8% Black or African American, 5.1% Hispanic or Latino, 2.9% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 0.7% Something Else.
In terms of age, 31.4% of participants were in the 45-54 age range, 31.4% in the 55-64 age range, 19.7% in the 35-44 age range, 9.5% in the 25-34 age range, 5.1% aged 65 and above, and 2.9% in the 18-24 age range. A total of 46.4% of participants had at least a post-graduate education degree, 39.1% were College Graduates, 10.1% attended Some College, 3.6% had Technical Education qualifications, and 0.7% had at least a high school diploma. An overwhelming majority of participants (96.3%) had good internet connection when using Zoom. Most participants (63.6%) were non-managers. There were 37% of participants that had worked in their roles between 0-5 years, 24.6% for 11-20 years, 18.8% for 6-10 years, 12.3% for 21-30 years, 6.5% for 31-40 years, and 0.7% for more than 41 years. Most employees (84.1%) had worked for their manager in their current role for 0-5 years, 12.3% for 6-10 years, 2.2% for 11-20 years, 0.7% for 21-30 years, and 0.7% between 31-40 years. Approximately 46.4% of employees have been with their company for 0-5 years, 23.2% for 6-10 years, 13.8% for 11-20 years, 11.6% for 21-30 years, 4.3% for 31-40 years, and 0.7% for more than 41 years of service.

3.1.2 Survey Measures

The measures for the close-ended surveys, the manager Communication Styles are the Independent Variables. There are approximately five communication styles Passive, Aggressive, Assertive, Passive-Aggressive, and Manipulative that will be used to gauge the independent variable. The participant responses will be measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Never, and 5 = Every day. The employee’s job satisfaction at work is the Dependent Variable. There are three items that gauge the dependent variable, such as: employee job satisfaction, employee attendance, and employee morale. The independent variables will be operationalized within the close-ended survey with the 5-point Likert scale.
**Passive Communication Style.** Examples of the question wordings for passive communication are as follows:

- My manager feels guilty when he/she stands up for his/her rights or expresses his/her feelings.
- My manager allows other people to take unfair advantage of him/her. My manager often remains silent.

The passive communication style items were adapted from Newbold (1997) articulates where managers avoid expressing their needs, feelings, and are timid to protect their rights. The measurement scale is a total of 8 items were used to measure the concept ‘passive communication style’. These items were adapted from Newbold (1997) and measured on a five-point Likert scale with $1=\text{Strongly Disagree}$ to $5=\text{Strongly Agree}$ and were summed up to form a scale ($M = 1.97$, $S.D. = 0.69$; Cronbach alpha = .85). This indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is reliable since it is greater than .7 and is good.

**Aggressive Communication Style.** Examples of the question wordings for aggressive communication are as follows:

- My Manager often brags and makes unrealistic claims about his good points.
- My manager makes other people look or feel stupid, small, or afraid.

The aggressive communication style items were adapted from (Newbold, 1997) where a manager expresses his or her feelings and opinions and recommends them for their needs in a way that violates the rights of employees. The measurement scale is a total of 8 items were used to measure the concept ‘passive communication style’. These items were adapted from Newbold (1997) and measured on a five-point Likert scale with $1=\text{Strongly Disagree}$ to $5=\text{Strongly Agree}$. They were summed up to form a scale on passive communication styles ($M = 1.74$, $S.D. = \ldots$
This indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is reliable since it is greater than .7 and is good.

**Passive Aggressive Communication Style.** Examples of the question wordings for passive aggressive communication are as follows:

- My manager controls employees’ emotions and behaviors to manipulate them.
- My manager occasionally loses their calmness and becomes angry, hostile, or punishing behavior.

The passive communication style items were adapted from Newbold (1997) articulates where managers avoid expressing their needs, feelings, and are timid to protect their rights. The measurement scale is a total of 8 items were used to measure the concept 'passive communication style’. These items were adapted from McIlduff and Coghlan (2000) where behavior by a manager is when he or she loses their calmness and becomes angry, hostile, or punishing behavior to an employee and measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, \( M = 1.80, S.D. = 0.83; \) Cronbach alpha = 0.93). This indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is reliable since it is greater than .7 and is good.

**Manipulative Communication Style.** Examples of the question wordings for manipulative communication are as follows:

- My manager uses deceptiveness to achieve their goals.
- My manager frequently exaggerates to emphasize a point.

The manipulative communication style items were adapted from Newbold (1997) articulates where managers avoid expressing their needs, feelings, and are timid to protect their rights. The measurement scale is a total of 7 items were used to measure the concept 'passive communication style’. These items were adapted from Newbold (1997) and measured on a five-
point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, \((M = 2.11, S.D. = 1.12; \text{Cronbach alpha} = 0.91)\). This indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is reliable since it is greater than .7 and is good.

**Assertive Communication Style.** Examples of the question wordings for assertive communication are as follows:

- My manager is able to recognize and express his good points.
- My manager is able to express negative feelings about other people without being abusive or cruel.

The assertive communication style items were adapted from Dasgupta et al (2013) where managers with assertive communication styles have the ability to communicate their honest thoughts in a polite and respectful way that is open to employees’ ideas and solutions (p. 177). The measurement scale is a total of 8 items were used to measure the concept ‘passive communication style’. These items were adapted from Dasgupta et al (2013) and measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1=Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, \((M = 3.95, S.D. = 0.67; \text{Cronbach alpha} = 0.89)\). This indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is reliable since it is greater than .7 and is good.

**Employee Job Satisfaction.** Examples of the question wordings for employee job satisfaction are as follows:

- I feel that I have good communication with my manager
- I feel that my manager has the best interest for career growth

Employee motivation was adapted from Kroth (2007) where it is focused on the employee’s job satisfaction factors, willingness to want to come to work every day, and the demeanor of the employee when engaging with colleagues. The measurement scale is a total of 10 items were
used to measure the concept ‘employee job satisfaction’. These items were adapted from Newbold (1997) and measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, (\( M = 4.54, \ S.D. = 1.11; \) Cronbach alpha = 0.92). This indicates that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is reliable since it is greater than .7 and is good.

4. Results

4.1 Zero-Order Correlations

4.1.1 Table X

Zero-Order Correlation Matrix Between Five Communication Styles and Job Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Passive-Agressive</th>
<th>Manipulative</th>
<th>Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.31***</td>
<td>-0.37***</td>
<td>0.38***</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td>-0.42***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-0.62***</td>
<td>0.91***</td>
<td>0.86***</td>
<td>-0.65***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>-0.37***</td>
<td>-0.62***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-0.65***</td>
<td>0.69***</td>
<td>-0.69***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive-Agressive</td>
<td>0.38***</td>
<td>0.91***</td>
<td>-0.65***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0.87***</td>
<td>-0.69***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>0.32***</td>
<td>0.86***</td>
<td>-0.69***</td>
<td>0.87***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-0.66***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>-0.42***</td>
<td>-0.65***</td>
<td>0.63***</td>
<td>-0.69***</td>
<td>-0.66***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ***\( p < .001 \)

First, I ran zero-order correlations between the five-management style independent variables and the employee job satisfaction dependent variable. From Table X above, the zero-order correlational analyses showed that job satisfaction increased when employees interacted with their manager that has an assertive communication style. The assertive communication style was positively correlated with employee job satisfaction, \( r(135) = 0.63, p < .001 \). The passive communication style was negatively correlated with employee job satisfaction, \( r(136) = -0.42, p < .001 \). The aggressive communication style was more negatively correlated with employee job satisfaction, \( r(136) = -0.65, p < .001 \). The manipulative communication style was
negatively correlated with employee job satisfaction, $r (132) = -0.66, p < .001$. Also, the passive-aggressive communication style was the highest negatively correlated with employee job satisfaction, $r (133) = -0.69, p < .001$.

4.2 Linear Regression Analyses

Next, I ran linear regression analyses in Jamovi to test my hypotheses. The five management style variables were specified as independent variables, and employee job satisfaction served as the dependent variable in the analyses. The following variables: race, gender, age range, education level, job role, duration in job role, duration with company, duration with manager, internet connection also served as demographic controls in my analyses.
4.2.1 Table Z

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients of the Management Style Independent Variables on the Employee Job Satisfaction Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Controls</th>
<th>Estimate (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.02(0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.20(0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>0.01(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>-0.09(0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Role</td>
<td>0.04(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration in Job Role</td>
<td>0.08(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration with Company</td>
<td>-0.04(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration with Manager</td>
<td>0.15(0.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Connection</td>
<td>-0.31(0.35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Estimate (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>-0.42(0.12)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>-0.19(0.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>0.35(0.15)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive-Aggressive</td>
<td>-0.47(0.24)#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulative</td>
<td>0.03(0.14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ R^2 = 0.63 \]

*Note. \#p = .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.*

From Table Z above, the passive communication style was negatively associated with employee job satisfaction, \( b = -0.42, SE = 0.12, t (102) = -3.49, p < .001 \). The more employees felt that their manager used passive communication style, the lower their self-reported employee job satisfaction level, lending support to H1. In addition, regression analyses showed that assertive communication style was positively associated with employee job satisfaction, \( b = 0.35, SE = 0.15, t (102) = 2.38, p < .01 \). The more employees felt that their manager used
assertive communication style, the higher their self-reported employee job satisfaction level, lending support to H5.

However, regression analyses showed that the aggressive communication style had no significant association with employee job satisfaction and H2 was thus not supported. Also, the manipulative communication style had no significant association with employee job satisfaction, lending no support to H3. Finally, the passive-aggressive communication style had no significant association with employee job satisfaction. H4 was not supported.

Further, the demographics consisting of race, gender, age, education level, job role, duration in the job role, duration with the company, duration with manager, and internet connectivity had no significant association and was not supported with employee job satisfaction.

4.3 In-depth Interview

4.3.1 Participant Recruitment Methods

Using the in-depth interview method, I recruited approximately 20 interview participants consisting of 12 non-managers and 8 managers. There was a combination of non-probability sampling techniques such as purposive and snowball sampling. The purposive sampling was used in the in-depth interview to select the participants based on judgment where the participant meets the criteria for the research (Babbie, 2014, p. 187). This type of non-probability sampling helped collect open-ended data on the different communication styles from the respondent’s manager and how these communication styles motivate and impact their job satisfaction in the workplace. As with survey participants, I found participants to interview who met my study’s criteria of being work employees who report to managers in their workplace. In addition, the snowball sampling technique worked well after identifying participants for the interview and
asking the participants for names of other people i.e., managers or employees to contact for an in-depth interview. I primarily recruited these interview participants from my workplace, social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook, as well as other employers within the state of Hawaii.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with employees by video technology such as the Zoom platform owing to COVID-19 restrictions at a time that is mutually convenient for both the interviewer and interviewee.

### 4.3.2 Interview Questions

In terms of semi-structured interview questions, the types of open-ended introductory questions that were asked to the participants included questions such as their role in the company, the number of years they have worked for the company, and roles/responsibilities performed.

### 4.3.3 Example of Interview Questions for Non-Manager and Manager Participants

With regards to main questions, participants were asked open-ended questions such as “What type of communication styles does your manager typically use with you, and why?”, “In what way(s) if any does your manager’s communication style impact your job satisfaction? Why?”, “Of all your manager’s communication styles, which is the most ineffective and why?”, and “In what ways do you think your manager can improve their communication styles?”. In terms of contingency probes, participants were asked to describe concrete instances in which they felt their manager had communicated ineffectively with them and how that made them feel.

### 4.3.4 Data Analysis Method for In-Depth Interviews

The thematic analysis for this research was conducted by reviewing and analyzing the interview data by searching for patterns, classifications, themes, and categories from the
interview transcripts from the in-depth interviews that are relevant to the research questions (Saldafia, 2009, p. 41). According to Braun and Clarke (2012) the use of thematic analysis enabled me to make sense of the qualitative data from this research and make sense of collective and shared meanings and experiences based on commonalities and patterns from the employees and manager response regarding the different communication styles that motivate employees for job satisfaction within the workplace (p. 57). For example, when interviewing employees and how they view their manager’s communication style that motivates them on a typical workday allowed me to gather data to review patterns that reflect the communication style(s) that improve job satisfaction.

4.4 Qualitative Results

This qualitative research study focused on two role types which consisted of non-managers and managers. The criteria for the in-depth interviews were that each of the role types were required to be a direct report to a manager. There were approximately 12 non-managers and 8 manager role types that participated in the in-depth interviews. In this research study the manager role types that participated in the in-depth interview all were direct reports to a manager. Their demographics of the participants ranged across a broad range spectrum. The ethnicity of the participants was Asian, Black, or African American, Hispanic, or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White Caucasian, and Two or More Ethnic Groups. There were approximately 75% male and 25% female participants in the in-depth interviews. The age range of the participants were from 25 – 64 years of age. The level of education of the participants ranged from Technical College Education to Post-Graduate Masters Ph.D. Law School college education. The duration that the participants were with their company ranged from 1 – 25 years of service. The duration that the participants reported to their manager ranged
from 1 – 5 years. Likewise, the duration that the participants were in their role as non-manager or manager was closely correlated to the amount of time, they reported to their manager which ranged from 1 – 5 years. All of the in-depth interview participants have internet connectivity.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the in-depth interviews were facilitated over the internet on the Zoom video conferencing platform. The average duration that each in-depth interview took was approximately 30 minutes each. There were 10 in-depth interview questions that were asked to each participant, and I typed all of the participant responses during the interviews. Each participant was eager and willing to engage in the in-depth interview and I learned so much more about how strongly the participants felt about various communication styles from their managers affected their job satisfaction with the workplace.

I would like to introduce you to the non-manager and manager participants that participated in the in-depth interview.

4.4.1 The Non-Manager Participants

Adam. Adam is a senior software engineer and has been with the company for approximately 15 years. Adam was selected because of his length of time at the company and his passion for wanting to grow within the organization.

Aiko. Aiko is a systems analyst and has been with the company for approximately 25 years. Aiko was selected because she communicates and interfaces with business team members and interacts with colleagues on a daily basis.

Iolani. Iolani is a program analyst and has been with the company for approximately 6 years. Iolani was selected because she interacts with the program management organization and provides unique perspectives.
**Jodie.** Jodie is employed within an academic institution and has been with the institution for approximately 10 years. Jodie was selected because she has different perspectives for communication styles and management from an academic perspective.

**Keanu.** Keanu is a senior software engineer and has been with the company for approximately 23 years. Keanu was selected because he has worked many positions within both the business side and information technology side of the company.

**Kelii.** Kelii is a senior software engineer who has been with the company for approximately 20 years. Kelii was selected because he leads many meetings and has daily interactions with his colleagues and management.

**Koa.** Koa is a call center analyst and has been with the company for approximately 3 years. Koa was selected because he has moved to different companies every 2 years and has interesting perspectives to share regarding different communication styles by his managers.

**Mohit.** Mohit is an associate software engineer and is relatively new to the company for approximately 2 years. Mohit was selected because he is from another country and has a diverse perspective to provide regarding communication style from the manager.

**Samesh.** Samesh is a lead senior software engineer and has been with the company for approximately 5 years. Samesh was selected because he is highly engaged with communication and decision-making for technology solutions for the business and overall company.

**Tejas.** Tejas is a senior test analyst who has been with the company for approximately 11 years. Tejas was selected because he is highly technical and is more of a heads down technical person with minimal interaction with his colleagues. He brings another perspective.
Viraj. Viraj is a software developer and has been with the company for approximately 6 years. Viraj was selected because of his diverse background and to find out what type of management communication style improves his job satisfaction.

Young-Soo. Young-Soo is a business intelligence data analyst and has been with the company for approximately 8 years. Young-Soo was selected because he is a key stakeholder within the business side of the organization and interacts with executive management frequently.

4.4.2 The Manager Participants

Aolani. Aolani is a business manager and has been with the company for approximately 4 years. Aolani was selected because she has perspectives of communication styles by her managers from many organizations.

Asahi. Asahi is a business manager and has been with the company for approximately 7 years. Asahi was selected because he is a very good and articulate communicator that is very professional and has excellent business etiquette. Asahi brings perspectives from the business side of the company.

Diego. Diego is a real estate manager and has been with the company for approximately 5 years. Diego was selected because he has a very diverse background and interacts with many diverse people and managers on a daily basis.

Elise. Elise is an account manager and has been with the company for approximately 14 years. Elise was selected because she is highly interactive with many business organizations within the state of Hawaii.

Haruto. Haruto is a test manager and has been with the company for approximately 14 years. Haruto was selected because has worked for managers in other countries, as well as on
the mainland. Haruto brings interesting perspectives regarding communication styles by managers.

**Izaak.** Izaak is a project manager and has been with the company for approximately 15 years. Izaak was selected because he constantly works on tight deadlines working with managers across all areas within the organization.

**Konala.** Konala is a vendor manager and has been with the company for approximately 6 years. Konala was selected because he interacts with the management and legal department of the organization. Konala brings the perspective of communication styles from a legal perspective.

**Thomas.** Thomas is a solution delivery manager and has been with the company for approximately 10 years. Thomas was selected because he has reported to managers on the west coast and east coast of the United States.

### 4.5 Qualitative Data Analysis Approach

After all of the in-depth interviews were complete and transcribed, then with the interview data provided, I conducted qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) in order to answer my research question: What type of communication styles can managers apply to improve employee’s job satisfaction within the workplace?

First, I was able to generate preliminary codes based on the interview questions asked from the initial set of transcribed interview responses, literature review, and theoretical frameworks. Each of the participant responses were summarized and consolidated into individual Microsoft Word documents by each of the interview questions. Then, all of the participant responses were assigned preliminary code categories by each question, and then the
final code themes were formalized. These codes were edited to form my finalized set of themes which are as follows:

- Leading by example in communication
- Communicating expectations clearly to subordinates
- Openness in communication
- Managers supporting their employees

4.5.1 Leading by Example in Communication

Leading by example in communication is important for managers to demonstrate professionalism, integrity, direction, mentoring, and purpose to the employees to build trust and innovation within the organization. Further, a manager that is leading by example guides their employees through their behavior and motivates their employees to follow them. When a manager leads by example, they earn their employees trust and confidence in their manager.

In today’s global workforce, organizations consist of employees and managers that have diverse cultural backgrounds, span of many age groups, and many ethnicities that are located locally as well as virtually around the world. Employees have many views they perceive as a manager that leads by example as a role model. House (1977) expressed those successful leaders lead by example as role models are very charismatic and make a strong influence on their employees by expressing their actions that align with their employees’ values and beliefs (p. 194). Further, Skinner (1938) articulates the reinforcement theory and how an employee learns by their manager direct experience with either positive or negative consequences. Podsakoff (1982) applies the reinforcement theory and leads by example when a manager provides positive direct feedback to their employee that “he or she did a great job on a report”, or the manager may provide negative feedback that “his or her work performance is not at acceptable quality control
levels”. The manager leads by example by taking action to support by guiding their employees by the manager’s behavior instead of their words.

An example of leading by example was shared by Konala where his team was having an audit finding and the internal audit team passed the action to the employee’s team. Konala’s manager was aware of the issues from the audit that needed to be addressed. Konala’s manager explained the company’s purpose and that this audit finding should not be assigned to the employee’s team. The manager met with the internal audit team regarding their findings and was able to communicate to them that this audit finding needed to be assigned to another team within the organization. The employees gained more trust in their manager by her actions, and the manager believes in the employees.

Another example of leading by example was shared by Haruto when his team was assigned faulty laptops and they were unable to perform their daily scope of work. Haruto’s team was getting a lot of push back by the Desktop services team to address their laptop issues as an urgent request. Eventually, Haruto reported the laptop issues to his manager. The manager actively listened to Haruto’s complaint with the laptops and the lack of cooperation by the Desktop services team. Haruto’s manager empathized with him and the team and took action. Haruto’s manager met with the Desktop services director and explained the challenge with the team delivering their daily work to their customers. Haruto’s team was issued new replacement laptops within 24 hours. Also, Haruto’s manager provided his laptop as a loaner until he received his replacement laptop. This was an excellent example of Haruto’s manager leading by example.

On the other hand, there was a participant that felt their manager was not leading by example. Koa shared that "when there were budget issues and the manager communicated to
him at the last minute and released the employee without any indication about his performance issues.” Koa was shocked when he received a layoff notice from his manager, when his manager would communicate in meetings that he has the employee’s best interest and will have recurring weekly meetings with each employee to discuss what is working well with the employees and address any performance concerns for improvement. Koa further explained that his manager would frequently cancel their weekly scheduled meetings, and this would make the employee feel like his manager does not value him. In this case, Koa did not feel that his manager was leading by example.

This theme aligns with the Leader Member Exchange model and demonstrates how managers have leadership relationships with employees where there are daily interactions and communication exchanges where the leader communicates instructions, orders, explanations, inquiries, reports, coordination, motivational messages, and vision sharing to the employees from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) to improve employee job satisfaction.

When managers lead by example, they truly understand the workplace and how the employees work together. When a manager gains the respect of their employees, they become a team working toward a common goal. Many of the participants from the in-depth interviews felt that their manager was leading by example by following through on their promises and commitment to their employees. When the manager follows through on their promises to the employees it builds a foundation of trust.

4.5.2 Communicating Expectations Clearly to Subordinates

Communicating expectations clearly to subordinates is an important attribute that a manager needs to know how to communicate with their subordinates so that they are able to complete their assigned work tasks and minimize any misunderstandings and motivate the
employees. Communicating expectations clearly to subordinates is explained by Xavier (2002) where the manager clearly states the purpose of an assignment, communicates to the employee exactly what is expected of the employee, the expected delivery of work deadlines, and asks for all clarifying questions from the employee (p. 33). The manager needs to ensure that he or she is communicating to the employee and that the employee understands what has been communicated by the manager. When the manager gets to understand how to communicate to each employee based on their communication style, the message resonates really well to the employee.

Young-Soo stated that when he and his manager brainstormed together to meet a goal, he felt that his manager was clear in her communication and what she needed, then that was helpful. Young-Soo stated that his manager communicated “the analytics report was to support the customer relations team and needed to be delivered within one week.” Young-Soo had a couple follow-up questions to understand what type of data was to be viewed in the report and from what data sources. Once Young-Soo received all of the relevant requirements from his manager, then he was able to deliver a quality report that was a value addition to the organization. When managers communicate company direction to the employee, it is very effective and translates to how it impacts the employee and provides a sense of purpose.

Mohit shared that “the level of guidance that he receives from his manager in a professional way and how the company priorities help Mohit understand how his assigned task will drive a solution that aligns with the company initiatives and direction of the company.” When Mohit clearly understood the expectations from his manager, he was able to do a better job and help reach the goals of the company. When Mohit’s manager was able to clearly communicate the expectations to Mohit, he had more clarity on the assignment with less
ambiguity and increased Mohit’s engagement to the assignment which improved his job satisfaction and excitement to support the assignment.

There was a participant from the In-Depth interview that felt their manager did not effectively communicate expectations clearly. Samesh shared that “his manager was very vague on what the expectations were for delivering a specific software solution on a certain date that was very unrealistic.” Samesh did his best to communicate to his manager that his workload was already exceeding capacity with the current priorities and wanted to understand how the new assigned task would be prioritized amongst the current assigned tasks. The manager was unable to provide feedback regarding priorities and the manager did not have a plan going forward nor did his manager have specifics on the assignment. As you can imagine Samesh was frustrated with his manager’s lack of clear expectations for the assignment. Since Samesh was a very high performer and his manager was very habitual with lack of clear expectations to the employee, over a period of time Samesh resigned from the company. There is a saying, “employees don’t leave companies, they leave managers.” This was the case for Samesh, and the employee lost a very high performing employee due to this manager unable to set clear expectations.

This aspect of communicating clearly with employees aligns with the tenets of the assertive communication style and when a manager respects the needs of the employees and goes through the mental processes of assessing what they need to know and how from Arredondo (2003). There is research from Newbold (1997) indicating that assertive communication style from managers is how they communicate their opinions and thoughts in a direct manner without attacking their employees and are able to communicate constructive feedback and provide recognition to employees, as well as asking questions and probing for ideas from their employees and create a collaborative environment. The interview participants indicate that clear
expectations from their manager are very important job expectations along with the employee role definition will keep them focused. This will prevent the employees from getting off the path from their manager and will ensure that the employees will produce deliverables on a regular basis with quality and on time to the customers.

4.5.3 Openness in Communication

Open communication is an important management attribute when managers are wanting their employees to earn their trust and increase employee job satisfaction. According to Avolio et al (2009), authentic managers display a level of transparent and ethical behavior that encourages openness in communication from the manager’s employees accepting their feedback and input (p. 423). Managers that are truly authentic are aligned with their core values and beliefs. Further, when managers mentor their employees and provide respectful feedback, this encourages open and free communication where the employees embrace their contribution to the workplace and develop trusting relationships with their managers (Alkaabi & Wong, 2020, p. 37). Employees typically interact with their manager’s frequently and they are very aware when their managers are being open and transparent with their communication. The first indication of managers being open and transparent is by their level of authenticity when they are communicating to their employees. When managers speak authentically, employees feel engaged and motivated to work.

Keanu shared that “when he could have an open and honest communication with his manager and that there was a sense of partnership and collaboration that increased his trust with his manager.” Typically, employees feel when their manager is transparent and directs their communication to the employees, the employees are more motivated to deliver their tasks with higher quality and on-time when expected.
Konala shared that “when he feels that his manager is being real and authentic, he feels comfortable to ask for more clarifying questions to understand what is being asked for the assignment. Also, Konala shared that when he has an open and transparent relationship with his manager, that when his manager communicates to him when he is doing something wrong, he does not take it personally and appreciates the feedback from his manager.” Another participant Jodi felt that “when her manager allows for open communication about any performance issues, she feels that her manager has her best interest in succeeding and to help her grow to her potential and to have a clear career path within the company.” Jodie feels strongly that her manager communicates with authority and demonstrates high integrity.

Also, openness in communication by the manager to their subordinates demonstrates trust. Although there are times when the manager is unable to communicate all the initiatives within the organization to the employees due to confidentiality agreed to by higher level management, employees appreciate when their manager communicates as authentically as possible about any impending initiatives so that they are aware of the company direction and if there are any changes that need to be made from a job satisfaction perspective. Darren shared that “the majority of time when his team communicates with their manager about initiatives occurring within the organization, the manager is typically aware of the initiative and is more than willing to elaborate on what the initiative is and the purpose of the initiative.

Interestingly, some study participants felt that direct eye contact from their manager was a hallmark of openness and transparency, and motivated them in their work. During COVID, the participants interacted with their managers on Zoom or WebEx video conferencing and their manager always had their cameras on so that the employees could see their facial expressions when communicating. The managers also requested the employees to
have their cameras on so that they could see the employees when speaking with them. One participant, Aiko further explained that since the COVID pandemic started a couple years ago all the employees worked from home remotely from the office. She shared that “when she has weekly Zoom video conferencing meetings with her manager, she appreciates that her manager’s camera is on so that she can see his reactions and facial expressions when they communicate.” However, there was a participant Viraj that shared “his manager never had his camera on during a video conferencing meeting and it was acceptable to him.” Viraj is from a different cultural background and does not feel comfortable with having eye contact with his manager on the video conference meetings. There is research from Uono and Hietanen (2015) that emphasize eye contact differs among individualistic and collectivistic cultures, where maintaining eye contact is viewed much more positively for individualistic people than collectivistic people (p. 2). Argyle (1976) indicates that maintaining eye contacting is often considered disrespectful, and that children from many collectivistic cultures are taught to look at another person’s neck to avoid the eye contact. Uono and Hietanen (2015) research study further indicates that people from collectivistic cultures have a tendency not to hold eye contact with other people to avoid highly emotional interactions and saving face (p. 12).

These findings indicate that when managers exhibit openness in their verbal and non-verbal behavior, employees will similarly express their feelings, concerns, opinions, and thoughts more openly and be more motivated to work (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). According to Denton (2012), to create high trust organizations managers must make continuous efforts to effectively communicate goals to the employees, and explain objectives and rationale, and actively listen to their employees for feedback and input.
4.5.4 Managers Supporting their Employees

Managers understand that the needs of their employees are important for their employee’s job satisfaction, performance, and success within the workplace. When managers support the needs of their employees to help them perform their assignments, the employees feel valued and feel more positive about the workplace. Participants from the In-Depth Interviews discussed how much does their manager help the employees get their job done? There were many participants from the In-Depth Interviews who felt that getting the support needed to complete their assigned tasks from their managers was very important to them. According to Rooney, G. et al (2009), when managers provide support needed for their employees in the workplace, the employees have a perception of job autonomy, they have confidence in assigned tasks, they have a perception that they are highly valued by their managers (p. 412).

Managers communicating and providing their support to employees are important attributes to earn trust by the employees. When an employee feels that their manager is genuinely interested in them as a person and employee, as well as giving the employee full support to be successful in their job role will provide huge benefits to the organization and ultimately their customers. When an employee knows that their manager has their back with full support and truly cares about the employees, the employees will do all that they can to deliver tasks on time with the highest quality for their manager.

Notably, some participants felt that their manager’s ability to provide the needed support to successfully complete their assigned tasks was an indicator that their manager was truly invested in them to be successful within the workplace and future career growth. There was research from Lakey and Cohen (2000) that shows that when managers are supportive of employee needs, the employees perceive job autonomy and view their managers positively and
supportive of their success. Further, the findings from the research indicate that managers who support the needs of their employees demonstrate to the employees that they are valued and competent, and the employees had positive attitudes about their job and the workplace.

Adam shared that “when he feels that his manager doesn’t understand his needs to deliver a specific assignment and that he needs help with a potential show-stopper on the project, then really frustrates him knowing that his manager does not care enough to give him what he needs to deliver the assignment on time for delivery to the customer. Adam further stated that “when my manager does not support my needs to successfully complete an assignment, then I feel like my manager does not care about me, the customer, or the company.”

Another aspect of managers supporting the needs of the employees is with the employee’s career growth within the workplace. In order for the manager to support the needs of their employee’s career growth, the manager needs to fully understand the career goals of the employee. The feedback from the employee will help the manager understand the employee’s current skill sets and develop a plan to expand the employee’s skill sets to align with the company’s priorities for the next level. Thomas shared that “his manager has been very supportive of his needs for career growth and opportunities within the workplace.” Thomas further communicated that he and his manager met on a recurring basis to discuss a job career path plan on how to move to the next level within the workplace. Thomas mentioned that his manager communicated to him that “he believed in Thomas and his outstanding skills.” Thomas was motivated to work because he knew that his manager was onboard to support the needs of his success.

When a manager is supportive to their employee needs, it creates a positive work environment for the employees, it motivates the employees to stay fully engaged, and they feel
that they are valued by their manager. Baruch-Feldman et al (2002) indicate that employees who report having a supportive manager experience higher levels of job satisfaction, workplace loyalty, work-life balance, and less stress. This theme is also consistent with research showing that the working relationship with a subordinate’s manager is critical to the success of the subordinate, as well as their manager within an organization (Callan, 1993, p. 14). This demonstrated the importance of a strong trusting relationship between the manager and subordinate to improve an employee’s job satisfaction. Rooney et al (2009) indicate that an employee’s manager that is supportive has a positive influence on their employees work related attitudes and behaviors, as well as well-being (p. 413).

5. Discussion

This research study used a mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative analysis to gain deeper insights and perspectives on how a manager’s communication style affects an employee’s job satisfaction within the workplace. Close-ended survey results showed that the passive communication style was negatively associated with job satisfaction, whereas the assertive communication style was positively associated with job satisfaction. Also, thematic analyses of qualitative in-depth interviews showed that leading by example in communication, communicating expectations clearly to subordinates, openness in communication, and managers supporting their employees were factors that helped employees to feel satisfied in their jobs.

With regards to hypotheses that were supported, the significant negative association between passive communication styles and job satisfaction, this finding is in line with previous findings showing that when a manager demonstrated passive communication style, it decreased their job satisfaction with the perceived decrease in managerial support to the employees.
Dasgupta et al., 2013). Furthermore, the more employees felt that their manager used assertive communication style, the higher their self-reported employee job satisfaction level, lending support to H5. Dasgupta et al. (2013) research study is consistent and supports the hypothesis that when a manager demonstrated assertive communication style, it increased the perceived managerial support to the employees and job satisfaction (p. 185). The survey data from the participants clearly indicate that when managers demonstrate assertive communication to their employees, the employees feel that their manager supports and values them as a person. Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) articulate those assertive managers create a supportive environment for their employees where they value and care about each employee within the organization.

By contrast, the aggressive communication style was not significantly associated with job satisfaction. This finding stands in contrast with related research showing that when a manager demonstrated aggressive communication style, it decreased their job satisfaction with the perceived decrease in managerial support to the employees (Dasgupta et al., 2013). It is possible that the aggressive communication style was not significantly associated with job satisfaction because although this type of manager may bend the rules in their favor to achieve their professional goals, they can come across as being supportive to their team when the manager is not easily pressured to lend his team members to other areas within the organization.

Also, the regression analyses indicated that the manipulative communication style had no significant association with employee job satisfaction and H3 was thus not supported. This stands in contrast to previous studies which showed that when a manager demonstrated manipulative communication style, their untrustworthy behavior was counterproductive and impacted the employees job satisfaction within the workplace (Brown et al., 2019). This null
finding could be due to the possibility that this type of manager uses their power and influence to control the actions of their employees, but this type of manager actually teaches their employees to ask for what they want within the organization and their careers.

In addition, passive-aggressive communication style had no significant association with job satisfaction. This runs counter to research demonstrating that employee’s will feel victimized by their manager’s passive-aggressive behavior (Bicer, 2020). It is plausible that the passive-aggressive communication style was not significantly associated with job satisfaction because this type of manager may not show support for their employees and tend to indirectly criticize them, but on the surface they come across to the employee as they agree with them on the surface. Taken together, it is plausible that these management styles only predict job satisfaction under certain types of conditions such as job type or the number of years employed with the organization. It is also possible that managers who possess aggressive, passive-aggressive, and/or manipulative characteristics really do not dampen an employee’s job satisfaction.

This mixed methods research study further used in-depth interviews to answer the research question RQ: What type of communication styles can managers apply to improve employee’s job satisfaction within the workplace, and how a manager’s communication style affects an employee’s motivation at work. There were elements within the themes that emerged such as openness in communication and communicating clearly to subordinates that aligned with elements of the assertive managerial style, which was a significantly positive predictor of job satisfaction in the close-ended survey. Notably, the in-depth interviews went beyond close-ended survey responses by uncovering specific examples of manager actions that exemplify the assertive management style. For instance, the interviews showed that an assertive manager is one
who actively brainstorms solutions with their employees, provides guidance, and maintains consistent eye-contact with their employees during meetings.

Importantly, the in-depth interviews were able to uncover aspects of effective managerial styles such as leading by example that went beyond the five managerial styles tested in the close-ended survey. The Leading by example theme is best explained by House (1977) where successful leaders lead by example as role models are very charismatic and make a strong influence on their employees by expressing their actions that align with their employees’ values and beliefs (p. 194). The in-depth interview participants shared that when they observe that their manager “walks the walk and talks the talk”, they trust that their manager has the best interest in their employees, as well as the organization. As an example, there was a manager that I reported to put his job in jeopardy to save the jobs of a couple employees that were based in remote locations where the company was downsizing. The manager was able to articulate to executive management that these employees were worth retaining and he provided business justification to relocate the employees to another office where employees were being retained. This leading by example as a manager resonated with the entire organization where the manager gained a lot of credibility and trust amongst the employees to know that the manager has the best interest of the employees. This is supported by Vogelgesang et al (2013) where employees expect that their manager demonstrates open and transparent communication that should align with a manager’s values and integrity that displays a level of trust to their employees and leading by example.

In terms of this study’s practical implications, based on the quantitative and qualitative results from all of the participants, when managers are properly trained to demonstrate assertive communication and leadership styles, it will provide huge returns for the employees and the organization. Specifically, employees are yearning for a manager that will actively listen to
them, feel valued, allow autonomy to have a sense of ownership, have a manager communicate expectations, and a manager that will provide development and support for the employees. Managers should also strive to avoid being passive when dealing with their subordinates because employees feel unsupported at work when their manager is too timid to advocate on their behalf.

5.1 Limitations and Future Research

There were some weaknesses in this research study’s design. The quantitative close-ended survey used convenience sampling and relied mostly on survey participants with at least a college degree. It would be interesting to reach out to a wider geographic audience for survey participants at all education levels and that span across multiple industries. This research study’s participants mainly came from Information Technology health insurance companies and Academic institutions. It would have been interesting to reach outside to other industries to gather data for this research study. Also, the average age of the survey participants was above the age of thirty. It would be interesting to interview survey participants below the age of thirty to gain their perspectives on managerial communication style affects their job satisfaction.

The qualitative In-Depth Interview enabled me to probe deeper with the participants to better understand what managerial communication style affects employee job satisfaction. A limitation with the In-Depth Interview was that all of the participants that were interviewed were a majority of white-collar employees. Also, the white-collar employees mostly worked within the information technology industry. It would be interesting to collect data on blue-collar types of employees that work in industries where the working conditions don’t allow them to work remotely on their computer from their homes. These blue-collar workers are required to report physically at the worksite. It would be interesting to gather data to understand what type of
communication style resonates with blue-collar workers and how that affects their job satisfaction.

The type of studies that future research could be done in order to build up this research study results is to understand when employees experience low job satisfaction, what do they do? Do the employees begin to call in sick to work in order to avoid interacting with their manager? Do the employees eventually resign from the company? Do the employees reach out to other managers within the organization to search for other opportunities? Are there alternatives for the managers to improve their communication style that will improve their interaction and trust with their employees? Future studies can examine whether generational factors such as age of the employee and use / email communication styles can work together to influence job satisfaction. Also, I would like to research how to retain employees that have low job satisfaction due their manager’s communication style.

The In-Depth Interviews have limited generalizability as opposed to quantitative research methods such as surveys administered using probability sampling methods (Baxter & Babbie, 2003). The future research will continue with a mixed methods approach to further review the quantitative research methods with additional questions on the close-ended surveys to narrow the data findings on the research question for how a manager’s communication style affects employees job satisfaction. Also, further probe questions on the In-Depth Interviews to determine what actions a manager can take to retain employees that are experiencing low job satisfaction in the workplace.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study contributed to existing research on organizational communication in the following ways. First, unlike previous studies (e.g., Dasgupta et al, 2013)
which have used management communication styles as mediating variables, this study examined
the various management communication styles as *direct predictors* of job satisfaction. Second,
unlike many previous research studies that have utilized one methodological approach (e.g.,
Bicer, 2020; Dasgupta et al, 2013), this research study’s unique mixed methods approach relied
on data from both close-ended surveys and in-depth interviews. Such a mixed-methods approach
is able to provide a more comprehensive picture of the way management styles shape job
satisfaction in the workplace. For example, the qualitative method in-depth Interview
participants were able to provide more nuanced data regarding the research question RQ: What
type of communication styles can managers apply to improve employee’s job satisfaction within
the workplace that went beyond the five management styles tested in the survey. Also, mixed-
methods approaches allow for the triangulation of findings (Babbie, 2012). The close-ended
survey, coupled with the in-depth interview findings, lent credibility and validity to the
importance of assertiveness as a positive trait that managers should ideally possess.
In sum, out of the five communication styles that were reviewed within this research study, the
assertive managerial communication style is the type of manager attribute in which an employee
reaches their potential. This research indicated that employees prefer an assertive manager that
trusts and believes in them, as well as actively listens to the employees’ recommendations and
solutions. An assertive manager recognizes that each employee possesses their own unique
strengths and weaknesses, and the manager that can leverage on those strengths and weaknesses
will have a high performing and motivated team.
References


https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.3.689.


Appendix A

List of Close-Ended Survey Questions:

1. **What is your ethnicity?**

   1) American Indian or Alaska Native
   2) Asian
   3) Black or African American
   4) Hispanic or Latino
   5) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   6) White Caucasian
   7) Two or More Ethnic Groups
   8) Something else, please specify: __________

2. **What is your age range?**

   1) 18-24
   2) 25-34
   3) 35-44
   4) 45-54
   5) 55-64
   6) 65+

3. **What is your gender?**

   1) Male
   2) Female
   3) Other
4. What is your level of education?

1) High School
2) Associates
3) Bachelors
4) Masters
5) Doctorate
6) Professional Certificate
7) Other

5. What is your role?

1) Non-Manager
2) Manager

6. How long have you been in this role?

1) 0-5 years
2) 6-10 years
3) 11-20 years
4) 21-30 years
5) 31-40 years
6) 41+ years

7. How long have you been with the company?

1) 0-5 years
2) 6-10 years
3) 11-20 years
4) 21-30 years
5) 31-40 years
6) 41+ years

8. How long have you worked for your current manager?

1) 0-5 years
2) 6-10 years
3) 11-20 years
4) 21-30 years
5) 31-40 years
6) 41+ years

9. Is your internet connection stable when you are having online meetings with your colleagues?

10. **Passive: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?**

**Level of measurement:** Ordinal.

**Range of measurement:** This question will be measured on a *five-point Likert scale* with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

- My manager feels guilty when he/she stands up for his/her rights or expresses his/her feelings.
- My manager allows other people to take unfair advantage of him/her. My manager often remains silent.
- My manager does not express his/her views and feelings.
- My manager has difficulty saying "no" when he/she does not want to say "yes" to someone's request.
- My manager has difficulty making reasonable requests of other people.
- My manager has difficulty recognizing and expressing his/her good points.
- My manager rarely stands up for his/her rights.
- My manager usually feels good at first about getting his way but feels guilty later as a result of how he/she went about it.

11. **Aggressive: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?**

**Level of measurement:** Ordinal.

**Range of measurement:** This question will be measured on a *five-point Likert scale* with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

- My Manager often brags and makes unrealistic claims about his good points.
• My manager makes other people look or feel stupid, small, or afraid.
• My manager ignores another person's rights.
• My manager frequently takes unfair advantage of other people.
• My manager often makes unreasonable demands from other people.
• My manager often monopolizes conversations.
• My manager sometimes becomes physically or verbally abusive when he/she is angry with someone or when criticizing someone.
• My manager cannot comfortably start or carry-on conversations.

12. Assertive: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?

Level of measurement: Ordinal.

Range of measurement: This question will be measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree

• My manager is able to recognize and express his good points.
• My manager is able to express negative feelings about other people without being abusive or cruel.
• My manager is able to receive compliments without denying them.
• My manager usually stands up for his/her rights and lets other people do the same.
• My manager is able to start or carry-on conversations comfortably.
• My manager can ask for what is rightfully his/her.
• My manager can take criticism without becoming defensive.
• My manager can easily express positive feelings about other people and their actions.

13. Passive-Aggressive: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements below?

Level of measurement: Ordinal.
Range of measurement: This question will be measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

- My manager controls employees’ emotions and behaviors to manipulate them.
- My manager occasionally loses their calmness and becomes angry, hostile, or punishing behavior.
- My manager is passive on the surface, but occasionally acts out their anger in indirect or secretive ways.
- My manager is often resentful and at times undermines the contributions made by the employees.
- My manager creates toxic relationships with the employees.
- My manager’s communication style while engaging with employees requests them to deliver a specific process a certain way, but the manager’s actions do not align with the request.
- My manager does not have my back when I need his/her support when interfacing with other managers at the same level or higher.
- My manager intentionally exhibits verbal outbursts to the employees,

Based on Sultanow et al (2013) the Close-Ended Quantitative questions on a five-point Likert scale with Ordinal and Nominal Values that measure the Independent Variable Communication Style: Manipulative related to question 13 is:

14. Manipulative: In your opinion from a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most significant, how much do you feel that your manager is very controlling of the employees to influence them to do things their way?

Level of measurement: Ordinal.

Range of measurement: This question will be measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

- My manager uses deceptiveness to achieve their goals.
- My manager frequently exaggerates to emphasize a point.
- My manager is a very cunning person.
- My manager is good at making others feel sorry for them.
- My manager often asks indirectly for needs to be met.
- My manager often sheds crocodile tears.
- My manager is good at using indirect methods to control subordinates.

15. Dependent variable: Employee job satisfaction from a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most significant, how much does your manager’s communication style affect your level of job satisfaction?

Level of measurement: Ordinal.

These questions will be measured on a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.


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<tr>
<th>Job Satisfaction Scale</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that I have good communication with my manager</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my manager has my best interest for career growth</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have training opportunities to improve my skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my salary is fair and competitive with the market</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my skills are fully utilized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my manager assigns me challenging assignments</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I am treated fairly compared to other employees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about the vision and goals within the workplace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good working with my colleagues and management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company culture is collaborartive, transparent, and trustworthy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

In-depth interview with semi-structured interview questions:

**Introductory Questions**

A. How are you today?

B. What is your role in the company?

C. How long have you been in this role?

D. How long have you been with the company?

E. What’s the name of your manager?

F. How long have you been working under this manager?

G. What types of duties/work responsibilities do you perform under your manager?

**Main Questions + Contingency Probes**

H. When thinking about a manager-employee relationship, what does the term ‘communication style’ mean to you?

I. What type of communication styles does your manager typically use with you, and why?
   
   a. Contingency probe: Describe an instance when you felt your manager communicated effectively with you. What style(s) did your manager use when communicating with you and why did that work?

   Contingency probe: Describe an instance when you felt your manager failed to communicate with you. What style(s) did your manager use when communicating with you and how did that make you feel?

J. In what way(s) if any does your manager’s communication style impact your job satisfaction? Why?

K. Of all your manager’s communication styles, which is the most effective and why?

L. Of all your manager’s communication styles, which is the most ineffective and why?

M. In what ways do you think your manager can improve their communication styles?

**Concluding Questions**
N. Do you have anything else you’d like to add?
Appendix C

Recruitment Email (Survey)

Dear XXX

My name is Bob Everson, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. You are being invited to participate in a close-ended survey on ‘How a Manager’s Communication Style Affects an Employee’s Motivation and Job Satisfaction within the Workplace’ that is being conducted as part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree.

This close ended survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You will be one of about a few hundred survey participants. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. There are no significant risks to participating in this survey outside of what you ordinarily encounter in daily life. You will benefit from participation in this interview by possibly gaining new knowledge about what communication styles improve employee job satisfaction.

I will not ask you for any personal information, such as your name or address. Please do not include any personal information in your survey responses. I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password. All potential identifiers will be removed from participants in order to preserve participant confidentiality. Only my University of Hawai‘i advisor and I will have access to the information. All results of this survey will be reported in the aggregate and will not be linked to individual participants. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai‘i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

For questions, concerns, complaints you may contact Bob Everson, the principal investigator for this study by email at beverson@hawaii.edu. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or phone at 808-956-3332.

Sincerely,
Bob Everson
School of Communications
The University of Hawaii at Manoa
Informed Consent Form (Survey)

University of Hawai‘i
Consent to Participate in a Research Project
Bob Everson, Co-Principal Investigator

Project title: How a Manager’s Communication Style Affects an Employee’s Motivation and Job Satisfaction within the Workplace

Aloha! My name is Bob Everson, and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

What am I being asked to do?
If you participate in this project, you will be asked to fill out a survey.

Taking part in this study is your choice.
Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you. Your choice to participate or not participate will not affect your status as a student at UH Manoa.

Why is this study being done?
The purpose of my project is to determine the manager’s communication style that motivates employees for job satisfaction in the workplace. I am asking you to participate because you are an employee that reports to a manager.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?
The survey will consist of approximately 57 close-ended survey questions. It will take approximately 15 minutes. The survey questions will include questions like:

On a five-point Likert scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.
- My manager feels guilty when he/she stands up for his/her rights or expresses his/her feelings.
- My manager makes other people look or feel stupid, small, or afraid.
- My manager can easily express positive feelings about other people and their actions.

The survey is accessed on a website to which I will provide you a link.

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?
I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the survey questions. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop taking the survey or you can withdraw from the project altogether.
There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this survey. The results of this project may further academic understanding of specific communication styles that increase employee job satisfaction.

Confidentiality and Privacy:
I will not ask you for any personal information, such as your name or address. Please do not include any personal information in your survey responses. I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password. All potential identifiers will be removed from participants in order to preserve participant confidentiality. I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a password protected computer. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

Compensation:
There will be no compensation for your time and effort in participating in this research project.

Future Research Studies:
Even after removing identifiers, the data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

Questions: For questions, concerns, complaints you may contact Bob Everson, the principal investigator for this study by email at <insert email address> @gmail.com. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or phone at 808-956-3332. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu to discuss problems, concerns, and questions, obtain information, or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd for more information on your rights as a research participant.

To Access the Survey: Please go to the following web page:
https://manoahawaiiss.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_doLjaCwesaQyHPw You should find a link and instructions for completing the survey. Clicking the “>>” button at the bottom of the informed consent page implies your consent to participate in this study.

Please print or save a copy of this page for your reference.

Mahalo!
Appendix D

Recruitment Email (In-Depth Interview)

Dear XXX

My name is Bob Everson, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in the School of Communications. You are being invited to participate in an interview on “How a Manager’s Communication Style affects an Employee’s Motivation and Job Satisfaction within the Workplace” that is being conducted as part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree.

These in-depth interviews will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, (I will audio-record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses). You will be one of about 20 people I will interview for this study.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering. There are no significant risks to participating in this interview outside of what you ordinarily encounter in daily life. You will benefit from participation in this interview by possibly gaining new knowledge about what communication styles are effective in improving employee job satisfaction in the workplace.

After I write a copy of the interviews, I will erase or destroy the audio-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name and company name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

For questions, concerns, complaints you may contact Bob Everson, the principal investigator for this study by email at beverson@hawaii.edu. You can also contact her advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo at rneo@hawaii.edu or phone at 808-956-3332.

Sincerely,
Bob Everson
School of Communications
The University of Hawaii at Manoa
Informed Consent Form (In-Depth Interview)

University of Hawai'i
Consent to Participate in a Research Project
Bob Everson, Co-Principal Investigator

Project title: How a Manager’s Communication Style Affects an Employee’s Motivation and Job Satisfaction within the Workplace

Aloha! My name is Bob Everson, and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Communication. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project.

What am I being asked to do?
If you participate in this project, I will have an online interview with you via an online platform of your choice such as Zoom, Skype, or Facetime at a time and location that is convenient with you.

Taking part in this study is your choice.
Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you.

Why is this study being done?
The purpose of my project is to understand how a manager’s communication style affects an employee’s motivation and job satisfaction within the workplace.

What will happen if I decide to take part in this study?
The interview will consist of approximately 15 open-ended questions. It will take 45 minutes to an hour. The interview questions will include questions like, “In what way(s) if any does your manager’s communication style impact your job satisfaction? Why?” “Of all your manager’s communication styles, which is the most effective and why?” and “Of all your manager’s communication styles, which is the most ineffective and why?”

What are the risks and benefits of taking part in this study?
I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview, or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. The results of this project may help managers to improve the ways in which they interact with their subordinates.

Privacy and Confidentiality:
I will keep all study data secure in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office/encrypted on a
password protected computer. Only my University of Hawai‘i advisor and I will have access to the information. Other agencies that have legal permission have the right to review research records. The University of Hawai‘i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

After I write a copy of the interviews, I will erase or destroy the audio-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

**Compensation:**
There will be no compensation for your time and effort in participating in this research project.

**Future Research Studies:**
Even after removing identifiers, the data from this study will not be used or distributed for future research studies.

**Questions:**
If you have any questions about this study, please email me at beverson@hawaii.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Rachel Neo, at 808-956-3332 & rneo@hawaii.edu. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu. to discuss problems, concerns, and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit http://go.hawaii.edu/jRd for more information on your rights as a research participant."

Keep a copy of the informed consent for your records and reference.
Signature(s) for Consent:

I give permission to join the research project entitled, “How a Manager’s Communication Style Affects an Employee’s Motivation and Job Satisfaction within the Workplace.”

Please initial next to either “Yes” or “No” to the following:
_____ Yes _____ No I consent to be audio-recorded for the interview portion of this research.

Name of Participant (Print): ___________________________________________________

Participant’s Signature: _____________________________________________________

Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent: ___________________________________