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The climate in which communication occurs is a result of how employees in an organization perceive and react to such factors as rewards, support, trust, openness, decision making, and leadership. The purpose of this case study is to identify and describe communication climate factors in a health care organization which are negatively influencing employee productivity and morale.

A literature review provides information which describes research in areas of health care communication, communication climate, and leadership. A multi-method approach is used to gather information from the twelve employees and the manager of this organization.
Communication Climate in a Health Care Setting:
A Case Study

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no other human factor is more directly related to the success or failure of a business than the communication climate of that organization. The communication climate in the organization which I researched is a composite of my evaluations and reaction to activities that took place in the organization. Thus, the climate in which communication occurs is a result of how organizational members perceive and react to such factors as information flow, support, trust, openness, decision making, and performance goals and standards (Downs, 1977). The rising cost of health care necessitates that health care workers and employers examine their communication competency in the workplace. This research is a case study of a health care organization. My goal is to identify and analyze those communication climate factors which most greatly affect this organization.

The organization which I chose to study is a doctor's office specializing in neurology. This business consists of
twelve employees, an office manager, and a physician who is the owner of the business. This case is unique in that the manager and the physician are married. At the time this research was conducted, it was the intention of the physician to employ his wife as the manager in order to create more organization and productivity among employees. The employees are divided into three work groups. This is a division which is created by both occupation and the work environment. The front office group consists of the receptionist, secretary, file clerk and scheduler. The back office employees are the bookkeepers, the medical transcriber and the insurance claims specialist. The third group of employees can be categorized as the medical technicians and are more educated and better paid than the other employees due to the demand for their skills in the medical field. There is little employee turnover in this organization.

This research employs a multi-method approach to study a single organization. The focus of this research is to identify and describe communication problems in this organization as they affect climate factors. I gathered information in order to understand the climate through the use of observations, interviews of the employees and the manager and a questionnaire. In the presentation of my research, I will describe my data findings and then offer an analysis of those findings. My research uncovered five communication climate factors which I attribute as the sources of low employee
productivity and morale in this organization. The first of these is decision making by management and the employees. I examined the nature of decision making and the effects of decisions on the employees. The second factor is trust within the organization. There is an inherent lack of trust between employees work groups and with management with can be attributed to many factors present in the organization. In this chapter, a discussion of communication distortion as it affects trust is also presented. The third climate factor I address is the extent to which performance standards are communicated to employees and the effects of a lack of clarity of this information on employees. The forth factor I discuss is the system of rewards and discipline in this organization and the effect of this system on issues of trust and employee cooperation.

The final issues addressed are those of leadership style and function. While leadership is not necessarily a climate issue, it has a tremendous impact on the communication climate of this organization in that it affects employee perceptions of fairness, trust, group competitiveness and organizational effectiveness. The leadership style of the manager is discussed at it affects decision making, performance standards and the rewards system in this organization.

These five communication climate factors are affected by many variables which are unique to this particular organization.
The length at which most of the employees have worked at the organization without a manager makes them particularly resistant to change. Another factor which is unique is the relationship between the manager and the physician. The relationship can be attributed many of the difficulties the employees have in accepting the manager as the leader. A third factor which must be taken into consideration is the inherent personality factors which may be responsible for many of the actions of the employees, manager and physician. These are issues which make the resolution of some of the communication difficulties this organization is experiencing difficult as these are factors which are not easily changed.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I will discuss relevant research in three areas: health care communication, organizational climate, and leadership style. These areas have been chosen as they are essential to the study of the communication factors which I have observed in this medical office.

Health Care Communication

While there is little research in the area of health care communication between the staff in a medical organization, what little is known is useful for understanding the issues that are pertinent to this setting. I will begin with those communication skills which are most valued by employees in the health care profession. Then, I will discuss the importance of information flow and the tendency to regard the physician as the leader of the organization as issues relating to this research.

To understand how patient and health care providers communicate with each other, it is necessary to examine the nature of the health care team. Patient and doctor communication has been the focus of communication research in a health care organization. Therefore, there is little research regarding those
communication skills of both the doctor and the staff which are necessary for efficient communication within the organization. However, research regarding the health care team has stressed the importance of communication. The communication skills that are necessary in a health care setting may often be different that those in other types of organizations due to the complexity of these organizations and the various levels of employees who work closely together. Results of work done by DiSalvo (1986) indicate that health care practitioners across occupational subgroups value most strongly those communication skills which facilitate positive, productive relationships. Relationship building, listening, motivating, and exchanging information are the core communication competencies important in the health care setting. This is true of communication with superiors, subordinates or patients. Health care professionals tend to place a stronger emphasis on interpersonal communication with patients and less emphasis on this type of communication between employees and leaders. An examination of health care employee communication skills indicates that when communicating with superiors, giving and soliciting feedback are desired. In addition, the exchange of routine information and listening skills is most desired (Becker and Ekdom, 1980).

The complexity of many health care organizations as well as the amount of specialization of employees in one organization makes the importance of information coordination essential. DiSilvo suggests that successful communication in a health care
setting appears to be more interpersonally oriented, needing less directive leadership than business organizations of a different nature. For this reason, information flow in health care organizations must be directed and coordinated both internally and externally for an organization to function effectively. Korsch (1978) evaluated doctor communication characteristics and found that communication is seen as an information exchange process such as giving advise and asking questions. Employees constantly need feedback regarding their performance to identify performance gaps and to promote change (Kreps, 1986). Management often fails to recognize and fully utilize the information regarding improvements the employees can provide. This contributes to ineffective communication relationships in the workplace. This is a problem in many health care systems (Boyer, 1977).

The doctor-patient relationship continues to remain the focus of health care research, despite the suspicion this is not the most important aspect of communication to the health of the patient. Successful medical care may depend on effective communication among health care workers. Research of communication in a medical setting stresses a dominant physician role. Regardless if he or she is given the title of leader, research indicates that the physician is perceived as the leader by the staff. This dominant physician role has been stressed regardless of the leadership training the physician may
need in order to become an effective leader. Nagi (1979) indicates that intradisciplinary health organizations are reluctant to engage in the processes necessary to support a leader other than the physician. Therefore, a common cause of conflict may be the misconceptions regarding who is the actual leader in an organization and the contradictory directives a health care staff receives from multiple sources in authority.

Pettigrew, Costello and Cassanta (1978), refer to the communication process between doctors, staff and patients and the importance of understanding how the parties communicate with each other in order to provide the best possible care. Because a health care organization has many sources of authority, there are often role conflicts and information processing difficulties which limit the effectiveness of organizational communication (House, 1970; Woodlock, 1983). This, along with the different communication needs of employees and organizational complexity, makes clear communication essential.

Communication Climate

According to Dennis Redding (1972), the communication climate is more crucial than communication skills or techniques in creating an effective organization. The
communication climate of this organization is clearly affecting the perceptions of the employees and is serving to create inefficiency. One can understand the communication climate by researching how people communicate with one another. This discussion of communication climate as part of the organizational climate will begin with some of the many communication climate theories proposed. Second, I will discuss Redding's theory of communication climate in detail. Third, I will discuss issues relating to trust as a crucial part of the communication climate.

Definition of communication climate are debated. Therefore, a review of those communication climate theories by James and Jones, Lawrence and Lorsch, Kahr, and Redding, as they relate to this research are explored. Communication climate consists largely of the perceptions employees have of the quality both relationships and communication in the organization. James and Jones (1974) suggests six aspects of organizational life which affect perceptions of employees. These factors are relevant to this study as they directly relate to many of the communication dysfunctions I discovered. The first factor is the perceptions the employees have of their importance in the organization. The need of employees to feel they are valued by their employer is not inherent only to the medical profession. All employees must feel appreciated and essential to the team if there is to be high morale.
The second factor is the flow of information in the organization. Because of the nature of the medical profession, information is constantly changing regarding patients and their needs. If the flow of the information does not allow constant adaptations to change, there is little hope for proper medical treatment. The third factor is practices relating to the motivation of employees. In a fast paced environment which demands much from employees, it is necessary to constantly motivate employees to be efficient and accurate. The fourth factor is that of decision making practices. The way in which decisions are made by management and employees can have a significant impact on the organizational climate. Employees should feel that decisions are made in their best interest and they have a voice in the decision making process. The fifth factor is the upward influence of employees. Management is frequently unaware of the contradictory messages which are sent to employees. They may tell employee to feel free to discuss problems or to offer criticism and at the same time communicate disapproval of feedback through subtle cues. According to James and Jones, communication difficulties as they relate to any of these five factors can determine the organizational climate.

Because the purpose of this study is to identify those climate factors which affect employee performance, the situational influences which affect employee motivation
becomes relevant. Lawerence and Lorsch (1980) distinguish eight structural dimensions used to characterize behavior of employees: 1. locus of formal authority, 2. time span of responsibility, 3. specificity of goals, 4. levels of hierarchy, 5. standardization of behavior, 6. quality of formal rules, 7. span of control, 8. rule specification. These dimensions are useful in describing the characteristics of an organization which effect employee performance.

Not every one of the situational influences described by Lawrence and Lorsch is of relevance to this particular study. The locus of formal authority, the specificity of goals, the quality of formal rules, and rule specification are factors which are contributing to the communication dysfunctions in this case. By identifying those problems which are affecting communication patterns, it is possible to make the changes which will increase performance levels.

Another interesting climate theory was proposed by Kahn in 1964. Using this theory, the organization is pictured as a set of overlapping and interlocking roles. Kahn's theory assumes that the performance of any organizational member is a product of the specific members with whom that person has contact. One of the most serious communication dysfunction in this organization is the relationship between employees. Kahn's theory is relevant in that it assumes performance levels among workers could be related to whom employees work with on a daily basis and the perception of these employees that they do not work well
Redding (1972) proposes that climate consists of five factors which can be examined to determine the communication climate of an organization. The first of these factors is supportiveness. Supportiveness is defined as the way in which subordinates perceive their communication relationship with their superior helps them to build and maintain a sense of worth. The second factor which contributes to the communication climate of an organization is participative decision making. This type of decision making promotes an atmosphere in which employees feel able to communicate with a true sense of influence. The third communication factor described by Redding is trust as it is affected by confidence in the leader and the credibility of the that person. This includes the extent to which messages and message sources are judged believable by the receiver. The fourth factor is openness and candor when communicating. This includes the ability of employees to speak with management about problems in the work setting and includes upward communication distortion issues. The fifth factor is clear performance goals. This can be described as the degree to which performance goals are clearly communicated to employees.

Using Redding's theory as a framework to describe the communication climate of this organization, I will first discuss is the way in which decision making by group members is perceived by those in the group. Group interaction is especially important in a medical setting as members are often together.
interdependent. The way in which a member becomes a part of the group will not only effect the communication interactions, but will have an impact on the decision making process of the group. Group competition also affects the way in which the group will function when making decisions. The longer the group is in existence, the greater the chance that members have assumed and identified certain functions and responsibilities associated with decision making.

Using Redding's communication climate theory, it is possible to discuss issues regarding trust. Communication which takes place in a cooperative and trusting atmosphere has positive consequences for group maintenance and performance. Clearly, trust can also function to create and alter the climate in which a group conducts its activities. Deutch's theory of cooperation and competition links cooperatively oriented groups with positive characteristics of performance and healthy relationships among group members. Competitive groups are consistently less successful in these aspects. Little cooperation among employees due to competitiveness for rewards may create a lack of trust. Deutch's theory provides an explanation for this behavior.

Another theory which links the poor performance of employees to their relationship with each other is proposed by Jackson(1959). This theory suggests that any productive communication must be built on a climate of trust. When trust exists, employees are more likely to communicate ideas and
feelings with more frequency and ease. Management is also likely to interpret information with more accuracy. Therefore, without a climate of trust between employees and management, there is a much greater change for poor and inaccurate communication.

Openness and candor is also an essential part of the communication climate. In order to completely understand the dynamics of inter-organizational systems, one must take into account the flow of information into that system. Operational effectiveness, defined as goal attainment, is significantly related not only to the amount of information received from outside forces, but from organizational peers and leaders as well. An examination of this type of communication in a medical organization is important for a number of reasons. First of all, the upward flow of communication supplies valuable information for decision making by those who manage the activities of others (Sharma, 1979). Second, upward communication lets management know when employees are ready for information from them and how well they accept information from management. Third, upward communication allows and encourages grievances to surface and management to understand conflict within the organization. Fourth, it provides the opportunity to ask questions and contribute ideas to management. Research regarding upward communication suggests that management ought to get information from employees which describes unsolved work problems and offers suggestions for improvements. Information regarding how employees think and
feel about their job, their co-workers and the organization itself is also valuable.

Research conducted by Osmo Wiio (1977) suggests a relationship between communication satisfaction and communication structure. He also suggests that organizational communication satisfaction comes from the distance and direction of the communication. His investigation into the effects of information flow in organizations provides insight into communication in organizations as information flows from employees to supervisors. Many employees direct comments towards an individual with more authority than themselves. This is the essence of upward communication. The openness and candor of employees is inhibited when there is little opportunity for upward communication. Difficulty in encouraging employees to communicate information to management is described by Sharma (1979) when he listed four reasons why upward communication is so difficult. The first reason is the tendency for employees to conceal their thoughts. Studies have shown that employees feel they will get into trouble if they speak openly with management and the best way to succeed is to agree with the manager. The second perception is that management is not interested or concerned with their problems. Employees often feel management may not respond to their conflicts and may even stifle some upward communication. The third finding is there is often a noticeable lack of rewards for upward communication from employees. Management frequently
fails to provide either tangible or intangible rewards for maintaining upward communication channels. The fourth finding is the perception of employees that management is unresponsive to information from them. Employees often feel that management is either too busy to listen to problems or is inaccessible to them.

A distortion of upward communication occurs when one of several kinds of modifications are made to messages. There are three types of communication distortion which are relevant to this study. The first is gatekeeping, which occurs when not all of the information which has been received by an employee is passed upward to management. The second is summarization, which involves changing the emphasis given to various parts of a message and therefore changing some or all of the intent of the message. Withholding of useful information is the third type of communication distortion. This general distortion involves actively changing the nature of the information transmitted. Research suggests that modifications to the transmission of messages are consistently related to three factors: the employees perception of power, perception of trust, and aspirations for upward mobility. Athenassiades(1973) also found that the degree of upward communication distortion depends on the employee's feelings of insecurity in their job. Therefore, an employee is less likely to distort communication when management and employee relations are positive and when there is high job security. This research appears to mean that
management often fails to understand problems which are facing employees in the workplace due to the tendency for employees who are insecure or ambitious to cover them up. This can be particularly harmful to a medical establishment which relies on accurate information to treat patients.

There are characteristics found in some organizations which tend to encourage the distortion of messages. There are a number of factors which may contribute to this distortion. There is usually a tendency for an employee to distort information so that it reflects on that position positively. Another factor which influences the way an employee communicates is organizational hierarchy. The hierarchy in an organization suggests to employees who occupies positions of authority and therefore which employees are superior to others. This results in a fundamental difference in perceptions of power. Therefore, employees in the lower levels of the hierarchy may feel they must be cautious when communicating honestly with those who are considered to be more powerful than them. Information may be distorted because a subordinate is careful to discuss things in a superior's interest and may avoid certain topics. A third factor which encourages the distortion of information is restrictions regarding who makes decisions which affect others. This perceived set of rules on the part of the employees may result in the restriction of information flow from all levels.

The communication skills of organizational members are
relevant not only to the communication process itself, but to the quality of the relationships group members develop. These climate theories suggest a number of climate variables which affect communication interaction in small group settings. These theories are useful in understanding some reasons for communication dysfunctions in this particular health care organization.

Leadership

Leadership is defined as those factors which facilitate group interaction and move the group towards the completion of a task. Prior to the 1950's, leadership research investigated the traits of leaders. Since then, two major lines of research have been initiated. One is concerned with factors involved in the emergence of leadership roles. The second line of research, which is of greater concern to this study, is the connection between leadership behavior and group performance (Evans, 1970). This emphasis is most likely a result of the presumed importance of leadership functions in the organizational.

In order to understand the communication climate of an organization, it is necessary to understand the leader of that organization and the impact the leadership style has on the performance of the employees and their view of the organization.
This discussion will include early leadership theories and present literature as they relate to leadership style and behavior most appropriate in a medical setting. I will also include a review of those leadership traits which may have an effect on organizational communication climate. Issues which will be specifically addressed are those communication competencies necessary to be an effective leader such as supportiveness, performance goals, and positive interactions with employees.

There have been several studies conducted which lend credibility to the belief that leadership style plays a large role in shaping the communication climate of an organization. This discussion of leadership as it pertains to organizational climate will include relevant leadership theories and the importance of each theory to a medical setting.

Studies of leadership style tend to concentrate on specific leadership traits and disregarded the importance of interaction between leaders and their staff. For example, a study conducted by the staff of the Ohio State Leadership Program (1982) discovered that it is more important to address leader behavior rather than leadership ability. This approach is summarized by Munn (1980) and is relevant for the study of a medical organization for three reasons. First of all, because it is the perception of many in a medical setting that the physician is the leader, there can often be power struggles between the perceived
leader and the actual leader. Second, because of the importance of few errors when working with patients and medications, it is essential that there be effective communication between staff and management. Third, most medical organizations have great amount of patients and paper work which makes high productivity essential. The effectiveness of a leader can often be measured in terms of group productivity and group solidarity. Since this type of work often involves the health of patients, the importance of good communication among management and employees cannot be understated.

The second part of this discussion deals with those communication competencies necessary to lead employees in a medical setting. Many believe that leadership is a major determinant of productivity and organizational success. Early research on leadership effectiveness was centered on the leader. Gradually the idea of group dynamics has emerged from the social sciences with more of a focus on members of the group rather than solely on the leader (Munn, 1981). The group dynamics perspective stresses the human elements involved in communication styles. Some of the research regarding leadership shows several communication behaviors which have an effect on group performance. For example, directness is an attribute of communication which affects group performance. Information given by the physician to management and employees is often technical, therefore clarity is essential. In
addition to this, the degree to which a leader is willing to initiate effective communication strategies will have an affect on the perceptions of employees towards her. This demonstrates a connection between leadership communication and the employee's opinion of their leader. The degree to which management provides employees with meaningful indicators of work performance also influences organizational climate.

Group satisfaction is higher when the organizational leader is considered by group members to be competent. The Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan has conducted numerous studies in an attempt to find out those principles and practices of leadership which directly affect productivity and job satisfaction. They found that when comparing employees under general supervision with those under close supervision, those with close supervision tend to be associated with low productivity while those with general supervision show higher productivity. Because of the setting of many medical organizations, employees are often under close supervision of management at all times. This could be leading to less productivity. The second finding by the Institute of Social Research is that there is a marked relationship between worker morale and how willing the manager is to discuss work related problems. Additionally, high production groups show greater loyalty, greater group pride, and a willingness to help each other accomplish tasks. These theories suggest that a decline in
worker morale may be a product of many factors in addition to employee motivation.

A similar program of research regarding the relationship between communication and leadership was conducted at Purdue University in 1972. Much of this research has direct implications for the study of leadership style in a medical organization. One of the most relevant findings is that a positive attitude towards communication is essential. Skill as a communicator on the part of the leader, such as a willingness to listen and responding to feedback in a positive manner, is also linked with the quality of leadership. Therefore, the efforts that a leader makes in becoming a good communicator will be perceived by employees as positive.

Another relevant finding is that quality leaders tend to be solicitous rather than authoritative. This is especially useful in a medical setting as employees most often have highly specialized duties in which the leader is not functional. For this reason, dictating duties may be counterproductive. Soliciting information from employees about what they need will be perceived as a more positive communication style. A third finding is that a willingness to share information about the organization, such as giving advance notice regarding changes and explaining reasons for change, is positively related to the quality of leadership as perceived by employees. Because employees in a small medical organization are interdependent,
advance notice of change, and a thorough understanding of the reasons for change is essential. Research findings also indicate that leadership is more of a function of the relationship among members of the group. Thus, the perceptions of the quality of the leader is related to the quality of the employee's communication with each other as well. Climate measures of trust, supportiveness, openness, and influence also correlate with perceptions of leadership. In a 1984 study, Tamayo identified the types of messages used by managers which lead to employee satisfaction with both the manager and with their job. Although he found limited support linking supervisory messages to job satisfaction, he did find considerable support showing a relationship between the types of messages used and manager and employee communication satisfaction.

The third part of this discussion is a review of leadership as it is affected by gender. Small group communication research supports the theory that men are more likely to emerge as leaders of a group. Nemeth, Endicott and Wechtler (1976) found that even when men and women have the same interaction styles, men will be perceived as the leader in a given situation more often than women. These results have been found in organizational settings as well. Denmark (1977), found that females are compared with males in the organizational setting in terms of perceived leadership effectiveness due to existing stereotypes. Because the medical profession is one in which the
high paying and powerful positions are most often held by males, there is a tendency to regard the male as the individual with the most authority. Research also shows that women perpetuate this stereotype. Using Bales IPAS categories, Waxley and Hunt discovered that females as leaders agree with employees more and ask for suggestions more often than men as leaders. This can lead to the perception by employees that a female leader is less competent.

According to Patricia Hayes Andrews (1980), if a women does not perceive herself as a leader, or is not perceived by others as a leader, then her chances of functioning in a small group and in an organizational context are limited. Andrew's research explores a variety of explanations which may account for the lack of acceptance of a woman in a leadership role. She believes that since perceptions of leadership behavior in a small group setting are often based on communicative acts, whether the individual is successful in performing the necessary communication behaviors will determine if she is successful in a leadership role. Another explanation which may account for perceptions of leadership ability of women are the characteristics of the group defined as the self concept of each group member and the leader. Macoby and Jacklin (1982) argue that self confidence is lower for women than men in group situations. Since women may perceive themselves to be less competent, they may be perceived by others as less competent.
Another study by Andrews provides support for the claim that self esteem has a substantial impact on an individual's chances of being well received as a leader. Results of Andrews research supports the theory that when self esteem is high, either gender may be chosen as the leader. Therefore, low self esteem may be a factor which contributes to the difficulties a leader may have being perceived in that role by others. Group communication and leadership research has also supported the theory that gender is a valuable part of leadership emergence with men more often being chosen as the leader.

Health care organizations are complex systems characterized by networks of interdependent groups of health care providers and professional staff whose activities must be constantly coordinated. Therefore, health care professionals at all levels need constantly updated information. The information flow in health care organizations must be directed and coordinated for an organization to function effectively. The communication climate of an organization is also clearly affected by it's leaders. Climate measures of trust, supportiveness, and openness have been shown to correlate with perceptions of leadership. Thus it is evident that the perceptions of the quality of the supervisor is related to the quality of the employees communication with that leader. It is important to identify the reasons for poor communication and begin to create solutions for those communication dysfunctions. Goldhaber's research shows
that the most important contributor to communication satisfaction with the manager is the quality of the relationship between the manager and employees. A manager who praises, understands the employee's job, can be trusted, and with whom the employees feel comfortable to disagree, will have a quality relationship with employees.
Chapter 2
METHODODOLOGY REVIEW

This research employs a variety of methods: questionnaire, interview, and observation, to study a single organization. Specifically, this research seeks to describe and analyze the communication climate of a small health organization by identifying the communication style of the leader and interaction patterns among management and employees. The multiple method revealed perceptions of employees regarding the communication problems in this organization. This study also investigates member involvement in decisions which affects them, the clarity and comprehensions of objectives of the leader, and the employee support and reward system.

Observational Frameworks

Historically, observational methods have been associated with social science disciplines; particularly anthropology, sociology, and psychology. Observational research, while naturalistic, involves a framework for describing behavior. Using a multiple methodology assisted in reducing uncertainties in the interpretation of data.
Researcher observation is an appropriate tool for understanding how an organization is affected by the climate and leadership style for two reasons. First, climate reflects interpretations of members in the organization and the extent to which those interpretations are shared by others. Second, it can be used to discover how leadership style affects the communication in this organization. Observational methods are capable of generating types of data that are difficult to obtain using other research methods. The strengths of using observation as a tool have been discussed extensively within the observation literature (Bailey, 1978). There are many characteristics of observational research which makes this method particularly useful for organizational assessment. The observer who is present in an organization over an extended period of time is at an advantage. Observations provide a richness of data by allowing identification of casual relationships as well as patterns of behavior over time. This may not have been possible using a more structured observational approach. Making observations using the Hymes framework was particularly useful at the beginning stages of my research as it gave me an opportunity to understand the daily communication patterns of the organization.

The climate of an organization is revealed through both the content of the messages between employees and management
and the employees themselves. A well conceived observational study can provide detailed information about the impact of change on several levels of functioning, including individual attitudes, small group norms and organizational climate, which is of particular interest in this study. Observation is considered to be the most straight-forward method for collecting data because it relies on the direct reporting of communication by the observer rather than reporting of behavior by others. Observation also allows the researcher to discover patterns because data is gathered over a period of time. A number of observational frameworks deserve discussion.

**Bale's Interaction Analysis System**

Psychologist Robert Bales developed the Interaction Process Analysis System in 1951 as a tool for the systematic observation of small groups by trained observers. This system provides twelve categories for use by the observer to make judgments regarding behavior. This procedure attempts to characterize the interpersonal communication patterns in the group according to certain behaviors.

Bales proposes that age, gender, history, and the number of individuals who enter and leave the group can be influential
elements. The value of the Bales Interaction Analysis goes beyond the data it produces. The observer is forced to make judgments and therefore learns the patterns of the interpersonal communication process in the organization. This system is value oriented as to what is important to the observer. Therefore, the observer must take into account the context and intent of a statement. This tool was not used because in order for it to be most effective, the observer should be trained and have verification of observations from other trained observers.

The Bales SYMLOG is a instrument which evolved from the original form of observation used by Bales. It is a complex computer assisted program. It has been found using the SYMLOG system that even trained observers arrive at varying conclusion about which category an interaction takes place. For this reason, this system of observation was not used.

Mann's Process Analysis Scoring System

This tool is used for observing and recording interactions between organization members. There are six categories in this system which are used to categorize statements by group members regarding anxiety, guilt, depression and self esteem. The researcher then uses these statements to understand the
relationship between group members. This tool was not used as it is difficult to distinguish between the ego state categories involved.

**LaForge's Framework**

Another system for categorization and analysis of observations in an organization was developed by LaForge. His goal was to categorize the way verbal messages created meaning in groups through the establishment of 134 different classifications for talking. This tool is useful due to the possibility for the intense evaluation of a conversation. Also, it is difficult to look at the process of interaction as there is no way of avoiding subjective evaluations. Due to the complexity, this framework is not useful for simple observations. For this reason I did not use it in my research.
Hemphill's Framework

In realizing the need to identify established characteristics of a specific small group, Hemphill formulated a questionnaire for use by observers to generate information about a given group in a given context. This questionnaire contains 150 statements which are scored on a true-false continuum. The results are tabulated and are then interpreted. This instrument suffers from the inability to establish how the observer arrives at these evaluations. It is also difficult to support the evaluations of the observer. For these reasons that this instrument was not used.

Hymes Framework

While the preceding observational systems could have been used in this study, none of them seemed to be sufficient in giving me the structure I needed but also allow me the freedom to observe many situations at the same time. The work of Dell Hymes, however, seems insightful to these needs and was chosen because of its flexibility and the richness of data it provides.

The Hymes framework was developed to describe any instance of naturally occurring communication in order to discover rules for speaking. This system includes eight
components. The first component is the **scene**. This is the physical setting in which the communication occurs. The cultural definition of the setting is also included in this category but is not relevant to this research. The second category is the **participants**. These are the individuals in the scene and their relationship to other individuals in the scene. The third category is the **ends**, which are the purposes, goals, and outcomes of the communication from one individual to another. The fourth category is the **act sequence**. This is the relationship between what is said, how it is said, and how it is perceived by others. The fifth category is the **key**, which is the tone, manner or spirit in which the talk occurs. The sixth category is the **instrumentalities**, which is the particular channel, language, or dialect from one individual to another. The seventh category is the **norms**, which includes those rules surrounding the interaction among participants and the interpretation of communication. The eighth category, the **genre**, is the cultural category of the communication and is not relevant to this study.

A benefit of using Hymes' framework for observational research is that this observation style maximizes the chance of discovering the unexpected. The inherent flexibility of this method gave me the ability to shift focus when important or interesting conversations took place and I was able to record relevant events with minimal structure. Therefore, this type of naturalistic observation was best suited to a study of this nature.
Observation Methodology

Each relevant category in the Hymes' framework was used in each setting, regardless of the length or scope of the observational period. The data recorded involves six major categories in the Hyme's framework. I recorded detailed observation as a narrative of ongoing behavior occurring within the observation period. My observations focus on the patterns in the "act sequence" and the "key" using Hymes' framework in order to infer the purpose and the outcome of communication.

Individuals and the location of the observation varied with each visit. In most cases, I moved between the front and back offices. Those being observed were not informed of when I would be present. Making observations unannounced was intended to reduce employee tensions and feelings of being singled out. Reoccurring events in the groups on different days served to confirm initial observations. Observing repeated events reinforced the fact that behavior was authentic rather than created for my benefit.

Detailed observations were recorded on observation sheets (Appendix A). The observations are a description of behavior of the employees and the manager for a period of approximately six months. An effort was made to keep the information recorded free from observer interpretations. These
interpretations were recorded elsewhere in order to separate the facts from assumptions about why events occurred, evaluative outcomes about the interactions, and attributions of intent.

Limitations of Observational Research

Criticisms of observational research focus on three problem areas: the degree of reliability of observational data, the related issue of validity of such data and concerns over the cost effectiveness of observational research. Since the observer is the instrument of data collection, the issue of reliability begins with observer bias (Sieber, 1973). Factors such as the status of certain individuals in the organization and sympathy for those being observed may contribute to favoritism by the observer. The magnitude of such bias is difficult to determine in most observational studies. By recording my personal reactions to events and individuals, it is possible to analyze potential biases (Jenkins, 1975). The problem of reliability can also be overcome through internal consistency in the final product. Precise fieldnotes can also serve as a reliability check. In addition, remaining open minded and thorough strengthens the reliability of my research.

There are threats to the validity of observational research as
well. One of problems with validity is that in most observational research, data is recorded in the form of the observer's field notes. This data is most likely not easily interpreted by persons other than the researcher. The second issue is the difficulty in assessing the validity of an observation based study. The problem of selectivity in observations cannot be avoided. It is for this reason that a multiple methodological approach will help to validate research findings. If the results of several different procedures are congruent, there is a basis for proving the validity of the findings. The third limitation to observational research is related to the cost involved. This was not an issue in my research.

Questionnaire Review

I used a questionnaire to verify the observations which were made and also to gather information regarding the employee's perceptions of their environment. There are many instruments which are useful in gathering information regarding communication in organizations. Three instruments pertinent to this study are discussed.

The Management Audit Questionnaire measures the work
environment and the human element. This tool is used to evaluate the work structure of the organization. It can also evaluate if the structure provides a means for satisfying the employees needs on the job, in particular those needs which cannot be satisfied through the formal work structure. The author of this tool, Al Tate, states that the questionnaire was designed to identify "people problems" and it is on this basis that the questionnaire was not chosen as I wanted to identify communication issues as they effect the performance of the employees. Also, the questionnaire is limited in that responses can only be yes, no, or not applicable. This would give me no indication of the extent to which the employee reacted to a given statement. While the scoring of this instrument would have been simple, the quality of the data would have been insufficient considering the small number of subjects who were responding.

The "Motivation Feedback Questionnaire", found in the book *Effective Communication in Health Care* by Harry Munn, is used to inform the researcher of what motivates employees. This instrument is lacking in that it fails to include those personality factors of each individual which could account for the motivation of an employee in a particular setting. While the Likert scale for measurement would be useful, communication factors which affect the motivation of the employees is not addressed. Therefore, this instrument is limited in its ability to assess a
wide range of possible communication factors in the organization with regards to employee perceptions.

The Group Effectiveness Questionnaire as developed by Harry Munn in 1981 is used in this study (Appendix B). In formulating the questionnaire, Munn supplemented original questions from the Communication Activity Questionnaire which was derived form the work of McCormick, Jeanneret and Mecham in 1972. This instrument measures communication factors which are perceived by employees to affect communication effectiveness. Although communication dysfunctions in an organization tend to be difficult to evaluate, the G.E.Q. assesses communication in an organization well. The advantage to using the G.E.Q. is that I was able to calculate numerical responses for the data, it is easy to use, and the data extracts information from a range of topics from one individual.

Questionnaire Methodology

A fifty item questionnaire was used to gather information from the employees regarding their perceptions of the communication problems in their organization (Appendix C). A Likert scale was chosen because it allowed for the respondents to answer quickly and it allowed them to indicate the degree to which their response was positive or negative. The respondents
were instructed to take as much time as necessary to respond to the questions but were asked to indicate their first immediate response. They were also told that all information would be kept confidential, a concern expressed by seven of the twelve employees.

There are three drawbacks to relying on a questionnaire for information. One of the limitations of using this method is that the researcher is collecting reports of the respondents' perceptions which may be consciously or unconsciously biased. Second, the data gathered using a questionnaire may also be limited in that subjects are responding to predetermined categories. Third, it assumes a certain knowledge base on the part of the respondent and may overly restrict answers. The effects of these limitations were reduced in two ways. I interviewed the respondents so that they could explain their perceptions. Additionally, I checked my interpretations of the data gathered through the questionnaire in light of the information gathered through observations and interviews.
Interview Methodology

The interview guide is based on the questions in the Interpersonal Communication Audit and the work of Gerald Goldhaber, author of Organizational Communication (Appendix D). The questions I asked provided me with a chance to explore reasons for the actions and feelings of the employees. The interview was structured around three issues: supportiveness, openness and decision making. Every employee was interviewed. The manager was interviewed as well in hopes of discovering differences in perceptions regarding the leadership of the organization as well as other aspects of the organizational climate. The questions were open ended and the respondents were given as much time as they needed to answer a question. I often asked follow up questions in hopes of validating the answers of the respondents and to gain a thorough understanding of the information being discussed.

Presentation of Data

The most serious problems effecting job performance in this organization is a result of the communication relationship between management and the employees. Problems of failure to receive needed information, difficulties in decision making, a
lack of cooperation, poor performance goals and the leadership style are those factors which are creating a lack of trust and ultimately communication ineffectiveness. The employees perceive their manager to have less satisfactory communication skills than she actually does, a case of selective perception in which the employees are only seeing in the manager what they want to see. This is an affect of the lack of trust that takes place in this organization between the management and the employees. The lack of information regarding the reasons for decisions by management is also having an affect on the employees perception of their manager. Information was gathered through the use of observations, interviews and a questionnaire.

I will begin with a discussion of the decision making process of the employees. There are three reasons this process is negatively affecting employee's perception of the organization. These reasons include the way in which problem solving is approached by employees, the difference in the goals of the employees, and the tendency to place blame on each other. Next, I will discuss staff meetings and employee interactions. Third, I will discuss cooperation and competition issues as they affect trust and supportiveness. The failure to receive adequate information from management is causing a lack of trust. This has led to a lack of group cohesion and distortion of upward communication. The following chapter will present issues I attribute to the poor performance goals of employees. This
includes the manner employees are rewarded, the lack of individual recognition for work and the lack of a discipline system. The final chapter will be a discussion of the leadership style and the effects of this style on the organization.
Chapter 3
Decision Making By Employees

This discussion of employee decision making focuses on decisions made by employees during staff meetings. Employee meetings are hastily organized and without a clear focus. The staff often leave the meeting feeling frustrated, disorganized, and unclear as to the decisions which were made.

There are two problems affecting employee decision making during staff meetings which will not be discussed in detail but are significant. First, meetings are held on Friday afternoon, a time in which few of the employees are interested in the task. Because of the meeting day, there is only one hour to meet, between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. Because of the day and the time of the meetings, the employees are often tired and do not want to discuss issues, therefore, those employees who are the most vocal and persistent in their views usually have the decision made in their favor. The second problem is that minority opinions are not protected during these meetings. Open participation is not encouraged as minority opinions are subtly ridiculed or ignored. Comments from group members such as "that's ridiculous" and "that will never work" discourage members from stating their opinions. These examples serve to illustrate the tremendous amount of submissiveness to more aggressive
members and promote an atmosphere in which there is very little cohesiveness between employees who work in different areas of the office.

Because there is so little time for the staff meetings, members are often hostile for the majority of the time and have little time to focus on relationship building and solidarity after conflicts are resolved. I have chosen to illustrate the decision making process of employees by analyzing the way in which a typical decision was made. The employees were given the problem of deciding among themselves if they would like to be paid on a salary basis or by an hourly wage. This is an issue which has created much resentment between employees towards the manager and of each other.

Data Presentation

Questionnaire: A number of questions pertaining to employee attitudes towards decision making were asked. A lack of agreement regarding a statement on the questionnaire which asks about satisfaction regarding group decision making was discovered. In the questionnaire section titled Problem Solving, employees responded to statements regarding responsibility for decisions, conflict when decisions by the group are made,
degree of satisfaction with the decision making process, and staff meeting productivity.

Responses to the questionnaire were similar among groups of employees who worked in the same area of the office. I found that all employees who work in the front office are satisfied with decisions made at the staff meetings. I also found a lack of disagreement in the decision making process among those employees who are technicians. Seven responses to the statement that "group meetings are action oriented" were positive although eight employees express dissatisfaction with the solutions generated during the meetings. In addition, all of the employees expressed dissatisfaction with the decision making skills of the group. The questionnaire also asked the employees to respond to the statements, "my group presents several options before proposing a solution to a problem" and "there is a high degree of commitment towards group goals". Seven out of the twelve employees responded "disagree" and two responded "slightly disagree" to each of these statements. Responses to the statement that "my group accepts the consequences when we make the wrong decision" varied among employees. Eight of the employees agreed that there is a high degree of commitment among employees towards goals in the organization. Nine of the twelve agree they are not using skills necessary to reach goals during decision making.
Interview: The employees were asked a number of questions regarding decision making. When asked what changes they would like to see in this process, eight of the employees responded that they would like to see a change in the staff meetings. Nine of the employees were very negative about how decisions are made. Employees consistently stated there is a lack of agreement with decisions. I asked them why they did not discuss this problem at the meetings. Comments from employees were "I guess I just like to hear what others have to say" and "I know if I ever got started I would probably go off so I keep my mouth shut". Another employee answered that she does not know why decisions are made the way they are.

Those employees who work in the front of the office gave the most positive responses regarding their satisfaction with the decision making process. I discussed with the front office employees how they feel about changes which are occurring. Each of them stated that do not like the changes in the office because it makes their jobs more difficult. Seven of the employees expressed their discomfort with the tendency to blame each other for problems. Employees are unhappy with staff meetings and the decisions which are made but have difficulty expressing ideas for change or what exactly makes the meetings unproductive.

Observations: I observed three employee meetings. The employees meet twice a month to discuss difficulties in the
daily operations of the organization which may be occurring. Sometimes the manager is present at these meetings. The employees are paid for the hour that they meet and are rarely productive during that time. During each meeting I observed conflict and hostility among employees. I noticed the meetings are unproductive and much time is wasted due to arguing.

Employees tend to discuss issues among those with whom they work prior to meetings and then present a united front for discussion. Because of this, there are three groups of employees who conflict in their opinions and goals. The front office employees tend to want little discussion of the issues. They tend to monopolize the conversation and consider themselves authorities on topics being discussed. These employees often interrupt comments made by others. The technicians and especially the back office workers seem intimidated by these co-workers. They wait until the end of the meeting to express their ideas and concerns. I observed the phases that the group passes through as they made the decision if they were to be paid by the hour or by salary. There was a noticeable increase in tension throughout the entire decision making process. This tension increased the closer the majority came to reaching a decision. The group seems unable to move from the conflict stage to development or integration. The employees left each meeting hostile towards one another.
Data Analysis

The way in which problem solving is approached by the employees is the first reason there are decision making difficulties. Group approaches to problem solving and decision making can either be a productive tool for increasing employee involvement or a factor which creates conflict. The employees have developed some decision making rules. These rules apply simply because the new members have been told that this is how decisions have always been made by the group. For example, the front office employees set the agenda for meeting. The front office staff has control of the meetings because they alwyss have. Because other employees are not included in this process, there is low involvement in the decision making process.

An example of the poor approach employees take towards decision making was observed when the employees were asked to decide if they would like to work on an hourly wage system or by salary. In the past, employees were allowed to choose between the two alternatives. Because those with a higher education level could make more money with an hourly wage system, and those with little education could make more with a salary system, there was much disagreement. Groups of employees tended to take a stand on a particular issues and refuse to deviate from that opinion. This made compromise between each
group almost impossible.

The approach to decision making taken by employees also creates much wasted time. Most studies of group communication have paid little attention to the problem solving abilities of group members. Members varied in their approach to problem solving and this is certainly a cause of much of the conflict during group decision making. For example, group members differ in their task orientation and the speed at which they make decisions. They often have various goals regarding the outcome of the decision. In addition, group goals are rarely decided on at the beginning of the meetings. Therefore, there is usually little progress made towards meeting group goals until late into the meeting time.

According to Goodall (1985), there are five common sources of communication problems experienced by small groups: interruptions while someone else is speaking, conflicts because a statement was made, no questions were asked, conflicts because of silence, and conflicts because of too much talking. One of the most apparent decision making problems within the group is interruptions which constantly occur when someone is speaking. These interruptions often occur when someone is making a statement which conflicts with general opinions of the group. This behavior on the part of all of the employees stems from their failure to actively listen to other members of the group, a basic group problem solving skill.
Theorists and researchers have characterized decision development as a unitary sequence, with all groups passing through stages in order to arrive at a decision. Poole (1981) describes five phases: orientation, conflict, coalescence, development and integration. There is little active problem solving occurring in any of these five phases. Because group members rarely took the time to elaborate on details of any proposed solutions and therefore they were not forced to thoroughly think about the affects of each decision. Tensions continue to build throughout the meeting because the group never fully reaches a consensus. Members of the group leave the meeting very dissatisfied with not only the decision making process, but with the decision itself.

The second reason for decision making difficulties is the inherent difference in the goals of each employee. There is a lack of decision making satisfaction particularly from those employees who are highly trained technicians. This could stem from their low involvement in the organization, with their manager. It may also be because they are the highest paid members of the group and have different needs than those employees with lower incomes. Because minority opinions, such as those of the technicians are not protected, employees have become self conscious about what they say and avoid presenting ideas which they feel will not be accepted. This has created a loss of creativity and new ideas. There is much resentment on
the part of the technicians and they react to this by withdrawing from the conversation in meetings. These individuals feel that they are not heard and that those who do speak often do not want them involved in the decision making. A group communication pattern of reinforcing the attitudes of the lower income employees and their desire for a salary has been established. Those employees who wait until the end of the meeting to express their concerns are not given any feedback or response in comparison to those who speak at the beginning of the meeting and are allowed to defend their position a number of times. The employees who are highly educated tend to be more passive during these meetings and therefore decisions are often made which affect them negatively. This degree of passiveness is most likely due to their low degree of involvement within the organization, a continuous cycle of non-involvement and passiveness.

Considerable research has focused on the affects of active and passive participation in decision making and levels of commitment once the decision has been made. These studies indicate that individuals who are more committed to a decision have a better attitude regarding that decision and are more likely to follow through with its implementation. While all members are present at these meetings, few are actual participants. This is a factor which contributes to the lack of cooperation among employees and the perception by employees that decisions
affecting all group members are not made by those members.

Lloyd Goodall (1985) states that as relationships develop within a group, individuals begin to sense who assumes each role and with what affect. Because of the critical function performed by the decision makers of the group, there is little tolerance of dysfunctional communication skills by members of the group towards each other. Therefore communication dysfunctions are often attributed to deficiencies in character, training, and intelligence rather than poor communication skills. This attitude is expressed by the technicians with the most frequency. Comments after the meeting such as "if they had gone to school they wouldn't have such money problems" serve to illustrate this point. This polarization among groups of employees is due to an increased amount of tension, stemming from the method in which decisions are made.

Poole, McPhless and Seibold (1982) developed an understanding of how communication determines the quality of decisions made by small groups. Their findings suggest the need to look strongly at the influence generated by arguments in which group members take stands during the initial interactions of decision making. The needs of the technicians who wanted a hourly wage system were not met during the decision making process. The decision made by those individuals whose needs were met had a negative affect on the attitudes of one group of employees towards the other. Those employees who work in the front part of the office
have a tendency to monopolize the decision making process. Their rationale for this, as expressed in the interview, is that they are the most affected by these decisions. Animosity between groups of employees who work in different areas of the organization has obviously developed, especially towards those in the front office. Those who work in the front office often tell others that they lack the knowledge of office procedures to make informed decisions. This problem relates to Goodall's theory that communication difficulties are often referred to as a lack of intelligence or a deficiency in character by those who are unsatisfied with the outcomes of a particular decision.

The third reason for decision making difficulties in this organization is due to the tendency for employees to blame each other for their inability to define and reach goals. The employees have a tendency to look at the problem or the reason for the problem, as a situation in which someone in the office should be blamed. By doing this, group members take away any responsibility each of them may have in contributing to the problem or the solution. Those members who have worked in the organization for many years have a greater tendency to do this, most likely due to their adversity to change. They react to this perceived threat by using their authority and power during the employee meetings to advert change. The assumption of the employees is that if they can shift the blame to another group of employees, there will be less change in their part of the
organization. There is a tendency to allow those individuals receiving blame very little influence in the decision making process, even if the decision will greatly affect their work. If the employees can not find a person or a group of people to place the blame for the problem then the manager is usually blamed.

There are a number of reasons which may account for the inability to define goals during the decision making process. The first is member resentment towards each other. A group will be significantly influenced by the degree to which members like or dislike one another and are attracted to one another. Similarities of backgrounds, values and experiences are conducive to mutual attractiveness. The employees in this organization have very dissimilar family and educational backgrounds. For example, four of the employees have a high school degree, four a college degree, and four have a college education as well as technical training. This diversity has an affect of polarizing according to education level. There are obvious salary differences which contribute to this polarization as well. The affect of this polarization based on income and education is that employees tend to focus on these issues during the decision making process. Consequently, there is little sympathy for the position of others. Group decision making in this organization should be replaced by individual decision making in which the individuals who are directly affected by the solution are given the opportunity to discuss the issue with the
sympathy for the position of others. Group decision making in this organization should be replaced by individual decision making in which the individuals who are directly affected by the solution are given the opportunity to discuss the issue with the manager. The manager should ask for employee input regarding decisions which affect employees but should make the final decision individually and not deviate from her decision. In order for there to be increased group effectiveness, each group member must acquire a reasonable understanding of what she should contribute to the group. Since the goals during the decision making process are often ill defined and will impact each employee differently, there will always be a certain amount of conflict.

A reason for the tendency of members to place blame on each other is that communication is highly personalized. Members often refer to past conflicts in order to make a point regarding a policy change. This is a tool for members to find fault with past decisions and gain power and control over the conversation. For example, employees in the back office constantly refer to a recent situation in which a patient was told by those in the front office that his appointment with the doctor had to be canceled due to overbooking. The patient was soon admitted into the hospital and passed away due to a brain hemorrhage. Those in the back office use this event to point out the inefficiency of the front office employees. Therefore, the tendency for employees
The forth reason for the lack of quality decision making is the lack of a neutral leader. Evans (1970) proposed the following statement as the core of his path-goal theory of leadership: If the leader of the group acts in a considerate way towards group members, providing structure while at the same time informing group members that their rewards are contingent upon their performance, the motivation and productivity of the group will increase.

Because there is a lack of leadership during the decision making process, there is a lack of structure. Those in the front office plan the meetings and therefore have an advantage in that they are given a chance to think about the issues and prepare possible solutions. In these situations, it is apparent the poor decision making skills of the entire group is enhanced by statements and actions taken by group members. Group members do not share information and are heavily influenced by one member's viewpoint, making it difficult to share information and brainstorm for solutions. The approach which is taken to problem solving is the reason for poor decision making of employees. This approach is characterized by a lack of clear goals, a lack of leadership, and the tendency for employees to place blame. The effects of poor decision making on the employees is a lack of employee cohesiveness, motivation to complete the decision making, greater conflict escalation opportunities and greater anxiety regarding the affects of decisions made by the group.
Chapter 4
Decision Making By Management

It has been noted that it is leadership behavior rather than leadership skill can be the most important factor when assessing the quality of the relationship between management and employees. The leadership behavior displayed by management can have a tremendous impact on the productivity of the employees. Some key communication behaviors are empathy, directness and openness. There are three issues which are creating a lack of trust in management decisions. The first of these is a lack of empathy regarding employee's work schedules. The second is the way in which she reacts to decisions made in her absence. The third is the lack of confidence that she displays in her decisions. Presented is a discussion of these issues and the effects on employees.

Data Presentation

Questionnaire: Responses to the questionnaire regarding management decision making and effects of those decisions were fairly negative. The responses remained similar among
groups of employees. When discussing if the manager asked for ideas about better planning, all of the employees except those in the front office were dissatisfied. Asked if they were satisfied with the manager accepting the consequences of decisions, responses varied. Four of the employees were neutral or iand seven were in slight agreement, with those in the front office slightly dissatisfied. This contradicts information gathered in the interviews. Those employees who work in the back office are the most dissatisfied with their ability to influence the decisions of the manager with front office workers being the most satisfied. All of the employees, except the medical technicians are dissatisfied that the manager is aware of problems pertaining to their work "and with the manager keeping them informed of those problems". Eight of the twelve employees responded that there is low commitment to performance standards in the organization. All were confident that the manager fairly represents their interests when speaking with the owner of the organization about them.

Interview: Responses I received during the interview regarding the manager's decision making were very similar to those in the questionnaire, with the exception of comments made regarding the manager accepting responsibility for her decisions. Seven of the employees responded that they feel she does not have confidence in her decisions and that her opinions regarding a
decision are easily changed. They feel it is very easy for them to change her opinions and many admitted to making her feel guilty about decisions she had made. When asked if they felt the manager listened to their opinions, nine essentially stated that "she gives little thought to the consequences of her decisions". They are grateful that they are asked to make decisions among themselves regarding some policies, such as the question regarding payment. However, they do not feel as though they are always given the opportunity to discuss decisions which affect them. When asked about decisions made by the manager, the employees described three factors which are contributing to the lack of credibility of her decisions. The first is her lack of understanding regarding the effects of her decisions, the second is the way she responds to decisions made in her absence, the third is the lack of job confidence that she has in her decisions.

I discussed the manager's decision making abilities with her during an interview. She believes that she is very committed to helping her employees solve problems. I asked her about her commitment to her decisions. She said that she is often unsure if she has made the right decision but she must take into account what is best for the office, not what is best for the employees. She also stated that one of the communication weaknesses of the organization is the staff meetings but she does not know how to make the employees stop fighting during those meetings. I asked her if she is confident in the decisions she makes. She said that
she does not know everything about the office and must rely on advise from employee'. She feels comfortable making decisions because she knows that she will be the manager as long as her husband owns the practice. She also commented that she makes decisions which are in the best interest of the business and she is aware of the hostility created within the organization and knows much of it is directed towards her.

Observations: While the subject was not discussed during the interview, I observed much hostility towards the manager when the employees worked on the weekends. There were many negative comments made about the manager and her lack of leadership skills. During the weekends, the employees worked slowly and were unproductive. The manager tried to make it enjoyable but the attitudes of the employees prevented this. I found that employees are well aware of her lack of confidence in her decisions and they use this to make her feel guilty about them. The manager often asks her husband and some of the employees how decisions should be made. When the employee's witness her discussing options with others, they often make sarcastic comments regarding her abilities.

When she is not in the office, the employees must make decisions for her. I noticed frustration among employees when making these decisions as many try to pass the decision to someone else. The manager is frequently angry about the
decisions which are made in her absence. I noticed that the manager is very critical of the decisions which employees make in her absence. She leaves the office at various times during the day, sometimes for the entire afternoon. She often refutes the decision or informs the employees of reasons why the choice they made was incorrect. Consequently, the employees are reluctant to make any decisions in her absence. Many patients and potential patients are told to call back when the manager is in, and many are not given the information they need for the same reason.

Data Analysis

One problem regarding the manager's decision making skills is her lack of awareness regarding the effect her decisions have on employees. The employees believe that the manager gives little thought to the consequences of her decisions on the employees. The effect is that employees regard many of the decisions she makes to be ineffective and without merit, even though this is not always the case. For example, the employees were told when they began working that they would be required to work on weekends on short notice if there is an excessive amount of patients which are scheduled for Saturday. The collective attitude regarding this policy is one of aggravation.
She often forgets to inform employees of the days and times they must work. This places the employees in a position of reminding their manager when they must work on weekends. This task serves to further aggravate an already tense situation by making the employees feel undervalued and that their sacrifice of working on a weekend is insignificant to the manager. Her decision to regard weekends as regular workdays has made employees very resentful and has created low morale. The employees perceive her lack of awareness regarding the affects of her decisions to be a factor created by her status in the office. She makes decisions which benefit her schedule and the schedule of the doctor. This leadership style is having a negative impact on the quality of the relationship between management and the employees. If the manager were to solicit the advice of the employees regarding the best way to handle an overbooking of patients, the perception of the decisions made by her would greatly improve.

The second problem regarding the manager's decision making is the way in which she regards decisions made in her absence. One of the indicators of a positive communication climate is the amount of support that management gives to employees. Supportiveness, for the purposes of this study, is the way in which employees perceive that the manager helps them to build a sense of self worth and value to the organization. The criticism of work done in the manager's absence is creating a loss of self
worth among employees. An example of this is an instance when she left the office for the day and was very critical of the decisions made by employees in her absence. Statements such as "why didn't you call me about that?" and "why did you do it that way?" have served to cause employees feel unappreciated. Most of her criticisms stem from a continuous overbooking of patients and insurance difficulties.

Employees react to her criticisms as if there is no way for them to please her. They have developed a tendency to make "safe decisions" in the manager's absence even though such actions result in little task accomplishment. Research demonstrates that groups tend to take riskier positions in decision making than do individuals. This is an interesting point as the group consistently takes the safe position in order to avoid reprimands. For example, they may tell a patient or another medical office to call back later and speak to the manager. Many factors contribute to this, the most significant is that employees are paid a salary and have little immediate investment in making sure that a great amount of work is accomplished when the manager is not in the office. Another reason for the lack of risky decision making is due to the inconsistency of information regarding office policies, causing employees tend to take as few risks as possible to avoid making a mistake.
The lack of confidence that the manager has in her decisions is the third decision making problem. This lack of confidence stems from two factors. The first is that the manager assigns tasks with very little thought or planning. Employees in each of the three work areas responded that there was low commitment to performance standards in the organization. This is most likely due to the lack of information regarding who is responsible for certain tasks. Consequently, there is disagreement between employees regarding task division and quality of work.

Second, is the tendency for employees to overly exaggerate their work load. There are often reactionary statements made which causes much unnecessary tension. Much of this overreaction takes place during the decision making process. When a policy change is made by the manager, she is usually unaware of the consequences of her decisions. This results in employees performing nonessential duties strictly for the benefit of the manager. This serves to lessen her credibility as a leader to a great extent.

Because of the over reactions to decisions on the part of the employees, the manager often backs down on decisions she has made if there is enough vocal resistance. This inhibits her from implementing many decisions due to resistance to change and gives the employees some control within their work setting. Additionally, if the leader is not perceived to be a quality
leader, then her chances of functioning well are limited. Performance self esteem has a substantial impact on an individual's chances of being well received as a leader. Her self esteem may be affected by the notion that employees consider her to be a less effective leader than the doctor. This could be due to many existing gender stereotypes as well as resentment regarding how she became the manager. Therefore, issues which must be addressed regarding decisions made by the manager are lack of knowledge regarding the effects of her decisions on employees, the way in which she regards decisions made in her absence, and a lack of confidence on the part of employees and the manager regarding her decision making abilities.
Chapter 5
Cooperation and Competition

This chapter will include a discussion of competition and cooperation issues between the three work groups of employees. I will first discuss the failure to receive needed information from management as a factor in creating a lack of cooperation among employees. I will then discuss the three groups and the cohesion displayed between them as a basis for understanding the lack of trust between the groups. Next, I will discuss the distortion of upward communication as it relates to the lack of cooperation and increased competition between employees and management. Last, I will discuss the defensive behavior and competitiveness among employees as it relates to trust.

Data Presentation

Questionnaire: The questionnaire responses indicate there is a lack of trust between employees. This problem is significant in terms of the trust between employees who work in different areas of the office. According to questionnaire responses, the technicians are most resentful of the decisions which are made,
and of the other two groups of employees. All of the employees expressed dissatisfaction in a number of areas related cooperation such as the distribution of information from management and from each other. Responses to the statement that "employees can count on their manager to be reasonable" were positive except for those employees who work in the back office. Employees responded that "group members will go out of their way to help other members" negatively when comparing groups of employees and positive among group members. Nine employees responded negatively to the statement that disagreements are handled constructively.

Members responded that they enjoy "open, honest, and direct communication" with varied answers. Nine of the employees also do not feel they receive enough information to carry out their responsibilities. However, those who work in the front office are more satisfied with the information they receive. There were interesting responses to the climate section as well. When asked about respect towards group members, ten responses were very positive. Yet when asked about trust among group members there was much disagreement.

Interview: There is a lack of cooperation between employees and a lack of trust with management. This stems from the lack of information the employees are receiving from each other and
from the manager. One employee stated that she "constantly feels suspicious of the other employees". All of the employees each stated that they do not receive all of the information they should. I believe that employees attribute this to the withholding of information by other members and a lack of direct communication on the part of the manager. The technicians feel they have little decision making authority and are often discouraged from making suggestions by other employees on the grounds that they are as one employee stated "the technicians, not the office staff".

During the interviews, all employees, except for two who work in the front office, discussed a lack of trust and cooperation due to a lack of information regarding policies, and little evaluation of personal performance. The lack of information from management and from each other was a reason for the lack of trust expressed by employees as well. Employees reported that the manager is not concerned about their work related problems and that she is inaccessible to them. When asked about the degree of openness and candor they have with management regarding the information they receive, many were hesitant to discuss conflict. Four of the employees felt uncomfortable speaking about conflicts in the manager's presence. When questioned as to the reason for this, the reply was often a fear of retaliation on the part of the manager. "Groups of employees hide information from each other and from
management in order to gain rewards for their group and make others look bad", according to one employee. These four employees also stated that constantly trying to receive rewards has caused much competition among each other.

During the interview, the manager stated that it is not only the competition between the groups that is causing a lack of trust among employees, but her lack of knowledge as to how to stop the situation that is an issue. She has considered firing those employees which are causing much of the tension, but has a difficult time identifying those individuals. She believes that her other alternative is to fire a group of employees. This would cause her to lose two or three employees at one time. Therefore she considers the issue difficult to address.

The manager believes that she makes a great effort to make employees understand what is expected of them. She said that she posts notes and has given the employees guidelines and procedures regarding what is expected of them. She added, "If any of them is ever unclear, all they have to do is ask." I asked her about the written communication that she sends employees. She stated that she only posts notes when she really wants to make a point because she doesn't feel the employees listen to her otherwise. When I asked her if she trusts her employees, she stated that she does not trust them to make decisions in the best interest of the organization. She also believes they are not committed to their work and that she must constantly supervise them.
Observations: There is much intragroup support between the three groups of employees. Employees in each group tend to reinforce each others attitudes and beliefs regarding controversial issues in the organization. I noticed there is a high degree of cohesion among those who work in the front office. These employees spend much of their free time together as well. This group is the most hostile towards the manager's decisions. They deliberately make her work in the organization more difficult by undermining her decisions. This group has much influence because they control the work schedules of other employees through booking of patients and they have the ability to solve problems quickly.

I also observed the written communication which the manager sends to employees. These messages are often overly critical and sharp in tone. They are sent to employees or posted in the kitchen when she is angry about an action of one of the employees. The employees resent this form of communication and tend to ignore it. The manager has made an attempt to make changes in existing policies and to make sure employees are aware of them. The communication distortion which is occurring is an effort on the part of employees to avoid change. This display of power towards management decisions was observed on several occasions.

There are three types of communication distortion which were observed. The first is gatekeeping, which occurs when not
all of the information which has been received is passed upward. Second, summarization involves changing the emphasis given to a part of the message. Withholding of useful information is the third type of communication distortion. Each of these types of communication distortion was found to be used by employees for purposes ranging from making the manager aware of good work to making another employee look bad in the eyes of the manager. Much of the withholding of information is on the part of the front office workers who try to keep information from others regarding collections and scheduling.

Data Analysis

The cliques that can be found among employees is one of the reasons for a lack of cooperation between them. While the employees share many of those traits which are necessary for productivity such as a common purpose, participation opportunities, social norms, and in many cases shared attitudes, there is very little cohesiveness between the three work groups. The difference in goals and the constant struggle between groups to either prevent or invoke change is creating this problem. There is a constantly struggle between the other employees and the technicians. The technicians are highly trained and very
well paid. This could be a reason for the attitudes of the other employees towards them. However, the technicians lack the confidence and self assurance that is needed to assert themselves during the decision making process.

The front office workers complain about the other employees often. They cooperate with others only when they must. These ineffective employees often affect the overall productivity of the group. This group clings to established procedures and very reluctant to change existing policies. The manager does not ask this group for input regarding her decisions which has resulted in a power struggle in which there is much resistance to her decisions. Therefore, this group undermines the decision making process during employee meetings and the possibility of success for the manager's ideas.

This group is part of a fight for power between new employees and and old employees as well. This is apparent through the continuous acting out of grudges on the part of the front office workers through the withholding of information regarding group norms and procedures from the new employees. The defensive environment of this office is a result of not only competition between groups of employees but a struggle for change between the new and the existing employees. The defensive climate has had a spiral effect in which cues from one employee, verbal or nonverbal, creates hostility among an entire group. As stated in the literature review, a person becomes more
defensive as they are less able to accurately perceive the motives, values, and emotions of others. The loss of effective communication between groups of employees can be attributed to this communication defensiveness. The defensive communication of one person tends to create defensive postures in others. If unchecked, the ensuing circular response becomes increasingly destructive to the organization (Gibb, 1961).

Dissatisfaction with the adequacy of information is one of the factors which can be attributed to the lack of trust employees have of management. Satisfaction with information received about the organization is low for a number of reasons. The first of these is the lack of opportunity for employees to suggest improvements to the manager. Employee responses were positive in the area of communication satisfaction. They feel it is best not to bring up issues in which the manager will disagree with them. The manager believes the employees are well informed and that she is open to suggestions. The employees feel uninformed regarding policies and why those policies are in effect. Therefore, openness and candor of employees is inhibited due to little opportunity for upward communication, and the differences in perception regarding communication opportunities.

Studies have shown that employees feel they will be viewed poorly by management if they bring negative information to the attention of the manager. This behavior leads to a lack of knowledge on the part of the manager regarding ideas for
improvements that employees may have. These contradictory perceptions are due to the manager's failure to communicate to her employees that she is open to criticism and suggestions. She must support her claim by rewarding employees for communicating honestly and openly with her.

Much of the difference in perceptions can also be blamed on the poor written communication of the manager. This is causing a great amount of mistrust of management by the employees. Because the office is small, there is little necessity for written communication in the form of memos. However, the manager does write and post notes to her employees. Her written communication often has a threatening quality to it and the employees perceive these notes as warnings. Examples of such messages are "If you are not going to start cleaning up the kitchen then I will lock it up" and "from now on if you need a day off you will have to ask the doctor yourself". These messages often stem from questions or criticisms that the employees have had regarding office policies.

The manager responds to these questions in a defensive manner which serves to warn employees not to question her or there will be consequences. Her messages are clear and to the point. They often serve to create much hostility and hurt feelings as the employees are not given a chance to discuss a new policy or to provide feedback regarding assumptions that have been made which have prompted policy changes. This has led to much
inefficiency, especially regarding the paper work. It has also led to a tremendous lack of trust of the manager as employees do not have confidence in her reactions to feedback from them.

Another issue directly related to the lack of information employees receive is much ambiguity regarding reasons for many office policies. When asked if the employees obtain sufficient information to carry out their duties, those in the front office were most satisfied, despite the fact that it is the lack of information from management to this group of employees which is causing the many of the billing difficulties. Hesitancy of this group to respond negatively could be an issue of pride. It possibility could be a lack of awareness by those in this part of the office that billing difficulties can be attributed to their work.

Many are unclear as to the criteria is for good or bad job performance or on what basis an employee receives a raise. The effect of this has been much guesswork on the part of employees as to the manager's satisfaction with their performance. For example, one of the newer employees was not receiving feedback regarding her performance and assumed that management had not recognized the work she was doing. Therefore, she made a great effort to point out her daily accomplishments to the doctor. He found it aggravating that the new file clerk was constantly talking to him about her work as he tried to see his patients. The result was that the employee was fired for
constantly bothering the doctor with petty issues. The degree to which management gives employees a clear indication of work performance is related to the quality of leadership. This employee was simply unaware of the rules and in need of feedback from management regarding her work performance. Soliciting information from employees regarding what they need to become more productive is essential. If there is to be trust between management and employees, a willingness to share information regarding the organization is essential as well.

The constant distortion of upward communication is a factor contributing to a lack of trust between management and employees and each other. This chapter will begin with a brief summary of the types of communication distortion which has been observed. I will then discuss three factors which can be attributed to this distortion by employees. The first factor is the threat of change, the second is the power struggle between management and employees, and the third is fear of retaliation from management.

The internal communication flow in an organization consists of information from downward, upward, and horizontal sources. The communication distortion which is occurring in this particular organization is that of information from employees to management. Recall that distortion of upward communication occurs when one or more modifications are made in the transmission of messages. The underlying cause of this
exercising their power over situations which may affect them. This display of power towards management has been observed on several occasions. For example, there are a number of patients who have not paid their bills and who the insurance company has refused the claim for payment. These patient's names are supposed to be filed in collections and these individuals are not to see the doctor again until the bill is paid. This would be an efficient method of handling delinquent payments. However, the employees do not check to see if a patient has paid the bill before they schedule him or her for another appointment. There is a distortion in the communication in that the employees tell the manager that they do check the collections file. The result is a large amount of unpaid bills. The employees are specifically ignoring the office policy regarding this problem in order to demonstrate their power. It is possible that the employee's fear of being given the responsibility of having the reorganize the collections file in the office. This gatekeeping occurs only with communication which may be considered negative by the manager. It is interesting to note that positive messages are immediately reported to the manager in order to gain approval and rewards.

The third reason for the distortion of upward communication is that there is much resistance to change in the organization. One of the most apparent reasons for the distortion of information given to management is fear of changes which new
information may bring. The manager has attempted to make many changes regarding policies. Laying the groundwork for change has not been done and this is one reason that change is being met with much resistance. The manager has yet to understand and identify the underlying communication problems in this organization. Instead, she opts for quick solutions rather than systematic implementation of larger changes. Employees reported the manager is not concerned about their work related problems and that she is inaccessible. The result of this is fear of the unknown, resentment of being forced from established habits, and defensiveness through the distortion of upward communication. While the employees agree that the manager makes an effort to ask for their ideas regarding better planning in the office, employees are not comfortable about expressing those ideas. The employees are hesitant to give the manager any information which may allow her to make improvements in the organization.

In conclusion, a lack of trust has led to fear about giving negative information. As a result, there is considerable gatekeeping in relation to change. Read(1982) found that subordinates have a greater tendency to distort information when the trust in their supervisor is slowly acquired. This is accentuated when the supervisor is perceived to have high upward influence. Both of these factors are of relevance to this organization as there has been much resistance to this manager
as she has a great deal of upward influence. The employees have a tendency to conceal their thoughts from the manager. They believe they will be reprimanded in some way if they are completely honest. The upward communication distortion is stemming from a lack of trust by the employees that they are free to communicate honestly with their manager. This distortion of information is costly to the organization. Defensive behavior is defined as that behavior which occurs when an individual perceives a threat. The lack of trust has created much defensive behavior on the part of employees towards each other. Given the continuous conflicts regarding power at staff meetings, a lack of job definitions, a tremendous work load, and a continuous resistance to change, there are many perceived threats on the part of employees towards each other.
When all members share recognition and are rewarded for group achievement, the group is more likely to be effective. To become effective, groups need successes. From that success the group builds confidence as a team. The group is then able to meet new challenges. Inconsistency in the types of rewards and punishments given, and the consistent rewarding of undeserving employees are two issues which are hindering the effectiveness of these employees. Due to these problems, employees are competitive for rewards and are not exhibiting effective group skills. This is true of individual successes as well. There are few individuals who feel appreciated in this organization as the employees are not responsible for specific task accomplishments. The lack of high performance standards among employees is a result of three issues in this organization. The first is the value the employees place on the rewards they are given. The second is that there is very little individual recognition, and the third is the lack of a consistent discipline system.
Data Presentation

Questionnaire: Nine employees responded to the questionnaire statement that management consistently rewards those who show high levels of performance positively. The back office employees are most dissatisfied with the rewards system. Responses to the statement "people who get ahead in this organization do so because of their performance" was positively answered by ten of the employees. When asked if management gives credit and recognition to those who do a good job, responses were positive as well, especially from the third group with those in that group giving the most positive responses. This is most likely due to the frequency of rewards given to the members of this group. When asked if members of the group follow through on their assignments, employees responses varied. Responses also varied to the statement "the group actively looks for better ways to get the job done". All of the employees except those in the front office responded negatively to the statement "there is general group satisfaction regarding the contribution to the survival and future success of the organization".

Interview: During the interviews it was revealed that
employees are rewarded in groups. The employees who should be rewarded feel resentful towards co-workers who are given credit for their achievement. Seven employees stated that they are unaware of management's system for rewards and discipline. One employee commented, "we know that the party is for increased collections, yet she never specifically stated what the employees had done to increase the collections that pleased her". Another employee told me, "the severity of the punishment depends on her mood. There is no formal system for discipline". For example, one of the technicians injected a patient with medication when the doctor was not present, a violation of office policy. The technician told the manager what she had done. The manager brought up the technicians past mistakes for which she was never given a warning or reprimand and then fired her. When asked about the rewards that they are given as incentive, I was told that employees are never really sure why they are rewarded. One employee commented, "I don't know why we have parties, I do know that I have to attend them".

During the interview, the manager stated "employees know what the rules are, and if they break them they should be prepared for the consequences." She also believes she is in a position where she should not have to justify her discipline decisions. She feels that she rewards employees often for good work, but they do not appreciate it. I asked her if she has specifically told the employees what they have done to deserve a
reward such as a party. She replied that they all know why.

Observations: The manager is unaware of the problems which are created due to her lack of a discipline and rewards system. Her reasons for rewarding employees have more to do with her lack of specific job duties in the office than a desire to provide employee incentive. The parties serve as a tool for the manager to be in the office. She tries to stay busy so that the doctor knows she is working and contributing. I observed a great lack of incentive to be productive, especially from the back office workers whose accomplishments are least often recognized. These workers are responsible for much of the bookkeeping and insurance work. They spend a great deal of time in order to complete their tasks. This is not due to incompetence, but a lack of incentive and a poor attitude regarding the organization.

Data Analysis

Employees do not value the rewards they are given in this organization. While it is the obvious goal of management to pay for performance, the manager has chosen to supplement this pay with rewards. The rewards are considered by some of the employees to be a burden rather than an asset in their work. When the manager receives information from employees which
she considers to be positive, there is often verbal praise and generous rewards are given. This is regardless of who gave her the information or for what reason. For example, when the collections of money from patients was high for the month, she rented an airplane and took the entire staff and their children to Disneyland for the day as a reward. The problem lies in that she does not consider the value of the rewards she gives to employees. Seven of the twelve employees are single parents who are struggling to meet day care costs among other expenses which come with being a single parent.

Along with the insensitivity to the value that employees place on rewards comes a conflict with the timing of the rewards. For example, the manager often rewards employees by giving them a party which is on Friday or Saturday night. Because of the family situation of many of the employees, it is difficult for them to spend time away from their families on the weekends.

Another factor which is not taken into consideration when planning these parties is the question as to whether the employees wish to spend time with their co-workers on their days off. Because of the nature of the parties and the small amount of people invited, the employees feel obligated to attend as they do not want to offend either the manager or the doctor. The effect of this type of reward is one of resentment on the part of employees at having to give up family time to attend
a social affair with co-workers. Perhaps monetary rewards rather than parties, gifts, or family trips would be a greater reward and a greater incentive to be more productive.

The second factor that is making the system of rewarding ineffective is that there is little individual recognition. While employees believe that management rewards consistently for good performance, they are unhappy with the lack of individual recognition for accomplishments. The dissatisfaction displayed by those employees who work in the back office can be attributed to the fact that they put the most effort into handling the collection of money and this is the basis for most rewards. Since this group is not given the individual recognition they deserve, they do not have the confidence they should in their work, or the incentive to be more productive. It is the front office employees who are often given recognition for high monthly collections as the manager perceives that they collect the money. There is rarely one employee who receives recognition for an accomplishment, it is most often a particular group of employees.

The rewards that are given, such as the trip to Disneyland, may change the employees' attitude toward her and may also increase loyalty towards her, yet there are few productivity increases. For example, the employees were given an Employee Appreciation Day because collections were high for the month. The employees received an expensive catered dinner at the
Doctor's house, and a very large cake which said "Thank You" with the employees names on it. Because the employees were not aware of what they had done to deserve the reward on an individual basis, it is not likely that they can make an increased effort to ensure greater profits in the future. The system of rewarding employees has also led to a greater competition between groups in order to receive rewards. This is a factor which can be attributed to the withholding of information which may be valuable to other employees. Therefore, the rewarding of employees in this manner is causing greater competition between employees.

The third problem is the inconsistency in which employees are disciplined. The manager attempts to discipline employees for past mistakes. I discussed an incident in which an employee was fired for very little cause in the interview analysis section of this chapter. This had a tremendous affect on the employees as it further increase upward communication distortion through the gatekeeping of negative information. Employees are fearful that they will be punished for past mistakes at any time and are concerned about their job security for this reason. Sometimes this discipline is a sarcastic comment or warning in front of others, other times the employee is fired. Management's written warnings to employees are often harsh and not well prepared. Because they are usually written to an employee when she is angry about a particular issue, her memos often resemble a
lecture to the employee regarding a rule of which they may not have known. This has created much uncertainty for employees because when they make a mistake they do not know if they will be warned or fired. This is poor for employee morale and productivity. It also greatly hinders the development of trust between management and employees.
Chapter 7
Leadership

The degree to which organizational leaders are willing to initiate effective communication strategies will have a great affect on the organizational communication climate. Nagi (1975) indicates that interpersonal health organizations are often reluctant to engage in the process necessary to support a leader other than the physician. This indicates that the physician is often viewed as the leader of a small organization even though their medical training leaves them ill equipped for this role. These findings could indicate a reason for the difficulty in the acceptance of the manager in this particular organization. However, there are factors specific to this organization which are contributing to leadership difficulties as well.

Data Presentation

Questionnaire: The employees who work in the back office are most dissatisfied with the manager in terms of giving assistance and being reasonable. The front office staff feels the manager is aware of problems existing at their level, the
other two groups do not. The employee's response to the statement "I can disagree with management without fear of reprisal" was negative by all employees except for the medical technicians who responded positively. All employees feel they are unable to get a direct response to a question that won't be contradicted by another in authority. It is interesting to note that there was no disagreement with the statement that management treats everyone fairly.

Interview: One of the most interesting findings is that employees do not like to be supervised as closely as they are and that they would like to discuss problems with management. An employee responded that if they had more feedback regarding their mistakes and more information regarding policies, there would be greater task performance. I discussed the concept of professional competence with them and asked each employee to define this term. Responses are such things as "an appropriate education to do the job, training in the field, leadership training". It was clear to me that the employees were referring to their manager's lack of training or experience. When asked about the manager's leadership style, one employee commented on her written communication style as being "unnecessarily hostile and expecting the worst of her employees". Another employee commented that "she interferes in the details to much and is constantly peering over people's shoulders". When I asked about
her leadership abilities, six employees agreed that she has the ability to become a successful leader by substituting her destructive behavior with more appropriate managerial skills.

According to one employee, "I expect her to give me a clear message about what is expected and she hasn't". She tends to prefaces a decision or criticism of the employees with statements such as "The doctor says" or "The doctor is unhappy about this". Another concern expressed by employees is the disagreement over who is the actual leader of the organization. One employee said, "No matter what she says, he'll say the opposite, I never know who to believe". The employees from each of the three groups were reluctant to discuss power issues with me. The information that I did receive was regarding the manager's misuse of power in the organization due to her secure position. The medical technicians are the most comfortable with the manager's power in the organization. When asked about the distribution of accurate information in the organization, employees stated that they frequently make sarcastic comments regarding the information they are given. They say that the answer to a question depends on who you ask.

When I discussed the manager's leadership style and skills with her, I found her perceptions of the employees to be reasonably accurate. She knows employees are having a difficult time adjusting to her style and with the way she was given this position. She would like to work on ways to improve
the communication in the office but does not know how. I asked her how she feels about the duties of each employees. She said that everyone tries to work together to complete tasks and that there aren't really specific job descriptions. She stated that employee performance is very important to her because it shows her husband she is doing a good job.

Observation: The manager attempts to provide direction through task and social leadership functions in but has a difficult time avoiding the domination of the group with her views and opinions. While she stated that employee performance is important to her, her actions and comments reveal that employee obedience is more important. The employees do what they think the manager want them to do. One of the most needed leadership functions in this organization is goal setting and decision implementation. There is also a great need for specific job descriptions for each employee, including herself. The manager seems to be unaware of this. Her decisions are constantly challenged by the employees. They ignore her written communication or they downplay the quality and feasibility of her proposals. The employees in the front and back office make an attempt to exclude her from group conversations as well.
Data Analysis

There are two issues which have made it difficult for the employees to accept the manager as their leader other than her relationship with the owner. One consequence of this employee inacceptance has been a lack of confidence on the manager's part in her ability to become a good leader. I will first discuss the type of leadership style displayed by the manager and addresses such issues as leadership skills and power. I will then describe her credibility as a leader as it is affected by family issues and gender.

The first factor which is creating inacceptance of the leader is her leadership style. The leadership style is the way in which a leader uses the degree of control she has over her employees. Leadership can be defined in terms of characteristics, success factor, and personality traits. Leadership types can be classified in a number of ways. The manager is an autocratic leader who imposes her decisions on others. This not only signifies a lack of trust in the capabilities of the employees but serves to make them resentful of her presence. She uses her position to force changes on the employees. Likert(1967) suggests that an autocratic leader gets faster results but that those results are of poorer quality, may be counterproductive, and breed hostility.

Employees have confidence in the manager as a potential
leader but are unsatisfied with her present leadership skills. The employees especially express dissatisfaction with the lack of job definitions. She is reluctant to create job definitions because as long as the office remains unorganized, she can prove that she is needed. She currently has no specific duties in the office and spends much of her time answering the phones and planning office parties. If the groups tasks were highly structured and the leader had a specific approach to management of the office, it would be difficult for them to challenge her decisions. However, since there is little structure, and much poor communication, the manager is considered at fault and her authority is constantly challenged by the employees.

Clear communication is another skill which she must improve upon. A lack of clear communication and lack of clarity regarding expectations has created an assumption that she does not possess the leadership skills that she needs. This leader has yet to develop an appreciation of the needs of her employees. The more that she continues to force herself onto the employees as their leader, the more the employees resent her. Difficulties in this leadership position stem from her lack of understanding regarding the type of leadership role which is necessary for this organization to function effectively. This organization needs a leader that is unobtrusive in the work of the employees and intervenes only when necessary. She continues to assert her ideas onto the group with little success. Because of her
unsuccessful attempts to change the organization by demanding respect, she has lost credibility with the employees as a competent leader.

The second topic I will discuss in relation to her leadership style is the way in which power is used. The technicians are the most satisfied with the leadership style displayed by the manager. This is most likely because this group has a great deal of job security due to their specialized training. The manager has little say in the work that they do or the policies they must follow. It is apparent that all employees are insecure about giving her the honest feedback that she needs in order to correct her negative communication behaviors. For example, she tells her employees to be candid with her and to feel free to discuss issues with her regarding the office. Yet at the same time she communicates her disapproval of criticism directed towards her and a hostile attitude towards those who disagree with her. The manager stated during the interview that employee performance is most important to her. However, her verbal and nonverbal cues tell employees that it is obedience, not performance, that she values in her employees.

The result of this is employees adapt their behavior and work patterns in order to accommodate her ideas of how things should be. The work that should be accomplished is often put aside so that employees may do what the manager has asked of them. This change in work procedures simply to accommodate her ideas is
causing a decline in efficiency.

The third leadership factor affecting this organization is the lack of understanding by the employees as to who is the leader. The first problem is the dual roles the manager must fulfill. She must serve to keep the employees satisfied, and her husband content that more money is being made due to her presence in the office. The physician wants change in the organization which he believes will create more productivity and increased revenue. The employees are resistant both to the change and the initiator of the change. The employees give great weight to the fact that the manager is married to the owner of the office and that she was hired because of this relationship.

Part of the reason for this lack of clarity regarding leadership is that the manager is caught in a conflict between pleasing her husband and pleasing the employees. There is a continuous distinction made by the employees that the manager is also the Doctor's wife. She is therefore excluded from many of the conversations between employees which might help strengthen her relationship with them. She is not considered a part of the group because of her relationship with the physician. This problem is due to actions by both the manager and the physician. The manager uses her status as the Doctor's wife excessively. She makes comments to employees such as "My husband won't be happy about this". These comments serve as scare tactics towards employee which weaken her position as an
effective leader.

The personality of the physician adds to conflicting role expectations. The physician is a very quiet person who is not interested in running a medical practice. His concern is with taking care of his patients and with the amount of money which is made at the end of each month. Therefore, he tells his wife to speak to the employees about problems he notices. By doing this, she is put in a position of criticizing employees for the physician. This gives the employees the impression that it is the physician to whom they are accountable rather than the office manager. The employees are not able to defend their actions to the physician. He makes many assumptions regarding their actions which may change if he spoke with them about the situation. This lack of defined leadership has left the employees with the impression that it is not the manager to whom they are truly accountable for their actions.

Another factor which contributes to the lack of understanding of employees as to who is the leader can be attributed to traditional role expectations in the medical setting. Employees discussed with me the problems of being caught between the authority of the doctor and the authority of the manager during the interview. While she has the authority to direct employees, her decisions are often overridden by the physician. Employees are constantly unclear as to who makes the decisions, who they should ask questions, and to whom they are ultimately
responsible. The tendency for the employees to regard the physician as the actual leader may be attributed to the fact that he is the only male in the organization. The actions of the manager may play a part in this tendency as well. Low self esteem is often attributed to the perception that one is not a good leader. The constant negative behavior on the part of the employees in the front office can be considered a factor in the perception of the manager as a poor leader. Because the manager asks her husband for help in making decisions, she sends a message to the employees regarding confidence in her own capabilities as the leader. Group member satisfaction is highest when the leader of the group is considered by herself and others to be competent. The conflicting role expectations, self esteem and gender issues are factor which face the manager are affecting her ability to lead this organization successfully.
CONCLUSION

This study has addressed communication climate and leadership issues in a small health care organization. What remains is an integration of research findings and a review of the research project itself. In the first section of this chapter I will discuss the communication problems identified in this particular organization. I will discuss decision making, change, clarity of information, and leadership as they related to the problems of cooperation and trust found in this organization. Second, I will discuss what I have learned about organizations from this research. Finally, I will identify strengths and weaknesses in this research and conclude with ideas for future study.

Decision Making

The decision making process that management and employees use affects both the atmosphere of trust and cooperation. There are positive and negative consequences for this organization that result from the way in which decisions are made. The positive consequences include first a greater knowledge by employees of the subject being discussed. Individuals may also be able to contribute otherwise unknown information to the group. Second,
group decision making allows for the employees to feel as they have control and power. Third, there is usually greater acceptance of a decision and better understanding if the decision is made by the group rather than by an individual.

There are some negative consequences to the way in which employees make group decisions in this organization as well. Due to established patterns of power and control during decision making in this organization, much hostility among co-workers has developed. There are many dimensions to this conflict among employees. To a great extent, this conflict is created by the struggle for each employee to gain some control over her work environment. Employees in this organization want to accomplish a task, but also value socialization and interpersonal relationships with co-workers. Decision making procedures have affected employee relations outside of group meeting time in three ways. First, the task of making a decision in which everyone agrees places individuals in a situation which there is social pressure to be accepted by others and to accept a certain alternative. When employees reach an agreement regarding a course of action, there is often a divergence in goals. Because of the struggle for dominance that occurs between the three work groups, individuals who do not participate in the process, such as the medical technicians, feel isolated from other group members and rarely are able to meet individual work goals.
Second, group members tend to dwell on the aggressiveness and hostility of other members rather than on their own behavior when making decisions during staff meetings. Employees tend to have exaggerated negative opinions of those individuals with whom they disagree.

The third negative consequence for employees is that the decision making process gives some employees more power than others. The decision making process puts employees in a situation in which some individuals are perceived as powerful who would not otherwise be considered to have much influence in the organization. Employees tend to accept solutions suggested by accepted members of the group, especially those who work in the front office, regardless of their agreement with that decision. The effect is dominance by a few individuals and the tendency to support popular individuals rather than the best solution. A lack of a fair decision making process has led to dissatisfaction among group members as employees who have power make efforts to keep that power by withholding information from others. Employees who do not have a great deal of power tend to distort information which would help others to work effectively.

In conclusion, problems of power distribution discourage members from becoming involved and being honest with each other. There is also social pressure to conform with the views of individuals who are perceived to have power. Therefore,
group decision making, as opposed to decisions made solely by the manager, has positive and negative consequences in this organization. However, the negative consequences make it difficult to recommend that this type of decision making continue. The employees should be able to make decisions which affect them, but changes in nature of the decision making process must occur if there is to be trust and openness among group members.

In order to resolve much of the conflict created by the decision making process in this organization, the manager could begin to make those decisions regarding office policies and procedures while giving the employees the opportunity for input before the decision is made. If the manager made some of the major decisions with the input of employees, she might better understand the possible impact of her decisions on the organization. This might also allow her to gain some control over the front office employees, decreasing their opportunity to manipulate both the manager and other employees regarding changes in the organization. Employees have been unwilling to discuss work related issues with the manager because she tends to avoid these discussions and because she becomes angry and defensive when the organization is criticized. By allowing the manager to hear suggestions from employees regarding an issue, trust of employees and their input regarding the organization may develop. However, because these problems,
giving more decision making authority to this manager should be carefully considered. To give more responsibility to a manager who has not demonstrated the ability to make competent decisions would not solve many of the problems facing this organization.

Given the alternatives, my recommendation is for the manager to learn how to become a more effective leader in this organization. To do this, she must be taught how to lead the employees as they make collective decisions. Her training must teach her how to deal with the dominant personalities within the organization and to encourage feedback from the less responsive employees. She should also be taught how to analyze the affects of decisions on the organization and when it is best for her to make the decisions on an individual basis. The manager may greatly benefit from a comprehensive course and individual training which will allow her to lead her employees more effectively.

This suggestion would also benefit the employees. Currently, individuals in each area tend to have similar goals. Employees are asked to make decisions which may or may not be compatible with personal or group goals. Incompatible goals is one reason for the conflict between employees. For example, those working in the front office consider the number of patients the doctor sees each day to be the most important matter. Those working in the back office are much more
concerned with how many of those patients were able to pay the doctor. Issues such as this tend to become personalized over a period of time. New employees are taught by group members about existing conflicts. This serves to ensure that past conflicts and conflicting goals remains the focus of intergroup relations. Also, because the front office employees set the agenda and lead the meetings during which decisions are made, there is an uneven amount of power among employees. This influences how employees relate to each other outside of group meeting time.

These are issues which should be addressed by a neutral leader during group decision making. A manager trained in conflict management, group decision making, and issues of power and control among groups would be able to effectively allow the group to reach a consensus in a manner that allows participation and expression of needs from all employees.

Leadership

The leadership style displayed in this organization also warrants review. This includes a discussion of role conflict, clear communication and management feedback as they affect the communication climate of this case. Leadership style has a significant impact on the relationship between employees and
group performance in this organization. Leadership traits which are essential for group productivity in this organization fall under the heading of communication competencies such as directness, effective decision making procedures, group conflict management skills, and social sensitivity. These are significant because without trust, there would be little respect for the leader and little willingness to follow her. The importance of employee approval of the leader becomes relevant when one takes into account the potential power that employees have in maintaining or destroying the success of this organization. For example, the decisions which are made by the employees in the manager's absence are usually not in the best interest of the organization. Employees avoid making decisions due to fear of reprisal from the manager regarding a decision. Because of the leadership style of the manager, the employees tend to avoid risky decisions. This leaves little accomplished when the manager is away from the office. There are three issues regarding the leadership of this organization which have an impact on the amount of trust and cooperation between the manager and the employees. The first is the manager's credibility as it is affected by her personal ties to the organization. The second is her lack of clarity regarding policies and change. The third is consistency when rewarding employees.
Credibility

The manager's personal ties with the organization negatively affects the way she responds the employees and lessens her credibility as a leader. The manager in this organization has financial ties to the business and she expects a great deal from employees. The manager's reluctance to discuss criticisms of her decisions, makes employees cautious about giving direct and honest feedback. Employees perceive the manager as unwilling to discuss work related issues which are negative.

The extent to which the manager is willing to discuss work related problems may be linked to her relationship with the physician. Therefore, face saving may be an issue for the manager. By making it difficult for employees to discuss work related problems, it is possible for the manager to give the appearance that there are few problems in this organization. The manager must often deal with conflicting agendas due to her role as wife and her role as the manager. If she listened to employees and took their criticisms and comments seriously, she would have to make a great deal of change in the organization regarding policies and procedures. In order to do this, she must to admit to her husband that there are problems in the organization and admit some of the responsibility.
Less avoidance of issues may to remedy her lack of credibility. The manager should acknowledge that her communication, or absence of direct communication, greatly affects the perceptions that others have of her as the manager. The manager should also incorporate behaviors which serve to encourage feedback and solicit participation from employees. These are skills which the manager must develop in order to be a competent leader.

Another issue which is related to credibility is the knowledge of the manager. The organization would benefit if the manager was as knowledgeable about the field of health care as her employees. Her lack of knowledge undermines her credibility as a leader. Management decision making must include an understanding of the effects of each decision on employees. This will not only give her the ability to be critical of her employee's performance, it will allow her to offer suggestions and praise as well. Because the manager of this organization is not familiar with the work of many of her employees, she is unaware of their level of performance. She only has monthly income as a measurement of work. She relies on monthly collections as a measure of work quality rather than a measure of work volume. A basic understanding of each employee's work would lead to increased empathy for employees.
A third issue which affects the manager's credibility is the tendency for employees to respond to the doctor of this organization as the leader. Health care organizations often have multiple sources of authority. The problem is compounded by the fact that the manager is insecure with her decisions and often asked for the doctor's advise in the presence of the employees. It was also compounded by the lack of leadership skills displayed by this manager and her relationship with the doctor. While multiple sources of authority may be an issue in other medical organizations as well, the extent to which it becomes a problem depends on the willingness for the doctor to allow the manager to become the leader and the leadership skills of the manager. The manager's decisions may be taken more seriously if they are not ultimately made by the doctor.

Clear Communication

Many of the problems in this organization reflect a lack of clear, direct communication from the manager regarding reasons for rewards and reasons for change. A lack of clear communication from management has promoted a lack of cooperation between employees in this organization. If there is trust and cooperation among employees, employees may
communicate more frequently, openly and directly.

The problems regarding lack of information about the reward system in this organization is fundamentally a communication problem. If employees know what is expected of them, it is possible for them to excel. Not only are unclear performance standards of the manager likely the cause of competition among employees for rewards, it causes communication distortion on the part of employees.

It is in the interest of management to have clearly defined rules and policies. Unclear standards has created hostility and a lack of trust towards management as employees do not know what is expected of them or what to expect from management. Because of this, they tend to be ambiguous about any information which may be viewed by others as a negative reflection of their work. In order to resolve this problem, it is essential that communication not be hindered as it is one of the few means that management has for employee feedback.

Organizational change illustrates further communication problems in the health care organization. Another factor which has led to a lack of cooperation among members of this organization is the way in which change has been initiated. The balance of work is essential to the operation of this organization. When one procedure is changed, everything is affected. The manager seems more concerned with her
authority to create changes than with the affects of those changes. In a complex organization, an emphasis on authority simply leads to resistance. Because the manager appears unaware of the complexity of the organization, she has attempted to promote change quickly. This has led to employee resentment of her decisions and the three groups of employees compete in order to resist change in their part of the office. The employee's resistance to change may stem from the complexity of the medical organization and the amount of information employees must process on a daily basis. Because the work of individuals in the medical field is often specialized, they may have assumed roles in the organization over time. Employees in this organization tend to be particularly resistant to change because the changes make their work more difficult and because they are not included in the decision to make changes.

The manager of this organization made changes expecting quick results. An effective way of promoting change in this organization would be to ask the employees what they think needs improvement. Employee input before changes were initiated would have led to greater improvements. For example, if management had discussed with employees the need for weekend work, the employees may have had suggestions such as working earlier or later in the day. Or they might have suggested an alternating schedule so that each employee worked
one weekend a month. Whatever the decision, the employees would have felt that they were a part of it and that their needs had been noticed. Because the employees were very affected by this change and were not included in decision, they tend to distrust the initiator of that change, the manager.

Fundamental changes which take place must first begin with competent communication among employees and management. Change should begin with clear goals and a clear explanation of the desired changes. This will create more security among employees as they then know what is expected of them and how each change will effect them. It is essential that a new manager gain acceptance within the organization before making changes. Once she has been accepted, employees should be included in discussions of change and the manager should rely heavily on employee feedback before implementing changes.

**Consistency**

This organization lacks strong leadership in the area of consistency regarding employee rewards. A lack of formal rules consistently applied leads to ambiguity regarding standards for rewards and discipline within the organization. It is essential that employees have specific standards of behavior on which to
based their performance. Employees have little confidence in
decisions they make when the manager is away. This lack of
confidence is caused by a lack of trust in the manager's
reactions to decisions made in her absence. Management's
inconsistent punishments for mistakes made by employees has
led to a lack of productivity when the manager is absent. This
creates a lack of trust and self esteem as employees do not
know when they will be rewarded or disciplined for their
actions.

The manager should consider three changes regarding
rewards in the organization. First, she could make efforts to
reward employees for quality care and patient satisfaction
instead of rewarding them for increased profits. Second,
employees should be told of the manager's perception of their
performance. A lack of understanding of the part of employees
has led to competition between employees for recognition. Rules
and policies are a common means for informing employees what
is expected on them. Because rules and policies specify actions
which should be taken, they should be clear and consistently
applied. Feedback from management regarding work
performance will increase both trust and self esteem of
employees and management. Third, rewards should be tailored
to meet employee needs. This might serve as an incentive for
employees.

Consistency in rewards and discipline will lead to increased
respect for management. More consistency from the manager could also lead to a sense of control and security for employees. Because of the nature of this organization, the positive or negative performance of one individual is often dependent on the work of others. The manager might consider the consequences of rewarding employee too often as well as the value employees place on those rewards. If the rewards are not perceived as equitable by all employees, there is a great likelihood that performance may suffer.

Climate

As discussed in relation to communication climate, the quality of communication may be influenced by who works with whom over a period of time on a daily basis. This health care organization has a significant amount of divergence in the incomes and education of their employees and those who are similar tend to work together most often. Because of this, health care leaders should be aware of the extent to which competition between groups may develop. In this organization, workers became polarized over decision making issues and in order to gain control over changes which were taking place. Organizational task assignments often serve to tell employees who is superior and power may be attributed to these
employees. For example, in the case of this organization, those who work in the front office are perceived to have a great deal of power because they organize the employee meetings and therefore set the agenda. They are also in charge of scheduling and have an ability to make other employees work more or less hours. This could effect the flow of communication between employees as they try to gain power and influence through the manipulation of information. Management should be aware of power and control issues among groups of employees and make efforts minimize this problem by allowing each employee the opportunity for input on an individual basis. Rather than promote the formation of groups of employees, the office setting should be structured so that there is as much contact between all employees as possible.

As noted in the literature review, health care organizations research tends to emphasize physician and patient communication rather than communication between organization members. This is due to the importance of the patient as a client to the organization's success. In this organization, the patient seems valued only in his or her ability to pay for services and employees valued to extent the can produce and collect revenue. Profits are the motivating factor for this organization. However, in order to ensure these profits, communication between staff members must be clear and efficient. Information coordination is essential to a health care
organization due to the amount of information received and sent on a daily basis. Employees must be given feedback regarding performance in order to identify gaps in work performance and promote changes. Since emphasis is put neither of the patient or on clear communication, profits have declined in this organization.

Personal Insights

I have learned some things about organizations and about the methodology that I chose. The way in which group members and leaders make decisions can have a great impact on the productivity of that organization. The environment in which a manager works can have a great impact on perceptions of her effectiveness as a leader. This view is different from my assumption entering this research that communication difficulties can be attributed only to the manager's leadership style.

I also discovered the importance of tailoring an organizational reward system to meet the needs of the employees. In many cases, attention and verbal approval may be an appropriate method of motivating employees. However, I found that monetary rewards may also served this function. Therefore, it is important for the manager to understand that a
reward system will only be affective if employees are given rewards which are valuable to them. Not only is the type of reward important, but the reason for the reward should be examined closely by leaders. The manager should observe and understand the causes of poor performance and superior achievement in order to determine if there are factors which are not personally related which may contribute to a change in productivity levels.

I learned some interesting things regarding the methodology chosen as well. Using a multiple method approach allowed me to gather information from individuals in both verbal and written form. While the interviews were valuable in allowing me to talk with each employee, employees seemed reluctant to discuss many issues. Therefore, the interview was not the most valuable tool. The questionnaire allowed a comparison of responses among groups of employees. By comparing group responses, I better understood attitudes of each employee group. Through observation, information was obtained from employees which was not filtered. The information gathered through observations has been most valuable to my understanding of this organization. This is because data was gathered that would not have otherwise been reported. It also gave me an opportunity to characterize the quality of work life that employees experience. Finally, this method was most useful in that it helped to explain inconsistencies in data
gathered previously. I would recommend a researcher observe employees with more frequency than I did. Also, a change the nature of the interview guide to allow for more flexibility in the responses of the employees is recommended.

Research Limitations

This research provides some valuable insights into the understanding of communication in a small health care organization. However, there are some limitations which should be addressed. The first is the questionnaire used. This instrument provides for Likert scale responses ranging from agree to disagree on a scale of one to five with no response available for a neutral answer. The intention in omitting a neutral response were to force employees to reveal information which they may be reluctant to share. However, it may have forced responses which may not have been representative of attitudes and feelings. A second limitation is in the self reporting which I relied on for much of my data. Because both the questionnaire and the interview rely on self reporting, a socially desired response may have been given. This is especially true of the questionnaire as employees responded to a list of prearranged items. A third limitation to the data
gathered stems from my observations. Situations observed may not occur with the frequency that I assume. The constantly changing environment makes it difficult to make generalizations about any organization. The amount of time spent observing this organization could have an impact on the reliability of my findings. A fourth limitation is that external elements which may affect the internal communication process was not addressed. It is possible that some of the communication problems could be a product of poor communication from other sources. The medical practice relies on timely and accurate information from insurance companies, hospitals and other medical organizations. Issues surrounding productivity, upward communication distortion, and management decision making could consequently be impacted by communication from other sources. A fifth limitation is the awareness of the employees that they were being studied. This awareness is also affected by their knowledge of my friendship with the physician and the manager. While this relationship can be viewed as a hindrance, it can also be considered a strength of this research. Because of our friendship, complete access to the organization was given. Unannounced visits and access to all employee records and all written communications was allowed. There were no limitations placed on me. This enabled me to understand issues in greater detail than would have been otherwise possible.
Ideas For Future Research

There are a number of issues which I have found to affect the communication of organizations which deserve further research. The first of these is the extent to which initial impressions of a leader by employees affects the perceived quality of leadership. This would be interesting in that much of the employee's resentment and hostility towards the manager might stem from impressions they had of her before they met her. The second issue is the extent to which the motivation of employees affects the communication climate. Unconscious motivations, such as habits which employees are not aware of, may be a factor contributing to the success or failure of a business. The third issue is the extent to which personality affects defensiveness in employees. Defensive behavior among employees can be related to both self esteem and trust in this organization. It would be interesting to know if this defensiveness can be attributed to personality rather than intergroup conflict. The fourth issue is how employees use ambiguity in their messages as a tool. Vagueness and ambiguity are a valuable method for employees when covering up mistakes. This was especially useful in this organization as the manager seems unaware of the exact nature of each employee's work. The fifth recommendation for future research is perhaps an
identification of those gender differences which may affect the communication climate. While this study may provide some insights into communication in a health care organization, there are many communication factors influencing the health care organization which deserve further research.


Redding, W. Communication Within the Organization. Purdue University 1972.


APPENDIX
Descriptive Framework #1: Hymes

Source:


Examples of Studies Using the Framework:


Purpose and Components of the Framework:

Hymes' framework was developed to describe any instance of naturally occurring speech to discover the rules for speaking (the ways in which speakers associate particular modes of speaking, topics or message forms, with particular settings and activities). The goal is to describe communicative competence in a speech community.

Scene - the physical setting where talk occurs and the cultural definition of the scene

Participants - the actors in the scene for talk and their role relationships.

Ends - the purpose(s), outcomes, and goals of the talk.

Act Sequence - the relationship between what is said and how it is said.

Key - the tone, manner, or spirit in which the talk occurs.

Instrumentalities - the particular channel, language, dialect or speech variety in which the talk occurs.

Norms - the normative aspect of the interaction among the participants and the normative aspect of the interpretation of the talk.

Genre - the cultural category of talk.

(English mnemonic SPEAKING; French mnemonic PARLANT : participants, raison, (resultat), locale, agents (instrumentalities), normes, ton (key), types (genres))
Time: _______

Participants: ________________________________

Scene: ____________________________________

Key: ______________________________________

Act Sequence: __________________________________

Norms: ______________________________________

Ends: _______________________________________

Instrumentalities: ____________________________
This questionnaire examines your perception of the effectiveness of your work group. The questionnaire deals with seven parts of the communication process: planning, problem solving, use of resources, responsibility, motivation, communication, and climate. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

Planning

1. Our group goals are clearly defined.  
2. There is a high degree of commitment toward group goals.  
4. The group does advanced planning to avoid a crisis like situation.  
5. Our goals are well coordinated with other associated work groups and with higher organizational goals.  
6. Management asks for my ideas about better planning.  
7. When procedural changes are made or new equipment is placed in operation, my group is properly trained and prepared.  
8. Management provides adequate staffing.

Disagree  Agree
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5
1 2 4 4 5

Problem Solving

9. My group presents several options before proposing a solution to a problem.  

1 2 3 4 5
10. In resolving group problems, each member of our group accepts a responsibility and constructively works towards resolution.

11. We quickly resolve operational problems so that personal conflict does not build up.

12. There is a general satisfaction concerning the quality of operational decisions that affect our group.

13. Management accepts the consequences of a wrong decision and does not pass the blame to subordinates.

14. If I have trouble in my job I can count on my superior to be reasonable and give necessary assistance.

Use of Resources

15. Group members utilize the skills of other members.

16. There is adequate time and money to meet important goals.

17. The group displays a high level of professional skill required for the job.

18. Our group meetings are action oriented and productive.

19. Members are efficient in how they spend their time.

20. My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.

21. People who get ahead in this organization do so because of their performance.

22. When needed we receive training in a timely manner.
Responsibility

23. Members of my group will go out of their way to help other members. 1 2 3 4 5
24. Members know each other's assignments and responsibilities. 1 2 3 4 5
25. Members of my group follow through on their assignments. 1 2 3 4 5
26. My job gives me the chance to learn new skills and techniques. 1 2 3 4 5
27. My job allows me to identify and solve problems on my own. 1 2 3 4 5
28. Through discussion with management I can influence the decisions that affect my job. 1 2 3 4 5
29. My group actively looks for better ways to get the job done. 1 2 3 4 5
30. My group accepts the consequences when we make the wrong decision. 1 2 3 4 5
31. I have a personal sense of responsibility to help the office be profitable. 1 2 3 4 5

Motivation

32. We have a record of success that provides a sense of pride. 1 2 3 4 5
33. There is a general group satisfaction about our contribution to the survival and future success of the organization. 1 2 3 4 5
34. Employee benefits are good. 1 2 3 4 5
35. Management consistently rewards those who show high performance. 1 2 3 4 5
36. I am making progress towards my career goals.
37. What happens in the office is important to me.
38. I take personal pride in doing my job well.

Communications

39. My group enjoys an open, honest, and direct style of communication.
40. Disagreements are handled constructively and we learn from the discussion.
41. Members of my group obtain sufficient information to carry out their responsibilities.
42. Management keeps me informed of proposed solutions to problems existing at my level.
43. My supervisor is aware of problems existing at my level.
44. Management gives credit and recognition to people who do a good job.
45. I clearly understand the benefits available to me.

Climate

46. Members of my group have a high degree of respect for the competence and ability of the other members.
47. My immediate supervisor treats everyone fairly.
48. I can honestly disagree with management without fear of reprisal.
49. Members of my work group trust each other.

50. I feel that management will fairly represent my interests on issues concerned with pay and working conditions.
SUPPPORTIVENESS

1. How comfortable do you feel to discuss problems with your manager?
2. Do you feel your manager understands your work problems?
3. Does your manager encourage you to let her know when there are problems at work?
4. Does your manager express her confidences in your ability to perform? How?
5. Does your manager listen to you?
6. Do you feel your co-workers support you in your job related duties when it is necessary?
7. Do you know each other's general job duties?
8. Are you supported by your work group? To what extent?

OPENESS AND CANDOR

1. Does your manager encourage you to bring information to her even if the news is bad?
2. Is your manager willing to give a fair hearing to your opinions regarding office procedures or work related issues?
3. Do you feel comfortable to say what you are really thinking to her?
4. To what extent is your manager candid with you regarding your performance at work?
5. Are you satisfied with your manager and co-workers as sources of job related information?
6. Is an adequate amount of information received for you to do your job well?
7. Is the written communication you receive useful?
8. What changes would you like to see in this office in regards to both written and verbal communication?
9. What are the major communication strengths of this office?
10. What are the major weaknesses?

DECISION MAKING

1. To what extent are you asked about decisions which affect you?
2. Are decisions which affect the group usually made with most people in agreement?
3. How involved are you in making decisions which affect you?
MANAGER INTERVIEW

1. Do you help your employees understand what is expected of them? How?
2. How do you make sure everyone has received accurate information regarding a certain subject or issue?
3. Do you feel your employees have a personal commitment to achieve office goals?
4. Do you feel you help your employees solve personal problems at work?
5. Do you trust the judgement of your employees?
6. Do you encourage your employees to take increased responsibility?
7. Do your employees see the rewards related to excellent experience?
8. How do you encourage mutual understanding and support among your employees?
9. Describe the general job duties of each employee?
10. What are the communication strengths of this office?
11. What are the communication weaknesses of this office?
12. To what extent do you feel the written communication you send is valuable?
13. What could you do to increase accurate communication among employees?
14. When does conflict occur among employees and why?
15. Do you inform your employees if they have done a good or poor job of meeting organizational goals? How?