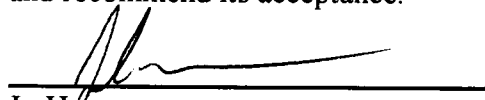


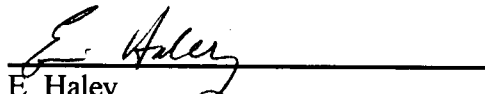
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Virginia Gay Lubkowitz entitled "Organizational Culture, Internal Communications and the Employee Public." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communications.


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Dean of The Graduate School

**Organizational Culture, Internal Communications
and the Employee Public**

**A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science Degree**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

**Virginia Gay Lubkowitz
May 1998**

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between corporate culture, internal communication and the employee public. The specific purpose was to analyze the degree to which perceptions of shared beliefs about the organization impact rank and file employee satisfaction with the organization, the types of information that impact rank and file employee perceptions of and satisfaction with the organization, and the degree to which interpersonal communication impacts perceptions of and satisfaction with the organization.

The study utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior management and qualitatively analyzed to determine management constructs for defining the organization. The constructs were used to develop a questionnaire distributed to rank and file employees to determine their perceptions of agreement with management on the constructs. The questionnaire also surveyed rank and file employee satisfaction with different types of information and use of different sources of information.

The results suggested that rank and file employee perceptions of the organization are more related to a perception of sufficient company-related information than to division- or personal-related information. The results also suggested that employees who receive more information about divisions other than their own may be more likely to be generally satisfied with the company. Lastly, the results unveiled no significant relationship between the use of interpersonal communication channels and general

satisfaction or perceptions of the organization. These results suggest that the organizational image employees hold may be related to their perception of the organization as a whole, when they are generally satisfied.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact that organizational culture and internal communications may have on employee perceptions of and satisfaction with an organization. More specifically, this study evaluates 1) the relationship between perceptions of shared beliefs about an organization and rank-and-file employee satisfaction with the organization, 2) the types of information that impact perception of and satisfaction with the organization, and 3) the degree to which interpersonal communication impacts perceptions of and satisfaction with the organization.

The study therefore focuses on employees as a public. "Publics" are specific groups of people with whom an organization is "linked" -- i.e., they impact or are impacted by the organization. Publics may be external (customers, suppliers, distributors, regulators, activists, donors) or they may be internal (employees). Public relations is "the management of communications between an organization and its internal and external publics" (Sriramesh et al, 1996, p. 239).

Because an organization and its publics are by definition linked, public relations activities must include the nurturing of mutually beneficial relationships with critical publics. As early as 1973, communication and business researchers such as Peter Drucker proposed that organizational communication should reflect "a reaction to the values and beliefs of the receiver" rather than a prescribed organizational "dogma" (Cameron and McCollum, 1993, p. 218). The public relations implication is that research cannot be limited to what an organization wants to tell a public and how the public will

respond; rather, it must also involve pre-communication analysis of what an organization can honestly do to align itself with the needs and expectations of its critical publics. The organization, the targeted public, what the two share, and where they differ must be explored. Such analysis is a component of the "two way symmetrical communication" identified by Grunig (1992) as critical for excellence in organizations.

Employees are widely accepted as an important public for any organization because they impact and are impacted by the organization. Although communication with employees has often been delegated to a human resources function, Grunig (1992) asserts that it should be a public relations function. Pre-communication analysis of values, attitudes, and expectations is particularly important when focusing on the employee public in corporations, where membership may be, at least initially, a function of earning a living rather than conviction or felt association. Furthermore, recent technological advances have necessitated increased management-employee understanding and trust as the hierarchical nature of organizations diminishes due to the increase in non-linear communication channels and access to information.

This research is guided by the interactionist perspective to corporate culture and communication research, also utilized by Cameron and McCollum in their 1993 study. This perspective focuses on the receivers of communication and the meaning given to communication acts rather than on the senders and the effectiveness of communication. The perspective is process oriented, defining communication as "the process by which organizations transform sense/data into information and use that information to relate its component to one another" (Harris and Cronen, 1979, p. 13)

Organizational culture is defined in this perspective as "the ways a group of individuals define their organization, their beliefs about the organization, and the actions of individuals within the context of the organization" (Cameron and McCollum, 1993, p. 218).

Operating under the premise that individuals interpret reality subjectively, the interactionist perspective necessitates attitudinal, perceptual research that reveals how "individuals judge information based on its usefulness in helping them make sense of reality" in the organization (Cameron and McCollum, 1993, p. 222). It furthermore recognizes that "successful communication is dependent on receiver perceptions of the sender as well as the actual messages being communicated" (Cameron and McCollum, 1993, p. 218).

Organizational culture researchers have identified many manifestations and components of culture. This study does not attempt to fully characterize the culture or communication of the organization under study; rather, it focuses on one aspect of corporate culture which Harris and Cronen (1979) identify as "organizational image," a component of an organization's master contract. They evaluate this image on three inter-related levels:

- (1) the constructs used to define the organization
- (2) beliefs about the [actual state] of the organization
- (3) ideal goal states for the organization (p. 15).

Also, rather than attempting to evaluate the competing master contracts or subcultures present within the organization, the study focuses primarily on a specific

master contract -- that of senior management. By focusing on the rank-and-file employee perceptions of one aspect of senior management's master contract, the study investigates the relationship between the values, practices and perceptions of these two discrete members of a particular organization.

The primary question guiding the research is: How are rank-and-file employee perceptions of an organization impacted by the perceived sufficiency of different types of information about the company and the communication acts that take place within the company?

To answer this question, the following more specific questions are addressed:

1. Do employees share management constructs for defining the organization?
2. Do employees perceive that they share similar beliefs about the ideal and actual state of the organization with management?
3. How do employees evaluate sufficiency of company-related information?
4. How do employees evaluate sufficiency of division-related information?
5. How do employees evaluate sufficiency of personal-related information?
6. How do employee evaluations of communicative acts related to different types of information relate to their perceived agreement with management about the organizational definition?

This study differs from Cameron and McCollum (1993) in that the two groups under study are senior managers and rank-and-file employees rather than senders and receivers of communication. Additionally, this research expands upon that of Cameron and McCollum's in that it evaluates the types of information that impact rank-and-file

employee perceptions of an organization in addition to the sources of information.

Frequency of use of different sources is examined rather than employee evaluations of the quality of information received from the different sources, and this study explores interpersonal and mediated communication sources rather than sanctioned and non-sanctioned communication channels.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The multi-disciplinary nature of this study requires a literature review that spans the public relations, organizational communication and management fields. A fundamental premise of this research is that employees are a critical public impacted by the corporate culture and communication practices of an organization. As a critical public, employee expectations, attitudes and values deserve and require the attention of senior management. Organizational communication research provides the foundation for understanding communication behaviors and practices within an organization; management theories provide insight into the relevance of organizational culture and internal communications to the attainment of organizational goals.

Thus, drawing upon the literature in these three fields, the structure of the literature review will be as follows. The emergence of the cultural school of organizational theory will be explored in the context of previous theories and their implications about employees and communications. Organizational culture will then be defined and the dynamics of its multiple components will be explored. Next, the value of researching organizational culture and methods for conducting such research will be discussed. Finally, organizational communication research about the relationship between communication and culture and how the two impact employee behavior, productivity and satisfaction will be reviewed.

The Emergence of Culture in Organizational Theory

Until the 1980s, organizational theory generally failed to unite beliefs about the nature of employees and the role of communication within organizations. Classical theories of organizing, dominant until the 1940s, were advocated by writers such as Frederick Taylor, Henri Fayol, and Max Weber. A representative definition of an organization under classical theory was: "a system of coordinated activities of a group of people working cooperatively toward a common goal under authority and leadership" (Goldhaber, 1993, p. 38). The approach identified hierarchy, specialization, economic rewards, discipline and rationality as critical components of organizational efficiency. As a result, communication was primarily task-oriented, downward, and formal (Andrews and Herschel, 1995).

In contrast to the classical theory which gave people little consideration over structure, the human relations school of organizing emerged in the 1950s and "humanized" employees by recognizing their social nature and need for "other-than-economic" rewards (Goldhaber, 1993). Also in contrast to classical theories, the human relations school advocated upward, horizontal, informal and group communications. Although "communication, participation, and democratic leadership" were espoused by this people-oriented rather than production-oriented approach, it was frequently characterized as "manipulative" and "insincere" (Goldhaber, 1993, p. 45); employee participation in decision making, for example, was often superficial and communication was viewed "as a kind of managerial tool aimed at improving morale" rather than as the "lifeblood" of the organization (Andrews and Herschel, 1995, p. 42).

The systems school, however, viewed communication as the lifeblood of the organization. Emerging in the 1960s, the perspective viewed healthy organizations as "open systems" that require communication to develop and articulate clear goals and to adapt to the environment, both internal and external. Focusing on the interrelationship of all aspects or components of the organization, structural and human variables were considered equally important (Goldhaber, 1993). Although the school did centralize the role of communication in organizations, communication was primarily information-transfer oriented (Andrews and Herschel, 1995). According to Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1983), the systems school failed to effectively address the nature of workers or effective management, but one of its "important legacies" was that it presented organizations as "contexts" rather than "causal equations".

Karl Weick's theory of organizing emerged in the late 1960s and was a precursor to the cultural school. Weick's theory presented organizations not only as contexts but also as "social systems for reducing equivocality and increasing the certainty of life" (Andrews and Herschel, 1995, p. 48). Weick viewed communication as central to the organization's environment because that environment is "enacted" as people receive information and "construct its meaning."

The cultural school of organizational theory emerged in the 1980s and also focused on the meaning people give to the organization and their membership in it. Its communication focus, however, was on "language use" rather than "information transfer" (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). The school therefore succeeded where

others had failed in that it unified consideration of the nature of employees and the role of communication within organizations.

What is Organizational Culture?

Definitions of organizational culture abound, ranging from a general "sense of place" or organizational "philosophy" to the following, more specific definition:

A system of shared values (what is important) and beliefs (how things work) that interacts with a company's people, organizational structure, and control systems to produce behavioral norms (the way we do things around here. (Uttal, 1983, p. 66).

Organizational culture differs from organizational climate in that climate describes the "internal environment" of an organization as it is experienced by and impacts its members, whereas culture explains the values or beliefs that shape that internal environment. As Goldhaber (1993) explained, "climate is often short term and may depend upon the current management of an organization, but culture is usually long term, rooted in deeply held values, and often very hard to change" (p. 69). Poole (1985) viewed climate as one dimension of culture.

Researchers have identified many dynamic components of culture that generally fall into two categories: 1) underlying values or basic assumptions and 2) the symbols used to articulate and propagate those values.

Peters and Waterman (1982), Deal and Kennedy (1982), Hofstede (1980), Sriramesh et al (1992) and others discussed values as the core component of an organization's culture. Peters and Waterman (1982) viewed culture as the values that

unified the "social dimensions" of the organizations (Sriramesh et al, 1992). In fact, they found that excellent organizations tended to have leaders who not only had a value-driven philosophy but also effectively communicated that philosophy to employees at all levels of the organization (Peters and Waterman, 1982).

Yet "values " are not always straightforward and are often difficult to pinpoint. Schein (1985) warned of the importance of distinguishing between the "espoused values" of an organization and the "underlying assumptions." In fact, organizations could lose credibility, he said, if the leaders' actions didn't reflect the espoused values of the organization (Sriramesh et al, 1996). Sackmann (1992) similarly advised that any assessment of organizational culture must consider the "expressed ideals" and "actual practices," recognizing that a culture may not be as "consistent, strong, or homogenous" as it appears (p. 140, 156)

With shared values at the core of culture, researchers such as Deal and Kennedy (1982) identified symbols that reflect, reveal and cultivate the core values as critical components of corporate culture. Such symbols include heroes, myths, rites and rituals, informal or formal communication networks, and the physical environment.

Sriramesh et al (1992) viewed these symbols as culture's "objective" components, in contrast to the more "subjective" shared values (p. 582). Schein (1985) recognized the value of culture's "objective" components but ultimately "reserved" the term "culture" for the "deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization that operate unconsciously and that define a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion from an organization's view of itself and its environment." Thus, to Schein, culture was

deeper than the highly visible "artifacts and creations" or even the highly conscious "values" (Sriramesh et al, 1996).

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo's perspective shared with Schein the focus on the less visible aspect of culture. Referring to "rituals, oft-told stories, key symbols and so on" as the "tip of the iceberg," Pacanowsky focused his culture research on "the mundane ways people go about their everyday organizational activities." He distinguished an organization's "charter" from its "culture" in a 1987 case study:

The charter is the explicit, organizationally sanctioned set of statements about a company, its vision of itself, what it does, why, and how...The culture of an organization is much broader than its charter; it is the totality of sense-making practices and resultant "sense made" of the organization. Ideally, the charter and the culture should be largely in synch with one another.... (p. 361).

Pacanowsky's focus on the "sense-making" character of culture reflected his adoption of Geertz's approach to organizational culture, articulated as follows:

man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun....culture [is] those webs, and the analysis of it [is] therefore not an experiential science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, p. 122).

Thus, researchers view culture as much more than the image or values visible on the surface or articulated by management. It is the collective "sense" made of an organization by its members--impacted by factors such as managements' espoused values and image, the reality of life within the organization, and the individual members' personal and subjective values and interpretations--and it is the process of communicating that "sense." This view of culture as the "sense made" as well as the "sense-making

process" reflects the novel centrality of communication and meaning that the cultural approach contributed to organizational theory.

The Value of Analyzing an Organization's Culture

Although difficult to define and identify, Sriramesh et al (1996) referred to culture as the "normative glue" that holds organizations together. Schein (1985) asserted that understanding organizational culture is valuable because culture is highly "visible" and "feelable," it helps explain how people behave and perceive the organization, and it provides a common frame of reference for the employees (Sriramesh et al, 1996). Through their research of organizations, Peters and Waterman (1992) isolated certain cultural characteristics they found to be common in "excellent" organizations. Those characteristics were: a bias for action; closeness to the customer; autonomy and entrepreneurship; productivity through people; hands-on, value-driven philosophy; sticking to the knitting; simple form, lean staff; and simultaneous loose-tight properties.

Reflecting a management perspective, Sathe (1983) asserted that understanding organizational culture is valuable because it can positively or negatively impact the achievement of the organization's goals (Sriramesh et al, 1996, p. 235).

The research of Wilkins (1983) supported this assertion. Wilkins identified within organizations the presence of subcultures that can lead to internal conflicts and "serious failure" because views on work "ends" and work "means" were not shared (p. 31). Thus, awareness of subcultures and how they interact can facilitate the management

of organizational activities.

In addition to facilitating the management of internal conflict, Wilkins and others asserted that culture impacts the effectiveness of new management strategies, diversification, growth, and downsizing. Wilkins identified such organizational changes as periods when culture can actually be impacted. However, not all organizational culture analysts agree that culture can be influenced.

Can Organizational Culture Be Shaped?

At a minimum, cultural assessments are useful in explaining, predicting, and perhaps managing organizational behavior, including communication. As mentioned, some organizational culture experts, like Wilkins, further assert that cultural assessment is useful because the culture itself can be influenced and shaped. These "cultural pragmatists" often focus on the impact an organization's leadership has on culture (Sriramesh et al, 1992). Peters and Waterman (1982) asserted that executives impact the basic assumptions within the organization through consistent and persistent actions that reflect those assumptions. As mentioned earlier, researchers such as Schein and Sackmann also wrote of the importance of consistency between the leadership's actions and the organization's espoused values.

According to cultural pragmatists, culture can be shaped at critical periods of an organization's development. Deal and Kennedy (1982) identified such periods as 1) when the industry is undergoing fundamental change, 2) when the industry is highly competitive and the environment changes quickly, 3) when the company is mediocre, or

worse, 4) when the company is truly at the threshold of becoming a large corporation and 5) when companies are growing very rapidly.

Wilkin's (1983) analysis focused on certain internal dynamics that could be opportunities for deliberately cultivating culture because they exposed the nature of the cultures and sub-cultures already present. These potential "pressure points" were: 1) times of employee role changes, 2) periods of sub-culture clashes and 3) the behavior of the top management.

While Wilkins spoke of management-controlled variables such as an organization's structure, hiring practices, and orientation experiences as impacts on culture, Sriramesh et al (1996) focused on the impact a change in the communication system could have on an organization's culture. Their research showed that:

participatory culture correlates strongly with several variables describing the organizational context -- a symmetrical system of internal communication, organic structure, and job satisfaction. (p.230).

The implication is that changing a communication system to be more symmetrical may make the culture more participatory rather than authoritarian.

"Cultural purists," however, criticize the pragmatists' notion that culture can be strategically influenced, believing instead that culture is "innate," evolving over time and developing at the grassroots of an organization rather than at the mandate or influence of the dominant coalition, whose goals are usually dramatically different (Sriramesh et al, 1996). One cultural purist, Smirchich (1981), articulated that culture is not something that an organization "has;" rather, it is something that an organization "is." It is not just

one more variable that can be manipulated to influence the functioning of an organization (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1983).

Researching Organizational Culture

Because of the centrality of subjective "meaning" and "values" in organizational culture, most organizational culture research has been qualitative, utilizing case studies to describe or reveal the culture in a particular organization. Methods such as participant observation, immersion, interviews, and analysis of heroes, myths, stories, rites and rituals are common.

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1982) argued that observation and interviews were the only methods to use when determining how members "make sense" of an organization. They cautioned that researcher's must be "intimate" with the organization without "going native," thereby losing recognition of the sought "underlying assumptions" (p. 127).

In their 1983 study, Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo were critical of cultural analysis that focused on "structural" aspects such as symbols, rituals, stories, and metaphors without exploring how and why that structure emerged. They introduced a "process notion" of organizational culture by suggesting that communication be evaluated as cultural performance rather than a display of "underlying attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, or strategies of the culture" (p. 146).

Later, Pacanowsky (1987) reenforced his previous assertion that rituals and symbols were just the "tip of the [cultural] iceberg" and used the participant observer

method to study the culture of an "empowering" organization. He focused on culture as reflected in "the mundane ways people went about their everyday organizational activities" (p, 358). Despite staunchly advocating qualitative research for culture studies, he used several surveys in that study to quantify the feelings and problems he detected through focus groups.

Content analysis has also been used in organizational culture research. Sackman (1992) content analyzed data from observations, written documents and interviews to identify sub-cultures through types of organizational knowledge held. Identifying "assumptions, beliefs, values and perspectives" as cognitive components of culture and "artifacts, behaviors, and symbols" as practical manifestations of culture, she argued that the two should be triangulated in order to gain insight into the "expressed ideals" and "actual practices" of the studied culture (p. 140).

Though organizational culture research has been primarily qualitative, Sriramesh et al (1996) recognized that quantitative measures have value, particularly in comparing large numbers of organizations. They therefore used factor analysis of characteristics of culture identified in previous literature and questionnaires to identify two quantifiable dimensions of organizational culture -- authoritarian and participatory. When these dimensions were correlated with variables found to impact an organization's public relations practices, the results showed that:

...culture is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for excellence in public relations. Participatory culture provides a nurturing environment for excellence; excellence also can occur in an authoritarian culture. Participatory culture correlates strongly, however, with several variables describing the organizational context -- a symmetrical system of internal communication, organic structure, and

job satisfaction -- suggesting that symmetrical internal communication may be the entry point for public relations practitioners to affect organizational culture... (p. 231).

The Organizational Culture and Communication Connection

Many researchers have noted the "symbiotic" relationship between communication and culture (Schall, 1983, p. 559). Sriramesh et al (1996) said that the two are inherently intertwined because communications are impacted by culture, culture is impacted by communications, and "communication is one of the ways by which organizations develop and maintain their cultures." (p. 238).

As discussed previously, most definitions of organizational culture include two components -- shared values and the symbols that articulate and propagate those values.

Organizational communication can be defined as:

That process wherein mutually interdependent human beings create and exchange messages, and interpret and negotiate meanings, while striving to articulate and realize mutually held visions, purposes, and goals (Andrews and Herschel, 1995, p. 1).

Following is a discussion of traditional organizational communication research, which is primarily focused on communication satisfaction, and cultural organizational communication research, which is more focused on the meaning and impact of communication.

Traditional Organizational Communication Research

Traditional organizational communication research has focused on different aspects of the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction.

In 1977, Downs and Hazen developed a "Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire" (CSQ) which used factor analysis to isolate seven dimensions of communication satisfaction. They concluded that communication satisfaction is a "multidimensional construct," and furthermore found that the dimensions of communication satisfaction most related to job satisfaction were Personal Feedback, Relations with Supervisor, and Communication Climate. The other dimensions isolated were: general organizational perspective, organizational integration, horizontal-informal communication, and media quality (p. 71-72).

The questionnaire developed in the Downs and Hazen study was widely used in later years to explore links between communication and job satisfaction. Pincus (1986) utilized the dimensions of organizational satisfaction identified by Downs and Hazen to analyze the relationship between communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and job performance. The study found that communication satisfaction was linked to both, but it was more strongly linked to job satisfaction than job performance (p. 412). Clampitt and Downs (1993) expanded upon findings from the Downs and Hazen study to evaluate the relationship between communication and organizational productivity (p. 5). The relationship was found to be "more complex" than anticipated, but communication was found to have an above average impact on productivity. Personal feedback was the communication satisfaction dimension identified as having the greatest impact on

productivity, while communication with co-workers, meetings and memos, and corporate-wide information, were identified as having the lowest impact on productivity. (p. 18-19).

Haas et al (1992) examined the relationship between shared goals and organizational outcomes, including communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and commitment. Their research distinguished between employee perceptions of goal sharedness and the employees' ability to actually articulate the goals. Perceived goal sharedness was found to have significant positive relationships with job satisfaction and communication satisfaction, while actual goal sharedness had a positive but not significant relationship with the two outcomes.

The Cultural Approach to Organizational Communication

While traditional organizational communication research focused on satisfaction and productivity, research evaluating the relationship between culture and communication focused on the rules and behaviors the two produce, the impact they have on one another, and the meanings they reflect.

Harris and Cronen (1979) spoke of organizations as cultures with master contracts composed of "constitutive" and "regulative" rules that "elaborated" the organizational image and guided communication behavior (p. 13). Schall (1983) demonstrated that cultures could be identified through the presence of shared communication rules. She also found that the pervasiveness of shared communication rules within a group may reflect the strength of the culture (p. 575).

More recently, organizational communication and culture research has addressed the impact that new information technologies have on culture and vice versa. Haskins (1996) asserted that an organization with a culture that encourages free and responsible speech will be best prepared to function in the information age as it will create a "more informed populace who share information, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, etc." (p. 89). According to Haskins, the research of Gordon and Infante (1991) showed that in this age of information:

...workers tend to rate their organization favorably when they perceive more, rather than less, freedom to communicate. They also tend to show greater organizational commitment, as well as view their organizations as more economically stable, participative in decision-making, committed to produce and work-life quality, and attentive to employee rights" (Haskins, p. 95).

Zaremba (1996) found that in addition to facilitating "task" and "maintenance" messages, e-mail availability enhanced the informal network, increased the transmission of "human" messages, and fostered the upward communication that previous research revealed was frequently lacking in organizations (Zaremba, p. 160). Doty (1994) identified organizational culture as a social factor to consider when implementing new communication technologies. Aspects of culture considered particularly relevant by Doty were the extent of bureaucracy and status differentiation within the organization.

Moving Beyond the Managerial Bias

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1982) criticized the traditional culture and communication research for focusing on "static, structural" features of culture, such as rituals and stories, rather than the communication processes through which these

structures were created, maintained, and transformed. They also criticized the "managerial bias" in traditional organizational communication research, which focused on the relationship between communication satisfaction and job performance or job satisfaction. This focus on organizational outcomes, they said, failed to recognize that "more things are going on in organizations than getting the job done" (p. 116). Furthermore, they said the "managerial bias" constrained organizational analysis by superficially measuring organizational behavior without analyzing behavioral meanings.

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1982) thus expanded communication research beyond the managerial bias and advocated an organizational culture approach to communication that explored "how organizational members communicatively make sense of their interlocked actions" (p. 127). The basic research questions in this approach were different in that they focused on the "sense made" of organizational experiences as well as the "sense making process" (p. 124). This approach furthermore reflected Smirchich's view that culture is something that an organization "is" rather than something that an organization "has" (i.e., culture is inherent to the organization rather than one variable of many in the organization that can be manipulated) (Schall, 1983).

Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo identified the following indicators of organizational sense-making: relevant constructs, facts, practices, vocabulary, metaphors, stories, rites and rituals.

Recognizing like Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo that communication research had been primarily management oriented, Cameron and McCollum (1993) expanded on the research that focused on the receivers of communication rather than

senders, building upon Drucker's assertion that "downward communication should be a reaction to the values and beliefs of the receiver instead of a prescribed 'dogma' that employees are supposed to believe." (p. 218). The previous receiver-oriented research included "uses and gratifications," which was concerned with employee information needs and uses, and "sense-making" research, which evaluated the meaning employees gave to communication acts. Cameron and McCollum, however, conducted their receiver-oriented research from an interactionist perspective, to "examine how receivers interact within a cultural context to arrive at a definition of company circumstances and the receiver's role in those circumstances " (p. 219). Their methodology included interviews and surveys, and their findings suggested that interpersonal communication plays an important role in establishing shared definitions of the organization and that perceptions of the organization are impacted by the organizations' satisfaction of information needs.

The findings of Cameron and McCollum furthermore suggested that employee perceptions of the organization are impacted by the availability of information from organization-sanctioned channels (p. 245). The research of Zimmermann et al (1996) suggested that most employees want more information than they receive, but more specifically, employees perceive that they need more communication through formal rather than informal channels as well as more communication from their supervisors and senior management (p. 197-198).

Chapter 3

Methodology

A two-staged, multi-method analysis was designed to investigate the primary question under study: How are rank-and-file employee perceptions of an organization impacted by the perceived sufficiency of different types of information about the company and the communication acts that take place within the company? Rank-and-file employee perceptions of the organization were analyzed primarily in the context of constructs used by senior management to define the organization and the degree of perceived agreement between the two groups on those constructs. The first stage of this research thus identified senior management's constructs for defining the organization using interviews and qualitative analysis. The second stage used a questionnaire and quantitative analysis to investigate rank-and-file employee perceptions of 1) the senior management's constructs, 2) sufficiency of different types of information, and 3) the communication acts within the organization.

The Company Under Study

The company under study is a small, privately owned and operated, for-profit business in the environmental monitoring industry. The company characterizes itself as a "mini-conglomerate," with each of its four main divisions operating independently under the direction of a different senior manager who also serves as a vice president. Although some of the products and services offered by the divisions are related, the

degree of cooperation and interaction between the divisions is limited, partly due to economic incentives for the divisions to compete with each other.

At the time of the study, the company had recently experienced rapid growth that was expected to continue. As discussed, such periods of growth have been identified by researchers such as Wilkins (1983) and Deal and Kennedy (1982) as opportunities to analyze and perhaps impact corporate culture.

The study focuses on the approximately 130 employees who work in different divisions at the company's headquarters in Knoxville, Tennessee. The company has less than 10 employees housed outside of Tennessee as well as several local and international joint venture partners not based in the Knoxville headquarters. Off-site employees were not included in the study.

The researcher had been an employee of the company for three years when the data were gathered for the study. The researcher's familiarity with the organization facilitated access to the senior managers as well as rank-and-file employees. The researcher's departure from the company prior to the analysis of the data and the researcher's assurance to rank-and-file employees that the study was being conducted for an academic thesis rather than for the senior management enhanced the legitimacy of the study in the eyes of the participants.

Stage One: Interviews and Qualitative Analysis

In the first stage of the research, semi-structured interviews with the company's senior managers were conducted to elicit their constructs for defining the organization and its relationship to its employees. The goal of this stage was to identify categories or constructs rather than evaluate the relationship between already-identified constructs (McCracken, 1988). Later, in stage two, the constructs were incorporated into a questionnaire distributed to rank-and-file employees to evaluate rank-and-file employee perceptions of agreement with management on the organizational definition.

For this study, all vice presidents and the president were considered "senior managers." This included the four division heads/vice presidents, the executive vice president whose responsibilities spanned several divisions, and the president/CEO of the company. One of the four division heads was not available for an interview due to extensive travel overseas. Thus, five of the six senior managers were interviewed.

A copy of the interview guide is attached in Appendix A. The guide was designed in consultation with the interview protocol for studying culture developed by Goldhaber and Barnett as well as the ICA Communication Audit Exploratory Interview Guide (Goldhaber, 1993, p. 72 and 362). Because the interviews were semi-structured, the guide was used to structure but not restrict the interview -- to "order data and free the interviewer" rather than "destroy the elements of freedom and variability within the interview" (McCracken, 1988, p. 25).

A test interview was conducted with a manager who was not a senior manager. In the test interview, the interviewer gained insight into the importance of controlling the

interview with prompts without shaping the interviewees responses by obtrusively putting words into the interviewees mouth or by "playing back" the interviewee's responses (McCracken, 1988).

While the guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews were similar, the qualitative data collection and analysis were somewhat interrelated, so interviews were allowed to impact the subsequent ones as appropriate to explore the emerging constructs, rather than all interviews being conducted prior to any analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 6). For example, the president and CEO of the company was interviewed after the individual division managers so that constructs that emerged among the division managers could be explored with the president.

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the interviewees and tape recorded. The data from the interviews were open coded and categorized to identify constructs that senior managers used to define the organization as a whole (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 13). More specifically, after the five interviews were transcribed in full, a list summarizing the comments was compiled for each interview. The five lists were evaluated and compared to identify general categories that emerged across the interview subjects. Next, the relationship between the general categories was analyzed and the categories were collapsed to produce a set of constructs. Despite the autonomy of the senior managers and the independence of the divisions they operated, eight constructs that were applicable to defining the organization as a whole emerged and were considered strong enough to be selected for further use in the study. The strength of the constructs was not quantified, but was generally based on the relevance of the construct to defining

the company as a whole, the extent of the interviewee's impact on the employees in general, the degree of sharedness between the interviewees, the degree to which the interviewee elaborated on the construct, and the nature of the mentioning of the construct (i.e., whether it was prompted by the interviewer or was raised independently by the interviewee.)

The constructs identified as "strong" and thus selected for further use in the study were:

- 1) employee challenge;
- 2) customer-oriented philosophy;
- 3) fair treatment of employees;
- 4) rewards to outstanding performers;
- 5) opportunities for long-term growth and advancement;
- 6) independence of divisions;
- 7) employee interest in other divisions;
- 8) openness to new business directions.

Hypothesis Development

After the management constructs were identified, one research question and eight hypotheses were developed to guide the questionnaire design and to address the primary research question: "How are rank-and-file employee perceptions of an organization impacted by the perceived sufficiency of different types of information about the company and the communication acts that take place within the company? The research

question and hypotheses are listed below. Each is followed by an explanation of how it emerged from the literature and/or interviews with senior management.

Research Question 1: Rank-and-file employees and senior management will have different constructs for defining the organization. Managers and rank-and-file employees often do not have the same perspective on the organization (Cameron and McCollum, 1993; Drucker, 1973; and D'Aprix, 1977). Similarly, cultural purists have asserted that members of the dominant coalition and rank-and-file employees often disagree on the goals of the organization (Sriramesh et al, 1996).

Hypothesis 1: Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition will be related to general satisfaction with the company. This hypothesis expanded on previous research that investigated the relationship between job satisfaction, communication satisfaction and goal sharedness to evaluate the relationship between perception of agreement on the organizational definition and general satisfaction with the company (Haas et al, 1992, Pincus, 1986, Downs and Hazen, 1977).

Hypothesis 2: General satisfaction with the company will be more related to perceived agreement with management on the ideal state of the organization than perceived agreement with management on the actual state of the organization. This hypothesis was based on research that indicated that a perception of shared goals may impact satisfaction even if in reality the goals are not shared (Haas et al, 1992).

Similarly, the assertion of this hypothesis is that perceptions of agreement on the goals and values of the organization might outweigh perceptions of agreement on the reality of life within the organization.

Hypothesis 3: General satisfaction with information sufficiency will be related to perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition. The development of this hypothesis was influenced by the research of Cameron and McCollum (1993), which showed that organization-sanctioned communication channels are evaluated more favorably if employees perceive that they agree with management on the organizational definition. This hypothesis focused on the quality or sufficiency of the information rather than the channel.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition will be more related to perceived satisfaction with division-related information sufficiency than company- related or personal-related information sufficiency. This hypothesis was based on the idea that emerged out of the interviews with senior management that employees may be primarily interested in the functioning of their own division rather than what goes on in other divisions.

Hypothesis 5: General satisfaction with the company will be more related to perceived satisfaction of personal-related information sufficiency than division- or company-related information sufficiency. By exploring organizational satisfaction, this hypothesis expanded upon previous findings that personal feedback was the dimension of communication satisfaction most related to job satisfaction and productivity (Downs and Hazen, 1977 and Clampitt and Downs, 1993).

Hypothesis 6: Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition will be related to frequent use of inter-personal communication sources. This hypothesis explored the conclusion of Cameron and McCollum (1993) that

"organizations with meaningful interpersonal communication may achieve a better shared definition of the organization" (p. 217). The hypothesis tested the frequency of interpersonal communication rather than evaluating how "meaningful" that communication was.

Hypothesis 7: General satisfaction with the company be related to:

- a. satisfaction with communication about the activities of other divisions*
- b. perceived familiarity with other divisions*

This hypothesis was developed to evaluate the significance of information about other divisions, which emerged as a theme in the interviews with senior management.

Hypothesis 8: Time employed at company will be related to:

- a. perceived agreement with management on organizational definition.*
- b. general satisfaction of information sufficiency.*
- c. general satisfaction with the company.*

This hypothesis was developed to evaluate the significance of time employed at the company, which emerged in the interviews as an interest of senior management.

Hypothesis 9: Access to the Internet will be related to:

- a. Perceived shared agreement with management on the actual state*
- b. general satisfaction with the company.*

This hypothesis was included to gain preliminary insight into the relationship between new communication technologies, satisfaction and culture at the specific organization under study as it considered the benefits of expanding Internet access.

Stage Two: Questionnaire and Quantitative Analysis

After the research question and hypotheses were developed, a questionnaire was designed to 1) measure rank-and-file employee agreement with senior management on the management-identified constructs, 2) survey rank-and-file employee satisfaction with company, division and personal related information, 3) measure rank-and-file employee satisfaction with the company in general, and 4) evaluate rank-and-file employee use of interpersonal and mediated communication channels. The questionnaire also contained open-ended questions similar to those asked in the interviews with senior management to identify rank-and-file employee constructs for defining the organization. These questions were strategically placed before the questions about the management constructs in order to decrease the likelihood of influencing the responses.

Variable Definitions

A copy of the questionnaire and the cover letter distributed with it are included in Appendix B. Following is a description of exactly how the variables in the hypotheses were operationalized and measured through the questionnaire. Details about the implementation and distribution of the questionnaire are outlined in the next section.

Rank-and-file employee perceptions of the constructs that emerged from the interviews with senior management were measured by questions 11, 12, 16, and 17, which asked the following of each construct:

*Please mark an "X" in the space on the line that you **personally believe** represents the **Actual State** at your company.*

‘ Please mark an "X" in the space on the line that you **personally believe** represents the **Ideal State** at your company.

‘ Please mark an "X" in the space on the line that you think represents what the company's **management believes** to be the **Actual State** for your company.

‘ Please mark an "X" in the space on the line that you think represents what the company's **management believes** to be the **Ideal State** for your company.

"Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition" was measured by averaging the measurement for perceived agreement with management on the actual state and perceived agreement with management on the ideal state. The measurement for "perceived agreement with management on the ideal state" was computed by first subtracting the respondents' rating for his or her personal beliefs about the ideal state from his or her rating for management's beliefs about the ideal state for each individual construct. The eight resulting numbers reflecting the difference for each construct were then averaged, and this average became the measurement for "perceived agreement with management on the ideal state." The measurement for perceived agreement with management on the actual state was computed in the same way.

"Satisfaction with general information sufficiency" was measured by averaging the responses to questions 1.1 through 1.13 from the questionnaire, where respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt they received sufficient information about certain subjects. "Perceived satisfaction with company-related information sufficiency" was measured by averaging the responses to questions 1.1 through 1.4.

"Perceived satisfaction with division-related information sufficiency" was measured by

averaging the responses to questions 1.5 through 1.7. "Perceived satisfaction with personal-related information sufficiency" was measured by averaging the responses to questions 1.8 through 1.13.

"Frequent use of inter-personal communication sources" was measured by averaging the responses to items in question 13, where respondents were asked to rank the frequency with which they received information from the grapevine, face-to-face interaction with immediate co-workers, face-to-face interaction with immediate supervisor, face-to-face interaction with senior management within the division, face-to-face interaction with senior management outside the division, and small group meetings.

"Satisfaction with communication about the activities of other divisions" was measured by responses to question 1.4, where respondents were asked to rank the degree to which they felt they received sufficient information about the activities of different divisions.

"Perceived familiarity with other divisions" was measured by question 3, which asked respondents to rank on a five point Likert-type scale their familiarity with the activities of divisions other than their own.

The types of information and sources of information were drawn from the literature review but were primarily based on those utilized in Harcourt's 1991 study, then tailored to fit the particular organization under study.

Questionnaire Implementation

The questionnaire was pre-tested on four employees. As a result, minor adjustments of wording were made. The questionnaire was distributed through the internal mailboxes at the company. Postage-paid business reply envelopes to the College of Communications were supplied for convenience, to ensure confidentiality, and to reinforce the academic nature of the research. For several weeks after the questionnaires were distributed, reminders were given in the form of voice mail and flyers. Employees had access to additional copies of the questionnaire and the business reply envelopes through an individual at the company and through the company's mail room. Also, the employees were given phone numbers to contact the researcher or her advisor if any questions arose.

Data from the questionnaire were coded and analyzed using SPSS 7.5 for Windows.

Chapter 4

Results

Descriptive Analysis

The frequencies of the responses to the questionnaire are summarized in Appendix B. Of the approximately 130 possible respondents, 56 completed questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 43%. The majority of the respondents (62.5%) classified themselves as "professionals," with the Office/Clerical and Technician classifications having the next largest representation (17.9% and 12.5%, respectively). Eighty percent of the respondents had college degrees, of which 28.6% had additionally received at least one graduate degree. Responses to questions number 2 and 14 indicated that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the organization (61%) and felt it was above average relative to other companies (71%). The majority (64.3%) of the respondents had been with the company for five years or less.

Types of Information: As Table 1 indicates, rank-and-file employees felt they received the most sufficient information about their division, their personal performance and responsibilities, and benefits. They felt they received the least sufficient information on the activities of other divisions and opportunities for advancements, rewards and training.

Company-related information included corporate policies, corporate mission, company's future, and the activities of the different divisions. Division-related information included the division's future and the division's policies. Personal-related

information included job performance, job duties, benefits, opportunities for advancement, rewards and bonuses, and training opportunities. On the questionnaire (see Appendix B), questions 1.1 through 1.4 measured company-related information; questions 1.5 through 1.7 measured division-related information; and questions 1.8 – 1.13 measured personal-related information.

Table 1
Perceived Sufficiency of Different Types of Information
(in order of perceived information sufficiency)

Subject	Mean *
My specific job duties (p)	3.91
Benefits (p)	3.73
How well I am performing my job (p)	3.63
Future of my division (d)	3.41
My divisions' goals and strategies (d)	3.38
My division's policies (d)	3.32
Company's corporate policies (c)	2.95
Future of company (c)	2.89
Opportunity for advancement in company (p)	2.80
Company's corporate mission (c)	2.63
Training opportunities (p)	2.29
Activities of different divisions (c)	2.25
Rewards and bonuses (p)	2.25

* 1 = insufficient information; 5 = sufficient information.

P = personal-related information

D = division-related information

C = company-related information

Rank-and-file employees generally felt the information they received related to their divisions was more sufficient than the company- or personal-related information they received. The mean response for the questions measuring company-related information was 2.68; the mean response for subjects measuring personal-related information was 3.16; and the mean response for division-related information was 3.37. However, within the personal-related information category, opportunities for

advancement, training and rewards rated noticeably lower than information specific to job duties, performance, and benefits. For example, the mean response for "rewards and bonuses" was 2.25, while the mean response for "my specific job duties" was 3.91. Means for individual questions within the company-related and division-related categories had less variation. The lowest mean response within the company-related category, for example, was 2.25 ("activities of different divisions") while the highest was 2.95 (company's corporate policies).

Sources of Information: Responses indicated that mediated channels of communication were not frequently used. Such channels included memos, informal hand-written notes, division and/or department meetings, formal management presentations, company letters to employees, electronic mail and the policy and procedures handbook. The most frequently used mediated channel was memos, which had an average response of 2.46 on a five point Likert-type scale where 1 indicated frequent use and 5 indicated infrequent use. The other mediated sources had mean responses ranging from 3.27 to 4.14. Interpersonal communication channels were generally more frequently used than mediated channels, although "face to face interaction with senior management not in my division was cited as the least frequently used information source. As indicated in Table 2, "face to face interaction with immediate co-workers" was rated as the most frequently used source of information, with a mean response of 1.84. Other channels of inter-personal communication measured included the grapevine, face to face interaction with immediate co-workers, face to face interaction with immediate supervisors, face to face interaction with senior management

outside division and small group meetings. The ratings for all the sources are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Sources of Information
(in order of decreasing frequency of use)

Source of Information	Mean Frequency of Use***
Face to face interaction with immediate co-workers**	1.84
Memos*	2.46
Grapevine**	2.63
Face to face interaction with immediate supervisor**	2.63
Informal hand-written notes*	3.27
Face to face interaction with senior management within division**	3.32
Small group meetings**	3.48
Division and/or department meetings*	3.54
Company letters to employees*	3.57
Electronic mail*	3.57
Policy and procedures handbook*	4.14
Formal management presentations*	4.57
Face to face interaction with senior management outside division**	4.68

* mediated source of information

** inter-personal source of information

*** 1 = frequently; 5=infrequently

Management Constructs: The responses to questions 11, 12, 16 and 17 suggest a discrepancy between what the rank-and-file employees think the situation at the company is and what they would like it to be. The responses also suggest a discrepancy between what the rank-and-file employees and management think the situation at the company actually is. Third, the responses suggest a discrepancy between what the employees at the company think the situation actually is and what they perceive the management is

striving for. Lastly, the responses suggest that the rank-and-file employees perceive that management believes that the company's actual state is fairly close to the ideal state. These observations are supported by the fact that the respondent's perceptions of the actual state of the company on the management constructs generally fell towards the middle of the five point Likert-type scale, while their ideal states for the constructs were weighted slightly more towards 1. (One generally reflected the positive dimension of the construct and the management's ideal.) Also, the rank-and-file employee perceptions of management's beliefs about the actual and ideal states were closer to the 1-2 range.

Table 3 quantifies the above observations for each individual construct identified through the interviews with senior management. The differences measuring "management satisfaction" and "management and rank-and-file employee shared ideals" are generally closer to zero than the differences measuring "respondent satisfaction" and "rank-and-file employee shared actual."

The construct validity of the four groups of questions asked about the constructs was tested using factor analysis. The four groups of questions were personal beliefs about the ideal state (personal ideal), perceptions of management beliefs about the ideal state (management ideal), personal beliefs about the actual state (personal actual), and perceptions of management's beliefs about the actual state (management actual). In each group, the constructs tended to load on two factors, with the majority of the constructs loading on the first factors and the sixth and seventh constructs usually loading on the second factor. The sixth and seventh constructs addressed the efficiency of the independence of the divisions and employee interest in other divisions. While the

Table 3
Rank-and-file Employee
Perceptions of Constructs

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee challenge		
Respondent satisfaction	-.8302	1.0604
Shared ideal	-.833E-02	.8227
Shared actual	-.6321	.9911
Management satisfaction	-.2963	.7680
Customer-oriented philosophy		
Respondent satisfaction	-.3241	.9425
Shared ideal	-.2037	.9689
Shared actual	-.4259	.9235
Management satisfaction	-.1019	.4989
Treatment of employees		
Respondent satisfaction	-.9630	.9359
Shared ideal	.1111	.7750
Shared actual	-.8056	.8656
Management satisfaction	-4.63E-02	.6607
Rewards to outstanding performers		
Respondent satisfaction	-1.2037	1.3014
Shared ideal	.1481	.9247
Shared actual	-1.0093	1.1010
Management satisfaction	-4.63E-02	.7726
Long-term growth/advancement opportunities		
Respondent satisfaction	-1.4444	1.3270
Shared ideal	.2074	.8602
Shared actual	-1.1019	1.1590
Management satisfaction	-.1352	.7963
Independence of divisions		
Respondent satisfaction	-.3241	1.3288
Shared ideal	-.7537	1.4667
Shared actual	-1.1019	1.7243
Management satisfaction	-.1481	.9952
Employee interest in other divisions		
Respondent satisfaction	-1.1111	1.0801
Shared ideal	.1889	1.3075
Shared actual	-.3148	1.2712
Management satisfaction	-.6074	1.0345
Openness to new business directions		
Respondent satisfaction	-.9204	1.0898
Shared ideal	-9.44E-02	.6623
Shared actual	-.8704	.8859
Management satisfaction	-.1444	.5732

Respondent satisfaction = personal ideal – personal actual

Shared ideal = management ideal – personal ideal

Shared actual = management actual – personal actual

Management satisfaction = management ideal – management actual

validity of these two constructs would require fine-tuning for future analysis, the factor analysis indicated that the validity was strong enough to use the constructs. The eigenvalues for the factor analysis are listed in Table 4 and the rotated component matrix data are in Appendix C. Note that in the "personal actual" group, the constructs actually loaded on three factors, but the initial eigenvalue of the third (1.007) was considered low enough to force two factors.

Table 4
Initial Eigenvalues for Constructs by Group

Group	Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Personal Actual	1	2.822	35.270	35.270
	2	1.569	19.615	54.885
	3	1.007	12.590	67.475
Personal Ideal	1	3.779	47.242	47.242
	2	1.139	14.232	61.474
Management Actual	1	3.679	45.990	45.990
	2	1.344	16.802	62.792
Management Ideal	1	3.941	49.267	49.267
	2	1.119	13.984	63.251

Research Question

RQ1: Rank-and-file employees and senior management will have different constructs for defining the organization.

This research question was analyzed with qualitative analysis of rank-and-file employee and senior management constructs, which revealed that rank-and-file employees and senior management did share some constructs for defining the organization, but generally the constructs differed. Rank-and-file employee constructs tended to be more focused on the work environment (atmosphere, relationships with

others, communication efforts) while management constructs tended to focus more on business goals and motivations.

Management constructs were identified through the interviews with senior management, while rank-and-file employee constructs were identified through the four open-ended questions on the questionnaire which were similar to those asked of management in the interviews. The constructs represent the terms or contexts in which the organization is discussed. Each construct generally represents a continuum of states rather than one specific state. For example, comments such as "long hours/loss of comp time," and "excellent benefits" would both indicate the construct "treatment of employees," despite the dramatically different implications about the perception of the organization.

Rank-and-file employee constructs were identified by listing the responses to the open-ended questions on the questionnaire and categorizing them with the same process used for the qualitative analysis of the interviews with senior management. However, because of the greater number of respondents, the constructs were more easily quantified based on how frequently they were mentioned.

As Table 5 indicates, two of the eight strongest constructs that emerged from the questionnaires were clearly shared with the senior management. These two were "the company's treatment of employees," which primarily included comments about pay scale and benefits, and "independence of the divisions," which primarily included comments about the degree of interaction between the divisions as well as the diversity of the businesses.

Table 5
Rank-and-file Employees' Most Frequently Stated Constructs

Construct	Number of times mentioned
Company's treatment of employees*	24
People	16
Atmosphere	14
Independence of divisions*	14
Trust to perform independently	14
Company's communication efforts	14
Commitment to quality	14
Management	11

* construct shared with management.

The second strongest construct category for the rank-and-file employees-- "people"-- did emerge in the management interviews, but was not considered strong because it was not as shared between the senior managers. Furthermore, management discussions of the construct "people" were generally focused on the skills and innovations of the employees, whereas the rank-and-file employee references to "people" were either vague or in the context of the people as "easy to work with," "professional," "close-knit," or "welcoming." Thus, while the construct category "people" may have been shared, the meaning for the two discrete groups under study could have been different, with rank-and-file employees referencing the inter-personal relationships between the people and the management referencing the capabilities of the people.

"Trust to perform independently" was another strong construct among the rank-and-file employees that also emerged in the interviews with senior management but was not as strong or shared by the management as the eight constructs that were chosen for the questionnaire.

Other strong rank-and-file employee constructs which emerged from the questionnaire – atmosphere, communication, commitment to quality, and management – were not central constructs that emerged in the interviews with senior management. These constructs were considered strong because of the number of times they were mentioned. Very weak constructs that emerged from the rank-and-file employee questionnaires were: “company’s position in the market place,” “company size,” “attitudes toward modernization” and “job security.” These constructs were weak because they were mentioned by the respondents less than five times.

As Table 6 indicates, the other six management-identified constructs were not prevalent in the employee responses. This observation does not provide insight into the amount of agreement between the two groups on the state of the organization in relation to these constructs; rather, it suggests that the particular constructs were not as central to the rank-and-file employees as they were to the management. The remaining hypotheses analyzed below addressed rank-and-file employee perception of agreement with management on the management-identified constructs. However, the extent of actual agreement on the constructs was not analyzed as management beliefs about the construct were not quantified.

Table 6
Management-Identified Constructs

Construct	Number of times mentioned By rank-and-file employees
Company's treatment of employees	22
Independence of divisions	14
Information about other divisions	6
Openness to new business directions	5
Opportunities for long-term growth and advancement	5
Customer orientation	4
Challenge of work	2
Rewards to outstanding performers	0

Hypotheses

H1: Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition will be related to general satisfaction with the company.

Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition was intended to be measured by averaging the respondent's perception of co-orientation with management on the ideal and actual states of the organization. The respondents' perceptions of co-orientation about the ideal and actual states were measured by computing the difference between their personal belief and perception of management's belief for the respective state of each individual construct (i.e., the "shared actual" and "shared ideal" variables identified in Table 3), then averaging the difference of all the constructs for each state.

However, as Figure 1 (below, left) indicates, the mean difference between the perception of management's ideals and the respondents' personal ideals was close to zero (-.06) with little standard deviation, indicating the general perception among respondents

of co-orientation between the two groups on the ideal state. Figure 2 (below, right) indicates that agreement with management on the actual state was less prevalent and had a mean that was further away from zero (-.76). Thus, because the range of perception of shared ideal states was small and generally close to zero, all further statistical analysis of perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition was limited to the respondent's perception of agreement with management on the actual state, which had a greater range. Therefore, the hypothesis was revised for further analysis.

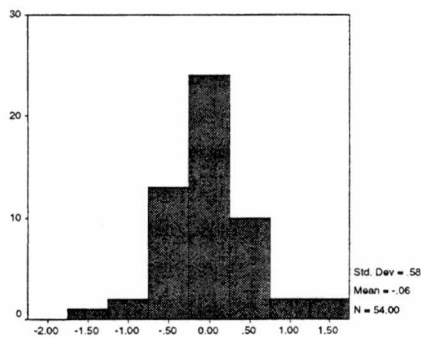


Figure 1
Perception of Shared Ideals

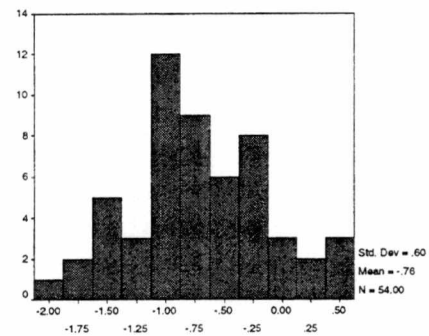


Figure 2
Perception of Shared Actual

“General Satisfaction with the company” was measured by question 3 on the survey, which ranked satisfaction on a 5 point Likert scale. This measurement had a moderate positive correlation of .463 with another measurement of satisfaction labeled as “satisfaction with constructs.” “Satisfaction with constructs” was determined by averaging the respondent's satisfaction on the eight constructs (see Table 3).

Thus, Hypothesis 1 as revised read: “Perceived agreement with management on the actual state of the organization will be related to general satisfaction with the

company.” Because of the small number of respondents, the measurement for general satisfaction was collapsed into from a five point scale to a three point one indicating “slightly satisfied,” “satisfied,” and “very satisfied.” As demonstrated in Tables 7 and 8 below, One-Way Analysis of Variance revealed that the “slightly satisfied” respondents and the “very satisfied” respondents differed significantly in their perception of agreement with management on the actual state with a mean difference of -.6546.

The respondents who were more neutrally “satisfied” didn’t differ significantly from either the slightly or very satisfied respondents.

Table 7
Satisfaction and Perception of Agreement on the Actual State

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Shared Actual	Between Groups	2.976	2	1.488	4.783	.012
	Within Groups	15.869	51	.311		
	Total	18.845	53			

Table 8
Satisfaction and Perception of Agreement on the Actual State

Multiple Comparisons				
Dependent Variable: SHARED ACTUAL				
Tukey HSD				
(I) General Satisfaction	(J) General Satisfaction	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	-.3724	.165	.072
	Very Satisfied	-.6546*	.232	.018
Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	.3724	.165	.072
	Very Satisfied	-.2822	.227	.432
Very Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	.6546*	.232	.018
	Satisfied	.2822	.227	.432

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 9 further indicates that the difference between the respondent's personal beliefs about the actual state and the respondent's perception of management's beliefs about the actual state decreases as general satisfaction increases, indicating a positive relationship between general satisfaction and perceived shared beliefs with management on the actual state.

Table 9
Satisfaction and Perception of Agreement on the Actual State

Descriptives						
			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Shared Actual	General Satisfaction	Somewhat Satisfied	21	-1.0327	.6500	.1418
		Satisfied	25	-.6604	.5075	.1015
		Very Satisfied	8	-.3781	.4206	.1487
		Total	54	-.7634	.5963	8.115E-02

H2: General satisfaction with the company will be more related to perceived agreement with management on the ideal state of the organization than perceived agreement with management on the actual state of the organization.

Because the range of perceived shared beliefs about the ideal state was so small and centered on zero, this hypothesis was not able to be analyzed. However, during the analysis of H1, a weak positive relationship was found between perceived shared beliefs about the actual state and general satisfaction.

H3: General satisfaction with information sufficiency will be related to perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition.

“General satisfaction with information sufficiency” measured the respondent’s satisfaction with company-, division- and personal-related information combined. Questions 1.1 – 1.4 measured company-related information; questions 1.5 – 1.7 measured division-related information; and questions 1.8 – 1.13 measured personal-related information. Again, perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition was limited to perceived agreement with management on the actual state.

As Figure 3 indicates, the data revealed a positive relationship between satisfaction with information in general and perception of shared beliefs with management about the actual state. For Hypotheses 3 - 6, significance was declared if $p < .05$. The Pearson product-moment correlation was $r = .349$ ($p = .010$), which reflects a significant but weak correlation.

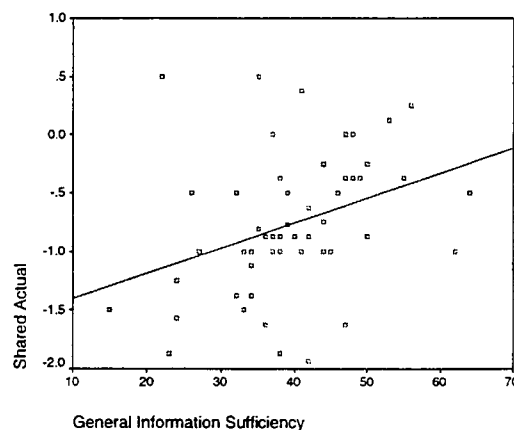


Figure 3
Correlation Between General Information Sufficiency
And Perception of Agreement on the Actual State

H4: Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition will be more related to division-related information sufficiency than company-related or personal-related information sufficiency.”

Again, perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition was limited to perceived agreement with management on the actual state, which was found to have a significant positive relationship only with company-related information. The measurement had no significant correlation with division- or personal-related information; the Pearson correlation of .418 ($p = .002$) with company-related information was a weak to moderate one.

H5: General satisfaction with the company will be more related to perceived satisfaction of personal-related information sufficiency than division- or company-related information sufficiency.

General satisfaction with the company had a weak positive correlation with division-, company- and personal-related information, with no apparent difference between the three. The Pearson product-moment correlations were $r=.340$ ($p = .010$), $r=.394$ ($p = .003$) and $r=.354$ ($p = .007$), respectively. For further analysis, personal-related information was divided into two groups – one including job duties, job performance, and benefits and the other including rewards and bonuses, opportunities for advancement and training. The former group had received the best ratings of information sufficiency while the latter received the least. Interestingly, the first group was found to have no significant relationship with general satisfaction, while the second group had a weak positive correlation of .348 ($p = .009$).

H6: Perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition will be related to frequent use of inter-personal communication sources.

Again, perceived agreement with management on the organizational definition was limited to perceived agreement with management on the actual state, which was found to have a significant positive relationship only with company-related information. Statistical analysis revealed no significant relationship between perception of shared beliefs with management about the actual state and frequency of use of inter-personal communication sources (Pearson product-moment correlation $r = -.170$, $p = .219$). Furthermore, analysis of variance and multiple comparisons revealed no significant difference in the use of inter-personal communication sources between respondents who were slightly, neutrally and very (p = .072). Lastly, most respondents were found to be using interpersonal communication sources more than mediated.

H7: General satisfaction with the company will be positively related to:

- a. satisfaction with communication about the activities of other divisions.***
- b. perceived familiarity with the activities of other divisions.***

As Tables 10 and 11 indicate, One-Way Analysis of Variance revealed that the slightly satisfied respondents and very satisfied respondents differed significantly while the neutrally satisfied respondents didn't differ significantly from either the slightly or very satisfied respondents.

Table 10
General Satisfaction and
Other Divisions

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Sufficiency of information about other divisions	Between Groups	7.143	2	3.572	4.577	.015
	Within Groups	41.357	53	.780		
	Total	48.500	55			
Familiarity with divisions	Between Groups	8.851	2	4.425	6.412	.003
	Within Groups	36.578	53	.690		
	Total	45.429	55			

Table 11
General Satisfaction and
Other Divisions

Multiple Comparisons

Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) General Satisfaction	(J) General Satisfaction	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Sufficiency of information about other divisions	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	-.3986	.273
		Very Satisfied	-1.0909*	.012
	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	.3986	.273
		Very Satisfied	-.6923	.138
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	1.0909*	.012
		Satisfied	.6923	.138
Familiarity with other divisions	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	-.4371	.174
		Very Satisfied	-1.2159*	.002
	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	.4371	.174
		Very Satisfied	-.7788	.062
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	1.2159*	.002
		Satisfied	.7788	.062

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

H8: Time employed at the company will be related to:

- a. *perceived agreement with management on the actual state***
(substituted for organizational definition).
- b. *General satisfaction with information sufficiency.***
- c. *General satisfaction with the company.***

As indicated in Table 12, three separate analysis of variance tests showed that the length of employment at the company was found to have no significant relationship with either item a, b, or c.

Table 12
Work Length

			N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
General Satisfaction with Company	Work length	0-5 years	36	3.7222	.8489	.1415
		6-10 years	14	3.3571	1.1507	.3075
		11 or more years	6	3.6667	1.0328	.4216
		Total	56	3.6250	.9451	.1263
General Satisfaction with Information Sufficiency	Work length	0-5 years	36	38.8889	10.2338	1.7056
		6-10 years	14	40.9286	6.7421	1.8019
		11 or more years	6	42.0000	11.5065	4.6975
		Total	56	39.7321	9.5298	1.2735
Shared Actual	Work length	0-5 years	34	-.8852	.6085	.1044
		6-10 years	14	-.5179	.5390	.1441
		11 or more years	6	-.6458	.5328	.2175
		Total	54	-.7634	.5963	8.115E-02

H9: Access to the Internet will be related to:

- a. perceived shared beliefs with management on the actual state.***
- b. general satisfaction with the company.***

T-tests revealed no statistically significant relationship between internet access and either of these two factors.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Findings

This study attempted to explore 1) the degree to which perceptions of shared beliefs about the organization impact rank and file employee satisfaction with the organization, 2) the types of information that impact rank and file employee perceptions of and satisfaction with the organization and 3) the degree to which interpersonal communication impacts perceptions of and satisfaction with the organization. Although the small sample size precluded findings with strong significance, the results do unveil certain relationships and patterns. First, the findings suggest that perceptions of shared beliefs with management about the actual state of the organization may have a relationship with general satisfaction with the organization. The data also suggest that rank and file employee perceptions of the organization are more related to a perception of sufficient company-related information rather than to division- or personal-related information. Furthermore, the data suggest that employees who receive more information about divisions other than their own may be more likely to be generally satisfied with the company. The analysis unveiled no significant relationship between the use of interpersonal communication channels and general satisfaction or perceptions of the organization. These results suggest that the “organizational image” employees hold may be related to their perception of the organization as a whole.

The descriptive analysis of the responses to the questionnaire suggests that the rank and file employees perceive they are receiving sufficient information about their

own division and their own jobs. However, the rank and file employees generally feel they are receiving less sufficient information about the company and their personal opportunities within the company. Thus, the company may be failing to provide information previously identified by researchers as critical to communication satisfaction – “information about the organization as a whole, its relationship with outside groups, its plans and policies, and the employees’ role in the broader organization” (Grunig, p. 555). Yet the majority of the respondents indicated that they are generally satisfied. This suggests that employees who receive sufficient information about their department’s or division’s operation are likely to be satisfied, but increased information about the operation of the company may make their satisfaction even greater.

Also, the rank and file employee perception of insufficient information about the company as a whole supports previous research that links consensus about the organizational definition to the extent of interaction between interpersonal systems at different levels within the organization (Cameron and McCollum, 1996) and communication with senior management (Grunig, 1996). Respondents indicated they infrequently used face to face interaction with senior management either within or outside of their own division. Their most frequent sources of information were co-workers, grapevine and memos. The lack of agreement on the constructs used to define the organization might therefore be related to the perceived lack of interaction between rank and file employees and senior management as well as the perceived lack of sufficient information on the company.

The analysis of the constructs identified through the interviews with management revealed that the respondents’ ideal state and their perception of the management’s ideal

state had the greatest agreement. It also revealed that the respondents perceive that management's beliefs about the actual and ideal states are close together. Cameron and McCollum (1996) had similar findings in both the organizations they studied. Also, although rank and file employees and management were found to share some constructs for defining the organization, the difference between the constructs that were not shared is significant. Generally, the rank and file employee constructs were more work-environment oriented while the management's constructs were more business and operations oriented. This difference may support the suggestion by cultural purists that the CEO or dominant coalition and lower-level employees often do not have shared goals (Sriramesh et al, 1996). However, as previously mentioned, the lack of business-oriented constructs does not necessarily mean that the rank and file employees do not share the business-oriented goals and ideals. Likewise, the fact that senior management constructs were less work-environment oriented does not necessarily indicate that senior management lacks concern for the work environment. It does indicate that the rank and file employees are more focused on the work environment, while management are more focused on business operations. This difference in perspective or priorities may be due to the nature of the different roles senior management and rank and file employees hold within the organization rather than a disagreement on the states of the organizations in relation to the different constructs.

Finally, the qualitative analysis of the constructs revealed that the respondents were more focused on communication and the impact it has on the organization than the senior management. Both groups' consciousness of communication was likely increased by their awareness that communication was the focus of the study. However, in the

interviews with senior management, the interviewer generally raised the topic of communication. The rank and file employees, on the other hand, mentioned communication and its impact on the organization frequently when asked the open-ended questions similar to those used in the interviews with senior management.

The respondents' focus on communication indirectly supports what Zimmerman et al (1996) identified as the "communication metamyth" -- that employees generally want more information no matter how much they receive. However, the lack of attention given to communication by senior management suggests a discrepancy between senior management and rank and file employees on this communication metamyth, which is a subject worthy of further exploration. Future research could analyze senior management's perspective on how much communication their employees should receive, as well as the degree to which senior managers themselves want more information about their subordinates' activities and the company's operations.

Although the small sample size precluded more sophisticated statistical analysis and what relationships were found were weak, the statistical data do also provide insight into the dynamic of factors impacting employee satisfaction with and perceptions of the organization. First, the findings suggest that when perceptions of the ideal state are generally shared between management and rank and file employees, perceptions of agreement with management on the actual state may be related to general satisfaction with the organization. As the perception of agreement increases, the employee is more likely to be generally satisfied with the organization.

Second, the analysis of information sufficiency suggests that as the perception of agreement on the actual state increases, the employee is more likely to perceive that the

or she is receiving sufficient information in general. Furthermore, although division-related information was ranked as the most sufficient, perceived agreement with management on the actual state of the organization had a significant (though weak) correlation only with company-related information. These data also support previous research (Downs & Hazen, Pincus) that indicated that employees want and need information about the larger scheme of the company as a whole. Analysis the relationship between general satisfaction with the company and information about the various divisions within the company also supports such previous research by suggesting that respondents who are more familiar with other divisions and who feel they are receiving sufficient information about other divisions are more likely to be generally satisfied with the organization.

Third, the analysis of use of interpersonal and mediated channels of communication unveils no significant relationship between general satisfaction or perceived agreement with management on the organization definition and frequency of use of any of the specific or categorized information sources. However, most respondents were found to be using interpersonal communication sources more frequently than mediated sources.

Research Implications

This study suggests several directions for future research. First, as more and more companies become involved in diverse operations, organized analysis of employee interest in unrelated divisions and the impact of familiarity with unrelated divisions could help direct employee communication plans and enhance their effectiveness.

Second, research evaluating communication and cultural expectations of employee publics in different industries or fields will provide insight into unique approaches for different employee publics rather than a broad approach for employees in general. For example, employees in a certain industry may be more dependent on or satisfied by a certain source of communication or type of information than employees in another industry. Thus, rather than evaluating communication commonalities across different industries, an approach that focuses on the unique cultural aspects of an industry will facilitate insights into the critical differences that can create a more targeted, responsive and effective communication plan.

Third, this study suggests a direction for further analysis of the “communication metamyth” identified by Haas et al (1992). More specifically, a comparison of the prevalence of this metamyth at different levels of the organization (rank and file employee, management, senior management, etc.) would provide insight into the value these discrete groups place on communication.

A fourth research implication is perception-oriented. If managers and employees do generally have different constructs for defining an organization, are manager constructs are often operations oriented while employees constructs are work-environment oriented? To what degree are these two discrete groups aware of their different focuses? While this study suggested that employees may be somewhat aware of management’s constructs, research into the degree to which managers are aware of employee constructs and the impact such a recognition has on their management and communication behaviors is a subject worthy of future study.

Lastly, the study demonstrates the usefulness of combining qualitative and quantitative analysis in cultural organizational communication research. The qualitative analysis allows careful consideration of the subjective “meaning,” and “values” within the organization, while quantitative analysis serves as a tool to measure and further explore the prevalence and strength of the meaning and communication practices within the organization. A thorough cultural analysis could incorporate into the first stage of the research a qualitative exploration of rank-and-file employee constructs through interviews or focus groups in addition to the interviews with senior management. Then, in the second stage, rank-and-file employee perceptions of the organization could be quantified not only in the context of senior management constructs but also rank-and-file employee constructs, providing a more focused picture of the culture by analyzing its multiple dimensions (Cameron and McCollum, 1993).

Managerial Implications

The managerial implications of this study primarily relate to companies with diverse operations. The study implies that employee satisfaction with and shared perceptions of the organization are impacted by sufficiency of information that reaches beyond the employees’ own division. Thus, managers should strive to keep their employees informed about the activities of the entire company rather than simply providing information about the employee’s own position and division. However, the depth and quantity of information required to impact employee satisfaction with and shared perceptions of the organization is a subject that warrants additional research, within specific organizations as well as across organizations and industries.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates the importance of management familiarizing itself with employee communication needs and perceptions. When employees are aware of management's ideals and goals concerning the operation of the company, employees may contribute to the achievement of those goals, but without management's reciprocal awareness of employee goals that may be more work-environment oriented rather than operations oriented, the employees may not feel as satisfied as possible with their organization despite its prosperity. Thus, managers should consistently monitor the communication needs, goals and perceptions of the employees in addition to regularly evaluating the operational and financial goals of the organization. By monitoring the employees, management can become more familiar with the culture of the organization from the "grassroots." Although management's ability to actually control culture is certainly debatable, through such familiarity, management may be in a better position to *impact* or mold the culture as they feel appropriate and desirable by encouraging or discouraging identified values, attitudes and/or behaviors.

Limitations

Despite the insights provided into the cultural and communication factors impacting employee perceptions of and satisfaction with the organization, the findings of this research have three fundamental limitations. First, the findings are not broadly generalizable because only one organization was involved. Second, the small sample size of 56 respondents precluded sophisticated statistical analysis. Also, the 56 respondents may have been those who were comfortable and eager to respond because they were satisfied. Third, rather than attempting a thorough culture audit, the study focused on

one very specific dimension of culture – “organizational image” -- analyzed in the context of management constructs, rather than constructs identified as shared between both management and rank and file employees. Thus, the study was rather “top heavy” for a cultural analysis, which is traditionally more grassroots oriented. This limitation was primarily due to methodology constraints that arose because of the respondent’s position within the company. While senior managers had little reason to feel threatened by or reserved in interviews, rank-and-file employees were not likely to have felt comfortable or open in interviews or focus groups because the researcher was a co-worker and because such research methods have no confidentiality. Therefore an anonymous questionnaire was used, even though it precluded in-depth analysis of rank-and-file employee perceptions and constructs for defining the organization.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Guide for Semi-structured Interviews with Senior Management

Interview Guide

ESC General

1. How long have you been at ESC? The company has obviously grown. What impact has that growth had on the company? (Has the growth taken away from ESC at all?) Has the company evolved in any other ways since you've been here? Where do you see ESC going?
2. How would you describe the work environment here at ESC?
3. Is there anything different or unique about the way things are done at ESC, such as the way work is organized or accomplished?
4. Are there any specific people you personally credit for getting ESC where it is today? Why? What did they do? [Is there anyone or any event that had a particularly negative influence on ESC?]
5. What is ESC's strongest asset/greatest strength? (If you were to speak at the Knoxville Rotary Club and had to pitch ESC as the best company in Knoxville, what would say?)
6. What would be the best news ESC as a company could get tomorrow? What would be the worst news?
7. Tell me a little (more) about the relationship between the different divisions at ESC? What would you say unites them? What differentiates them? How much interaction between divisions do you see? What is the nature of those interactions (social, professional, competitive?) Is there oppty. for cooperation? Do they cooperate?
8. What is the mission of ESC as a whole? What is ESC trying to accomplish? Is ESC accomplishing its mission? Why? Why not? What would you say are the goals and objectives of ESC? Do they differ from the goals & objectives of your department? How so? Have you been achieving your goals? Why? Why not?
9. Are there any rituals or special events that you participate in at ESC? What impact or purpose do you think they have? What about status symbols?
10. Tell me a little bit about how decisions are made at ESC.

ESC as an employer

11. If you had a colleague seriously considering accepting a job offer from ESC, what advice or insights would you offer?

12. If a new employee wanted to be succesful here at ESC what would he/she do? What would he/she not do?
13. What qualities does ESC value in an employee? How are those qualities rewarded?
14. What do you think keeps ESC employees here? What do you think makes people leave?
15. What do you think is ESC's greatest strength? (What is ESC's greatest weakness?)
16. Are most employees within your division living up to their potential? Do they have room to grow?
17. What is the best thing about working for ESC? What is the worse thing?

Communication

18. Can you identify major communication strengths within this organization? Weaknesses? What about within your division?
19. How do you convey job-related information to employees? How are company policies communicated to employees?
20. How do you receive job-related information from your subordinates? Do you get feedback on company policies from your subordinates? How?
21. What kind of information would most likely be conveyed through formal communication channels?
22. What kind of information would most likely be conveyed through informal communication channels?
23. If you could make any communication changes at ESC, what would you do? Why?
24. Earlier you mentioned that ESC's mission was _____. How do you see that mission being conveyed to employees?

Appendix B:

**Rank and File Employee Questionnaire
and Cover Letter**

Questionnaire

1. Please indicate the degree to which you feel you receive sufficient information about the following subjects:

		Insufficient Information			Sufficient Information		
1. ESC's corporate policies	mean=2.95	1 12.5%	2 23.2%	3 30.4%	4 24.0%	5 8.9%	
2. ESC's corporate mission	mean=2.63	1 16.1%	2 37.5%	3 21.4%	4 17.9%	5 7.1%	
3. Future of ESC	mean=2.89	1 7.3%	2 29.1%	3 36.4%	4 21.8%	5 5.5%	
4. Activities of different divisions	mean=2.25	1 23.2%	2 37.5%	3 32.1%	4 5.4%	5 1.8%	
5. My division's goals and strategies	mean=3.38	1 10.7%	2 5.4%	3 39.3%	4 25.0%	5 19.6%	
6. Future of my division	mean=3.41	1 10.7%	2 8.9%	3 19.6%	4 32.1%	5 19.6%	
7. My division's policies	mean=3.32	1 12.5%	2 14.3%	3 21.4%	4 32.1%	5 19.6%	
8. How well I am performing my job	mean=3.63	1 1.8%	2 10.7%	3 25.0%	4 48.2%	5 14.3%	
9. My specific job duties	mean=3.91	1 0%	2 8.9%	3 21.4%	4 39.3%	5 30.4%	
10. Benefits	mean=3.73	1 1.8%	2 10.7%	3 23.2%	4 41.1%	5 23.2%	
11. Opportunity for advancement in company	mean=2.80	1 17.9%	2 26.8%	3 19.5%	4 28.6%	5 7.1%	
12. Rewards and bonuses	mean=2.25	1 35.7%	2 23.2%	3 26.8%	4 8.9%	5 5.4%	
13. Training opportunities	mean=2.29	1 23.2%	2 25.0%	3 25.0%	4 17.9%	5 8.9%	

2. Please rank your satisfaction with ESC in general. (Circle one)

5.4%	1.8%	32.1%	46.4%	14.3%	
1	2	3	4	5	mean=3.63
Very unsatisfied				Very satisfied	

3. Please rank your familiarity with the activities of ESC divisions other than your own. (Circle one)

17.9%	46.4%	26.8%	7.1%	1.8%	
1	2	3	4	5	mean=2.29
Not at all familiar				Very familiar	

4. Do you have access to the Internet through ESC? (Check one)

57.1% No 41.1% Yes

5. Please rate how frequently you receive information at work from the following:

	Frequently			Infrequently		Never
Memos <i>mean=2.46</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Informal hand-written notes <i>mean=3.27</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Division and/or department meetings <i>mean=3.54</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Formal management presentations <i>mean=4.57</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Company letters to employees <i>mean=3.57</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Electronic mail <i>mean=3.57</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Policy & Procedures Handbook <i>mean=4.14</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9

6. In your opinion, what is the best thing about working for ESC? _____

7. In your opinion, what is the worst thing about working for ESC? _____

8. In your opinion, what is ESC's greatest strength? _____

9. In your opinion, what is ESC's greatest weakness? _____

10. How long have you worked at ESC?

64.3% 0-5 years 26.8% 6-10 years 3.6% 11-15 years 5.4% 15+ years

11. In this section, please mark an "X" in the space on the line that *you personally believe* represents the *Actual State* at ESC.

1. ESC employees are challenged	mean = 2.46					ESC employees are not challenged
	1	2	3	4	5	
2. ESC's philosophy is fundamentally customer oriented	mean = 2.02					ESC's philosophy is not fundamentally customer oriented
	1	2	3	4	5	
3. ESC treats its employees fairly	mean = 2.41					ESC does not treat its employees fairly
	1	2	3	4	5	
4. ESC rewards outstanding performers	mean = 2.70					ESC doesn't reward outstanding performers
	1	2	3	4	5	
5. ESC employees have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement	mean = 3.01					ESC employees don't have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement
	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Independence of divisions enhances ESC's operations	mean = 2.90					Independence of divisions does not enhance ESC's operations
	1	2	3	4	5	
7. ESC employees are interested in other divisions.	mean = 3.24					ESC employees are not interested in other divisions
	1	2	3	4	5	
8. ESC is open to new business directions	mean = 2.63					ESC is not open to new business directions
	1	2	3	4	5	

12. In this section, please mark an "X" in the space on the line that *you personally believe* represents the *Ideal State* for ESC.

1. ESC employees are challenged	<i>mean = 1.64</i>					ESC employees are not challenged
	1	2	3	4	5	
2. ESC's philosophy is fundamentally customer oriented	<i>mean = 1.71</i>					ESC's philosophy is not fundamentally customer oriented
	1	2	3	4	5	
3. ESC treats its employees fairly	<i>mean = 1.45</i>					ESC does not treat its employees fairly
	1	2	3	4	5	
4. ESC rewards outstanding performers	<i>mean = 1.51</i>					ESC doesn't reward outstanding performers
	1	2	3	4	5	
5. ESC employees have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement	<i>mean = 1.57</i>					ESC employees don't have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement
	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Independence of divisions enhances ESC's operations	<i>mean = 2.58</i>					Independence of divisions does not enhance ESC's operations
	1	2	3	4	5	
7. ESC employees are interested in other divisions.	<i>mean = 2.15</i>					ESC employees are not interested in other divisions
	1	2	3	4	5	
8. ESC is open to new business directions	<i>mean = 1.73</i>					ESC is not open to new business directions
	1	2	3	4	5	

13. Please rate how frequently you receive information at work from the following:

	Frequently					Infrequently	Never
Grapevine (casual talk with ESC employees who are not necessarily immediate co-workers)	<i>mean=2.63</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Face to face interaction with immediate co-workers	<i>mean=1.84</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Face to face interaction with immediate supervisor	<i>mean=2.63</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Face to face interaction with senior management within division	<i>mean=3.32</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Face to face interaction with senior management outside division	<i>mean=4.68</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9
Small Group Meetings (2-4 people)	<i>mean=3.48</i>	1	2	3	4	5	9

14. In your opinion, how does ESC compare to other companies as a place to work?

1.8%	3.6%	12.5%	37.5%	33.9%	10.7%	
1	2	3	4	5	0	mean=3.66
Below				Above	Don't	
Average				Average	Know	

15. Which classification best describes your position at ESC? (By "describes your position" I mean describes the activities that account for 75% of your time at work.) Please check only one.

<u>12.5%</u>	Technician	<u>3.6%</u>	Sales/Marketing
<u>62.5%</u>	Professional (engineer, programmer, etc.)	<u>0%</u>	Skilled Worker (assembler, fabricator)
<u>17.9%</u>	Office/Clerical (accounting, administrative secretarial)	<u>3.6%</u>	Manager
	<u>0%</u>	Other (Please specify: _____)	

16. In this section, please mark an "X" in the space on the line that you think represents what ESC management believes to be the Actual State for ESC.

1. ESC employees are challenged	mean = 1.85					ESC employees are not challenged
	1	2	3	4	5	
2. ESC's philosophy is fundamentally customer oriented	mean = 1.61					ESC's philosophy is not fundamentally customer oriented
	1	2	3	4	5	
3. ESC treats its employees fairly	mean = 1.61					ESC does not treat its employees fairly
	1	2	3	4	5	
4. ESC rewards outstanding performers	mean = 1.70					ESC doesn't reward outstanding performers
	1	2	3	4	5	
5. ESC employees have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement	mean = 1.91					ESC employees don't have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement
	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Independence of divisions enhances ESC's operations	mean = 1.98					Independence of divisions does not enhance ESC's operations
	1	2	3	4	5	
7. ESC employees are interested in other divisions.	mean = 2.94					ESC employees are not interested in other divisions
	1	2	3	4	5	
8. ESC is open to new business directions	mean = 1.78					ESC is not open to new business directions
	1	2	3	4	5	

17. In this section, please mark an "X" in the space on the line that you think represents what *ESC management believes* to be the *Ideal State* for ESC.

1. ESC employees are challenged	<i>mean = 1.56</i>					ESC employees are not challenged
	1	2	3	4	5	
2. ESC's philosophy is fundamentally customer oriented	<i>mean = 1.51</i>					ESC's philosophy is not fundamentally customer oriented
	1	2	3	4	5	
3. ESC treats its employees fairly	<i>mean = 1.57</i>					ESC does not treat its employees fairly
	1	2	3	4	5	
4. ESC rewards outstanding performers	<i>mean = 1.66</i>					ESC doesn't reward outstanding performers
	1	2	3	4	5	
5. ESC employees have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement	<i>mean = 1.78</i>					ESC employees don't have opportunity for long-term growth and advancement
	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Independence of divisions enhances ESC's operations	<i>mean = 1.83</i>					Independence of divisions does not enhance ESC's operations
	1	2	3	4	5	
7. ESC employees are interested in other divisions.	<i>mean = 2.34</i>					ESC employees are not interested in other divisions
	1	2	3	4	5	
8. ESC is open to new business directions	<i>mean = 1.63</i>					ESC is not open to new business directions
	1	2	3	4	5	

18. Are you connected to an internal computer network at ESC?

39.3% No 60.7% Yes

19. Which best describes your educational background? Please check only one.

<u>3.6%</u> Some high school	<u>3.6%</u> Received high school diploma
<u>8.9%</u> Some college	<u>48.2%</u> Received college degree
<u>7.1%</u> Some graduate work	<u>28.6%</u> Received at least one graduate degree

VIRGINIA GAY

2617½ Delrose Drive
Knoxville, TN 37914
423-544-7881

September 4, 1997

Dear ESC Employee:

As you may know, in the three years that I have been working at ESC I have also been pursuing my Masters degree in Communications at the University of Tennessee. I am now working on my thesis, which is looking at corporate culture and communications.

With the approval of Mark Margetts, I am conducting a portion of my thesis research at ESC. Attached is a questionnaire I am distributing to all ESC employees at this location. I would be grateful if you would complete it and return it to me at the U.T. College of Communications using the enclosed postage-paid business reply envelope.

Please note that nowhere on the questionnaire do I ask for your name. Although I am working with the support and cooperation of ESC's management, this research is being conducted for my academic thesis, not for ESC. It is important that you understand that ESC will not see any of the individual surveys; rather, they will see the aggregate data (group summaries and totals of the surveys) which will be the basis of my thesis. I will be present my general findings to ESC, but *the only people who will view the individual surveys will be myself and my thesis advisor.*

Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary and should take you about fifteen minutes. Although there is no identification on the questionnaire, the completion and return of the questionnaire will be considered your anonymous consent to participate in the study.

As my time at ESC is rapidly drawing to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to say that I have truly enjoyed working at ESC and getting to know many of you. I thank you in advance for helping me in these final steps towards completing my Masters degree, and I wish each of you and the company the best in all future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Virginia Gay

PS -- I will be at ESC through this Friday, so I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the questionnaire or my research. If you have questions after Friday, please do not hesitate to contact me or my thesis advisor, Dr. Candace White, through U.T.'s Journalism Department (974-5155).

Appendix C:

Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrixes

**Personal Actual Group
Rotated Component Matrix**

a

	Component	
	1	2
Construct 5	.770	-2.893E-02
Construct 4	.736	2.210E-03
Construct 1	.732	-1.669E-02
Construct 3	.652	.496
Construct 8	.614	5.415E-02
Construct 2	.344	.784
Construct 7	.165	-.734
Construct 6	-1.876E-02	.605

Extraction Method: Principal Component
Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser
Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

**Personal Ideal Group
Rotated Component Matrix**

a

	Component	
	1	2
Construct 3	.833	.324
Construct 5	.832	-6.120E-03
Construct 1	.810	6.048E-02
Construct 4	.709	.464
Construct 8	.696	-.104
Construct 7	.538	-5.263E-02
Construct 2	.535	.336
Construct 6	-8.755E-02	.924

Extraction Method: Principal Component
Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser
Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3
iterations.

**Management Actual Group
Rotated Component Matrix**

a

	Component	
	1	2
Construct 3	.848	-.138
Construct 4	.799	-1.625E-02
Construct 2	.787	-.126
Construct 5	.772	.147
Construct 8	.683	.427
Construct 1	.645	3.226E-02
Construct 6	.419	-.745
Construct 7	.218	.742

Extraction Method: Principal Component
Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser
Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

**Management Ideal Group
Rotated Component Matrix**

a

	Component	
	1	2
Construct 5	.901	-3.027E-02
Construct 3	.848	.266
Construct 4	.811	.204
Construct 1	.687	7.492E-02
Construct 2	.653	.196
Construct 8	.635	.281
Construct 7	2.558E-02	.885
Construct 6	.293	.680

Extraction Method: Principal Component
Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser
Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3
iterations.

Appendix D:

Approval of Form B

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

09/11/97

Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
PHONE: (423) 974-3466
FAX: (423) 974-2805
URL: <http://www.ra.utk.edu/ora>

IRB # : 5420 B

Title : Corporate Culture, Internal Communication and the Employee Public

Lubkowitz, Virginia
Communications
2617 1/2 Delrose Dr.
Knoxville

White, Dr. Candace
Communications
330 Communications
Campus

Your project listed above was reviewed. It qualified for expedited review and has been approved.

This approval is for a period ending one year from the date of this letter. Please make timely submission of renewal or prompt notification of project termination (see item #3 below).

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. To retain signed consent forms from subjects for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

The Committee wishes you every success in your research endeavor. This office will send you a renewal notice on the anniversary of your approval date.

Sincerely,


Brenda Lawson
Compliances

cc: James A. Crook



September 16, 1997

Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
PHONE: (423) 974-3466
FAX: (423) 974-2805
URL: <http://www.ra.utk.edu/ora>

IRB#: 5420 B

Title: Corporate Culture, Internal Communication and the Employee Public

Virginia Lubkowitz
Communications
2617 ½ Delrose Dr.
Knoxville, TN 38914

✓ Dr. Candace White
Communications
330 Communications
Campus

This is to inform you that your Form D request for modification in the above protocol has been approved. This approval does not affect your original approval date.

You will need to make a change in the body of the Form B to coincide with this modification. In Section IV, paragraph 2, you will need to modify the time for completing the survey to 15 minutes as stated in the Form D.

Responsibilities of the investigator during the conduct of this project include the following:

1. To obtain prior approval from the Committee before instituting any changes in the project.
2. To retain signed consent forms from subjects for at least three years following completion of the project.
3. To submit a Form D to report changes in the project or to report termination at 12-month or less intervals.

We wish you continued success in your research endeavor.

Sincerely,

Brenda Lawson
Compliances

Vita

Virginia Gay Lubkowitz was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on November 23, 1969. She grew up in New Orleans where she attended elementary school and graduated from Isidore Newman High School in June 1987. She attended Washington and Lee University, where she received the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religion in 1991. She had an additional concentration in Political Science. As an undergraduate, she studied in the former Soviet Union for four weeks in the Spring of 1989 and spent the Fall 1991 semester studying the Arab-Israeli conflict in Jerusalem through Earlham College.

After graduating from college, she worked for two years in Washington, DC for a non-profit organization that focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict before moving to Knoxville, Tennessee to pursue a Master of Science degree in Communications from the University of Tennessee.