Research in Brief

The impact of internal communication satisfaction dimensions on job satisfaction dimensions and the moderating role of LMX

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of the research on the predictive role of internal communication satisfaction dimensions on job satisfaction dimensions of middle managers from 131 companies in Serbia and the moderating influence of the leader member exchange relationship between middle managers and their supervisors (LMX) on that role. The research has shown that some internal communication satisfaction dimensions have statistically positive impact on job satisfaction dimensions and the moderating effect of LMX has also been noticed.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between the internal communication satisfaction dimensions and job satisfaction dimensions in Serbian companies. This is highly significant because of the transition process that is still present in the Serbian economy. Since job satisfaction is an antecedent of many organizational outcomes it is an imperative to work towards educating organizations on the importance of job satisfaction and specific variables that can assist in leading the employees to a better job satisfaction (Kang, 2010; Pincus, Knipp, & Rayfield, 1990; Vukonjanski, Nikolić, Hadžić, Terek, & Nedeljković, 2012). Many employees in Serbian companies are not satisfied with their jobs, making it very important to determine whether and how internal communication satisfaction dimensions can contribute to increasing job satisfaction dimensions. In Serbia, during the period of socialism, a so-called self-management system was introduced in organizations. At that time employees expected that management took into account their opinions related to many decisions. Under the self-management system a two-way communication style was almost a rule and employees were to some extent involved in the decision making process. The worker’s self-management system was meant to provide the opposite of a Soviet-type dominance over the worker; the “new” Yugoslav worker, by contrast, was intended to have democratic control and a

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democratic voice in the daily activity of work. We hope that our results would be of some theoretical and practical benefit for scientific community and top management in Serbian companies as well.

2. Method and hypotheses

The research was carried out in 131 Serbian companies. The survey was conducted during 2011 by a web-based survey that was sent to the respondents (320 middle managers) via personalized emails. The online questionnaire was programmed with the Electronic Fields Survey. The total of 256 managers answered the questions. All the middle managers in the sample have Bachelors and Masters degrees, 136 of them are male and 120 female.

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) (Downs & Hazen, 1977) was used as an instrument for measuring internal communication satisfaction. The dimensions are: personal feedback, supervisory, subordinate communication, co-worker communication, organizational integration, corporate information, communication climate, and media quality. Job satisfaction is measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985) and LMX is measured by the LMX-7 instrument (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

We propose the following hypotheses:

H1. Internal communication satisfaction dimensions have statistically significant correlations with the job satisfaction dimensions.

H2. Internal communication satisfaction dimensions have statistically significant predictive effects on the job satisfaction dimensions.

H3. LMX levels have a moderating effect on the correlation between internal communication satisfaction dimensions and job satisfaction dimensions.

3. Findings

The values of Cronbach’s alpha for all questionnaires range from $\alpha = 0.703$ to $\alpha = 0.920$. All correlations between communication satisfaction dimensions and job satisfaction dimensions are positive, except for dimension operating procedures, where all correlations are negative. This confirms hypothesis H1.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive effect of internal communication dimensions (independent variables) on job satisfaction dimensions (dependent variables). Results of the regression analysis show that the best predictors of: satisfaction with pay is satisfaction with communication on organizational perspective ($R^2 = 0.422$); satisfaction with promotion is satisfaction with communication on organizational perspective ($R^2 = 0.403$); satisfaction with supervision is satisfaction with communication with supervisors ($R^2 = 0.518$); satisfaction with contingent rewards are satisfaction with communication related to organizational perspective; personal feedback communication and horizontal and informal communication ($R^2 = 0.500$); satisfaction with co-workers are satisfaction with communication climate and horizontal and informal communication ($R^2 = 0.430$); satisfaction with nature of work is personal feedback communication ($R^2 = 0.33$); and general satisfaction with communication are satisfaction with communication on organizational perspective and communication with supervisor ($R^2 = 0.526$). Hence, H2 is confirmed.

Hierarchical regression analysis with LMX as the moderator confirmed that LMX moderates the regressions between: satisfaction with contingent reward and satisfaction with communication on organizational perspective; satisfaction with supervision and communication satisfaction with supervisors; satisfaction with contingent rewards and communication with supervisors; satisfaction with contingent rewards and satisfaction with communication climate; satisfaction with contingent rewards and satisfaction with personal feedback; satisfaction with contingent rewards and satisfaction with horizontal and informal communication; satisfaction with promotion and satisfaction with media quality; satisfaction with contingent rewards and satisfaction with communication on organizational integration. It can be concluded that high LMX leads to the strengthening of the relationship between internal communication satisfaction and job satisfaction. This confirms hypothesis H3.

4. Analysis and conclusion

We obtain the result that the increase of the values of communication satisfaction with organizational perspective is accompanied by the increase of satisfaction with pay. One possible explanation is that the increase of the value of the communication satisfaction with organizational perspective means that there are good opportunities for realistic analysis of the overall financial position of the organization in the market and policy of organizations, including the remuneration policy and the promotion of employees, which helps employees to realistically perceive the organization and its ability to pay middle managers. Serbian companies are under the pressure to improve their performance and to become increasingly competitive. In such a competitive environment, the first consideration for many organizations is their profitability and one of the methods to gain this goal is to determine sources of cost-savings. On the other hand, the level of unemployment in Serbia is very high (over 25%) which highly influences the perception of employees on job insecurity i.e. the fear they might lose their jobs and become unemployed. The above-mentioned facts reduce the expectation of employees with respect
to the pay and increase the level of satisfaction of employees with the pay. A similar explanation can be given for the relationship between the increase of the satisfaction with promotion and the increase of the communication satisfaction with organizational perspective. The increase of the communication satisfaction with supervisor is accompanied by the increase of the satisfaction with supervisor. This conclusion is in accordance with the social exchange theory-SET since social exchange theory views the exchange relationship between specific actors as actions contingent on rewarding reactions from others. There are at least two reasons that personal feedback is the most influential communication satisfaction dimension with respect to satisfaction with nature of the work. The first reason is that personal feedback provides the person’s knowledge on how successful their work has been which in turn enables them to learn from mistakes or to raise self-esteem in the case that personal feedback is positive. The second reason is that personal feedback connects employees to their outputs (product or service) thus giving further purpose and meaningfulness to the work and increase the satisfaction with the nature of the work. High scores for satisfaction with supervisors communication means that the supervisor is ready to listen to employees (middle managers) complaints, and in this case, the communication from down to top is good.

Utilizing the findings from this study in communication training programmes, organizations will assist in greater job satisfaction of middle managers. The employees need to be given regular information about company goals and objectives, plans for the future, achieved results and company perspective. By creating appropriate internal communication and a high level of LMX, it is possible to achieve (relatively easily and quickly) a better job satisfaction, without making an enormous investment.

The complete study can be requested from the authors.

References

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