

**TITLE:** A Comparison of Leadership Practices and Behaviors and Their Relationship to Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

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**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between leadership styles and occupational stress and job satisfaction.

**METHODOLOGY:** The sample consisted of eight managers and 24 direct reports at the University of California Cooperative Extension Agency of the County of Los Angeles (California). Eight managers were female and three were males; among direct reports four were male and 20 were female. Participants completed the Leadership Practices Inventory, the Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI-R; Osipow, 1981), and the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS; Spector, 1997), and also took part in semi-structured interviews.

**KEY FINDINGS:** “In all cases the coefficients indicated that higher ratings of managers on the 5 scales of the LPI correlated with greater levels of job satisfaction” (p. 72). Role ambiguity and the five leadership practices were correlated in a negative fashion, indicating that high levels of job ambiguity in direct reports coincided with low ratings of the supervisor. Social support and LPI scores were also correlated negatively, which was unexpected (“somewhat contradictory,” p. 73).

ANOVA results indicated that, in general, direct reports who rated their supervisor “low” on a leadership practice were significantly less satisfied in three specific job satisfaction areas (satisfaction with pay, supervision, and nature of work), as well as in total job satisfaction, than direct reports who rated their supervisor as “moderate” or “high.” Leadership practices significantly predicted job satisfaction in various regression analyses, with the best equation for predicting total job satisfaction being the leadership practice of Encouraging (adjusted  $R^2$  of .497).

ANOVA results indicated that, in general, direct reports who rated their supervisor “low” on a leadership practice (except for Challenging) had significantly higher levels of role ambiguity than direct reports who rated their supervisor as “high.” Stepwise regression analysis showed that Enabling and Challenging accounted for a significant amount of explained variance in role ambiguity (43%). Regression analyses were generally not significant when relating leadership practices to predict overall occupational stress.

“The major findings from this correlational research is that job satisfaction is directly related to leadership effectiveness, more so than occupational stress....consequently, as an organization experiences high levels of employee satisfaction, one might conclude that the leaders are effective” (p. 80). The LPI was a better predicator of job satisfaction in general than the Occupational Stress Inventory.