

Managerial Behaviors and the Impact on Employee Job Satisfaction  
of Telecommuters

by

Debra Stevens

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of  
Wilmington University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Business Administration

Wilmington University

November 2020

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Debra Stevens

I certify that I have read this dissertation and that in my opinion it meets the academic and professional standards required by Wilmington University as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

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## Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation to my family who has been supportive of me through this journey. They showed the same excitement as me and felt the pressure with me all while encouraging me to continue working toward my goal. My husband Peter, children Tyler and Sophia, and my parents Charles and the late Ella. Thank you and I love you very much.

## Acknowledgements

I cannot thank my committee members, Dr. Lynda Fuller and Dr. Amy Danley, enough for their knowledge, support, and patience as I worked through the process of this study. They helped me through this process, and I learned so much about preparing for research and carrying the knowledge through to execution and interpreting the results. I will be forever grateful to them.

I would also like to thank three other members of the faculty that were responsive in helping me as I took on the task of creating my own survey instrument. Their expertise in content helped me create a reliable instrument for my study. They are Dr. Robin Weinstein, Dr. Patricia Deplasco, and Dr. Nancy Doody.

Finally, I would like to thank all the members of the DBA program administrative staff and faculty for their knowledge, work, and support.

## Abstract

Employee job satisfaction is imperative to any organization as it directly impacts customer satisfaction and an organization's overall costs relative to employee productivity and turnover. This research examined the influence of managerial communications, coaching, and empowerment on employee satisfaction with employees that telecommute. Telecommuting refers to working outside the traditional business structure using modern technologies. The literature review investigated four grounded management theories (LMX, High-Involvement Work Processes, Path-Goal Theory, and Transformational Leadership) and past research studies, identifying three main factors influencing job satisfaction which were communication, coaching, and empowerment. This quantitative study examined the impact an employee's direct manager has on their job satisfaction through effective communication, coaching, and empowerment. The population was 183 participants who were 18 years of age or older, worked full-time, were based in the United States, and telecommuted at least two days per week. The results of the study showed a significant relationship between employee job satisfaction, and the direct manager's behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment with the employee. Of the three behaviors, manager communication had the greatest impact on employee job satisfaction. These findings were similar to other research studies and grounded theory. Recommendations for managers' actions in a telecommuting environment are awareness of how employees process communication, frequently discuss areas of work improvements, allow decision making, and ask employees' feedback. Future research may include researching a specific industry, a longitudinal study, using manager/employee dyads, and telecommuting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The work environment has changed over the last 10 – 20 years, especially with respect to technological advances and the ability to perform many jobs without entering a traditional work setting. In the beginning, telecommuting, or jobs performed outside the office, relied on the use of express mail, typewriters, and phone calls. With advances in technology, workers now have available phones, computers, internet, videoconferencing, email, etc. (Wilkie, 2015). As a result, an increasing number of jobs have the ability to be performed outside the traditional work setting as more immediate support and resources are available (Vega et al., 2015).

As the environment of work changes, more flexible work arrangements become available to both companies and employees. Technology is changing the landscape of work with many different avenues of communication are available for employees to complete the duties of their jobs. This flexibility and interconnectivity allow employees to live anywhere and work for companies located anywhere while performing activities from a place of their choosing (Smith et al., 2018). The technology available to employees in a telecommuting arrangement, which allows them to work globally (Yadav et al., 2016), may present other challenges. A conclusion can be drawn that companies and managers must possess the ability to manage employees in this environment. The arrangement may present managers with the challenge of effectively managing employees with whom they may have little contact or interaction. Additionally, the interactions are through the use of technology-based communications instead of face-to-face. It is important managers are able effectively to manage employees in this

environment as a direct relationship to an organization's bottom line exists through employee satisfaction and morale (Wu et al., 2017).

In any working arrangement, job satisfaction of employees is important for the overall success of both the organization and the employee. There are many factors that contribute to employee job satisfaction, which are controllable, and others are not. Managers are at the forefront and control some aspects of employee job satisfaction. The aspects relating to the manager and employee relationship, as it pertains to communicating, coaching, and empowering employees when the employee is working in a telecommuting arrangement, was the focus of this study.

The employees involved in this study worked for various companies and industries in a telecommuting work arrangement. No individual company or industry was studied, just employees who telecommute. The productivity of employees and the clients they serve are important for any company regardless of the product produced or service provided. Regardless of a company's mission to be employee or customer-focused, they must strive to provide employees support and training to meet readily the needs of the clients. The continued existence and growth of a company relies on consistent employee productivity in which employee satisfaction affects all areas of business and its operations.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is the overall feeling and perception an individual has toward the environment, management, duties, and responsibilities for the job in which they are employed (Sangeetha & Kumar, 2016). Although the word satisfaction suggests a favorable outlook, it must be noted that there are different degrees of satisfaction ranging

from low to high. Additionally, an employee may have a high degree of satisfaction with the overall environment or benefits of the job but a low degree of satisfaction with the duties or the relationship with the manager. For this research study, unless a level of satisfaction is stated as low or high, it was assumed satisfaction is being used as a positive or favorable outlook pertaining to the job responsibilities of the employee.

A high degree of job satisfaction exists when an employee has feelings of fulfillment and accomplishment or meaning toward the overall circumstances surrounding the aspects of their job (Vlachos et al., 2012). Many aspects to a job contribute to the overall feeling of satisfaction experienced by an employee. Job satisfaction research indicates environment, manager relationship (Wu et al., 2017), communication, trust (Allen et al., 2015), duties of the job, training, meaningful assignments, and inclusion in decisions are aspects contributing to overall job satisfaction (Min et al., 2016).

Employees with higher levels of job satisfaction are more fulfilled and have a lower tendency to quit (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). Additionally, satisfied employees have a higher tendency to be self-motivated and proactively to engage in activities to improve productivity or that are beneficial for the company (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014).

Many factors influence an employee on the job. An employee experiencing low employee job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction can be the result of negative feelings pertaining to the overall tasks or outcome of the job, feeling of the unimportance of responsibilities, the relationship with the manager and/or peers (Allen et al., 2015), lack of resources (i.e., proper training or tools) effectively to perform the job, or stress (Moen et al., 2016). When an employee is experiencing low satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it may

have a negative impact on the employee's productivity and even cause task avoidance (Choi & Ha, 2018), which directly impacts the overall productivity of the company.

Research in the area of employee satisfaction dates back for decades concluding that employee satisfaction at work has been and continues to be an area of interest for organizations. Many questions have been topics of research around employee satisfaction pertaining to whether employees were satisfied, what factors motivate satisfaction, and what the costs are associated with satisfaction versus dissatisfaction (Ahmadi et al., 1986; Arons, 2010; Bengston & Shields, 1985; Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Hart, 2005; Koys, 2001; Vecchio & Norris, 1996;).

There is a direct link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Satisfied employees tend to offer higher quality service to customers resulting in higher customer satisfaction (Conway & Briner, 2015). Customers are the reason for the existence of any company; therefore, it is of great importance to understand the factors that influence employees to perform well on the job. It is equally important to understand the changing landscape of the working environment and the main contributors toward achieving employee satisfaction from the aspect of the impact of the manager.

Job satisfaction and the factors affecting job satisfaction are major contributors to overall job performance. The level of job performance companies realize from employees plays a major role in the overall success of the company as it directly affects the company's level of success (Kontoghiorghes, 2016).

There are numerous reasons employees perform the way they do. Through research, it is evident there is not only one aspect that a manager can consider that will allow the manager to achieve complete satisfactory job performance from all employees.



It is clear a manager must tap into what aspects of the job and relationship that will assist in achieving higher job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is something the manager may play a role in creating for the employee. In doing so, there are several financial benefits for the organization (Torten et al., 2016).

Satisfied employees are motivated to offer customers a better experience, in turn, creating more loyal customers and customers that are more likely to continue doing business with the company. This has a direct effect on productivity and customer retention, thereby improving the finances for the organization (Conway & Briner, 2015) and (Wu et al., 2017). Company culture and human resource practices contribute to job satisfaction (Kontoghiorghes, 2016), which then, in turn, impact customer satisfaction and overall firm performance.

Employee retention is an area that has a major impact on costs associated with training, recruiting, and overtime. There is a direct relationship between an employee satisfied with their position and the intention of that employee to stay with the company. “Employees, who perceive their jobs to be significant and worthwhile, feel higher levels of work satisfaction” (Sinha, 2017, p. 48). Managers can take actions to enhance employee job satisfaction, thereby achieving employee commitment to reduce turnover (Raina & Roebuck, 2016).

Where employee retention breaks in on the bottom line can be unclear to some managers and organizations. Some companies operate under the thought of weeding out those that are not doing a job well or are not productive and choose to replace that employee. The other alternative is the employee becomes frustrated with a lack of perceived support and leaves on their own. However, it is more expensive to recruit and

train new employees than it is to retrain or offer additional support. In addition, it has been found that an employee with whom a company provides additional support and training gains a more motivated employee and cohesive workforce (Cloutier et al., 2015).

Cloutier et al. (2015) found the following as a result of a study completed on the

*Importance for Developing Strategies for Employee Retention:*

When all these goals ‘become a manager’s priority, they create job satisfaction and a positive work environment. It will also increase employee retention and lead to accomplishing organizational goals such as gaining competitive edge and contributing to increased profits.’ (p. 125)

Employee job satisfaction is one of the most important factors to businesses as it allows the business “to create a highly talented, motivated, and committed workforce, which in turn will constitute a source of hard to replicate competitive advantage” (Kontoghiorghes, 2016, p. 1838). Concluding that in order to have customer satisfaction, productivity, and other satisfied employees, there must be a focus on creating an environment where an employee is satisfied with his or her work life.

### **Communication, Coaching, Empowerment**

The ideas surrounding job satisfaction are communication, coaching, and empowerment from the manager as part of the overall employee/manager relationship. When the employee/manager relationship is combined with proper communication, coaching, and empowerment, the relationship tends to be of higher quality than a relationship without these aspects. These relationships provide more open communication, which benefits relationships in other areas of the business, including customers, which impacts financial outcomes (Wu et al., 2017). For this study, the focus

was on manager communications, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors.

### **Communication**

Communication is key to building the manager and employee relationship on the job and is directly linked to employee job satisfaction (Sniderman et al., 2016).

Communication processes that are strong and more open tend to lead to stronger, more trusting relationships and improving job satisfaction. Weaker communication with less openness tends to have a negative impact on job satisfaction. The result of failure to communicate effectively results in an unhealthy work environment and may impact interaction, listening, and speaking sufficiently and effectively with the workforce. This, in turn, negatively impacts organizational performance (Cloutier et al., 2015).

### **Coaching**

The link between employee job satisfaction and turnover impacts training resources, recruiting efforts, and reduced productivity, which, in turn, directly impacts a company's financial productivity. Developmental training is a way for businesses to aid employee job satisfaction and is less costly to business operations (Ali et al., 2018). This sort of training may be through formal organizational training or through communication and coaching, as provided by the manager. Since the purpose of this study was communication and coaching from the manager, it must be noted that the manager may be in control of the information pertaining to formal organizational training and is responsible for the communication of such opportunities.

More responsibility is falling on managers to coach employees on the job and seek out opportunities for other training and coaching to aid employees in solidifying and

gaining skills to perform the responsibilities of the job. Coaching by managers has become a way of professional life as managers strive to guide employees in processes and provide the knowledge needed to perform on the job (Ali et al., 2018).

As a coach, the manager must see the potential of the employee and what they can accomplish and evolve into as a productive employee. The key mission a coach has is guiding employees so they can take advantage of their hidden talents and skills and create an environment that drives employees to evolve into better and more successful people (Cajnko et al., 2014).

Coaching not only provides developmental feedback that improves performance, but it can also accentuate self-confidence. By coaching employees to gain new skills or improve existing ones, managers are improving the work environment for employees. Additionally, employees have shown to have higher creative tendencies when provided with development activities. This impacts employee job satisfaction and performance (Min et al., 2016).

### **Empowerment**

When an employee has the skills to perform a job, received the proper coaching to acclimate themselves to the job and the company, and is receiving the necessary communication effectively to perform the duties of their job, then the manager must trust the employee to make decisions as they carry out the responsibilities. The manager must then empower the employee to perform. Empowerment is when an employee perceives meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact for the work or job they are responsible for in an organization (Sinha, 2017). Employees have a need to know that their work is meaningful in that the job being done holds importance to the company as

an integral part of operations. In performing the job, it is important employees have a choice and control to make decisions resulting from the outcome(s) of the work they are performing. Additionally, the importance placed on the work and decisions they have made with respect to the overall impact it has on the organization and receive recognition for those decisions and the value created.

Responsibility for actions and outcomes is important for employees to find and keep satisfaction with respect to their jobs. A sense of responsibility and motivation may be achieved when an employee is trusted to do the job and make decisions.

Empowerment is crucial for an organization to engage in with employees as it may ensure the employee is satisfied with their job leading to greater motivation (Sergio & Rylova, 2018). This, in turn, has an impact on the retention of the employee.

The manager has a responsibility to the employee not only to communicate and provide coaching but also to then allow the employee room to practice. By doing so, the manager is stepping back from coaching to allow the employee to act and make decisions based on the coaching provided. This is when communication and coaching lead to the outcome of empowerment.

An organization and its managers have a responsibility to identify, develop, and engage in processes and techniques to aid the success of the organization. Employees serve as human capital to organizations, and by engaging in proper communication, coaching, and empowerment techniques to build higher-quality relationships, the overall result will be higher employee job satisfaction. This is a direct link to customer satisfaction and overall improvement of company operations in both processes and financially.

Awareness of and learning more about the methods used to gain and build employee satisfaction is crucial to managers and organizations. This study is of great importance to companies and academically as it researched employee job satisfaction in a growing group of employees who telecommute and the importance of managerial actions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is much research regarding flexible work arrangements and telecommuting as they relate to job satisfaction. However, little research has been done regarding the components of satisfaction as it relates to the manager/employee relationship in a telecommuting arrangement. Employee job satisfaction is imperative for organizational success; therefore, it is important to gain an understanding of how the manager impacts employee job satisfaction by communicating, coaching, and empowering employees who telecommute.

### **Purpose**

This study was intended to identify the needs of telecommuting employees with respect to communication, coaching, and empowerment from their direct manager and the impact of these behaviors on overall employee job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction is important for any job completed for any organization. Increased job satisfaction results in increased customer satisfaction (Conway & Briner, 2015) and, in turn, overall increased productivity (Choi & Ha, 2018).

The information gained from the study may be utilized by companies as a basis of understanding the impact that the managerial behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment have on job satisfaction as they consider or maintain current telecommuting arrangements. A company can better identify steps toward improving business operations and the level of attention needed pertaining to managerial behaviors.

This includes developing plans and ensuring processes and behaviors are introduced to maximize employee satisfaction and productivity.

The results of the study may benefit in education as current and future managers prepare for managing employees in non-traditional work environments. The importance of communication, coaching, and empowerment skills to manage employees in telecommuting arrangements may be demonstrated in the learning environment.

Building positive relationships is key in developing and maintaining employee job satisfaction. As companies consider this alternative work arrangement, it is imperative managers are trained to build strong relationships with employees regardless of their working environment. Current and future managers must understand and develop the skills to build effective, positive relationships.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

#### **Research Question Number One (RQ1)**

What is the relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?

#### **Hypothesis One (H1)**

Communication from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction.

#### **Null Hypothesis One (H1<sub>0</sub>)**

There is no relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

#### **Research Question Number Two (RQ2)**

What is the relationship between coaching from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?

**Hypothesis Two (H2)**

Coaching from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction.

**Null Hypothesis Two (H2<sub>0</sub>)**

There is no relationship between coaching from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

**Research Question Number Three (RQ3)**

What is the relationship between empowerment from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?

**Hypothesis Three (H3)**

Empowerment from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction.

**Null Hypothesis Three (H3<sub>0</sub>)**

There is no relationship between empowerment from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

**Definition of Terms**

***Alternative/Flexible work arrangement*** - For this study, this term is used synonymously for telecommuting as telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement.

***Coaching*** - Coaching is the process of a manager, supervisor, mentor, or peer reviewing and observing the productive output and/or work processes of another employee to provide feedback and share techniques with the employee to enable that



employee to make modifications to improve, change, or enhance productivity (Cloutier et al., 2015).

**Communication** - The process by which an organization, manager, and employee engage in sharing information pertinent to the resources required of an employee to perform effectively the duties of their job or the information required by the company from employees to effectively manage the business operations in pursuit of the company goals (Arons, 2010). Communication may be presented in many forms. Formal line is communication through company meetings, email, or other means the company deems necessary for documentation of processes. Informal lines of communication may be through side conversations or dialogues that take place while performing business operations. This also includes communication in relating to the employee personally (Juneia, 2020).

**Empowerment** - Employees are empowered when they are given tools, motivation, encouragement, and opportunities to make decisions, attempt new techniques, and freely share knowledge and ideas while working toward a common goal and in the benefit of the work team and organization. It is common to have empowerment referred to as the employee having the authority to make decisions (Sinha, 2017).

**Job satisfaction** - The extent to which a person experiences a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences (Vlachos et al., 2012). Note, for the purpose of this study, the focus was on job satisfaction as it relates to the impact of the relationship developed by the employee's manager through communication, coaching, and empowerment.

**Telecommuting** - An employee engaging in telecommuting is working from a location outside the established business structure while using modern technologies such as computers, telephones, internet applications, mail, etc. The employee completes the specified duties of the job for which they are employed or contracted to perform. The typical environment of a telecommuting worker is working from home (Wilkie, 2015).

### **Summary**

There are many factors that contribute to the satisfaction an employee experiences on the job, both internal and external. This study focused on the main factors identified in research and what was in direct control of the immediate manager, which were communication, coaching, and empowerment. These factors are controlled by the immediate manager, which indicates that the relationship an employee has with a supervisor contributes to the level of satisfaction that an employee may experience with their job. This study contributes toward a better understanding of the importance of the manager and employee relationship in a telecommuting environment. Additionally, managers and companies may use the findings as a basis for internal efforts towards changing managerial behavior and additional actions or initiatives from those managers to improve employee job satisfaction.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The business environment where employees enter the office daily and perform tasks where a supervisor checks the work based on standards, without discussion, has quickly changed over the last few decades. Employees are looking for more fulfilling relationships with both the work performed and the management staff. In addition to the changing expectations of the relationships, the environment of work has changed. Employees do not always go to work in a store, office, or to a job site. Managers may have employees for whom they are responsible but rarely see in person. As a result, the level of employee satisfaction and maintaining satisfaction may be questions that go unanswered for many businesses today.

Leaders are representatives of the organizations from which they are employed. Although a manager or supervisor may not be in control of all conditions pertaining to the environment of the company, they are in control of their own actions and support of the employees for which they are responsible (Moen et al., 2016). This premise was the basis for the review of literature pertaining to the topic; the control of the direct manager in activities and behaviors that impact employee job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is the “attitude that has received the most empirical attention” (Allen et al., 2015, p. 47) and refers to an employee’s pleasurable or positive emotional state as a result of the appraisal of one’s job and job experiences. The desirable outcomes, as a result of such satisfaction, is expected to be performance (Vega et al., 2015), with the inclusion of other factors such as: good attendance, lower turnover (Lee et al., 2018), and increased customer satisfaction (Conway & Briner, 2015). There are many factors, both

internal and external, contributing to employee job satisfaction. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on job satisfaction as it related to the impact of the relationship developed by the employee's manager through communication behaviors, coaching behaviors, and empowerment behaviors in a telecommuting work arrangement.

### **Organization**

This literature review was designed to provide an understanding of the components studied in preparation for a study of employee job satisfaction in employees performing duties by telecommuting. Included is a brief discussion of the importance of employee job satisfaction in business today and the method and terms used to search for appropriate material to include in the review. Then there is a description and discussion of several leadership theories pointing out the similarities pertaining to the manager and employee relationship. Next, there is a description of the three main components found in literature that contribute to the majority of what gives an employee job satisfaction as related to the leadership theories – communications with managers, coaching provided by managers, and empowerment provided to the employee. Finally, there is a brief review of telecommuting before the chapter summary is presented. In the next section, the importance of employee job satisfaction is discussed.

### **Importance of Employee Job Satisfaction**

The area of research surrounding the relationship between employee job satisfaction and employee job performance is an important area for organizational understanding and research. Exploring job satisfaction and assessing the resulting employee behaviors at work is an important aspect as it relates to employee job performance, and thus organizational productivity (Wu et al., 2017). Employees of an

organization represent the organization to each client, and satisfied employees aid in cultivating external relationships (Men, 2014). When employees experience job dissatisfaction, they are more likely to leave a job (Torten et al., 2016). Studies show employee turnover has a negative impact on organizational effectiveness and productivity (Men, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative managers of an organization possess an understanding of the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance and how to influence job satisfaction of employees. Additionally, an employee may perceive organizational support, or lack thereof, through the relationship with their manager (Kim, 2014). With several different generations of workers in the workforce, there are also differences in the methods a manager may utilize to motivate different employees (Malangwasira, 2013).

The importance of employee job satisfaction is more than just the desire to want satisfied, motivated employees because they are easier to work with. Employee job satisfaction, or lack thereof, may be a problematic issue facing organizations through increased expenses, as job satisfaction largely contributes to employees' intentions to remain with an organization (Cloutier et al., 2015). Employees who lack job satisfaction have a tendency for higher turnover. The results are more costs associated with recruiting, training, and loss of productivity while recruiting more personnel. The environment this creates may negatively impact overall morale (Cloutier et al., 2015). A positive social exchange between a manager and an employee will foster actions by the employee, due to job satisfaction, which ultimately has a positive impact on the performance of the company (Jha & Jha, 2013).

### **Inclusion Criteria**

Articles used to review the topic of this paper were obtained mainly from Business Source Complete and Academic Search Premier (EBSCOhost). Additional reviews of ProQuest, Google Scholar, and SHRM Foundation at shrm.org were completed for information pertaining to the subject. Telecommuting statistics were obtained from Lister (2017) from Global Workplace Analytics. Any articles or other documents found in Google Scholar or through internet sources were then searched through EBSCOhost and ProQuest in an attempt to obtain the articles through university sources.

The search criteria used for articles and information were employee job satisfaction, employee satisfaction, LMX, Transformational Leadership Theory, Path-Goal Theory, job satisfaction and LMX theory, manager communication, communication and job satisfaction, coaching and job satisfaction, and telecommuting.

### **Leadership Theories**

A review of several leadership theories was performed for the purpose of connecting the theories with current practices that were found to impact employee job satisfaction. This has been an area of study for decades, and the theories created, as a result, served as a basis for the study. One main factor continued to be presented in the literature and theories associated with employee satisfaction. Communication is vital for employee job satisfaction (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). An employee's actual or perceived relationship with their leader is another strong contributing factor of overall job satisfaction that stems from the overall communication and interactions an employee has with their manager. There are several theories that exist pertaining to the relationship

built between a manager and employee and the effect that relationship has on an employee's job satisfaction. The main theory explored was Leader-Member Exchange (LMX). Path-goal theory, Transformational Leadership, and High-Involvement Work Processes were investigated for overlapping ideas as they pertained to supporting the relationships described in LMX and ultimately how quality relationships may be built through communication, coaching, and empowerment of employees by their manager.

### **LMX**

LMX is a dyad that was developed over 40 years ago. The dyad consists of four quadrants describing the perception of the quality of the relationship between the employee and the leader. The groupings are as follows:

Leader perspective – High and Low

Follower perspective – High and Low

A combination of each perspective is plotted in the quadrant. There are four possible outcomes of the LMX (Cogliser et al., 2009), which are described in Appendix A.

LMX is a social exchange that is created between a manager and an employee. The premise is that a positive relationship will foster organizational citizenship, job satisfaction, and performance improvements and ultimately impact organizational performance (Jha & Jha, 2013).

High-quality relationships are strong motivators for employee behaviors (Jha & Jha, 2013). Low-quality relationships are mainly economic and result in the employee seeking fulfillment in other aspects of their job to increase satisfaction in the working environment. If the employee does not find satisfaction through their skills and abilities, they may consider leaving the job (Boon & Biron, 2016). Employees also notice

managers' interactions with other employees, which impacts that employee's own relationship with the manager. For instance, observing management's arrangements, such as pay, or job description, with other employees can have a negative effect on an employee's job satisfaction (Jha & Jha, 2013) as the follower's perspective of the relationship is low.

An important factor in building relationships with employees is manager support. To build a high-quality relationship, a manager must provide a high level of support and guidance (Boon & Biron, 2016). A study was performed by Boon and Biron (2016) of 160 employees in elder care positions and the role of LMX as it relates to their perception of the job and organizational "fit." The findings were "followers in higher-quality LMX relationships often enjoy more challenging assignments, sponsorship and greater access to information relevant to the job." (p. 2183). The support in the study pertained to support provided by the manager.

Employees' and managers' perceptions of relationships and events may differ in the same scenario. Different interpretations of the same practice (Ali et al., 2018) may arise given the backgrounds, experience, and history of each employee and past jobs. Furthermore, demographic differences between the employee and manager proved to be a factor in employee satisfaction, mainly a difference in age and/or gender (Malangwasira, 2013). Understanding the employee's potential perspective of the relationship is the key to aid a leader with appropriate behaviors and communications to foster a high-quality relationship. High Involvement Work Processes overlap the LMX theory in the behaviors expected from managers. This theory is discussed in the next section.

### **High Involvement Work Processes**



This concept is important to the constructs of this study as it supports the LMX theory in building a high-quality relationship through the empowerment of employees. High Involvement Work Processes (HIWP) have been studied as a basis to measure overall employee satisfaction on the job. A supportive work environment is important to employee satisfaction and overall job performance. The premise is that employees who feel involved with the process of decisions are more likely to have buy-in and demonstrate greater loyalty to the process and the company (Huang et al., 2016). Descriptions of each of these four areas described by Butts et al. (2009) are listed in Appendix B.

“Employee contributions and ideas are viewed as essential for organizational renewal and success” (Kontoghiorghes, 2016, p. 1849). The process is intended to allow the employee to experience meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact (Butts et al., 2009), which may lead to greater job satisfaction for the employee.

A study by Boxall, Hutchinson, and Wassener (2015) surveyed 285 employees in distribution jobs. They found a direct relationship between an employee’s sense of power, information, reward, and knowledge and employee job satisfaction. The value, for the purpose of this study, supports the premise of the empowerment of employees as they are involved in the overall decisions and constructs of the work they are completing. In addition to HIWP, the Path-Goal theory also contains overlapping behaviors of the manager is discussed next.

### **Path-Goal Theory**

The Path-Goal Theory of management has components that complement the main theory used as a basis for this research, LMX. Path-Goal theory supports LMX due to the

flexibility in applying one of four management styles, given the situation under which the manager is working with a particular employee. In addition, the styles contain elements supporting the aim of this research by using communication, coaching, and empowerment, which lead to greater employee job satisfaction. The style used in a situation depends on the employee's background, experience, and skill level, given the task at hand (Juneia, 2020). For details on the four management styles of Path-Goal theory, see Appendix C.

The directive style, in part, implements formal communication by informing employees of expectations and details surrounding the job, which is important to job satisfaction as the employee is aware of expectations. The supportive style, in part, adds informal communication by displaying concern for the employee on a personal level, making the employee feel part of the team and they matter. The participative style, in part, focuses on communication but more on coaching employees to improve performance. The act of coaching allows the employee to gain insight and perform the job more effectively, which studies show is an element of improving job satisfaction. Finally, the achievement-oriented style is about empowering the employee as the leader and the belief the employee can accomplish goals and encourages him to do so. By allowing the employee the room to make the decisions toward accomplishing goals, the employee gains greater job satisfaction. Each of the elements described is aimed to contribute to the manager and employee building a relationship where the result is greater employee job satisfaction.

Malangwasira (2013) conducted a recent study performed with employees of a manufacturing company that utilized social media. The study was aimed to uncover

differences in the relationship between the manager and employee as it relates to demographics, tenure of job, and education. The outcome supported stronger relationships when the supervisor had longer tenure and was the same gender. This study has value in understanding employees will gravitate to someone they see as a supporter and potential mentor, thereby concluding the importance of a manager possessing knowledge, confidence, and flexibility in order to be successful in building quality relationships with today's diverse working population. These attributes and relationships are imperative to employee job satisfaction. Relationships may be strengthened with motivation and support; the Transformational Leadership Theory is discussed next as it provides a motivational approach.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational Leadership is another management theory that has elements that overlap or support the main theory, LMX, described in this paper. Transformational Leadership, overall, has four elements a manager must exhibit in order to succeed at being or becoming a transformational leader (Juneia, 2020). The details of these elements are described in Appendix D.

The overlap of Transformational Leadership and LMX was found in three of the four elements as they pertain to communication, coaching, and empowerment, which is imperative in changing the organizational environment to be supportive of employees and thereby having the overall effect of greater employee job satisfaction. The elements that supported the aim of this study were inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration, which is important in building high-quality relationships as described in the LMX Theory constructs.

Inspirational motivation, in part, indicates the leader will work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster a spirit of teamwork and commitment. In order to accomplish this, the leader must employ appropriate levels of communication. Idealized influence, in part, indicates the leader can influence followers only when he practices what he preaches, and leaders act as role models. This support and influence come through coaching and mentoring employees in a way to prepare them to succeed. Finally, individualized consideration, in part, indicates leaders empower employees to make decisions, which is a direct element of empowerment (Juneia, 2020).

A meta-analysis study performed by Ng (2017) compared results from more than 600 research studies where job satisfaction was measured in transformational leadership environments. The findings supported that when transformational behaviors were present, there was a higher level of job satisfaction and overall commitment. As a result, the conclusion solidifies the premise of managerial and leadership behaviors building or serving as a detriment to the manager and employee relationship, which impact employee job satisfaction.

The theories discussed affecting employee job satisfaction have one main denominator linking them together - communication is the key. A manager of an organization will find good communication is imperative to (a) coach employees to success, (b) empower employees, (c) develop and maintain appropriate, motivating relationships with employees, and (d) create an appropriate, productive working environment. This is necessary whether the environment is in a traditional office setting or flexible working arrangements such as telecommuting.

## **Employee Satisfaction**

In the area of what actions or processes will encourage employee job satisfaction, there are several items for the company, manager, and even outside sources that contribute to the overall happiness of an employee with their job. In this study, the focus was on three items found consistently in literature: communication, coaching, and empowerment. Research showed the application of the three main areas by the manager had an impact on the relationship with the employees and thereby impacted employee job satisfaction. They are also referred to as managerial behaviors. The importance of the behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment are discussed in the next section.

### **Management Behaviors Contributing to Employee Satisfaction**

#### **Communication**

A common theme in the literature was that communication from managers and leaders was directly related to job satisfaction and that wages were not supported as having an impact on satisfaction. Management practices and communication are factors contributing to job satisfaction (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). Since job satisfaction is greatly influenced by managerial relationships (Boon & Biron, 2016), the importance of building formal and informal lines of communication is imperative in building an overall positive relationship.

Managers play an important role today in ensuring employee job satisfaction. One study found high markers on communication pertaining to the information employees receive and contact with their immediate supervisor were indicative of job satisfaction (Sniderman et al., 2016). Additionally, a study performed by Raina and Roebuck (2016)

with 105 participants of an Insurance company in India found a positive relationship between communication and employee satisfaction.

In building a relationship that will foster employee satisfaction, it is important to note that a positive attitude from employees may be the result of positive management behaviors and communication (Burriss et al., 2017). The manager must not only build formal and informal relationships with employees but must also have the characteristics that will enable an employee to pull knowledge, guidance, and support through the network of communication created. Malangwasira (2013) performed a study aimed to uncover the difference in an LMX relationship as it relates to demographics, tenure of job, and education of the participants. The findings concluded that gender and tenure were positively related to developing a positive LMX relationship. This finding supports the premise that employees are looking for a manager that is perceived as a source of knowledge as managerial tenure was a factor and perceived as contributing to knowledge.

Collaboration or sharing information with employees and discussing personal decisions and those of the company are critical in creating relationships with employees (Choi & Ha, 2018). Employees require such information as part of a sense of belonging, and these actions foster heightened feelings and a sense of being part of the company (Cloutier et al., 2015). Studies showed managerial communication and interaction practices influence employees' sense of job satisfaction (Müller et al., 2013).

The behavior exhibited of the leader is an important factor of consideration in the overall job satisfaction of an employee (Sniderman et al., 2016) and is considered communication. A leader must be in constant evaluation of their communications as they are constantly being observed by employees and evaluated for integrity and fairness.

Employees are likely to be influenced by all observations, whether personal or otherwise, and not only their personal relationship with the leader but also by relationships of other group members. Ineffective communication and behaviors may be perceived as the manager not communicating or behaving as part of the team (Stewart et al., 2017). Therefore, all communication by a manager is important as all interactions may not be perceived the same.

It is important for managers to consistently gauge the level of satisfaction amongst employees and adjust interaction or communication attempts according to the needs of the employee. If employees are dissatisfied, it may lead to turnover resulting in a loss of skilled personnel (Altunta, 2014). A leader may not receive the same support of their manager and may not have a high-quality relationship. Additionally, the organizational culture or physical work environment may not provide all the support needed for a manager to facilitate all that is necessary to achieve the highest quality relationship with direct reports (Karanika-Murray et al., 2015). A manager may find this situation difficult; however, managers are in the position to ensure they have developed a high-quality relationship with their direct reports through interactions with them. The culture created is important to attract and retain employees (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). This may be accomplished through communication. Another area, coaching, found to contribute to building positive relationships with employees is discussed next.

### **Coaching**

Coaching is a factor of building a positive relationship that must exist between a manager and employee in order to build an appropriate level of employee satisfaction (Ali et al., 2018). There are two types of coaching a manager may utilize, informal and

formal. Informal is where the manager relates to an employee on a personal level, and formal is a structured form of coaching with the purpose of assisting the employee with job-related issues in an effort to increase productivity (Cloutier et al., 2015).

Coaching responsibility is increasingly being transferred to managers and leaders and part of building a relationship (Ali et al., 2018). Since they act as agents of the organization, a leader's favorable orientation to an employee is a perceived representation of organizational support. Coaching by the leader can generate employee job satisfaction (Kim, 2014).

Managers who coach employees to ask for assistance or seek out information to gain additional skills are benefiting the employee and the company in succeeding as employees are an important force in continuing to grow as a learning organization (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). A competitive edge and increased profits are the results of trained and satisfied employees (Cloutier et al., 2015).

Proper coaching of employees by a manager has an impact on both the employee and the company. The tendency is the employee experiences greater job satisfaction when coaching takes place from the manager. This results in greater organizational commitment and clarity of job goals. The company benefits from this occurrence by way of less expensive training as organized, formal training is more expensive (Kim, 2014).

It must be noted that not all employees will respond to coaching in the same way. It is important for a manager to understand various employees and circumstances as the manager is in the position to be a major factor and positive influence relating to the satisfaction of an employee. The manager must use different techniques when coaching employees and provide support while considering the employee's position and experience



in order to gain the intended outcome of greater job satisfaction and thereby performance (Ali et al., 2018). As employees experience proper communication and engage in coaching activities, they begin to experience empowerment, which is discussed in the next section.

### **Empowerment**

Empowerment is another aspect contributing to employee satisfaction. There are two types of empowerment, climate empowerment deals with constructs of the job, much like transactional management, and psychological empowerment deals with an employee's meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Psychological empowerment is motivational and fosters higher job satisfaction (Sinha, 2017). It must be noted that for this study, psychological empowerment was the empowerment discussed for the purpose of a manager having direct control over interactions with employees. "Intellectual stimulation leads to employee satisfaction as undeveloped potential is inspired and the spirit of the follower is satisfied" (Chen et al., 2012, p. 409).

Empowerment is an important factor pertaining to overall job satisfaction (Sergio & Rylova, 2018). The point at which the manager has control over empowering employees in the workplace is where the manager's relationship with the employee is contributing to job satisfaction through empowerment. A leader is responsible for the empowerment of members and allowing the creation of autonomy in employees which high-quality relationships (Min et al., 2016). Although empowerment alone may not accurately measure job satisfaction, it is a contributing factor of which the direct manager has some control.

Employees who feel empowered will approach work more creatively and proactively as opposed to waiting to be told what to do and then react to the demands of the company or the leader (Sinha, 2017). Empowerment plays a role in the employee's feeling of importance to the company and the understanding of how their skills relate to the overall "big picture" of the mission of the company. The employee feels the action they take on a daily basis means something and can make a difference in the organization.

Empowered employees develop a feeling of obligation to reciprocate in doing a good job for the company. This equates to an employee's approach at work as positive and active while striving to meet goals and obtaining the desired results as it pertains to the duties and responsibilities of their job. Empowerment is a tool of engaging leadership and aids in developing a dedicated employee, which may create an environment where employees feel support in successes and failures (Min et al., 2016). This maintains that a supportive environment is necessary for the optimal effect on employee satisfaction and performance.

A relationship exists between employee empowerment and the relationship between an employee and a manager. When employee empowerment is low, a manager is resistant to change and see themselves as a member or part of the team and share responsibilities and decisions, the manager/employee relationship suffers. Employees find greater job satisfaction and sense a better manager/employee relationship when empowered (Stewart et al., 2017).

A manager must have trust and confidence in an employee's skill level and experience to empower the employee to make decisions. Therefore, if the manager is

empowering an employee for job-related decisions, the employee may have a sense of trust from the manager. Empowering employees and encouraging them to make decisions is empowering them by providing them the tools they need to do their jobs (Chen et al., 2012). This creates a sense of belonging and supports employee satisfaction on the job. Manager behaviors are important for developing employee job satisfaction in any environment. The work arrangement of telecommuting is reviewed in the next section.

### **Telecommuting**

Telecommuting began in the 1970s and was mainly comprised of data-entry personnel. Companies viewed it as a way to reduce their carbon footprint and provide cost savings to the company. Employees recognized cost savings as well in the form of reduced commuting costs (Onley, 2015).

Telecommuting is on the rise and has grown in popularity since 2010 (Coombs, 2015). In addition to self-employed individuals and unpaid volunteers, in 2013, 3.3 million workers worked from home most or all the time. This represents an 80% increase since 2005 (Lister, 2015). As of 2011, Global Workplace Analytics (Lister, 2017) reported the average telecommuter is 45 years old, has a college degree, works in a management or professional role, earns approximately \$58,000 a year, and works for a company with more than 100 employees.

Improvements in technology have made telecommuting possible for more workers, such as laptops, cell phones, video conferencing, email, and remote desktops (Wilkie, 2015). The newest technologies for online meetings and collaboration, such as Skype, have made regular face-to-face interactions possible (Coombs, 2015).

In addition to other benefits, telecommuting allows companies greater flexibility in obtaining employees from other areas and globally without relocation (Coombs, 2015). This allows employers to gain and retain more talented workers (Onley, 2015).

“The majority of research has found support for teleworkers being more satisfied than traditional workers” (Caillier, 2014, p. 194). However, it must be noted that telecommuting reduces interpersonal relationships and may leave employees feeling isolated from co-workers and supervisors as the dynamics of work-related interactions are altered (Allen et al., 2015). The employee misses informal interactions and learning (Dahlstrom, 2013) that takes place in the traditional workplace through side conversations. Great importance to interact regularly with telecommuting employees is placed on managers. As a result, in order to have a robust telecommuting program, the company must have strong managers (Wilkie, 2015). Wilkie (2015) described that managers must have the ability to set clear, precise, and measurable work goals and the ability to follow through managing the process.

There are many tips for creating a successful working environment such as regular communication (both formal and informal), training or coaching, and collaboration of ideas (Wilkie, 2015). Formal communications are actions pertaining to the information needed for performing the duties of the job, such as email communications, notification of changes in procedures, and providing information regarding company initiatives. On the other hand, informal communications are those relating on a human level, such as how the family is doing and wishing someone happy birthday (Wilkie, 2015). The full list may be reviewed in Appendix E. When creating a program, it is important to train managers that have the ability to be flexible. It also must

be communicated to them the importance of flexibility when coaching, communicating, and empowering employees as perceptions of intent and relationships differ among people.

For telecommuting to be successful, the company and manager must engage in setting clear, precise, and measurable work goals (Wilkie, 2015). “Managers and supervisors who support employees’ needs attract and retain workers who report better health, improved job satisfaction and more loyalty to the company” (SHRM Foundation, 2014, p. 20).

### **Summary**

This literature review was designed to provide the overall idea of the main points in literature that indicate what is important for managers in order to build a positive, working relationship with employees for whom they are responsible, which results in positive employee job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an important and main driver for the productivity of any organization (Men, 2014). It is also the employee “attitude that has received the most empirical attention” (Allen et al., 2015, p. 47).

Several leadership theories were explored that connect theory with manager behaviors expected to affect employee job satisfaction. LMX (Leader-Member Exchange), Transformational Leadership, Path-Goal Theory, and HIWP (High-Involvement Work Processes) were reviewed. LMX focuses on the quality of the relationship between the manager and the employee as a basis for building relationships where the employee feels obligated to reciprocate through creative input and productivity, benefiting both the employee and the organization (Jha & Jha, 2013). Transformational Leadership is based on the leader playing the part of an inspirational

motivator. The motivation is to take place while exhibiting the behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowering the employees to participate in reaching organizational goals (Juneia, 2020). The Path-Goal Theory encourages managers to use one of four different styles when managing employees taking into consideration the level of expertise of the employee and the situation the employee is placed under when completing tasks – the styles are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented (Juneia, 2020). Similar to LMX theory, the Path-Goal theory encourages building a quality relationship by providing what the employee needs in different situations. Finally, the High-Involvement Work Processes (HIWP) approach focuses on team building and gaining input from all participants while encouraging managers to support employees as they provide input and gain a sense of purpose (Huang et al., 2016). Overlap amongst the theories was noted as the behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment are encouraged in each theory.

The main themes in literature and studies - communication, coaching, and empowerment - are imperative for a manager to employ in efforts to build quality relationships with employees in an effort to allow the employee greater job satisfaction. Communication is an important resource for employees and provides them with a sense of inclusion (Choi & Ha, 2018). Coaching from the manager and seeking information from employees allows the organization to gain insight and continue to grow (Kontoghiorghes, 2016), and empowerment allows employees to grow and create autonomy (Min et al., 2016). The need for these behaviors in any work arrangement is crucial for success, even in the growing flexible arrangement of telecommuting.

Telecommuting is a growing option for many employees as technology increases (Wilkie, 2015). As a result, managers have the task to effectively manage employees they may not physically see, and the result is a changing dynamic of work (Allen et al., 2015). Managers must recognize this and remain flexible in their approach to ensure the behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment are modified to have the desired effect on their employees, which is greater job satisfaction.

This study used the information to develop a method of collecting data from a group of individuals where little research has been done to this point in time. The group identified was non-traditional workers, as they have the flexible work arrangement of telecommuting.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This study was a quantitative study using a cross-sectional design. A survey instrument was created to collect data from the population participating in the study. Data were collected using online websites for crowdsourcing and survey research. The participants were employees who work under a telecommuting arrangement for the companies of which they were employed. The telecommuting status of the employees was self-reported as being two or more days per week. The goal of the research study was to determine the relationship between the managerial behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment and their impact on employee satisfaction in this environment. Additionally, the data were analyzed to determine if there were significant differences in the responses among the different demographic groups who participated.

As businesses and occupations evolve in the availability of resources and methods used to perform a job, technology is introduced, which allows for flexible/alternative work arrangements beyond the traditional office setting. Employees, whether working in the traditional setting or having a flexible arrangement, require support, communication, coaching, and the ability to make decisions. Therefore, there was a need to gauge the level of satisfaction with employees working in a telecommuting arrangement. This research study was designed to test the hypotheses that the managerial behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment of employees contribute to employee job satisfaction in a telecommuting environment.

The research questions and hypothesis for the study were:



**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?

H1: Communication from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction.

H1<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between coaching from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?

H2: Coaching from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction.

H2<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between coaching from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relationship between empowerment from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?

H3: Empowerment from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction.

H3<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between empowerment from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

### **Research Design**

The research design is cross-sectional as the data gathered for analysis was collected at one single point in time. This design was selected as the goal of the research was to collect data from the participants, group the answers based on the demographics, and determine if there were statistical differences between the groups. There was no

intervention, managerial training for the application of techniques, or follow-up, thereby making the cross-sectional design appropriate. The answers provided by the participants, based on their knowledge and perception, were used to measure differences and create groups using the information. “The groups will be constructed on the basis of their existing differences” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 171), and the differences were analyzed (de Vaus, 2001). Additionally, there was no involvement from the researcher or other party.

A quantitative study applies a scientific method to social science research by gathering data through surveys and analyzing the results. The survey questions are coded to allow statistical analysis and are free from intervention and biased interpretation of the researcher (O’Leary, 2010). The goal of the research was to gather the data based on the perception of each participant in a manner to place a numerical value on the answer, thereby allowing the researcher to analyze the data results statistically to determine if there was a relationship between the variables and demographic groups pertaining to the research questions. The instrument used for this study was a survey with quantifiable results as scored by the participants using a 5-point Likert scale. This made the quantitative study the best option for this research.

### **Population**

The population invited for the research was 250 individuals at least 18 years of age, working full-time, and telecommuting two or more days per week while performing their job duties. The invitation to complete the survey was posted on Amazon’s Mturk.com, an online site for surveys and online tasks, with a hyperlink directing participants to SurveyMonkey.com, another online site for surveys and research, to complete the survey. More details regarding Amazon’s Mturk.com and

SurveyMonkey.com and the processes of using the websites for this research are found in this chapter under the heading Mturk.com by Amazon and SurveyMonkey.com in the Procedures section. The limitation of telecommuting two or more days per week was placed on participants as a regular pattern or schedule of telecommuting was desired for the research to gauge the impact of managerial behaviors in this employment arrangement. The potential participants for the research were selected through parameters set during the creation of the task in Mturk.com. The researcher had the option to filter Mturk.com workers by requiring a certain approval rating or a minimum number of prior jobs completed. For this research, the exclusions of a minimum number of jobs of 500 and an approval rating of 90% were chosen. The reason for the exclusions was to ensure the Mturk.com workers had experience completing tasks in Mturk.com, and the organizations they completed them for were satisfied.

Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk.com) is an online crowdsourcing website with global access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Mturk.com employees sign up with the company through the internet website as “Workers” and are available to complete tasks or surveys online for organizations and individuals pertaining to analysis, marketing, surveys, or other needs (Amazon Mturk.com, 2018). The purpose of choosing Mturk.com was to send invitations to Mturk.com workers as it is an online venue, and the data needed for the research was the completion of the survey instrument by individuals who telecommute two or more days per week. Additionally, by using Mturk.com for recruiting potential participants, an email list was not needed, thereby eliminating unsolicited emails where an email list would have been needed from online groups or other organizations where the population for the research may be employed or belong to

an organization. This also provided additional anonymity, as the Mturk.com workers information is not available to the researcher or others. The procedures for creating the project online in Mturk.com and SurveyMonkey.com follow in the next section.

### **Procedures**

A project was created on Mturk.com where parameters were set to match the intended population for this research. An invitation (Appendix F) asking for participation in the study was posted on Amazon's Mturk.com (Mturk.com), inviting potential participants to participate in the research. The importance of the study and brief background information were provided. Once the potential participant was given the opportunity to review the information, a hyperlink was provided to complete the survey. The hyperlink, when selected, automatically redirected each participant to SurveyMonkey.com where the survey was accessed and completed. Participants received minimal compensation of \$1.00 through Mturk.com for involvement in the study, and they were assured all answers obtained would be kept confidential.

The online link through Mturk.com had a parameter to keep the survey open for three days or 250 completed surveys, whichever came first. During this time, any potential participants using Mturk.com were able to access and complete the survey. The estimated time of 7 to 10 minutes to complete the survey and the timeframe for which the survey was available were provided in the invitation. At the end of the three days, the invitation and link were removed from Mturk.com, and the survey was closed in SurveyMonkey.com, resulting in no additional surveys being accepted.

### **Mturk.com by Amazon**

Information in this section was derived from information available on the website Amazon Mechanical Turk (2018). Mturk.com is a web-based program by Amazon that connects companies or other entities requiring work to be completed online by human workers. It is customizable to accommodate multiple uses, including questions for marketing research or completing a survey for research purposes. Mturk.com charges a fee to the requester for each HIT. Additionally, to compensate Mturk.com workers for their time, the requester can opt to pay a set amount to each worker upon completing the HIT. In addition to the amount the requester is paying the worker, Mturk.com charges a 40% fee for the service to the requester. Below are some common terminologies used by Mturk.com:

**Approval Rating** – Anyone may sign up as a worker with Mturk.com. Upon completion of a HIT, requesters may approve or reject the worker’s completion of the task. The number of HITs a worker has approved versus the number of HITs the worker accepted gives an approval rating for the worker.

**HIT** – “Human Intelligence Task” - The task can be answering a question, finding items in a picture, or taking a survey, etc. When creating a task in Mturk.com, a requester indicates the number of HITs needed. For this research, 250 HITs were requested, which equates to 250 Mturk.com workers completing the survey.

**Requester** – The entity needing a task completed by human intelligence whether through questions, to aid in marketing, or to take a survey.

**Worker** – An individual with an account in Mturk.com to complete jobs or surveys requested by others. When signing up with Mturk.com, a worker is

assigned a 15 alphanumeric character worker ID. This ID has no identifying information available to requesters and is not available to other workers.

A new project was created in Mturk.com using the “Create” tab and selecting the option to add a survey link. The project allowed Mturk.com to send a request to complete the HIT by Mturk.com workers. If a worker chose to accept the HIT request, the worker then selected the survey link which automatically redirected them to the survey in SurveyMonkey.com. The project was created by entering the necessary information in a template provided on the Mturk.com “Create” tab. The detailed parameters of the project are outlined in Appendix G.

Once the HIT was posted on Mturk.com, the task was made available to workers who met the qualifications set by the requester. Any worker interested in the HIT had the opportunity to accept or reject the HIT. The HIT created for this research contained a web hyperlink the worker selected, thereby being auto linked to the survey posted on SurveyMonkey.com. Prior to selecting the link to complete the survey, the worker was provided with the invitation to the survey, which provided information pertaining to the purpose of the survey and the option to accept or reject the HIT. By accepting the HIT, implied consent to participate in the research was given by the worker.

While a worker was completing the survey via SurveyMonkey.com, the Mturk.com window remained open. Once the worker submitted the survey in SurveyMonkey.com, they were thanked for completing the survey and provided with a number (44332211). This number was provided only for the purpose of the worker to enter the number in the appropriate field, “Provide the survey code here:”, on their Mturk.com window, which remained open while completing the survey. Upon entering

the number in the appropriate field this signaled Mturk.com that the worker completed the task and was eligible to receive payment.

At the end of the 3-day timeframe allotted for the availability of survey or 250 completed HITs, a batch was created by Mturk.com that contained only the list of worker IDs who completed the task. The batch was made available to the requester and was accessed by selecting “Manage.” This is standard for all projects and is how Mturk.com workers may be approved and receive payment for the task. Mturk.com workers were provided the option to complete the questions or skip questions they did not feel comfortable answering. As a result, all Mturk.com workers were approved, and the batch was closed. The batch containing the worker IDs was under “Results” in the “Manage” tab in a file marked “Batches Ready for Review.” Once reviewed, the batch was moved to a file marked “Batches Already Reviewed.” At the end of the research, the requester’s account was deleted, thereby deleting the batch containing the Worker IDs. Additionally, there is no way to match individual worker IDs with the surveys completed in SurveyMonkey.com. Using the combination of the two websites for the research offered an additional layer of anonymity.

### **SurveyMonkey.com**

Information in this section was derived from information available on the website, Surveymonkey.com (2019). Surveymonkey.com is a web-based program allowing companies and individuals to create and disseminate surveys for business marketing or research purposes. Surveymonkey.com allows the survey creator to use a template or create a custom survey. The data results of surveys completed were collected and downloaded to a .csv, .exl, or directly to an SPSS file to be loaded into SPSS software so

results may be analyzed. For this research, a custom survey was created. The steps to enter a custom survey in SurveyMonkey.com are found in Appendix H.

The survey created in SurveyMonkey.com was designed to allow the taker to scroll and view all questions as opposed to only viewing one question at a time. The thought behind this was to create a sense of transparency of the actual questions and length of the survey up front for the participants. Additionally, the program allowed for the option to make each question mandatory or not require that every question receive an answer from the participant. The mandatory option was not selected as participants were able to choose not to answer a question at their discretion. However, the exception to this was the first question, which was the qualifying question asking the participant if they telecommuted two or more days per week. Once all questions were entered for the survey, the survey was scored using the scoring system in SurveyMonkey.com, which returned an estimated time to complete the survey and an estimate of the number of participants that would complete the survey upon beginning the process. The results of the scoring were an estimated time to complete of 7 minutes and an estimate that 79% of participants would complete the survey. This information was used to advise potential participants of the time to complete the survey and the estimated 79% equated to the expected completed surveys of 197 out of 250 HITs requested on Mturk.com. This provided confidence in the number of HITs requested in Mturk.com, as mentioned previously, and having enough completed surveys for the data analysis.

Once the custom survey design was complete, the method for collecting responses was selected as a mobile link, or hyperlink. The link was a hyperlink connecting the Mturk.com HIT for the worker to the survey in SurveyMonkey.com. The link, called a



“Collector”, had options for the researcher to select. The selections available in configuring the collector included a description to the participant, a custom thank you message, allowing multiple responses, anonymous responses, and custom disqualification. The description advised the participants of the estimated time to take the survey and what the survey was about. A custom thank you message was important as it not only thanked the participant for completing the survey, but also provided a code for the participant to enter into their Mturk.com account to receive compensation. Participants were advised their answers were confidential, and the added layer of protection for anonymity was selected here by not collecting IP addresses in the collector area. Finally, a custom disqualification was entered by disqualifying potential participants answering “No” to the first survey question, which asked if they telecommuted two or more days per week. The detailed options selected to configure the Collector are found in Appendix I.

Upon completion of configuring the collector on SurveyMonkey.com, the survey and the collector were activated and ready for respondents. Workers in Mturk.com received the invitation and selected the link to complete the survey.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

The data collected for this study were obtained through the use of a survey questionnaire. The use of questionnaires is widely used in cross-sectional research designs, and the data are collected using pre-defined variables and categories (de Vaus, 2001, p 191). The survey (Appendix J) was newly created as several existing instruments were reviewed without finding any one or combination that closely matched the current study.

The survey instrument consisted of 49 questions, with question one being a qualifying question. The remaining 48 questions were broken down into four sub-categories of 10 questions on overall job satisfaction, 12 questions on manager communication, 10 questions on manager coaching, and 11 questions on empowerment, and 5 demographic questions. Each participant was asked to rate their perception of the frequency of occurrences and behaviors using a 5-point Likert scale. This process for answering the questions was chosen due to the nature of the Likert scale, developed by Rensis Likert in the 1930s, widely being used to assess behaviors or attitudes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The labels chosen for the points on the scale were intended to demonstrate a time or occurrence factor. The labels were 1 – *never*, 2 – *rarely*, 3 – *sometimes*, 4 – *usually*, and 5 – *always*.

Demographic questions for gender, age, education level, and income were used to determine if there was a significant difference in job satisfaction levels when grouped together while measuring communication, coaching, and empowerment behaviors of the manager, as suggested in research performed by Malangwasira (2013). Additionally, the question of the number of telecommuting jobs the participant has held in the past was asked to determine if this was a significant factor in job satisfaction for the population studied, also relating to communication, coaching, and empowerment behaviors.

Prior to distribution of the official survey for the research, a pilot test was completed using the survey as the instrument was newly created for this study. The pilot test was completed through Mturk.com by asking workers who telecommute to access the survey by a link that directed them to SurveyMonkey.com to complete the survey. For the purpose of the pilot test, 15 surveys were completed. During the pilot test, participants

were provided a comment area on each question to provide feedback pertaining to the clarity of the question, so any needed changes to the wording of the questions could be made prior to gathering data for the research.

### **Internal and External Validity**

As mentioned prior, the survey instrument was newly created by the researcher. To determine that the survey was measuring what it was intended to measure, the researcher had the survey reviewed by three individuals considered experts in their fields of Academia and Human Resources. The purpose was to ensure the validity of the content for the survey and that the questions were directed pertaining to the purpose of job satisfaction, manager communication behaviors, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowerment behaviors. All three individuals were faculty members of a mid-eastern university in the United States and held doctorate degrees. One member also held a position as the Vice President of Human Resources at a local community college. Additionally, all three individuals were active with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Finally, the survey had not been tested previously so a pilot test was completed using the survey to determine the reliability of the instrument.

There were many internal company issues and other external situations that may have affected how employees answered the survey questions at any given point in time, which is an issue with cross-sectional research. The data was collected one time for analysis, and there was no follow-up or opportunity for intervention. Some internal company factors may have been present at the time of collection, which may have influenced answers, including human resources, overall company operations, pay structure, and company technological issues (i.e., internet, phone, or server issues).

Additionally, the employee may have been experiencing external company factors such as the state of the economy, laws affecting the nature of work for the industry they were employed (i.e., universal healthcare issues, banking laws), physical interruptions (i.e., spouse, children, visitors, other patrons), and personal financial issues. These issues may have influenced a participant's answers by the weight he or she places on them when questions were analyzed for an answer. In an effort to eliminate thoughts of these occurrences, which may sway a participant's answers, the questions were written to specifically point to manager behaviors with the employee, which was the goal of the research.

Confidence that the design of the research can sustain causal conclusions that we can claim reflects the research design's internal validity (de Vaus, 2001, p. 27). Attempts can be made to improve internal validity through the design structure of the research (de Vaus, 2001, p. 28). The goal of the research was to determine the relationship of managerial behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment, and overall employee job satisfaction. Following the goal of the research, the survey instrument was created with questions pertaining to each area of employee job satisfaction, managerial communication, managerial coaching, and managerial empowerment. Additionally, the questions pertaining to managerial communication, managerial coaching, and managerial empowerment were asked of the participants to direct them to think in terms of their direct manager. The results of the study can be useful to managers and companies in identifying areas of focus for managers pertaining to behaviors related to communication, coaching, and empowerment processes/techniques in an attempt to create better employee job satisfaction.

This study was designed to have external validity. “External validity refers to the extent to which results from a study can be generalized beyond the particular study” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 28). The research design and research questions were not targeted to a particular group other than employees who telecommute. The attempt was to generalize the study in such a way that it applies across industries, companies, and employees in different positions. Only the actions and methods used by managers may need adjusting, based on employee work structure, to apply the results.

### **Ethics Related to Human Subject Participation**

Ensuring privacy, confidentiality, avoidance of harm, and providing informed consent to participants (de Vaus, 2001, p. 192) was imperative to this research as the participants were reporting personal feelings and perceptions of occurrences and behaviors on the job. The research design considered this point, and measures were taken to safeguard confidentiality. Participation in the research study was voluntary and potential participants were advised of the voluntary nature and confidentiality measures in the introduction of the survey.

Collecting the data occurred through a well-known online website, SurveyMonkey.com, and was able to be completed at any time. No survey data was collected in Mturk.com as it was used only for filtering potential participants and directing them to SurveyMonkey.com. In designing the research, it was decided no dyads of manager and employee responses were collected, thereby, the need to match responses was non-existent. This allowed for complete anonymity as the employees were free to report perceptions without any answers being matched back to any other individual. Additionally, this study was cross-sectional, and data was collected at one point in time.

Demographic information was collected for the purpose of grouping employees; however, the groups were large enough and each participant was included in more than one grouping which avoided identification of any person based on any one grouping. Geographic location, which may have been an identifier in this population, was excluded from being questioned, other than the United States, as it is not pertinent to the research. The results remain anonymous to the researcher and anyone analyzing them.

### **Data Analysis**

The survey invitation was posted on Mturk.com, and a link to Surveymonkey.com was provided to participants to access and complete the research survey. At the end of the time allotted for the survey, 3 days, the data were downloaded from Surveymonkey.com into an Excel file and loaded into SPSS Statistical Software for analysis. At the same time, the survey invitation was deleted from Mturk.com.

The data collected was first reviewed for the answer to the qualifying question, question number one. Any survey respondent's answers that were recorded but answered "no" to the qualifying question of "*Do you telecommute an average of two or more days a week in performing the duties of your job?*" was deleted from the data set.

Additionally, several questions required reverse coding as the structure of the questions had a negative relation to the Likert-scale. The questions requiring reverse coding were 2 – 4, 36 – 39, and 42 – 44. This was done to avoid reversing the scale for participants that may have resulted in confusion when answering the questions. The reliability of the data collected using a survey instrument was evaluated using Cronbach Alpha. A Cronbach Alpha score of .70 and above indicates data reliability (Leech et al., 2011). Cronbach Alpha was performed on the final survey data for the survey as a whole and in four

separate groups for each set of questions for each job satisfaction, manager communications, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors. The results were .94 for the survey as whole, .89 for job satisfaction, .88 for manager communications, .91 for manager coaching behaviors, and .76 for manager empowering behaviors. These scores demonstrated the validity of the data collected. Finally, the data collected was analyzed in sections by descriptive statistics using groups from the demographic questions, and each research question RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 was analyzed using Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression.

As stated previously in this chapter, the survey instrument consisted of 49 questions, with the first question being a qualifying question. The remaining 48 questions were broken down into four sub-categories of 10 questions on overall job satisfaction, 12 questions on manager communication, 10 questions on manager coaching, 11 questions on empowerment, and 5 demographic questions. First, a frequency chart was developed that separated the respondents by demographic groups that showed the number and percentage of respondents from each group. Then the mean score and standard deviation for each area was performed: (1) overall job satisfaction, (2) manager communication, (3) manager coaching, and (4). manager empowerment.

In analyzing Research Question One, "*What is the relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*" a Pearson's correlation was run to determine if the hypothesis of communication from the manager was related to the employee's overall job satisfaction was supported or if a null hypothesis existed and there was no significant relationship.

In analyzing Research Question Two, “*What is the relationship between coaching from an employee’s direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*” a Pearson’s correlation was run to determine if the hypothesis of coaching from the manager was related to the employee’s overall job satisfaction was supported or if a null hypothesis existed and there was no significant relationship.

In analyzing Research Question Three, “*What is the relationship between empowerment from an employee’s direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*,” a Pearson’s correlation was run to determine if the hypothesis of empowerment from the manager was related to the employee’s overall job satisfaction was supported or if a null hypothesis existed and there was no significant relationship.

A multiple regression analysis was completed to determine if the combination of managerial communication, coaching from the manager, and empowerment from the manager may have predicted overall job satisfaction. This analysis was completed to determine if the combination of behaviors by the direct manager could have achieved and maintained employee job satisfaction. This provided a deeper understanding of how a direct manager’s behaviors may be more beneficial in achieving and maintaining employee job satisfaction.

Finally, descriptive statistics were performed to determine the means and standard deviations for each job satisfaction, manager communications, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors broken down by the demographic groups. For the groups of gender and telecommuting job number, a t-test was completed. A one-way ANOVA was completed for the groups of education, income, and age. The t-tests and one-way ANOVA’s were to delve deeper into demographic differences of



telecommuters to determine if there were significant differences in the answers pertaining to the groups of gender, income level, age group, education level, and telecommuting job number. This was important to understand as managers bring employees into telecommuting situations and knowing how to be flexible in approaching different demographic groups is essential.

### **Limitations**

The goal of this study was to provide evidence that supports quality relationships built through a direct manager's efforts, in telecommuting work arrangements. The main elements of building a quality relationship, as supported by literature and previous studies, were communication, coaching, and empowerment. Definitions of these elements were provided in Chapter 1 and were used in developing the research survey.

Limitations of this study were that the point in time collection of data did not allow for adjustments in feelings or perceptions over time. No follow-up with this group took place after the results of the survey were collected, analyzed, and results were not provided to any company for which the employees work. Additionally, this study was not designed to define detailed actions that should be taken by a manager in achieving a high-quality relationship as it pertains to the type, method, or frequency of communication, coaching, and empowerment.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify the main areas research shows where the relationship a manager builds with an employee is related to job satisfaction and how this applies to employees working in a telecommuting environment. The areas identified in prior research were communication, coaching, and empowerment on the job.

This research is of importance to most companies embracing alternative or telecommuting arrangements with employees. Each company has differences pertaining to the composition and overall business or industry; however, the findings of this research will be useful to most organizations in realizing extra effort must be placed on building quality relationships with employees not reporting to a traditional office. This conclusion was drawn from the premise that regardless of industry, the need to alter the techniques of management and support of employees with alternative work arrangements is imperative.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

This study was a quantitative study using a cross-sectional design. A survey instrument was created and used to collect data from the telecommuting employee population that participated in the study. No specific job group or industry was targeted nor asked during the survey. The purpose was to examine the relationship between overall employee job satisfaction as it may be influenced through direct manager behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment toward the employee.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data overall and by breaking the data down into demographic groups. The results are presented in tables and written explanations throughout this chapter.

#### Participants

A total of 250 surveys were requested on Amazon's Mturk.com for potential participants. Of the 250 requests, there was a response rate of (89%) that equated to the collection of 217 surveys, of which 33 surveys were not used. The surveys not used in the research were due to 21 (9.6%) participants who did not pass the qualification question of telecommuting two or more days per week and 11 (5%) participants who answered the qualifying question of telecommuting two or more days per week but chose not to complete the remainder of the survey. The remaining 183 (84%) participants' survey data was analyzed using SPSS.

The survey included demographic questions; the results pertaining to the participants' demographics are shown in Table 1. The percentage of males to females was approximately equal at 50.8% and 49.2%, respectively. The largest age group responding

to the survey was the age group of 28 – 35 (37.2%), and the ages of 28 – 45 comprised a 64.9% of the respondents. Half (50.8%) of the respondents held a bachelor's degree and 19.1% of the participants held a graduate degree. The income level groups of the respondents ranged from the lowest number of responses of less than \$26,000 annually (9.3%) to the largest number of responses \$60,000 - \$79,999 annually (25.1%). Additionally, the income group of \$40,000 - \$59,000 annually had a total of 24.6%, which equated to approximately 50% of the participants having an income between \$40,000 and \$79,999. The number of respondents who reported their current job as the first telecommuting job was 68.9%.

The individual answers from the respondents were averaged and in comparison, Lister (2017) indicated the gender percentages of male and female telecommuters is about equal, the typical telecommuter was college educated, was about 45 years old, and made an average annual salary of \$58,000. The results of this research were in line with an approximate equal number of males to females respondents, 87.4% had a college degree with 69.9% having had a bachelor's degree or higher, and an average annual income of \$62,000. Conversely, the average age of the respondents for this research was 40, which is slightly lower, but not significantly. Overall, this demonstrates an alignment of the respondents for this research study with the overall statistical information provided by Lister (2017) from Global Workplace Analytics, which gathered data from several sources, including the U.S. Census and Gallup Polls.

**Table 1***Demographics of Participants – Telecommuting Employees*

Variable	Respondents	
	n = 183	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	93	50.82
Female	90	49.18
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 27	16	8.74
28 - 35	68	37.16
36 - 45	49	26.78
46 - 55	35	19.13
56+	14	7.65
<b>Education</b>		
High School	12	6.56
Post-Secondary Certificate	10	5.46
Associates Degree	32	17.49
Bachelor's Degree	93	50.82
Master's Degree	31	16.94
Doctorate Degree	4	2.19
<b>Income (annual)</b>		
<26,000	17	9.29
26,000 - 39,999	31	16.94
40,000 - 59,999	45	24.59
60,000 - 79,999	46	25.14
80,000 - 99,999	22	12.02
100,000+	21	11.48
<b>Telecommuting Job Number</b>		
1st Job	126	68.85
2nd+ Job	56	30.60

## Mean Scores

The overall mean scores of manager communications, job satisfaction, manager empowering behaviors, and manager coaching behaviors were moderate as the range for the means fell between (3 – *sometimes*) and (4 – *usually*), as shown in Table 2. This means the overall employee perception of job satisfaction and the manager's communication, coaching, and empowering behaviors could be improved as the highest score on the scale is (5 - *always*). Additionally, the standard deviation of the means ranged from .51 (manager empowering behaviors) to .75 (manager coaching behaviors), which means there was less variation in the answers for perceived manager empowering behaviors than the answers for perceived manager coaching behaviors.

**Table 2**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors*

Variable	Mean	SD
Manager Communications	3.83	0.59
Job Satisfaction	3.78	0.68
Manager Coaching Behaviors	3.62	0.75
Manager Empowering Behaviors	3.56	0.51

## Statistical Analysis

In this section, the participants' answers to the survey were analyzed using various SPSS statistical analysis methods to explain the answers relating to the research questions and hypotheses. The data was tested for skewness and was found to be within the range of normal distribution.

### Research Question One

Research question one asked, "*What is the relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*" The hypotheses were (H1) Communication from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction, and (H1<sub>0</sub>) There is no relationship between communication from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

A Pearson's Correlation was performed between the independent variable of manager communications behaviors and the job satisfaction of the employee. Table 3 shows  $p \leq .01$  and demonstrates a moderate positive relationship of .651 between manager communication behaviors and the overall employee job satisfaction. The result rejected the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between employee job satisfaction and manager communication behaviors due to the results being statistically significant at .01. The positive relationship shows that if a manager engages in communications with employees, the employee should have higher job satisfaction.

**Table 3**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Manager Communication Behaviors*

	Manager Communications
Job Satisfaction	.651**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### **Research Question Two**

Research question two asked, “*What is the relationship between coaching from an employee’s direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*” The hypotheses were (H2) Coaching from an employee’s direct manager is related to the employee’s job satisfaction, and (H2<sub>0</sub>) There is no relationship between coaching from an employee’s direct manager and the employee’s job satisfaction.

A Pearson’s Correlation was performed between the independent variable of manager coaching behaviors and the job satisfaction of the employee. Table 4 shows  $p \leq .01$  and demonstrates a moderate positive relationship of .519 between manager coaching behaviors and overall employee job satisfaction. The result rejected the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between employee job satisfaction and manager coaching behaviors due to the results being statistically significant at .01. The positive relationship shows that if a manager engages in coaching employees the employee should have higher job satisfaction.



**Table 4**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Manager Coaching Behaviors*

	Manager Coaching Behaviors
Job Satisfaction	.519**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Research Question Three

Research question three asked, “*What is the relationship between empowerment from an employee’s direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*” The hypotheses were (H3) Empowerment from an employee’s direct manager is related to the employee’s job satisfaction, and (H3<sub>0</sub>) There is no relationship between empowerment from an employee’s direct manager and the employee’s job satisfaction.

A Pearson’s Correlation was performed between the independent variable of manager empowering behaviors and overall employee job satisfaction. Table 5 shows  $p \leq .01$  and demonstrates a moderately weak positive relationship of .391 between manager empowering behaviors and overall employee job satisfaction. The result rejected the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between employee job satisfaction and manager empowering behaviors due to the results being statistically significant at .01. Although there is a moderately weak positive relationship, employees should have a somewhat higher job satisfaction if a manager engages in empowering employees.

**Table 5**

*Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix of the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Manager Empowering Behaviors*

	Manager Empowering Behaviors
Job Satisfaction	.391**

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### **Additional Findings**

The correlations found to support the research questions' hypotheses and the statistical analysis pertaining to the means and standard deviations provided much information into the relationships of manager behaviors and job satisfaction. In addition to the correlation analysis, a multiple regression was performed to determine the relationship between the manager behaviors and overall employee job satisfaction if one of the behaviors (communication, coaching, and empowering) changes, then what is the impact on employee job satisfaction.

The multiple regression output, below in Table 6, shows an R Squared of .46, which means that 46% of employee job satisfaction can be explained through the contributing factors of manager communication, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors, collectively. The ANOVA chart indicates there is significant influence of the contributing factors on employee job satisfaction. Finally, the coefficients chart demonstrates that manager communication behaviors and manager empowering behaviors were the only two of the three behaviors found significant. Manager communication behavior is the largest contributor to overall employee job

satisfaction with  $B = .644$ . This means there is a positive relationship and for each unit of change in the manager communication score, employee job satisfaction will change in the same direction by .644. Additionally, manager empowering behaviors is  $B = .209$ . This means there is a positive relationship and for each unit of change in the manager empowering behavior score, employee job satisfaction will change in the same direction by .209. Manager coaching behaviors were found not significant.

**Table 6**

*Multiple Regression Model of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.678a	0.46	0.45	0.49993

a. Predictors: (Constant), Manager Empowering Behaviors, Manager Coaching Behaviors, Manager Communications.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	33.038	3	11.013	44.063	.000b
Residual	38.740	155	0.250		
Total	71.778	158			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Manager Empowering Behaviors, Manager Coaching Behaviors, Manager Communications.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.462	0.324		1.424	0.156
Manager Communications	0.644	0.131	0.569	4.932	0.000
Manager Empowering Behaviors	0.209	0.089	0.156	2.357	0.020
Manager Coaching Behaviors	0.035	0.101	0.038	0.351	0.726

*Note.* Dependent Variable - Job Satisfaction.

Finally, the researcher further examined the demographic differences of the participants. The answers to the survey were separated by each demographic group to determine if there were significant differences in means and standard deviations among each of the groups of gender, income, education, age, and 1<sup>st</sup> telecommuting job or 2<sup>nd</sup> or higher telecommuting job.

Table 7 separated the participants by gender and recorded the means and standard deviations for each males and females for manager communications, job satisfaction, manager empowering behaviors, and manager coaching behaviors. Note the overall higher mean score for each category amongst females as opposed to males. The means of the female respondents' answers to manager communications was 3.95, and the mean for manager communication behaviors was 3.94. The same factors in the male respondents were 3.71 and 3.64, respectively. It should be noted the mean for the factors of manager empowering behaviors was higher in the male group and lower in the female group, and the mean for manager coaching behaviors was higher in the female group than the male group. Additionally, in three of the four categories (manager communications, job

satisfaction, and manager empowering behaviors) the standard deviations of the answers from females were lower than males indicating the answers were not quite as spread out over the scale. It should be noted that job satisfaction and manager communications means in the female group answers were closer to (4 – *usually*) than the male group.

**Table 7**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Gender)*

Variable	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Manager Communications	3.71	0.60	3.95	0.57
Job Satisfaction	3.64	0.69	3.94	0.65
Manager Empowering Behaviors	3.54	0.52	3.58	0.49
Manager Coaching Behaviors	3.47	0.71	3.76	0.76

As a result of seeing some variations in the mean scores and standard deviations amongst the male and female respondents, a t-test was performed to determine if the differences noted were significant at  $p \leq .05$ . Table 8 demonstrates a significant difference in mean answers pertaining to the gender of the participants for the factors of job satisfaction, manager communications, and manager coaching behaviors as the Sig. (2-tailed) score is less than .05. There was not a significant difference found in the mean answers for manager empowering behaviors based on gender.

**Table 8**

*Independent t-test for Gender Related to Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors*

Variable		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Job Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	0.107	0.744	-2.930	170.00	0.004	-0.299	0.102	-0.501	-0.098
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.937	169.72	0.004	-0.299	0.102	-0.500	-0.098
Manager Communications	Equal variances assumed	0.871	0.352	-2.651	178.00	0.009	-0.231	0.087	-0.403	-0.059
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.654	178.00	0.009	-0.231	0.087	-0.403	-0.059
Manager Coaching Behaviors	Equal variances assumed	0.075	0.785	-2.626	177.00	0.009	-0.288	0.110	-0.504	-0.071
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.623	175.19	0.009	-0.288	0.110	-0.504	-0.071
Manager Empowering Behaviors	Equal variances assumed	0.256	0.614	-0.564	172.00	0.574	-0.044	0.077	-0.196	0.109
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.563	170.87	0.574	-0.044	0.077	-0.196	0.109

Table 9 shows the participants' answers grouped by income level. The mean score for manager communications was the highest at 4.0, which directly compares to a score of (4 – usually) for the group earning \$100,000 or more annually. The lowest mean was for the group earning \$40,000 - \$59,999 annually at 3.72; however, the group with the highest standard deviation of .79 was the group earning less than \$26,000 annually. The mean job satisfaction of 4.01 was the highest with the group earning \$80,000 - \$99,000 annually, and the lowest score of 3.65 was amongst the group earning \$40,000 - \$59,999 annually. Again, the highest standard deviation was the group earning less than \$26,000 annually with .95. Under the category of manager coaching behaviors, the group earning less than \$26,000 annually had the highest mean at 3.81, and the lowest score of 3.52 was amongst the group earning \$40,000 - \$59,999 annually. Finally, the mean for manager

empowering behaviors of 3.78 was the highest with the group earning \$100,000 or more annually, and the lowest score of 3.49 was amongst the group earning \$60,000 - \$79,999 annually. The standard deviation was highest with the group earning less than \$26,000 annually.

**Table 9**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Income – annual)*

		Variable			
		Manager Communications	Job Satisfaction	Manager Coaching Behaviors	Manager Empowering Behaviors
Income					
	Mean	3.88	3.83	3.81	3.64
<26,000	SD	0.79	0.95	0.81	0.59
	Mean	3.87	3.91	3.68	3.60
26,000 - 39,999	SD	0.64	0.65	0.83	0.47
	Mean	3.72	3.65	3.52	3.53
40,000 - 59,999	SD	0.59	0.76	0.77	0.53
	Mean	3.82	3.73	3.55	3.49
60,000 - 79,999	SD	0.59	0.60	0.68	0.47
	Mean	3.81	4.01	3.55	3.50
80,000 - 99,999	SD	0.43	0.44	0.73	0.56
	Mean	4.00	3.79	3.76	3.78
100,000+	SD	0.54	0.70	0.71	0.42

As a result of seeing some variations in the mean scores and standard deviations amongst the income groups, a one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if the differences noted were significant at  $p \leq .05$ . Table 10 shows there was no significant

difference in answers pertaining to the income level of the participants. The lowest score was in job satisfaction with .39, which was well above the  $p \leq .05$  level.

**Table 10**

*ANOVA comparing Income groups and Job Satisfaction, Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Income – annual)*

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	2.463	5	0.493	1.050	0.390
	Within Groups	77.424	165	0.469		
	Total	79.886	170			
Manager Communications	Between Groups	1.144	5	0.229	0.638	0.671
	Within Groups	62.088	173	0.359		
	Total	63.232	178			
Manager Coaching Behaviors	Between Groups	1.850	5	0.370	0.657	0.657
	Within Groups	96.913	172	0.563		
	Total	98.763	177			
Manager Empowering Behaviors	Between Groups	1.354	5	0.271	1.066	0.381
	Within Groups	42.408	167	0.254		
	Total	43.761	172			

Note. Sig. at  $p < .05$ .

Table 11 shows the participants' answers grouped by education level. The mean job satisfaction of 3.99 was the highest with the group holding a high school diploma, and the lowest score of 3.64 was amongst the group with post-secondary training. The highest standard deviation was the group with a master's degree .73. The mean score for manager communications was the highest at 4.02 with the group holding an associate's degree. The lowest mean ws for the group with doctorate degrees at 3.56, which also had the lowest standard deviation .43. Under the category of manager coaching behaviors, the group with a high school diploma had the highest mean at 3.74, and the lowest score of 3.32 was amongst the group with a doctorate degree, which had the lowest standard deviation .27. Finally, the mean for manager empowering behaviors of 3.88 was the



highest with the group holding an associate's degree, and the lowest score of 3.08 was amongst the group with a doctorate degree. The standard deviation .95 was highest in the group with post-secondary training.

**Table 11**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Education)*

		Variable			
		Job Satisfaction	Manager Communications	Manager Coaching Behaviors	Manager Empowering Behaviors
Education Level					
High School	Mean	3.99	3.76	3.74	3.53
	SD	0.56	0.64	0.64	0.79
Post-Secondary	Mean	3.64	3.63	3.55	3.21
	SD	0.53	0.65	0.33	0.95
Associates Degree	Mean	3.79	4.02	3.62	3.88
	SD	0.69	0.58	0.50	0.72
Bachelor's Degree	Mean	3.82	3.81	3.57	3.60
	SD	0.69	0.58	0.52	0.69
Master's Degree	Mean	3.69	3.81	3.46	3.61
	SD	0.73	0.64	0.52	0.79
Doctorate Degree	Mean	3.70	3.56	3.32	3.08
	SD	0.64	0.43	0.27	0.74

As a result of seeing some variations in the mean scores and standard deviations amongst the education groups, a one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if the differences noted were significant at  $p \leq .05$ . Table 12 shows there was no significant difference in answers pertaining to the education level of the participants. The lowest

score was in manager coaching behaviors with .10, which was well above the  $p \leq .05$  level.

**Table 12**

*ANOVA comparing Education groups and Job Satisfaction, Manager Communication, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Education)*

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	0.995	5	0.199	0.427	0.830
	Within Groups	76.996	165	0.467		
	Total	77.992	170			
Manager Communications	Between Groups	1.958	5	0.392	1.104	0.360
	Within Groups	61.381	173	0.355		
	Total	63.340	178			
Manager Coaching Behaviors	Between Groups	5.052	5	1.010	1.858	0.104
	Within Groups	93.521	172	0.544		
	Total	98.573	177			
Manager Empowering Behaviors	Between Groups	0.993	5	0.199	0.759	0.580
	Within Groups	43.659	167	0.261		
	Total	44.651	172			

Note. Sig. at  $p < .05$ .

Table 13 demonstrates the participants' answers grouped by age range. The mean score for manager communications was the highest at 3.96 with group 46 – 55 years of age. The lowest mean was for the group 36 – 45 years of age 3.73. Under the category of manager coaching behaviors, the group 18 – 27 years of age had the highest mean at 3.76, and the lowest score of 3.55 was amongst the group 36 – 45 years of age. The highest standard deviation for the mean of manager coaching behaviors was among the group 56 years old and older 1.00. The mean job satisfaction of 3.99 was the highest with the group that was 46 – 55 years of age, and the lowest score of 3.66 was amongst the group 18 – 27 years of age. Finally, the mean for manager empowering behaviors of 3.70

was the highest with the group 46 – 55 years of age, and the lowest score of 3.44 was amongst the group 28 – 35 years of age.

**Table 13**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Age)*

		Variable			
		Manager Communications	Manager Coaching Behaviors	Job Satisfaction	Manager Empowering Behaviors
Age	Mean	3.92	3.76	3.66	3.53
18 - 27	SD	0.44	0.68	0.78	0.56
	Mean	3.80	3.58	3.71	3.44
28 - 35	SD	0.62	0.72	0.70	0.55
	Mean	3.73	3.55	3.75	3.64
36 - 45	SD	0.62	0.72	0.64	0.46
	Mean	3.96	3.71	3.99	3.70
46 - 55	SD	0.55	0.78	0.70	0.43
	Mean	3.87	3.63	3.90	3.58
56+	SD	0.67	1.00	0.58	0.46

As a result of seeing some variations in the mean scores and standard deviations amongst the age groups, a one-way ANOVA was performed to determine if the differences noted were significant at  $p \leq .05$ . Table 14 shows there was no significant difference in answers pertaining to the education level of the participants. The lowest score was in manager empowering behaviors with .12, which was well above the  $p \leq .05$  level.

**Table 14**

*ANOVA comparing Age groups and Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Age)*

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	2.234	4	0.559	1.194	0.315
	Within Groups	77.652	166	0.468		
	Total	79.886	170			
Manager Communications	Between Groups	1.295	4	0.324	0.909	0.460
	Within Groups	61.937	174	0.356		
	Total	63.232	178			
Manager Coaching Behaviors	Between Groups	0.936	4	0.234	0.414	0.798
	Within Groups	97.826	173	0.565		
	Total	98.763	177			
Manager Empowering Behaviors	Between Groups	1.851	4	0.463	1.854	0.121
	Within Groups	41.911	168	0.249		
	Total	43.761	172			

*Note.* Sig. at  $p < .05$ .

Table 15 separates the participants by groups into whether their job was their first telecommuting job or their second or more telecommuting job, and records the means and standard deviations for each pertaining to manager communications, job satisfaction, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors. Note the group of respondents where this was their first telecommuting job had higher mean scores in three of the four categories (manager communication behaviors, job satisfaction, and manager coaching behaviors). The standard deviations in answers between the two groups were similar with the highest difference between the groups in any one category of .06.

**Table 15**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors (Job Number)*

Variable	1st Telecommuting Job		2nd + Telecommuting Job	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Manager Communications	3.86	0.62	3.77	0.54
Job Satisfaction	3.81	0.70	3.73	0.66
Manager Coaching Behaviors	3.60	0.77	3.65	0.71
Manager Empowering Behaviors	3.59	0.51	3.48	0.51

As a result of seeing some variations in the mean scores and standard deviations amongst the respondents based on telecommuting job number, a t-test was performed to determine if the differences noted were significant at  $p \leq .05$ . Table 16 shows there was no significant difference in mean answers pertaining to the participants' telecommuting job number in all the factors of job satisfaction, manager communications and manager coaching behaviors and manager empowering behaviors as the Sig. (2-tailed) score was higher than .05.

**Table 16**

*Independent t-test for Telecommuting Job Number Related to Job Satisfaction, Manager Communications, Manager Coaching Behaviors, and Manager Empowering Behaviors*

Variable		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.						Lower	Upper
Job Satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	0.392	0.532	0.639	169	0.524	0.074	0.115	-0.154	0.302
	Equal variances not assumed			0.656	97.032	0.513	0.074	0.112	-0.149	0.297
Manager Communications	Equal variances assumed	1.093	0.297	0.904	177	0.367	0.087	0.097	-0.103	0.278
	Equal variances not assumed			0.949	116.507	0.345	0.087	0.092	-0.095	0.270
Manager Coaching Behaviors	Equal variances assumed	0.970	0.326	-0.362	176	0.718	-0.044	0.122	-0.285	0.197
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.374	109.082	0.709	-0.044	0.118	-0.278	0.190
Manager Empowering Behaviors	Equal variances assumed	0.118	0.731	1.257	171	0.211	0.105	0.083	-0.060	0.270
	Equal variances not assumed			1.250	101.247	0.214	0.105	0.084	-0.062	0.271

### Summary

This chapter analyzed three research questions and the corresponding hypotheses and the means and standard deviations of the respondents' answers using correlations and descriptive statistics in SPSS. Although the relationship to job satisfaction for communication behaviors and coaching behaviors were moderate and empowering behaviors was moderately weak, all three hypotheses were supported as having a relationship with overall employee job satisfaction in telecommuting employees.

The overall results demonstrated a positive impact on job satisfaction related to manager communications, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors. The largest impact on employee job satisfaction was when the level of manager communications is perceived as higher; then employee job satisfaction was also

higher. The other behaviors of manager coaching behaviors and manager empowering behaviors also had a positive impact, but not at the level of communication.

In Chapter 5, the results of this study are compared to previous studies, implications of the findings are discussed, recommendations for using the information are highlighted, and finally, areas for possible future research are identified.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This study was a quantitative study and was to determine the impact an employee's direct manager has on overall employee job satisfaction through the behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment exhibited by the manager with the individual employee. The study also examined the differences in overall satisfaction and the perception of managerial behaviors in different demographic groups. Finally, the study explored if job satisfaction could be predicted by the individual manager's behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowering.

The cross-sectional study was completed using a survey instrument of 49 questions and posted online using Amazon's Mturk.com for targeting potential participants and SurveyMonkey.com for the participants to complete the survey. Participants were offered the opportunity to participate in the study and were given 3 days to complete the survey. The survey opened on March 10, 2020 and closed on March 13, 2020.

The target population was individuals working full-time, being at least 18 years of age, telecommuting two or more days per week, and working within the United States. Additionally, the participants were not targeted by any industry or job type, only that they were in a telecommuting arrangement with their current employer.

The findings of the study, implications, recommendations, limitations, and areas for future research are discussed in this chapter.



## Findings

This study expands the body of research that exists and that has been widely studied for decades, which is employee job satisfaction. According to Allen et al. (2015), it is “the employee attitude that has received the most empirical attention” (p. 47). Much of the research found pertains to the elements that were shown to increase employee job satisfaction that an organization can implement. However, little research was found for the individual behaviors exhibited by the employee’s direct manager as they relate to employee job satisfaction or how they impact telecommuters. Therefore, this research study was important to expanding the information available as it pertains to managerial behaviors on job satisfaction and telecommuters.

The hypothesis for each of the three research questions of this study was supported showing there is a direct, positive relationship between a manager’s behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment and overall employee job satisfaction.

- Research question one asked, “*What is the relationship between communication from an employee’s direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*” The hypotheses were (H1) Communication from an employee’s direct manager is related to the employee’s job satisfaction, and (H1<sub>0</sub>) There is no relationship between communication from an employee’s direct manager and the employee’s job satisfaction.
- Research question two asked, “*What is the relationship between coaching from an employee’s direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*” The hypotheses were (H2) Coaching from an employee’s direct manager is related to

the employee's job satisfaction, and (H2<sub>0</sub>) There is no relationship between coaching from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

- Research question three asked, "*What is the relationship between empowerment from an employee's direct manager and overall job satisfaction of the employee?*"

The hypotheses were (H3) Empowerment from an employee's direct manager is related to the employee's job satisfaction, and (H3<sub>0</sub>) There is no relationship between empowerment from an employee's direct manager and the employee's job satisfaction.

The better the employee perceives the manager's communication, coaching, and empowering behaviors, the employee reports higher job satisfaction. The strongest relationship was that of manager communication with coaching behaviors second. The overall relationship was moderate, whereas empowering behaviors was the lowest of the three behaviors and moderately weak.

The results of this study point to a manager's communication with an employee as having the greatest impact on employee job satisfaction. The findings in a study performed by Raina and Roebuck (2016) were similar in that the researchers concluded, through a similar methodology, that there was a significant relationship to manager/employee communication and overall employee job satisfaction.

The results of this study show there is a relationship between a manager's coaching behaviors with an employee and overall employee job satisfaction. Kim (2014) performed a study and concluded managerial coaching and support impact employee job satisfaction. The study was performed by using a survey and had a broad section of industries for which the participants worked.

This study also found a relationship between manager empowering behaviors and overall employee job satisfaction. In this study, empowering behaviors had the least impact of the three relationships in that the relationship was moderately weak. Similar results were found in a study by Sinha (2017) where empowerment was determined motivational and fosters higher job satisfaction.

The grounded theories of LMX, Transformational Leadership, Path-goal Theory, and High-Involvement Work Process all demonstrate the largest impact a manager can have on employee job satisfaction is through positive communication. Coaching and empowerment are also integral parts and described in the theories. In this study, an analysis was performed to determine the influence of managerial behaviors on employee job satisfaction and determine if employee satisfaction could be predicted by the managerial behaviors alone. The result was significant pertaining to communication and empowerment where each unit of change in these behaviors will change employee job satisfaction by 46%. There was no significant result for managerial coaching found.

Finally, the data was analyzed by demographic groups to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean score answers given by the different demographics of the group. The result was the only significant difference in mean answers was due to gender. Females, overall, had higher scores in each of the survey's four areas (job satisfaction, manager communication behaviors, manager coaching behaviors, and manager empowering behaviors) than males. The findings in a study by Malangwasira (2013) found demographic differences proved to be a factor in employee job satisfaction including gender, age, education, and tenure, whereas this study only found a difference in gender. This difference may be attributed to the different population studied as

Malangwasira's population was in the manufacturing industry and the population for this study was telecommuting employees.

The study demonstrates the relationship between specific managerial behaviors and overall employee job satisfaction. In the next section, the implications and recommendations of this research for organizations and managers are discussed.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Employee job satisfaction is an integral part of success for any organization. Employee job satisfaction drives many other parts of the business including customer satisfaction (Conway & Briner, 2015) and productivity (Choi & Ha, 2018), and building and maintaining positive relationships with employees fall mainly on the employee's direct manager.

The results of this study, with telecommuting employees, demonstrated a relationship between the managerial behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowering behaviors and job satisfaction. This can be more difficult for direct managers as they are responsible for employees, which they do not have face-to-face contact with or little face-to-face contact as the level of satisfaction may be more difficult to gauge virtually.

A manager may not control the technology resources available for the situation encompassing their telecommuting employees; however, they do have control on how they use those resources to maintain effective contact with employees and the actions they personally demonstrate. As this study establishes the influence of the manager's behaviors on job satisfaction, it is important for both the manager and the organization to realize modifications in techniques are required for delivering proper communication

remotely, how to coach employees remotely, and how to provide employees with empowerment.

Employees who work remotely may not be satisfied just in the fact they work from home. However, because they are not in a face-to-face environment, it may be especially difficult to gauge the employee's satisfaction level, as mentioned above. This creates a challenging situation for the manager when determining if an employee needs assistance, requires training, or feels they are not receiving enough interaction with the manager or other members of the team.

The results show that there is some work to do in this area of delivering effective communication, coaching, and empowering behaviors with telecommuting employees. Across all four categories of the survey, the majority of the answers fell in the 3 – *sometimes* category of the scale. This indicates that even though prior research shows these behaviors impact job satisfaction (Ali et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2012; Kim, 2014; Kontoghiorghes, 2016; Raina & Roebuck, 2016; Sinha, 2017), there is improvement needed by managers in the behaviors they engage in with telecommuting employees. Additionally, the theories explored in Chapter 2 of this study, LMX, High-Involvement Work Processes, Path-Goal Theory, and Transformational Leadership, indicate building strong relationships (Cogliser et al., 2009), supporting and guidance (Boon & Biron, 2016), and empowerment (Boxall et al., 2016) are important to achieve employee job satisfaction.

We see from the literature review and the past research reviewed for this study that grounded theory aligns with past research results. Additionally, the results of this study with telecommuters also align with theory and past research. The implications of

managing someone in a telecommuting arrangement are essential for managers to understand and explore ways to modify and improve to be effective at achieving a higher level of job satisfaction with the employees they manage. There are some ways managers and organizations can apply the information gathered in this study.

### **Communication**

Effective communication is an integral part of achieving higher levels of employee job satisfaction, and perceptions of communication effectiveness may differ (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). Managers must develop a mechanism for regular communication that provides information and feedback to employees. Additionally, the manager must offer regular and consistent communication and be flexible in using various resources for the communication preferences of different individuals (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Employees should be provided details pertaining available resources so they may be kept apprised with when and how information is disseminated. The manager must maintain awareness of how the communications are being received and processed by employees in a virtual environment. This may be accomplished through petitioning employees for input and organizing a regular method of follow-up.

### **Coaching**

Managerial coaching impacts employee job satisfaction. Employees who receive coaching from their manager may have a more optimistic outlook of their job, which may improve productivity as their job duties and expectations are clearer (Kim, 2014). Additionally, managerial coaching can be interpreted as organizational support, thereby improving employee job satisfaction (Ali et al., 2018). The manager should take opportunities to coach employees in different ways the employee may approach their job

duties, regularly follow up with employees, offer assistance, and seek out other training that may benefit the employee. Additionally, the manager should provide regular performance reviews and take that opportunity to discuss ways to improve. These processes are even more crucial in the virtual environment as the employee may have questions about how to modify their own approach to the duties of their job while working remotely.

### **Empowerment**

Empowering employees to approach their work with flexibility and make decisions has a direct influence on employee job satisfaction (Sinha, 2017). Encouraging an employee to make recommendations for processes and other functions lead to the employee having a sense of value and meaning for their work (Chen et al., 2012).

Working in the telecommuting environment requires a flexible structure and the need for innovative ideas to carry out company goals. Managers need to recognize that they must create a participative environment and one where employees may provide regular input in decisions. Creating a structure to allow for greater participation in decisions is critical for improving employee job satisfaction.

### **Limitations**

The results of this study provided some quality information pertaining to employees' needs with respect to interactions with their managers to have greater job satisfaction. Although the study yielded these results, there were some limitations to the study.

The population was broad in that no specific industry or job type was targeted so the results are generalized. Someone wanting to use this information may find the results are not indicative in a specialized field or a specific industry.

The study was cross-sectional, and the data were collected at one point in time. The environment of telework is changing and for the majority of the respondents, their current job is their first telecommuting job. There is no follow up with those respondents to determine if their responses would change over time with more experience.

Finally, the study did not use dyads between the employee and their actual manager to compare results. Additionally, no interventions or training took place to allow for a follow up to see if new or different techniques in presenting managerial behaviors would positively impact overall job satisfaction and achieve higher scores.

Although these limitations exist for the study, the results are useful for both organizations and managers as they develop and maintain telecommuting opportunities for employees.

### **Future Research**

When reviewing literature for the current study, there were many factors uncovered pertaining to employee job satisfaction. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, employee job satisfaction is “the employee attitude that has received the most empirical attention” (Allen et al., 2015, p. 47). In order to maintain a narrower focus on the factors of the study, the top three that were observed to occur most often in other research results were chosen and had a commonality with grounded research topics.

The data were collected from participants in early March 2020 from participants that were already telecommuting. Since that time, many employees in the United States



were forced to telecommute due to a pandemic. It should be considered to repeat this research with employees that were not telecommuting prior to that time. Neither employees nor their managers had much time, if any, to prepare either mentally or physically for the differences between working in an office environment and telecommuting.

There may be value in repeating this research in specific telecommuting groups pertaining to industry or job type. A researcher may have a specific need to determine the impact of each of the manager behaviors in the finance industry or IT job types. Additionally, it may be of interest in that scenario to perform a longitudinal study with training interventions, as described above in applications, using manager/employee dyads.

The generalized nature of the instrument created for this research makes it valuable for performing additional research, as suggested above. Adding an additional qualitative piece may also be warranted to gain further understanding of the role a manager plays in employee job satisfaction.

### **Summary**

This research provided a clear picture of how the manager behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment impact employees in telecommuting arrangements. There may be some misconceptions about telecommuting employees' needs as far as what they need from their manager to experience higher overall job satisfaction. Still, the results indicate the same behaviors are necessary in telecommuting employees as was found in other studies with face-to-face-employees.

This study added to the research already conducted on the topic of employee job satisfaction and expanded on the needs of employees who telecommute with respect to interactions with their direct managers. The results are somewhat unique in that not a lot of prior research was found pertaining to the contributing factors of job satisfaction in telecommuting employees. Additionally, the narrow scope of the study of managerial behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment allows organizations and managers to see the main contributing factor, which the direct manager has control over, is communication.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

1. **High leader perspective/Low follower perspective:** This is an unbalanced perspective as the leader views the relationship more favorably or of high quality and the follower perceives the relationship less favorably. In this scenario the leader usually has respect for the follower and feels there is a mutual influence on the job, whereas the follower perceives the relationship as transactional or economically based.
2. **High leader perspective/High follower perspective:** This is a balanced perspective as both the leader and follower perceive the relationship to be high quality. This relationship scenario usually comes with the follower having loyalty to the supervisor and the supervisor makes significant investments in the career of the follower.
3. **Low leader perspective/Low follower perspective:** This is a balanced perspective as both the leader and the follower perceive the relationship to be low quality. The relationship in this scenario is more formal in nature and usually neither party will make any investment toward taking the relationship beyond the formal employment contract.
4. **Low leader perspective/High follower perspective:** This is an unbalanced perspective as the follower views the relationship more favorably or of high quality and the leader perceives the relationship less favorably. In this scenario the follower usually has respect and feels there is a mutual influence on the job,

whereas the leader perceives the relationship as transactional or economically based.

(Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner, 2009)

## Appendix B

### High-Involvement Work Processes (HIWP)

- Meaning – An employee must feel a sense of “meaning” that the job they are doing adds value to the overall process.
- Competence - The employee’s feeling of ability to perform the tasks at the expected skill level for high performance.
- Self-determination – The employee’s perception of control over his or daily job duties.
- Impact – The influence the employee feels he or she has in the outcome of the job duties and the process.

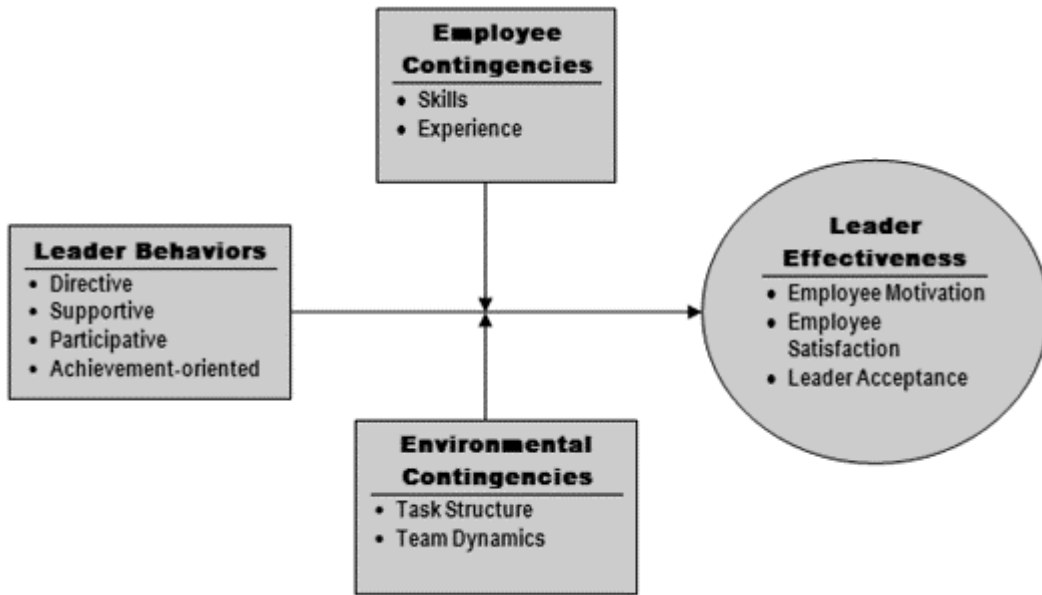
(Butts, Vandenberg, Dejoy, Shaffer, & Wilson, 2009)

## Appendix C

### House's Path-Goal Theory of Management

The four leadership styles are:

- **Directive:** Here the leader provides guidelines, lets subordinates know what is expected of them, sets performance standards for them, and controls behavior when performance standards are not met. He makes judicious use of rewards and disciplinary action. The style is the same as task-oriented one.
- **Supportive:** The leader is friendly towards subordinates and displays personal concern for their needs, welfare, and well-being. This style is the same as people-oriented leadership.
- **Participative:** The leader believes in group decision-making and shares information with subordinates. He consults his subordinates on important decisions related to work, task goals, and paths to resolve goals.
- **Achievement-oriented:** The leader sets challenging goals and encourages employees to reach their peak performance. The leader believes that employees are responsible enough to accomplish challenging goals. This is the same as goal-setting theory.



Model of Path-Goal Theory

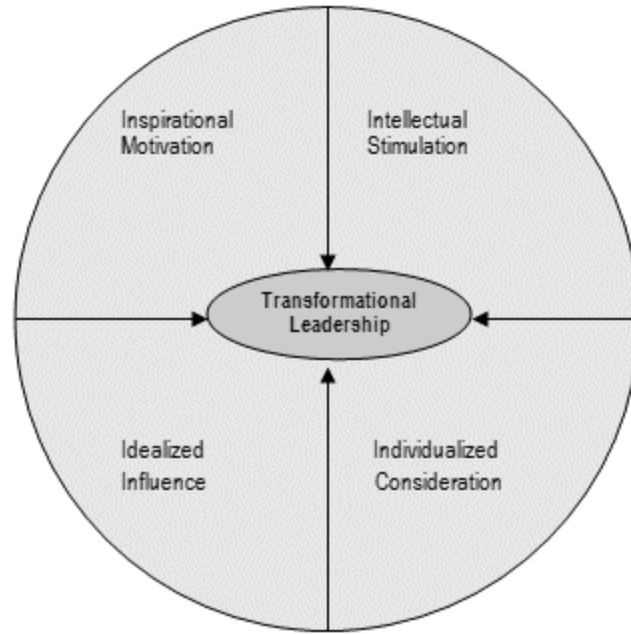
(Juneia, 2020)



## Appendix D

### Transformational Leadership

- **Inspirational Motivation:** The foundation of transformational leadership is the promotion of consistent vision, mission, and a set of values to the members. Their vision is so compelling that they know what they want from every interaction. Transformational leaders guide followers by providing them with a sense of meaning and challenge. They work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment.
- **Intellectual Stimulation:** Such leaders encourage their followers to be innovative and creative. They encourage new ideas from their followers and never criticize them publicly for the mistakes committed by them. The leaders focus on the “what” in problems and do not focus on the blaming part of it. They have no hesitation in discarding an old practice set by them if it is found ineffective.
- **Idealized Influence:** They believe in the philosophy that a leader can influence followers only when he practices what he preaches. The leaders act as role models that followers seek to emulate. Such leaders always win the trust and respect of their followers through their action. They typically place their followers needs over their own, sacrifice their personal gains for them, and demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct. The use of power by such leaders is aimed at influencing them to strive for the common goals of the organization.
- **Individualized Consideration:** Leaders act as mentors to their followers and reward them for creativity and innovation. The followers are treated differently according to their talents and knowledge. They are empowered to make decisions and are always provided with the needed support to implement their decisions.



Model of Transformational Leadership

(Juneia, 2020)

## Appendix E

Ensuring that working from home is successful for both an employer and its employees takes planning and constant attention. Tips from experts include the following:

- Provide suitable training and technology, including collaboration methods.
- Create appropriate performance metrics.
- Establish regular times for discussion and brainstorming.
- Communicate regularly; keep telecommuters in the loop.
- Schedule regular visits to the worksite.
- Find other ways to have informal interactions, such as wishing someone happy birthday.
- Set expectations on workers' schedules and availability.
- Select workers who are disciplined self-starters.

(Wilkie, 2015)

## Appendix F

### Invitation to Participate in the Study

My name is Debra Stevens, as part of my doctoral program at Wilmington University, I am conducting research on the impact of communication, coaching, and empowerment from an employee's direct manager as it pertains to overall job satisfaction. I would greatly appreciate your participation in a survey about this important topic. Responding to the survey should not take more than 7 – 10 minutes, and your answers will be anonymous. Participation is voluntary, and you may refuse to answer certain questions or stop at any time without any penalty. However, I value your perceptions and sincerely hope that you will take a few minutes to help us better understand employee satisfaction in telecommuting employees. By completing and submitting the survey, you are voluntarily consenting to participate in this study. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (researcher).

Thank you,

Debra Stevens

Email: [dstevens008@my.wilmu.edu](mailto:dstevens008@my.wilmu.edu)

## Appendix G

### Mturk.com Detailed Project Parameters

1. Project Name – “Telecommuter Satisfaction Considering Manager's Behavior” (This field is only visible to the Requester as a way of identifying the project.)
2. Title – “Telecommuter Job Satisfaction Survey” (This field tells Workers briefly about the HIT.)
3. Description – “This is a research study survey. The survey will take about 7 - 10 minutes to complete and asks questions pertaining to overall job satisfaction and questions pertaining to your manager's communication, coaching, and empowering actions.” (This field provides more detail about the HIT to the Workers.)
4. Keywords – “survey, job satisfaction, telecommuter” (Keywords is a way Mturk.com Workers may search for potential HITs they may qualify for.)
5. Reward per response – “\$1.00” (Reward is the amount the Requester is paying the Worker for completing the task or HIT.)
6. Number of respondents – “250” (This field sets the expectation to Mturk.com for the number of HITs needed for the project.)
7. Time allotted per worker – “1 hour” (Once a Worker chooses to accept a HIT, this is the time he or she has to complete the survey.)

8. Survey expires – “3 days” (This signifies the amount of time the project will be posted. If the 250 HITs are not completed before 3 days, the project will end in 3 days.)
9. Auto-approve and pay Workers – “3 days” (Workers will automatically receive payment even if the Requester has not approved the HIT completed by the Worker.)
10. Master Workers – This option was not selected. Master Workers have completed at least 1,000 HITs for various Requesters. For this study, this limitation was too high, and it was felt potential participants would be excluded.
11. Location – “United States” (Restrictions may be placed on the geographical location of Workers. For this study, telecommuters in the United States were desired.)
12. Employment status – “Full-time (35+ hours per week)” (A restriction for full-time employees was placed as the goal of the study is for telecommuters who work full-time.)
13. Daily Internet Usage – “1 to 4 hours” (This restriction was set since there is not a restriction specifically for telecommuters. The idea is that if an employee is working from home two (2) or more days a week that the average internet usage is about 1 – 4 hours daily. Also, telecommuting does not necessarily equate to a full day on the internet.)

14. Task visibility – ‘Hidden and only available to Workers meeting the qualifications’ (Only Workers meeting the full-time status, in the United States, and using the internet on an average of 1 – 4 hours daily will see this task as a potential HIT.)

## Appendix H

### SurveyMonkey.com Detailed Custom Survey Creation

1. An account must first be created by selecting “Sign-up” on the top bar of the website Surveymonkey.com.
2. Once the account is created, “Log-in” to the account is required.
3. Select “Create a New Survey” button on the top bar of the account screen.
4. To enter the survey for the first time the “Start from scratch” option was selected on the left tool bar.
5. At this time, a pop-up box with options for “Survey Name”, “Survey Category”, “My Questions are Already Written” box, and the way the questions appear to the survey taker were asked. For this research, the Survey name of “Job Satisfaction and Manager Interaction for Telecommuters” was given, the category selected was “Human Resources”, “My Questions are Already Written” box was selected, and it was decided to show the questions in a “classic” format.
6. Once the prior information is entered, the “Create the survey” button was selected at the bottom of the pop-up box.
7. The option to copy and paste questions or enter each question directly into a template is provided. For this survey, the choice to enter each question was chosen as a personal preference of the researcher. For each question entered, the answer format of “multiple choice” was chosen and the answer choices



were entered. For this survey, the answer choices for question one (1) was multiple choice consisting of “yes” or “no” and for questions two (2) through forty-four (44) were based on the 5-point Likert scale of 1 – never, 2 – rarely, 3 – sometimes, 4 – usually, and 5 – always. The answers for the demographic questions forty-five (45) through forty-seven (47) were also multiple choice, and questions forty-eight (48) and forty-nine (49) were open for entry by the taker.

8. After the questions were entered, the “Done” button at the bottom of the design page was selected and the survey was saved. The next step, using the button “Next”, allowed the researcher to review the questions for content, ease of viewing, and provided the estimated time to complete the survey and an estimated completion rate for the survey.

## Appendix I

### Configuring the Collector in SurveyMonkey.com

1. Thumbnail Image and Text – This is prefilled.
2. Title – Job Satisfaction and Manager Interaction for Telecommuters
3. Description – The same description was used for both Mturk.com and surveymonkey.com (“This is a research study survey. The survey will take about 7 - 10 minutes to complete and asks questions pertaining to overall job satisfaction and questions pertaining to your manager's communication, coaching, and empowering actions.”)
4. Custom Thank You – Selected as yes to include a thank you notice that included a code for the Worker to enter into their personal Mturk.com screen was provided. (“Thank you for completing the survey. Please enter the code 44332211 in the "Please enter survey code here:" field on your Mturk.com screen.”).
5. Multiple Responses – This option was turned on. This is to restrict multiple responses from the same computer device. As the invitation is through an Mturk.com HIT invitation, only one HIT per Worker is allowed.
6. Response Editing – This option was turned on to allow respondents to change their answers until the survey is submitted.
7. Anonymous Responses – This option was turned on and thereby not allowing IP addresses to be collected.

8. Instant Results – This option was turned off thereby not allowing respondents to see the compilation of previous answers.
9. Cutoff Date and Time – This option was turned on and the date and time selected to end the mobile link coincided with time allotted for the HITs to be completed in Mturk.com.
10. Response Limit – This option was turned on and the number of responses set for collection was set to 250 to coincide with the number of HITs requested through Mturk.com.
11. IP Restrictions – No IP addresses were restricted from taking the survey.
12. Password Protection – No password was set to restrict access to the survey.
13. Custom Disqualification – If a respondent answers “No” to the first question the survey, “Do you telecommute 2 or more days per week?”, they are disqualified from taking the survey. If this occurs, the respondent will receive the message “Thank you for your willingness to aid in this research project. At this time, we are unable to continue to the questions for the research based on not meeting the initial qualification.” In the event there is a technical issue with disqualifying a respondent, the data will be identified in the final data set and the respondent’s answers deleted before analysis.

## Appendix J

### Survey Questionnaire

#### The Impact of the Managerial Behaviors of Communication, Coaching and Empowerment on Employee Job Satisfaction in Telecommuters

#### Introduction of the survey questions:

The purpose of this survey is to learn about how management behaviors of communication, coaching, and empowerment impact overall employee job satisfaction in a telecommuting environment. The answers you provide should be from your own experience and perception. Please be honest and rest assured all answers will be kept confidential.

Please refer to the scale below when answering questions. Select a number for each question that most closely matches the frequency of each occurrence.

#### Prequalifying Question

Do you telecommute an average of 2 or more days a week in performing the duties of your job? (yes – continue with the survey) (no – the participant is ineligible and thanked)

Scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always

Prequalifying question

1. Do you telecommute an average of 2 or more days a week in performing the duties of your job?

Overall employee job satisfaction questions

2. I dislike the work I am doing.

3. I am actively looking for another job.
4. I am thinking about looking for another job.
5. I feel good about the work I am doing.
6. I enjoy my current working arrangements.
7. I look forward to working each day.
8. I feel balance between my work-life and home-life.
9. My job is important.
10. I enjoy helping others, directly or indirectly, as a result of performing the duties of my job.
11. Overall, I am satisfied with my job.

#### Manager communication questions

12. I know what is happening at the organizational level in my company.
13. I receive emails from my manager with timely information for performing my job.
14. I receive phone calls from my manager with timely information for performing my job.
15. I know where to find the information I need to do my job.
16. I am prepared to answer questions asked of me by customers, co-workers, my supervisor etc., about details pertaining to my work (i.e., products, processes, projects, information).
17. If I don't know an answer to a question, I know where to start looking for it.
18. My manager makes me aware of the reasons for when changes occur in performing my job.
19. My manager checks with me frequently to see if I have questions.
20. My manager is available when I need help or have a question.
21. I receive support from my manager when I have questions.
22. I know where I can get help with questions.
23. My manager directs me to appropriate sources to learn about products for my work.

#### Manager coaching questions

24. My manager keeps me informed about new company information to help me do my job.
25. My manager quickly informs me regarding changes or information that impacts my job.
26. My manager provides me with opportunities to learn about my job.
27. My manager listens to me when I have a question and offers advice for solutions.
28. My manager discusses my work with me.
29. My manager offers encouragement about my job.

30. My manager provides me with needed instruction when changes occur that impact my job.
31. My manager discusses with me ways of improving the job I perform.
32. My manager advises me of upcoming training classes or events.
33. My manager schedules time with me to discuss products and processes.

#### Manager empowerment questions

34. I am comfortable making decisions when performing my job.
35. I am comfortable not telling my manager about decisions I make on my own when completing my work.
36. I frequently seek my manager's approval when making decisions about my work.
37. I worry my manager will question my decisions.
38. I procrastinate telling my manager about decisions I make when completing work.
39. I try to make decisions my manager would make.
40. My manager encourages me to make decisions.
41. My manager supports the decisions I make when completing my work.
42. My manager suggests I make a different decision next time.
43. My manager has me change my decision and do work over.
44. My manager frequently questions the decisions I make.

The following questions are for the purpose of grouping answers, obtained from the questions above, with other participants.

45. This is my ( \_\_ 1<sup>st</sup> ) or ( \_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> or more ) telecommuting job.
46. I am ( \_\_ male ) ( \_\_ female ).
47. My level of education, other than the licenses I hold for my job, is
  - a. \_\_ High School
  - b. \_\_ Post-secondary certificate (training after high school)
  - c. \_\_ Associate's (college)
  - d. \_\_ Bachelor's (college)
  - e. \_\_ Master's
  - f. \_\_ Doctorate
48. My income last year was ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) (round to the nearest 1000) (i.e., \$52,000 is 52000).
49. My age is ( \_\_ ).