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Dyadic Duration and the Performance-Satisfaction Relationship: A Contextual Perspective¹

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This study examined dyadic duration as a contextual variable affecting the relationship between subordinate performance and job satisfaction. Dyadic duration, the length of time a subordinate has been directed by the same immediate superior, was expected to enhance the performance-satisfaction relationship in dyads of shorter duration and neutralize this relationship in dyads of longer duration. As anticipated, in shorter duration dyads, performance was found to be positively associated with satisfaction with the nature of work, characteristics of supervision, and characteristics of coworkers. For dyads of longer duration, an unexpected inverse relationship was found between performance and all of these same variables. Overall, these results suggest that considering dyadic duration as a contextual variable offers a unique perspective on the relationship between subordinates' performance and job satisfaction.

A growing awareness of the role of context in understanding individual behavior and attitudes is evident in recent empirical studies and reviews focusing on the importance of contextual arguments in understanding behavior in organizations (cf. Mowday & Sutton, 1993). In contemporary usage, the term "context" refers to surroundings that are associated with and help illuminate a particular phenomenon (Cappelli & Sherer, 1991). Typically, context is operationalized in terms of factors associated with units of analysis above those expressly being examined. In studies focusing on individual-level behavior and attitudes, context is thus the environment surrounding an individual and may include characteristics of the immediate workplace, work group, and organization.

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One basic distinction among contextually oriented studies is whether they describe the potential influence of the surrounding environment in terms of a compositional or unitary perspective. The latter, reflecting a long sociological tradition, concentrates primarily on variables that are meaningful at a systems or organizational level of analysis. Studies considering overall or core technology (Sutton & Rousseau, 1979), structural characteristics (Connor, 1992; Rousseau, 1978), or external labor markets (Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiyā, 1985) as a backdrop for individual responses illustrate this approach.

In contrast, studies reflecting a compositional perspective examine how the make-up of a unit (e.g., group) affects the attitudes and behaviors of unit members. Such studies consider various combinations of theoretically meaningful variables that are expected to influence attitudes and behaviors (cf. O'Reilly, 1991). In effect, the composition of a unit with regard to such variables provides a context for studying attitudes and behaviors. Research examining the impact of work group composition with regard to demographic factors such as age, educational level, length of service, and race (Ferris, Judge, Chachere, & Liden, 1991; Jackson et al., 1991) or other individual characteristics (Baratta & McManus, 1992) exemplifies this second approach.

Fundamental to all organizations, the superior-subordinate dyad exists whenever one individual is made subordinate to another within a systematic ordering of positions and duties defining a managerial hierarchy. A dyadic focus represents a midground compositional perspective for understanding joint processes involving superiors and subordinates. By contrast, an individual focus omits one of the focal persons and an average work group approach obscures the variation in relations that may exist between superiors and their various subordinates. The superior-subordinate dyad has been the focus of several studies reflecting a compositional perspective (Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989; Pulakos & Wexley, 1983; T sui & O'Reilly, 1989). Continuing in this vein, the present research investigates the role of *dyadic duration* in connection with the much debated, but yet unsettled relationship between subordinate performance and job satisfaction.

Theoretical Overview

As the focal contextual variable of the present study, dyadic duration refers to the length of time a subordinate has been directed by the same immediate superior (cf. Mossholder, Niebuhr, & Norris, 1990). Kacmar and Ferris (1989) note that dyadic duration (tenure with superior) merits increased attention because of its connection not only with Katz's (1980) work on employee responsiveness, but also with Graen's (Graen & Scandura, 1987) work on dyadic organizing.

Dyadic interaction is evolutionary in nature, consisting of varying levels of action and reaction between superiors and subordinates (Graen & Scandura, 1987). In light of what Baudry (1993) has termed the "vicissitudes" of the superior-subordinate relationship, the process of dyadic exchange may be thought of as resembling a learning curve, requiring a considerable amount of personal involvement and the sharing of thoughts and emotions by both dyad members. In essence, dyadic duration is a defining characteristic of superior-subordinate dyads because a period of time is required for superior-subordinate alliances to fully develop (cf. Graen & Wakabayashi, 1994). For this reason, dyadic duration was specifically chosen for study because of its inherent importance for understanding aspects of superior-subordinate relations. Such aspects include the willingness of superiors and subordinates to work together, the degree of satisfaction in such interactions, and the relative effectiveness of work-related exchanges.

Although time-related constructs have been suggested as potential contextual parameters (Mowday & Sutton, 1993; Schriber & Gurek, 1987), they have generally been conceptualized in terms of their direct effects on individual behavior (Landy, Rastegary, Thayer, & Colvin, 1991; Thierry & Meijman, 1994). Tenure, variously defined, has been the time dimension most frequently considered. With respect to the present research, the results of prior studies examining direct relations of tenure with performance and satisfaction tenure have been inconsistent (Bedelian, Ferris, & Kacmar, 1992; Gordon & Johnson, 1982).

Almost completely overlooked in prior studies is an integrative model of time and work which also has pertinence for understanding the influence of dyadic duration on the subordinate performance-job satisfaction relationship. Simply stated, Katz's (1980) job longevity model posits that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee responsiveness to varying job characteristics is moderated by job tenure, with responsiveness decreasing as tenure increases. Katz's model is contextual in nature as it treats job tenure as having surplus meaning for understanding how job characteristics and individuals' job satisfaction are associated.

Katz (1980) discusses this surplus meaning in terms of three sequential stages of job longevity—socialization, innovation, and adaptation—that vary in employee responsiveness. He hypothesized and found performance to be positively correlated with job satisfaction only during stages in which satisfied employees were willing to exert greater effort and involvement in their work (Katz, 1978a). As part of this general framework, Katz (1978a) suggests that such stages are more likely to evidence themselves earlier (rather than later) during an employee's job tenure. In this study, Katz (1978a) also hypothesized and found that as job tenure increases, employee responsiveness declines,

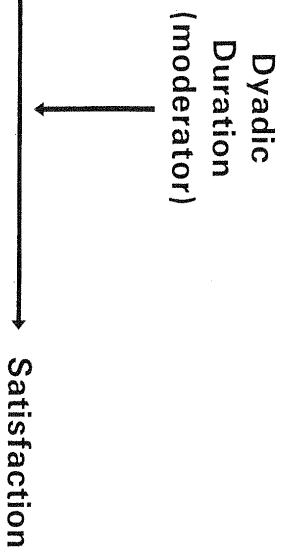


Figure 1. Hypothesized relation of performance with job satisfaction moderated by dyadic duration.

thereby decreasing the likelihood that satisfaction will be associated with performance.

Though Katz (1980) discussed the importance of social/interpersonal relationships in explaining the transition between job longevity stages and has referred to social interactions in discussing temporal work considerations (Van Maanen & Katz, 1976), major tests of his model (Katz, 1978a, 1978b; Kozlowski & Hulst, 1986) have previously only emphasized the role of job characteristics. The current study shifts the focus from job design to the superior-subordinate dyad, and examines relations between subordinates' performance and job satisfaction within dyads of varying duration. Within this framework, dyadic duration is thus considered a contextual variable that moderates the relationship between these variables. The expected role that dyadic duration plays in this relationship is depicted in Figure 1.

Linking Context and Individual Responses

As Cappelli and Sherer (1991) note, understanding links between context and individual responses requires theoretical underpinnings that elucidate how the former can affect the latter. With regard to dyadic duration, the work of Graen and colleagues provides such underpinnings. Their three-stage model of dyadic organizing (Graen & Scandura, 1987) parallels the logic underlying Katz's job longevity model. Graen also proposes that superior-subordinate relationships generally move through three stages—role taking, role making, and role routinization. However, instead of addressing shifts in employee responsiveness to job characteristics, Graen's role making process discusses responsiveness in terms of dyadic exchanges.

Thus, during the *role taking* stage, superiors learn about subordinates' work habits, strengths and weaknesses, and so on. In this stage, superiors are active initiators while subordinates play a more passive role. Role taking introduces subordinates to task procedures, informs superiors about subordinates'

performance potential, and represents an exchange based on contractual transactions. The dyadic relationship at this stage may be characterized as active and growing.

In *role making*, superior-subordinate relations evolve as they begin to define how each will behave in various situations. By cooperating on unstructured tasks, superiors and subordinates test their dyadic interdependency and sets of mutually reinforcing interlocked behavior cycles surface (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Although either party may initiate an interaction, superiors typically do so most often. Superior-subordinate exchanges move to a new level where subordinates collaborate in return for positional and personal resources from superiors. The dyadic relationship at this stage reaches its highest levels as exchanges become cooperative in nature rather than contractually based.

Over a period of time, *role routinization* occurs and both parties' behaviors become tempered by experience. Effective behaviors are strengthened and less effective actions weakened as mutual expectations are crystallized. With role routinization, superior-subordinate relationships become more institutionalized. Aspects of such relationships may sometimes even be incorporated in organization documents (e.g., job descriptions; Graen & Scandura, 1987). Overall, the need for mutual interpersonal responsiveness is obviated by subordinates' job knowledge and experience as well as the development of explicit agreements and implicit assumptions about why and when exchanges within a dyad are necessary.

Research suggests that both role taking and role making occur earlier in the dyadic organizing process (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Thus, shorter duration dyads would be expected to involve conditions of higher responsiveness in which subordinates would be attentive to superiors' requests. In turn, superiors would be expected to respond commensurately in order to provide socializing experiences and diagnostic feedback that inform subordinates as to the acceptability of their behavior. As noted, superior-subordinate exchanges evolve from being primarily contractual to cooperative (Graen & Scandura, 1987), with superiors possessing positional and personal resources such as information, influence, tasks, attention, and support (Graen & Cashman, 1975). It seems reasonable to conclude that in both stages, superiors' responsiveness to subordinates would entail dispensing both intrinsic (e.g., extensions of job responsibilities) and extrinsic (e.g., promotions, bonuses) rewards.

As a dyadic relationship enters its final stage—role routinization—responsiveness would logically become less necessary and diminish. In this stage, subordinates would generally no longer have to depend as heavily on their superiors for instrumental and supportive guidance. Their expectations regarding performance may be maintained by explicit agreements, job knowledge,

experience, and implicit assumptions as much (or more) than their superiors' inputs. In turn, superiors may become generally less cognizant of subordinates' actions because of their decreased need for attention.

Study Hypotheses

Given the nature of the interpersonal dynamics underlying both Katz's job longevity model and Graen's model of dyadic organizing, in shorter duration dyads we expected subordinates' satisfaction to be correlated with superiors' assessments of their performance. As described above, this is much more likely to occur during earlier stages (role taking and role making) of dyadic organizing because superior-subordinate exchange and cooperation are at their highest level. When a superior-subordinate relationship reaches a mature stage (role routinization), mutual responsiveness is less necessary and could be expected to ebb, vitiating the link between subordinate job behavior and intrinsic/extrinsic rewards from one's immediate superior. This circumstance should decrease the likelihood that superiors' assessments of subordinates' performance would be associated with subordinates' satisfaction. Additionally, as the intensity of a superior-subordinate relationship fades, broader factors (e.g., personal growth and self-fulfillment) may become more prominent as determinants of subordinate satisfaction.

The logic being outlined is not intended to represent a fully developed theory of the calculus underlying subordinate performance and satisfaction. Rather, following Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969), employee satisfaction is treated as a partial function of the nature of work, characteristics of supervision, promotional opportunities, and characteristics of coworkers. With respect to the current logic, it was expected that subordinate performance and satisfaction with the work itself, supervision, promotions, and coworkers would be positively related in dyads of shorter duration (Hypothesis 1). In terms of a typology proposed by Howell, Dorfman, and Kerr (1986), this hypothesis suggests that dyadic duration acts as a moderator, enhancing subordinate performance and satisfaction during role taking and role making. This enhancement is believed to apply to satisfaction facets which directly involve a superior (supervision), as well as facets in which a superior has an influential role (the work itself and promotions). Finally, as is described below, subordinates participating in the present study worked in small work teams. Because coworkers were thus an integral part of the work setting, we also expected the moderator effect to be evidenced for satisfaction with coworkers.

In contrast, we expected that subordinate performance and satisfaction with work, supervision, promotions, and coworkers would not be related in longer duration dyads (Hypothesis 2). Viewed in terms of the Howell et al. (1986)

typology, this hypothesis suggests that dyadic duration acts as a neutralizer, attenuating subordinate performance and satisfaction relationships during role routinization. This attenuation was thought to apply for all facets of employee satisfaction for the same reasons underlying Hypothesis 1.

Method

Research Site

The research site was a midsize engineering firm located in the Midwest. Development and applications projects were accomplished by engineers and technical personnel operating in small work teams. As such, team members were compelled to interact with one another to successfully complete project task assignments.

Given the importance of engineering excellence to the firm's success, a dual career ladder was available to all team members. The option of pursuing either a management or technical career path was created to clearly communicate that both alternatives were valued and would be rewarded (Kail, 1987). Of relevance for the present investigation, research suggests performance-satisfaction relationships are more likely to occur where performance is considered to be instrumental (cf. Podsakoff & Williams, 1986). Thus, this firm was an appropriate site for testing the hypotheses.

Sample

Research packets were distributed on site to 253 engineers and technical personnel. The packets contained: (a) a cover letter explaining the study's general purpose, (b) the measures described below, and (c) an envelope pre-addressed to the researchers for ease of return. Confidentiality was guaranteed and participation voluntary. One hundred and sixteen research packets were returned for a 46% participation rate.

Only those participants having at least 3 months' tenure with their direct supervisor were included in the following analyses. The period of 0 to 3 months has been identified by Katz (1978b) as a time of socialization and resocialization. Given the technical and team-oriented nature of the work, it was considered important to allow for an initial period of mutual adjustment, increasing the likelihood that truly representative subordinate behavior could be observed and more informed performance assessments obtained. This stricture, along with missing data, resulted in a reduced sample of 102 cases.

Mean participant age was 33.28 years. Over 90% were male and college educated. Mean organization tenure was 6.26 years and mean job tenure was

2.71 years; the distribution of both variables, as would be expected with normal mobility patterns, was slightly right-skewed.

Measures

Job satisfaction. Facet-specific satisfaction was assessed using the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith et al., 1969). The JDI consists of 72 items, scored on a 3-point scale, and was used to measure the four focal dimensions of job satisfaction: work, supervision, promotions, and coworkers. Extensive use of the JDI has shown it to be a useful and accurate measure of job satisfaction, with acceptable psychometric properties. Coefficient alpha reliability estimates for the four JDI scales were: satisfaction with work, .81; satisfaction with supervision, .85; satisfaction with promotions, .92; and satisfaction with coworkers, .88.

Performance. Participants were independently rated by their immediate supervisors on 23 separate items which were based on job performance literature and company input, and deemed applicable to the engineering field. The rating instrument covered a domain similar to that of Kozlowski and Hults' (1986) 13-item aggregate measure of engineers' performance. Each item was rated using a 5-point response mode ranging from *clearly unsatisfactory* (1) to *outstanding* (5). Performance items ranged from fairly specific job-relevant behaviors (e.g., "the quantity of work the person turns out on routine jobs") to more general characteristics (e.g., "the extent to which the person shows flexibility, is open to new ideas, and adjusts to change"). Performance ratings were returned to the researchers under separate cover by individual supervisors.

Supervisory liking may influence supervisor's subjective ratings of subordinates (Cardy & Dobbins, 1986). Such ratings, however, are less subject to leniency bias and exhibit greater variance than self-ratings (Murphy & Cleveland, 1992). Moreover, when supervisory ratings are collected expressly for research purposes, as in the present study, sources of possible rater bias affecting performance appraisals are reduced as compared to when the ratings are used for human resource decisions (Zedeck & Cascio, 1982). Ratings of the 23 items were summed to form a composite performance measure. A global indicator was used because it was felt that performance assessments within a dyadic context should tap a gamut of relevant behaviors. The coefficient alpha reliability for job performance was .94.

Dyadic duration. The length of time participants had reported to their immediate supervisors was assessed by a single self-report item: "How many months have you worked for your present supervisor?" Though not objective in nature, such information is noncontroversial and generally expected to be accurately reported. Mean dyadic duration was 18.74 months. As noted above

with regard to the distribution of organization and job tenure, this variable was also slightly right-skewed.

Analyses

Complete consensus about the causal ordering of our focal variables is lacking. In keeping with the Lawler-Porter (1967) performance-satisfaction framework, at least one meta-analysis supports the notion that performance precedes satisfaction (Petty, McGee, & Cavender, 1984). Additionally, in specific relation to the present research, Graen, Novak, and Sommerkamp (1982) stress that superiors' behaviors are crucial for influencing subordinate performance, resulting in increased subordinate loyalty, motivation, and overall satisfaction. Following this logic, subordinate performance was therefore treated as an independent variable, various facets of job satisfaction as dependent variables, and dyadic duration as a moderator variable.

Standard moderated regression analyses (Stone & Hollenbeck, 1989) were employed to determine the effect of dyadic duration on the relation between subordinate job performance and satisfaction. Because dyadic duration could be expected to correlate with both organization and job tenure, all analyses were conducted controlling for the potentially biasing effect of these variables. The amount of variance attributable to interaction effects beyond that explained by main effects alone may be determined by comparing full and restricted regression models. A restricted model comprised of the control variables, performance, and dyadic duration was created by entering them as a block. Next, a full regression model was constructed by adding the focal interaction term (Performance \times Dyadic Duration) to the restricted model. Standard statistical tests were used to determine if the addition of the interaction term accounted for a significant amount of incremental variance.

Results

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations among all study variables are shown in Table 1. Dyadic duration was positively related to both organization and job tenure, and negatively related to satisfaction with promotions. The range of intercorrelations among the JDI subscales was low to moderate. The only significant correlation involving performance was with organization tenure.

Hypothesis 2 states that the relationship between performance and satisfaction will be attenuated in long duration dyads. Johns (1991) argues that such attenuation could occur for purely artifactual reasons if dyadic duration was simply acting as a contextual constraint on individual behavior and attitudes.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	r						
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Performance	77.55	11.14	.04	-.20	-.13	.04	-.01	.12	-.09
2. Dyadic duration (months)	18.74	13.56	.24	.24	-.01	-.10	-.29	-.03	
3. Organization tenure (years)	6.26	5.03	.46	-.03	-.16	-.18	.05		
4. Job tenure (years)	2.71	2.56	.02	.03	-.34	-.03			
5. Satisfaction with supervision	43.08	9.45	.48	.34	.49				
6. Satisfaction with work	36.69	9.14	.17	.45					
7. Satisfaction with promotions	26.67	17.60							
8. Satisfaction with coworkers	42.86	10.06							.28

Note. $n = 102$. Correlations greater than $\pm .20$ are significant at $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Were this occurring, our performance and satisfaction measures should exhibit less variation in longer duration groups than in shorter duration groups, making for an unfair test (Cooper & Richardson, 1986). Thus, as a prelude to testing the hypotheses, we checked this possibility by creating shorter and longer dyadic duration groups (using median splits) and testing for between-group variance differences in the performance and satisfaction measures. None were found.

Table 2 shows the results of the moderated regression analyses pertaining to Hypotheses 1 and 2. As indicated, dyadic duration moderates the relationship between performance and three (out of four) facets of job satisfaction. The interaction of performance and dyadic duration added significantly to the explained variance in satisfaction with supervision, $p < .01$, as well as in both satisfaction with work and satisfaction with coworkers, $p < .05$. The

Table 2

Results of Moderated Regressions

Dependent variable	Model variables	β	F
Satisfaction with: Supervision	O	-.07	.33
	J	.06	.30
	P	.39	5.60*
	DD	1.91	7.39**
	P \times DD	-1.99	7.56**
	AR ² P \times DD = .07		
	Total R ² = .08		
Work	O	-.24	4.38*
	J	.16	2.22
	P	.27	2.73
	DD	1.55	4.93*
	P \times DD	-1.68	5.57*
	AR ² \times DD = .05		
	Total R ² = .11		
Promotions	O	-.02	.04
	J	-.26	5.94*
	P	.19	1.44
	DD	.27	1.17
	P \times DD	-.52	.59
	AR ² P \times DD = .00		
	Total R ² = .17		
Coworkers	O	.04	.12
	J	-.05	.18
	P	.22	1.76
	DD	1.67	5.40*
	P \times DD	-1.74	5.64*
	AR ² P \times DD = .06		
	Total R ² = .07		

Note. $n = 102$. O = Organization tenure, J = Job tenure, P = Job performance, DD = Dyadic duration. β = Beta weight obtained after controlling for other model variables.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

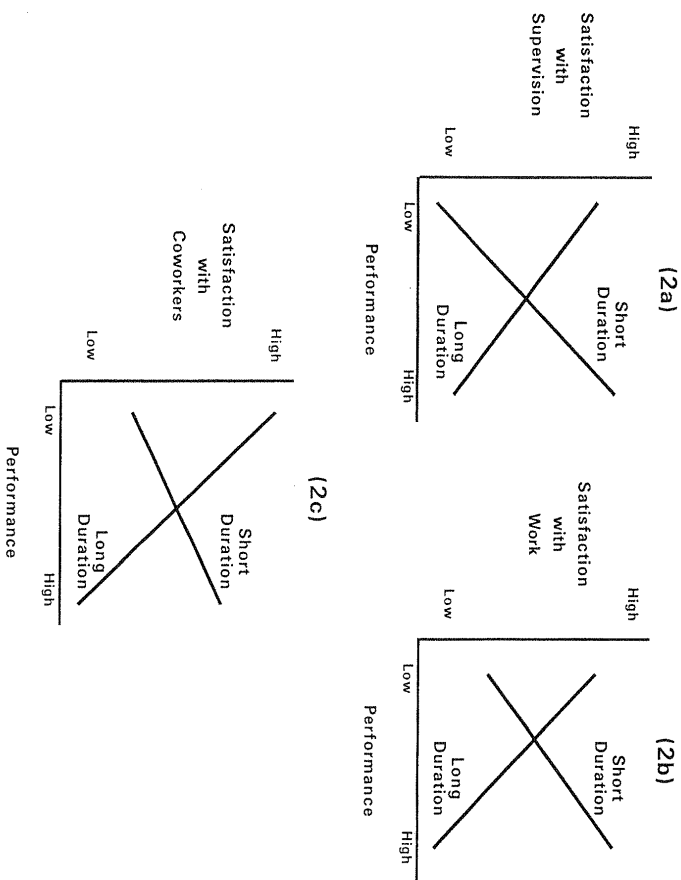


Figure 2. Significant interactions between dyadic duration and job performance.

Performance \times Dyadic Duration interaction was not significant for satisfaction with promotions.

Following Cohen and Cohen (1983), plots for the significant performance-satisfaction interactions were constructed using reference points ± 1 SD from the means of performance and dyadic duration. Figures 2a, 2b, and 2c show the nature of these interactions. For superior-subordinate dyads of shorter duration, the relationships between performance and satisfaction with supervision, work, and coworkers are positive, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1. For dyads of longer duration, an unexpected inverse relationship was found between performance and all of these same variables. Hypothesis 2 was thus not supported.

Because of the parallels underlying the theoretical rationale of the present study with that of Katz's (1980) job longevity model, we conducted a post hoc check to determine if job tenure had a moderating impact on the relationship between performance and satisfaction. To do this, we substituted job tenure for dyadic duration and reran all of our regression analyses. Organization tenure

was still used as a control variable. If dyadic duration were acting as a surrogate variable for job tenure, one would expect that the obtained significant interactions (or additional ones) would be found. None of the interaction terms from the analyses were significant.

Discussion

In their review of employee performance and job satisfaction relationships, Iaffaldano and Muchinsky (1985) note that although contextually-based variables may contribute greatly to the variance in such relationships across studies, information about such variables is difficult to code and is usually excluded from meta-analyses. Recently, researchers have begun to stress that context should be considered an integral part of organizational studies so that interrelationships among variables may be more completely explained (cf. James, Demaree, Mulark, & Ladd, 1992; Mowday & Sutton, 1993). In this vein, the purpose of the present research was to examine how a contextual variable, dyadic duration, might extend our understanding of the performance-satisfaction relationship.

Significant interactions were found between dyadic duration and performance when satisfaction with work, supervision, and coworkers were the dependent variables. Plots of these interactions indicate that subordinate performance and satisfaction were positively related in dyads of shorter duration (Hypothesis 1). Overall, these results advance the notion that dyadic duration may be an important contextual variable in understanding the relationship between subordinate performance and job satisfaction. The effect sizes (R^2 change) of the significant interactions were moderate, ranging from three to eight percent of the variance in subordinate satisfaction.

The expectation that relationships between performance and various facets of job satisfaction would simply be "neutralized" in dyads of longer duration (Hypothesis 2) was not supported. Instead, the dynamics of exchange were stronger than predicted; for interactions involving satisfaction with supervision, work, and coworkers, performance and satisfaction were inversely related. Finding negative correlations between performance and satisfaction is not an uncommon occurrence (cf. Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985). Interestingly, Katz (1978a) reported a trend for satisfaction to be negatively related to the performance scores of individuals with greater job longevity.

Though these results were not predicted, they are nevertheless intriguing to consider. Possibly at a more mature juncture in a dyadic relationship, supervisors may come to be seen as direct or indirect barriers to desired career transitions (cf. Brooks & Seers, 1991). Subordinates who have remained with the same superior for longer periods would be expected to view their career

progress as static. Such employees may become dismayed with their promotion potential, leading to even greater dissatisfaction. The significant negative correlation in Table 1 between dyadic duration and satisfaction with promotions supports this idea.

It is consistent with the dyadic organizing framework that superiors would provide less encouragement to subordinates who have gained sufficient experience and job knowledge (Graen & Scandura, 1987). The diminished dyadic exchange may prompt subordinates to feel that the utility of the dyadic relationship has declined. Coupled with concerns about stalls in upward movement, this may lead subordinates in long duration dyads to feel wronged by the larger organizational system and its most immediate formal representative, their supervisor. The quality of social exchanges with others might decrease and subordinates would become less satisfied with the very persons with whom they are most likely to interact (i.e., their supervisor and coworkers). In the extreme, these employees may come to see their jobs as deadend positions, leading to less enjoyment with both the work itself and elements integral to it.

This explanation is more plausible if subordinates in longer duration dyads are performing at least as well as subordinates in shorter duration dyads. Given similar performance levels, the perception of being wronged could more readily arise in subordinates in the longer duration dyads, resulting in an inverse relationship between performance and satisfaction. Shorter and longer dyad duration groups (median splits) were formed to test for performance differences: there was no significance difference in performance for the two groups, $t = .77, p > .44, df = 100$, and higher and lower performers were evenly distributed across both groups. Of course, any explanation for the obtained negative relationships in longer duration subordinates must only be considered tentative until further research is conducted.

Some caveats regarding our findings should be mentioned. Despite the increasing prevalence of team structures in organizations, the emphasis on small teams in the firm studied may limit the generalizability of our results. At the same time, conducting the study in a setting where there is interaction among coworkers as well as with superiors makes for a more conservative test of the moderating effect of dyadic duration and, thus, appears to strengthen the reported results. Also, because a cross-sectional design was employed, subordinate movement between superiors could not be tracked, and, thus, its impact on our findings is unknown. Subordinates may have remained with superiors with whom they interacted well and separated from those with whom they did not. Finally, it should be noted that common method variance would not appear to explain the results, because performance data were collected independently from superiors.

In summary, the present study considered the potential impact of a contextual variable, dyadic duration, on the relationship between subordinate performance and job satisfaction. Results suggest that when examining relations between work behavior and work attitudes, it is important to consider not only superior or subordinate characteristics, but also the context of their dyadic interaction. Considering contextual-based variables in research designs may well lead to a better understanding of other behavior-attitude relations in general. In this regard, dyadic duration would seem especially worthy of study because it describes an enduring intraorganizational phenomenon. Dyadic duration may thus offer potential insights into various internal labor market dynamics (e.g., job transfers, skill acquisition, promotions from within) that have career implications, but are too frequently ignored (cf. Cappelli & Sherer, 1991).

From an organization-wide perspective, particular attention may need to be given to contexts where longer duration dyads are more numerous. To the extent that the inverse relationships we found between performance and satisfaction are generalizable, organizations will be presented with career development challenges. As companies downsize, restructure, and streamline their operations in the 1990s, the apex of organization pyramids will become smaller. Members of the baby boom generation, who have moved beyond initial career stages, may be impacted negatively as a result because promotional opportunities will become scarcer (Chanick, 1992). This could raise the potential for longer dyadic relationships and the attendant challenges implied by our results. Possible responses might include human resource initiatives aimed at familiarizing both superiors and subordinates with the nature of the role-making process, recognizing external environmental forces (e.g., economic conditions, labor practices, technological advances) that might affect dyad duration, or even the restructuring of departments and reassignment of personnel to reduce the length of time subordinates report to the same immediate superior. Greater recognition and planning of horizontal career development strategies (e.g., Northcraft, Griffith, & Shalley, 1992) might also provide a method for dealing with career challenges posed by demographic trends that organizations will face with the coming millennium.

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