# Employee Satisfaction:
# Communication Competence and Leadership Oriented Approach

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*Abstract:*
*This research explores whether or not relationships between supervisor communicator competences, leadership style (Task-oriented vs. Relation-oriented) and employee job and communication satisfaction exist. Participants are 126 graduate students who works for (52 males and 74 female) a variety of organizations in Turkey. The findings signify that there is incontrovertibly positive and strong relationship between supervisor communication competence and employee communication satisfaction. In a similar way, relational leadership style has strong effect on employee communication satisfaction. On the other hand, the results indicate that weak relationship between task-oriented leadership style and job and communication satisfaction. According the results communicator competence is the strongest significant standardized regression coefficient with the job and communication satisfaction.*

*Keywords: Employee communication, communication competence, leadership style*

## 1. Introduction

Employee satisfaction influence an individual's commitment to the company and also it has effect on employee performance and business success. Employee behavior and satisfaction are highly correlated to the organization success and because of this reason the researches on employee satisfaction is quite rich. Pincus (1986) investigated the effect of communication satisfaction on job performance, Helm (2011) studied about employees' impact on corporate reputation, Cravens and Oliver (2006) mentioned employees as key factor of reputation, Antoncic and Antoncic (2011) and Duboff and Heaton (1999) specified how employee satisfaction is important on business growth, Bulgarella (2005), Hanna at all. (2004) remarked that employee satisfaction is a vital aspect for customer satisfaction, Brown et al. (1996) found out that positive employee behavior has strong and positive effect on customer satisfaction. Kattara et al. (2014) published a study about impact of employee behavior on customers' overall satisfaction.

Employee satisfaction contains both communication and job satisfaction and it is influenced by many different factors like leadership style and the quality of communication with leaders. Increasing the effectiveness of leader-employee communication can help to strengthen levels of employee satisfaction.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Communication Competence

Communication competence is about the knowledge and wisdom of using applicable communication skills. Communication competence is not just understanding proper communication skills but also the ability to apply and adapt that knowledge when certain situations may emerge unexpected. (Cooley and Roacch, 1984:25). Communication competence is considered to contain both cognitive and behavioral aspects. (Rubin, 1985). Understanding that communication competence contains these two aspects, then being socially informed and perceptive is a key factor in being a competent communicator. Light (1989) considered fundamental constructs of communication competence as functionality of communication; sufficiency of communication, knowledge, judgment

and skill. Spitzberg (1983) believed that communication competence involved knowledge, motivation and skill as a system that relates and connects to one another. In order to be mutually beneficent to one another in a relationship, communication competence is a necessary tool which consists of cognitive, attitudinal, emotional and behavioral knowledge (B-Ikeguchi, 2014) In order to reach personal, educational, vocational and social goals, communication competence is a key quality that an individual need in order to attain success in life (Light and Mcnughton, 2014:1)

## 2.2. Leadership

Yukl defined leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (2016:8). Leadership is not just a trait, it is recognized as a process which individuals influence people in order to reach certain goals and objectives as a unit (Sharmai, Jain, 2013). Bryman (1992) considered leadership as the ability to direct people towards certain goals for an organization.

In literature, leadership is considered to be divided into two separate functions; Task- oriented leadership and relation-oriented leadership (Taberner, Chambel, Arana, 2009). Task-oriented leadership focuses on organizing, planning and coordinating the necessary jobs needed of the team or individual employees whereas relation-oriented leadership focuses on the motivation and behaviors of the people themselves. In relation-oriented leadership, the leader works to inspire those around him in order to achieve the organization's success. The effectiveness of leader-subordinate relationship affects many organization outcomes due to group satisfaction (Anderson, Madlock& Hoffman, 2006). Leadership plays a great roll in effecting employee satisfaction (Castaneda &Nahavand, 1991).

## 2.3. Communication Satisfaction

Communication satisfaction is an important topic in our day which is being researched and investigated for business and communication industries. "Communication satisfaction is an employee's satisfaction with various communication practices of the organization" (Clampitt and Girard, 1993:84). Pincus described communication satisfaction as the accumulation of an individual's satisfaction which is saturated from information flow and relationship variables (Pincus, 1986). Different researches has studied on communication satisfaction measurement. For instance, Downs and Hazen (1977) created Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, Organizational Communication Scale was conducted by Roberts and O'Reilly (1979), and to analyze communication practices in organizations. Crino and White (1981) were the researchers who offered a conceptualization of communication satisfaction.

A conceptualization of communication satisfaction was offered by Crino and White (1981), who argued that organizational communication satisfaction involves an individual's satisfaction with various aspects of the communication occurring in the organization, whereas Putti, Aryee, and Phua (1990) demonstrated that organizational members' communication satisfaction is associated with the amount of information available to them. Although communication provides employees with information that clarifies work tasks and may contribute to communication satisfaction, Anderson and Martin (1995) found that employees engage in communication interactions with coworkers and superiors to satisfy interpersonal needs of pleasure and inclusion. Thus, employee communication satisfaction appears to involve a task and relational dimension.

## 2.4. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been an area which examined by researchers for a long time. According to Locke (1976) definition job satisfaction is a pleasant or positive emotional expression which causes by worker's job or job experience.

Many different researches have shown that dissatisfied employees are more likely to quit their jobs or be absent than satisfied employees so job satisfaction is one of the vital necessaries for business success. (Saari and Judge, 2004) According to Schneider and Snyder's definition (1975) job satisfaction is personal evaluation of conditions related to job, or outcomes that arise as a result of having a job. The perception of employees about their job is influenced by many different factors such as employee's personal circumstances like needs, values and expectations. (Sempane at all. 2002) Moreover, quality of communication in the organization, communication between employees and supervisors and supervisor leadership style have an influence on the employees' job satisfaction.

## 3. Method

This research explores if relationships exist between supervisor communicator competence, leadership style (task or relationship oriented) an employee job and communication satisfaction in Turkey.

The current research conducted based on the Mudlock's article (2008) that titled "The Link Between Leadership Style, Communicator Competence and Employee Satisfaction" The research process which used by Mudlock (2008) contained four different scales to investigate relationship between components. Authors reached the original publications which contain the scale items and these scales translated to Turkish by authors and the pilot questionnaire was send 10 participants. The results of this pilot were used to refine the questionnaire for distribution to research participants.

The data used in this study were collected from graduate students of Bahcesehir University in Turkey. Respondents were chosen by using the convenience sampling method.

These participants are not only graduate students of Marketing Communication and Public Relations program but also they work for different organizations. The survey was pre-tested on 10 students and then a total of 200 questionnaire forms send them via e-mail. At the end of the given period 126 usable questionnaire forms returned.

Communicator competence scaled was developed by Monge et al. (1982.9 which is 12-item Communicator Competence Questionnaire. Job satisfaction was measured by the 8-item Abridged Job in General (AJIG) scale (Russell et al., 2004). Communication satisfaction was measured by the 19-item Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (ICSI) developed by Hecht (1978). Leadership style was measured by the 20-item Leadership Style Questionnaire developed by Northouse (2001). The instrument measures the task and relational leadership styles.

Mudlock (2008) used Pearson correlations and multiple regression analyses to show relationship between predictor and criterion variables. In the current research we followed his way to test hypotheses and to answer two different research questions.

### 3.1. Hypotheses and Research Questions Hypothesis
The current research has the same hypotheses and research question in Mudlock's (2008) article. These are:
- ➢ H 1: There is a significant and positive relationship between supervisor communication competence and employee job and communication satisfaction.
- ➢ H 2: There is a significant and positive relationship between supervisor relational leadership style and employee job and communication satisfaction. Hypothesis
- ➢ H 3: There is a significant and positive relationship between a supervisor's task leadership style and employee job and communication satisfaction. Hypothesis
- ➢ H 4: There is a significant and positive relationship between a supervisor's task and relational leadership style and communication competence.
- → RQ1: Which behavior displayed by a supervisor—task leadership, relational leadership, or communicator competence—will serve as a greater predictor of employee communication satisfaction?
- → RQ2: Which behavior displayed by a supervisor—task leadership, relational leadership, or communicator competence—will serve as a greater predictor of employee job satisfaction?

## 4. Findings
Participants were 126 working adults and more than half were female. (see table 1) Table 3 shows organizations which they work for. 43 participants were working for a female supervisor and 79 were working for a male supervisor. (see table 2) Participants ranged in age from <= 25 to 41+ (M = 30.44, SD = 16), whereas supervisors' ages ranged from 30 to 71 (M = 48,70 SD = 12.7). Table 3 contains information about participant's organizations types.

|        | f   | %     |
|--------|-----|-------|
| Female | 74  | 58,73 |
| Male   | 52  | 41,27 |
| Total  | 126 | 100   |

*Table 1: Sex of Participants*

|           | f   | %     |
|-----------|-----|-------|
| Female    | 43  | 34,13 |
| Male      | 79  | 62,70 |
| No Answer | 4   | 3,17  |
| Total     | 126 | 100   |

*Table 2: The Sex of Supervisor*

|               | f   | %     |
|---------------|-----|-------|
| High tech     | 12  | 9,52  |
| Manufacturing | 3   | 2,38  |
| Service       | 53  | 42,06 |
| Education     | 19  | 15,08 |
| Civil service | 13  | 10,32 |
| Government    | 2   | 1,59  |
| Other         | 18  | 14,29 |
| No Answer     | 6   | 4,76  |
| Total         | 126 | 100   |

*Table 3: Organizations of Participants*

Table 4 shows questionnaire items and the mean scores of communicator competence. Cronbach's alpha for the current study is 0.809 and the dimension mean is 3.13.

| When communicating with my immediate supervisor, I feel... | Mean | Std. Dev. | Dimension Mean | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| he or she lets me know that I am communicating effectively. | 3,74 | 1,060 | | |
| nothing is ever accomplished. | 2,26 | 1,156 | | |
| I would like to continue having conversations like ours | 3,06 | 1,233 | | |
| he or she genuinely wants to get to know me | 3,55 | 1,066 | | |
| very dissatisfied with our conversations. | 2,32 | 1,164 | | |
| like I have something else to do. | 2,98 | 1,160 | | |
| I am able to present myself as I want him or her to view me. | 2,54 | 1,311 | | |
| he or she shows me that he or she understands what I say. | 3,63 | 1,094 | | |
| very satisfied with our conversations. | 3,61 | 1,058 | | |
| he or she expresses a lot of interest in what I have to say. | 3,21 | 1,184 | 3,13 | 0,809 |
| I do NOT enjoy our conversations | 2,28 | 1,093 | | |
| he or she does NOT provide support for what he or she says | 2,70 | 1,183 | | |
| that I can talk about anything with my immediate supervisor | 3,36 | 1,221 | | |
| that we each get to say what we want. | 3,33 | 1,200 | | |
| that we can laugh easily together. | 3,77 | 1,067 | | |
| conversations flow smoothly. | 3,71 | 1,065 | | |
| he or she changes the topic when his or her feelings are brought into the conversation. | 3,04 | 1,235 | | |
| he or she frequently said things that add little to the conversation. | 3,44 | 1,077 | | |
| we often talk about things that I am NOT interested in. | 2,84 | 1,162 | | |

*Table 4: Communication Satisfaction*

Table 5 contains items and mean score related to job satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha for the current study was 0.787. (see table 5)

| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Dimension Mean | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Good | 4,10 | 0,785 | | |
| Undesirable | 2,36 | 1,049 | | |
| Better than most | 3,68 | 1,027 | | |
| Disagreeable | 2,52 | 1,165 | 3,34 | 0,787 |
| Makes me content | 3,79 | 1,074 | | |
| Excellent | 3,14 | 1,309 | | |
| Enjoyable | 3,58 | 1,023 | | |
| Poor | 2,47 | 1,268 | | |

*Table 5: Job Satisfaction*

Communication satisfaction scale items and the mean scores may be seen in the table 6. Cronbach's alpha for the current study is 0.800 and the dimension mean is 3.53.

| My immediate supervisor... | Mean | Std. Dev | Dimension Mean | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| has a good command of the language | 3,85 | 0,993 | | |
| is sensitive to my needs of the moment | 3,71 | 0,884 | | |
| typically gets right to the point. | 3,75 | 1,050 | | |
| pays attention to what I say to him or her. | 3,86 | 0,901 | | |
| deals with me effectively | 3,52 | 1,161 | | |
| is a good listener. | 3,71 | 1,144 | | |
| is difficult to understand when communicating in written form. | 2,44 | 1,281 | 3,53 | 0,800 |
| expresses his or her ideas clearly. | 4,06 | 0,888 | | |
| is difficult to understand when he or she speaks to me. | 2,40 | 1,369 | | |
| generally, says the right thing at the right time. | 3,52 | 1,008 | | |
| is easy to talk to. | 3,71 | 1,087 | | |
| usually responds to messages (memos, phone calls, reports, etc.) quickly. | 3,78 | 1,123 | | |

*Table 6: Communicator Competence*

Leadership style was measured by the 20-item Leadership Style Questionnaire. Originally this scale has 20 different items to evaluate leadership style. 10 of 20 items are related to task-oriented style while the others are related to relationship-oriented style. In this

research we used one scale to measure leadership style but below we used two different tables to show task-oriented and relationship-oriented items' mean scores and Cronbach's alpha results.

| My immediate supervisor... | Mean | Std. Dev. | Dimension Mean | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| tells group members what they are supposed to do. | 3,94 | 0,888 | | |
| sets standards of performance for group members. | 3,80 | 0,992 | | |
| responds favorably to suggestions made by others. | 3,90 | 0,983 | | |
| makes his or her perspective clear to others. | 3,69 | 0,971 | | |
| develops a plan of action for the group | 3,80 | 1,518 | | |
| behaves in a predictable manner toward group members | 3,70 | 1,138 | 3,83 | 0,877 |
| defines role responsibilities for each group member. | 3,87 | 1,012 | | |
| clarifies his or her own role within the group. | 3,83 | 1,079 | | |
| provides a plan for how the work is to be done | 3,93 | 1,044 | | |
| provides criteria for what is expected of the group. | 3,87 | 1,015 | | |

*Table 7: Leadership Style (Task)*

| My immediate supervisor... | Mean | Std. Dev. | Dimension Mean | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| acts friendly with members of the group. | 3,77 | 1,044 | | |
| helps others feel comfortable in the group. | 3,73 | 1,061 | | |
| makes suggestions on how to solve problems | 3,90 | 0,995 | | |
| treats others fairly | 3,66 | 1,160 | | |
| communicates actively with group members. | 3,94 | 1,018 | | |
| shows concern for the personal well-being of others | 3,77 | 1,194 | | |
| shows flexibility in making decisions | 3,71 | 1,081 | 3,75 | 0,932 |
| discloses thoughts and feelings to group members | 3,55 | 1,001 | | |
| encourages group members to do quality work | 3,74 | 0,997 | | |
| helps group members get along | 3,70 | 0,957 | | |

*Table 8: Leadership Style (relationship)*

The first hypothesis was there would be significant and positive relationships between supervisor communication competence and employee job and communication satisfaction. Pearson correlations supported the hypothesis by indicating statistically significant positive relationships between the predictor and criterion variables. The relationship between communication competence and communication satisfaction was stronger than the relationship between communication competence and job satisfaction. Result can be seen in Table 9.

The second hypothesis predicted significant and positive relationships between supervisor relational leadership style and employee job and communication satisfaction Pearson correlations supported the hypothesis. The relationship between supervisor relational leadership style and employee communication satisfaction was strong while the relationship between supervisor relational leadership style and employee job satisfaction weak. Result can be seen in Table 9.

The third hypothesis suggested significant and positive relationships between supervisor task leadership style and employee job and communication satisfaction. Pearson correlations supported the hypothesis. However, both relationships were weak. Result can be seen in Table 9.

The fourth hypothesis was there would be significant and positive relationships between supervisors' task and relational leadership style and their communicator competence. Pearson correlations supported the hypothesis. For both components the relationships were strong. Table 9 contains the correlational analysis results.

| | Communication Satisfaction | Job Satisfaction | Communicator Competence | Leadership Style (Task) | Leadership Style (Relational) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Communication Satisfaction | _ | | | | |
| Job Satisfaction | 0,465 | _ | | | |
| Communicator Competence | 0,734 | 0,401 | _ | | |
| Leadership Style (Task) | 0,350 | 0,317 | 0,615 | _ | |
| Leadership Style (Relational) | 0,859 | 0,315 | 0,616 | 0,876 | _ |

*Table 9: Pearson Correlations among Variables*

Note: All correlations are statistically significant at p < .001.

Before start out to regression analyses preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality (P-P plot), linearity, multi-collinearity (Tolerance and VIF) and homoscedasticity for each regression analysis and no serious violations reported. Secondly, the sufficiency of sample was checked for the assumption of regression analysis. The formulation is "N≥50 + 8x independent variable" (Tabachnick and Fidell 2014, p. 159). According to this formulation in this study, the sample of 126 is enough for 3 independent variables. In addition, there is no missing data.

For research question 1, the three items, Leadership Style (task), Leadership Style (Relational) and Communicator Competence were used in a standard regression analysis to predict the Communication Satisfaction. The prediction model was statistically significant, F (3, 122) = 16,317 p < 0,001, n=126, and accounted for approximately 29% of the variance of Communication Satisfaction (R2 =0,286, Adjusted R2 = 0,269) The raw and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors with their correlations with the Communication Satisfaction, their semi-partial correlations and their structure coefficients are shown in Table 10. "Communicator Competence" had the strongest significant standardized regression coefficient with the "Communication Satisfaction", (beta = 0,505, p < 0,001), and explained about 15 % of the unique variance in the Communication Satisfaction. When the part or semi partial correlation coefficient values are squared, it is an indication of the contribution of that variable to the total R square, in other words it tells how much of the total variance in the dependent variable is uniquely explained by that variable. Part or semi partial correlations values represent only the unique contribution of each variable, with any overlap or shared variance removed or partialled out, the total R square value however includes unique variance explained by each variable and also that shared (Tabachnick& Fidel, 2014, Pallant, 2013) "Leadership Style (Relational)" had the second strongest standardized regression coefficient (beta = 0,061) but it is insignificant (p=0,709). "Leadership Style (Task)" had the third strongest standardized regression coefficient (beta =-0,014), but again it is statistically insignificant (p=0,932).

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Correlations | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Zero-Order | Part | Tolerance | VIF |
| Constant | 1,373 | 0,268 | | 5,122 | 0,000 | | | | |
| Leadership Style (Task) | -0,010 | 0,121 | -0,014 | -0,085 | 0,932 | 0,350 | -0,007 | 0,224 | 4,469 |
| Leadership Style (Relational) | 0,041 | 0,109 | 0,061 | 0,374 | 0,709 | 0,359 | 0,029 | 0,223 | 4,478 |
| Communicator Competence | 0,466 | 0,091 | 0,505 | 5,096 | 0,000 | 0,534 | 0,390 | 0,596 | 1,678 |
| Dependent Variable: Communication Satisfaction | | | | | | | | | |

*Table 10: Multiple Regression: Communication Satisfaction*

For research question 2, the three items, Leadership Style (task), Leadership Style (Relational) and Communicator Competence were used in a standard regression analysis to predict the Job Satisfaction. The prediction model was statistically significant, F (3, 122) = 8,290 p < 0,001, n=126, and accounted for approximately 17% of the variance of Job Satisfaction (R2 = 0,169, Adjusted R2 = 0,149) The raw and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors with their correlations with the Job Satisfaction, their semi-partial correlations and their structure coefficients are shown in Table 11. "Communicator Competence" had the strongest significant standardized regression coefficient with the Job Satisfaction, (beta = 0,324, p < 0,05), and explained about 6 % of the unique variance in the Job Satisfaction. "Leadership Style (Task)" had the second strongest standardized regression coefficient (beta = 0,071) but it is not statistically significant (p=0,686). "Leadership Style (Relational)" had the third strongest standardized regression coefficient (beta = 0,054), but again it is not statistically significant (p=0,758).

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Correlations | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Zero-Order | Part | Tolerance | VIF |
| Constant | 1,524 | 0,378 | | 4,037 | 0,000 | | | | |
| Leadership Style (Task) | 0,069 | 0,171 | 0,071 | 0,405 | 0,686 | 0,317 | 0,033 | 0,224 | 4,469 |
| Leadership Style (Relational) | 0,047 | 0,153 | 0,054 | 0,308 | 0,758 | 0,315 | 0,025 | 0,223 | 4,478 |
| Communicator Competence | 0,390 | 0,129 | 0,324 | 3,033 | 0,003 | 0,401 | 0,250 | 0,596 | 1,678 |
| Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction | | | | | | | | | |

*Table 11: Multiple Regression: Job Satisfaction*

## 5. Discussion

Nowadays, the most important attribute that corporations may possess is regarded as their employees. Establishing effective communication with the employees considered as an integral part of the entire in-house process and operation depends on the communication competence of the leader. When the leader establishes efficient communication between the employees, it will be deemed as having taken an important step for determining and eliminating the problematic areas and problems encountered by the corporation.

The satisfaction of the employees about their job and communication is significant for fulfilling corporate objectives. Two of these basic aspects which affect this satisfaction level are the leadership style demonstrated by the executives and communication component.

The communication established with the employees has numerous significant functions. These may be listed as acquiring information, persuasion and influence, providing instructions and combination with education-training. Communication component possessed by the leader has a key role in fulfilling these functions in a healthy manner because this competence constitutes one of the milestones for the formation of mutually satisfactory relationships with the employee. Apart from the communication competence of the executive, it is also indicated that his leadership approach affects the employee's communication and job satisfaction.

Mudlock (2008) previously examined the relationship between communication competence, leadership style and employee communication and job satisfaction in a research that he had conducted and determined that there is a strong and positive correlation between these. This current research is also derived from Mudlock's study and tests the same hypotheses in Turkey obtaining similar results in the end.

According to these results, the relationship between communication competence and communication satisfaction is strong. This statistically significant and positive relationship demonstrates that it is of vital importance for supervisors to develop their communication competences and transform these competences into an integral part of their leadership styles.

It has been concluded that the supervisor communication component has a positive impact on the job satisfaction of the employees even though it is not as strong as communication satisfaction. Employee communication and job satisfaction both have a key significance in the performance of both in-house and outside targets of the corporation, ensuring market growth, increasing customer satisfaction levels, increasing sales figures and creating a strong and positive corporate reputation. For this reasons, executives are required to show the necessary efforts to develop their communication competences. It is obvious that the communication competence is one of the determinant factors on task and relational oriented leadership styles.

In this study, it has been concluded that the relationship between supervisor relational leadership style and employee communication satisfaction was strong. Relational leadership style refers to placing the relationship established with other people to the core while acting as a leader and the right management of relationships. In this regard, executives concentrating on their relational leadership skills while developing their communication components would bear positive results.

Task-oriented leadership style places emphases on obtaining suitable business methods and careful inspection of group members for the success of the business. The communication channels used by the corporation between the leader and group members is only related to the activation of the structure and obtaining results. (Bloisit et al., 2003:574). Therefore, as a task-oriented leader only evaluates the task performance of its employees, it does not have a directly statistically significant impact on the job and communication satisfaction of the employee. As the supervisor cannot establish effective communication to develop any kind of relationship, it is natural for the relationship with the communication satisfaction of the employees to yield weak results.

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that the leader's communication competences and at the same time, relational leadership style have a positive impact to ensure employee satisfaction and in this regard, it provides a guidance to the corporations which would like to concentrate on satisfaction that they have to develop the quality of communication and support relational leadership approach.

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