THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION ON THE JOB SATISFACTION OF
BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS

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THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION ON THE JOB SATISFACTION OF
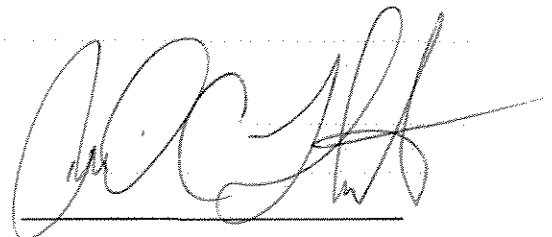BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS

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Abstract

This thesis examines how different forms of participation impact the job satisfaction of
blue-collar workers. By examining previous literature, satisfaction has shown to be
beneficial for both the worker and the employer, but limited research has been done in the
blue-collar sector of the workforce. Six types of participation were analyzed including:
participation in work decisions, consultative participation, informal participation, short-
term participation, representative participation, and employee ownership. In order to
analyze these types of participation, four companies were used to interview twenty blue-
collar employees. A qualitative approach was used to discover what employees thought
about participation and satisfaction within their own companies, and participants were
encouraged to tell stories of past experiences to exemplify their responses. Results
suggested that informal participation, consultative participation and emotional attachment
have the most impact on blue-collar employee satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: (Participation, Job Satisfaction, Blue-Collar)

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Reid C. Thornton

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The majority of Americans are not satisfied with their jobs. In 2005, a survey

conducted by Harris Interactive Inc. showed that 55% of Americans are not satisfied with

their jobs, while only 14% would say that they are very satisfied. However, additional

surveys show that 80% of Americans would continue to work if they inherited enough

money to live comfortably, which is contradictory to the 55% of Americans who are not

satisfied with their jobs.[1] Why would people be willing to work without pay if they were

not happy while doing it? One way to analyze this predicament is to research job

satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be, and has been examined to see how it contributes to

other attitudes and outcomes.[2] When searching for "job satisfaction" on an internet search

engine 2.79 million results were found; leading one to believe that job satisfaction is a

very important topic that captures the interest and attention of many.

The job satisfaction of blue-collar workers has become increasingly interesting

due to their lower pay structures and intense working conditions. The blue-collar

workforce includes skilled craft workers, service/maintenance workers, and other people

who have physically demanding jobs. In 2000, the Economic Policy Institute found that

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[1] Brian Dumaine and Ann Sample, "Why do we Work?" *Fortune* 130, no. 13 (12/26 1994): 196-201.

[2] Edwin A. Locke, "The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction," in *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (New York: Wiley, 1983), 1297-1349.

40.1% of men in the United States are blue-collar workers that make an average hourly wage of $13.71; compared to the $22.20 an hour that white-collar workers earn. PayScale used job satisfaction as a measure to find the top and bottom ten jobs in the United States. Coincidently, all ten of the lowest rated jobs were those of the blue-collar sector of the workforce. Some researchers feel that the lack of employee participation in the blue-collar workforce is to blame for their job dissatisfaction.[3]

To conceptualize these statistics, let's take a look at the life of Phillip Gamber. Phil is a middle aged dock worker at a major trucking line in Colorado. He goes to work everyday in order to support his family and lives life paycheck to paycheck. Phil dreads going to work everyday because he constantly fights with his bosses over how his job is to be performed. He feels that he can think of many different ways to alter his job to increase his happiness and the efficiency of the trucking line; but, he also feels that he has no voice in the organization. To cope, he has turned to alcohol and drinks every night just to wake up with another hangover to go to work with. His health has deteriorated and has become another concern for his future finances. Is this the way life should be? Many people would think that a lifestyle like this is not possible, but more often then not this story can summarize the lives of many blue-collar workers across the nation.

What makes job satisfaction so important? Obviously it is important to the individual employee. If a person works 40 hours a week from age 20 to 65, that's 93,600 hours (10 years of one's life) devoted to a job. Wouldn't it be natural to assume that people would want that part of their life to be a happy existence? Not only should employees care about their happiness, but employers should also care about their

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[3] Samuel Melamed et al., "Objective and Subjective Work Monotony: Effects on Job Satisfaction, Psychological Distress, and Absenteeism in Blue-Collar Workers," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 80, no. 1 (02 1995): 29-42.

employee's satisfaction. In fact, studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and productivity.[4] A chief concern for many organizations is increasing productivity so that the firm can earn higher profits, which can lead to higher wages for the employee and lower costs to the consumer. There is also evidence that higher job satisfaction can lead to lower employee absenteeism and turnover.[5] Employers try to reduce employee turnover because it has been found that the recruitment and training of a new employee can cost firms thousands of dollars. In fact, ACE Manufacturing found that it costs $2,288 to replace an employee, while it costs other large companies like Ernst & Young $120,000 to replace a single professional. Since job satisfaction is important to both employees and employers, it's important to understand the factors that influence satisfaction.

Job satisfaction has been researched dating back to the 1920s. It is defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences."[6] Appreciation for the psychological state of the worker came into prominence as a result of the now famous Hawthorne Studies.[7] Research has shown that favorable employee attitudes and employee-centered supervision are some keys to increasing productivity.

Job satisfaction has been divided into two main sub-groups which include conditions and agents. The basic job "conditions" that influence satisfaction include the

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[4] John M. Zelenski, Steven A. Murphy, and David A. Jenkins, "The Happy-Productive Worker Thesis Revisited," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9, no. 4 (12 2008): 521-537.

[5] Glenn P. Fournet, M. K. Distefano Jr., and Margaret W. Pryer, "Job Satisfaction: Issues and Problems," *Personnel Psychology* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 165-183.

[6] Locke, *The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction*, 1297-1349.

[7] Fournet, Distefano Jr., and Pryer, *Job Satisfaction: Issues and Problems*, 165-183.

social environment, communication, security, pay, working conditions, recognition and promotions. The "agents" in job satisfaction are supervision, co-workers, organization and management.[8] Since job satisfaction is necessary for continued success (high productivity), it is a topic that should be carefully evaluated throughout all business practices.

One technique that is believed to increase job satisfaction is the implementation of a participative management style. Advocates state that if employees have a voice in the decision-making process, they would be able to impact and help change the basic characteristics of job satisfaction. Many companies today are beginning to implement new participative practices to help increase their worker's satisfaction.[9]

Participation has been discussed and researched since the 1950's. There have been many definitions of "participation" in the last half of the 20th century. The confusion on the definition can be clearly seen through the following quote. "Workers' participation has become magic words in many countries. Yet almost everyone who employs the term thinks something different."[10] Locke and Schweiger (1979) proposed that the most concrete definition of participation in decision making (PDM) could be "joint decision-making." This definition does not limit the amount of people involved in the decision-making process, necessitate that the sharing be equal, or specify the content that is

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[8] Locke, *The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction,* 1297-1349.

[9] W. Matthew Juechter, "Speaking from Experience...the Ups and Downs of Participative Management," *Training & Development Journal* 37, no. 1 (01 1983): 92.

[10] Edwin A. Locke and David M. Schweiger, "Participation in Decision-Making: One More Look," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 1 (01 1979): 265.

shared. Therefore the concept of PDM refers to the participation in the decision-making process.[11]

Several studies have shown that allowing employees to participate in decision-making has led to an increase in job satisfaction.[12] However, many studies have conflicting views on whether or not an increase in employee participation directly affects job satisfaction. Some critics, such as Sashkin (1986) feel that participation is not only effective, but that its use by management is an ethical imperative.[13] Others such as Locke, Schweiger and Latham (1986) believe that participation is merely a managerial technique that can be used effectively in certain situations.[14] Participative management and PDM have been researched to examine if this relationship is true. It is especially important to examine the blue-collar sector of the workforce and their satisfaction due to the monotonous routines and the intense working conditions that blue-collar workers face.[15] This thesis will examine the relationship between participation and satisfaction and the views and outcomes of the use of participation in the blue collar workforce.

Cotton et al, (1988) conducted a study, "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Outcomes," that focused on different forms of participation and the outcomes that come with each. His study pinpoints six different forms of employee participation. These forms include: participation in work decisions, employee ownership, consultative

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Soonhee Kim, "Participative Management and Job Satisfaction: Lessons for Management Leadership," *Public Administration Review* 62, no. 2 (03 2002): 231.

[13] Marshall Sashkin, "Participative Management Remains an Ethical Imperative," *Organizational Dynamics* 14, no. 4 (Spring 1986): 62-75.

[14] Edwin A. Locke, David M. Schweiger, and Gary P. Latham, "Participation in Decision Making: When should it be used?" *Organizational Dynamics* 14, no. 3 (Winter86 1986): 65-79.

[15] Melamed et al., *Objective and Subjective Work Monotony: Effects on Job Satisfaction, Psychological Distress, and Absenteeism in Blue-Collar Workers*, 29-42.

participation, representative participation, short-term participation and informal participation. Cotton (1988) found positive effects on satisfaction for some of the above mentioned categories, but inconclusive results on others. This thesis will attempt to show positive or neutral effects on job satisfaction for all six types of participation as defined by Cotton.

This investigation will also attempt to fill in some of the gaps in Cotton's (1988) study. Cotton did not focus on the blue collar sector of the workforce. This study will focus on just the blue-collar workforce and will analyze the effects of the different types of participation on job satisfaction. It is important to look at just the blue-collar sector when examining job satisfaction because studies have shown that satisfaction between employment sectors can be different.[16]

It is also important to look at the blue-collar sector's relationship to the six different forms of participation because some categories do not apply to the blue-collar sector as much as private and public sector jobs. For example, many blue-collar employees are not offered stock ownership of the company through their incentive systems. As a substitution for the typical parameters of employee ownership, emotional attachment to the company will be researched instead. Studies have shown that an emotional attachment to an organization can not only increase satisfaction, but also increase productivity, company profitability, and lower turnover and absenteeism.[17] Therefore, this thesis will help create and expand the literature looking at employee emotional attachment and its relationship to job satisfaction in the blue-collar sector.

[16] Victor S. Desantis and Samantha L. Durst, "Comparing Job Satisfaction among Public- and Private-Sector Employees," *The American Review of Public Administration* 26, no. 3 (September 1996): 327-343.

[17] Credit Union National Association, "Engaged Employees Equal Engaged Members. (Cover Story)," *Credit Union Executive Newsletter* 33, no. 10 (06/11 2007): 1-2.

Typical representative participation will also be somewhat absent in this study. Some companies being looked at in this current study are non-union. Representative participation typically involves unions being the body that represent employees and management. Through unions, workers can gain equal standing with employers by organizing and speaking with a single voice, the major aim of representative participation.[18] By researching some non-union companies, this study will evaluate other types of representative participation, through qualitative research.

The findings of this research will help answer the following questions:

1. How do different participation techniques affect the job satisfaction of blue-collar workers?

2. Which participation forms have the most impact on job satisfaction?

3. How do employees feel about participation? Do they ever see results due to their participation in the decision-making process?

4. What improvements can be made in the decision-making process to improve job satisfaction?

5. Does emotional attachment to an organization lead to increased job satisfaction?

In order to assess the relationship between satisfaction and participation, a qualitative interview method was used. The purpose of these interviews was to get a worker's point of view and an in-depth understanding of the relationship between the six forms of participation and how they increase/decrease their job satisfaction. The goal was to get the employees to tell stories of actual events and encounters that they had with management in order to get a better idea of the use of participation. By using the

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[18] Sar A. Levitan and Clifford M. Johnson, "Labor and Management: The Illusion of Cooperation," *Harvard Business Review* 61, no. 5 (/09Sep/Oct83 1983): 8-16.

qualitative interview method, this thesis brought real world examples to the heavily quantitative based literature surrounding participation and satisfaction. Personal quotes and stories brought life to the research and gave first-hand experiences to highlight findings from previous studies.

This introduction is followed by a review of the literature revolving around job satisfaction, participation, and the blue-collar workforce. Cotton's (1988) study will also be analyzed as this thesis will expand on his findings as well as include new participative trends.[19] Chapter III discusses the qualitative interview methodology used in this study, highlighting the importance of qualitative research. It also explores the lack of qualitative research done on blue-collar job satisfaction in the field. This chapter also states the proposed relationships between each type of participation and satisfaction. Chapter IV presents the results found from the research conducted. The final chapter discusses the conclusions that can be drawn from the research as well as recommendations for the companies studied as to how they can increase their employee's job satisfaction.

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[19] John L. Cotton et al., "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 1 (01 1988): 8-22.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the existing literature pertaining to job satisfaction
and the history of employee participation. The articles reviewed cover: what job
satisfaction is and why it is important, studies of participative management styles, studies
based on participation in work decisions, employee ownership, consultative participation,
representative participation, informal participation, short-term participation, and why the
blue-collar workforce is especially important when studying job satisfaction. This
examination gives a better understanding of how research in this field can be conducted
while also aiding in identifying possible gaps in the research.

Job Satisfaction

Some of the earliest literature on personal happiness and job satisfaction stems
from Maslow in 1954. Maslow explained that humans have five basic needs:
Physiological needs - including food, water and air, *Safety needs* - freedom from physical
threats, *Belongingness and love needs*, *Esteem needs* - including the need for
achievement and the need for recognition and the approval of others, and the need for
Self-actualization - the desire to become everything that one is capable of becoming. He
theorized that these needs are arranged in a hierarchy of dominance from most important

to least important. This theory explains that humans will not seek the specific needs of something until the priority needs have been met. Therefore esteem needs and self-actualization needs (most related to job satisfaction in the workplace) will be sought after last.[1]

The next major research on human satisfaction came from Herzberg in 1966. Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory came from a study of 200 engineers and accountants to describe a time when they felt satisfied, and a time when they felt dissatisfied. Groups of answers were then put together and Herzberg (1966) created separate categories of motivator and hygiene factors. Answers including the work itself, achievement, promotion, recognition and responsibility were mentioned as sources of satisfaction (motivators). Incidents involving supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, company policies and salary were mentioned as causes of job dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). Motivators were found to give positive satisfaction while hygienes were found to not give positive satisfaction, but their absence would result in dissatisfaction.[2]

In 1983, Locke found inconsistencies within both theories. Locke (1983) felt that Maslow offered no proof of needs, the need hierarchy, or the confusion between needs and values. Locke (1983) questioned Herzberg (1966) for not having a directional operation of needs, the lack of parallel between man's needs and the motivator and hygiene factors, and the denial of individual differences.[3]

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[1] Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954)

[2] Frederick Herzberg, *Work and the Nature of Man* (Cleveland: World Pub. Co, 1966)

[3] Edwin A. Locke, "The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction," in *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (New York: Wiley, 1983), 1297-1349.

Locke (1983) took the most defensible aspects of both theories and expanded the definition of job satisfaction. "Job satisfaction results from the appraisal of one's job as attaining or allowing the attainment of one's important job values, providing these values are congruent with, or help to fulfill, one's basic needs. These needs are of two separate, but interdependent types: physical needs and psychological needs, especially the need for growth. Growth is made possible mainly by the nature of the work itself."[4]

By creating this new definition, Locke (1983) created the principles of job satisfaction and separated them into conditions and agents. The conditions included work, pay, promotion, recognition, benefits and working conditions. Work included intrinsic interest, variety, opportunity for learning and control over pace and methods used. Pay consisted of the actual amount of payment and fairness. Recognition included praise for accomplishment and credit received for work done. Benefits included plans for medical insurance, paid vacations, etc. Working conditions included everything from hours, rests, temperature, and equipment to physical layout. Agents consisted of supervision, co-workers, and the organization and management. Supervision includes supervisory style and influence and human relations. The category "co-workers" consisted of co-worker competence, helpfulness and friendliness. Organization and management was the overall view of the company and their concern for the individual employee and their treatment of the previous needs. [5]

Locke (1983) also identified the consequences of job dissatisfaction on the individual which makes job satisfaction important to measure. He felt job satisfaction should be a concern because happiness is the goal in life for the individual and that

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

contributes to other attitudes and outcomes. Since one's job is a part of one's life, the attitudes carried from work to other non-work activities can "spill-over". This includes positive or negative attitudes involving one's family, off-the-job activities, and the view of oneself. Locke (1983) also noted that there could be physical harm done to an individual due to job dissatisfaction.[6] These symptoms could include fatigue, headaches, ill health, indigestion, nausea, and loss of appetite. Negative correlations were also found between job satisfaction and length of life.[7] Other studies showed that job satisfaction was related to mental health issues including anxiety and tension, self-esteem, hostility, sociability and personal morale.[8]

Following Locke (1983), there is a large body of research showing benefits due to job satisfaction. Typically one of the most important aspects of positive job satisfaction is higher productivity. This is one of the most highly debated topics in the available literature as many articles have shown that job satisfaction has no direct effect on productivity.[9] [10] The search for the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance has been likened to the "Holy Grail" of organizational behavior research.[11]

In 2008, Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins tried to examine the relationship between happiness and productivity. They felt that a stronger relationship would be found if the

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Stephen M. Sales and James House, "Job Dissatisfaction as a Possible Risk Factor in Coronary Heart Disease," *Journal of Chronic Diseases*, 23, no. 12 (5 1971): 861-873.

[8] Arthur William Kornhauser, *Mental Health of the Industrial Worker; a Detroit Study [by]* (New York: Wiley, 1965)

[9] Locke, *The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction*, 1297-1349.

[10] Glenn P. Fournet, M. K. Distefano Jr., and Margaret W. Pryer, "Job Satisfaction: Issues and Problems," *Personnel Psychology* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 165-183.

[11] John M. Zelenski, Steven A. Murphy, and David A. Jenkins, "The Happy-Productive Worker Thesis Revisited," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9, no. 4 (12 2008): 521-537.

definition of happiness was broadened. Happiness was broken into five different categories including: job satisfaction, life satisfaction, quality of work life, and both positive and negative affects on emotions. To test these five types of happiness against productivity, Zelenski et al. (2008) surveyed 75 directors who had similar levels of authority and number of subordinates. These participants completed a self-reported questionnaire every Monday and Thursday for eight weeks, allowing them three previous days of experience to formulate their responses. Results showed that positive affect and quality of working life had the highest correlations with productivity. Both job satisfaction and life satisfaction demonstrated slightly weaker but statistically significant correlations with productivity. Not only did results show that happier people are more productive people, but also that people are more productive when they are in happier moods.[12] Even though many studies show conflicting results on the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, Zelenski et al. (2008) was able to show evidence of the positive relationship by redefining the term "happiness."

Also in 2008, Edwards, Bell and Decuir tried to find the relationship between satisfaction and performance by redefining performance. Productivity was split into two groups: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance included behaviors that are role prescribed and distinguish one job from another. Contextual performance was described as behaviors that support the broader organizational, psychological and social environment in which the technical core operates. Job satisfaction was also broken down into five facets: work, pay, promotion, supervision and co-workers. The sample used for the study consisted of 444 employees who held a variety of jobs in a large, Texas manufacturing plant. Supervisors rated their employees

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[12] Ibid.

on their quantity, quality and accuracy of work to evaluate task performance; and rated their employees on such items as teamwork and willingness to volunteer to evaluate contextual performance. The results showed that there was a significant, positive relationship between overall job satisfaction and task and contextual performance. Evidence also showed that satisfaction is more strongly related to task performance over contextual performance. Three facets of job satisfaction (work, promotion and co-workers) were significantly related to task performance while only one facet (supervision) was related to contextual performance.[13] By splitting up satisfaction and performance, this study successfully showed that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. When satisfaction and productivity is not split up into different characteristics, it is harder to demonstrate their positive relationship.[14]

There have also been other positive effects of job satisfaction besides employee productivity. Absenteeism has consistently been found to be inversely related to job satisfaction as well as job turnover.[15] This is important to businesses because with lower absenteeism and turnover, the company can save money on lost production and hiring new employees. Limited studies have also shown that the rate of learning is positively related to job satisfaction as bored, unsatisfied workers show much slower improvement in learning new work tasks. Another category of limited research is the relation between

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[13] Bryan D. Edwards et al., "Relationships between Facets of Job Satisfaction and Task and Contextual Performance," *Applied Psychology: An International Review* 57, no. 3 (07 2008): 441-465.

[14] Fournet, Distefano Jr., and Pryer, *Job Satisfaction: Issues and Problems*, 165-183.

[15] Ibid.

accidents and job satisfaction as the research shows only a slight negative relation between the two variables.[16]

Ting (1996) further examined the variables that affect job satisfaction. He looked specifically at the white-collar work force and used data from a previous *Survey of Federal Employees*. He looked at both intrinsic and extrinsic factors and the results showed that pay, promotion, task clarity, skills utilized, task contribution, relationships with supervisors, relationships with co-workers, organizational commitment, and amount of education were all significantly related to job satisfaction.

Ting (1996) also related demographics to job satisfaction and had interesting results. Ting (1996) found that Hispanics and white women have higher levels of job dissatisfaction due to lack of promotion. Women see lack of promotion as unfair when it favors their male counterparts. Interestingly, some races/ethnicities, and both genders, have different views of job satisfaction variables which offers the possibility for further research.[17]

Stringer's (2006) study of Leader-Membership Exchange Theory (LMX) also showed the importance of the different types of needs that must be met in order to achieve job satisfaction. This study emphasized the positive relationship of the presence of LMX and job satisfaction. However, even when supervisory and interpersonal relations were very high, some employees still had low job satisfaction. Stringer (2006)

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[16] Locke, *The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction*, 1297-1349.

[17] Yuan Ting, "Analysis of Job Satisfaction of the Federal White-Collar Work Force: Findings from the Survey of Federal Employees," *The American Review of Public Administration* 26, no. 4 (December 1996): 439-456.

noted this is possible because when extrinsic needs are met satisfaction levels can still be low if not all intrinsic needs are met first.[18]

Job satisfaction has been researched for most of the 20th century. Job satisfaction contains many different characteristics that all impact the happiness of an employee. Consequences of dissatisfaction have given researchers the ability to conclude that job satisfaction should be evaluated to protect employee safety. The importance of job satisfaction can be seen through its relationships with productivity, absenteeism and employee turnover. Different demographic trends have also been identified to give job satisfaction more importance in being studied.

Participative Management

The use of participation is believed to increase employee's satisfaction. Since there are many benefits from higher employee job satisfaction, many companies have begun taking more participative measures. Studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between the use of a participative management approach and employee satisfaction.[19] Participative management focuses on empowering the employee to feel that their opinion and participation is important to the success of an organization. Some theorists go as far as classifying participative management as an ethical imperative. Others deem it just another managerial technique that can only be implemented in certain situations. Participative management can be a useful technique to increase job satisfaction

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[18] Leronardo Stringer, "The Link between the Quality of the Supervisor–Employee Relationship and the Level of the Employee's Job Satisfaction," *Public Organization Review* 6, no. 2 (06 2006): 125-142.

[19] Soonhee Kim, "Participative Management and Job Satisfaction: Lessons for Management Leadership," *Public Administration Review* 62, no. 2 (03 2002): 231.

which can increase organizational effectiveness, but its implementation does not guarantee success.

There are many different ways to manage an organization, all of which have different characteristics. In 1997, Moss identified four main types of management styles. These include exploitive/authoritative, benevolent/authoritative, consultative, and participative. Characteristics of each type of management style can be seen in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 Types of Management Styles and their Characteristics

Type 1: Exploitive/ Authoritative	- Superiors show little confidence in subordinates - Superiors ignore subordinates' ideas - Communication flows downward, is inaccurate, and leaves subordinates feeling suspicious - Goals and decision making are accomplished by top management with resulting orders issued downward; - Fear, threats, punishment and occasional rewards are the motivating forces.
Type 2: Benevolent/ Authoritative	- Superiors are condescending to subordinates - Communication is limited, censored and filtered downward - Upward communication may exist in the form of a suggestion system, but employees are intimidated to share ideas - Goals and decision making are made by top and middle management while subordinates are occasionally consulted for input or problem solving - Orders are issued downward. Rewards and some actual or potential punishments are the motivating forces.
Type 3: Consultative	- Superiors have substantial confidence in subordinates - Subordinates' ideas are sought and freedom to discuss work with the superior is felt - Goal-setting responsibility is felt by a substantial proportion of personnel - Employees generally behave in ways to achieve organizational goals - Communication flows down and up but information is limited and viewed with caution. - Rewards, occasional punishment and some involvement are motivating forces.

Type 4: Participative	• Superiors have complete confidence in subordinates; make them feel empowered • Subordinates' ideas are always sought and freedom to discuss jobs with superiors is felt • Goals are set at all levels • Communication is abundant and flows down, up, and sideways; information is accurate and received with an open mind • Economic rewards are based on a compensated system that is developed through participation is the motivating force.

Adopted from: *Rita Moss and Connie J. Rowles, "Staff Nurse Job Satisfaction and Management Style," Nursing Management 28, no. 1 (01 1997): 32-34.*

Many studies have tried to show that a participative management approach is the best one to choose in order to stimulate productivity and employee job satisfaction. Theories of participative management advocate that managers share decision-making power with employees to enhance performance and work satisfaction.

In 2002, Kim looked for the relationship between the use of participative management and job satisfaction in local government agencies. Kim (2002) surveyed 1,576 employees who worked for Clark County, Nevada and asked them about their job satisfaction and participative management characteristics. The results indicated that the manager's use of a participative management style correlated positively to job satisfaction. It was also found that employees who felt they had effective communication with management and strong input in the participative strategic planning process were associated with high levels of job satisfaction.[20]

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[20] Ibid.

One principal characteristic of participative management is giving employees a sense of empowerment.[21] Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason (1997) looked at the ability of supervisors to empower employees and the relationship towards employee satisfaction.[22] In order to empower employees, four cognitions must be met: a sense of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. "Meaning" encompasses the creation of a fit between the needs of one's work and one's values, beliefs and behaviors. "Competence" is the belief that one has all the necessary skills and abilities to perform his/her job well. "Self-determination" is the belief that one has control over how s/he does one's work. "Impact" is the perception that one has influence over strategic, administrative or operating outcomes to make a difference at work. All of these aspects are important to give employees the sense of empowerment. If employees feel no "meaning" in their work they will not feel empowered due to the fact that their work conflicts with their values. If employees lack "competence," they feel inadequate in being able to perform their job. Individuals also need to feel some sense of autonomy because following a hierarchy of orders decreases empowerment. Finally, if individuals do not feel they are making an "impact" through their work they will not feel empowered.[23]

Some researchers believe that participative management needs to be implemented in most companies because it is an "ethical imperative." Sashkin (1984) feels that the implementation of a participative management scheme can satisfy all three basic human work needs which in his opinion are: autonomy, achievement and interpersonal contact in

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[21] Rita Moss and Connie J. Rowles, "Staff Nurse Job Satisfaction and Management Style," *Nursing Management* 28, no. 1 (01 1997): 32-34.

[22] Gretchen M. Spreitzer, Mark A. Kizilos, and Stephen W. Nason, "A Dimensional Analysis of the Relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Effectiveness, Satisfaction, and Strain," *Journal of Management* 23, no. 5 (12/15 1997): 679.

[23] Ibid.

the context of work activities. He also notes that the failure to satisfy those needs can result in physical or psychological harm. He concludes his study by taking the minimalist ethical position - do not harm other people. Therefore, participative management is an ethical imperative. He goes further by saying that it is ethically unjustifiable to manage "non-participatively" unless one maintains the position that individuals do not have a basic right to remain unharmed by others.[24]

Other researchers quickly respond to participative management being an ethical imperative by saying that the opposite is true. Locke, Schweiger and Latham (1986) note that Sashkin (1984) is correct by proposing that it is unethical to cause physical harm onto another, but it is not similar for psychological harm.[25] If it was unethical for someone to make another unhappy or frustrated, that would include anytime a manager took a legitimate action that an employee did not agree with. If supervisors were never able to fire a dishonest employee, refuse to hire someone who did not have the crucial skills needed, or requiring an employee to set service standards higher than they did - they would be considered unethical. Locke, et al, (1986) makes the point that job satisfaction is not a right; it is a responsibility that both employee and employer must pursue in the interest of both parties. If employees want satisfaction and happiness through raises and promotions, and employers want satisfaction through running a profitable organization, then these views come into conflict. Locke, et al, (1986) conclude

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[24] Marshall Sashkin, "Participative Management is an Ethical Imperative," *Organizational Dynamics* 12, no. 4 (Spring84 1984): 4-22.

[25] Edwin A. Locke, David M. Schweiger, and Gary P. Latham, "Participation in Decision Making: When should it be used?" *Organizational Dynamics* 14, no. 3 (Winter86 1986): 65-79.

by saying that good management is the result of intelligence, experience and clear thinking and that sometimes participation can be an answer and sometimes it can't be.[26]

When is it right to use participative management? Research cannot easily measure the success of participative management efforts with objectives of improved communication, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced problem-solving, due to it being highly personalized. The success of participative management techniques rely on the personnel involved.[27] Typical American organizations reject participative management because workers are accustomed to hierarchical structure and managers and employees are typically reluctant to accept participative values.[28] Participative management will not succeed if the employees do not desire it. There needs to be a large population of workers who feel that their input could help themselves and/or the company.[29] Studies have also shown that employees need to have an interest or attachment to the employing firm to make them feel that their participation will be legitimate.[30] Another condition is that participants need to have sufficient knowledge of the subjects being decided at the time. If employees are asked to contribute their ideas on something they know nothing about, this will lead to a low-quality decision and a negative emotional impact at best.[31]

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Richard J. Long, "The Relative Effects of Share Ownership Vs. Control on Job Attitudes in an Employee-Owned Company," *Human Relations* 31, no. 9 (09 1978): 753.

[28] Sar A. Levitan and Clifford M. Johnson, "Labor and Management: The Illusion of Cooperation," *Harvard Business Review* 61, no. 5 (/09Sep/Oct83 1983): 8-16.

[29] Long, *The Relative Effects of Share Ownership Vs. Control on Job Attitudes in an Employee-Owned Company*, 753.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Locke, Schweiger, and Latham, *Participation in Decision Making: When should it be used?*, 65-79.

Participative management can produce gains for employers and benefits for
workers, but it will not usher in a new era of labor-management relations.[32] Due to the
circumstances in which a participative management approach can succeed, it will not and
can not be implemented into all organizations. However, if employee participation is
desired in decision-making, a participative management style does not have to be
enforced. Many types of participation have been identified and have had success without
the full implementation of a participative management scheme.[33]

Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes

Employee participation can come in many different forms and can offer wide-
ranging results. These forms of participation can increase employee satisfaction as well
as improve organizational efficiency. In 1988, Cotton, Wollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall
and Jennings tried to determine varied levels of job satisfaction with the different forms
of participation by looking at 91 articles that were relevant to the philosophical and
theoretical discussions on participation. They were able to identify the properties of
participation, six different forms of participation, and the impact that each form of
participation had on job satisfaction.

They acknowledged that participation in decision-making (PDM) is classified in
terms of three properties. These properties include formal-informal, direct-indirect and
amount of influence. Formal participation has a system of rules to be followed (like a
"quality circle"); while informal participation can be casual like a conversation with a

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[32] Levitan and Johnson, *Labor and Management: The Illusion of Cooperation*, 8-16.

[33] John L. Cotton et al., "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 1 (01 1988): 8-22.

supervisor. Direct participation involves "immediate personal involvement"; while indirect participation involves some sort of employee representation. The different types of influence were defined using the following criteria: (a) no information is given to employees about a decision; (b) employees are informed in advance; (c) employees can give their opinion about the decision about to be made; (d) employee's opinions are taken into account; (e) employees can negatively or positively veto a decision; and (f) the decision is completely in the hands of the employees.[34]

While Cotton, et al, (1988) were classifying the studies, they realized there were many different types of PDM; but six different combinations proved to be prominent in being able to describe all of the studies in the sample. These six types of participation were: participation in work decisions, consultative participation, short-term participation, informal participation, employee ownership, and representative participation. Descriptions of each are found in Table 2.2. These six forms of participation will be used in this study to examine how much of each form is apparent in the blue-collar sector.[35]

Table 2.2 Cotton's Six Forms of Participation

Participation in Work decisions	• Formal • Direct • Long-term • Influence: high to very high
Employee Ownership	• Formal • Indirect • Length: depends on how long the stock is held • Influence: level of influence employees can have, is usually determined by their involvement in stockholder meetings

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

Consultative Participation	• Formal • Direct • Long-term • Influence: depends on amount of participation in meetings; such as quality circles and Scanlon Plans
Representative Participation	• Formal • Indirect • Length: can be both long-term and short-term • Influence: medium to low due to indirect participation
Informal Participation	• Informal • Direct • Length: based on relationships employees have with supervisors • Influence: varied levels of influence; which are determined by the strength of the relationships between supervisors and their subordinates
Short-Term Participation	• Formal • Direct • Length: short-term • Influence: depends on the amount of participation power given to employees by management

Adopted from: *John L. Cotton et al., "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes," Academy of Management Review 13, no. 1 (01 1988): 8-22.*

Cotton, et al, (1988) found interesting outcomes when looking at the six forms of PDM. It was determined that if two-thirds of the studies in a cluster found positive effects on PDM then the effect existed. If less than one-third of the findings were positive then the effect did not exist. Clusters were determined uncertain if more than one-third but less than two-thirds of the studies saw positive effects. When looking at the impact of each on job satisfaction, both informal participation and employee ownership had positive effects. Participation in work decisions and consultative participation had inconclusive results. Short-term and representative participation showed no effect on job satisfaction.[36] Each of these forms of PDM are discussed in more detail below.

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[36] Ibid.

Participation in Work Decisions

There have been many studies that look at participation in work decisions without implementing a participative management style; these studies have looked at the relationship between satisfaction and the use of participation in work decisions. This strategy consists of formal, direct, organized events where employees have a high influence on the decisions made. Many studies included in this literature review have looked at employee participation in work decisions, but this form of participation must be formal with the intent of allowing employees to decide the final outcome. Research shows that pay incentive plans and overall working decisions have been the types of decisions in which employees have been able to participate.[37] It is interesting to note, as well, that employees have an emotional attachment to the results of their participation. Participation in work decisions has shown consistent increases in job satisfaction due to the employee's ability to be directly involved in the decisions making process.

Lawler and Hackman (1969) looked specifically at the effects of employee participation in the development of pay incentive programs. Building maintenance employees were split into nine different work groups and were placed into different categories. Three groups designed their own incentive plans, two groups had pay incentive plans imposed on them, two groups talked to researchers but did not have their pay plans altered, and two other groups received no treatment at all. The groups that designed their own plans saw significant results. Before creating their own incentive plans, workers worked 88% of their scheduled work hours and after the implementation of the plans they created, workers worked 94% of their assigned hours. The imposed

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[37] Edward E. Lawler III. and J. Richard Hackman, "Impact of Employee Participation in the Development of Pay Incentive Plans: A Field Experiment," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 53, no. 6 (12 1969): 467-471.

group had the pay incentive plan that the participative group created imposed on them. This group saw no improvements on attendance.[38] Conclusions can be drawn from this, stating that participating in the development and implementation of a plan pertaining to work decisions can have a high rate of effectiveness; in this case specifically the amount of effectiveness was measured in attendance. Another possible conclusion is that participation can improve the quality of the decisions being made in the eyes of the employees. This can be seen since both groups had the same plan assigned to them, but the participative group was the only group to see positive results.

Many other interesting conclusions can be found within this study. The imposed groups did not seem to fully understand the incentive plans that were forced on them. Since they had no participative measures in creating the plan, the plan was not as clear to them and positive results were not shown; even though similar workers in the other group did. The imposed group also showed a lack of commitment to the new plan. Again, due to the absence of their participation, the employees had no emotional attachment to the new plan and they saw it as just another attempt by management to exploit them. The researchers also noted that interestingly, the workers responded well to the opportunity of participating in the design of the new plan. Most workers had very little education and belonged to the lower socio-economic classes. Since these workers responded well to the opportunity and showed results, one could expect the same response from the blue-collar workforce due to their demographic trends.

Lawler and Hackman's (1969) results were very similar to that of a study conducted by White and Ruh. White and Ruh (1973) looked at participation in work decisions by surveying 2,775 employees in six manufacturing plants in the Midwest.

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[38] Ibid.

They looked at the participation in general work decisions, job involvement, motivation, and personal identification within work groups in the organization. The correlations between participation and job attitudes were consistently positive and significant for the total sample and even within the six separate plants. They reported that employees who are more involved, motivated, and identify with the company more, may report a higher degree of participation and satisfaction regardless of any differences in actual participation.[39] The success of this type of participation may be due to the fact that employees can be directly involved in making decisions. Formal participation can come in many different forms but participation in work decisions has seen consistent results.

Employee Ownership

Another type of formal participation is employee ownership. Employee ownership typically involves financial ownership of the company in which a person is employed. Stockholders often can only participate indirectly so their influence on decision making is low. Even though financial ownership has shown a positive relationship with satisfaction, participation alone has shown a stronger impact on satisfaction. Emotional attachment can also be a form of employee ownership because they share similar traits. Research shows that the more an employee identifies him/herself to their organization, the more satisfied they are with the challenges of their job, resulting in higher satisfaction.[40] Even though emotional attachment receives no monetary rewards, employees are still similarly

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[39] J. Kenneth White and Robert A. Ruh, "Effects of Personal Values on the Relationship between Participation and Job Attitudes," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (12 1973): 506-514.

[40] Stringer, *The Link between the Quality of the Supervisor–Employee Relationship and the Level of the Employee's Job Satisfaction*, 125-142.

motivated to see the organization grow. Several studies have looked at the impact of both financial ownership and emotional attachment and its relationship to job satisfaction.

Klein (1987) proposes that there are three models of the psychological effects of employee ownership. The first model is the "intrinsic satisfaction model" of employee ownership. This model suggests that the simple fact of ownership increases employee's commitment and satisfaction with the company. Researchers who have tested this model yield inconsistent results due to: employee ownership status as an individual-level independent variable, differences in employee salary, tenure, status, and commitment to the company. The second model is the "instrumental satisfaction model" of employee ownership. According to this model employee ownership increases employee influence in company decision making which in turn increases employee commitment. As with the first model, this model often has inconsistent results due to the different perceptions of employee influence. The last model is the "extrinsic satisfaction model" which suggests that employee ownership increases organizational commitment if employee ownership is financially rewarding to employees. Surprisingly, this model is rarely discussed or studied, but is supported by research that shows the importance of financial rewards as a determinant of job satisfaction.[41]

To test her theory, Klein (1987) conducted a study consisting of 37 different firms that had 2,804 stockholding employees. These employees took surveys based on individual influence, company characteristics, and satisfaction levels to test the three models. The study showed no support for the "intrinsic," or the "instrumental satisfaction

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[41] Katherine J. Klein, "Journal of Applied Psychology Monograph - Employee Stock Ownership and Employee Attitudes: A Test of Three Models," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 72, no. 2 (05 1987): 319-332.

model" as expected.[42] There was, however, support for the "extrinsic satisfaction model" which basically means - money is what matters. This leads to the conclusion that if employees are making money, they will be happier and more involved with the company.

Another study looked at the effects of employee ownership and employee participation in decisions, to see which variable had a stronger effect on job satisfaction. Long (1978), noted that employee ownership does not necessarily automatically correlate to more participation and satisfaction. His purpose was to separate the effects of ownership and employee PDM to determine if there is an interaction between the two variables. Long (1978) used a trucking company that had just been purchased from a corporate owner by most of its workers for this experiment. Seventy percent (70%) of the firm's employees had complete ownership of the company. Long surveyed these employees using employee ownership as a dummy variable and PDM as another variable that would be measured by answers to questions regarding the individual amount of use of PDM. Results showed that participation had a much stronger impact on satisfaction than ownership did. Ownership had a non-significant positive impact on satisfaction.[43] While both were found to have positive impacts on satisfaction, participation in decision-making had much stronger effects.

Bakan, Suseno, Pinnington, and Money (2004) reviewed Long's (1978) study and tried to create a new model to calculate the combined effects of both financial participation (FP) and PDM which they called employee participation (EP). The unit of analysis used in this study was survey respondents who worked in a large British retail

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Long, *The Relative Effects of Share Ownership Vs. Control on Job Attitudes in an Employee-Owned Company*, 753.

organization. The results of the study showed that EP and PDM were both positively and significantly associated with job satisfaction. Other results included little support for the intrinsic satisfaction model since FP showed a significant relationship to commitment alone. Another conclusion was made providing support for the instrumental model since PDM showed positive and significant effects on most job attitudes. The last finding was that EP did not have higher independent effects on satisfaction as PDM does alone.[44] This shows that employee ownership shows weak positive effects on satisfaction and that direct participation in decision-making is more favorable.

It has been shown that emotional attachment to an organization has similar effects of employee ownership on the employee, without the monetary value. One particular study looked at the emotional attachment of workers at a credit union.[45] The article offers some insight into the importance of emotional attachment. It suggests that employees are the same emotional beings in the marketplace as they are in the workplace. Many financial institutions try to improve employee satisfaction with pay incentives and other benefits. The author explains that those factors are important but that they don't relate to improving business outcomes. The true way to improve satisfaction and improve business outcomes is to make your employees feel engaged. "Engagement is a much better predictor of business outcomes such as productivity, profitability, consumer engagement, turnover, absenteeism and loss."[46] Emotional attachment and employee ownership has

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[44] Ismail Bakan et al., "The Influence of Financial Participation and Participation in Decision-Making on Employee Job Attitudes," *International Journal of Human Resource Management* 15, no. 3 (05 2004): 587-616.

[45] Credit Union National Association, "Engaged Employees Equal Engaged Members. (Cover Story)," *Credit Union Executive Newsletter* 33, no. 10 (06/11 2007): 1-2.

[46] Ibid.

often shown positive results to job satisfaction; however, other forms of participation have shown better results due to direct employee participation in making decisions.

Consultative Participation

Consultative participation is a type of participation that is both formal and direct to employees. The majority of consultative participation can be found in *Scanlon Plans* and *quality circles*. Scanlon Plans are based on monetary rewards given for productivity-enhancing suggestions. Quality circles can be defined as small groups who participate in decision-making and usually do not receive any financial bonus for their contributions. Success usually depends on the amount of employee dedication and participation within the plans. Both types of consultative participation have promoted increases in job satisfaction, especially in the automobile manufacturing industry.

Scanlon Plans (SP) had their beginning in the depression era when Joe Scanlon, a union president of a local steel mill, led a successful effort to enlist employee's help to salvage the company and maintain employee wages. The basic principle behind the SP is that there is a reservoir of creativity and experience in the workforce and if it properly tapped, the potential could lead to an increase in productivity.[47]

White (1979) led an investigation to measure the success of Scanlon Plans (SP). He designed an experiment to survey 23 Midwest manufacturing companies who have experience using SP. In order to measure the success of the SP, the survey had the following variables: SP success, PDM, expected level of SP success, managerial attitudes toward participative management policies, reward for following participative

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[47] J. Kenneth White, "The Scanlon Plan: Causes and Correlates of Success," *Academy of Management Journal* 22, no. 2 (06 1979): 292-312.

management policies, number of years the company had the SP, and company size. The study showed that perceived employee participation is highly related to SP success. Therefore, SP only works when a high amount of employee participation can be achieved. Managerial attitudes were also strongly related to SP success. The attitudes typically predicted whether the SP would succeed or fail. Length of SP tenure also related to its success.[48] We can draw from these findings that when participation is high, SP will succeed which will then lead to higher satisfaction.

Bradley and Hill (1987) define "quality circles" as semi-autonomous work groups wherein employees can work together and participate in the decision-making process.[49] Companies Usacorp and Ukayco allowed these researchers to look into both the arrangements and the response of management in the quality circle programs. They found that most quality circle ideas required managerial approval before implementation and 68% of the quality circle recommendations in Ukayco and 50% in Usacorp were not implemented by management. The manager's felt that quality circles only dealt with minor aspects of the organization; however, employees did recommend ideas for significant change, but were rejected because they required substantial expenditures of the restructuring of some part of the organization.[50]

Bradley and Hill (1987) also tried to determine the impact of quality circles on employees.[51] Ninety percent (90%) of Usacorp and 76% of Ukayco employees felt that

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Keith Bradley and Stephen Hill, "Quality Circles and Managerial Interests," *Industrial Relations* 26, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 68-82.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

quality circles gave them "more say" in the way work was done in their sections. Certain changes in the area of health and safety were particularly welcomed. Two examples of improved work-life included the installation of a music system into one area, and another circle obtained an increased opportunity for skill development.[52] Since management has the ability to reject quality circle ideas, the ability to let employees feel that they are participating in the decision-making process is an easy way to increase satisfaction while at the same time getting great suggestions on how to improve work life and save money.

Quality circles have had huge success in the automobile manufacturing industry. Toyota claims that 37% of their auto makers assemble in quality circles that put worker against worker in a competition to develop more efficient manufacturing methods. Toyota claims that their quality circles help them maintain an edge over their competitors as technology becomes less of a differentiator among auto makers. Toyota's vice president of manufacturing says, "It [quality circles] encourages employees on the factory floor to submit new ideas and it gives very high pride for team members to participate."[53]

Land Rover also used a very extensive quality circle program in the 1990s. Membership in their quality circle program was voluntary and groups made of 4 to 12 employees would usually meet for an hour or two to discuss work related problems. The objectives of the quality circles were to: improve quality, create an outlook for solving problems, involve people in their work, improve communication and teamwork, and improve job satisfaction. Quality circles helped Land Rover to save on costs, improve quality, create a better skilled workforce, improve teamwork and foster a greater

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Byron Pope, "Toyota Says Quality Circles Still Paying Dividends," *Ward's Auto World* 44, no. 6 (06 2008): 20-20.

commitment to the organization. They even implemented a point system to reward

employees for great ideas and participation in the circles. Land Rover attributes much of

its success of the late 1980s and early 1990s to their dedication to consultative

participation.[54] Consultative participation has been a success in improving job

satisfaction in a wide array of companies, but blue-collar working car manufacturers have

seen the largest gains.

Representative Participation

Representative participation is closely related to consultative participation.

Representative participation is also formal and is usually conducted through long-term

plans. It is considered very indirect because all workers are not directly participating as

they do in consultative participation plans. Typically, representative participation consists

of groups of people from different sectors of the company elected to meet with

management to discuss certain decisions. Unions are typically the most used type of

representation. However, other types of "worker councils" have been constructed to

represent the entire employee fleet. Besides the success of American unions,

representative participation has not had the amount of success that consultative

participation has had.

Rosenberg and Rosenstein (1981) tried to compare the Yugoslavian worker's

councils with consultative participation in United States' plants. Yugoslavia implemented

worker's councils consisting of 15 to 20 employee volunteers, based on the size of the

firm. The worker's council participates in making management accountable for their day-

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[54] Sonia El Kahal, Geraldine Hammersley, and Ashly Pinnington, "Quality Circles at Land Rover: The UK Experience," in Sonia El Kahal 2001, 2001), 315.

to-day actions and also controls economic, market, community, and financial influence over the management structure. The United States representative body consisted of leaders of each of the plant's functional groups who would meet weekly with management to discuss plant operations, analyze production problems, and propose solutions. Management, however, reserves the right to make the final decisions. Rosenberg and Rosenstein (1981) found that Yugoslav participation meetings were less frequent, not as well attended, were more confined to the discussion of personal problems, were less involved with overall plant operations and were more dominated by management than their U.S. counterparts. It was found that the Yugoslavian way of operating at the level of enterprise management is not the best way to encourage participation; and that the U.S. data showed that participation that is nominally consultative can effectively involve workers in the management process.[55]

Another type of representative participation researched is "forced representative participation." Bartolke, et al, (1982) investigated the Work's Constitution Act of 1972 in Germany.[56] According to this law, any plant that has more than 5 employees over 18 years of age must establish a worker's council consisting of representatives elected by the employees. Two principles oversee the laws which include: the council and management must strive to maintain an effective organization, and the council can not initiate strikes based on issues such as pay and working conditions. These councils have influence in the areas of: work environment, production organization, personnel and finance. After

[55] Richard Rosenberg and Eliezer Rosenstein, "Operationalising Workers' Participation: A Comparison of US and Yugoslav Models," *Industrial Relations Journal* 12, no. 2 (03 1981)

[56] Klaus Bartölke et al., "Workers' Participation and the Distribution of Control as Perceived by Members of Ten German Companies," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (09 1982): 380-397.

reviewing ten firms that followed this law, results showed that workers felt that their controls over decisions were less than half of the control that management had.[57] Therefore the forced representative participation did not give employees a sense of participation and therefore lowered job satisfaction. Due to employee's lack of direct participation, representative groups have not typically been able to positively increase job satisfaction.

Informal Participation

Informal participation occurs through the interpersonal relationships between managers and subordinates. By having a strong relationship with a supervisor, an employee can persuade and influence management decisions that would typically not seek employee opinion. Studies have shown that the strength of the relationship between subordinate and supervisor directly affects job satisfaction.[58] This relationship can be measured by looking at Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). Trust is a main component of LMX theory and positive correlations have been found between subordinate's satisfaction levels and their trust in their leader. Since relationships can be easily measured through LMX techniques, there are many studies that focus on the supervisor/employee relationship and its impact on satisfaction.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory states that when leaders and followers have good exchanges or high quality relationships they share mutual trust, feel better, accomplish more, and the overall unit performance within the organization is enhanced.

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Stringer, *The Link between the Quality of the Supervisor–Employee Relationship and the Level of the Employee's Job Satisfaction*, 125-142.

A study performed by Stringer (2006) examined the impact of a high-quality leader-member exchange on an employee's satisfaction. Stringer used 57 firefighters to conduct his study on the effect of LMX theory on job satisfaction. Two questionnaires were given to the firefighters including the LMX-7 Questionnaire and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire in order to calculate the amount of apparent LMX and job satisfaction (both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction) within the group of subordinates. Results showed that there is a significant correlation between high-quality supervisor-employee relationships and job satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and intrinsic satisfaction. When there is a strong relationship between employees and supervisors, then, employees enjoy the benefits of mutual trust, support and communication, higher satisfaction, more accomplishment, and will improve organizational efficiency.[59]

Numerous researchers agree that trust has a number of important benefits for an organization. Dirks and Ferrin (2001) noted that there are two models that describe how trust can have effects on attitudes and performance in organizational settings.[60] The main effect model claims that trust results from a variety of outcomes. According to this model, higher levels of trust results in more positive attitudes, higher levels of cooperation and superior levels of performance. The moderating effect model claims that trust facilitates or hinders the effects of other determinants of attitudinal, perceptual, behavioral outcomes via two distinct perceptual processes. Basically, this model states that trust provides the conditions under which cooperation, more positive attitudes and higher performance is likely to occur. By reviewing empirical studies spanning a 40 year

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[59] Ibid.

[60] Kurt T. Dirks and Donald L. Ferrin, "The Role of Trust in Organizational Settings," *Organization Science* 12, no. 4 (2001): 450-467.

period, Dirks and Ferrin (2001) conclude that the main effect model works in situations where guidance and incentives are not apparent. The moderating effect model works better when the work environment provides guidance and incentives to behave a particular way.[61] Dirks and Ferrin (2001) indicate that trust can play a huge role in the satisfaction of employees; and that the type of work environment determines whether or not trust will be expected to result in positive outcomes or has the possibility to be successful. Informal participation is the only type of participation that is not formally organized but it does show results. Relationships can effectively influence the amount of participation one has on decision making, due to the amount of trust that is apparent within the supervisor/subordinate relationship.

Short-Term Participation

Typically, short-term participation use can also be seen as a type of informal participation. Short-term participation typically consists of a single sit-down event or training program in which an employee can participate. Studies have shown a positive relationship between short-term participation and satisfaction through employee appraisal interviews and feedback sessions. There is limited literature on the use of short-term participation, but, when it has been researched, it has been seen as a sufficient PDM technique.

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[61] Ibid.

Wexley, Singh, and Yukl (1973) investigated how authoritarianism and the need

for independence affect various relationships.[62] These relationships include the amount of

participation a subordinate is permitted during the appraisal interview, employee

satisfaction with the interview, and motivation to improve subsequent job performance.

Twenty-seven subjects were placed into four different groups. These groups included

people with a high need for independence, low need for independence, high

authoritarianism, and low authoritarianism. Each personality group was assigned to three

different participation levels. The "tell and sell" method (TS) allowed the subordinate a

minimum amount of participation in the interview. The "tell and listen" (TL) group

allowed the interviewee to tell the subordinate his or her strengths and then allowed the

subordinate to express his/her feelings about the evaluation. The "problem solving" (PS)

approach gave the subordinate maximum participation in the appraisal interview. Across

the board, satisfaction levels were the highest when the PS method was used, followed by

the TL method; and the lowest amount of satisfaction came with the TS approach.[63] This

leads to the conclusion that allowing an employee to participate fully, in a one-time event

improved satisfaction. Therefore, the duration of a participatory event does not influence

the amount of satisfaction that can be achieved by participation.

Another study focusing on short-term participation was conducted with similar

results. Taylor and Zawacki (1978) took 152 Air Force Academy cadets and divided them

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[62] Kenneth N. Wexley, J. P. Singh, and Gary A. Yukl, "Subordinate Personality as a Moderator of the Effects of Participation in Three Types of Appraisal Interviews," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 58, no. 1 (08 1973): 54-59.

[63] Ibid.

into experimental and control groups.[64] The supervisors of the experimental group received extensive training on how to implement a participative/supportive performance appraisal and development system. Supervisors in the control group continued to use a hierarchically direct system and received no instruction. Tests were given after the six month experimental period to calculate results. Results showed that there were significant differences in perceived involvement, feedback, and attitudes between groups. The experimental group felt more involved, more satisfied with the system, and received positive feedback. The experimental group believed that the feedback they were receiving contributed to their personal growth and development. It is also interesting to note that there were no differences in performance between the two groups.[65] Again, in a short period experiment, people were found to be more satisfied when given the ability to participate in the process of evaluating their performance.

There has been an abundance of research evaluating the six different forms of participation. Participation in work decisions, employee ownership, consultative participation and informal participation have all shown positive relationships to job satisfaction. Since the employees in this thesis do not have any financial ownership in their organization, emotional attachment will be analyzed as a substitute to employee ownership. Short-term participation has also shown positive results with satisfaction, but, its use is limited and possibly will not be able to be evaluated in this thesis. Representative participation has shown inconclusive results in increasing satisfaction when there is an absence of unions. Since unions are absent in the firms being studied in

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[64] Robert L. Taylor and Robert A. Zawacki, "Collaborative Goal Setting in Performance Appraisal: A Field Experiment," *Public Personnel Management* 7, no. 3 (/05May/Jun78 1978): 162.

[65] Ibid.

this thesis, other forms of representation will be analyzed if available. All six forms of participation are believed to be positively related to employee satisfaction if they are used by the blue-collar firms being studied.

Importance of Studying the Blue-Collar Sector

To begin discussion on blue collar workers, we must first define what blue-collar workers are. According to the Department of Labor's Dictionary of Occupations, blue-collar occupations are composed of two categories. The first category includes skilled craft workers. This includes occupations in which workers perform jobs requiring special manual skills and need comprehensive knowledge of the process involved, which they can acquire through on-the-job training and experience or through apprenticeship or formal training programs. The second category is the service-maintenance category. This group consists of occupations in which workers perform duties resulting in the comfort, convenience, hygiene, or safety of the general public or to upkeep the care of buildings or grounds of public property.[66]

Countless studies on job satisfaction and participation in decision making have been conducted; however, few have focused on the blue-collar sector of the workforce. Research has shown that blue-collar work is very similar to public and private sectors in its need for task identity, task significance, and the need for autonomy among other factors.[67] It has also been shown that employees from across different sectors view

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[66] Mark A. Emmert and Walled A. Taher, "Public Sector Professionals: The Effects of Public Sector Jobs on Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Work Involvement," *The American Review of Public Administration* 22, no. 1 (March 1992): 37-48.

[67] Ibid.

satisfaction in different ways; leading one to believe that the literature on satisfaction in other sectors may not apply to the blue-collar sector.[68] The nature of blue-collar work has been found to cause psychological distress; therefore increasing the importance of participation to increase job satisfaction.[69] Interestingly, demographic trends have been examined to determine which type of people respond better to participation strategies. This thesis will attempt to bridge the gap in the current literature that deals with satisfaction and participation among blue-collar workers.

Many studies give reasons for why satisfaction and participation should be evaluated in the blue-collar workforce. One study tried to find the effects of satisfaction and motivation on public sector jobs compared to blue-collar jobs. Five hundred workers were surveyed while 72% of them were professionals and the other 28% were blue-collar workers. The surveys consisted of the job diagnostic survey in conjunction with the job characteristic model. Survey results showed that the job characteristics of public sector employees were no higher than blue-collar workers except in the category of task variety. Task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the job, all had similar results between the two sectors of the workforce. The study also showed that public sector professionals have lower work satisfaction than blue-collar workers.[70] This study would have been more interesting if the level of participation was measured in both sectors as well. It could be possible that this sample of blue-collar employees had high

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[68] Victor S. Desantis and Samantha L. Durst, "Comparing Job Satisfaction among Public- and Private-Sector Employees," *The American Review of Public Administration* 26, no. 3 (September 1996): 327-343.

[69] White and Ruh, *Effects of Personal Values on the Relationship between Participation and Job Attitudes*, 506-514.

[70] Emmert and Taher, *Public Sector Professionals: The Effects of Public Sector Jobs on Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Work Involvement*, 37-48.

participation rates and that this would explain their improved job satisfaction. But this study also helps us understand that blue-collar work is just as demanding as professional work in all areas except task variety.

Another study conducted by DeSantis and Durst (1996) looked at job satisfaction between private and public sector employees. They surveyed 821 private-sector employees and 741 public-sector employees on subjects including their personal characteristics, monetary and non-monetary rewards, and both job and work characteristics. The results showed that there were some considerable differences in the relationships that these variables had with job satisfaction. Education, marital status, pay and actual income earned, experience, and supervision were all differences observed between the sectors.[71] Blue-collar workers, therefore, require special attention. Since there have been differences between private and public sectors, it's reasonable to expect that the blue-collar sector is different as well.

A different article looked at repetitive work and its relationship to job satisfaction. It is believed that stress is associated with a high degree of work repetitiveness. It was also speculated that "work under-load," (the condition where workers are employed in jobs beneath their capacities and have "down-time"), lacks stimulus variation with no demands of creativity, problem solving, or interaction, therefore lowering job satisfaction. Melamed, et al, (1995) used 1,278 blue-collar workers in Israel for their study of work monotony.[72] Results showed that job satisfaction was negatively related to

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[71] Desantis and Durst, *Comparing Job Satisfaction among Public- and Private-Sector Employees*, 327-343.

[72] Samuel Melamed et al., "Objective and Subjective Work Monotony: Effects on Job Satisfaction, Psychological Distress, and Absenteeism in Blue-Collar Workers," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 80, no. 1 (02 1995): 29-42.

all types of work monotony when compared to jobs with higher task variety.

Psychological distress and sickness-related absence also increased in repetitive jobs.[73]

Since the majority of work in blue-collar settings is repetitive, one can assume that blue-collar workers would have low job satisfaction due to the findings in this study.

White and Ruh (1973) also try to explain why it is important to study blue-collar worker's satisfaction and focus on demographic trends as well.[74] They claim that many blue-collar workers view their jobs primarily as a means of obtaining the financial resources to pursue their interests and fulfill their needs. Therefore, they are typically not satisfied with their work already, and that due to a lack of participation and other work conditions, their satisfaction is typically low. According to these authors the use of participation may be more rewarding to employees whose background, needs, expectations and values predispose them to desire higher order need-fulfillment from their jobs.[75] Therefore, it is important that this thesis looks at the basic demographics of employees to see if their background warrants a need for participation. Some blue-collar workers may not need, or want, a higher order of fulfillment from their jobs due to their background, and hence the use of participation would probably not increase their satisfaction. These demographic variables will be important to look at when assessing the use of participation and its relationship to employee satisfaction. This thesis will focus on the impact of participation on blue-collar employee satisfaction and demographic trends will also be noticed and analyzed for their significance.

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[73] Ibid.

[74] White and Ruh, *Effects of Personal Values on the Relationship between Participation and Job Attitudes*, 506-514.

[75] Ibid.

This thesis will attempt to fill the gap in the literature of job satisfaction and the use of participation in the blue-collar sector of the workforce. Studies suggest that blue-collar work is different than other sectors of the workforce but that their work is just as demanding as others. Past research shows that job satisfaction typically focuses on public and private sector employees; thus, researchers have not been able to provide information on how each type of participation affects the blue-collar workers. Different job tasks and conditions of blue-collar workers also shed light on the importance of their satisfaction. Since Cotton, et al, (1988) did not focus on just one sector of the workforce; their results could have been skewed.[76] In this thesis, all six forms of participation will be examined to determine their impact on job satisfaction for the blue-collar sector of the workforce.

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[76] Desantis and Durst, *Comparing Job Satisfaction among Public- and Private-Sector Employees*, 327-343.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the research methods used to assess the impact participation has on the job satisfaction of blue-collar workers. Many types of research methods have been utilized to measure participation and satisfaction in the past. These methodologies are reviewed by their strengths and weaknesses in order to select a creative, yet effective way to answer the proposed research questions. Instead of trying to regress or to mathematically find correlations, qualitative analysis of blue-collar worker's interviews was used. Unlike Cotton's (1988) study, this research aimed to find the voice of the employees to determine what determinants of participation really have an impact on satisfaction and those that have no effect at all. Interviews were conducted with employees at four different blue-collar organizations, which were used to determine how each type of participation impacted job satisfaction.

Previous Research

Before selecting a research method to help answer the research questions, previous methods from similar studies were consulted. After reviewing more than thirty relevant studies, many characteristics of different methodologies were noticed. Some methodologies were ruled out for use in this thesis as a way to answer the proposed

research questions. The argument on the topic of participative management, presented by

Sashkin (1984)[1] and Locke (1986)[2] was written with no original research. Both authors

used theory to predict how workers would feel about the participative approach. Another

type of research methodology found in studies was observational research.[3] These studies

observed the success of different participative attempts, but did not identify the change in

worker satisfaction due to the change in participation. Few studies, such as Cotton et al

(1988), were meta-analyses, and came to their conclusions based on the results of

previous studies. This method provides overarching findings even though participation

and satisfaction were not observed at a personal level. Cotton et al (1988) suggested six

major types of participation by using this method.

Many other research methods that have been used in this field have been very

convincing. One of the most prominent methods to measure satisfaction and the use of

participation is through quantitative analysis. Countless studies have used surveys and

questionnaires along with ordinary least squared regressions to find results.[4][5][6] Other

successful studies have conducted experiments with employees centered on the use of

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[1] Marshall Sashkin, "Participative Management is an Ethical Imperative," *Organizational Dynamics* 12, no. 4 (Spring84 1984): 4-22.

[2] Edwin A. Locke, David M. Schweiger, and Gary P. Latham, "Participation in Decision Making: When should it be used?" *Organizational Dynamics* 14, no. 3 (Winter86 1986): 65-79.

[3] Richard Rosenberg and Eliezer Rosenstein, "Operationalising Workers' Participation: A Comparison of US and Yugoslav Models," *Industrial Relations Journal* 12, no. 2 (03 1981)

[4] Mark A. Emmert and Walled A. Taher, "Public Sector Professionals: The Effects of Public Sector Jobs on Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Work Involvement," *The American Review of Public Administration* 22, no. 1 (March 1992): 37-48.

[5] Soonhee Kim, "Participative Management and Job Satisfaction: Lessons for Management Leadership," *Public Administration Review* 62, no. 2 (03 2002): 231.

[6] J. Kenneth White and Robert A. Ruh, "Effects of Personal Values on the Relationship between Participation and Job Attitudes," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (12 1973): 506-514.

participation.[7][8] This seems to be the best way to test controlled and uncontrolled variables, but this process is time consuming and can be expensive as well. Studies that focus on demographics also seem to find strong relationships between participation and job satisfaction. After carefully reading the existing literature on this topic and finding the characteristics of each research method previously used, the method chosen to creatively answer the stated research questions in this thesis is through qualitative interviews.

Importance of Qualitative Research Methods

The use of qualitative data in the field of job satisfaction within the blue-collar workforce is limited. One objective of this thesis is to find the "voice" of blue-collar workers and discover what they really think about participation and how much it means to them. Creswell (2003) explains that there are many advantages to using the qualitative interviewing method.[9] One advantage is that participants can provide historical information and are able to freely express their opinions on certain questions. Open ended questions are asked, which are intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. Past experiences will be extremely helpful in order to assess the importance of participation and shape the worker's opinions towards participative measures. An additional advantage to using this method is the ability for the researcher to control the line of questioning. During surveys and questionnaires, participants are only able to

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[7] Kenneth N. Wexley, J. P. Singh, and Gary A. Yukl, "Subordinate Personality as a Moderator of the Effects of Participation in Three Types of Appraisal Interviews," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 58, no. 1 (08 1973): 54-59.

[8] Edward E. Lawler III. and J. Richard Hackman, "Impact of Employee Participation in the Development of Pay Incentive Plans: A Field Experiment," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 53, no. 6 (12 1969): 467-471.

[9] John W. Creswell, *Research Design : Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2ndd ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2003), 246.

answer the questions provided; however, through interviews, the researcher can alter the line of questioning and ask follow up questions after certain responses in an attempt to gain further information.[10] Mason (1996) also supports qualitative interviewing as a high quality research method. She suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations and experiences are meaningful ways to answer proposed research questions. The most legitimate way to obtain these outlooks is to talk, interact, and listen to people.[11] The current literature on job satisfaction is lacking a true qualitative approach. This thesis will use real stories from blue-collar employees in order to get a richer understanding of their feelings about participation and job satisfaction. Since many studies have found quantitative conclusions through surveys, this thesis will bring those numbers to life. When studying a subject like participation's impact on job satisfaction, a qualitative approach adds rich detail to employee's perceptions regarding different participation techniques and the benefit and detriments of each type of participation.

Research Design

The question set designed was intended to focus on participant demographics, job satisfaction and previous experiences with Cotton's six forms of participation. Table 3.1 shows the list of questions that each participant was asked. This list does not include the follow-up questions. These follow-up questions were "spur of the moment" questions and were different for each participant. The dependent variable in this research is the employee's job satisfaction and the independent variables are the six forms of participation. Since demographic trends have also been researched as important in

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996), 180.

determining job satisfaction, they were also included in the question set.[12] The final

questions focus on the employee's overall view of management and participation in an

attempt to find out how they really felt about the idea of employee participation.

Table 3.1 Interview Questions

Demographics	• How old are you? • How many years have you been employed at this company? • What is your approximately annual salary? • What is the amount of education you have received? • How many people live in your household? • What is your marital status?
Job Satisfaction	• How satisfied are you with your current job (on a scale of 1 to 10)? What led you to give that rating? • What things do you really enjoy about it? • What parts of your job would you like to change to increase your satisfaction? • Do you feel that you are a valued member of your firm? Why or why not? • Do the tasks you complete give you a sense of accomplishment? Why or why not? • Do you have a sense of fulfillment at the end of the day? Why or why not?
Participation in work decisions	• Are there formal meetings where employees get to have all the say on certain work decisions? If so, how beneficial are they? Please explain. • Can you provide an example of a time when your supervisor listened to everyone's suggestions on a work decision? Can you provide an example of them implementing one of your ideas? • Do you think there should be a formal meeting that lets employees create their own work decisions? How would that be beneficial? • How much influence would you say the employees have on the decisions that affect their jobs?

[12] Yuan Ting, "Analysis of Job Satisfaction of the Federal White-Collar Work Force: Findings from the Survey of Federal Employees," *The American Review of Public Administration* 26, no. 4 (December 1996): 439-456.

Short-Term Participation	• Has there ever been a "one-time" only event in which you were able to express your ideas about your job? Perhaps in a workshop? How did it go? • Do you have annual meetings with management to discuss your performance? How much participation do you have in them? • Are there any other rare events that occur where you find you are able to participate fully or not at all? Please describe your experience.
Consultative Participation	• Has your supervisor ever gotten all the employees together in a group to talk about new decisions or ideas? Can you describe the experience? How often does this happen? • How is "the voice of the employee's" heard? How valuable/helpful are their ideas? • How do you think these meetings are helpful? Why aren't these meetings helpful? • How could they be improved? • Have there ever been any major changes when the whole group requests something? • Why or why don't you and your fellow co-workers collaborate together to try to get something accomplished in the decision making process?
Informal Participation	• Describe the relationship you have with your supervisor. • How often does your supervisor ask you for your opinion when faced to make a decision? Why does he/she ask you? Please provide an example. • How comfortable do you feel making suggestions to improve your job with your supervisor? Do you feel that your voice is ever really listened too? • How well does your supervisor understand your job problems and needs? • What do you think would happen if your supervisors left and put you in charge? Would you do a better or worse job than him/her and why or why not?
Employee Ownership	• Do you have any financial ownership of your company? • If you owned stock in the company would you work harder to try to make more money in the long run, why or why not? • Would you be more satisfied if you were able to help elect the board of directors? Why or why not? • Describe your personal relationship with the company, are you emotionally attached to it? • Do you feel that your attachment to the company

	increases/decreases the amount of work you put into your job? Please explain.
Representative Participation	• Is there an elected group of employees that help make decisions with management? How do you find this helpful or unhelpful? • Would you think a union would be beneficial to the employees in regards to decision making? Why or why not? • If you could choose, how would you want yourself and all of the other employees represented to your management in decision making?
Overall view of management and participation	• What changes do you think management should make in regard to employee participation? • How can management make participation more accessible to the employees? • What affects would a more participative management approach have on the company and on your satisfaction? • How much does your participation with your company even affect your job satisfaction and happiness?

Interviews were conducted both on site and over the phone. Two organizations were comfortable having a student researcher conduct interviews face to face with employees on the job site. The other organizations were hesitant to allow a researcher on site and felt that interviews conducted on company time would take time away from operations. The average interview lasted 20-25 minutes; however, they ranged from 15 to 55 minutes long. Interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and notes were also taken to pinpoint key findings and quotes. Interviews were then transcribed, organized and analyzed to discover relationships between participation and satisfaction. The major findings of this research are presented in Chapter IV and conclusions are made in Chapter V.

Sampling

The sampling technique that was used in this thesis can be best defined as both a convenient and snowball sample.[13] Each organization that was used in this study employed a family member or a close friend to the researcher, known as the initial respondent. With these connections, it was easier to get management to approve of the interviews and to contact employees who would be willing to participate in the study. Many participants were selected by the initial respondent in an attempt to create a somewhat random and diverse sample. By acknowledging that this sample is not totally random, the results of this thesis can show bias and variability. However, there was an attempt to obtain a diverse population that had many different demographic trends and represented the company as a whole.

Predicted Relationships

Qualitative interviews will be used to answer the proposed research questions, but there are preliminary hypotheses of the results. After consulting the available literature on the topic of satisfaction and participation, many predictions can be made. It is believed that the more participation blue-collar employees have, the more satisfied they will be with their job. If formal participation in work decisions occurs, workers will more likely be satisfied due to their amount of influence in making those decisions. Short-term participation will not have an effect on job satisfaction, as Cotton et al (1988) found, due to the monotonous nature of blue-collar work; one event will most likely not result in any

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[13] William G. Zikmund, *Business Research Methods* (Mason, Ohio: Thomson/South-Western, 2003), 748.

major changes in satisfaction.[14] Due to its success in other blue-collar realms, consultative participation should have a large impact on employee satisfaction in this thesis. Consultative participation is relatively easy to orchestrate and has the ability to give every employee an opportunity to participate. In light of Stringer's (2006) research, this thesis will examine the perceived relationships employees have with their supervisors to measure the effect this has on current job satisfaction. Informal participation is likely to have a positive impact on typical blue-collar workers because they work very closely with their supervisors, and their relationship is considered to have a large impact on job satisfaction.[15] Since this thesis is focusing on the blue-collar sector of the workforce, which does not typically own stock in their companies, it is important to research the impacts of emotional attachment. Emotional attachment will most likely be positively related to job satisfaction, because if a worker is working for an organization they actually care about and connect with, the more satisfied they should be. Some of the blue-collar employees that are being researched in this study do not belong to unions, so there will also be an attempt to identify different forms of representative participation and measure its success in increasing job satisfaction. Representative participation is also likely to follow Cotton's (1988) results and find no strong relationship to job satisfaction. Participation in general is expected to largely affect job satisfaction of the typical blue-collar worker.

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[14] John L. Cotton et al., "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 1 (01 1988): 8-22.

[15] Leronardo Stringer, "The Link between the Quality of the Supervisor–Employee Relationship and the Level of the Employee's Job Satisfaction," *Public Organization Review* 6, no. 2 (06 2006): 125-142.

Participant Demographics

Table 3.2, provides demographic data that describes the respective backgrounds of each participating employee. This information should illustrate the wide array of backgrounds of all of the participants as well as demonstrate a sense of identity for the average blue-collar worker. In an attempt to obtain a random sample; employees of different ages, tenure with organization and education levels were desired to participate. All employees that were interviewed in this study were male. The average age of the participants was 40.95 years old. Average tenure with current organization was nine years and nine months, which includes the seasonal employee who has only worked three seasons. The average income was $48,263. That average did not include the employee who chose not to discuss him income. Out of all twenty participants interviewed, only two have Bachelor's degrees, one has an Associate's degree while five employees have no education after high school. All employees at Company C completed the Electrician Apprenticeship Program, which is required to work at Company C. Fourteen of the participants are married (twelve with children), four are single and two are divorced.

Table 3.2 Demographic Data Table

Participant	Age	Tenure with current organization	Approximate Annual Salary	Amount of Education	Marital and Family Status
A-N	29	7 years	$43,000	Some college, no degree	Single
A-K	51	12 years	$45,000	GED	Married w/ 1 child
A-M	59	20 years	$54,000	Some college, no degree	Single
A-J	45	8 years	$30,000	High School Diploma	Married w/ 6 children
A-R	28	10 years	$30,000	High School Diploma	Married w/ 2

					children
B-R	54	18 years	$48,000	Bachelor's Degree-Business	Married w/ 1 child
B-B	50	6 years	$42,000	Completed 10th grade	Married
B-F	56	23 years	$51,000	Some college, no degree	Married w/ 2 children
B-M	52	19 years	$65,000	Some college, no degree	Divorced
B-J	38	9 years	$45,000	High School Diploma	Single
C-R	30	10 years	$80,000	Electrician Apprenticeship Program	Married w/ 3 children
C-D	54	6 months	$68,000	Electrician Apprenticeship Program	Married w/ 3 children
C-B	44	3 years	$70,000	Electrician Apprenticeship Program	Married w/ 2 children
C-N	29	3 years	$67,000	Electrician Apprenticeship Program	Married w/ 4 children
D-L	33	3 years	$39,000	Associates Degree-Horticulture	Married w/ 1 child
D-F	36	10 years	$47,000	Some college, no degree	Divorced
D-T	48	23 years	N/A	Some college, no degree	Married w/ 2 children
D-A	30	6 years	$43,000	Some college, no degree	Married w/1 child
D-M	31	4 years	$40,000	Bachelor's Degree-Marine Science	Married
D-J	22	3 summers	$10,000	Currently in college	Single

Participating Companies

Blue-collar employees were interviewed from four different

companies/municipalities. These four organizations were selected based on personal

connections with employees. Some of these companies were more willing than others to

allow the research to be conducted, but all interviews were taken place either on the job

site or by phone. The four organizations that were used in this thesis include: a glass and metal manufacturing company, a freight company, an electrical contracting company and the parks and recreation department of a local city. Even though these firm's employ both white-collar and blue-collar workers, only blue-collar workers were interviewed.

Company A is a manufacturing company that focuses on providing the residential, commercial and automotive glass industry with quality products and dependable service. Company A has been serving the glass industry since 1872, where they were founded in Richmond, Virginia; since then, headquarters have moved to Memphis, Tennessee. The company serves more than 40,000 customers from more than 150 locations throughout the United States. Their mission is to be the leading fabricator, distributor, installer and retailer of glass and related products. Their foundation has been built around relationships with customers and suppliers to better understand their everyday needs. Five employees were interviewed from the Denver distribution facility, one of 40 facilities found in the nation.

Company B is the leading transporter of industrial, commercial, and retail goods, specializing in solutions for businesses across North America. Their origins can be traced to 1924, when a young entrepreneur from Oklahoma started a bus and taxi serviced he called the "Company Y". In 1930, "Company Z" was founded in Akron, Ohio; where they focused on keeping commitments in order to attract new customers. Both companies operated independently throughout the entire 20th century but in 2008, the companies officially merged in order to create Company B. Company B prides itself on guaranteeing time windows from a specific hour to a specific day. In order to accommodate customer needs, Company B also can provide dedicated protective services for a single item or an

entire trailer. They employ 59,000 employees and has over 430 service center. Company B delivers approximately 80,000 shipments per working day averaging 1,000 pounds. In 2008, they delivered roughly 22 billion tons of freight. Five employees at the Aurora, Colorado facility were interviewed for this study.

Company C is an electrical contracting company that focuses on commercial electrical construction which includes fire alarms, tenant remodels, hospital remodels and other upgrades. They were founded in 1998 and currently employ 31 workers even though that number has ranged from 8 to 70 at any given time. Headquarters can be found in Denver, Colorado, but since they are a contracting company, they do not have a main facility since all jobs are completed on site. This company is much smaller than the other large blue-collar firms studied. Due to their small size they are able to perform jobs that cost $100, but have the ability to complete jobs that cost well over $800,000. Revenues have been over five million dollars for both 2006 and 2007. Company goals include steady growth as well as providing an innovative, high quality service to their clients while providing a safe workplace for their employees as well. Four employees from Company C were interviewed over the phone since they did not have a main facility to hold in-person interviews.

Company D is very different than all of the other companies used in this thesis. The Parks and Recreation department is a part of the city government so all services are done for the good of the community and are not for profit. Jobs are very secure because the city is financed through state and city taxes. The city itself is the seventh largest city in Colorado and prides itself on the hundreds of recreational activities it provides its citizens. Residents have over 2,900 acres of parks to enjoy including 54 parks within the

city. With its emphasis on providing safe environments for its residents, each resident has a park within a half mile of their home. The interconnected trail system winding through the city features 63 miles of off-road trails offering easy access to many recreational opportunities for residents. Main facilities are located east of City Park, which is twelve blocks away from City Hall. The Parks and Recreation department employs roughly 125 full-time employees and well over 250 during the summers months with seasonal and other temporary workers needed to help maintain parks during the warmer part of the year. Company D distinguishes itself from their neighbors by preserving one third of their territory to public and private parks. Five full-time employees were interviewed on site, while one seasonal employee was interviewed over the phone.

The data gathered from the employees of these four organizations will be presented in Chapter IV. Relationships between satisfaction and types of participation will be discussed, along with a conclusion that will interpret key findings and highlight their meanings in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter will summarize and analyze the data collected from the twenty blue-collar workers that were interviewed. The data was organized into eight different sections, including the six forms of participation that Cotton (1988) defined: participation in work decisions, short-term participation, consultative participation, informal participation, representative participation and employee ownership.[1] The other two sections are job satisfaction and the employee's overall view of participation. Findings are summarized and supported by quotes given by the participants in the interviews. These quotes were answers to the questions listed in Table 3.1 within the respective categories. Each set of results are then interpreted and analyzed for their significance.

It is important to note the differences in companies used for this thesis. The objective was to find a random sample of four companies that hired blue-collar workers. This goal was attained; but one company's employees had dramatically different responses to the questions given than the other three. Based on the interviews, it appears that Company C employs a different management style than the other companies. They have fostered an open and friendly company culture that has increased morale and satisfaction for all of their employees. The other three companies enact a different management style. Within these companies, employees seemed to share similar answers,

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[1] John L. Cotton et al., "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 1 (01 1988): 8-22.

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and this is most likely because each company has a distinct management style. There were, however, different responses given by employees who work together, leading one to believe that responses are still very individualized.

Job Satisfaction

Consistent with many findings on job satisfaction, results were mixed. Table 4.1 shows some of the answers employees gave on the questions asked about their current job satisfaction. On a scale of one to ten on how satisfied employees were with their job, answers ranged from one to ten. Sixteen employees stated that the part of their job they like the most is the type of work they do, including working with their hands, interacting with fellow co-workers and enjoying different tasks everyday. Nine employees stated that bad management is their chief complaint about their job. Interestingly, a majority of employees found themselves to be valued by their organizations for their experience and the skill set they bring with them to work everyday. Also, it seems that through informal participation, they realize that they are valued as well.

Table 4.1 Job Satisfaction Responses

Likes the type of work they do.	A-M: "I love to work with my hands and being able to make things." B-M: "I like the work, I like the trade, I like to drive." B-J: "I like the work, its different everyday. I like the guys I work with, we try to make our jobs fun even though they suck" C-R: "I just like that every job site is different, there are always new ways of doing things. Its different then going to an office everyday." D-J: "I like working outside and having different things to do everyday, if I didn't like it I wouldn't keep coming back"

Unhappy with management	A-M: "I hate dealing with management, they are close to unrealistic with the deadlines they set for us, but we still try to do it." A-R: "There is a lot of favoritism around here (by management) , a lot of mistreatment and worker abuse" B-B: "Management is really bad and they need to change" B-J: "I hate the changes that have happened lately, especially the merger. Management tends to fight with us over stupid stuff and they try to get us in trouble." D-J: "I wish I received better individual recognition for the tasks I complete, which is more important then pay to me. When they make the work fun, its fun. When you work for assholes you tend to follow suit."
Valued	C-R: "Yes, the big guys have let me have more freedom lately and it shows they have trust in me." C-N: "Yes- I left the company at one point and when I wanted to come back they took me right back. It meant a lot to me, it showed that management really cared about me" D-T: "Yes, I know I am valued here because they continue to pay for further training for me." D-M: "Yes – because I know how to do a lot of jobs that other people don't know how to do"
Not Valued	A-N: "Hell no! They are taking our pants away. They do whatever they have to do to save money, but they don't care about us. They won't even provide us with work jeans anymore!" B-R: "We are all a number here, everybody is replaceable." B-J: "Not really, I feel that if I died tomorrow, they would just hire some new guy instead."

The results gathered from questions about job satisfaction reveal some interesting ideas about participation. Many employees like the type of work they do and almost half of the employees stated that bad management was the critical factor impacting their satisfaction. This supports the importance of participation as a motivating factor of

satisfaction for blue-collar workers. Employees did not state that they like the amount of participation they have, or the freedom and trust management empowers them with; but rather that, they just enjoy the type of work they do. Employees stated they were unhappy with management, which comes in part from a lack of informal participation, emotional attachment, and consultative participation. It is also interesting that the majority of employees feel valued by their respective firms. Many employees from Company's C and D felt valued while only some employees from Company's A and B did not. It is suggested that this trait can be carried through management's attitude towards employees and is different from company to company.

Participation in Work Decisions

Participation in work decisions can be defined as formal, direct, organized events where employees have a high influence on the decisions made. It was found that none of the participating companies used formal participation in work decisions (PWD). Though employees were not really aware of what participation in work decisions actually was, it was explained to them and many of them thought that it would be beneficial. However, other employees were reluctant to desire formal participation in work decisions because they had a pre-existing belief that management wouldn't listen or act on their requests and formal participation in work decisions would therefore be a waste of time. Overall, the majority of employees felt that they have low to very low influence on the decisions that affect their job. However, all employees from Company C stated that they make decisions that affect their jobs on the job site as they work. These quotes along with

quotes stating that: PWD would be beneficial, management doesn't listen/act on ideas

and evidence of low employee influence can be found in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Participation in Work Decisions Responses

PWD would be beneficial	A-N: "We can't even get together for a safety meeting, and that is a law to have those. We never get together to discuss anything, management has problems setting meetings like that up. I think that they could be beneficial if we could ever all get together." B-B: "I think we would be more efficient if employees could make more decisions. We know how to run things smoother but with management, it's always their way or the highway." B-M: "No, but it would be very beneficial. We are the ones who do the job, not management. They work on a computer, 99% of them have never done our job." D-J: "No we don't, but I think that it would be beneficial because the blue-collar guys are the ones who do the work all day. The guys in the office take care of the politics. The blue-collar guys should be able to make the decisions on subjects like how the parks should be maintained, because we're the ones who are out there all day."
Management doesn't listen or act on employee's ideas	A-R: "We try to have those around here but if you go against management you will get the shit end of the stick. They don't like new suggestions; they feel like you are bad mouthing them. It is real hard to speak up against them." B-F: "Management thinks that employees aren't educated enough to make decisions. They don't listen to our ideas because if we suggested it, it can't be a great idea. It's only a great idea if they think of it." D-L: "No never. I think they would be beneficial though because management loses track of what's going on. They are so stuck in their mindsets that they wouldn't listen to employee's ideas anyway."
Low influence on decisions that affect their jobs	B-R: "They don't like to listen to what we say. They will do things their way, not ours. That's just how it is." D-F: "We have a little influence but I would say we definitely have to listen more then we speak." D-A: "Not much at all, you are told what to do and you get it done"
Company C employee's regarding PWD	C-R: "In the field, you make the decisions yourself. I mean the plan is laid out but the employees have the freedom on how the jobs will get done."

	C-D: "Employees do what they need to do. We only come to the supervisors when we have a problem. We run the show. C-N: "Individually we create our own work decisions, and management almost always backs us up on the decisions we make. It's up to us how we do our job but when we come across a challenge we can ask them, its very open here."

Even though none of the companies had formal participation in work decisions, important conclusions can still be drawn. Many employees stated that they thought it would be very beneficial to let employees make input on decisions that affect their jobs. This leads one to believe that PWD does/could increase employee satisfaction as well as company productivity and efficiency. Many employees who did not think formal PWD would be beneficial felt that way because management has not listened/acted on their previous requests or ideas. Therefore, it seems that PWD would only be successful in an environment where employees feel comfortable making suggestions to management and where management is dedicated to improve informal participation. Company C allows employees to make their own decisions on how their job is actually performed. This freedom is given to employees not only from the nature of their work, but because management trusts them to make the right decisions. Since formal PWD did not occur, we do not know how it impacts employee satisfaction. However, since some of them thought that it would be beneficial, it would be fair to assume that it could increase satisfaction.

Short-Term Participation

Short-term participation typically consists of a single sit-down event or training program in which an employee can participate. There were no relevant results concerning short-term participation. No traces of short-term participation were found within any of the companies except Company D. Even though employees at Company D have annual evaluations with their supervisors, responses were mixed. Half of the employees stated that the evaluation was a two-sided informative conversation but others stated that it is very one-sided and was only done because it is a formality. The amount of participation the employee had during the evaluation was related to the strength of the relationship between employee and supervisor. If there was a good relationship, employees felt free to make comments during their evaluation. If there was a bad relationship, the evaluation was quick and one-sided. Due to the lack of responses of short-term participation, there are no significant conclusions to be made.

Consultative Participation

Consultative participation is a type of participation that is both formal and direct to employees, most commonly consisting of Scanlon Plans or quality circles. Results for consultative participation were somewhat similar to those found in formal PWD and the employee's responses concerning consultative participation can be found in Table 4.3. Both Company B and D have a type of consultative participation set in place that is very similar to quality circles. Company B has "pre-shift meetings" where employees are gathered and have the ability to participate in work decisions. Company D has consultative meetings both on the department and organizational levels. About half of the

employees stated that consultative participation is already, or would be, beneficial to the company and to the individuals themselves. However, thirteen employees stated that management does not listen or act on the employee's ideas or would not listen or act if employees had a chance to participate consultatively. It was also interesting that seven employees said that they feel discouraged to participate due to management's lack of interest in their opinions. Company C again was very distinct in this category. These employees felt that consultative participation was not needed because of the company's open door policy and the employee's ability to bring concerns directly to management informally.

Table 4.3 Consultative Participation Responses

Consultative is/would be beneficial	A-M: "They were helpful, I mean it gave the employees a chance to talk and to let other employees hear other's opinions and to straighten stuff out."
	A-K: "No not really. It would probably be beneficial though, I think that it would really help productivity. One guy doesn't know what the other guy is doing. There is very bad communication around here. Those types of meetings would make us more of a team."
	B-M: "They would be beneficial. I wish they would utilize the skills and talents of the blue-collar guys. Use their ideas to make a better work environment, and to be more productive."
	D-L: "I think the meetings we have are very helpful, we use to not have them and that's when nobody knew what the hell was going on."
Management does not listen to or act on employee's ideas	A-N: "People just want to punch in and punch out around here. Management doesn't like to hear our concerns; in fact, they loved it when the super safety concerned guy quit when he got tired of not being listened too."
	A-J: "They don't listen to the employees! It is their way or the highway. They have their goals and that's how it's going to be."

	B-B: "We have pre-shift meetings but management doesn't listen to us. They tell us how it's going to be. We can put our input in but it goes in one ear and out the other with them."
	B-F: "Employees make suggestions and everybody discusses it but most of the time they don't act on them because they are not valid, they tell us to talk to the union about concerns. I told two supervisors about a trailer that had a flat tire but two weeks later it was still sitting there. Guys become apathetic when they try to fix things but their suggestions are never listened too."
	D-L: "The employees are heard but are not listened too. I suggested that we buy a certain type of hedge trimmer because we have some hedges that the old ones won't work on and I told them we need to buy a different model, but did they listen? No."
Employees feel discouraged to participate	A-N: "If there was an honest concern about what we thought, meetings like these would be helpful. Nobody suggests anything because we know that we would see no changes.
	B-J: "I think they could be improved by making the employees more welcome to speak their minds. I mean when we know that management could care less about what we have to say, we are reluctant to say anything more you know?
	D-F: "I also think we should have a meeting where everybody is concerned and listened too, people are too shy to speak and they feel uncomfortable doing it in front of everybody. So maybe we could have smaller meetings"
	D-A: "The company needs to show more of a willingness to listen and accept our ideas because that would raise employee confidence, but since we know they won't listen why should we speak up?"
Company C employee's regarding consultative	C-D: "They have a very open door policy, we can always go in to see management when we have an issue
	C-R: "We don't really need consultative meetings. Everything is very open around here. There is an open-door policy and employees are encouraged to ask questions and bring up new ideas."

Conclusions from the consultative participation section are similar to those drawn

from PWD. Since many employees thought that consultative meetings are helpful, or

would be helpful, it can be reasoned that this type of participation increases employee

satisfaction along with possible increases in company productivity and efficiency. More

employees probably would have agreed that consultative participation is beneficial, but again employees stated that management has not and will not be open to the ideas and concerns of the blue-collar employees. It is suggested then, that consultative participation can only be successful in an environment where management is open to listen and willing to try new ideas. Employees must also feel comfortable making suggestions in order for consultative participation to occur. Since management has not listened to employee's ideas before, they would have to re-build trust and commitment to their employees in order for employee's to feel comfortable participating consultatively. Company C suggests that an effective open-door policy and strong informal participation eliminates the need for consultative participation. Due to the majority of employees stating that consultative participation is or would be beneficial (if previous experiences with management were positive), consultative participation can improve employee job satisfaction.

Informal Participation

Informal participation occurs through the interpersonal relationships between managers and employees and in this case resulted in many intriguing findings. The key finding was that the relationship between employee and supervisor was highly related to whether or not their supervisor understood their job problems and needs. This can clearly be seen by the side-by-side answers given by a sample of eight employees found in Table 4.4. If a supervisor did understand the employee's job problems and needs, the relationship tended to be very good both on a work and friendship level, and the opposite applied as well. Only two out of twenty respondents did not follow this trend.

Table 4.4 Relationship vs. Supervisor's Understanding of Employee's Job Needs

Relationship between employee/supervisor relationship and how well supervisor understands employee's job needs	Describe the relationship you have with your supervisor	How well does your supervisor understand your job problems and needs?
Good relationship, supervisor understands employees job needs	A-J: "It is very good. We work well together. He doesn't enslave us you know?" C-D "We are very friendly, more aligned. We are all in it together we have a very casual atmosphere around here" C-N: "It is pretty friendly. I mean my boss is my friend. They trust us and give us a lot of freedom and we can discuss anything and everything with them." D-A: "Our relationship is very good, both professionally and personally. There is open communication and a lot of trust.	A-J: "My supervisor understands my jobs because he used to do it before so he has a good idea of what we do" C-D: "Supervisors have done the work before so they know the job and they know how to approach new situations. C-N: "Great! They have been doing the same thing that I do a lot longer than I have been doing it. They know exactly what we do, how we do it and what we need to do it. D-A: "He knows our job very well, he can really relate to all of our issues."
Bad relationship, supervisor does not understand employee's job needs	A-M: "My supervisor seems to be put off, he is very hard to talk to and he seems to be bothered when I talk to him. I never get any feedback from him, ever!" B-M: "I just deal with them to get through the day. They are there to babysit it seems. I just do my job, I don't put any lives in danger."	A-M: "He doesn't totally understand our job, his time frames really hurt us. B-M: "They don't know because they haven't done it. They know how to work the computers. If you put them in a truck, 9 out of 10 times you will have to call an ambulance."

| | B-J: "I really don't like the management here. They are kind of like your parents, they make sure you do what you're supposed to do, and if you don't do it you get yelled at. It feels like they have an incentive to get us in trouble and yell at us.

D-J: "I didn't think he liked me because he just thought I was another seasonal. It's a strict work relationship" | B-J: "They don't really know what we do. They have never worked on the dock or driven a truck. I'd laugh just to see one of those guys start a fork lift and pick up a few palettes.

D-J: "He doesn't have a fucking clue about what we do. He never will unless he works with us for a whole day too. |

As far as supervisors asking the employee's for their opinions or thoughts before making a decision, there were three classes of answers that were evenly distributed. Either the employee's opinion was sought constantly, never, or only when the supervisor asked about something he was unaware of or didn't know. The responses of nine employees concerning this issue can be found in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 How Often Does Your Supervisor Ask You For Your Opinion?

	Opinion is constantly sought	Management only seeks opinion about issues they are unaware of	Opinion is never sought
How often supervisors ask for employee's opinion when faced to make a decision	A-J: "He does quite often. In our department we always listen to new ideas and try them out, but the company does not on a whole." C-D: "Yes, because management usually desires another angle or viewpoint on decisions so he can make the best	A-N: "He asks me a lot of things because he is new and has no idea about what's going on." B-R: "He might ask me for my opinion on a blue-collar decision or about things that I know	B-B: "They don't ask us for our opinion. They are going to do things their way. We are just the workers; we do what they tell us to do." B-M: "Never – because they are paid the big bucks to make the decisions and that

	one. D-T: "He always asks me for my opinion. He is very cool and understands that some employees know more about certain things then he does."	more about more then he does." B-J: "They usually ask me about stuff they don't know about but never to make one of their decisions.	is their mentality." D-M: "He does what he thinks is right, he doesn't usually consult with me about anything."

The questions concerning informal participation revealed an interesting finding. In this case, it was found that the relationship between supervisor and employee heavily depends on if the supervisor understands the job needs of his employees and if he has done the same job before. This should be very interesting for companies and hiring offices to take notice of. It suggests a policy to hire from within, and to hire supervisors who have done the job before or who understand the job needs of their blue-collar employees. Based on these results, this can lead to good relationships between supervisors and employees, and potentially to a more satisfied workforce. The wide array of answers regarding how often supervisors seek out employee opinions leads one to believe that it depends on the individual supervisors. There were no company-wide similarities. Informal participation on the whole seemed to be the sole type of employee participation within Company C, which also led to an emotional attachment to the employees. Informal participation seems to correlate to the employee's job satisfaction; the better their relationships with their supervisors, the more satisfied the employees were.

Employee Ownership

In regards to employee ownership, both financial ownership and emotional attachment were examined. Many employees do not have any financial ownership of their company. However, a few from Company B did own some stock and some employees from Company D felt that they had financial ownership in their company due to their retirement plan within the company. Interestingly, almost half of the employees stated that they work as hard as they can already, even if they had financial ownership. Seven stated that they would work harder to make more money in the long run. Table 4.6 illustrates the two common responses employees gave concerning financial ownership.

Table 4.6 Financial Ownership Responses

Financial Ownership	Would work harder for more money	Works as hard as possible already
	A-N: "Maybe, just to make more money. To make myself happier to be more self-fulfilled." B-J: "Hell yeah I would, the more money the better for me man." C-D: "I think everybody would work harder if it meant more money in the long run." D-A: "Yes and no. Yes for personal greed of money but no because why should you work hard for people who don't care about me?	A-K: "No not really. I don't sit around. A lot of these guys hide out in the corners. I work as hard as I can as it is." B-B: "I do the best I can do everyday as it is. There is only so much you can do." B-F: "To be honest, I don't work harder then I used too. I take pride in what I do. I don't half-ass it. I do everything to the best of my ability." C-B: "No, because we try to do the best that we can we are out there as it is already. If I don't do my job then I won't have a job."

Emotionally, employees were split right down the middle for being attached or unattached to their employers. A strong majority of employees claimed that they do work

harder or that they would work harder due to an emotional attachment. Seven stated that they work as hard as possible already, whether they were attached or not. Employee's reactions to emotional attachment can be found in Table 4.7. Multiple reasons were given for having an emotional attachment or not having an attachment at all.

Table 4.7 Emotional Attachment Responses

Emotionally attached	Not Emotionally attached
A-M: "I've been here so long, it's like a home. I started here in 1976 so I would have to say I am attached." C-N: "Yes I am. I wouldn't want to work for anyone else. If I had to leave it would suck, it would hurt. They treat us with such good respect and trust us so much. Company C is unlike a lot of other places. D-L: "I am emotionally attached to the parks I work on because they are mine, you know? I want my parks to look the best, it's very competitive around here." D-T: "Yes I am attached because they gave me an opportunity of a lifetime and they have taken good care of me. They have provided me with a good living which has taken care of my family. It's a great place to work."	A-N: "No, because this company sucks. It's a hell-hole! I just need the job and the paycheck that comes with it." B-F: "I won't advertise for them. No I am not attached, Company B is secondary. I've been dealt with by them very unfairly. Nobody is immune to mistreatment. Few employees would go up and beyond for this company, they are very bitter." B-M: "No it is nothing but a job. Its shift work, what I don't do the next guy will" D-A: "No, I might have been four years ago but things have changed. My satisfaction has gone down due to interior changes of personnel and management."
Works harder or would work harder due to emotional attachment	Works as hard as possible already
A-R: "Yeah I would work harder because you would want to return the favor what they do for you and to you. They treat me like shit so I wouldn't work harder for them." B-J: "Oh yeah for sure. If I cared about this place I would work a lot harder. But when	A-N: "No, I bust my ass as it is!" A-K: "I have a work ethic that I developed growing up. Whether I had to work hung-over or not I always show up, when someone else would call in sick."

management treats you like a kid, what incentive do I have to work harder? I make the same hourly wage no matter how hard I work. I don't work on commission. D-T: "Yes I do because they have taken care of me. We have accomplished great things here and we provide the best service in the metro area. We are gold medal award winners and we are proud of it." D-A: "Yes if I was more attached I would work a lot harder. I don't put my all into it because if you don't care about something and your not attached all you care about is showing up and getting paid."	B-B: "I do as much as I can do." B-M: "No, I take pride in myself. I work for myself. I grew up with strong work ethics so that I can achieve goals and reach expectations." C-B: "Not necessarily. I have the same strong work ethic that I have had my entire life."

Results from this section are very interesting when looking at just the blue-collar sector of the workforce. It was surprising to see that nearly half of the employees stated that they would not work harder if they had financial ownership in the company. Even though seven employees said that the attraction of more money would motivate them, it seems that many blue-collar workers already work as hard as they can. This is probably because the nature of blue-collar work is usually fast-paced, physically demanding work, and they wouldn't succeed if they didn't work their hardest. It seems that emotional attachment can be different due to the type of company one works for and the type of work one performs. For the most part, employees at Company's A and B are not attached, while almost all employees from Company's C and D are. Company C employees are attached to management and the relationships they have formed with them. Company D employees are more attached to their individual parks/regions of the city that they are responsible for. The majority of employees agreed that an emotional attachment motivates them to work harder for their employer. The employees who are already

attached had higher satisfaction levels then the ones who weren't. Again, we see that seven employees work as hard as possible regardless of attachment levels. As expected, emotional attachment was positively related to job satisfaction, while financial ownership saw mixed results.

Representative Participation

Representative participation refers to formal, yet indirect representation of employees to management. Typical representative participation is conducted through unions, and in this case two of the four companies did have union representation. Other types of representation could only be seen in Company B. For example, they have a safety committee and another committee that was specifically designed to help the ongoing merger. The employees at Company B that recognized these other types of representation stated that they were productive and that employees wanted more similar groups of representation. Of the eighteen people who thoroughly knew what unions were and what they did, ten were against them and eight were in favor of having unions represent them. Many employees stated that some type of employee representation to management would be beneficial. Eight employees also claimed that they would like more representation and there were also statements claiming to desire more consultative and informal participation. Interestingly, five employees thought that if there was more informal participation (better relationships between supervisor and employee and a more comfortable work atmosphere) there would be no need to have representation. Besides unions, and the small amounts of representation in Company B, no other types of

representation were found through the responses the employees made, which can be

found in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Representative Participation Responses

Pro-Union	B-R: "Absolutely, the union fights for our wages and benefits, and brings disciplinary actions into a better light."
	C-R: "The union does a pretty good job. They protect the workers' rights, insurance, paid vacation and that the company provides good work equipment. In our company employees come to management first with a problem, not the union first."
	D-L: "I think it would be better if we had a union just so we would have more of a voice. Promises would be kept that way.
	D-A: "Yeah I would love to be in a union. With unions, you pay for their services and the issues you have get addressed."
Anti-Union	A-N: "No! Unions just take your money and give you nothing. They protect the lazy. We actually got rid of our union a few years ago because we were sick of them just milking us for our money."
	A-R: "That's a toss up. They don't do much. They don't do their job to represent us, but there is no communication they just protect our job."
	B-B: "No, I think our union has gone to hell. They make decisions without consulting us. We are members we should vote on all of their decisions."
	B-M: "Union is a corporation itself so they are just in it for themselves."
Representation is beneficial	A-M: "I think we should have the consultative meeting once a month or one person to represent us employees. The more management would be able to hear, the better they would respond."
	B-F: "Yes, they just formed a committee to help meet with management to help the merger. It is absolutely helpful! We have only had two meetings so far but it gets them to listen to us and get our opinion on things. The bosses have asked to create a safety committee also."
	D-L: "No we don't. It would be better if we did though. Upper management has no idea what's going on so if we had a group of guys meet with them and inform them of things I think that would be very helpful."

	D-F: "No. It would be nice though because management doesn't work in the fields, they don't know what's going on. With representation we could probably get better equipment and make management understand what we actually go through."
Wants more representation	B-R: "We have a safety committee, and they bring up topics and they try to rectify solutions, which is a good thing. I think there should be another one that represents the blue collar employees as a whole. We would be able to demonstrate our tasks and portray them to management to be more efficient and productive." B-B: "We just have the union stewards, but they can't help run the company. I really think we should have more representation, they would be able to make changes so that we could be more productive and efficient, it would save the company more money and we wouldn't have to re-do everything." B-J: "A representative group would be nice, we have a lot of smart guys that work here who could step up to management confidently and express our opinions." D-M: "I think that we should have more committees. They would have the no holds barred attitude and management might actually listen to them."
Informal Participation is enough, no need for representation	A-N: "I think that representation should be on a personal one on one basis. No grouping." C-B: "I think the open door policy that they have now does justice enough. They will listen to you and if you have a legitimate concern then they will definitely act on it, especially safety problems." C-N: "No, employees are represented on an individual basis. I think the way we have it now is the best way to do it. This place is different then a lot of other companies."

No strong conclusions were drawn after reviewing the responses regarding representative participation. Employees were nearly split down the middle on whether or not unions do a good job of representing employees. Most employees who were in favor of unions liked how they negotiated wages and protected employee's jobs. They did not specifically state that unions acted as the employee's voice or that they helped voice other employee concerns. Participants who were against unions stated that they are a waste of

money and that they do things for their own interests and not for the interests of the employees. Therefore, it can be concluded that this sample of employees felt that unions do not adequately represent their voice and concerns on a day to day basis, and is not a good form of participation. Several employees stated that representative participation is beneficial and that they would like to see more of it. But since there was not a clear majority, it is hard to determine that representative participation strongly relates to job satisfaction. Employees also felt that sufficient informal participation makes representative participation irrelevant; this suggests that employees value informal participation over representative participation.

Overall View of Participation

The last set of questions focused on getting the employee's opinion about overall employee participation. Fourteen employees stated that the ability to participate heavily impacts their satisfaction. However, there was a common theme among the six who did not agree. Five out of the remaining six employees who said that participation was not important actually gave suggestions to improve participation at their respective companies. Employees initially stated that participation was not important to them, but later on in the interviews actually requested that their companies employ more participative techniques. Both sets of these answers can be found in Table 4.9. This implies that they too care about participation and that it does impact their satisfaction even though they did not say it straight forwardly. Thirteen employees claimed that the biggest improvement management could make in regards to participation was to change the way they approach it. Employees claimed that they just wanted

management to listen, care and be more open-minded to employee participation. In this last section of questioning, employees also suggested which forms of participation they desire the most. This list included consultative participation, informal participation, representative participation and a comfortable open-door policy. The employees of Company C asserted that the "all empowering open-door policy" is all they need to feel like fully participating members of their company. The purpose of this section was to wrap up the interview and get the overarching views of participation from the employees.

Table 4.9 Overall Views of Participation Responses

Participation is important to satisfaction	B-B: "Participation means a lot to me. You get discouraged when they don't listen to you. They don't get all of my potential without listening to me!"
	B-M: "Sure, for a very large part. We are professionals and we don't need babysitters. I have driven for 30 years, I don't need a white collar computer nerd to tell me how I should do it. People should be expected to be responsible and that's why they get paid."
	C-B: "It is a big part. When I was coming up in the trade I saw management at other places make a lot of wrong decisions and mistakes. I don't ever want to see that again so I take pride in working for these guys because they plan jobs accordingly and they do things the right way."
	C-N: "Participation has a lot to do with my happiness here. If I have a problem or question it's not a big deal with anybody. There is no fear to bring the question to management because they are open to that."
	D-J: "I think participation makes employees happier because it gives them a sense of responsibility. I think participation is important but it's our job to work. Management doesn't know how to drive a lawnmower; the workers give first hand knowledge. There is nothing to lose; we can only gain by participating."
Participation is not important	B-R: "I don't think participation is a big deal at all." ("I think there should be a meeting of the minds, where employees can meet with management and where they wouldn't look down on

Participation request quotes in parenthesis'	employees who propose ides.") D-L: "It's not that big of a part of my happiness, I am here for the work." ("I think more participation would help a lot. We would be more productive and be happier too I bet.") D-M: "Participation is not that big of a deal really." ("If there was more participation more things would get done. We would be more efficient and it would help tremendously. I would enjoy coming to work more.)
Management needs to change	A-N: "I just don't feel that workers have the ability to participate with the company. That's not how things get done around here and I don't think it will ever be like that." B-B: "I just want them to listen, and try our ideas. Our ideas aren't to benefit us; it's to benefit the company so that they can be more profitable." B-F: "There's not much more they can do but listen. A lot of guys don't say anything because they know there will be no change." D-A: "They should just listen. People have no confidence in the administration and taking in what we have to say." D-M: "Management just needs a better attitude. We are the people who do the work, we are the peons. Management just has their 30 years of experience mindset, they are old school."
Requests for participation	A-R: "We need a meeting every month without being afraid of being persecuted for displaying our feelings and ideas. If you say anything around here you with get the shaft and that's just how they do things around here" B-R: "I think there should be a meeting of the minds, where employees can meet with management and where they wouldn't look down on employees who propose ides." B-J: "I think management should make this place have more of a family atmosphere. People shouldn't be intimidated to voice their concerns but they are here. There should be an open-door policy here that everybody can be comfortable with." B-F: "I think they need to start more committees. That way they would be able to ask for input and let the employees voice what they can."
Company C	C-R: "We are all friends, there is an open door policy, we all feel

employees regarding participation	free to discuss anything we want. I don't know how it could change to be better then what we already have."
	C-D: "I think that our open door policy absolutely takes care of employee participation. Employees control their jobs and management is fairly casual and not very strict."
	C-B: "What we have now is enough, you cant do much better then a direct link. This company is different because it is not too big or too small. There is a lot of co-operation between co-workers. Participation accessibility is at its max."

Many conclusions can be drawn from the employee's overall view of participation. Nineteen out of twenty blue-collar employees stated that participation is important to their individual satisfaction; even though, five of them did not say it straight forwardly. This majority suggests that participation is a very important factor for a blue-collar employee's satisfaction. Only one employee (5%) stated that he did not think participation was important while also not suggesting any ways on how management could improve employee participation. A majority of participants also stated that management needs to change their demeanor in order for employee participation to be important. Employees stated that management doesn't listen to employee's ideas or care about what employees have to say, and that they are closed minded towards employee ideas. The fact that management at these blue-collar firms act this way suggests that participative management has not yet been employed.[2] These firms (besides Company C) still manage through authoritative styles. Employees also said that they desired specific types of participation. The issue of the open-door policy is very captivating. All employees employed at Company C claimed that their company's open-door policy is all the participation they need to be satisfied. They declared that their management is very

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[2] Rita Moss and Connie J. Rowles, "Staff Nurse Job Satisfaction and Management Style," *Nursing Management* 28, no. 1 (01 1997): 32-34.

open to employee's ideas and concerns, and that employees feel very comfortable approaching them through this policy. Four other employees requested that their company have an open-door policy similar to this. Employees also stated that they desired more consultative, representative and informal participation. Since these were their requests on what they preferred, it helped determine that these are the three types of participation that could impact their satisfaction the most. As expected, participation is a main determinant of a blue-collar worker's satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the impact employee participation has on the job satisfaction of blue-collar workers. Twenty blue-collar workers were interviewed about their job satisfaction, overall views of employee participation, and past experiences with the six types of participation found by Cotton (1988).[1] Responses regarding participation led to some interesting findings that both supported and refuted previous literature. The results also suggest further research be accomplished to examine their prevalence in the larger population.

Theoretical Conclusions

This thesis found that most employees do not like their job because of bad management. Since management is a primary determinant for participation within a company, poor management usually results in lower amounts of participation. Employees in this study suggested poor management more than any other factor to hinder their satisfaction; this helps explain why participation can be important to blue-collar workers. Previous literature did not examine management as a factor that influenced blue-collar worker satisfaction. Many blue-collar workers also stated that they like the type of work that they do. This contradicts the findings of White and Ruh (1973) who stated that many

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[1] John L. Cotton et al., "Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 1 (01 1988): 8-22.

blue-collar workers view their jobs as only a means to earn a living, which implies that they already have low satisfaction.[2] But, if many blue-collar workers perform their job because they like it, participation is more likely to help satisfaction. The assumption that many blue-collar workers do not like their job because of the actual work was not supported in this thesis.

A significant finding in this thesis was that the relationship between supervisor and employee is dependent upon the experience and knowledge of the supervisor. If a supervisor had not done the employee's job before, or did not thoroughly know what the employee's job entailed, the relationship they had with the employee was strained. Healthy relationships are vital in order to have a robust participatory environment. Informal participation is especially important in the blue-collar sector because employees work with their supervisors directly and more often than in other sectors of the workforce. Firms can enhance satisfaction if there are strong relationships between supervisors and employees, which could ultimately influence many other positive variables within a company.[3] This suggests that companies follow a policy to promote from within and to avoid hiring supervisors who are not knowledgeable of the job of their subordinates. This thesis found that informal participation was strongly related to job satisfaction and many employees requested that the informal participation at their company be improved. Cotton (1988) also found that informal participation heavily impacts job satisfaction.[4]

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[2] J. Kenneth White and Robert A. Ruh, "Effects of Personal Values on the Relationship between Participation and Job Attitudes," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (12 1973): 506-514.

[3] Leronardo Stringer, "The Link between the Quality of the Supervisor–Employee Relationship and the Level of the Employee's Job Satisfaction," *Public Organization Review* 6, no. 2 (06 2006): 125-142.

[4] Cotton et al., *Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes*, 8-22.

Company C presented a unique case study for informal participation. Based on the responses, Company C is managed with a great degree of informal participation and a management style that is very different than the style used by the other three blue-collar companies. Management at Company C enacted an open-door policy that was important to all respondents. They stated that employees are encouraged to come to management with any problem or concern they have and management will do their best to provide them with a resolution. Employees at Company C also feel very comfortable bringing issues to management because they feel welcomed and are not intimidated. This policy encourages equality and friendship between employees and management and many of them spend time together outside of work. Coincidently, management personnel at Company C have done the lower electrician jobs before, and there were no observed poor relationships between supervisors and employees. Management at Company C also gives employees the freedom to make their own decisions on the job site. Employees stated that they value the amount of trust they are given and feel confident to make the right decisions on the job site. If employees were not sure about a certain work decision, they felt confident to ask management for advice and were encouraged to do so. Communication is very important to the success of Company C. Employees at Company C stated that no other types of participation were desired because they felt that their open-door policy and ability to participate informally was enough. Due to this, all employees at Company C stated that their job satisfaction was either a nine or ten on a scale of one to ten.

In regards to employee ownership, financial ownership had limited responses. Only three employees in this study held financial ownership of their respective

companies and it was fascinating that two of the three stockholders, as well as a large group of employees, stated that they work as hard as they possibly can with or without the appeal of financial ownership. This is very interesting when compared to previous studies. The fact that financial ownership does not impact the job satisfaction of blue-collar workers contradicts Klein's (1987) findings.[5] It does however, agree with Long (1978) that financial ownership does not impact satisfaction as well as other types of participation.[6] Coincidently, Long (1978) researched a trucking company (a blue-collar company). This thesis supports the finding that blue-collar workers do not see financial ownership as a sufficient way of participating and therefore does not increase their satisfaction.

As expected, emotional attachment as a proxy for employee ownership had a large impact on job satisfaction. Emotional attachment led employees to work harder and employees who were not emotionally attached agreed that if they were, they would inevitably work harder as well. Respondents agreed that if a worker has something to work for (whether it is for their "friends" in Company C or their individual parks in Company D) they are happier working and as a result work harder. Employees at Company's A and B felt they had nothing to work for besides a paycheck, and they therefore had lower satisfaction and motivation to work to the best of their ability. The results of this thesis agree with previous literature that claims that personal engagement

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[5] Katherine J. Klein, "Journal of Applied Psychology Monograph - Employee Stock Ownership and Employee Attitudes: A Test of Three Models," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 72, no. 2 (05 1987): 319-332.

[6] Richard J. Long, "The Relative Effects of Share Ownership Vs. Control on Job Attitudes in an Employee-Owned Company," *Human Relations* 31, no. 9 (09 1978): 753.

directly impacts satisfaction, and productivity.[7] Fascinatingly, this type of employee
ownership (emotional attachment) was found to increase job satisfaction just as employee
ownership was by Cotton (1988).[8] Contradicting this finding, as mentioned earlier, some
employees stated that they work as hard as possible whether they were/are emotionally
attached or not. This is most likely due to the fact that in blue-collar work settings,
employees are forced to work as hard as they can due to the fast-paced, physically
demanding work they face everyday.[9]

Responses regarding participation in work decisions (PWD) and consultative
participation were similar. Employees thought that consultative participation was
beneficial and that consultative and PWD would be beneficial if they were used at their
individual companies. However, many of the employees who did not think PWD and
consultative participation would be beneficial had the same reasoning to support their
responses. These employees felt that management will not and has not listened to
employee's requests and ideas in the past, so they would not listen to their ideas through
these types of participation either. Employees felt that these types of participation would
be a waste of time because they "knew" that management would not care to listen to what
they had to say. Earlier research has shown that the success of some consultative
participation techniques do depend on the attitudes of management.[10] In this thesis,

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[7] Credit Union National Association, "Engaged Employees Equal Engaged Members. (Cover Story),"
Credit Union Executive Newsletter 33, no. 10 (06/11 2007): 1-2.

[8] Cotton et al., *Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes*, 8-22.

[9] White and Ruh, *Effects of Personal Values on the Relationship between Participation and Job Attitudes*,
506-514.

[10] J. Kenneth White, "The Scanlon Plan: Causes and Correlates of Success," *Academy of Management
Journal* 22, no. 2 (06 1979): 292-312.

employees stated that the work atmosphere and management's attitude must be very open in order for these types of participation to be successful. If employees felt that management would condone their ideas, they felt discouraged to participate and viewed all future attempts to be a waste of time. Cotton (1988) found inconclusive results for both PWD and consultative participation; this thesis also found PWD to be inconclusive, but found consultative participation to benefit job satisfaction.[11]

Short-term participation and representative participation were not used in any of the companies studied in this thesis; therefore, no conclusions can be made regarding their influence on job satisfaction. There is a small amount of literature on short-term participation, and the literature consulted used types of short-term participation that were absent in these companies. Some traces of representative participation were seen to be beneficial and improved satisfaction, but there was no clear majority favoring representative participation. Union representation also saw inconclusive results. Since employees were split on approving unions, no conclusions can be drawn regarding their impact on satisfaction. The employees who did like unions did not state that they represented their voice in job decisions or their concerns. Interestingly, Cotton (1988) also found short-term and representative participation to be inconclusive factors in increasing satisfaction. The lack of "worker's councils" that Rosenberg and Rosenstein (1981) found to be beneficial were absent in this study; although the one worker council that was noticed was seen to be beneficial.[12]

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[11] Cotton et al., *Employee Participation: Diverse Forms and Different Outcomes*, 8-22.

[12] Richard Rosenberg and Eliezer Rosenstein, "Operationalising Workers' Participation: A Comparison of US and Yugoslav Models," *Industrial Relations Journal* 12, no. 2 (03 1981)

Limitations of Study

This thesis investigated the relationship between participation and job satisfaction; however, it is limited in scope. This thesis focused on four blue-collar employers. These four companies were not selected at random, but were a convenience sample for the researcher.[13] Family, friends and previous employers were used to gain access into these companies. Employees within these companies were not selected by a random sample either. Even though it was attempted to attain a random sample, employees were chosen through a snowball effect.[14] Participants were found through the initial correspondent. The initial correspondent was directed to find a random group of co-workers who would be willing to perform the interview. Even though the majority of the participants were white males, there was a significant amount of diversity found among the participants.

In an attempt to assess the impact of six different types of participation, companies that enacted all types of participation were desired. No companies in this thesis had formal participation in work decisions or short-term participation; therefore these types of participation were not fully examined. Financial ownership was also not apparent in any companies but Company B, which is why emotional attachment was examined instead. In an attempt to examine all six forms of participation simultaneously, it is suggested to evaluate companies who employ all six types of participation. This would allow the researcher to evaluate the success of each type of participation within a given company.

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[13] William G. Zikmund, *Business Research Methods* (Mason, Ohio: Thomson/South-Western, 2003), 748.

[14] Ibid.

Areas for Further Research

Many conclusions were suggested in this thesis, along with many other interesting ideas that should attract future research. Through analysis of the impact of six forms of employee participation on job satisfaction, this thesis discovered several other interesting suggestions on improving satisfaction for blue-collar employees. Questions such as "What kind of environment is needed to have successful consultative participation?" and "Is an open-door policy the only thing needed to satisfy employee's desire to participate?" were not answered in this thesis, but would be attractive areas for future research. These discoveries could enhance the entire participation and job satisfaction realms if properly researched.

The largest area for future research surrounds the management style that Company C enacts. Their open-door policy is very powerful and has led to great informal participation as well as high employee satisfaction. An open door policy does seem to be the easiest and most logical way to allow employees to participate. It does not cost any money to enact; it is confidential so employees do not need to worry about embarrassment in front of fellow co-workers, and it opens the door to communication barriers and it creates great relationships between supervisors and employees. Employees stated at Company C that their open door policy is the only type of participation that they need and that they did not desire any other form of participation. We must then address the question, "Is a completely open-door policy the only type of participation needed to have a satisfied workforce?" This possibility should be further researched because if an open door policy is all that is needed for a satisfied workforce, companies around the world would be interested in pursuing that strategy.

This thesis was successful in showing that emotionally attached employees are beneficial to the company that employs them. But how does a company go about getting an employee emotionally attached? Emotional attachment could be based on the individual and what he/she wants or desires, but could there be something more that companies could offer their employees to get them emotionally attached? Employees at Company C were attached to management and the company as a whole because they treated them so well over the years, while employees at Company D were attached to their individual work stations. This thesis was not able to pinpoint how the company itself attempted to get employees to be emotionally attached, but it is worth further research because emotional attachments make employees more satisfied and have many positive benefits for the company as well.

Another interesting idea to explore within the grounds of employee ownership is the idea that many blue-collar workers feel that they work as hard as they possibly can with or without financial ownership or emotional attachment. It is believed that workers feel this way because of the physical demanding nature of their work, but possibly a larger sample would show that many blue-collar workers do not feel this way. It was shown that emotional attachment is apparent in the blue-collar sector, but it may be possible that financial ownership does not improve satisfaction in this specific sector due to the employee's hard-working nature. This belief could be researched in more detail to determine whether certain aspects of employee ownership do or do not apply to blue-collar sector workers.

The work atmosphere of a blue-collar company could also be further investigated regarding consultative participation. Previous studies have shown that managerial

attitudes were strongly related to consultative participation success.[15] But, employees also stated that they felt uncomfortable suggesting ideas in front of other co-workers and in front of management who they thought would oppose their ideas. In the blue-collar sector, it would be beneficial to further research which environments are needed in order for consultative participation to flourish. It is also important to research how management should act towards the idea of employee participation and how management can make employees feel comfortable suggesting ideas. It is interesting that studies have shown that just by giving employees to chance to participate, their satisfaction increases even if management does not follow through with their suggestions.[16] This study found that employees who felt that management would not act upon their requests felt discouraged in participating at all. Further research could be conducted on how management should act and set up an environment where employees would be able to consultatively participate comfortably.

Due to inconclusive results, representative participation should also be further researched in the blue-collar sector. Participants in this study were split evenly for favoring unions. Those who were in favor, did not state that unions did a good job of representing their "voice" but rather just provided wage negotiations and job protection. Since unions are the most typical type of representation for blue-collar workers, their ability to represent the voice of the employee and the impact on their satisfaction should be further studied. In addition, future investigations could focus on other types of representative participation in the blue-collar sector.

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[15] White, *The Scanlon Plan: Causes and Correlates of Success*, 292-312.

[16] Keith Bradley and Stephen Hill, "Quality Circles and Managerial Interests," *Industrial Relations* 26, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 68-82.

Conclusion

Ninety-five percent of participants in this study agreed that participation is an important factor that affects their job satisfaction. In order for employee participation to be successful, management has to welcome and encourage employee involvement in the decision making process. Since, management in three of four companies evaluated in this thesis still utilize authoritative management styles suggests that there is an opportunity for improvement. The majority of blue-collar workers were not encouraged to participate in the decisions that affect their job and this thesis found that this decreases employee satisfaction.

In this day and age, the workplace should be a place where people can work together in order to get things done in the most efficient way. Employee participation has been shown to not only increase employee satisfaction but also company productivity and efficiency. If all parties benefit from the advantages of employee participation, why is it so slow in making a presence in the business world? Future research on employee participation including which types of participation are the most useful for individual companies is warranted. This thesis demonstrated that the blue-collar sector of the workforce can benefit from employee participation in order to achieve higher levels of satisfaction for employees.

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