An Analysis of Leader and Subordinate
Perception of Motivating Language

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A leader's motivating language (ML)—i.e. uncertainty reduction, corporate culture explanation, and expression of shared feelings—has the goal of bridging the distance between leader intent and employee understanding to positively influence employee outcomes. This study explores the effects of supervisors' ML on employees' job satisfaction, perceived supervisor communication competence, communication satisfaction, and perceived leader effectiveness for two groups: employees with supervisory roles and those without supervisory roles. Multivariate data analysis results indicate that the influence of the three forms of ML communication on key employee outcomes varies for those who hold supervisor positions and those who do not.

INTRODUCTION

The connection between leadership and competent communication is documented by Pavitt (1999). He found that leaders' effective communication builds confidence of followers and this supports communication satisfaction between leader and follower. The ability of a leader's oral communication to influence employee motivation has been reported by Arnold (1981) and Keller (1989), and the influence of leader communication on employee performance was reported by Conger (1991), Waldron (1991), Mayfield and Mayfield (2002, 2004, 2010), Mayfield, Mayfield, and Kopf (1998) .

The relationship between a leader's verbal communications with employee outcomes is documented in studies of motivating language (ML). Sullivan (1988) extended ML theory by exploring the impact of three types of supervisor to direct report communication -- uncertainty reduction, corporate culture explanation, expression of shared feelings —on employee motivation (Sullivan, 1988). Mayfield et al. (1995, 1998) broadened ML theory when they developed and put into operation a scale for assessing the use of leaders' ML. According to Mayfield et al. (1995, p. 331) the scale "measures both a leader's general oral communication skills with subordinates and his/her strategic use of spoken language variance to motivate workers." Further, motivating language theory (MLT) "predicts that strategic applications of leader oral communication have positive measurable effects on subordinate performance and job satisfaction." (Mayfield et al., 1995, p. 332) Mayfield et al. expanded ML research by investigating the positive influence of leaders' ML on employee outcome variables such as performance, retention, attendance, and creativity (J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007, 2009; J. Mayfield, Mayfield, & Kopf, 1995,

1998; M. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2004). Recent research by J. Mayfield & Mayfield (2012) examines the relationship between a leader's ML and employee self-efficacy.

Prior MLT research has been shown to be a practical predictor of many worker and workplace outcomes. Our proposed research continues the investigation of MLT by studying the differential effects of leader ML on employee job satisfaction, perceived leader effectiveness, employee communication satisfaction, and perceived supervisor communication competence for two groups: employees who supervise others (referred to as leaders or supervisors) and employees who do not supervise others (referred to as direct reports, team members, workers, or subordinates). The study is based on a survey of a representative group of employees from a Southeast Regional Division of a Fortune 500 Company. We address the research question: How does supervisory ML impact employee key outcomes for the two groups? One goal is to identify notable differences between the groups.

This study broadens organizational communication research by relating MLT to practical organizational issues. The role of supervisors' ML on the employee outcomes of both leaders and team members will guide communication training in organizations.

The basis of this research continues in the following sections: motivating language theory, perceived communicator competence, communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, perceived leader effectiveness, hypotheses, methods, results, discussion and recommendations.

MOTIVATING LANGUAGE THEORY

MLT predicts that strategic applications of leader oral communication have positive measurable effects on subordinate performance and job satisfaction (Mayfield et al., 1998). MLT proposes that leaders' effectiveness in using three types of communication in accomplishing their tasks will have an impact on important organizational outcomes. These three types of communication are:

- Direction-giving and uncertainty reducing communication that occurs when a leader clarifies tasks, goals, and rewards to an employee.
- Meaning-making communication occurs when a leader explains the organization's cultural environment to a worker, including its structure, rules, and values. Meaning-making communication may take the form of metaphorical stories and rumors.
- Empathetic communication occurs when a leader expresses emotions through shared feelings, praise, and criticisms (Mayfield et al., 1998).

MLT is constrained by several assumptions. First, the three types of communication represent most verbal expressions that can occur in leader-worker talk. Second, leader behavior strongly influences the impact of ML on employee outcomes (Sullivan, 1988). Third, if leaders' language and behavior are incongruent, the effect of leaders' behavior will dominate. Language "will only get a leader so far, and speech must be congruent with behavior to be taken seriously over time" (Mayfield et al., 1995, p. 330) Fourth, leaders must use a combination of all three speech acts in order to gain the full power of motivating language (Mayfield et al., 1998).

Our research explores the association of the three types of leader ML with four key employee outcomes: perceived supervisor communication competence, communication satisfaction, perceived leader competence, and employee job satisfaction. Each employee outcome is expanded in the following sections.

PERCEIVED COMMUNICATOR COMPETENCE

Supervisors perceived as competent communicators share and respond to information in a timely manner, actively listen to other's points of view, communicate clearly and succinctly to all levels of the organization, and use differing communication channels (Shaw, 2005). An employee's communication competence can also include job-specific communication skills such as those required in sales, customer service, and human resources. A supervisor's management or leadership efforts clearly require a broader

range of communication competence than would be necessary in a nonsupervisory position (Sharbrough, Simmons, & Cantrill, 2006).

Communicator competence is measured by the twelve-item Communicator Competence Questionnaire developed by Monge, Backman, Dillard, and Eisenburg (1982). See Appendix A.

COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION

Employee communication satisfaction is a measure of how well the "available information fulfills the individual's requests for information pertaining to the task-role or for simply being informed about organizational activities" (Putti, Aryee, and Phua, 1990, p. 45). Putti et al. (1990) demonstrated that an organizational member's satisfaction with the amount of information available to them may enhance their commitment to the organization.

Madlock (2008) found a strong link between supervisor communication competence and both employee job and communication satisfaction. Madlock's (2008) research also found a significant positive association between supervisor relational leadership style and employee communication satisfaction. Communication satisfaction is an organizational outcome that has been shown to be associated with increases in the use of ML (Mayfield et al., 1995, 1998; Hughes, Ginnet, & Murphy, 1996; Sharbrough et al., 2006). As shown in Appendix A, communication satisfaction is evaluated by nine questions that focus on the employee-supervisor relationship.

JOB SATISFACTION

The connection between leader communication and worker job satisfaction is documented in management literature. Graen and Scandura (1986) found that leader communication training was followed by improved ratings of job satisfaction by direct reports. Leader-subordinate communication studies show that specific forms of supervisor communication (informational remarks, for example) have strong positive effects on employee job satisfaction (Pettit, Goris & Vaught, 1997).

Additional studies of worker job satisfaction investigated supervisors' displays of nonverbal immediacy (Madlock, 2006; Richmond & McCroskey, 2000); humor (Avtgis & Taber, 2006); supervisors' communication style (Richmond, McCroskey, Davis, & Koontz, 1980); supervisors' leadership style (Madlock, 2008); and supervisor's verbal aggressiveness and mentoring (Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2010). Prior studies revealed a supervisor's use of ML has a positive association with their direct reports' job satisfaction (Mayfield et al., 1995, 1998; Hughes, Ginnett & Murphy, 1996; Sharbrough et al., 2006).

In our study, the Hoppock Job Satisfaction Measure (Hoppock, 1935) quantifies employee job satisfaction. Hoppock's measure consists of four questions dealing with job aspects, such as how well employees like their job and how much of the time they feel satisfied. See Appendix A. Nichols, Stahl, and Manley (1978) examined the validity and reliability of the Hoppock Job Satisfaction Measure by employing the measure in surveys targeted to R & D professionals, maintenance employees, and managerial employees. Hoppock (1960) completed a twenty-seven year job satisfaction follow up by surveying in 1959 the same group of employed adults who participated in the original 1932-1933 survey.

PERCEIVED LEADER EFFECTIVENESS

Perceived leader effectiveness is based on three measures of leaders' effectiveness adapted from Nahavandi (1991). Survey respondents were asked to what extent their leaders achieved (a) the organization's goals set for the leaders, (b) the leader's own goals, and (c) the employee's goals (Nahavandi, 1991). See Appendix A for the perceived leader effectiveness scale. Sharbrough (1998) and Sharbrough et al. (2006) found a direct relationship between a supervisor's use of ML and perceived leader effectiveness.

HYPOTHESES

From the literature review, we find a bridge between a supervisor's use of ML and key employee outcomes that encompass employees' job satisfaction, employees' communication satisfaction, perceived supervisory communication competence, and perceived leader effectiveness. To expand prior research, we will investigate the link between supervisor's ML and employee key outcomes for two groups: employees who hold positions as supervisors (also referred to as leaders) and employees who do not hold supervisor positions (also referred to as workers, direct reports, team members, or subordinates). The following hypotheses, divided into statements for the two groups, are posed:

Hypotheses for Respondents with Supervisor Roles

> *Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employee job satisfaction.*
> *Hypothesis 2a: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employee communication satisfaction.*
> *Hypothesis 3a: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employees' perception of leader communication competence.*
> *Hypothesis 4a: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employees' perception of leader effectiveness.*

Hypotheses for Respondents without Supervisor Roles

> *Hypothesis 1b: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employee job satisfaction.*
> *Hypothesis 2b: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employee communication satisfaction.*
> *Hypothesis 3b: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employees' perception of leader communication competence.*
> *Hypothesis 4b: There is a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and employees' perception of leader effectiveness.*

METHODS

Procedures and Sample

The sample consisted of employees of the Southeast Regional Division of a Fortune 500 Company. The study is based on a sample of 136 participating employees from a 400-person organization surveyed via an interactive Internet survey. One incomplete survey was omitted, so our research is based on 135 complete surveys. The survey instrument, shown in Appendix A, asks whether the respondent supervises others. Responses to this question provide information to separate the respondents into the two groups of interest in our research.

The sample's demographic makeup is comparable to similar industries. As summarized in Table 1, the majority of respondents were male (82% n =111) versus female (18% n = 24). Individuals in a supervisory role made up 31% (n = 42) of the respondents while 69% (n = 93) did not supervise anyone. Individuals with a high school, trade school, or Associate's degree made up 57% (n = 77) of the sample and 34% (n = 46) had Bachelor's degrees, and 9% (n = 12) had a Master's degree or higher. Thirty percent of the sample was 35 years of age or younger, and 30% of the sample was older than 45 years of age. A majority of the sample, 65% (n = 88), had 10 years or less of service. Technical or engineering positions made up 59% of the sample. The data is stratified into two groups: employees who hold supervisor positions (n = 42) and employees who do not hold supervisor positions (n = 93).

TABLE 1
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Category	Not a Supervisor	Supervisor	Number	Percent
Male	72	39	112	82%
Female	21	3	24	18%
Age				
16-25	4	0	4	2.9%
26-35	32	4	36	26.5%
36-45	33	22	54	39.7%
46-55	20	12	32	23.5%
56-65	4	4	8	5.9%
No Response	2	0	2	1.5%
Education				
High School	14	5	19	14.0%
Trade School	16	12	28	20.6%
Associate Degree	24	6	30	22.1%
Bachelor's Degree	31	15	46	33.8%
Master's or higher	8	4	12	8.9%
No Response	1	0	1	0.7%
Length of Service				
0-5	47	12	60	44.1%
6-10	19	9	28	20.6%
11-15	11	5	16	11.8%
16-20	5	8	13	9.6%
21-25	7	4	11	8.1%
26-30	2	2	4	2.9%
31-35	1	1	2	1.5%
36-40+	1	1	2	1.5%
Job Type				
Technical/Engineer			80	58.8%
Direct Supervisor			21	15.4%
Sales			22	16.2%
Administrative			13	9.6%
Supervisory				
Yes	0	42	42	30.9%
No	93	0	93	68.4%
No Response	1		1	0.7%

Study Variables
Motivating Language Scale

Each employee rated his or her immediate supervisor's use of ML by using a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents were asked to choose the response that is most appropriate and the answer that best matches his or her perceptions. Survey examples show different ways that a boss might talk to a respondent. The choices are: Very Little (VL), Little (L), Some (S) A Lot (A) and A Whole Lot (WL). As shown in Appendix A, ML questions 1 through 24 are the questions used by Mayfield et al. (1995, 1998) to develop the three motivating language subscales:

1. Uncertainty Reduction: A leader's direction-giving and uncertainty reducing communication that clarifies worker roles, tasks, and rewards.
2. Corporate Culture Explanation: Leader's meaning-making communication that explains the organization's cultural environment to a worker, including its structure, rules, and values.
3. Expression of Shared Feelings: A leader's empathetic communication, which expresses the emotions of a leader through shared feelings, praise, criticisms, compliments (Mayfield et al., 1995, 1998).

Factor analysis reduced the twenty-four ML questions to three sub-scales, each sub-scale representing one of the forms of leader communication listed above. Prior ML research by Mayfield et al. (1995) and Sharbrough et al. (2006) confirmed congruence between hypothesized and observed factor structures. Factor scores were derived for each of the three ML subscales. These scores provide a means of correlating each ML subscale with the employee outcome measures.

Cronbach's α was used to test for reliability for all ML subscales and employee outcomes scales before using the scales in subsequent analysis. Nunnaly (1978) identified 0.70 as an acceptable threshold, but lower limits are sometimes used (Santos, 1999). From prior investigations, we know ML subscale reliabilities are high, as evidenced by scores ranging from 0.97 to 0.92 found by Mayfield's et al. (1995) research and a score of 0.96 found by Sharbrough et al. (2006). Cronbach's α for the ML subscales and the employee outcomes scales, derived from the Fortune 500 dataset, are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

Survey Type	Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)
ML	0.9558
Employee Communication Satisfaction	0.9270
Perceived Leader Communication Competence	0.7806
Perceived Leader Effectiveness	0.8472
Employee Job Satisfaction	0.7417

Employee Communication Satisfaction

Employees' communication satisfaction is measured by nine survey items that asked employees to rate their immediate supervisor in areas such as trust, honesty, praise, understanding of the employee's job needs. See questions 25 through 33 in Appendix A. Prior research reported scale reliability of 0.93 (Sharbrough et al. 2006). The employee communication satisfaction scale was converted to factor scores that could be used in subsequent correlations.

Perceived Leader Communicator Competence

A Perceived Communicator Competence Questionnaire developed by Monge, Backman, Dillard, and Eisenburg (1982) is used to evaluate a worker's perception of his or her immediate supervisor's communication competence. Perceived leader communication competence is evaluated by questions 34

through 45 (See Appendix A). Prior research reported scale reliability of 0.93 (Madlock, 2006), 0.90 (Madlock, 2008), and 0.78 (Sharbrough et al., 2006). The perceived communicator competence scale was converted to factor scores that were subsequently used to correlate communicator competence to ML and its subscales.

Perceived Leader Effectiveness

Perceived Leader Effectiveness is quantified by three measures of leaders' effectiveness adapted from Nahavandi (1991). See questions 46 through 48 in Appendix A. Research by Sharbrough (1998) and Sharbrough, et al. (2006) found substantial support for the relationship between supervisory use of ML and perceived leader effectiveness within an organization. Prior research reported scale reliability of 0.85 (Sharbrough et al., 2006). The perceived leader effectiveness scale was converted to factor scores that were subsequently correlated with ML subscales.

Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction is evaluated by four questions created and tested by Hoppock (1935, 1960; Nichols, Stahl, & Manley, 1978) that asked how well respondents like their job, how much of the time they feel satisfied with the job, how they feel about changing their job, and how they think they compare with other people. See questions 49 to 52 in Appendix A. The employee job satisfaction scale was converted to factor scores so the association between job satisfaction and ML could be established.

Pearson correlation was used to find the association between the ML scale and each subscale and each of the four employee outcome scales. Two sets of correlations were generated, one for respondents who hold supervisor positions and another set for those who do not hold supervisor positions. See Table 3 for ML and Employee Outcome Measure correlations.

TABLE 3
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN MOTIVATING LANGUAGE SCALE AND SUBSCALES
AND KEY EMPLOYEE OUTCOME MEASURES

Key Employee Outcome Measures	Position	ML (total 24 questions)	ML Subscales		
			Direction Giving	Shared Feelings	Explains Culture
Employee Job Satisfaction	*Non-Supervisory*	*0.357**￼*	*0.281**￼*	*0.220*￼*	*0.087*
	Supervisory	0.259	0.262	0.215	0.173
Employee Communication Satisfaction	*Non-Supervisory*	*0.597**￼*	*0.440**￼*	*0.525**￼*	*0.171*
	Supervisory	0.632**	0.432**	0.685**	0.145
Perceived Supervisor Communication Competence	*Non-Supervisory*	*0.536**￼*	*0.500**￼*	*0.191*	*0.161*
	Supervisory	0.479**	0.442**	0.562**	0.274
Perceived Leader Effectiveness	*Non-Supervisory*	*0.633**￼*	*0.535**￼*	*0.311**￼*	*0.248*￼*
	Supervisory	0.687**	0.502**	0.393*	0.108

**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level
*Correlation significant at the 0.05 level
Correlations on the top row of each outcome, in *italics*, are for those who do not hold a supervisor position (n = 93)
Correlations on the second row of each outcome are for those who hold a supervisor position (n = 42)

RESULTS

Confirmatory factor analysis of the 24 ML questions resulted in three, well-defined factors. The three factors: uncertainty reduction, corporate culture explanation, and expression of shared feelings communication, correspond to the three subscales identified by Sullivan (1988) and developed by Mayfield et al. (1995) and further confirmed by Hughes, Ginnet, and Murphy (1996) and Sharbrough et al. (2006). The last study's findings established that respondents were interpreting the ML questionnaire questions in a way comparable with respondents in previous ML research. The ML scale, along with each of the ML subscales, were used for subsequent analysis to determine the association between ML and the key employee outcome measures of: (1) employee job satisfaction, (2) communication satisfaction, (3) perceived leader effectiveness, and (4) perceived leader communication competence.

Pearson correlation coefficients, shown in Table 3, measure the strength, statistical significance, and direction of the relationship between the ML scale and each subscale with each employee outcome. Derivation of separate sets of correlation coefficients for each group (i.e. those with supervisor roles and those without supervisor roles) permits a comparison of group members.

Hypotheses Results for Respondents with Supervisor Roles

The first four hypotheses, 1a through 4a, are based on an analysis of respondents in supervisory positions. These supervisors were asked to complete the survey based on both job experience and their immediate supervisor's communication. Hypothesis 1a predicted significant and positive relationships between leader ML use and employee job satisfaction. Pearson correlation coefficient 0.259 ($p > 0.05$) is not significant; Hypothesis 1a is not confirmed. The question that arises from this weak association between ML and employee job satisfaction is: What variables play a role in job satisfaction for supervisory personnel? Supervisory job satisfaction ties significantly to communication satisfaction ($r = 0.551$ $p < 0.01$) and perceived leader communication competence ($r = 0.479$ $p < 0.01$).

Hypothesis 2a hypothesized a significant positive relationship between leader ML use and employee communication satisfaction. The correlation between ML and employee communication satisfaction is 0.632 ($p < 0.01$). This significant and positive result supports Hypothesis 2a. Further analysis reveals that only uncertainty reduction communication and expression of shared feeling communication play a significant role in communication satisfaction for employees in supervisory positions.

Hypothesis 3a predicted a significant positive association between leader ML use and the employee's perception of leader communication competence. The correlation between a supervisor's ML use and perceived communication competence of 0.499 ($p < 0.01$) supports Hypothesis 3a and signifies a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. Specifically, uncertainty reduction and expression of shared feeling communications are the only ML forms that strongly affect perceived leader communication competence.

Hypothesis 4a predicted significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and the employee's perception of leader effectiveness. The correlation of 0.687 ($p < 0.01$) supports Hypothesis 4a, and we find a significant positive association between a supervisor's ML communication and the perception of leader effectiveness. Again, only uncertainty reduction communication and expression of shared feeling communication have notable roles in perceived leader effectiveness for respondents in supervisory jobs.

Hypotheses Results for Respondents with Who Do Not Hold Supervisor Roles

The next four hypotheses were based on an analysis of respondents who did not hold supervisor positions. These direct reports were asked to complete the survey instrument based on their perceptions of their immediate supervisor's communication with them.

Hypothesis 1b predicted significant and positive relationships between leader ML use and employee job satisfaction. Pearson correlation coefficient 0.357 ($p < 0.01$) is significant and positive, confirming Hypothesis 1b. The ML forms that contribute to job satisfaction are uncertainty reduction communication and expression of shared feeling communication.

Hypothesis 2b explored the relationship between leader ML use and employee communication satisfaction. The correlation between supervisor ML use and employee communication satisfaction is .597 (p < 0.01). Hypothesis 2b is confirmed. There is a significant positive relationship between a leader's ML use and employee communication satisfaction. Only uncertainty reduction and expression of shared feeling communications have a notable association with communication satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3b investigated the association between leader ML use and the employee's perception of leader communication competence. The correlation is 0.563 (p < 0.01). Hypothesis 3b is confirmed, and there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. Only uncertainty reduction communication has a strong link to perceived leader communication competence for respondents who do not hold supervisor positions.

Hypothesis 4b predicted a significant and positive relationship between leader ML use and the employee's perception of leader effectiveness. The correlation of 0.633 (p < 0.01) supports Hypothesis 4b, and we find a significant positive association between supervisor ML use and the employee's perception of leader effectiveness. Both supervisory uncertainty reduction communication and expression of shared feeling communication are strongly linked to perceived leader effectiveness.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the current study is to support and extend prior ML research by examining the impact of supervisors' use of ML and its subscales on employee outcomes for two groups: employees who hold supervisor positions and employees who do not hold supervisor positions. The association between a supervisor's use of ML, the three ML subscales, and four key employee outcomes— employee job satisfaction, perceived supervisor communication competence, perceived leader effectiveness, and employee communication satisfaction—is analyzed for both groups. Data analysis results support and validate previous ML research by J. Mayfield and Mayfield (1998, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2012) Mayfield et al. (1995, 1998), M. Mayfield and Mayfield (2004) Sharbrough (1998), and Sharbrough et al. (2006). The research also supports Madlock's (2008) findings of the relationship between communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and communicator competence. We extend ML research by looking at the relationship between each of the three ML communication forms and employee outcomes for two groups: employees in supervisory occupations and employees in nonsupervisory occupations.

We discuss the impact of a supervisor's ML namely the three subscales considered as a set. For both employees in supervisory and nonsupervisory positions, ML has a significant, positive association with key employee outcomes. As displayed in Table 3, leader ML use has a positive significant correlation with perceived supervisor communication competence, perceived leader effectiveness, and employee communication satisfaction. This finding supports prior research showing that a supervisor's ML has a positive impact on these three employee outcomes (Mayfield et al. 1995, 1998; Sharbrough et al., 2006). This broadens prior research by investigating the connection between supervisors' utilization of ML and employee outcomes for two previously unstudied groups: employees in supervisory positions and those in nonsupervisory positions.

Motivating Language and Employee Job Satisfaction
ML has a positive significant association with job satisfaction for employees not in supervisor positions, while employees in supervisor positions do not experience this (See Table 3). This supervisory-nonsupervisory difference is noteworthy. One explanation may be that those in supervisor positions have less dependence on uncertainty reduction communication, corporate culture explanation communication, and expression of shared feeling communication compared to employees who are not supervisors. Those in supervisor roles have been with the industry long enough to understand the culture and know their job requirements. Our sample demographics reveal that approximately fifty percent of nonsupervisory respondents have five years or less with the firm, while approximately three-fourths of the supervisory respondents have been with the firm more than five years. Another explanation may be that those in nonsupervisory roles depend more on shared-feeling communication where they are told they are doing a

good job. Those in supervisor roles have already been confirmed as doing a good job by virtue of their promotion. This study's finding for those in supervisor positions warrants future research.

Motivating Language and Employee Communication Satisfaction

A review of the impacts of each ML subscale (uncertainty reduction, corporate culture explanation, expression of shared feelings) provides significant insights not found in prior research. As seen in Table 3, ML has a significant positive connection with employee communication satisfaction for both supervisory and nonsupervisory employees. Communication satisfaction measures an employee's trust of his or her immediate supervisor; whether or not the supervisor listens to the employee; whether or not the supervisor praises the employee, understands the employee job needs, and is friendly.

Examining the three forms of ML separately reveals that uncertainty reduction communication and expression of shared feeling communication play a significant role in communication satisfaction. However, for both groups, corporate culture explanation communication has no association with employee communication satisfaction. This delineation of the three ML components provides insight not found in prior ML research. (See J. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007, 2009, 2012; J. Mayfield, Mayfield, & Kopf, 1995, 1998; M. Mayfield & Mayfield, 2004; and Sharbrough et al., 2006) Training meant to improve employee communication satisfaction can be targeted to uncertainty reduction and expression of shared feeling communication.

Motivating Language and Perceived Supervisor Communication Competence

For both supervisory and nonsupervisory personnel, uncertainty reduction communication plays a significant role in perceived supervisor communication competence (See Table 3), thus underscoring its role in leadership. A leader's expression of shared-feeling communication has a significant link to perceived communication competence for those in supervisory roles. The absence of a considerable association between shared-feeling communication and perceived supervisor communication competence for respondents in nonsupervisory roles is difficult to explain and warrants additional study.

Motivating Language and Perceived Leader Effectiveness

A supervisor's practice of all three ML communication styles plays a significant role in perceived leader effectiveness for nonsupervisory personnel. As seen in Table 3, this outcome is the only one in which corporate culture explanation communication displays a significant connection. This type of communication occurs when a supervisor clarifies the organization's values, culture, and rules (Mayfield et al., 1995). For employees with supervisor roles, uncertainty reduction and expression of shared feeling communications have an important correlation with perceived leader effectiveness. For supervisors, explanation of corporate culture communication does not influence this outcome and may reflect their tenure with the company. They learned the organization's culture, value, and history earlier in their career and so no longer feel the need to communicate them with regularity. Sample demographics shows approximately 70 percent of the supervisors have been with the company longer than 5 years.

Insights on Motivating Language and Industry

This study also addressed the need to be able to generalize the findings of ML research to leader-subordinate communication in industry. Specifically, the sample for this research came from an industry division that includes considerable diversity with respect to: level of management, level of education, length of service, gender, and career field. The diverse sample overcame some of the limitations of Mayfield et al.'s (1995, 1998) ML research based on a sample that was predominately female nurses.

Another application stemming from this research involves its possible contribution to industry. As noted in prior research, low levels of employee communication satisfaction have been linked to outcomes such as absenteeism (Alder & Golan, 1981; Blau, 1985; Iverson & Deery, 2001) and turnover (Porter & Steers, 1973). The current study identified specific supervisor communication behaviors, i.e., the use of uncertainty reduction and expression of shared feeling communications, which play critical, significant roles in communication satisfaction for both supervisory and nonsupervisory personnel. Supervisory

training programs may be wise to concentrate on these two communication forms to increase employee communication satisfaction and improved performance while reducing turnover and absenteeism.

The results indicate a clear link between a leader's uncertainty reduction communication and all four key employee outcomes for employees in nonsupervisory appointments. Employees in supervisor positions display a significant association between uncertainty reduction and expression of shared feeling communication with employee communication satisfaction, perceived supervisor communication competence, and perceived leader effectiveness. For employees in supervisory and nonsupervisory positions, uncertainty reduction communication has the strongest link to employee outcomes while corporate culture explanation communication exhibits the weakest impact on employee key outcomes. Organization communication training targeted to "How to accomplish job tasks" as opposed to training that centers on "Why we do it this way" can be expected to improve employee outcomes and performance.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study has applications for leadership and communication, it has limitations. This study expanded and supported prior research that found a positive association between leaders' use of ML and employees' job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, perceived supervisor communication competence, and perceived leadership effectiveness. (See Mayfield et al., 1995, 1998; Sharbrough et al., 2006) The current findings provide a starting point for researchers to expand on this association and discover and verify links between the use of ML and its subscales and key employee outcomes beyond the scope of this study.

A limitation of the study is the demographic makeup of the sample. Of the 135 respondents, only 24 were female. In addition, the job types represented by the sample, although representative for this industry, were heavily weighted by technical and engineering jobs (58%). Future research could expand job types to address sales, human resources, administrative, health care, military, education, accounting, finance, and marketing.

The connection between supervisor ML and leadership styles (Madlock, 2008) provides a new area for research. Future ML research may consider leaders' and employees' personality inventories.

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APPENDIX A

SCALES USED IN STUDY

A. Demographic Data Scale
Please answer the following questions:
1) Your age is?
a)   16-25
b)   26-35
c)   36-45
d)   46-55
e)   56-65+
2) Your gender is?
a)   Male
b)   Female
3) Your level of education is?
a)   High School
b)   Trade School
c)   Associate Degree
d)   Bachelor's Degree
e)   Master's Degree
f)   Doctorate
4) Years of service with company?
a)   0-5
b)   6-10
c)   11-15
d)   16-20
e)   21-25
f)   26-30
g)   31-35
h)   36-40+
5) Your job title category is
a)   Administrative
b)   Direct Supervision
c)   Sales
d)   Technical/Engineering
6) Do you supervise others?
a)   Yes
b)   No

B. Motivational Language Scale
Please choose the response that is most appropriate for you. The examples below show different ways that your boss might talk to you. Please choose the answer that best matches your perceptions. Be sure to mark only one answer for each question.

Very Little   (VL)
Little   (L)
Some   (S)
A Lot   (A)
A Whole Lot   (WL)

Direction-Giving/Uncertainty Reducing Language
1) Gives me useful explanations of what needs to be done in my work.   VL L S A WL
2) Offers me helpful directions on how to do my job.   VL L S A WL
3) Provides me with easily understandable instructions about my work.   VL L S A WL
4) Offers me helpful advice on how to improve my work.   VL L S A WL
5) Gives me good definitions on what I must do in order to receive   VL L S A WL
rewards.
6) Gives me clear instructions about solving job-related problems.   VL L S A WL
7) Offers me specific information on how I am evaluated.   VL L S A WL
8) Provides me with helpful information about forthcoming changes   VL L S A WL
affecting my work.
9) Provides me with helpful information about past changes affecting my VL L S A WL
work.
10) Shares news with me about organizational achievements and   VL L S A WL
organizational financial status.

Empathetic Language
11) Gives me praise for my good work.   VL L S A WL
12) Shows me encouragement for my work efforts.   VL L S A WL
13) Shows concern about my job satisfaction.   VL L S A WL
14) Expresses his/her support for my professional development.   VL L S A WL
15) Asks me about my professional well-being.   VL L S A WL
16) Shows trust in me.   VL L S A WL

Meaning Making Language
17) Tells me stories about key events in the organization's past.   VL L S A WL
18) Gives me useful information that I couldn't get through official   VL L S A WL
    channels.
19) Tells me stories about people who are admired in my organization.   VL L S A WL
20) Tells me stories about people who have worked hard in this   VL L S A WL
    organization.
21) Offers me advice on how to behave at the organization's social   VL L S A WL
    gatherings.
22) Offers me advice about how to "fit in" with other members of this   VL L S A WL
organization.
23) Tells me stories about people who have been rewarded by this   VL L S A WL
organization.
24) Tells me stories about people who have left this organization.   VL L S A WL

C. Communication Satisfaction Scale
Please choose the response that is most appropriate for you. Please choose the response that is most appropriate for you. Be sure to mark only one answer for each question.

Strongly Disagree   (SD)
Disagree   (D)
Undecided   (U)
Agree   (A)
Strongly Agree   (SA)

25) I trust my immediate supervisor.   SD D U A SA
26) My immediate superior is honest with me.   SD D U A SA
27) My immediate superior listens to me   SD D U A SA
28) I am free to disagree with my immediate superior.   SD D U A SA
29) I can tell my immediate superior when things are wrong.   SD D U A SA
30) My immediate superior praises me for a good job.   SD D U A SA
31) My immediate superior is friendly with his/her subordinates.   SD D U A SA
32) My immediate superior understands my job needs.   SD D U A SA
33) My relationship with my immediate superior is satisfying.   SD D U A SA

D. Communication Competence Scale

Please choose the response that is most appropriate for you. Please choose the response that is most appropriate for you. Be sure to mark only one answer for each question.

Strongly Disagree   (SD)
Disagree   (D)
Undecided   (U)
Agree   (A)
Strongly Agree   (SA)

34) My immediate supervisor has a good command of the language.   SD D U A SA
35) My immediate supervisor is sensitive to other's needs of the   SD D U A SA
    moment.
36) My immediate supervisor typically gets right to the point.   SD D U A SA
37) My immediate supervisor pays attention to what other people say to SD D U A SA
    him or her.
38) My immediate supervisor can deal with others effectively.   SD D U A SA
39) My immediate supervisor is a good listener.   SD D U A SA
40) My immediate supervisor's writing is difficult to understand. SD D U A SA
41) My immediate supervisor expresses his or her ideas clearly.   SD D U A SA
42) My immediate supervisor is difficult to understand when he or she SD D U A SA
    speaks.
43) My immediate supervisor generally says the right thing at the right SD D U A SA
    time.
44) My immediate supervisor is easy to talk to.   SD D U A SA
45) My immediate supervisor usually responds to messages (memos,   SD D U A SA
    phone calls, reports, etc.,) quickly.

Questions 34, 36, 38, 40, 41, 42, and 43 measure the Encoding dimension of communication while questions 35, 37, 39, 44 and 45 measure the Decoding dimension of communication.

E. Leader Effectiveness Scale

In the following questions, we would like you to describe how your immediate supervisor leads. Think about his/her behavior in general, rather than about specific situations. Be sure to mark only one answer for each question.

Strongly Disagree   (SD)
Disagree   (D)
Undecided   (U)
Agree   (A)
Strongly Agree   (SA)

46) He or she effectively achieves the goals set by our company.   SD D U A SA
47) He or she effectively achieves his or her own goals as a supervisor. SD D U A SA
48) He or she aids me in achieving my goals as an employee.   SD D U A SA

F. Job Satisfaction Scale
For each question, please check the response you feel is most appropriate. Be sure to mark only one answer for each question.

49) Choose ONE statement which best tells how well you like your job:
a. I hate it
b. I dislike it
c. I don't like it
d. I am indifferent to it
e. I like it
f. I am enthusiastic about it
g. I love it
50) Check one of the following to show HOW MUCH OF THE TIME you feel satisfied with your job:
a. All the time
b. Most of the time
c. A good deal of the time
d. About half of the time
e. Occasionally
f. Seldom
g. Never
51) Check the ONE statement which best tells how you feel about changing your job:
a. I would quit this job at once if I could get anything else to do
b. I would take almost any other job in which I could earn as much as I am earning now
c. I would like to change both my job and my occupation
d. I would like to exchange my present job for another job in the same line of work
e. I am not eager to change my job, but I would do so if I could get a better job
f. I cannot think of any jobs for which I would exchange mine
g. I would not exchange my job for any other
52) Check one of the following statements to show how you think you compare with other people:
a. No one likes their work better than I like mine
b. I like my work much better than most people like theirs
c. I like my work better than most people like theirs
d. I like my work about as well as most people like theirs
e. I dislike my work more than most people dislike theirs
f. I dislike my work much more than most people dislike theirs
g. No one dislikes his work more than I dislike mine