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**IMPACT OF SUPERVISOR SUPPORT ON EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION
AMONG FUNDRAISING STAFF WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**A Research Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The George L. Graziadio
School of Business and Management
Pepperdine University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Organization Development**

**by
Giuseppe Nespoli**

August 2017

This research project, completed by

GIUSEPPE NESPOLI

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Date: August 2017

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Abstract

This study examined the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education. Sixteen fundraisers working in higher education institutions were interviewed about supervisor support for fundraiser task needs and personal needs, participant job satisfaction and supervisor impact on it, and participant intention to stay in their jobs and the field. Participants reported satisfaction with their supervisors' task-related and personal support, high job satisfaction, and strong intentions to stay in their jobs and the field. Key mechanisms of supervisor support included aiding employee growth and development; accelerating and facilitating task completion; being caring, accessible, and communicative; and empowering employees. Doing meaningful work and attaining career achievement and growth also enhanced their job satisfaction. Factors increasing their stay intentions included their sense of achievement at work, rewards, and positive relationships. Suggestions for practice and continued research are offered.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Fundraising has become a central focus of institutions as their public funding and student enrollments decline (Hall, 2004; Matthews, 2007). Rather than being limited to private colleges, public universities and all types of higher education institutions now practice fundraising (Brittingham & Pezzullo, 1990) as a means of survival (Yates, 2001). It follows that nearly all higher education institutions have participated in a capital fundraising campaign (Hall, 2004).

However, successful fundraising requires talented staff members who remains engaged and dedicated to their institutions and who develop long-term relationships with donors. Such engagement, dedication, and job performance are more likely when staff members are satisfied in their jobs (Oliver, 2007).

However, survey research indicates that job dissatisfaction among fundraisers is very high (Berkshire, 2013), while retention is low (Oliver, 2007). Most fundraisers stay in their roles only 2 years (Hugg, 2006), and the average time needed to close a donation from start to finish is 18 months (Sykora, 2005). As a result, there is little sustained relationship building and ongoing giving because these relationships are built and then abandoned a short time later. In other words, the institution is forced to make the same investment in relationship building year after year, without benefiting from the relationships built by departing staff. In addition to these losses, the direct costs of turnover also are high.

Various interventions have been attempted to attract and retain fundraisers, such as attractive salaries and benefit packages. However, this approach addresses only one potential cause of turnover—compensation. Many other factors lead to turnover, such as

job satisfaction (Schleicher, Hansen, & Fox, 2010). Not only is satisfaction important for retention, but a satisfied employee also tends to be more effective and productive (Appelbaum & Kamal, 2000; Tietjen & Myers, 1998).

Moreover, many of these factors that contribute to fundraisers' dissatisfaction relate to the degree to which they feel supported by their supervisors (Pincus, 1986). For example, Ford and Wooldridge (2012) classified supervisors' support in terms of support for employees' task completion and work-life balance. This study examined the impact of supervisor support on fundraisers in higher education.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education.

Four research questions were explored:

1. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' tasks?
2. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' personal needs?
3. In what ways does supervisor support affect fundraisers' job satisfaction?
4. In what ways does supervisor support affect their intentions to stay?

Significance of the Study

This study generated valuable insights related to the impact of supervisor support on fundraisers in higher education. The findings generated through this study can be helpful for informing manager training and development and for providing guidelines for motivating and supporting staff for the purpose of retention and improved organizational performance.

Organization of the Study

This chapter provided the background and purpose for the study. The study's significance also was provided. Chapter 2 provides a review of theory and research relevant to the present study. Literature on fundraising staff, supervisor support, and job satisfaction is reviewed. Chapter 3 describes the methods that were used in this project. The research design as well as the procedures related to participant selection, confidentiality and consent procedures, data collection, and data analysis are described.

Chapter 4 reports the results of the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the study results, including conclusions; recommendations for employees, managers, institutions, and organizational development consultants; limitations of the study; and suggestions for continued research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education. This chapter reviews literature relevant to the present study. First, research and theory related to leader fundraising staff are discussed. Second, research on supervisor support is reviewed. Finally, concepts and research related to job satisfaction are presented.

Fundraising Staff

Fundraising has become a central focus of higher education institutions as their public funding and student enrollments decline (Hall, 2004; Matthews, 2007). Rather than being limited to private colleges, public universities and all types of higher education institutions utilize fundraising (Brittingham & Pezzullo, 1990) as a means of survival (Yates, 2001). For these reasons, nearly all higher education institutions have participated in a capital fundraising campaign (Hall, 2004; Matthews, 2007).

Hager, Rooney, and Pollak (2002) estimate that nearly 296,000 fundraisers are employed in the United States. The United States Department of Labor describes fundraisers as professionals who “organize events and campaigns to raise money and other donations for an organization. They may design promotional materials and increase awareness of an organization’s work, goals, and financial needs” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015, p. 1). Yet, inconsistencies exist concerning the definition of *fundraiser* because responsibilities vary from organization to organization, and some professionals have many roles, if they have clarity about the scope of their role at all (Haggerty, 2015). Distinguishing the role of *fundraiser* from *development officer* may provide clarification. Duronio and Tempel (1997) describe development officers as “people whose jobs involve

the acquisition of revenues from private sources for nonprofit organizations” (p. 1). Drozdowski (2003) add that fundraising concerns cultivating or soliciting donors, whereas time spent “aligning fund-raising goals with institutional planning and maturation” is the role of a development officer (para. 3). These two domains of activity can be carried out by different employees in different roles, or the same employee can handle these multiple roles.

Demographics. The population of fundraisers is rather homogeneous. Two of the largest professional associations for fundraisers, the Association of Fundraising Professionals and Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, report that their memberships consist predominantly of Caucasian, middle-aged females with at least 16 years of fundraising experience (Haggerty, 2015). Willard (1985) discovered that age, years of work experience, and years of fundraising experience were positively associated with success in fundraising roles.

Despite the predominance of women, pay and status inequality is common among the higher ranks of the field. That is, although men and women usually begin their fundraising careers with equal pay (Sampson & Moore, 2008), women typically do not keep pace with men’s increases in salary or title (Mesch & Rooney, 2008). These discrepancies also have been associated with dissatisfaction among female fundraisers.

Regarding ethnic diversity in the field, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (2005) acknowledged that increasing numbers of African Americans are joining the field. However, these individuals tend to serve in multiple roles and hold job titles that do not imply fundraising.

Roles and responsibilities. Fundraisers in higher education have many responsibilities that go beyond the scope of raising donations (Haggerty, 2015; Ryan,

2006). One such responsibility is relationship building, which fundraisers ranked higher in importance than soliciting donations in Bell and Cornelius's (2013) survey of fundraisers. Worth and Asp (1995) described four roles that fundraisers need to enact in their work: (a) sales, wherein their main duty is soliciting donations; (b) catalyzing, wherein they provide support for fundraising activities; (c) management, wherein they organize resources; and (d) leadership, wherein they influence policy changes. Notably, only one of these four roles has a primary function of directly raising funds.

According to past research, soliciting donations accounts for only 5% of a fundraiser's actual responsibilities (Dee & Henkin, 1997). Other responsibilities ranked in Bell and Cornelius's (2013) study include managing the organization; researching prospective and current donors; providing transparency regarding how funds are being used; and involving stakeholders such as colleagues, board members, and volunteers. Thanking donors and building relationships also require considerable time.

Challenges of fundraising. Examination of fundraising studies indicates that fundraisers experience several frustrations and challenges in their work. One challenge is that a fundraiser may be the only one responsible for soliciting donations at an institution. This can lead to a lack of role clarity, mentoring, and development, as well as a lack of understanding among other organization members regarding the fundraiser's roles and responsibilities (Haggerty, 2015). Moreover, some fundraisers are perceived as salespeople and are thus excluded from strategic discussions and roles (Worth & Asp, 1995). Pigeonholing fundraisers in this manner can lead them to feel dissatisfied with both their job and the institution (Waters, Kelly, & Walker, 2012).

A second challenge concerns the performance metrics used to measure fundraiser success. A typical metric is the amount of money raised. Although this is a reasonable

metric, it becomes problematic when funds raised is the only metric, as it does not account for the many other responsibilities fundraisers carry out before, during, and after the actual donation (Bloland & Tempel, 2004). One such activity is relationship building, which requires a great deal of time and as well as integrity, enthusiasm, creativity, and the capacity to inspire confidence. Although these are central to the fundraising task, they typically are not measured (Ryan, 2006).

A third challenge is that fundraisers are viewed as untrustworthy by the public (Dee & Henkin, 1997). In one survey, fundraisers were characterized as being only slightly more trustworthy than lawyers and politicians. Being trusted meets important psychological needs and also is an important component to the relationship building critical to fundraising.

Each of the challenges discussed in this section can undermine fundraisers' job satisfaction and performance. Thus, it is important to understand what supervisors can do to enhance fundraisers' satisfaction. The next section examines the unique industry challenges fundraisers face.

Industry challenges. Just as individual fundraisers face challenges, their institutions do as well. One challenge is that fundraising staffs tend to be bottom heavy, due to a scarcity of talent to fill mid-level and senior positions and a rapidly increasing population of entry-level professional fundraisers (Hall, 2004; Matthews, 2007; Schwinn, 2002).

A second challenge is that the low supply of seasoned fundraisers compels organizations to offer higher salaries and more attractive compensation and incentive packages to new hires. Organizations must compete vigorously for qualified fundraisers in their quest to maintain and increase philanthropic support for their institutions (Moore,

2004b; Taylor, 2006). It is understandable that fundraising managers identify hiring as the single most frustrating and time-consuming activity (Lingenfelter & Harris, 2003; Moore, 2004a; Pollack, 2001; Schwinn & Sommerfeld, 2002; Taylor, 2006).

A third and perhaps even more pressing problem is maintaining and hiring experienced staff in the midst of frequent budget cuts and high turnover (Association of Fundraising Professionals, 2005). Hugg (2006) reported that the average job-life expectancy for a fundraiser is now 2 years or less: 25% of Association of Fundraising Professionals (2005) annual survey respondents reported they had changed jobs in the last year, and over each of the last 4 years, nearly half the respondents indicated they had been in their current jobs for 3 years or less.

Turnover is considered the biggest financial cost of personnel management (Brief, 1976). It is estimated that it costs twice the employee's annual salary to replace him or her (Brannick, 2001; Gale, 2002; Roberts & Chonko, 1996). Only 10-15% of the losses are direct costs due to recruitment, replacement, and training of personnel (Racz, 2000). The remaining 70-85% consists of indirect costs that are difficult to measure, such as lost productivity and opportunity costs (Capko, 2001; Racz, 2000).

Phillips (2003) concluded based on his research that it takes 12 months for a new employee to reach 100% efficiency, including an average of 5 months of lost productivity. Mobley (1982) pointed out that the time consumed by efforts to fill vacant positions may hamper effective operation and interfere with efficient achievement of organizational goals. When one combines the issues of short tenure, high turnover, time needed to achieve efficiency, and the average time needed to secure a major gift (18 months [Sykora, 2005]), it follows that fundraisers may be moving from institution to institution having achieved no tangible results.

Supervisor Support

Supervisor support refers to both (a) *task support*, which concerns task-related advice, guidance, and problem solving related to the work at hand and (b) *personal support*, which involves the supervisor expressing care for and listening to the individual (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994; Swanson & Power, 2001). Personal support can include such behaviors as demonstrating empathy; offering recognition and incentives; and practicing active listening, which allows the supervisor to help employees manage stress (Wicks, 2005).

Supervisor support has been explored in terms of the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship. Spector (2000) emphasizes that high-quality relationships are defined by respect, likeability, and fair distribution of resources (Oliver, 2007). Supervisor support also is an element of organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), although employees do distinguish between support from the organization and support from the supervisor (Haggerty, 2015).

Influences. A central feature of supervisor support is trust. Subordinates trust supervisors who exhibit characteristics that demonstrate valuing other people, such as benevolence, integrity, and ability (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007; Kramer, 1999; Mayer et al., 1995). Supervisors perceived as trustworthy also are perceived as having a range of other desirable traits, such as communicating honesty, outlining realistic goals, and having good intentions and a strong values system (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Conger, 1990). Importantly, it does not matter whether the supervisor possesses these traits in actuality; it only matters whether the employee believes the supervisor has these traits.

It follows that when trust is absent between supervisors and employees, communication tends to be viewed as being manipulative, particularly when employees are striving for challenging or unrealistic goals. Employee perceptions of supervisor support may be influenced by the degree of autonomy; decision-making authority; resources; and recognition, feedback, and encouragement supervisors grant to employees (Ganster, Milan, & Duffy, 1996). Supervisor support also has been associated with supervisors' promotion of goal setting and accountability by peers.

Impacts. Employee perceptions of supervisor support have diverse effects on the employees and their organizations. First, the supervisor represents the organization and acts as a direct link to the organization's mission and values (Haggerty, 2015). It follows that employees who trust their supervisors also tend to trust their organizations (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995).

Moreover, when employees view their supervisors as trustworthy, they have more confidence in the supervisor. It follows that when supervisors communicate or take action, the employee trusts that the supervisor is benign, honest, and reliable (Mayer et al., 1995).

Employees view supervisors as having positive or negative influences on the stresses employees face (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Johnson, 2008). As a result, employees who lack support from their supervisor feel more stressed and less satisfied (Jaramillo, Nixon, & Sams, 2005).

Several researchers have concluded that supervisor support affects employee job satisfaction (Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayan, & Schwartz, 2002; Haggerty, 2015; Harris, Winskowski, & Engdahl, 2007; Jaramillo et al., 2005; Ko, Frey, Osteen, & Ahn, 2015; Tierney, Bauer, & Potter, 2002; Kula & Guler, 2014). Supervisor qualities that

enhance employee job satisfaction include providing recognition, helping with task-related issues, using leadership skills to support the individual and team (Loke, 2001) and being supportive (Kula & Guler, 2014). The nature of the supervisor-subordinate relationship is particularly influential for employee job satisfaction within collectivist cultures (e.g., Latin, Asian), where the emphasis is on the family more than the individual (Moyes, Cortes, & Lin, 2007). The impact of supervisor support on job satisfaction is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

Based on their research with the Turkish national police, Kula and Guler (2014) concluded that supervisor behaviors such as offering constructive feedback about job performance, allowing for more autonomy with decision-making, and providing more responsibility have a positive effect on employees' self-esteem. Self-esteem, in turn, has a positive effect on job satisfaction (Oliver, 2007).

At an organizational level, productivity and retention increase when employees feel accepted by their supervisor (Becker, 1992; Moyes et al., 2007). Abelson (1987) added that supervisor support is a powerful and controllable lever for enhancing employee retention. Moreover, supervisors also can exert control over other retention levers such as pay, growth, and the work itself (Oliver, 2007). In contrast, studies indicate that employees are more likely to resign due to poor relationships with their supervisors than they are likely to resign due to problems with their job or the organization at large (Etzion, 1984; Perrewe & Carlson, 2002).

Supervisor support among fundraisers in higher education. Many of the antecedents and impacts of supervisor support related to the general employee population hold when applied to the field of fundraising. The relationship between supervisors and employees was identified as the greatest indicator of retention for fundraisers in

educational institutions, compared to other nonprofit sectors (Haggerty, 2015). It was found that fundraisers who lacked respect for their supervisors were more likely to leave their jobs (Oliver, 2007). Haggerty (2015) additionally advised managers to control the scope of the fundraiser's work, avoid setting unrealistic responsibilities or goals, and provide training to fundraisers so they are supported and prepared for the roles and responsibilities of their position.

Success in fundraising requires leaders (i.e., executives and board members) who are deeply involved in raising money (Berkshire, 2013). The majority of respondents (75%) in a national survey of more than 2,700 fundraisers indicated that leaders were insufficiently involved in raising money for their charities, further suggesting a perceived lack of supervisor support.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been examined through several theoretical lenses, including discrepancy theory (Locke, 1976), which assesses the gap between employees' workplace expectations and their experiences; expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), which is based on the expectations of the job that are met; attribution theory (Heider, 1944), which asserts that employees' job satisfaction emerges from their professional achievements; and equity theory (Adams, 1965), which argues that job satisfaction results when a balance is struck between employees' contributions to the organization and the rewards employees receive.

Fields (2002) offered a broad definition of job satisfaction as consisting of employees' feelings about their jobs, which are influenced by various factors. Locke's (1976) earlier and more specific definition describes job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or

positive emotional state from the appraisal of one's job or experiences" (p. 1297). This definition has been widely accepted in organizational research (Pincus, 1986).

These definitions of job satisfaction suggest three critical elements of the construct. First, job satisfaction is associated with experiencing positive emotion, whereas negative emotion is associated with dissatisfaction (Hofmans, De Gieter, & Pepermans, 2012). Second, the emotions employees feel about their jobs emerge from their appraisal of their job or experiences (Locke, 1976), although it is unclear whether this appraisal tends to be conscious or subconscious and active or passive. Third, Locke asserted that what employees are assessing during this appraisal process is the degree to which the job allows them to fulfill their unique job values and needs. It follows that job satisfaction would be expected when an employee feels happy in one's job because he or she has determined—whether consciously or subconsciously, actively or implicitly—that the job is fulfilling his or her needs and values.

Importance. Job satisfaction is correlated with many other employee behaviors, including performance, absenteeism, and retention (Schleicher et al., 2010). A satisfied employee will be more productive (Appelbaum & Kamal, 2001), and produce a higher quality of work (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Based on their meta-analysis of case studies conducted within Spanish firms, Garrido, Pérez, and Antón (2005) concluded that organizations with satisfied employees enjoy overall improved competitiveness.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, employees who have low job satisfaction or high dissatisfaction reportedly have various adverse effects on the firm. Sheehan (1993) conducted an experimental study of the impact of turnover due to various reasons. He found that when the departing individual cited dissatisfaction as the reason for leaving, the remaining workers produced significantly less work than when the departing

individual cited illness as the reason for leaving. Sheehan concluded that dissatisfied workers have a lasting adverse effect on organizational productivity.

Additionally, dissatisfied employees are more likely to show up late for work (Blau, 1994) and are prone to both absenteeism (Cleeg, 1983; Dalton & Mesch, 1991; Kahn, 1973) and turnover (Hom, Caranikas-Walker, Prussia, & Griffeth, 1992; Kahn, 1973; Lee, 1998). Moreover, turnover can become contagious (Krackhardt & Porter, 1986).

Antecedents. Many factors influence job satisfaction, including “working conditions, [the] work itself, supervision, policy and administration, advancement, compensation, interpersonal relationships, recognition, and empowerment” (Castillo & Cano, 2004, p. 72). Seashore and Taber (1975) identified the environment inside the organization as influencing job satisfaction, largely through the effects of employees’ relationships with supervisors, peers, and subordinates.

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) developed the two-factor theory to explain the mechanisms of job satisfaction and work motivation. The first set of factors is called motivators (see Table 1), which are intrinsic to the work itself and lead to a positive emotion within employees. The second set is referred to hygiene factors. These are extrinsic and not related to the work itself. Herzberg observed that employees felt negative emotion when these factors are absent.

Herzberg et al. (1959) claim that motivators can increase job satisfaction because they allow an employee to achieve self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). However, employees will not be dissatisfied when motivators do not exist. The opposite applies to hygiene factors: These factors can increase dissatisfaction, but satisfaction will not be affected when they are present (Tietjen & Myers, 1998). Locke (1976) elaborates further

using the dual theory of man's needs. He explains that physical needs are connected to hygiene factors, and that psychological and growth needs are linked to motivators.

Table 1

Motivators and Hygiene Factors

| Motivators | Hygiene Factors |
|-----------------------|---|
| Recognition | Salary |
| Achievement | Interpersonal relations with supervisor |
| Possibility of growth | Interpersonal relations with peers |
| Advancement | Interpersonal relations with subordinates |
| Responsibility | Supervision |
| Work itself | Policies |
| | Working conditions |
| | Personal life factors |
| | Status |
| | Job security |

Note. Based on "Motivation and Job Satisfaction," by M. Tietjen and R. Myers, 1998, in *Management Decision*, 36(4), pp. 226–231.

Locke (1976) questions Herzberg's assessment of intrinsic and extrinsic values being associated with motivators and hygiene factors, respectively. Locke points out that the employees interviewed took credit for positive events that increase job satisfaction, and blamed others for negative events that increase job dissatisfaction. Locke defines motivators as those factors that cause an employee to feel satisfied. He also describes hygiene factors as agents that cause events to occur. If agents allow for employees to meet their needs through events, then the employees will have high job satisfaction. Clarifying this distinction addresses the challenge Locke had with Herzberg's analysis of employee interviews.

Herzberg (1968) also suggested that age is a factor in job satisfaction. He believes that job satisfaction is high when an employee first begins work because of their excitement for the new position. Then, satisfaction drastically drops to levels of dissatisfaction, and only after time, as the employee gains more experience, does

satisfaction slowly increase. According to a study by Haggerty (2015), fundraisers' alignment with the organization and their capability to fulfill the responsibilities of the position seemed to be more important than the relationship with the supervisor with being satisfied in the position.

Extending the concept of employee differences further in understanding the concept of job satisfaction, Pink (2009) proposed that the employee's personality type determines which factors are motivating. Pink identifies two types: Type X personalities, which are motivated by external rewards, and Type I personalities, which are motivated by the inherent satisfaction within the activity and which find autonomy, mastery, and purpose rewarding. Type I personalities typically outperform Type X personalities in the long term, although extrinsic rewards can produce immediate results within both types.

Given the importance of intrinsic antecedents of job satisfaction, it is worth discussing these further. Autonomy refers to having some degree of freedom with regard to how employees perform their work (Pink, 2009). Mastery involves getting better in something that matters to them. Employees have to be deeply engaged or to achieve the sense of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) to determine what matters to them in an organization, which in turn requires that job challenges are well-matched to their abilities. Companies like Microsoft, Patagonia, and Toyota are reputed for creating a flow-typical environment that engage employees, allow them to practice mastery, and support job satisfaction and productivity.

Purpose refers to the idea of working towards a greater cause. Pink (2009) asserted that working with purpose leads to the most satisfied and productive employees. Hewlett (2009) added that purpose was so critical for Baby Boomers and Millennials that they tend to leave and even create their own jobs or organizations if satisfaction is

lacking in their current occupation. Pink (2009) advises organizations to infuse purpose into their policies. Furthermore, rather than telling employees what to do and what not to do, they should allow for autonomy to drive purpose. He shares a Mayo Clinic study where doctors were allowed one day each week to focus their energy on one aspect of their job that was most purposeful for them. The result was that burnout rates fell to a rate that was half of that reported by nonparticipants (Shanafelt et al., 2009).

Impacts of supervisor support. Yukl (2012) identified that there is a strong correlation between supervisor support and job satisfaction, regardless of environment. Two additional studies reinforced this correlation, specifically linking communication (Blegen, 1993) and relationship (Irvine & Evans, 1995) with the employee's supervisor as important to job satisfaction.

The relationship between the supervisor and employee is most beneficial when the employee experiences their supervisor as collaborative, transparent, and trusting (Pincus, 1986). This produces positive feelings and higher job satisfaction. According to Aiken, Smits, and Loller (1972), the relationship appears to be more important than working conditions or reward mechanisms identified in their study of state rehabilitation agencies. The quality of that relationship also matters. In contrast, Herzberg (1968) found that poor supervisor relations were the single best predictor of employee dissatisfaction and departure. A supervisor who shows little to no interest investing in the relationship with the employee can negatively affect the employee's job satisfaction (Yukl, 2012).

McNeese-Smith (1997) explored specific characteristics supervisors demonstrated that led to higher job satisfaction. Influential supervisor behaviors as it relates to job satisfaction include recognition of employee accomplishments, meeting the employee's personal needs, mentoring, and providing support for the team's needs (not just the

individual employee). A supervisor who empowers employees can promote job satisfaction in those employees (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Additionally, when the supervisor provides learning opportunities for the employee, job satisfaction increases (Cole, Panchanadeswaran, & Daining, 2004). Not giving recognition nor providing support, and criticizing during a time of crisis led to job dissatisfaction (Loke, 2001). Another criticism of supervisor behavior that lowered job satisfaction was hostility towards the employee (Wilkinson & Wagner, 1993).

Baard, Deci, and Ryan (2004) studied investment bankers and discovered that supervisors who supported autonomy had employees with higher job satisfaction. Specifically, the supervisors understood the employee's perspective, gave meaningful feedback, allowed freedom of choice to employees, and encouraged more responsibility. These factors, in turn, led to higher job performance. Beard et al.'s examination of 320 small businesses revealed that those organizations businesses that offered autonomy reported 33% less turnover than those that had command-and-control top-down management. These findings suggest that supervisors can directly impact extrinsic rewards like compensation and growth. Moreover, it seems to be advantageous for supervisors to create environments that support autonomy, mastery, and purpose, as these in turn are believed to enhance job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction among fundraising staff in higher education. Although specific data about job satisfaction among fundraising staff in higher education institutions were not found, a recent nationwide study of more than 2,700 development directors and charity heads from various organizations found that job dissatisfaction was very high: 50% of the chief fundraisers surveyed planned to leave their jobs in 2 years or less, and 40% were contemplating leaving the field altogether (Berkshire, 2013). A key

reason cited for the high dissatisfaction were executive leaders' lack of understanding about fundraising, which suggests that fundraisers may believe that supervisor support is lacking for their efforts.

Additionally, Berkshire (2013) found in her examination of the issue that sole responsibility for fundraising typically falls to the development director, which she believes sets them up to fail, further feeding fundraisers' dissatisfaction with their roles. Instead, Berkshire counters, a culture of philanthropy needs to be established within the organization so that the responsibility is shared across the organization. Bell and Cornelius (2013) explained that this type of culture is marked by "deep and passionate engagement across the organization, which translates into shared accountability for the organization achieving its fundraising goals," operationalized by including fundraising goals in the annual performance evaluation process for staff and executives.

Another contributor to dissatisfaction is the diversity of traits and skills needed for success in fundraising. For example, fundraisers need to be assertive and engaging enough to be good at asking for money, but also be detail oriented and quiet enough to be able to spend hours writing a grant. Pilar Gonzales, director of philanthropic partnerships at the International Development Exchange, pointed out, "Those are actually different kinds of fundraisers" (as cited in Berkshire, 2013, p. 1), indicating that fundraising is best executed by a team with complementary strengths.

Bell and Cornelius (2013) asserted that satisfaction among fundraisers could be improved by promoting fundraising as a rewarding career—one that plays a central role in helping charities create social change, and training board members thoroughly and emphasizing their role in partnering with executives and fundraising staff to raise money. Oliver (2007) conducted a study of fundraisers in higher education, who reported high

levels of job satisfaction were less likely to leave their job. The six main factors for why fundraisers chose to leave their institution were salary, possibility for growth, supervisor, organizational mismatch, work itself, and personal reasons. These factors had positive and negative impacts on the fundraisers' satisfaction in their institution.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a review of theory and research related to fundraising staff, supervisor support, and job satisfaction. Based on the literature reviewed, the following assumptions are offered related to the research questions. Regarding the nature of supervisor support for fundraiser tasks, it is anticipated that supervisors demonstrate support for fundraiser tasks by providing needed resources for fundraisers to do their jobs, recognition for task accomplishments, autonomy, and feedback. Regarding the nature of supervisor support for fundraisers' personal needs, it is anticipated that supervisors demonstrate support by demonstrating empathy and extending encouragement to employees. Supervisor support is anticipated to have an enhancing effect on fundraiser job satisfaction and intention to stay, particularly because supervisors influence all motivators described by Herzberg et al. (1959), including recognition, achievement, possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility, and the work itself. Supervisors also have influence on hygiene factors such as their relationship with fundraisers, salary, supervision, work conditions, and job security. The next chapter describes the methods that were used to conduct the study.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education.

Four research questions were explored:

1. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' tasks?
2. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' personal needs?
3. In what ways does supervisor support affect fundraisers' job satisfaction?
4. In what ways does supervisor support affect their intentions to stay?

This chapter describes the methods that were used in the study. The research design is described first, followed by a discussion of the procedures used for participant recruitment, assuring confidentiality and consent, and collecting and analyzing data. The chapter closes with a summary.

Research Design

This study used a primarily qualitative design wherein participants rated their job attitudes and experiences and then offered further elaboration about their insights and feelings about their jobs, as well as the impact supervisors have on their experiences. Qualitative methods are preferable when the desire is to gather a rich and nuanced understanding of the topic being examined (Creswell, 2013; Kvale, 1996). Research interviewing is a particularly powerful way to assess participants' interpretations and internally experienced realities.

Participants

Sixteen fundraising professionals were recruited for this study from the researcher's personal and professional networks. Participants needed to satisfy the following four selection criteria:

1. Participant is employed full-time by a higher education institution as a fundraiser.
2. Participant has been in his or her role for at least 6 months.
3. Participant has at least 18 months of fundraising experience in total.
4. Participant directly solicits gifts from individual donors as part of his or her job responsibilities.

An attempt was made to draw a diverse sample in terms of gender and ethnicity.

To recruit participants, the researcher listed all contacts who were believed to satisfy the criteria. Next, he invited these contacts to participate by email (see Appendix A).

Individuals who responded affirmatively were sent a consent form (see Appendix B) and an interview time was scheduled.

Confidentiality and Consent Procedures

This study was conducted within the oversight of the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board and all human subject protections were observed. Participants were informed regarding the intent, nature, and procedures related to being involved in the study. Participants' agreement to take part was documented using the consent form (see Appendix B). Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time or decline to answer any questions without penalty (Cone & Foster, 2006).

Participation in this study was completely voluntary and confidential. Each participant was identified using only a pseudonym. Actual personal and institution names were not recorded or reported. No hard copies of the data were produced. Electronic

versions of the deidentified raw data will be kept indefinitely for research purposes, although only summarized interview data are reported in the present study. Individual interview responses provided as examples are cited anonymously.

Data Collection

The interview script consisted of 35 questions organized into five sections. First, demographic data were gathered about each participant, including gender, age, current role, and tenure in the field and their current position.

The second group of questions examined supervisor support for fundraiser task needs. First, participants were asked to rate six closed-ended questions on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For example, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with, “My supervisor has expectations of my performance on the job that are realistic.” These items were drawn from Ford and Wooldridge’s (2012) Supervisor Support Measure. Next, participants were asked open-ended questions to ascertain more details about how they are being supported and how they want to be supported.

The third set of questions examines supervisor support for fundraisers’ personal needs. First, participants were asked to rate four closed-ended items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) from Ford and Wooldridge’s (2012) Supervisor Support Measure. For example, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with, “I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor.” Next, participants were asked open-ended questions to gather in-depth details about how they are being supported and how they want to be supported. Participants also were asked to identify the supervisor traits and behaviors that are most important to them.

The fourth section of the interview examined the impact of supervisor support on participant job satisfaction. First, participants were asked to rate their job satisfaction

using six items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These items were taken from Thompson and Phua's (2012) brief index of affective job satisfaction. For example, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with "I would not consider taking another kind of job." Next, participants were asked to discuss in detail what increases and decreases their satisfaction in their roles, as well as whether and in what ways their supervisors' support affects their satisfaction.

The fifth section inquired about participant intentions to stay in their current roles as well as in the field overall. Given that the average tenure within fundraising is 18 months, participants were asked to provide their answers on a scale ranging from "less than 6 months" to "more than 2 years." Next, participants were asked to describe what influences their intentions and whether and in what ways their supervisors' support affects their desire to stay. The final question in the interview asked participants to offer any additional information they believed relevant to the study.

Each participant was interviewed by telephone or in person, per mutual agreement by the researcher and participant. Each interview last approximately 1 hour and was audio-recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

Data Analysis

The interview data for the present study were content analyzed using the following procedures (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013):

1. All the interview notes were read to develop an understanding of the nature, breadth, and depth of the interviews and the data gathered.
2. Answers that participants provide for each question were examined one at a time.
3. Themes were identified for each question, and answers for each question and participant were re-sorted accordingly.

4. The number of participants reporting each theme was calculated when the analysis was complete.
5. A second coder reviewed the data analysis for all the interviews to determine whether the results appeared to be valid. Where discrepancies were found in the results, the researcher and second coder discussed and agreed upon how the analysis was revised.

Summary

This qualitative study involved interviews with 16 fundraisers working in higher education institutions. Participants completed a 1-hour interview regarding supervisors' support for fundraisers' task needs and personal needs, participants' job satisfaction and supervisors' impact on it, and participants' intention to stay in their jobs and the field. The data were examined using content analysis procedures. The next chapter reports the results of the study.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education.

Four research questions were explored:

1. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' tasks?
2. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' personal needs?
3. In what ways does supervisor support affect fundraisers' job satisfaction?
4. In what ways does supervisor support affect their intentions to stay?

This chapter presents the results. Participant demographics are outlined first. The findings related to supervisors' support for participants' task and personal needs are then presented. Participants' job satisfaction and intentions to stay, along with the factors affecting these, also are outlined. Finally, findings related to supervisors' impacts on participants' job satisfaction and intention to stay are presented. The chapter closes with a summary.

Participant Demographics

Sixteen participants (eight male, eight female) were interviewed (see Table 2). Approximately two thirds of participants were Caucasian. Participants had varying positions and levels of experience: 4 executive-level, 10 director-level, and 2 non-management level fundraisers were interviewed. Participants' tenure in the field ranged 4-29 years ($M = 11.73$, $SD = 7.67$) and tenure in their positions ranged from 8 months to 9 years ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 2.25$).

Table 2
Participant Demographics

| Position level | <u>n</u> | <u>%</u> |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Executive | 4 | 26% |
| Director | 10 | 63% |
| Non-management | 2 | 13% |
| Gender | <u>n</u> | <u>%</u> |
| Male | 8 | 50% |
| Female | 8 | 50% |
| Ethnicity | <u>n</u> | <u>%</u> |
| Caucasian | 10 | 63% |
| African American | 3 | 19% |
| Hispanic | 2 | 13% |
| Asian American | 1 | 6% |
| | <u>Range</u> | <u>Mean (SD)</u> |
| Tenure in Field | 4-29 years | 11.73 (7.67) |
| Tenure in Position | 8 mos-9 years | 2.89 (2.25) |

Supervisor Support for Task Needs

In the first set of questions, participants were asked to evaluate their supervisors' support for their task needs (see Table 3). On average, participants agreed that their supervisors offered this type of support ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.64$). Examination of item scores indicate they were somewhat neutral about whether their supervisor keeps them informed of the things they need to know to do their job well ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.13$) and whether their supervisor is fair and refrains from favoritism ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.00$). Notably, responses to these items were highly variable.

Table 3*Assessment of Supervisor Support for Task Needs*

| Item | Mean | SD |
|---|------|------|
| My supervisor keeps me informed of the things I need to know to do my job well. | 3.75 | 1.13 |
| My supervisor has expectations of my performance on the job that are realistic. | 4.5 | 0.73 |
| My supervisor recognizes when I do a good job. | 3.94 | 0.85 |
| My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem. | 4.56 | 0.73 |
| My supervisor is fair and does not show favoritism. | 3.75 | 1.00 |
| I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things. | 4.19 | 0.98 |
| Overall | 4.11 | 0.64 |

N = 16; Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Participants were asked to describe the support their supervisors provide related to completing their tasks (see Table 4). Twelve of the 16 participants stated that their supervisor supports employees growth and development by allowing employees to work autonomously (*n* = 7), being a role model and mentor to employees (*n* = 6), and pushing employees to higher performance (*n* = 2). One participant stated, “I’m being supported in a way that I am given the freedom to do what I think is best.” Another participant elaborated the impact her supervisor, a talented fundraiser in his own right, has had on her:

I think it’s just been like he’s probably one of the better fundraisers at [this institution], and so it’s been cool to observe him in action. I’ve learned a few things along the way just from observing him, certainly also from conversations and strategy sessions and all those sorts of things. He’s got a great relationship with the donors that he works with, and I’ve been able to experience that in different settings. I think that’s been really cool and helpful as a young professional.

The second key form of support, cited by 63% of participants (*n* = 10), was that their supervisor accelerates and facilitates task completion by advocating for the employee (*n* = 4); communicating clear, realistic goals and expectations (*n* = 3); helping

employees identify solutions and navigate challenges (n = 2); and providing resources and best practices (n = 2). One participant described how his supervisor leverages his position to advocate for staff:

If it gets to the point where we really need him to advocate a little bit stronger than just supporting us, like if we need him to help with something that's happening internally, maybe we're not getting the partnership that we need from our marketing department or some of our other programming within the Alumni Association, he does a pretty good job of trying to step in as the executive director. He'll throw his weight around a little bit more than we could as more general staff.

Table 4

Supervisors' Current Support for Task Needs

| Type of Support | n | % |
|--|----|-----|
| Supervisor supports employees growth and development Allows employee to work autonomously (7) Acts as a fundraising role model and mentor (6) Pushes employee to higher performance (2) | 12 | 75% |
| Supervisor accelerates and facilitates task completion Advocates for employee (4) Communicates clear, realistic goals and expectations (3) Helps employee identify solutions and navigate challenges (2) Provides resources and best practices (2) | 10 | 63% |
| Supervisor is readily accessible to discuss task-related issues Has open door policy (3) Is accessible (2) Has regularly scheduled meetings with employees (2) | 6 | 38% |
| Supervisor offers respect and emotional support | 6 | 38% |
| Employee does not seek or receive support from supervisor | 3 | 19% |

N = 16

Another participant explained how her supervisor instituted several formal procedures and introduced various resources to their department:

My boss has done a very good job of bringing in best practices to the college. I really appreciate that because we just have a lot more support than we used to. . . . We beefed up our stewardship program so that we could do a better job of stewarding and at the same time, cultivating donors for new gifts, for instance. He hired a computer person to work with all the data. . . . He put expectations on the

major gift team to create a strategy for every prospect in your portfolio, to have a plan for every person in your portfolio.

Other forms of support cited by participants was that their supervisor is readily accessible to discuss task-related issues (38%) and that their supervisor offers them respect and emotional support (38%). Notably, 19% of participants stated they do not seek or receive support from their supervisors and, instead, seek support as needed from others. One of these participants explained, “I’m a huge believer in seeking wise counsel, and so I will go more to a source that I see that can answer the problem more directly than necessarily a supervisor.”

Participants then were asked to describe the task-related support they would like to receive from their supervisors (see Table 5). Twelve participants (75%) stated they wanted their supervisors to accelerate and facilitate task completion by communicating clear, realistic goals and expectations (n = 4); providing access, resources, and information (n = 4); helping employees identify solutions and navigate challenges (n = 5); and advocating for employees (n = 2). One participant described how critical it is to have a supervisor advocate for your needs to support task completion: “When you have a supervisor who’s willing to add the additional microphone to get your concern heard or your ideas pushed, I think that is the most ideal way. It’s challenging when your supervisor is playing their own political game.”

Seven participants (44%) wanted their supervisors to communicate honestly and with sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation. One participant acknowledges her supervisor’s honest communication regarding when he can support her:

I know when to ask for his help, and I know when something is important to me. If I give him something he doesn’t think is a great idea, I won’t push it. But if he says, “Yes, it’s awesome! I want to support you and it will take time.” . . . I know when I can really count on the support, and when it’s just a little unrealistic.

Another seven participants (44%) wanted their supervisors to support employees' growth and development by allowing employees to work autonomously (n = 5), supporting development of their broader skillset and careers (n = 3), and being a fundraising role model and mentor (n = 1). One participant described the autonomy she received when her supervisor provides the end goal in saying, "I like working with someone who is not a micromanager and who, at the end of the day, can say, 'Here is the outcome that we are going for. Make it happen.' Then she backs away."

Table 5

Desired Task Support from Supervisor

| Desired Support | n | % |
|---|----|-----|
| Accelerate and facilitate task completion Communicate clear, realistic goals and expectations (4) Provide access, resources, and information (4) Help employee identify solutions and navigate challenges (5) Advocate for employee (2) | 12 | 75% |
| Communicate honestly and with sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation | 7 | 44% |
| Support employee growth and development Allow employee to work autonomously (5) Support development of broader skillset and career (3) Act as a fundraising role model and mentor (1) | 7 | 44% |
| Involve employees and support their ideas | 6 | 38% |
| Promote a collaborative team atmosphere | 3 | 19% |
| Be readily accessible to discuss task-related issues | 2 | 13% |

N = 16

Another participant believes a supervisor should provide professional development with applicable skills, not just limited to fundraising techniques. She also described how she supports her own subordinates' growth:

Professional development is critical. I have a fairly seasoned development director, but rather than send him to a fundraising workshop or conference, what I have suggested is a negotiations class. [I am] looking at the specific skills that need to be developed. . . . What we do every day is negotiate, whether it's internal or external. Try and look at those opportunities for the team by doing a gap analysis. Where do we want you to be? Where are you right now?

Other desired forms of support include involving employees and supporting their ideas (38%), promoting a collaborative team atmosphere (19%), and being readily accessible to discuss task-related issues (13%).

Supervisor Support for Personal Needs

In the next set of questions, participants were asked to evaluate their supervisor's support for their personal needs (see Table 6). Participants agreed that their supervisors offered this type of support ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.59$). The lowest score, which still reflected agreement, concerned their comfort level with bringing up personal or family issues to their supervisor ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.85$). The high scores were reported for supervisor responsiveness to their needs to take care of family or personal business ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.58$).

Table 6

Assessment of Supervisor Support for Personal Needs

| Item | Mean | SD |
|---|------|------|
| My supervisor is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of. | 4.75 | 0.58 |
| My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work. | 4.53 | 0.64 |
| I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor. | 4.06 | 0.85 |
| My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life. | 4.38 | 0.89 |
| Overall | 4.43 | 0.59 |

$N = 16$; Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Participants then were asked to describe the ways their supervisors support their personal needs (see Table 7). All but one participant stated that their supervisor supports them in taking time off for personal issues. One participant shared the story of being

nervous about telling her supervisor about wanting to pursue a master’s degree, and being surprised by the support she received in return:

I told her that I was interested in pursuing a master’s degree. I was nervous to tell her. I thought she would be supportive, but at the same time, I think it’s realistic for any boss to think, “That’s going to pull you away and make you less focused and more distracted and give you less time to be at work.” . . . I mentioned it to her, and she was really excited and supportive. She was like, “I want to help you in this process. I think it’s such a good idea.” She thought that was perfect for me, and she’s even writing me a letter or recommendation for my application. I think she understands that in the long term, this is going to help me (and probably her) in my position here.

Another participant acknowledged the care he received when going through some personal highs and lows while at the institution: “Since I worked at [this institution], I lost my dad [and] had a baby. Those are life-changing situations, and they’ve been great. I definitely feel like they care.”

Table 7

Current Supervisor Support for Personal Needs

| Support | n | % |
|--|----|-----|
| Supervisor supports employee taking time for personal issues | 15 | 94% |
| Supervisor understands importance of work-life balance | 5 | 31% |
| Employee does not seek personal support not from supervisor | 2 | 13% |

N = 16

Regarding the support participants would like their supervisors to offer relative to their personal needs, half the participants stated they would like flexibility with their time (see Table 8). One participant described wanting a supervisor who allowed for flexibility with his time, acknowledging that work responsibilities still need to be met: “For me, as well as for [my supervisor], if the work is getting done, then handle your [personal] business. Do what you need to do as long as nothing is falling through the cracks.”

Another participant shared her interview experience for her job and how the supervisor began to form a personal relationship with her:

I think it's great to have a good relationship with your supervisor, personally. When I interviewed for the job, he spent the whole day with me basically, and even introduced me to his daughter, who was a current student at the time. He wanted me to have lunch with her and him, just so I could have a chance to talk to a student. I think that was also a way of him saying, "We're family here."

Table 8

Desired Supervisor Support for Personal Needs

| Desired Support | n | % |
|---|---|-----|
| Allow employee flexibility with his or her time | 8 | 50% |
| Demonstrate care for employee | 4 | 25% |
| Form personal relationship with employee | 2 | 13% |

N = 16

Participants were asked to identify the supervisor attributes and behaviors they perceived as supportive (see Table 9). Twelve participants expressed that a management style that balances compassion and direction was highly supportive. This type of style included being available to and supportive of staff (*n* = 6), having realistic expectations (*n* = 3), empowering employees and allowing for their autonomy (*n* = 3), providing direction (*n* = 2), and supporting work-life balance (*n* = 2). One participant described a supportive supervisor as one who knows how to gauge employees' stress:

Someone who is intuitive, so that if I'm stressed out they don't add to the stress; [instead] they intentionally shift the way they are speaking to the employee to bring them down. I felt like my former supervisors, if I was about to jump off the skyscraper, she would add a couple more floors for me to jump on.

Another participant described how her supervisor aligns her passions with initiatives:

"She knows where my passions are. . . . So, her knowing me and knowing that maybe not everything here I love, she was able to help connect me with something that would be my interest. So, I appreciate that." Another participant elaborated on the supervisor providing direction by setting realistic expectations for the team and the institution:

In development, the campus will always want to see a higher metric than we may be able to produce—both for philanthropic dollars and number of donors. The role of the supervisor needs to be managing expectations regarding what is realistic for a campus of a particular size and donor demographics, and . . . having everybody understand what’s involved in cultivations.

Table 9

Supervisor Attributes and Behaviors Perceived as Supportive

| Supervisor Attribute | n | % |
|---|----|-----|
| Exhibits a management style that balances compassion and direction Is available to and supportive of staff (6) Has realistic expectations (3) Empowers employees and allows for their autonomy (3) Provides direction (2) Supports work-life balance (2) | 12 | 75% |
| Forms warm relationships with staff Is empathetic, compassionate, and understanding (8) Respects and trusts staff (6) | 11 | 69% |
| Communicates openly with staff Communicates with and listens to staff (7) Is transparent (3) | 9 | 56% |
| Approaches tasks with creativity and focus on performance Promotes critical thinking and strong performance (5) Allows for curiosity and creativity (4) | 8 | 50% |
| Exhibits a positive attitude Is self-aware and self-confident (3) Exhibits calm and optimism (2) | 4 | 25% |

N = 16

Eleven participants stated that their supervisors form warm relationships with staff, marked by empathy, compassion, and understanding (*n* = 8) as well as by respect for and trust in the staff (*n* = 6). One participant observed her supervisor being compassionate towards her colleague: “We had a coworker who was out for 2 weeks dealing with a medical emergency and . . . my boss understood that you need to stay home and just rest for a while.” Another participant describes the trusted relationship he has with his supervisor:

I'm lucky. My supervisor and even my supervisor's supervisor are people that are trusted mentors of mine, and I think that makes a huge impact. That's the number one thing that keeps me there. My relationship with them is fantastic.

Nine participants cited their supervisors' open communication as being supportive, such as communicating with and listening to staff (n = 7) and being transparent (n = 3). One participant described the importance of communication and the challenge he faced with a previous supervisor:

With my last supervisor, communication was big, as she wasn't sharing anything with us. So when a problem came up and we were trying to solve it, we didn't have all the pieces. Listening, communicating, I think those are big. . . . When they're able to communicate clearly, I don't have to keep going back asking for help. I can go back and ask for their input.

Eight participants stated that their supervisors were supportive in their creative and performance-focused approach to task. This approach is evidenced when they promote critical thinking and strong performance (n = 5) and when they allow for curiosity and creativity (n = 4). One participant said she wants a "thought partner" in a supervisor, and another participant shared that he wants someone to balance challenge with care, thus spurring his productivity. He explained that a great supervisor is:

someone who simultaneously can challenge you and get you to work the hardest. As a supervisor myself, I think that is one of the most difficult aspects of being a manager, because you want your employees to know you care about them and that you are supporting their work-life balance so that they are happy and productive in their position.

Job Satisfaction

Participants next were asked to evaluate their job satisfaction (see Table 10). Overall, participants agreed they felt satisfied (M = 4.19, SD = 0.61), although participants offered varied responses about whether they would consider taking another kind of job (M = 3.09, SD = 1.21). The highest scores were reported for feeling fairly well satisfied with their job (M = 4.56, SD = 0.51).

Table 10***Participants' Assessed Job Satisfaction***

| Item | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| I find real enjoyment in my job. | 4.53 | 0.67 |
| I like my job better than the average person likes his or her job. | 4.31 | 1.01 |
| I am seldom bored with my job. | 4.44 | 0.81 |
| I would not consider taking another kind of job. | 3.09 | 1.21 |
| Most days I am enthusiastic about my job. | 4.19 | 0.91 |
| I feel fairly well satisfied with my job. | 4.56 | 0.51 |
| Overall | 4.19 | 0.61 |

N = 16; Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

When asked to describe the factors that enhance their job satisfaction (see Table 11), 63% of participants identified doing meaningful work, including helping students, donors, staff, and community (*n* = 5), making a difference and having impact (*n* = 4), and believing in the mission and enjoying the work (*n* = 2). One participant elaborated that his satisfaction is enhanced by providing satisfaction for alumni:

I think the biggest thing that helps me feel satisfied is when I have a good interaction with an alumnus where I'm able to help them make a connection to something here, whether that's by making a gift or whether that's by getting them to speak at an event or anything like that. I think that just makes me feel like that's what my job is—that's what I'm supposed to be doing. I guess when I'm able to provide customer satisfaction.

Another participant described the impact she has:

I think we have the best positions on campus when we're able to match and help a donor realize their passion through making an impact. A gift is never to the campus. It's through us that they're able to realize something that's just so important to them. It doesn't get any better than that.

Another 63% of participants stated that attaining career achievement and growth enhances their job satisfaction. In particular, participants associated job satisfaction with achieving results (*n* = 6), professional development (*n* = 3), developing sought-after expertise (*n* = 2), and having task variety (*n* = 1). One participant described utilizing her

colleagues for growth, stating, and “The sharing of ideas with other fundraisers across the campus I really like. All I would say is it’s helping me in the long run.” Another participant shared that she achieves her own measure of success by doing the best job possible: “My own internal measure of success is what gives me a lot of satisfaction. If I don’t meet a mark, conversely, because I’m passionate, then that can be very devastating.”

Table 11

Factors Enhancing Job Satisfaction

| Factor Enhancing Satisfaction | n | % |
|--|----|-----|
| Doing meaningful work Helping students, donors, staff, and community (5) Making a difference and having impact (4) Believing in the mission and enjoying the work (2) | 10 | 63% |
| Attaining career achievement and growth Achieving results (6) Pursuing professional development (3) Developing sought-after expertise (2) Having task variety (1) | 10 | 63% |
| Having a competent and supportive supervisor | 4 | 25% |
| Connecting with others | 4 | 25% |
| Receiving adequate compensation | 4 | 25% |

N = 16

Other satisfaction enhancing factors identified by participants include having a competent and supportive supervisor, connecting with others, and receiving adequate compensation. Each of these factors was cited by 25% of participants.

When asked to identify the factors that decrease satisfaction, 56% of participants cited poor management, characterized by exerting unrealistic or inappropriate demands, expectations, and metrics (*n* = 4); allowing little autonomy (*n* = 4); failing to practice timely, transparent communication (*n* = 2); and not being in alignment with employees (*n* = 1), as shown in Table 12. One participant simply stated, “Being held to an unrealistic

expectation would decrease my satisfaction.” Another participant shared that creativity is eliminated when:

. . . you do things a certain way because that’s the way they’ve always been done. Events would be a good example of that. This is the way it will be done, no matter what. That just crushes an employee’s motivation and creativity. Nothing becomes innovative, you just sit there and say, “Okay, what’s the procedure, and I’ll follow it to a tee.”

Table 12

Factors Decreasing Job Satisfaction

| Factor Decreasing Satisfaction | n | % |
|---|---|-----|
| Poor management Exerting unrealistic or inappropriate demands, expectations, and metrics (4) Allowing little autonomy (4) Failing to practice timely, transparent communication (2) Not being in alignment with employees (1) | 9 | 56% |
| Factors that undermine career achievement Lack of growth or success (5) Lack of resources (3) | 7 | 44% |
| Political maneuvering among coworkers | 6 | 38% |
| Not liking the work | 2 | 13% |
| Inadequate compensation | 2 | 13% |

N = 16

Seven participants expressed that their job satisfaction decreased when their achievement was compromised, such as when they experienced a lack of growth or success (*n* = 5) or had to work with insufficient resources (*n* = 3). One participant talked about jeopardizing the donor relationship when supervisors ask fundraisers to focus on the short term. He explained:

[It’s problematic when I’m] being asked to be transactional. Where if someone says, “It is more important to me that you just get this gift because we need it by year end,” than to trust you when you say, “I believe this person is passionate, and unfortunately our timing is not theirs. If we let this go a little bit longer, and you trust that I’m not just stalling, you’ll get a bigger gift.” I really believe in that, and I think it’s the role of the supervisor. We have to push gently.

Six participants expressed that the political maneuvering of their coworkers undermined their satisfaction. One participant described internal politics occurring “when colleagues are uncollaborative—when colleagues are clearly only out for themselves, [and] they’ll intentionally keep you out of building a relationship so they can take credit for a gift that’s closed.” Another participant similarly shared it’s challenging when supervisors encourage “performing to the metrics as opposed to performing to what we’re supposed to be really doing. It can create a lot of competition, people being territorial and not being team players.”

Intentions to Stay

Participants were asked to share how long they intended to stay in their current positions and in the field of fundraising (see Table 13). More than half the participants intended to stay in their current position more than 2 years, and all but one intended to stay in the field more than 2 years.

Table 13

Participants’ Intentions to Stay

| Intended Time Frame | Current Role n (%) | Field n (%) |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Less than 6 months | 1 (6%) | |
| 6-12 months | 1 (6%) | 1 (6%) |
| 1-1.5 years | 2 (13%) | |
| 1.5-2 years | | |
| More than 2 years | 9 (56%) | 15 (94%) |
| No response | 3 (19%) | |

N = 16

When asked to elaborate on their reasons for wanting to stay, 69% of participants described the sense of achievement they feel through their work (see Table 14). This was described as fulfilling their drive for challenge and success (*n* = 6); having a sense of contribution (*n* = 5); developing expertise, attaining success, and gaining recognition (*n* =

3); and experiencing learning and development opportunities (n = 5). One participant described her drive to be challenged in her role: “I need to be able to have a high degree of independence, and I love the strategy side. I love the really complex cultivations. So far, I have had great independence in that, so if that remains, that’s really important to me.”

Another participant talked about her sense of contribution by building relationships for her institution and making something out of nothing:

I didn’t inherit a prospect pool with this position so I’m building it. As I’m seeing that it is actually building and I’m actually having prospects where I’m actually able to build a 12- to 18-month plan for them, that keeps me motivated to see that list grow and to continue to meet more people and to do more things.

Table 14

Factors Increasing Participants’ Intentions to Stay

| Factor | n | % |
|---|----|-----|
| Sense of achievement Fulfilling the drive for challenge and success (6) Having a sense of contribution (5) Developing expertise, attaining success, and gaining recognition (3) Experiencing learning and development opportunities (5) | 11 | 69% |
| Sense of reward Receiving adequate compensation (6) Having a sense of purpose and enjoyment (4) | 8 | 50% |
| Positive relationships Enjoying positive relationships with coworkers (6) Enjoying a positive, supportive relationship with supervisor (3) | 7 | 44% |

N = 16

Half the participants cited their sense of reward in the form of adequate compensation (n = 6) and the sense of purpose and enjoyment (n = 4) as their reason for staying. One participant shared a conversation she had with her supervisor as she plans for her future: “[My supervisor] said, ‘Shame on us if we aren’t able to help you continue to grow professionally and compensate you fairly.’”

Another participant described it as divine intervention and having a higher calling that makes her position rewarding:

I would say it is always about God's appointment on my life. Years ago, I would never have scripted higher education for myself. It was such a divine appointment that God wanted me here that it was just clear. And so, fast forward 10 years, unless I felt God really pulling me that, "This is not a right fit for you," that's why I would stay, so it would take something pretty big.

The final reason for staying, cited by 44% of participants, was positive relationships with coworkers (n = 6) and their supervisor (n = 3). One participant stated, "I have a really great bond with my colleagues. That's kept me here maybe a little bit longer; just really when I get into work every day, I enjoy it. We talk about our weekend, and we make some jokes, and then we get to business. It's been a very friendly environment and culture. If and when I leave, I'll definitely miss that. I think that's a big part of it."

Next, participants were asked to identify the reasons they might decide to leave their positions or the field (see Table 15). Half the participants reported that misalignment and challenges with current organization would prompt them to leave. Such challenges could include a lack of alignment with organization's mission, vision, values (n = 4); organizational politics (n = 3); poor relationships with colleagues (n = 2); or policy or resource changes (n = 1). One participant stated she would leave if the leadership and organizational vision changed, thus no longer aligning with her own:

I could potentially see that if our current dean decided to step down and a new dean takes the school in new directions and has different priorities. That could be something that either if I don't feel that it's the right direction or something that is in line with what our alumni want to support. I wouldn't stay; I would just up and leave. I would want to try to help steer things in the right direction based on my experience and the people we're talking to and what we're hearing and things like that.

Another participant described the politics and favoritism that would motivate him to leave:

I was very close to leaving a couple times due to the politics and the favoritism by the institution. There [are] those [individuals] who get a position with no experience, or they have an office, or they have certain perks and you're [wondering] why. There [are] those [individuals] who get promoted and you're [thinking], "Their numbers suck, so where is this coming from?" I think it's more of a matter of personalities and institutional politics that will drive anyone out.

Seven participants stated that compelling opportunities elsewhere in other careers or industries (n = 3); for other organizations with different mission statements (n = 2); or with other leaders, teams, clients, or stakeholders (n = 4) may prompt them to leave. One participant shared, "If it was a chance to work closely with friends or someone I admire or respect, I think that would also be appealing." Another participant said that she would leave if she found another cause she is passionate about supporting: "I'm very concerned about the [natural] environment, and I wouldn't mind putting some energy there if the right job were to come along."

Table 15

Factors Decreasing Participants' Intentions to Stay

| Factor Decreasing Satisfaction | n | % |
|---|---|-----|
| Misalignment and challenges with current organization Lack of alignment with organization's mission, vision, values (4) Organizational politics (3) Poor relationships with colleagues (2) Policy or resource changes (1) | 8 | 50% |
| Compelling opportunities elsewhere Another career or industry (3) Another organizational mission (2) Other leaders, teams, clients, and stakeholders (4) | 7 | 44% |
| Lack of supervisor support | 5 | 31% |
| Burnout | 4 | 25% |
| Personal reasons | 4 | 25% |
| Being offered better compensation elsewhere | 3 | 19% |

N = 16

Five participants cited lack of supervisor support as a reason they might leave. One participant stated that she should leave if others lacked respect for her or her work: “Somebody not respecting me, or not having respect for the direction that I’m trying to take the program when I’m hired to do just that. All of those things would make me leave.”

Supervisor Impact on Job Satisfaction and Intentions to Stay

Participants were asked to describe their impact their supervisors had on their job attitudes. First, participants were asked to identify the supervisor attributes and behaviors that enhance job satisfaction (see Table 16). Ten participants stated that their supervisors’ attempts to form strong positive relationships with them enhanced their satisfaction. This was described as forming respectful and trusting relationships (n = 6), exhibiting the belief that employee is competent and valued (n = 3), and demonstrating care for the employee (n = 2). One participant described the relationship with her supervisor as having a major influence on her satisfaction: “Any supervisor in any job can really make or break your work experience because we work for people. It is a major influence. . . . [My previous supervisor was] somebody I really just admire as a human being.” Another participant compared two supervisors who shined the light on the employee with donors to demonstrate competency, impact job satisfaction, and increase productivity:

When there was an opportunity, [my previous supervisor] always made sure that I was front and center. If there were public opportunities, he could put me in that light as the [lead gift officer]. It’s important for us as we’re dealing with the very top donors that they know how the campus is seeing us. This was a [supervisor] who intentionally put me in those positions, whether it was leading parts of the board meeting or doing public announcements. Something he was very good at was understanding that if his expectations were for me to bring in the majority of the major gifts, he needed to position me in that way. This is in contrast to [another supervisor] who is high control, and all about putting the spotlight on himself, which is fine. It just makes it more difficult for the rest of us.

Table 16

Supervisor Attributes and Behaviors That Enhance Job Satisfaction

| Supervisor Attribute or Behavior | n | % |
|--|----|-----|
| Forms strong positive relationship with employee Forms respectful and trusting relationship with employee (6) Exhibits sense that employee is competent and valued (3) Demonstrates care for employee (2) | 10 | 63% |
| Provides practical task-related support Provides support (4) Provides task-related guidance (4) Navigates politics (2) Is accessible to discuss task-related issues (2) | 9 | 56% |
| Empowers employees Provides sufficient information and resources (4) Allows autonomy (2) Assures good employee-job fit (1) | 6 | 38% |

N = 16

Nine participants stated that their supervisors' practical task-related support, such as general support ($n = 4$), task-related guidance ($n = 4$), assistance with organizational politics ($n = 2$), and availability to discuss issues ($n = 2$), enhanced their satisfaction. One participant shared that his supervisor provides a positive work environment:

I may not have that extra \$10,000 to \$15,000 in my pocket at the end of the year, but I don't hate coming into work. There's satisfaction in coming in; I work with a really great team and that's something that I think my supervisor dictates tone and style.

Another participant described the guidance a supervisor provides to do the right thing:

I know that she would be there to guide me in the right way. I've had supervisors before in the past where I don't really have a good idea about where I am with them or what they think I'm doing either way, good or bad. That has made me second-guess everything I've been doing in the past. I think that her support is a big part of just my overall satisfaction.

When asked to identify the supervisor attributes and behaviors that their enhance intentions to stay (see Table 17), 56% of participants described their supervisors exhibiting a management style that balances compassion and direction. This style was

evidenced by attuning to and seeking to meet employees' needs (n = 5), offering growth and development opportunities (n = 4), allowing flexibility and autonomy (n = 4), and providing task-related assistance (n = 3). One participant shared that the environment her supervisor creates is compelling: "She will create an inclusive, open, fun office environment."

Another participant said that his supervisor is attuned to meeting his needs of growth that supporting him to leave makes him want to stay:

She's very interested in—for all of her people who work for her—their professional development and professional growth. That includes . . . if we ever are not happy or we are ready to move on, to be honest with her about that. She says, "I want to help you find the right place for you, whether that's somewhere at [this institution] or somewhere else." [She] uses her connections or uses her experience to help guide us in the right way. I think that just creates a really nice environment of not feeling pressure.

Table 17

Supervisor Attributes and Behaviors That Enhance Intentions to Stay

| Supervisor Attribute or Behavior | n | % |
|---|---|-----|
| Exhibits a management style that balances compassion and direction Attunes to and seeks to meet employees' needs (5) Offers growth and development opportunities (4) Allows flexibility and autonomy (4) Provides task-related assistance (3) | 9 | 56% |
| Forms warm relationships with staff Demonstrates appreciation and offers moral support (5) Respects and trusts staff (3) | 6 | 38% |
| Supervisor is the reason to stay | 4 | 25% |

N = 16

Six participants stated that they were motivated to stay when their supervisors form warm relationships with staff, such as demonstrating appreciation and offering moral support (n = 5) and respecting and trusting staff (n = 3). Another participant described her supervisor as a man of few words, but that those words of appreciation

matter to her: “He doesn’t say much, but every once in a while he says, ‘You’re doing a good job.’ That makes me want to stay.”

Notably, four participants emphasized that their supervisor was the key reason to stay in their jobs. One participant shared that the learning she receives from her supervisor keeps her in the position: “I probably would have left a month ago, honestly, but it is my boss that’s keeping me here because I learn so much from her and she really does encourage me.” Another participant summed up after raving about her supervisor throughout the interview, “Any of my decisions to stay has 100% to do with everything that I previously said about my supervisor.”

Summary

This chapter reported the results based on interviews with 16 fundraisers. After presenting the participant demographics, findings were reported related to supervisors’ support for task and personal needs. Participant job satisfaction and intentions to stay were then presented, followed by a report of the findings related to supervisors’ impacts on job satisfaction and intentions to stay. The next chapter provides a discussion of the results.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education.

Four research questions were explored:

1. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' tasks?
2. To what extent and in what ways are supervisors demonstrating support for fundraisers' personal needs?
3. In what ways does supervisor support affect fundraisers' job satisfaction?
4. In what ways does supervisor support affect their intentions to stay?

This chapter provides a discussion of the results. Conclusions are presented first, followed by recommendations. Limitations are then acknowledged and suggestions for continued research are offered.

Conclusions

Supervisor support for tasks. Study findings indicated that most of the participants were satisfied with their supervisors' task-related support, especially as it concerned setting realistic performance expectations and being supportive of their work-related problems. Participants were less consistent in their responses regarding their supervisors keeping them informed and refraining from favoritism. Supervisors reportedly provided task-related support in four key ways: aiding employees' growth and development, accelerating and facilitating task completion, being available to discuss issues, and offering respect and emotional support. Notably, approximately 20% of the participants do not rely on their supervisors for task-related support. When asked how they wanted to be supported, participants expressed their wishes that supervisors continue

to accelerate and facilitate task completion; communicate honestly and with sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation; support employee growth and development; and involve employees and supporting their ideas.

No research on the particular topic of supervisor support for fundraisers' tasks was found. However, various studies have associated supervisor support with perceiving supervisors as trustworthy (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Conger, 1990) and with retention (Etzion, 1984; Haggerty, 2015; Perrewe & Carlson, 2002). Thus, it appears that delivering the forms of support requested by participants may achieve these important outcomes.

Based on these findings, managers are advised to assure that adequate communication and support mechanisms are in place, and that reward and recognition programs are equitable. Managers may use the list of current and desired forms of task-related support as a framework for interacting with their direct reports.

It may be advisable for institutions to include assessment of manager supportiveness in the hiring process for supervisory positions, given the associations between supervisor support and retention. Institutions also should educate and train managers to understand the importance of task-related support and how to provide it.

At the same time, employees who are not feeling supported in one or more desired ways should be encouraged to request the needed support from their supervisor. Fundraisers also may be encouraged to demonstrate and exhibit the traits and types of task-related support they are wanting from supervisors in order to help create an overall supportive climate.

Organizational development consultants can provide valuable guidance in diagnosing and enhancing the level of task-related support that supervisors provide. It

may be particularly important to intervene in cases where employees are underperforming or where employee retention is an issue. In such cases, it would be helpful to assess employees' perceptions of supervisor support and intervene where needed. Specific mechanisms for doing so include diagnosing task support using the questions utilized in this study, fostering supervisor-employee dialogue, and coaching supervisors.

Supervisor support for personal needs. Fundraisers rather consistently agreed that their supervisors supported their personal needs, especially as it concerned taking care of family or personal business. Half the participants wanted more flexibility with their time and four wanted their supervisors to demonstrate care for them. When asked to name the attributes supervisors exhibited that seemed most supportive, participants described supervisors who balance compassion with direction; form warm relationships with staff; practice open communication; and take a creative, performance-focused approach to task completion.

Specific measurements of supervisor support for personal needs among fundraising staff were not found. However, past research has suggested that supervisor support influences employees' perceptions of organizational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and employees' job satisfaction (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002; Haggerty, 2015; Harris et al., 2007; Jaramillo et al., 2005; Ko et al., 2015; Tierney et al., 2002; Kula & Guler, 2014; Yukl, 2012).

Based on these findings, managers and their institutions are advised to maintain their current practices and to continue to allow flexibility for their staff. In cases where perceptions of support, job satisfaction, or performance are lacking, it may be advisable

to assess the level of support supervisors are providing for employees' personal needs and to adjust managers' approaches as needed.

Managers should be encouraged to get to know their employees, learn what types of support are meaningful to each, and then consider how the desired support may be provided. Managers also are advised to undergo sensitivity training to give them additional tools and approaches for understanding employees and forming warm and supportive relationships with them.

Institutions should ensure that their policies do not stifle flexibility or the formation of positive supervisor-employee relationships. Organizational development consultants again may be engaged in a coaching or training role to help managers maintain or develop supportive practices. Employees, for their part, should take care not to abuse the flexibility and personal support their managers provide.

Supervisor impact on job satisfaction. The study findings indicated that participants were satisfied with their jobs. Although participants offered varying responses about considering taking another job, they explained their responses as simply preferring to keep their options open. Participants stated that two main factors enhance their satisfaction: doing meaningful work and attaining career achievement and growth. Aspects of their work that decrease their satisfaction include poor management; having their career achievement undermined, and political maneuvering among coworkers. When asked to name the attributes supervisors exhibited that most enhanced their satisfaction, participants identified behaviors of forming strong, positive relationships with employees, providing practical task-related support, and empowering employees.

The findings in this study regarding satisfaction vary from Berkshire's (2013) nationwide study of more than 2,700 development directors and charity heads from

various organizations, which found that job dissatisfaction was very high. Although it is possible that the present study's sample was simply highly satisfied, it also is possible that the positive findings could be due to self-selection bias, socially desirable answering, or other methodological issues. Similar to the present study, Pink (2009) also alleged that doing meaningful work (which he termed *purpose*) and attaining career achievement and growth (which he termed *mastery*) were critical to job satisfaction. This study's findings that supervisors' relationships with employees, task focus, and empowerment of employees enhance satisfaction also was consistent Kula and Guler's (2014) conclusions that empowering supervisor behaviors enhanced employee self-esteem and, in turn, job satisfaction (Oliver, 2007).

Given these findings, managers and institutions are advised to regularly assess employee job satisfaction and intervene in cases where it is low or shows evidence of decline. Organizational development consultants can serve helpful roles in designing and conducting these assessments and any subsequent interventions. Employees are advised to deepen their own self-awareness in order to identify what work they find meaningful, identify desired growth and development opportunities, and to communicate these goals to their supervisors. Managers should encourage employees in this effort, proactively get to know their employees' goals, and offer employees opportunities for challenge and growth. These activities are part of forming strong, positive relationship with employees, which participants identified as contributing to job satisfaction. Managers should be made aware of the importance of strong positive relationships, seek to form these, and diagnose and resolve any issues regarding their relationships with subordinates.

The study findings also emphasized the importance of high-quality management for enhancing job satisfaction. Therefore, employees should be encouraged to give

feedback, managers should seek feedback, and institutions should create a culture and mechanisms for two-way feedback. Institutions should focus on high-quality management as a central human capital objective. Organizational development consultants can play invaluable roles in supporting and facilitating the development of strong management capability, for example, through assessment, executive coaching, or the creation of feedback mechanisms.

Finally, it is advisable for all parties involved in the employment contract (i.e., employees, managers, institutions) to assess and seek to enhance person-job and person-organization fit, given the role of organizational mission in employees' sense of purpose and satisfaction.

Supervisor impact on intentions to stay. Participants reported having strong loyalty both to their profession and to their positions. The leading reason for their stay intentions was their sense of achievement at work, with other reasons including their sense of reward and their positive relationships. Factors decreasing their stay intentions included misalignment and challenges with their current organization and being drawn to compelling opportunities elsewhere. Roughly, one third of participants cited lack of supervisor support as decreasing their stay intentions. Two supervisor behaviors were named as enhancing participants' stay intentions: exhibiting a management style that balances compassion and direction and forming warm relationships with staff. Additionally, one quarter of participants emphasized that their supervisor was their reason for staying.

This study's findings regarding stay intentions departed from Berkshire's (2013) findings indicating high turnover intentions among fundraisers. The difference may be due to having drawn a highly loyal sample or due to methodological issues. However,

other past studies similarly concluded that lack of supervisor support decreases employees' stay intentions (Abelson, 1987; Becker, 1992; Etzion, 1984; Moyes et al., 2007; Oliver, 2007; Perrewe & Carlson, 2002).

Based on these findings, employees are advised to take any measures needed to sustain their own loyalty. For example, during the hiring process, candidates should assure that they align with the organization's mission and to learn as much as possible about their potential job responsibilities, coworkers, and supervisors to avoid later misalignment. Managers and institutions similarly should ensure that their hiring process enables all parties to make sound and informed hiring decisions that promote person-job and person-organization fit. Managers should be made aware of the powerful impact they have on employee retention and be supported in interacting with employees in ways that promote retention. Organizational development consultants can assist institutions and managers in this effort through diagnosis and intervention as well as through executive coaching.

Recommendations

Recommendations are offered for employees, managers, institutions, and organizational development consultants based on the study findings. These recommendations are outlined in the following sections.

Recommendations for employees. Three recommendations are offered to employees:

1. Assess and confirm job and organization fit in advance. Past research and the present study findings emphasized the importance of organizational mission and overall person-job and person-organization fit for enhancing job satisfaction and reducing turnover. Employees have the responsibility of assessing and confirming that they fit well with the job and the organization as part of the hiring process. Just as they are being interviewed by potential

employers, a job candidate also should carefully assess the potential job opportunity to determine whether it is appropriate for him or her.

2. Increase job-related self-awareness. The study findings indicated that doing meaningful work, attaining career achievement and growth, and receiving needed support were important for job satisfaction and retention. Therefore, it is important for employees to understand themselves and to identify their specific needs and wants related to what work they find meaningful and what growth and development opportunities they desire. Understanding one's specific career-related goals is central to developing a meaningful and rewarding career.
3. Identify what support is available and request what additionally is needed. Based on the study results, it is reasonable to conclude that a number of managers do support their employees in various ways. Therefore, employees may be advised to identify what support is currently available to them and to be appreciative of that support. Where support is lacking, employees may provide feedback to their managers and to request what additional support they need. Fundraisers also may be encouraged to demonstrate and exhibit the traits and types of task-related support they are wanting from supervisors in order to help create an overall supportive climate.

Recommendations for managers. Three recommendations also are offered to managers based on this study's findings:

1. Assure fit during hiring process. Organizational mission and overall person-job and person-organization fit was emphasized as being important for enhancing employees' job satisfaction and retention. Therefore, managers should take care to confirm that job candidates are a good fit for the position and the organization during the hiring process. Cultural and skill assessments as well as in-depth interviewing methods should be employed to gauge fit and identify potential issues.
2. Know one's employees. Across the research questions, participants emphasized the importance of warm supervisor-subordinate relationships and the value of feeling known and supported. Therefore, managers are strongly encouraged to learn about and seek to understand their employees both personally and professionally. This is particularly important in cases where job satisfaction or performance is lacking. Specific topics for inquiry include employees' career goals, development needs and goals, personal sense of mission, and desired types of support. Managers also should regularly assess their subordinates' job satisfaction and intentions to stay. The subtle act of engaging in dialogue and deeply listening to the fundraiser is invaluable for helping them feel valued, understood, and supported. Study findings suggest that, in turn, employees' job satisfaction and retention may increase. Managers who believe they are struggling to develop strong relationships with subordinates are advised to seek executive coaching, leadership development,

or sensitivity training to give them additional tools and approaches for understanding employees and forming warm and supportive relationships with them.

3. Deliver personalized, yet equitable support. Managers should be made aware of the powerful impact they have on their subordinates' job satisfaction and retention and be encouraged to deliver personalized, yet equitable support to increase both. For example, managers should assure that adequate communication mechanisms are in place, such as regular meetings with each subordinate. Reward, recognition, and development programs also should be equitable to avoid the perception that the best opportunities only go to a chosen few. Managers may use the list of current and desired forms of task-related and personal support identified in this study as a framework for interacting with their direct reports. To assure that employees are being adequately supported, managers should regularly seek feedback from subordinates. For example, even if managers believe they are exhibiting all the needed qualities and delivering all the needed support, the employees are the final judges. Supervisors need to speak with their employees to understand what they need and to identify and resolve any disconnects.

Recommendations for institutions. The study findings lead to three recommendations for institutions:

1. Hire for supportiveness. Supervisor supportiveness was emphasized in the study findings as being critical for enhancing employees' job satisfaction and retention. Therefore, institutions are advised to screen for supportiveness when selecting individuals for management positions. The supportive supervisor traits and behaviors identified in this study may be used as a framework for outlining needed competencies in prospective managers. Additionally, behavioral interviewing questions may be designed to determine whether managerial candidates interact with their staff members in ways that are likely to promote perceptions of support, job satisfaction, and retention.
2. Train for supportiveness. Given the importance of supervisor supportiveness, it is important for institutions to assess their current managers to identify and resolve any knowledge, skill, or ability gaps. Ongoing training also should be delivered to continually remind and educate managers about the importance and mechanisms for supporting staff.
3. Institutionalize supportiveness. Various organizational policies and procedures can aid in enhancing the level of perceived support. Such measures include allowing flexibility with regard to where, when, and how work is performed; supporting positive supervisor-employee relationships through budgets for happy hours or team events; instituting a culture of communication, high-quality management, and supervisor support; regularly assessing employee job satisfaction and stay intentions; and assuring that hiring practices include assessment of person-job and person-organization fit.

Recommendations for organizational development consultants.

Organizational development consultants can serve helpful roles in designing and conducting assessments, coaching, and any additional interventions needed to enhance supervisor support, job satisfaction, and retention. In particular, it would be helpful to develop and offer validated assessments of perceived supervisor support, job satisfaction, retention, and the influences on each. The questions used in this study may be a helpful starting point.

It is reasonable to assume that at least some managers may need help in becoming more supportive to their employees. In such cases, executive coaching and training may be helpful for assisting managers in developing approaches for learning about and understanding their subordinates, responding to voiced needs, and increasing awareness of the managers' own strengths and development areas as it concerns people management.

Organizational development consultants also can provide valuable guidance and leadership when creating and implementing other interventions, such as fostering supervisor-employee dialogue, creating feedback mechanisms, shifting to a supportive culture, revising hiring practices, or designing other supportive mechanisms.

Limitations

Four limitations were found:

1. **Sample size.** A key limitation of this study is the sample size, which was limited to 16 participants. If time allowed, a larger population could have been interviewed, yielding more data and insights to be analyzed. Additionally, a mixed method design might be used, including a survey of a large sample of fundraisers. This approach may generate findings consistent with Berkshire's (2013) conclusions about the low job satisfaction and high turnover within fundraising.

2. Sample homogeneity. Although diversity in age, gender, and ethnicity were represented in the sample size, the 16 participants had similar relationships with their current supervisors. Those positive relationships could explain the high job satisfaction and retention in the sample. The results may be not representative of the entire field of fundraising. The 16 participants chose to opt-in; while others invited by the researcher chose to opt-out.

4. Participant bias. It is possible that respondents provided socially desirable answers and hypothesis guessing, among others. Some questions also asked participants to engage in speculation (e.g., reasons why they might leave their position in the future). Due to these biases and questioning approaches, participants may have consciously or subconsciously responded in ways to appear “good” or to “help” the researcher by providing expected data. To obtain less biased data, it may be helpful to use methods that allow anonymity. The data also could have been gathered retrospectively by asking participants why they left previous positions.

Suggestions for Continued Research

Three suggestions for research are offered to build upon the present study. First, the present study may be repeated while controlling for its limitations. Such a study would increase the sample size, allow for more anonymity, and reduce the amount of speculation required to answer interview questions.

Second, it may be helpful to examine generational differences among fundraisers, given the purported differences across employees from different birth generations (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). Future studies could recruit larger samples to allow for more variation in the data, which might reveal generational differences. Care must be taken, however, to avoid confounding variables of time in role or career; that is, new employees tend to have higher job satisfaction simply due to the excitement of tackling a new role. This excitement naturally declines over time, and then increases again as the employee becomes more comfortable in their positions. Thus, the criteria for selecting participants should be 2 years or more of fundraising experience, and at least 1 year in their current role. These criteria should allow the fundraisers to be operating at 100% efficiency in

their role, as it typically takes 12 months to reach that capacity and to be familiar with fundraising.

Third, it would be valuable to examine the impact of supervisor support compared to the impact of other factors (e.g., organizational support) on job satisfaction. Although supervisor support does influence job satisfaction, it is one of many influential factors. For example, many participants discussed politics and challenges with faculty. It would be helpful to gauge the impact of the various factors to understand how influential supervisor support is in its contribution to satisfaction. Additionally, such a study could identify particular focuses of the supervisor support.

Summary

This qualitative study examined the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education. Data were gathered through interviews with 16 fundraisers working in higher education institutions regarding supervisors' support for fundraisers' task needs and personal needs, participants' job satisfaction and supervisors' impact on it, and participants' intention to stay in their jobs and the field. The data were examined using content analysis procedures.

Participants reported satisfaction with supervisor task-related and personal support, high job satisfaction, and strong intentions to stay in their jobs and the field. Key mechanisms of supervisor support included aiding employee growth and development; accelerating and facilitating task completion; being caring, accessible, and communicative; and empowering employees. Additional factors that enhanced their job satisfaction included doing meaningful work and attaining career achievement and

growth. Factors increasing their stay intentions included their sense of achievement at work, rewards, and positive relationships.

Given these findings, managers and institutions are advised to promote positive supervisor-subordinate interaction and to create highly empowering and development-oriented workplaces. Additional research is needed to confirm the present study's findings, especially as some findings were inconsistent with past literature.

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Appendix A: Study Invitation

Greetings!

I am conducting research on fundraisers in higher education institutions and I would like to request your participation in this study. Participation will involve one interview conducted by telephone or in person. This conversation is anticipated to take 1 hour of your time.

Participation is voluntary and confidential. You would not be identified in the study and any answers you provide would be pooled with others' responses and reported in aggregate.

Would you please let me know if you are willing to participate in my study?

I sincerely thank you for your help!

Appendix B: Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Giuseppe Nespoli under the direction of Dr. Gary Mangiofico at Pepperdine University, because you are employed full-time by a higher education institution as a fundraiser who directly solicits gifts from individual donors; you have at least 18 months of fundraising experience; and, you have been in your role for at least 6 months. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine the nature and impact of supervisor support on employee job satisfaction among fundraising staff within higher education.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview conducted by telephone or in person. The interview will be recorded. You can still participate in the study if you do not wish to be recorded. This conversation is anticipated to take 45 minutes of your time.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include possible psychological discomfort during the course of the interview as you may be asked questions you have not previously considered or may be uncomfortable answering.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are anticipated benefits to society, which include a better understanding of the supervisors' impacts on fundraising staff in higher education institutions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records collected for this study will be confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, it may be necessary to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if disclosed any instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password-protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your responses will be coded with a pseudonym and transcript data will be maintained separately. The audio recording will be destroyed once they have been transcribed.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or only completing the items for which you feel comfortable.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact Giuseppe Nespoli at [contact information] or Dr. Gary Mangioficio at [contact information] if you have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90045, [contact information].

Appendix C: Interview Script

Demographics

1. Gender: (record, don't ask)
2. What is your age?
3. Ethnicity?
4. What is your current role?
5. How long have you been in this field (fundraising)?
6. How long have you been in your current role?

Supervisor Support for Fundraisers' Task Needs

First, I'm going to ask you to rate a series of questions on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

7. My supervisor keeps me informed of the things I need to know to do my job well.
8. My supervisor has expectations of my performance on the job that are realistic.
9. My supervisor recognizes when I do a good job.
10. My supervisor is supportive when I have a work problem.
11. My supervisor is fair and does not show favoritism.
12. I am encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.

13. When it comes to tasks, how are you being supported?

14. How do you want to be supported?

Supervisor Support for Fundraisers' Personal Needs

Once again, I have a series of questions I would like you to rate on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

15. My supervisor is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of.
16. My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work.
17. I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor.
18. My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life.

19. When it comes to personal needs, how are you being supported?

20. How do you want to be supported?

21. When you think about the ways you want to be supported by your supervisor, what traits or behaviors are most important to you?

Impact of Supervisor Support on Job Satisfaction

Now, I'd like you to rate your feelings about your job on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

22. I find real enjoyment in my job.
23. I like my job better than the average person likes his or her job.

24. I am seldom bored with my job.
25. I would not consider taking another kind of job.
26. Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.
27. I feel fairly well satisfied with my job.
28. What helps you feel satisfied in your role?
29. What decreases your satisfaction in your role?
30. In what ways, if any, does your supervisor's support of you affect your satisfaction in your role?

Prompt (if needed): how important to you are the following supervisor activities: recognition, allowing creativity, listening to your problems, etc.

Fundraisers' Intentions to Stay

31. How long do you intend to stay in your current role?
- Less than 6 months
 - 6-12 months
 - 1-1.5 years
 - 1.5-2 years
 - More than 2 years
32. How long do you intend to stay in fundraising?
- Less than 6 months
 - 6-12 months
 - 1-1.5 years
 - 1.5-2 years
 - More than 2 years
33. What increases your desire to leave your role?
34. What increases your desire to stay in your role?
35. In what ways, if any, does your supervisor's support of you affect your desire to stay?
36. Do you see any similarities between your relationship with donors, and your supervisor's relationship with you?
37. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences in your role and your supervisor's support for you?