THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED TRUST ON THE COMMUNICATION OF BOUNDARY SPANNERS IN ORGANIZATIONS

By

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The present study was concerned with how interpersonal trust affects the communication of boundary-spanning individuals in organizations. Previous studies have suggested that message senders who distrust the message recipient will distort certain kinds of information. Specifically, it seems that message senders tend to minimize personally unfavorable information and emphasize personally favorable information in an effort to project a competent image. The current research was designed to determine if similar information distortion occurs when message senders perceive that they are distrusted by the message recipient. In addition, generally favorable or unfavorable information i.e. "pleasant" or "unpleasant" news was examined instead of information of a more personal nature. College students volunteered to participate in an organizational simulation in which the relationship between message-sending behavior and level of perceived trust was analyzed. The participants worked on prepared information items under two conditions: perceived trust and perceived distrust. A Likert-type scale was used to measure levels of information distortion, ranging from total omission of a message to gathering additional details. A measure of job satisfaction was also taken for each of the message senders in hopes of clarifying the relationship between trust, information distortion, and job
satisfaction. The results indicate that the message senders did not distort information in a manner expected from previous research. Message senders who perceived they were distrusted sent less favorable-unimportant information than did message senders who believed they were trusted, thus exhibiting behavior that was opposite that hypothesized. In addition, message senders who thought they were distrusted by their superior did not differ in either the total amount of information or the amount of total unfavorable information sent when compared to message senders who thought they were trusted by their superior. However, because power is low, these results are at best tentative. Finally, the results lend partial support to the hypothesis that interpersonal trust influences job satisfaction i.e. greater levels of perceived trust result in higher levels of job satisfaction. One possible interpretation of these results is that message-sending subordinates who perceive that they are not trusted by their immediate superior react with loyalty displays. That is, by performing their task with a minimum of bias toward favorable messages they are trying to convey that they are indeed capable and efficient workers. Thus, their message-sending strategy may have centered around the goal of earning the trust of a superior who is thought to distrust them. The results also suggest that subordinates who believed they were trusted may have been sending more favorable (but unimportant) messages in
an effort to protect their superior from an overload of "unpleasant" information. Both interpretations support the hypothesis that a message sender's perceptions of the message recipient's attitudes will have some degree of influence on the message sender's communication.
CHAPTER ONE
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

This study examined the effect of interpersonal trust on the message-sending behavior of boundary spanning subordinates in organizations. An experimental simulation was employed to examine the relationship between the level of trust and the amount of information distortion that occurs between a superior and subordinate.

Previous research has demonstrated that a subordinate sends less information, particularly personally unfavorable information, to a distrusted superior than to a trusted superior. The explanation for this finding suggests that the message-sender is acting out of self-preservation: when one hopes for personal advancement within an organization, one does not transmit information to another believing it will be used against him or her to hinder goal attainment. A distrusted superior thus becomes a potential obstacle to the individual's upward movement within the organization.

Interpersonal trust, however, is a transactional process (Zand, 1972; Adams, 1976). Just as a subordinate
places a certain amount of trust in a superior, a superior will likewise trust certain subordinates more than others. If a subordinate should come to believe that s/he is distrusted, it is possible that the subordinate will react in a defensive manner (Gibb, 1961). The thesis of the present study is that a message-sender in such a situation will also send less unfavorable information in an effort to project a positive self-image and rectify the superior's lack of trust. In addition to minimizing unfavorable information, it was predicted that a subordinate who perceives superior distrust will also emphasize more favorable messages. This argument assumed that the message-sender will hope to be associated with his or her positive and optimistic performance and thus earn the esteem of the superior (Adams, 1976; O'Reilly, 1978).

In the superior/subordinate relationship, then, distrust on the part of either party will have the potentially dysfunctional outcome of hindering efficient and accurate message transmission.

Whereas the transmission of personally unfavorable information has been the focus of previous research, the present study was designed to determine if generally unfavorable (i.e., unpleasant) information is also sent less frequently by a subordinate who perceives superior distrust than by a subordinate who does not. Generally unfavorable information is information that does not reflect
directly upon the sender, but is "bad news" that a subordinate might believe would be unpleasant for a superior to receive. Research has indicated that individuals are hesitant to forward "bad news," even when those individuals are neither the cause nor the focus of the unpleasant information that they must pass on to the recipient (Rosen & Tesser, 1970).

Finally, a measure of each subordinate's job satisfaction was taken. At present it is unclear whether a direct relationship exists between trust and job satisfaction (Falcione, Daly, & Mc Croskey, 1977; Giffen, 1967; Zand, 1972) or if job satisfaction is more dependent upon the amount of information distortion present in a message-sender's role (O'Reilly, 1978). The current study was designed to address this issue.

The remainder of this chapter reviews several issues relevant to the present study. Hypotheses are presented when appropriate.

Boundary Spanning - Definition and Relevance

One of the factors that determines the degree of success attained by an organization is how effectively the organization interacts with its environment (Adams, 1976; Aldrich & Herker, 1977). An organization depends on the environment to provide necessary resources for production as well as suitable markets for finished products (Adams, 1976).
A specialized organizational role has evolved in response to this need for effective interchange. Such a role is now referred to as a boundary spanner, or boundary role person (BRP) (Adams, 1976). The two terms are synonymous and refer to those individuals whose responsibilities mandate that they operate across the boundaries of the organization in order to interact with various facets of the external environment. Examples of individuals who occupy boundary spanning positions are marketing and sales personnel, advertising and public relations workers, and negotiators and bargaining agents.

The term "boundary spanner" can be applied to a diverse spectrum of organizational functions. However, Aldrich and Herker (1977) have emphasized that a boundary spanner performs two major functions: 1) information processing, and 2) external representation. The former refers to the message-sending activity of a boundary spanner, who controls the flow of information from the environment to the organization. The latter refers to how a boundary spanner serves as a representative of the organization while operating outside its borders.

Information Processor

As an information processor, the boundary spanner exercises control by acting as either a filter or a facilitator of information. The "filter" function entails selec-
tivity on the part of the boundary spanner, who may choose to consolidate, delay, store, or entirely omit information as it is received from the external environment. The "facilitator" function refers to a boundary spanner's capacity to directly relay a message when it is deemed important.

The information processing function is a necessary and crucial responsibility of a boundary spanner. Indeed, one of the chief functions performed by the boundary spanner is that of preventing information overload (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Top management must attend to many different matters, and cannot take the time to read lengthy or numerous messages. Subordinates, realizing this, must exercise discretion in their message-sending. Thus, a boundary spanning subordinate is upper management's first line of defense against irrelevant or unimportant information.

A problem arises from this aspect of a boundary spanner's job: if discretion may be used, it may also be misused, resulting in information distortion. According to O'Reilly (1978), information distortion is the "incorrect reproduction of objectively correct information and can result from either conscious or deliberate alteration or unconscious manipulation" (p. 175). Incorrect reproduction of information can occur in two ways: 1) sharpening, or the selective retention of certain details in a message, and 2) leveling, or
the selective omission of details (Allport & Postman, 1947; Berkowitz, 1971; O'Reilly, 1978). March and Simon (1958) were also concerned with information distortion when they described the process of "uncertainty absorption":

Uncertainty absorption takes place when inferences are drawn from a body of evidence and the inferences, instead of the evidence itself, are then communicated. Through the process of uncertainty absorption, the recipient of a communication is severely limited in his ability to judge its correctness. Although there may be various tests of apparent validity, internal consistency, and consistency with other communications, the recipient must, by and large, repose his confidence in the editing process that has taken place. To the extent that he can interpret it, his interpretation must be based primarily on his confidence in the source and his knowledge of the biases to which the source is subject (p. 165).

Deliberately or not, a message-sender draws his or her own conclusions from data and communicates them to a superior. Unfamiliar or unwanted information will eventually be either omitted or "absorbed" into the sender's own organizational perspective and communicated in the vocabulary (oral code) with which the message-sender is familiar. This implies that the final message will frequently reflect the biases of the sender.

A boundary spanner, then, is subject to the process of uncertainty absorption as s/he transmits information to a superior. An "alert" superior will be aware of this, and will try to learn the biases of particular subordinates.
Some will be seen as fairly objective and trustworthy, while others may be perceived as more biased in their perspective. A subordinate who is ambitious and has high mobility aspirations (Read, 1962), for example, might exhibit a greater degree of self-interest and self-promotion in his or her communications than would another less ambitious subordinate. In this case, promotion is the major consideration rather than message accuracy. A superior might do well to remember this and look for signs of this bias in the subordinate's messages.

External Representative

The second major function of a boundary spanner, external representation, is most often illustrated through the process of negotiation (Adams, 1976; Aldrich & Herker, 1977). During the negotiation process, a boundary spanner must often function outside the confines of his or her organization while attempting to exert influence over another party. In exerting this influence, the boundary spanner/negotiator strives to attain an optimal outcome for his or her organization. The boundary spanner thus acts as an "external representative" who seeks satisfactory outcomes by representing to an external party the best interests of his or her organization.

The responsibilities of the boundary spanner require that s/he be alert for important changes in the environment.
Here, too, personal biases may be introduced; in all likelihood, no two boundary spanners will give the same weight to elements that come to their attention, simply because they will each have their own criteria for deciding what is "important." The reasons for this are varied, but Leifer and Delbecq (1978) have compiled a useful list. According to these writers, boundary spanners attend to aspects of the environment as a function of: 1) what they are told to pay attention to; 2) their own wants and needs; 3) some attention cues based on past experience; 4) how and in what context they expect that information to be utilized; and 5) cues based on whether or not the information is redundant.

As these criteria demonstrate, the monitoring process is by no means a sterile one, devoid of personal biases. A boundary spanner's own needs will play a part in determining where s/he directs effort and attention. Two boundary spanners scanning the same environment will retain different aspects of that environment as dictated by their differing needs. Indeed, because an individual's needs change over time, the same boundary spanner will most likely attend to different parts of the environment at different times. Each time a boundary spanner examines the environment, s/he will see a different picture depending upon current needs and levels of knowledge (Scott and Powers, 1978, p. 116).
Considering that so many "loopholes" exist through which personal biases can infiltrate the message-sending process, the fourth item listed by Leifer and Delbecq, "how and in what context they expect that information to be utilized," is of direct relevance to the issue of interpersonal trust in a superior/subordinate relationship. Indeed, trust has often been defined as an expectation that certain behavior will occur (Giffen, 1967; Rotter, 1971; Zand, 1972). In the superior/subordinate dyadic relationship, a boundary spanner's expectations of how a superior will behave toward him or her will influence the degree to which the boundary spanner exercises personal bias in transmitting information to that superior. The import of this potential for information distortion is considerable; an organization's boundary spanners play a crucial role in facilitating the flow of information necessary for maintaining "routine" functions and for planning and implementing innovations (Note 1).

Trust as an Obstacle to Efficient Communication

Due to the vital nature of the boundary spanning role in the organization, an awareness of any factor that affects the efficiency of a boundary spanner's performance is essential. Interpersonal trust is one such variable that may influence the boundary spanning process and affect the efficiency with which a boundary spanner performs his or her
communicative function (Adams, 1976; Zand, 1972). Research has demonstrated that the level of trust in a relationship is important in determining both the quantity and quality of information that is communicated between the involved parties (Mellinger, 1956; Read, 1962). Given the communicative aspects of a boundary spanner's job, the above relationship implies that the amount of trust in a sender-receiver dyad will influence the amount and type of information that is transmitted.

Trust as an independent variable has been defined as both a personality characteristic (Rotter, 1967) and as a communicative attitude (Deutsch, 1962; Giffen, 1967; Zand, 1972). In the former sense, trust is viewed as an enduring trait of the individual: "(trust is) a generalized expectancy held by an individual that the word, promise, oral or written statement of another individual or group can be relied on" (Rotter, 1980). This definition has been useful from a social learning perspective, in which researchers have tried to pinpoint some of the consequences incurred by individuals either high or low in interpersonal trust. For example, some findings indicate that high trusters are in turn more trustworthy, less likely to be unhappy, and are sought out as a friend more often by both low-trusting and high-trusting others (Rotter, 1980).
The focus of the present study is on trust, not as a personality trait, but as a relational characteristic. That is, trust is not viewed as a personality characteristic, but is instead seen as a product of a particular relationship. Whether a person is trusting or untrusting is not important; the level of trust that results from the interaction of two individuals is the focus of the present study.

The above notion of interpersonal trust suggests that interpersonal perception plays an important part in this research. The amount of trust generated in a dyadic relationship is dependent upon the individuals' perceptions of each other's actions and motivations; these perceptions will in turn serve as the basis for future actions. Furthermore, as Laing, Phillipson, and Lee (1966) observe:

My field of experience is, however, filled not only by my direct view of myself (ego) and of the other (alter), but of what we shall call metaperspectives -my view of the other's (your, his, her, their) view of me. I may not actually be able to see myself as others see me, but I am constantly supposing them to be seeing me in particular ways, and I am constantly acting in the light of the actual or supposed attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on the other has in respect of me. (p. 4)

By applying the concept of metaperspectives to the present research it is hoped that a fresh perspective will be given to the relationship between interpersonal trust and communication efficiency. Whereas previous research on boundary
spanning and message-sending has concentrated on the sender's direct view of the receiver (i.e., how much the sender trusts the receiver), this research examines the consequences of the sender's metaperspective (i.e., how the sender thinks the receiver perceives him or her).

Thus, this study is examining the consequences of perceived distrust on the message-sending activity of the boundary spanner. The term "perceived distrust" represents the situation in which a boundary spanning subordinate perceives that s/he is not trusted by an immediate superior. A definition that focuses on the relational aspect of trust is therefore required. Giffen's definition of interpersonal trust, which embodies a situation-specific notion, shall be used: "reliance upon the communication behavior of another person in order to achieve a desired but uncertain objective in a risky situation" (Giffen, 1967, p. 224). A secret told to a friend, for example, displays trust in that friend because the teller is relying upon the friend to keep the secret safe ("communication behavior"). If the friend does keep the secret, the teller is rewarded by feelings of well-being because s/he has shared with another and reinforced their friendship ("a desired but uncertain objective"). The situation is risky because there is always the possibility that the friend will not stay quiet about the secret. Thus, this
definition recognizes the communicative aspect of trust and can readily be applied to the situation in which a subordinate's decision to send particular information to a superior will be determined by the subordinate's perceptions of how such information may be used.

Studies of interpersonal trust have examined how messages are affected when the message-sender distrusts the message-recipient. Mellinger (1956) reported that accurate transmission between two individuals is more likely to occur under conditions of trust than under conditions of distrust. His study demonstrated that an individual will restrict or distort information to another to the extent that s/he believes the other might use this information against him or her. Read (1962) found further evidence of this phenomenon in his study of middle management personnel from three major industrial organizations in the United States. Read's findings indicated that a highly mobile subordinate will hesitate to communicate anything negative, such as information about unsolved problems, to an untrusted superior. Read reasoned that because a highly mobile subordinate desires rapid advancement in the organization, this reluctance to communicate negative information occurs because the subordinate fears it could be used by a distrusted superior to hinder his or her upward progress.
Support for this argument can be found in an earlier study by Cohen (1958). Cohen defined the hierarchy in an organization in terms of power, and proposed that subordinates are aware of the influence that those of high rank possess in mediating their rewards. Upward communication thus becomes a means by which subordinates can send information in a manner that satisfies their own interests and needs. In this way, low-ranking individuals may protect and enhance their relationship with those of high rank.

More recent research on boundary spanning, concerned with the negotiation function, has further emphasized the impact that distrust can have on the efficiency with which the boundary spanner carries out duties. Adams (1976) argues that a boundary spanner, by the nature of the position, is more distant from the organization both physically and psychologically than are his or her peers who work primarily within the organization's boundaries. A boundary spanner is thus often perceived to be more likely to deviate from organizational norms and have his or her loyalty to the organization questioned. Three major consequences result from this situation: first, organizations often monitor their boundary spanning personnel to assure adherence to norms; second, boundary spanners must display their loyalty and norm-adherence to a greater extent than
others in the organization; and third, because of the suspicion attached to the position, a boundary spanner will experience a high degree of intrapersonal conflict in performing his or her duties (Adams, 1976). This conflict arises from the fact that:

The organizational need for optimal outcomes, whether explicit or not, and the need for BRP's to display their loyalty and norm-adherence are often incompatible. For example, allowing a vendor a given margin of profit in order to achieve an optimal outcome in obtaining organizational inputs may give the appearance that the negotiator is disloyal; giving economic aid to a socialist nation may be perceived as ideological treachery. . . .The essence of many such conflicts is that there is role sending both about the outcomes to be achieved and about some of the means to achieve them (Adams, 1976, p. 1179).

A boundary spanner's need to be concerned with loyalty displays, as well as with results, is the source of much role conflict.

Other studies of the negotiation behavior of boundary spanners (Haccoun & Klimoski, 1975; Klimoski & Ash, 1974; Kogan, Lamm & Trommsdorff, 1972; Wall, 1975; Wall & Adams, 1974) have shown that this distrust can actually reduce the effectiveness of a boundary spanner in the negotiation process, resulting in lesser outcomes for the organization.

The previous research findings can be summarized into two main ideas: 1) a boundary spanner as a message-
sender will selectively transmit less information to a distrusted superior (Cohen, 1958; Mellinger, 1956; O'Reilly, 1978; Read, 1962), and 2) a boundary spanner as an external representative, or negotiator, will be less effective if s/he perceives that a superior distrusts him or her (Adams, 1976; Haccoun & Klimoski, 1975; Klimoski & Ash, 1974; Kogan, Lamm and Trommsdorff, 1972; Wall, 1975; Wall & Adams, 1974). This second issue, that of perceived distrust, has not been examined with respect to the message-sending activity of a boundary spanner. Research has demonstrated that the negotiation function suffers when a boundary spanner feels untrusted, but whether a boundary spanner's message-sending efficiency is impaired under similar conditions is an issue that still remains unclear. It is with this issue that the current study is concerned.

The following hypotheses will be tested in this section:

H1: Under conditions of perceived distrust less total information will be transmitted to a superior than under conditions of perceived trust.

H2: Under conditions of perceived distrust less unfavorable information will be transmitted to a superior than under conditions of perceived trust.

The MUM Effect - Do Individuals Prefer to Omit Bad News?

A variable that interacts with interpersonal trust is the type of information that a boundary spanner selects.
That is, researchers have found that under conditions of distrust certain kinds of information are more likely to be distorted in a sender-receiver dyad. Research on information distortion has identified what has come to be known as the MUM Effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970). The MUM Effect refers to the reluctance of an individual to convey negative information (i.e., "bad news") to another person. This reluctance may result from either of the following: 1) when the negative information concerns the message-sender, hesitation to communicate it to a superior arises from a desire to protect one's image of organizational competency (O'Reilly, 1978; Read, 1962), or 2) when negative information does not directly concern the message-sender, one is still reluctant to convey such news for fear of the emotional costs, such as a negative reaction from the receiver, that might be projected onto the sender after transmitting the message (Fisher, 1979; Rosen & Tesser, 1970).

The studies that come closest to approximating the conditions under which a boundary spanner operates are those that have focused on the sending of personally unfavorable information to a superior. Both Read (1962) and O'Reilly (1978) found that the MUM Effect is more pronounced when the message-sender distrusts the superior who is to receive the information. Indeed, O'Reilly (1978) found that even important information is suppressed if it is personally unfavorable.
to the sender, while relatively unimportant messages are emphasized if they reflect positively upon the sender. However, little work has been done to determine if a reluctance to communicate negative information of a general nature (i.e., that does not reflect unfavorably on the sender) exists within the confines of a boundary spanner's role. Those studies that have dealt with negative information of a general nature have been either non-organizational in nature (Rosen & Tesser, 1970), in which news of family matters was concerned, or of an organizational nature but from the superior to the subordinate in message directionality (Fisher, 1979).

This issue is important, for if a boundary spanner edits not just personally unfavorable information, but any information that is generally negative, an even greater potential exists for an upper level manager to become isolated from those matters of which s/he most needs to be made aware. If the MUM Effect is discovered in this study, support will be lent to the argument that individuals in organizations may suppress bad news even when their organizational responsibilities dictate that they do just the opposite. Whereas individuals outside of the organization have no precise guidelines to govern their actions when faced with the transmission of negative information, those within organizations often do have an obligation to communi-
cate such information. The existence of the MUM Effect in the communication of generally unfavorable information should be of vital concern to researchers and managers alike.

The hypotheses to be tested in this section incorporate O'Reilly's (1978) definitions for types of information distortion (i.e., sharpening, or the selective retention of certain details in a message, and leveling, or the selective omission of details) and are the following:

H3: Under conditions of perceived distrust more unfavorable-important information will be leveled or suppressed than under conditions of perceived trust.

H4: Under conditions of perceived distrust more favorable-unimportant information will be sharpened than under conditions of perceived trust.

The factors under consideration in this study have consequences that could affect the amount of job satisfaction experienced by workers in organizations (O'Reilly, 1978; Zand, 1972). These relationships are complex, however, different researchers have arrived at different conclusions as to which factor is most important in determining job satisfaction. The final section of this chapter addresses this issue.

Job Satisfaction

The relationship between job satisfaction and communication has been examined from several perspectives.
The first of these correlates job satisfaction with the amount of information distortion. According to a field study by O'Reilly (1978), low job satisfaction was independently related to information distortion and "not an artifact of the sender's lack of trust" (p. 188). This perspective argues that distorting information is unpleasant to the individual and thus results in lower job satisfaction, and that this low satisfaction is not related to the level of trust in the relationship. The following hypothesis will be tested on the basis of the above argument:

H5: As the amount of information distortion increases, a subordinate's job satisfaction will decrease.

A second perspective makes a direct link between job satisfaction and interpersonal trust. Zand (1972) found that executives working in groups to solve a management problem experienced greater satisfaction with the problem-solving effort under conditions of high mutual trust than under conditions of low trust. Under trusting conditions group members were more open in their communications, more committed to the group effort, and less frustrated than were members of untrusting groups. Job satisfaction was similarly affected by low levels of trust in a study by Falcione, Mc Croskey and Daly (1977). Basing their finding on the perceptions of subordinates in an organization, these writers found that job satisfaction was
lower for employees who perceived a low level of trust between themselves and their immediate supervisors. Therefore, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H6: Under conditions of perceived distrust a subordinate's job satisfaction will be lower than under conditions of perceived trust.

Whereas previous studies have measured job satisfaction as a consequence of the sender's level of trust in the receiver, the present study examines how job satisfaction is affected by the sender's perceptions of how trusted s/he is by the message receiver.

Summary

Previous research has demonstrated that message-senders who distrust their message-recipient minimize personally unfavorable information (i.e., information that makes them look bad) and emphasize personally favorable information. The present study is designed to examine what happens when the situation is reversed: does the same kind of information distortion occur when message-senders believe they are distrusted by the message-recipient? Furthermore, will this distortion still occur when the information is generally rather than personally unfavorable (i.e., unpleasant) for the message-recipient? Finally, how will a message-sender's job satisfaction be affected by different levels of perceived trust and information distortion? An organizational simulation focusing on boundary spanning
activity will be employed to examine the communicative behavior of message-senders in such a situation.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

Subjects

The 39 participants in this study were 21 male and 18 female undergraduate students enrolled in communication courses at the University of Delaware. The volunteers were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions, trust or distrust. Equal numbers of males and females were assigned to each condition. On the basis of brief interviews conducted with participants on their assigned days, it was determined that all of the subjects had at least some working experience in formal organizations, ranging from managerial responsibility to temporary summer employment. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 38; the average age was 22.6 years.

Procedure

The participants took part in an organizational simulation in which they were asked to role play the part of marketing employees for a large chemical company. Each subject would have to make decisions on whether to send certain pieces of information to his or her superior. This procedure is based in part on O'Reilly's (1978) research on information distortion.
To obtain volunteers, students were approached in their classes and given a brief "description" of the experiment. They were told that the study was designed to examine decision-making during a "crisis" situation. Each student would be asked to role play the part of an employee for an organization that was involved in a public controversy. As an employee, each volunteer would have to make some decisions based on their reactions to this controversy. No further details were revealed, and the issue of trust was never mentioned. Thus, the likelihood of a participant determining the actual focus of the study (i.e., trust) was minimized. The students were then informed that the experiment would last for approximately forty minutes, and that participation would receive a certain amount of credit toward their grades in class (as determined by their respective teachers). After being told when the experiment would be run, a sign-up sheet was passed around on which the students could indicate the date and time they would like to participate.

On their assigned day, students arrived separately according to the pre-arranged schedule. Each individual was met by the experimenter and shown to a room with a desk and chair; this room was the individual's "office." On the desk was a description of the organization for which the subject "works." This description included a
discussion of a recent controversy surrounding one of
the company's products and an account of the individual's
work history and relationship with his or her superior.
This account was designed to achieve the trust or distrust
manipulation by describing either a trusting or untrusting
relationship with the superior. A sealed packet containing
the information items to be examined by the individual and
directions pertaining to these items was also on the desk.
The company and the individual's work relationship descrip-
tions are shown in Appendices A and B. Appendix A represents
a trusting relationship and Appendix B is a description of an
untrusting relationship. The information items and their
directions are presented in Appendices C and D, respectively.

Once seated at the desk, the participant was given a
brief but standardized explanation of what was to occur
during the session. Each subject was told that s/he was
role playing the part of an employee for the Lansing
Chemical Company, which is currently involved in a contro-
versy surrounding one of its products. The individual was
then directed to the written description containing the
company history, a description of the controversy, and his
or her role and was instructed to read it and ask any ques-
tions that s/he might have. Once it was clear that the
participant understood the situation, s/he was told that the
"boss," who was another experimenter (Note 2), had requested
a meeting with him or her to discuss the situation involving the controversial product, which was called TST (a chemical insecticide). This meeting with the person's superior was also described at the end of the written description that had just been read (see either Appendix A or B). Nothing was said about who the boss was; the participant was just told to go to his office and see what he wanted.

After being directed to the boss's office, the participant knocked on the door and entered to find the "boss" seated at his desk waiting for his or her arrival. Once the participant was seated in a chair across from the boss's desk, the experimenter proceeded to make the following rehearsed speech:

As you probably know, our company is currently involved in a nationwide controversy over its production of TBT, a chemical insecticide. Recent scientific studies have found that popular food fish are carrying TBT in their flesh in concentrations potentially dangerous to consumers in the surrounding areas. Nobody is sure yet how this is happening, but it is, and it's beginning to cause some problems. It seems that word of this situation has spread rapidly, and college students at several campuses have begun to protest our product by staging sit-ins when our company recruiters are holding job interviews on campus. Students and professors are also urging that buyers boycott the company's other consumer products. Picketing has also occurred at several Lansing sites. As you can see, the situation is a potentially explosive one. Unfortunately, I do not have the time to keep track of events. That is why you are here. Your job is to keep me informed on developments concerning this issue. Information should be coming
in from the PR department, and I'm sure our recruiters will have news from the outside as well. Use these and any other sources at your disposal to gather information on this current challenge. I'll expect a daily report from you - this matter is important to me.

If the participant had any questions at this point, the experimenter handled them in a brief and noncommittal manner; he was instructed to be neutral in his actions and comments to avoid giving the impression that he either liked or disliked the participant. This was done so that the participant's perceptions of him would be primarily from the description containing either a trusting or untrusting relationship. The experimenter was not aware of the condition (trust vs. distrust) of individual participants.

At this point the subject returned to his or her office and opened the packet containing the information items and directions. These directions (see Appendix D) instructed the individual to examine the messages, which had already been collected for him by other workers, and indicate how each one should be presented in a report to the boss. For each item the participant was given the choice of expanding upon, searching further, leaving unchanged, summarizing, or omitting it entirely (see "information distortion ranking" below). To insure motivation, the subject was told that there would be another meeting with the boss to discuss his or her report. Once the experimenter was satisfied that the participant understood
the task, he informed him or her that s/he had 20 minutes
to complete the task and left the room.

At the end of the time limit the experimenter
returned and told the participant that the meeting with the
boss had been canceled due to a last-minute schedule change.
Instead, s/he was asked to fill out a post-experimental
questionnaire that was designed to check the manipulation
of perceived trust/distrust in the study. In addition,
questions were included to check on the participant's
loyalty to the company (i.e., to assure the participant
had identified with his or her "employee" role), on his or
her reasons for sending, changing, or omitting certain
messages, and to measure job satisfaction. The questions
on trust, loyalty, and information-sending are shown in
Appendix E while the job satisfaction questionnaire
(reliability = .87 when corrected by Spearman-Brown formula)
is presented in Appendix F (from Brayfield & Rothe, 1951;
in Price, 1972). The participant was then thanked and allowed
to leave. All participants were debriefed in their classes
at a later date.

Coding

Each of the information items used in this study was
pre-coded independently by three judges (Note 3) on the
following two continua: 1) (a) important information -
information that pertained to the controversy surrounding the company's insecticide, (b) unimportant information - information that had little or nothing to do with the controversy surrounding the insecticide; and 2) (a) favorable information - information that reflects positively upon the superior and/or the company's activities (all activities), (b) unfavorable information - information that reflected negatively upon the superior and/or the company's activities.

The judges were supplied with a description of the simulation to give them the background essential for coding the items. From this procedure the following four information categories were obtained: 1) important-favorable, 2) important-unfavorable, 3) unimportant-favorable, and 4) unimportant-unfavorable. From a total of 70 items created by the researcher (Note 4), 24 were chosen (6 in each category) that all three of the judges had agreed upon. These 24 items were then randomly arranged into two different versions so that a check for ordering effects could be done. These two versions were assigned equally in each of the two conditions of trust. Appendix G presents the information items according to category.

Information Distortion Ranking

Using O'Reilly's (1978) ranking of types of information distortion mechanisms, each of the participants was given the following choices for each of the information items:
1) expand upon - you would like to emphasize certain details of the message and/or add your own insight to it, 2) search further - request more information regarding the message; find out more about it, 3) leave unchanged - keep the message as it is, 4) summarize - condense the message to reduce its impact, and 5) omit completely - do not include it in your report to your boss (see AppendixD). From these alternatives, the participant chose the one that best indicated how s/he would present that item in the report to the superior. The ordering ranges from most sharpening to most leveling, which enabled the researcher to compute an index for each participant ranging from a low score (1), representing high sharpening, to a high score (5), representing high leveling. A low score would thus indicate that the participant had sent a relatively great amount of information, while a high score would indicate a relatively small amount of information transmitted by the participant.

Manipulation of the Independent Variable

Trust was manipulated to create two conditions: 1) perceived distrust, in which the subject believed that the superior did not trust him or her, and 2) perceived trust, in which the subject felt the superior did trust him or her. This trust manipulation was achieved in the written description of the subordinate's relationship with the superior that was read by each participant at the beginning.
of the experiment (see Appendices A and B). The tables indicate that either a trusting or untrusting relationship was created through personal anecdotes and events.

**Measurement of the Dependent Variables**

The information distortion index described above follows a Likert scale format, with 1 = most sharpening, 2 = moderate sharpening, 3 = no change in message content, 4 = moderate leveling, and 5 = most leveling. Therefore, the lowest total score a participant could get would be 24 (i.e., a response of 1 for all 24 information items, indicating extreme sharpening); the highest total score for an individual would be 120 (i.e., a response of 5 for each item, indicating extreme leveling). A similar procedure can be followed for the information categories being examined in each hypothesis. For the hypothesis concerning the amount of unfavorable information sent (H2), the scores could range from 12 (a response of 1 for each of the 12 unfavorable information items) to 60 (a response of 5 for each item). Since both the unfavorable-important and favorable-unimportant information categories (i.e., those categories examined in H3 and H4, respectively) each contain 6 information items, index scores for each of these categories would range from 6 (most sharpening) to 30 (most leveling). Thus, by first calculating the individual scores of the participants for each information category, and then calculating the mean
score for each category, the amount of each type of information transmitted can be compared across conditions of trust.

In addition to measuring the amount of information distortion, the present study also examines the message-sender's job satisfaction. This variable was measured by the post-experimental questionnaire, which contained the job satisfaction instrument described earlier in this chapter. Finally, checks on experimental manipulations were performed.

Data Analysis

Analyses of variance were conducted on the information types and on the post-experimental questionnaire to determine differences between the two conditions of perceived trust. Since the experimental design posited differences between two groups, both Chi-square and t-test analyses were employed. In addition, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to test the relationship between information distortion and job satisfaction as discussed in Hypothesis 5.

Summary

The present study examined the communicative behavior of message-sending subordinates who believe they are either trusted or distrusted by their superior. An organizational simulation was employed to approximate the conditions found
in real organizational settings. The participants' decisions in choosing how to send prepared information items to their superior were analyzed and used as a measure of their message-sending behavior. The participants' job satisfaction was measured by a post-experimental questionnaire.
CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS

In this thesis it has been argued that a subordinate's message-sending will be influenced by his or her perception of how trusted s/he is by a superior. In general, it was believed that a subordinate who feels untrusted will tend to minimize the amount of unpleasant information sent and emphasize more generally favorable news. A subordinate who feels trusted, on the other hand, should see no need to protect his or her status and was therefore not expected to exhibit the above biases.

In accordance with this argument, an experimental simulation was designed to test several hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested by subjecting the data to a series of statistical analyses. Since the design of the experiment called for analyzing differences between two groups, t-tests and Chi-square tests were utilized. The results as they relate to each hypothesis are reported below.

Manipulation Check

Each of the volunteers in this experiment completed a post-experimental questionnaire designed to verify the
manipulation of perceived trust. These responses were subjected to both t-test and Chi-square analyses. The results are presented in Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. The t-test results indicate that the manipulation of perceived trust was successful; item M1 ($t=4.45$, $df=37$, $p=.000$) demonstrates that subordinates in the perceived distrust group felt less trusted within their jobs. Item M2 results were also significant; subordinates in the perceived distrust condition demonstrated lower levels of trust in their superior than did subordinates in the perceived trust condition ($t=4.63$, $df=37$, $p=.000$). On item M3, which was included to check on the subordinates' loyalty to their company, no significant difference was obtained. This indicates that the participants succeeded in identifying with their "company employee" roles because they sided with the company on the TBT controversy. Chi-square analysis yielded the same results, indicating that the experimental manipulation was effective. The manipulation check items are also presented in Table 3.3.

Checks were also run to determine if any differences occurred because of the subordinate's sex or due to the ordering of the information items. Regarding sex, on item M3 it was found that females sympathized more with the public on the TBT controversy than did males. Female respondents had a mean score of 2.611 (S.D.=1.335) while males scored a mean of 1.667 with a S.D.=.913 ($t=2.61$
Table 3.1

Results of T-test Analysis of Manipulation Check Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulation Item</th>
<th>(n=19) Distrusted</th>
<th>(n=20) Trusted</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1*</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.976</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>-4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2*</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>-4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.342</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>-1.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a significant difference in means.
Table 3.2
Comparison of Mean Scores on Manipulation Check Items M1 & M2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manipulation Item</th>
<th>Perceived Distrust</th>
<th>Perceived Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = .976</td>
<td>S.D. = .366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S.D. = .831</td>
<td>S.D. = .489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3

Results of Chi-Square Analysis of Manipulation Check Items

M1) *I feel that my boss trusts me to do my job correctly.
    Chi-square=15.129  df=3  Sig.=.0017

M2) *I trust my boss to treat me fairly within our work relationship.
    Chi-square=15.234  df=3  Sig.=.0016

M3) My sympathies lie with: Company _ _ _ _ Public.
    Chi-square=5.046  df=4  Sig.=.283

*Indicates significant result
df=37, p=.013). A check on the ordering of the information items yielded only one significant difference in responses that could be attributed to the ordering itself. This difference occurred for the unfavorable-important information items, in which the mean scores differed by almost two units (15.84 with a S.D.=2.41 vs. 13.95 with a S.D.=2.84; t=2.24, df=37, p=.031). No other significant results were obtained.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 suggested that less total information would be sent by a subordinate who perceived superior distrust than by a subordinate who felt trusted:

H1: Under conditions of perceived distrust less total information will be transmitted to a superior than under conditions of perceived trust.

Table 3.4 demonstrates that this hypothesis was not supported (t=.730, df=37, p=.473). Scores for the total amount of information transmitted could range from 24 to 120 (i.e., a response of 1 for each item to a response of 5 for each item). A smaller score represents more information transmitted; a higher score is indicative of less information transmission. While the mean scores for the two groups indicate a trend in the predicted direction (trust condition $\bar{X}$=72.45, distrust condition $\bar{X}$=75.58), the results do not demonstrate a significant difference in the amount of information transmitted by the two experimental
### Table 3.4

Distrusted Subordinate vs. a Trusted Subordinate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comparison</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distrusted</td>
<td>75.58</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.730</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted</td>
<td>72.45</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
groups. The perception of a superior's distrust is not associated with a decrease in the amount of total message-sending.

The second hypothesis focused upon only unfavorable messages:

H2: Under conditions of perceived distrust less unfavorable information will be transmitted to a superior than under conditions of perceived trust.

This hypothesis examined the difference between subordinates who perceived they were trusted and those who felt distrusted based on the assumption that feeling distrusted would result in a desire to minimize the transmission of unfavorable information to the superior. This argument was not supported (t=.03, df=37, p=.974). The range of possible scores for the transmission of unfavorable items was from 12 to 60. The mean scores for the two groups were nearly identical (35.75 for the perceived trust condition, 35.68 for the perceived distrust condition). There was no significant difference between groups based on the amount of unfavorable information transmitted. These results are presented in Table 3.5.

While Hypothesis 2 made the argument for the suppression of unfavorable messages in general, Hypothesis 3 predicted that even very important information would be leveled by subordinates who felt distrusted if they believed
Table 3.5

T-test Results: Quantity of Different Types of Information Sent by a Distrusted Subordinate vs. a Trusted Subordinate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Info Type</th>
<th>(n=19) Distrusted</th>
<th>(n=20) Trusted</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>35.68</td>
<td>7.181</td>
<td>35.75</td>
<td>5.399</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unfavorable-Important</td>
<td>14.42</td>
<td>3.322</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>2.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable-Unimportant</td>
<td>25.16</td>
<td>6.112</td>
<td>20.90</td>
<td>6.569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
it to be unpleasant (i.e., generally unfavorable) news:

H3: Under conditions of perceived distrust more unfavorable-important information will be leveled or suppressed than under conditions of perceived trust.

Thus it was expected that fewer important messages of an unfavorable nature would be transmitted by subordinates who believed their superior distrusted them. T-tests results presented in Table 3.5 indicate that this hypothesis was not supported (t=.99, df=37, p=.329). There was no significant difference in the amount of unfavorable-important information suppressed by subordinates in either condition of perceived trust.

Since these data should be considered strictly ordinal-level, a Chi-square analysis was also performed on each of the individual unfavorable-important information items to determine if differences between conditions existed in transmitting specific information items. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.6; only those items with significant Chi-square's are shown. Of a possible six items that were in the unfavorable-important category, two were found to yield significant Chi-square values (for item XI, $x^2=9.647, df=4, p=.047$; for item X14, $x^2=10.427, df=4, p=.034$). The frequency distribution of subordinates for each response shows that Hypothesis 3 was not supported. For item XI, a total of 17.9% of the perceived trust group chose either response 4 or 5 as opposed to a total of 12.9%
Table 3.6

Chi-Square Results for Unfavorable-Important Messages:
Trusted vs. Distrusted Subordinates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Pct</th>
<th>Cond</th>
<th>Col Pct</th>
<th>Tot Pct</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Distrust</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
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<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>44.4</td>
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<td>55.6</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>51.3</td>
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</table>

Chi-square=9.647 df=4 Sig.=.047

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row Pct</th>
<th>Cond</th>
<th>Col Pct</th>
<th>Tot Pct</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Distrust</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square=10.427 df=4 Sig.=.034
of the perceived distrust group. Since responses 4 and 5 indicate high leveling of information, the subordinates in the perceived distrust condition would be expected to have a higher number of responses in this range. Similar results were obtained for item X14, with a score of 23.1% for the perceived trust condition vs. a score of 15.4% for the perceived distrust group. These results indicate that subordinates who felt they were trusted by their superior were the ones to minimize the number of unfavorable-important messages they transmitted. This finding is the opposite of what was predicted in Hypothesis 3. The actual information items are presented in Table 3.7.

Hypothesis 4 was based on the assumption that a subordinate who feels distrusted will send more favorable messages, or at least choose to emphasize the more positive aspects of messages:

H4: Under conditions of perceived distrust more favorable-unimportant information will be sharpened than under conditions of perceived trust.

In addition, this bias was predicted to be so strong that even trivial or unimportant information would be communicated if it was considered "good" (i.e., generally favorable) news. Therefore it was expected that a greater number of favorable but unimportant messages would be sent by subordinates in the perceived distrust condition. Analysis by t-test indicated that the data do not support this
Table 3.7
Information Items Presented by Category

Unfavorable-Important

X 1) 29 people were arrested in a protest of TBT staged at Lansing's corporate headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on March 25.

X 7) Newspapers report that a lawsuit will be filed by the parents of Michael Young, a boy who has suffered brain damage as a result, claim the parents, of eating fish containing TBT over a long period of time.

X11) On April 26, students at the University of Florida held a demonstration that protested on-campus recruiting by Lansing and TBT. The crowd became unruly and police resorted to tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

X13) The federal government has initiated an investigation of reports claiming that TBT has been found in fish in a new location, an area in which farmers have not been using the insecticide.

X14) Students at the University of Illinois prevented Lansing interviews from taking place by blocking the entrance to the placement building. They were calling for an end of the production of TBT.

X24) PCT, another of Lansing's insecticides, is now being investigated by the federal government for possible harmful side-effects.

Favorable-Unimportant

X 3) Reports from the sales department indicate that Lansing's new sugar substitute is a success, with supermarkets constantly ordering more to match consumer demand.

X 5) A new job candidate that your boss wanted very badly has accepted a position with Lansing in your department.

X15) A merger largely to the advantage of Lansing has been agreed upon by one of Lansing's competitors. The merger has been desired by Lansing for the past 2 years, and is a huge success for the company.
Lansing's research department has finally gotten the okay from the government to start production of its new birth control pill for men.

Reports from hospitals indicate that Lansing's new pain-killing drug effectively reduces post-operative pain for patients.

The accounting department has okayed your boss's budget for the new fiscal year.

Favorable-Important

"Lansing Company has been a leader in developing hardier strains of food crops, and has contributed substantial sums of money to higher education. Those who protest their production of TBT would do well to look at the whole picture."
- Editorial appearing in the Chicago Tribune.

While some coverage of the TBT issue has been negative, an equal number of articles have been favorable: ...
"The Lansing PR department has handled a delicate situation with the utmost professionalism."
- Forum Magazine.

Lansing received recognition for its contribution to a better society at the annual business and agriculture convention in New York.

"It is quite possible that a majority of college students do support Lansing's right to recruit."
- Newsweek Magazine.

Farmers have mailed letters supporting Lansing and its production of TBT, sighting its crucial role in controlling the potentially destructive pest called the Ring Caterpillar.

Some faculty members at Penn State organized a forum on "TBT and the environment" that was met with standing-room-only crowds. It was conducted in an orderly fashion and both sides were represented in the discussion.
Unfavorable-Unimportant

X 2) Phone calls about the article have been coming in from various newspaper columnists who wish to further question your boss about his statements. In the article, your boss seems to support accusations that Lansing is involved in illegal business dealings.

X 8) Several Lansing employees have received abusive phone calls and letters after their promotion notices were printed in the paper. One was informed that he was to be tried as a "corporate criminal."

X10) Lansing has lost a $100,000 law suit to a former female employee who claimed she was sexually harassed by her boss.

X12) The commercial TV campaign for Lansing's new food additive has been totally ineffective.

X17) A women's group has filed charges of sexual discrimination against Lansing.

X18) At Cornell, 3 potential Ph.D. candidates canceled their interviews with Lansing at the last moment, resulting in Lansing canceling the visit.
argument \((t=2.09, \text{df}=37, p=.043)\). While a significant difference between groups was obtained, an examination of the group mean scores indicated that this difference was the opposite of what was predicted; subordinates in the perceived distrust condition sent/emphasized less favorable-unimportant information than subordinates in the perceived trust condition (distrust condition \(\bar{x}=25.16, \text{S.D.}=6.11\); trust condition \(\bar{x}=20.90, \text{S.D.}=6.57\)). The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3.5.

A Chi-square analysis was also performed on these individual items. The results are presented in Table 3.8. Again, only those items with significant Chi-square's are shown. Of the six items comprising the favorable-unimportant category, two were found to have significant Chi-square values (for item X3, \(\chi^2=9.581, \text{df}=4, p=.048\); for item X21, \(\chi^2=10.325, \text{df}=3, p=.016\)). In both cases the frequency distributions of the responses indicated that, if anything, subordinates who felt distrusted sent fewer favorable-unimportant messages than their counterparts in the perceived trust condition (a response of 5=omitting the message entirely). These results mirror the t-test analysis, that is, participants exhibited behavior that was just the opposite of that predicted in Hypothesis 4. Table 3.7 shows the information items for this category.

Hypothesis 5 was based on the assumption that a subor-
Table 3.8
Chi-Square Results for Favorable-Unimportant Messages: Trusted vs. Distrusted Subordinates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cond</th>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Pct</th>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Pct</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Pct</th>
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<td>Distrust</td>
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<tr>
<td>X3 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>80.0</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>X2 1</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>51.3</td>
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<td>35.0</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square=10.325  df=3  Sig.=.016

Chi-square=9.581  df=4  Sig.=.048
dinate's job satisfaction would be inversely related to the amount of information distortion occurring:

H5: As the amount of information distortion increases, a subordinate's job satisfaction will decrease.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and information distortion. The results of this analysis indicate that a negative relationship did exist between these two variables; the relationship, however, was not significant ($r = .16$, df=39, $p = .16$). While these results may represent a trend in the expected direction, the present study does not support the argument expressed in Hypothesis 5.

The final hypothesis postulated an interaction between perceived distrust on the part of the subordinate and his or her level of job satisfaction:

H6: Under conditions of perceived distrust a subordinate's job satisfaction will be lower than under conditions of perceived trust.

Specifically, this hypothesis suggested that a subordinate who experiences a lack of trust on the job will derive less satisfaction from his or her work. The results of a t-test analysis are presented in Table 3.9. Both overall job satisfaction and individual item measures of job satisfaction were analyzed. A Likert-type scale was used on the job satisfaction instrument, with responses ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Scores could thus range from 18 to 90,
Table 3.9

T-test Results: Overall and Individual Measures of Job Satisfaction for Trusted vs. Distrusted Subordinates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>(n=20) Trusted</th>
<th>(n=19) Distrusted</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>58.00 3.907</td>
<td>58.26 5.097</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 1</td>
<td>3.30 1.081</td>
<td>3.47 1.349</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 2</td>
<td>1.90 .718</td>
<td>2.05 .911</td>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 3</td>
<td>2.55 .686</td>
<td>2.74 1.046</td>
<td>-.66</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 4*</td>
<td>1.60 .503</td>
<td>2.42 1.017</td>
<td>-3.17</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 5</td>
<td>3.80 .768</td>
<td>3.63 1.212</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 6</td>
<td>1.90 .718</td>
<td>2.26 .933</td>
<td>-1.37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 7*</td>
<td>1.60 .503</td>
<td>3.00 1.202</td>
<td>-4.70</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 8*</td>
<td>1.75 .716</td>
<td>2.42 1.071</td>
<td>-2.31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 9*</td>
<td>1.95 .686</td>
<td>2.63 .895</td>
<td>-2.68</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J10</td>
<td>2.00 .918</td>
<td>2.47 1.073</td>
<td>-1.48</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J11*</td>
<td>1.40 .503</td>
<td>1.89 .737</td>
<td>-2.46</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J12*</td>
<td>2.15 .489</td>
<td>2.89 .994</td>
<td>-2.94</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J13*</td>
<td>1.80 .410</td>
<td>2.47 .964</td>
<td>-2.81</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>.010</td>
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<tr>
<td>J14</td>
<td>1.95 .510</td>
<td>2.37 .831</td>
<td>-1.88</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>.069</td>
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<tr>
<td>J15*</td>
<td>2.05 .605</td>
<td>2.79 .713</td>
<td>-3.50</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J16</td>
<td>2.05 1.090</td>
<td>2.37 .895</td>
<td>-.99</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J17*</td>
<td>1.95 .394</td>
<td>2.58 1.020</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J18*</td>
<td>1.30 .470</td>
<td>2.32 1.060</td>
<td>-3.84</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a significant difference in means
with a low score representing high job satisfaction and a high score representing relatively low job satisfaction (Note 5). The results indicate that no differences were found between the two conditions of perceived trust on overall job satisfaction ($t=.18$, $df=37$, $p=.857$). When examined at the individual item level, however, ten of the eighteen measures of job satisfaction yielded significant differences in support of Hypothesis 5. Since a higher score for each measure is indicative of lower job satisfaction, these results lend at least partial support to the argument that perceived distrust is associated with lower job satisfaction.

Chi-square analysis was also performed on these ordinal data. The results are shown in Table 3.10. In all of the cases in which significant Chi-square's were obtained, the frequency distributions demonstrate that the subordinates in the perceived distrust condition gave responses that indicated less satisfaction with their jobs. Of eighteen items, seven yielded significant Chi-square's, and three other items were close to being significant at the $p=.05$ level. These results tend to reinforce the conclusion that at least some degree of dissatisfaction is associated with the belief that one is not trusted.

**Summary**

This study examined the message-sending behavior of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J 4</td>
<td>*I consider my job rather unpleasant.</td>
<td>18.469</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 7</td>
<td>*I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.</td>
<td>6.037</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J11</td>
<td>*I definitely dislike my work.</td>
<td>13.503</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J12</td>
<td>*I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.</td>
<td>9.032</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J13</td>
<td>*Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.</td>
<td>9.704</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J15</td>
<td>*I like my job better than the average worker does.</td>
<td>12.138</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J18</td>
<td>*I am disappointed that I ever took this job.</td>
<td>8.123</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 1</td>
<td>**My job is like a hobby to me.</td>
<td>8.454</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 9</td>
<td>**I am satisfied with my job for the time being.</td>
<td>7.333</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates significant result  
**Indicates near-significant result
subordinates in relationship to the level of trust between them and their superior. It was predicted that subordinates who believed they were distrusted by their superior would send different kinds and amounts of information than would subordinates perceiving a trusting relationship with their superior. The data indicate that:

1) Subordinates who felt distrusted did not differ in the total amount of information sent to a superior when compared to subordinates who felt they were trusted by their superior.

2) There was no difference in the amount of unfavorable information sent by subordinates in either condition of perceived trust. This was true when the unfavorable information was judged to be important or unimportant.

3) Subordinates who felt distrusted sent less favorable-unimportant information than did subordinates who felt trusted by their superior.

4) On an overall measure of job satisfaction there was no difference between trusted and distrusted subordinates, but when specific measures of the overall job satisfaction instrument were analyzed it was discovered that subordinates who felt they were distrusted by their superior were less satisfied with many aspects of their job.
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSION

This research was designed to test five hypotheses about the comparative communicative tendencies of subordinates under different conditions of perceived superior distrust. In this chapter the results reported in Chapter 3 will be interpreted and discussed. In addition, methodological issues will be examined. Finally, some suggestions for future research will be offered. The results will be presented in their entirety first; a more extensive interpretation of the results will follow.

Review of Results of Hypothesis-Testing

A brief summary of the results reported in Chapter 3 will now be given. Hypothesis 1 proposed that:

Under conditions of perceived distrust less total information will be transmitted to a superior than under conditions of perceived trust.

This hypothesis was based on the assumption that subordinates who believed they were distrusted by their superior would try to minimize the amount of unfavorable or unpleasant information they sent. This, in turn, would result in the transmission of less total information. The analysis does not confirm this hypothesis -- the total amount of information
sent did not differ significantly for the two conditions of perceived trust.

Since the above hypothesis was based upon the assumption that less unfavorable information would be transmitted by subordinates who perceived they were distrusted, two additional hypotheses were formulated that dealt specifically with this issue. These were Hypotheses 2 and 3. Hypothesis 2 stated:

Under conditions of perceived distrust less unfavorable information will be transmitted to a superior than under conditions of perceived trust.

The results of this analysis indicate that this is not the case -- subordinates who believed they were distrusted by their superior sent no more or no less unfavorable information than did their trusted counterparts. Apparently the distrusted subordinates did not feel the need to prevent the passage of unpleasant news to their superior.

The above hypothesis does not take into account the factor of message importance. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 suggested that:

Under conditions of perceived distrust more unfavorable-important information will be leveled or suppressed than under conditions of perceived trust.

This hypothesis assumes that even important messages will be suppressed if they are judged to be unfavorable by the message-sending subordinate. As was found for Hypothesis 2, unfavorable
information, even when important, was not leveled any more by distrusted subordinates than by trusted subordinates. Apparently the task itself was of more salient concern than any thought of self-interest.

Suppression of information is just one way in which message distortion can occur. Information can also be distorted by the selective retention or expansion of certain details. Hypothesis 4 suggested that:

Under conditions of perceived distrust more favorable-unimportant information will be sharpened than under conditions of perceived trust.

This hypothesis assumed that subordinates who believed they were distrusted by their superior would not only inhibit unfavorable messages but would also emphasize favorable ones. While there was no reason to expect a difference in the communication of favorable information that was also important (both trusted and distrusted subordinates should desire to transmit this type of information), a difference was anticipated for information that was not so important. If subordinates who felt distrusted are truly more concerned with their image, then it might be expected that they emphasize even trivial messages if they believe that doing so will present a more positive self-image to the superior suspected of distrusting them.

As reported in Chapter 3, the analysis did not support this hypothesis. In fact, the results demonstrated that
the distrusted subordinates sent even less favorable-unimportant information than trusted subordinates. Contrary to the above argument, it would appear that subordinates who believe they are distrusted do not emphasize all favorable information in an attempt to present a more positive image to their superior.

The boundary spanner's degree of job satisfaction was also examined in this study. In Hypothesis 5 it was proposed that the amount of information distortion present in a boundary spanner's role would be negatively related to his or her level of job satisfaction:

As the amount of information distortion increases, a subordinate's job satisfaction will decrease.

A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated to test this relationship; while a negative relationship was found, it was not significant. Therefore, the argument expressed in Hypothesis 5 was not supported in the present study.

It was also argued that a subordinate who believed that s/he was not trusted by a superior would derive less satisfaction from her or his work. This prediction was based on the assumption that a distrusted subordinate would feel compelled to consciously distort more information and would thus experience a greater degree of conflict and stress in carrying out routine duties. This argument was explicitly expressed in Hypothesis 6:
Under conditions of perceived distrust a subordinate's job satisfaction will be lower than under conditions of perceived trust.

Results of an analysis of overall job satisfaction did not support this hypothesis. However, when the individual items of the overall job satisfaction instrument were analyzed separately, the results indicated that subordinates who felt distrusted were less satisfied on ten of the eighteen individual measures. Thus, while there was no significant difference in overall job satisfaction, this analysis does lend at least partial support to the argument expressed in Hypothesis 6.

Overall, the results do not support the original assumptions. Instead of inhibiting unfavorable messages and emphasizing favorable ones, as was predicted, subordinates who believed that their superior distrusted them showed no differences in the amount of unfavorable information they suppressed and actually sent less favorable information than did their trusted counterparts.

Interpretation and Implications
A more general interpretation of the above results will now be given. Emphasis will be on reexamining the rationale for the hypotheses and providing plausible explanations for the results obtained in this experiment.

The literature cited in Chapter 1 on boundary spanning
and information distortion in organizations clearly demonstrated the importance of interpersonal trust as a factor in effective organizational communication. Adams (1976) described how a negotiator's effectiveness can suffer when his or her organization shows signs of distrust. A boundary spanner is also a processor of information, however, and research showed that a higher degree of information distortion occurs when the message-sender distrusts the message-recipient (Cohen, 1958; Mellinger, 1956; O'Reilly, 1978; Read, 1962). Thus, boundary spanning, information distortion, and interpersonal trust were three interrelated concepts that were valuable in describing important aspects of organizational communication.

The focus of the present research was based on examining the above factors and arriving at a different perspective. When a boundary spanner is involved in message-sending to a superior, his or her perceptions of that superior may not be as important as how the boundary spanner thinks the superior feels about him or her. The boundary spanner's perceptions of the superior's feelings toward him or her, especially when considering the issue of trust, may be just as important in determining how and why a boundary spanner transmits information. Whereas previous research concentrated on situations in which a message-sender distrusted a message-recipient, the current study examined what happens when a message-sender believes that the message-recipient does not trust him or her.
The results do not support the original assumptions. The hypotheses were formulated on the basis that the message-sending of a subordinate in the perceived distrust condition would approximate the message-sending behavior of a subordinate who distrusted the message-recipient. This similarity in behavior was predicted because in either situation it was assumed that the motivation for communicating information would be the same (i.e., self-interest). However, as was shown in Chapter 3, the subordinates in this study did not react in the expected manner. Instead of inhibiting unfavorable messages and emphasizing favorable ones, subordinates who believed that their superior distrusted them showed no differences in the amount of unfavorable information they suppressed and actually sent less favorable information than did subordinates who felt they were trusted by their superior.

In the following sections, several factors will be considered in interpreting these results. These will include: 1) the overall reactions and responses of the distrusted subordinates, 2) the overall reactions and responses of the trusted subordinates, 3) the fact that unfavorable information in this study did not directly involve the subordinates themselves, and 4) the issue of job satisfaction. These interpretations are tentative ones, and should be subjected to further research before they are either accepted or rejected.
Reactions and Responses of Distrusted Subordinates

Each of the participants in this study was asked to complete a questionnaire in which an open-ended question was included. This question requested that the individual describe his or her reasons for sending information. From these responses it was possible to obtain further insight into the motivations of the message-senders.

A majority of the responses (approximately 75%) in the perceived distrust condition indicate that the subordinates concentrated primarily on the task requirements when making decisions about sending information. In other words, they sent information on the basis of how pertinent it was to the immediate TBT crisis. These responses typically made no direct mention of the subordinate's relationship with his or her boss. Favorable or unfavorable information was included if it aided the company in dealing with the public's response to the controversy.

Another type of response was frequent enough (4 out of 19 participants, or approximately 20%) to indicate to this researcher a possible trend. Essentially, these subordinates reasoned that they could present a favorable and competent image to their superior if they did the best possible job on the TBT assignment. One subordinate who believed that he was distrusted was worried about leaving out any item of importance, and decided to omit any personal
information that was irrelevant to the TBT issue because "I was not on a close basis with my boss." Another desired to do the best job possible so he and his boss "could become friends." Two others (or approximately 10%) believed that the task was too important to allow personal feelings to interfere with efficient performance. One distrusted subordinate stressed that even though their relationship needed discussing, the assignment made her feel important. She therefore made efficiency her top priority and decided to discuss the relationship at a later time.

These kinds of responses indicate that the subordinates who felt distrusted in this study were actually acting upon the same motivation as those subordinates who distrusted the message-recipient in previous studies -- self-interest. The only difference is that in the present research, the distrusted subordinates decided that the best way to achieve their own goal (that of presenting a more positive image to their boss and improving their relationship) was to perform their assignment without allowing personal biases to interfere. In doing so, they were in effect transmitting the message, "Look, I am capable of doing a good job and am deserving of a more favorable impression from you." By performing well, subordinates who felt distrusted were impressing upon their superior that they are indeed worthy of his or her trust and respect.
Since the other subordinates in the perceived distrust condition did not mention how they felt about their superior, it is not possible to make a definite statement about their motivation. At best, it can be said that they demonstrated the same kind of message-sending behavior as those distrusted subordinates who did indicate a desire to improve relations with their boss. That is, all of the subordinates who believed they were not trusted by their superior responded by performing efficiently and in the best interests of the company.

Manipulation check item M2 demonstrated that another factor must also be considered in interpreting the behavior of the subordinates in the perceived distrust condition. Item M2 ("I trust my boss to treat me fairly within our work relationship") was included to insure that perceived trust, and not the subordinate's trust/distrust in a superior, was being measured in this study. The results for item M2 indicated that the subordinates in the two conditions of perceived trust did differ in how much they trusted their superior. That is, subordinates in the perceived distrust condition actually trusted their superior less than did subordinates in the perceived trust condition. The transactional nature of trust is such that, at least in the present study, subordinates tended to distrust a superior if they perceived that the superior did not trust them. This makes intuitive
sense; if we think that someone does not trust us, we would expect that individual to be less open or honest when interacting with us. This expectation of "dishonest" behavior from the other would tend to influence our perceptions of how trustworthy the untrusting individual really is. The result: a cycle of mutual distrust is created and fostered by events that are perceived by each party as being untrustworthy (Zand, 1972).

The present study, then, may have actually measured the consequences of message-sender trust/distrust rather than examining the effects of perceived trust/distrust. However, the relationship between perceived levels of trust and trust of others that was demonstrated in this study is not unimportant; it lends support to the view that interpersonal trust is a cyclical, transactional process in which our perceptions of how others see us are important in determining our own behavior. In addition, this relationship has important ramifications for managers; the way they are perceived to feel toward their subordinates, even if inaccurate, will affect the message-sending behavior of their subordinates. For those managers who believe that downward communication (i.e., communication from the upper to the lower levels in hierarchy) is unimportant, the above discussion might give reason to reconsider the merit of insuring that subordinates hold accurate impressions of upper level management.
One other response from a subordinate in the perceived distrust condition is of interest. This respondent indicated that:

I was going to expand on some information simply by adding my own opinion. For instance, I was going to mention that the boss's budget has been approved. Although this isn't related to my assignment to find out public info about TBT, it was a way to get closer to the boss. I would have told him that it was a clear sign from upper management that we (he especially) were handling the scandal quite well.

Here is a subordinate who believed that a "closer" relationship with the boss could result from emphasizing a favorable piece of information, even though it might not be very important. This idea should look familiar; it is a direct statement of Hypothesis 3 of this thesis. Although this type of behavior was not demonstrated to a significant extent by subordinates who felt distrusted, this one response may indicate that more research is needed to clarify the relationship between interpersonal trust and message-sending behavior.

Reactions and Responses of Trusted Subordinates

The results indicate that subordinates who believed they were trusted sent more favorable-unimportant information than did the subordinates in the perceived distrust condition. This finding was unexpected because it was assumed that subordinates who felt distrusted would be motivated to send more trivial information if it was good news for his or her superior. Instead, just the opposite occurred; subordinates who
sensed a trusting relationship with their boss sent more trivial but positive messages.

This group's responses to the open-ended question shed some light on this unanticipated finding. Most of the participants indicated that they concentrated on items that centered upon the TBT issue (75% responded in this fashion). Another respondent went further, however, and described a feeling of obligation to report some of the more negative messages because he felt "a friend" would want to keep another friend informed on such matters. This kind of thinking would result in the behavior that was hypothesized in Hypotheses 2 and 3.

The above rationale does not explain, however, why more favorable-unimportant messages were conveyed by the trusted subordinates. The key to understanding this result was found in the responses of four of the twenty trusted subordinates. The general feeling expressed by these respondents was one of wanting to cheer up their boss by including some good news among the more relevant and unpleasant developments. It would thus appear that these subordinates' feelings of friendship moved them to "dilute" the bad news by adding a helping of good news. The trusted subordinates fully realized that the information they were including was not important in terms of the immediate assignment. They sent this information because it was something a friend would want
to do for another friend. The following is a typical example:

Most of the information sent was sent unchanged or pending further research. The unchanged information was mostly simple and factual and highly pertinent to the TBT issue. The exception here was the item about approval for my boss's budget, which I decided to transmit unchanged. I felt that since we have such a good relationship I would like to give him a little boost by bringing him good news.

It is likely that this kind of thinking would help explain why subordinates who felt trusted by their superior sent more favorable-unimportant information than the subordinates who felt distrusted and were worrying about performing well to impress their boss.

The responses from both the trusted and distrusted subordinates give rise to the possibility that trust is more relevant on a social dimension than it is on a task dimension. Small group research (Benne & Sheats, 1948; Burgoon, Heston, and Mc Croskey, 1974; Zand, 1972) has demonstrated that "when a group works on a problem, there are two concerns: one is the problem itself, the second is how the members relate to each other to work on the problem" (Zand, 1972, P. 238). Zand (1972) continues:

Apparently in low-trust groups, interpersonal relationships interfere with and distort perceptions of the problem. Energy and creativity are diverted from finding comprehensive, realistic solutions, and members use the problem as an instrument to minimize their vulnerability. In contrast, in high-trust groups there is less socially generated uncertainty and problems are solved more effectively (p. 238).
In the present study, subordinates who felt distrusted did indeed "use the problem as an instrument to minimize their vulnerability" -- it just so happened that performing more efficiently was the means to reach this end. The situation in this study, then, gave rise to circumstances in which the needs of the distrusted subordinates coincided with the needs of the organization (i.e., efficient performance). This overlapping, however, occurred strictly along a social dimension; that is, the needs coincided not because of the task itself, but because of the relationship between the individuals who worked on the task. It was the efforts by the distrusted subordinates to alter their relationship with their superior that led to more efficient message-sending.

Trust was also socially relevant for subordinates who felt trusted. However, due to a more secure relationship with their superior, trusted subordinates felt no need to "minimize their vulnerability." Instead, these subordinates concentrated at least some of their energy on trying to protect their "friend" from an overload of unpleasant information. The emphasis shifted from the protection of self (as was the case for the subordinates who perceived they were distrusted) to the protection of another. Since this concern for another resulted in the transmission of more trivial (but favorable) messages, the question arises of whether a trusting relationship is actually less conducive to efficient performance.
Of course, this is a matter of degree; it is possible that an occasional supportive gesture would do little to impair overall efficiency. Such behavior may even enhance performance if it results in maintaining an atmosphere of trust and cooperation. Future research might do well to focus on the question of "how much trust?" That is, it seems plausible that a middle ground exists in which the level of trust is such that the advantages gained in organizational effectiveness far outweigh any minor negative side-effects. The problem would then become one of finding the proper "trust level" for a variety of diverse organizational settings. Whatever the case may be, the present study has raised a question which will be answered only by further research.

Unfavorable vs. Unpleasant Information

The type of information acted upon by the subordinates in this study is an important consideration in interpreting the results. Previous research has studied information distortion by assuming that information that has unfavorable connotations for the message-sender would be the most likely to be distorted. For this reason previous studies have used personally unfavorable information as their focus.

Studies of the MUM Effect (Rosen & Tesser, 1970) had indicated that there also exists a hesitance to communicate generally unpleasant information for fear of incurring a negative emotional reaction from the message-recipient.
On the basis of this finding, this study was designed to determine if this MUM Effect occurs in an organizational setting. Whereas Fisher (1979) examined this question by studying the behavior of superiors who communicated unfavorable evaluations to their subordinates, the present study examined the message-sending behavior of subordinates who were communicating generally unfavorable information to their superior. Whereas unfavorable information in previous research implicated the message-sender, the unfavorable information in the present study was actually more like unpleasant news that did not directly involve the message-sender.

In light of this fact, it is possible that the differences between the expected and obtained results in this study arose from the use of unpleasant information instead of personally unfavorable information. The hypotheses were based on findings from research that studied information distortion of personally unfavorable messages. In this study there was no indication of a MUM Effect; generally unfavorable (unpleasant) information was not restricted by the subordinates. If personally unfavorable messages had been included among the information items, it is still possible that the leveling effect described by previous studies would have resulted. Further research may determine that it is only personally unfavorable information that message-senders feel
compelled to inhibit. The results of this study would seem to indicate that unpleasant news, having no direct bearing on the sender, is not significantly leveled.

Job Satisfaction

The final issue relevant to a discussion of the results is that of job satisfaction. The present study was designed to reexamine the relationship between interpersonal trust and job satisfaction. Previous studies had described two different kinds of interactions; O'Reilly (1978) argued for a direct link between information distortion and job satisfaction, while Falcione et al (1977) and Zand (1972) found that a high level of trust was associated with greater job satisfaction. The former view claimed that lower satisfaction was independently related to information distortion and was not an artifact of low trust, while the latter view argued a direct link between the amount of trust in a relationship and the degree of satisfaction derived from it.

The results of the present study are inconclusive. The perspective taken by this researcher on the issue of job satisfaction was that low perceived trust would result in more information distortion, and then either one or the combination of these two factors would lead to decreased satisfaction for the distrusted subordinates. The results, however, indicate that on a measure of overall job satisfaction there was no difference between subordinates who felt
distrusted and subordinates who believed they were trusted. An analysis of individual items, however, found ten of the eighteen measures of job satisfaction to yield significant differences indicative of lower satisfaction for the distrusted subordinates. In addition, while a possible trend in the predicted direction could be argued, there was no significant correlation between information distortion and job satisfaction.

Several factors are important in considering the above findings. First, the fact that subordinates who felt distrusted did not engage in a greater amount of information distortion than their trusted counterparts is significant. The reason this finding is significant is because it removes "information distortion" as a variable in the present study. Any differences in job satisfaction for the trusted and distrusted subordinates would not have resulted from more or less message distortion. Once information distortion is eliminated, the only other variable left is interpersonal trust. Therefore, any difference in job satisfaction in this study would occur because of different levels of trust in the superior-subordinate relationship, and not differing amounts of message distortion. The fact that the negative relationship between information distortion and job satisfaction was not significant tends to lend support to this argument.
Second, the question still exists as to whether the results of the job satisfaction analysis should be considered significant. The overall measure of job satisfaction did not yield a significant result. However, this researcher feels that the results of the analysis of the individual items lend at least partial support to the conclusion that the two groups of subordinates experienced different levels of job satisfaction. More specifically, the results indicate that the distrusted subordinates did indeed experience less satisfaction with their jobs.

If the above argument is accepted, then it becomes obvious that the present study shows a direct relationship between the perception of interpersonal trust and the degree of job satisfaction experienced by a subordinate. Stated explicitly, the results demonstrate that a subordinate derives less satisfaction from a working relationship in which s/he perceives that s/he is not trusted. The importance of this association to an organization's overall operating efficiency is an issue for future research to resolve.

Finally, an examination of the individual job satisfaction items that were significant may provide insight into whether there exist different dimensions of satisfaction that are more relevant to the issue of trust. For ease of comparison, job satisfaction items yielding significant differences are presented in Table 4.1 and those that were not
significant are shown in Table 4.2. The items are organized to make the following interpretation more readily discernible.

Before the major argument is presented, several observations should be discussed. First, except for item J5, the responses to all of the job satisfaction items indicate that the distrusted subordinates experienced less satisfaction. That is, while not all of the measures yielded significant differences, all of them (except J5) did demonstrate a lower degree of satisfaction on the part of subordinates who felt distrusted. This result gives even more justification to the argument that a difference in levels of job satisfaction was evidenced in the current study.

Second, it is possible to "factor out" items J1 and J5 from the general discussion of job satisfaction because of the particular issue they deal with. It is more the exception than the rule when an individual considers his or her job more enjoyable than leisure time, or treats a job like a hobby. The subordinates in the present study were no exception; both trusted and distrusted individuals indicated that their leisure time was more enjoyable than their work. Since no difference would be anticipated between the two groups on this particular aspect of job satisfaction, the above result conforms to expectations and is not essential
Table 4.1

Job Satisfaction Items: Significant Results (Social Factors)

J 8) Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work.
J 13) Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.

J 4) I consider my job rather unpleasant.
J 11) I definitely dislike my work.
J 17) I find real enjoyment in my work.

J 12) I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.
J 15) I like my job better than the average worker does.

J 7) I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.
J 9) I am satisfied with my job for the time being.

J 18) I am disappointed that I ever took this job.
Table 4.2

Job Satisfaction Items: Insignificant Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J 1</td>
<td>My job is like a hobby to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 5</td>
<td>I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 3</td>
<td>It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 10</td>
<td>I feel that my job is no more interesting than others I could get.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 16</td>
<td>My job is pretty uninteresting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 2</td>
<td>My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 6</td>
<td>I am often bored with my job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 14</td>
<td>Each day of work seems like it will never end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to an overall interpretation of the job satisfaction results. These items are not unimportant, but their inclusion in a general discussion of the results would not yield any additional insight.

Once the above considerations are dealt with, the job satisfaction results follow a pattern insofar as those items that measure a "social" aspect of satisfaction yielded significant differences, while those that do not deal with "social" considerations were not significant. This researcher's definition of "social" can best be understood by examining Tables 4.1 and 4.2. The items in each of these tables have been arranged so that those that measure similar aspects of job satisfaction are grouped together. In Table 4.1, J8 and J13 both measure "enthusiasm," which is considered to be a social factor. The remaining items in Table 4.1 are all considered to be "social;" items J4, J11, and J17 measure "job enjoyment," J12 and J15 measure "happiness with work," J7 and J9 indicate general "satisfaction," and J18 measures "level of disappointment" with one's work. These items are social because in this researcher's opinion they are measured factors that were indicative of the kind of relationship that existed between the subordinates and their superior.

The above stance is clearer if the items that were not significant are also considered (Table 4.2). As mentioned previously, items J1 and J5 can be eliminated for
the sake of the present discussion. Items J3, J10, and J16 are concerned with the level of "job interest," while J2, J6, and J14 all deal with "job boredom." These two factors of job satisfaction may be considered to be separate entities, or, if "interest" and "boredom" are thought of as opposites, they could be considered to be extremes of a single continuum. In either case, trusted and distrusted subordinates were not significantly different in their responses to these job satisfaction measures, i.e., they both experienced similar levels of job interest/boredom. The job itself, then, was equally interesting for both groups of subordinates. With this fact established, it becomes clear that dissatisfied subordinates in this study were unhappy with something other than the kind of work they were performing.

As was noted earlier, there are two considerations when people work together on a task: 1) the task itself, and 2) the relationships between the workers (Zand, 1972). The above argument makes it clear that the task itself was not the source of dissatisfaction. Within the confines of the present study, the only other cause of subordinate dissatisfaction is the kind of relationship that existed between themselves and their superior. From this perspective, this researcher believes that the job satisfaction items that did yield significant results are those that measured "social" aspects, i.e., aspects that were indicative of the
superior/subordinate relationship. For example, a worker could be interested in the type of work to be done, but if s/he had an unsatisfactory relationship with his or her boss, a factor like "job enthusiasm" would probably be low for that worker. A similar argument can be made for each of the other "social" elements - if the superior/subordinate relationship is unsatisfying, factors such as "enjoyment," "happiness with work," "satisfaction," and so on will be decreased. This interpretation is congruent with the earlier argument that interpersonal trust is more relevant along a social dimension, and it is social considerations that are more influential in determining the outcome of a particular task. Thus, the results of the analysis of the individual job satisfaction items reemphasize the importance of trust and the impact it has as a social factor on the communicative behavior of individuals in organizations.

Several other factors must be considered in a discussion of the results. The following sections will center around issues concerning research methods and generalizability of findings.

Methodological Issues

Methodological issues of concern in interpreting this research include the questions of validity and generalizability. The discussion of validity will include an assessment of the reliability of my measuring instruments, coding
procedure, manipulation checks, and problems with possible confederate effects. Issues relevant to generalizability will include: the small cell sizes, the representativeness of my subjects, and aspects of this particular study that may limit the generalizability of the findings to other situations.

Validity

One concern in this experiment was whether or not the manipulation of perceived trust was effective. To obtain a valid measure of differences in message-sending, the subordinates had to truly feel the impact of being either trusted or distrusted by their superior. Also important was determining if the volunteers could identify with their roles as employees for a large company. Three questions in the post-experimental questionnaire were designed to measure these effects. Two questions dealt with the issue of trust, and one ascertained degree of company loyalty. As was reported in the results section, the perceived distrust group did indeed feel less trusted than the trusted group. However, this effect was confounded by the results of manipulation check item M2, which demonstrated that subordinates who perceived they were not trusted by their superior tended in return to distrust their superior. Therefore, it is difficult to determine which effect was responsible for the behavior of the participants in this experiment. However, as
was noted earlier in this chapter, these results do illus-
trate the transactional nature of interpersonal trust and
the impact it has on communication. To the extent that this
effect was evident in this study, the manipulation of trust
was effective.

Results of the loyalty question revealed no difference
between the two conditions of trust, with both groups choosing
to side with the company on the TBT issue. This would seem
to demonstrate that the volunteers did identify with their
roles. If they had not, a higher number would have been
expected to react as unbiased individuals and sided with the
public on the issue.

Did these self-measurement procedures validly describe
the participants' motivations? Personal observations made
during this study were generally consistent with the self-
reports of the volunteers. Loyalty to the company was espe-
cially evident; the subordinates were very concerned with
performing their duties correctly, and would ask questions
about the company that might help them to understand the
company's plight. Their open-ended responses also indicated
a large degree of concern for the company's image and well-
being. For example, while other concerns were expressed,
every response indicated that messages were sent to aid the
company in its efforts to deal with the TBT controversy.
This fact demonstrates that the participants did desire to
perform well, and is further evidence of their identification with the company's goals.

Consideration of the trust issue, however, lends itself to a discussion of several matters. At first glance, the results would indicate that the trust manipulation did work. Self-reports made after the simulation correlated with the respondents' respective condition of trust. In addition, it could be assumed that the trust manipulation was effective because some of the open-ended responses explicitly mentioned the kind of relationship that existed with the boss as being influential. However, a possible confederate effect may also have existed in this experiment that could have offset the hoped-for impact of the trust manipulation.

This confederate effect is the fact that the presence of a "flesh-and-blood" boss in this experiment may have had more immediacy for the subordinates than did the written description of how trusted they were. When the volunteers began a simulation trial, they first read a description of their relationship with their superior. In this description they were told whether or not they enjoyed a trusting relationship. After this they were shown to their boss's office, where they sat down and actually had a face-to-face discussion. The immediacy of this situation, in which a direct request for information was made, probably served to overshadow anything that had occurred in the simulation up to that point. What
may have happened was that this meeting took on more
importance for the subordinates than the written descrip-
tion, and therefore the subordinates left their boss con-
centrating primarily on his spoken request for information.
This would explain the kind of response reported earlier in
which a distrusted subordinate decided to postpone a dis-
cussion of their relationship because the boss's request
made her feel important. With no previous contact with
their superior, their first meeting apparently took on a
momentous character that may have heightened the import of
the request. Of course, in a real organization setting, and
over a period of time, the superior-subordinate relationship
would have taken shape over the course of many meetings and
experiences. Since in this experiment these events were
only described on paper, they may have been temporarily for-
gotten once the boss actually stood before them.

The fact that the manipulation checks for trust indi-
cated that it was successful does not necessarily contradict
the above speculation. What may have happened is that after
they had completed the message-sending task, and when they
were questioned about how trusted they felt, they suddenly
recalled the initial description of their role that they had
read at the beginning of the simulation. Seeing the word
"trust" in print again may have triggered a recollection of
their role and how they were supposed to have felt during
the completion of their assignment. If this were so, they would then simply answer the trust questions based on their role descriptions. As explained above, this mental set may not necessarily have been present during the completion of the message-sending exercise.

This confederate effect may not have been present for everyone involved. It is likely that it was not, for there was enough mention of the effect of trust in the open-ended responses to indicate that some subordinates felt its influence. However, on the basis of some of the responses and on some brief discussions held with some of the participants, it is possible that the confederate effect had enough impact on this experiment to preclude significant differences between the conditions.

A final consideration relevant to validity is the kind of coding procedure used to categorize the information items. Ideally, the judges' ideas of what is important or favorable information would coincide with the participants' opinions. It was hoped that obtaining the unanimous agreement of three independent judges on coding the information items would assure this. Examination of the open-ended responses of the subordinates indicated that in many cases this seemed to be true. However, some of the responses demonstrated a difference of opinion on some of the items; an item that was judged to be important was felt to be
relatively trivial by some of the subordinates, etc. For example, several information items contained quotes from certain magazines or other parties, and these kinds of items were judged to be important by the coders. However, several participants indicated in their responses that they did not include these same items because they felt they were relatively unimportant! It is also possible that the notions of "relevance" and "importance" may have become confused during the course of this simulation. For example, information item X21 ("The accounting department has okayed your boss's budget for the fiscal year") may justifiably be considered by a subordinate to be "important" enough to be transmitted to the superior. Within the confines of this study, however, this information item was not considered to be "relevant" (i.e., important with respect to the immediate product controversy). To overcome this problem, two alternatives present themselves: 1) attempt to eliminate the "relevance/importance" factor by obtaining the agreement of a higher number of judges to assure a more reliable coding scheme, or 2) try implementing a self-coding instrument in which the volunteers themselves assess the information items as they work on them. In many cases in the present study the participants indicated how important they felt certain items to be on the post-experimental questionnaire. Since what really matters in this kind of experiment is how the message-sender feels about the information, it may be more valid to
design a measuring instrument that allows the sender to quickly indicate why a particular message was either transmitted or omitted. While this would make data analysis more time-consuming and difficult, it should give a more reliable measure of the reasons behind the message-sending of subordinates. The measurement could be done either during or after the message-sending assignment itself.

In addition to the above considerations, it is also important to evaluate issues concerning generalizability. The following section will deal with several factors that are relevant to this concern.

Generalizability

There are several factors that may bear on the generalizability of the findings. The most obvious of these is the fact that this was a laboratory study, run over a very short period of time. Generalizing the results of any lab research must always be done cautiously because of the artificial nature of the situation. In addition, the number and ages of the participants should be taken into consideration -- there were 39 participants ranging from ages 18 to 38, with an average age of 22.6. These individuals possessed varying amounts of business experience; some had held steady jobs and even had management experience while others had only minimal job experience. However, since these individuals were randomly assigned to conditions for a comparison between
groups it is hoped that these differences did not significantly affect the results. Whether or not these participants' reactions can be said to be representative of how individuals would behave within real organizational settings is problematic.

One other aspect of this research is relevant to the issue of generalizability. The situation encountered by the subordinates in this organizational simulation is a special type -- it involved a crisis in which the company was forced to deal with both good and bad reactions from the public. The subordinates' job in this crisis situation was to gather information that would be beneficial for their superior (and their company) to know. Under these kind of circumstances it is essential that both the positive and negative reactions be dealt with so that the company can display an awareness of and a dedication to the public's welfare. Seen in this light, a negative (unpleasant) piece of information is "positive" and should be sent because it can be used for the good of the company's image. A negative, unpleasant item thus has positive ramifications for the company's defense in the TBT controversy.

There are many other situations, however, in which a negative piece of news would not necessarily have a positive side to it. For example, news of the loss of a client's business would not hold any positive aspects for the receiver of
this information nor for the company. A completely innocent individual caught in this situation might not desire to be the one to have to tell the boss the news. News of a sales campaign that is failing, of a competitor's success, and other similar events of a more routine nature are all examples of unpleasant news devoid of a positive side. It is possible that the particular situation selected for this study has limited the generalizability of the findings to only those situations in which both a negative and a positive value can be associated with unpleasant news. It is possible that the results of another study using a situation similar to those described above would differ from the results obtained in the present research.

Future Research

The current study suggests numerous possibilities for future research. This study could be replicated to determine if the findings remain consistent. A more vigorous but pragmatically possible testing of the hypotheses in this study could be accomplished by setting up a year long study of some existing student organization (a public relations club, for example) and examining a specific exercise that was designed to allow for message-sending by the student employees. Trusting and untrusting relationships that had been established between the students ("subordinates") and their advisor ("superior") during the course of the year could be identified
and observed to measure effects upon the communicative behaviors of the students. An even more ambitious undertaking would be to conduct a field study in a company or some other large organization. O'Reilly (1978) made use of the survey method in his study of trust in a military organization; this method could easily be employed in other types of organizations to assess the impact of trust on tasks requiring message-sending.

Replication of this study is not the only direction for future endeavor suggested by the findings. Instead of using generally unfavorable or unpleasant information, a similar study could be designed in which personally unfavorable information was included; it is possible that the hypotheses formulated in this research would be supported if this were the case. Another type of study could be one in which the negative information was still generally unfavorable (unpleasant) but did not possess any positive ramifications, as did the negative messages in this study.

Several other issues have arisen during the course of this research, as well. The question of job satisfaction and its correlation with distrust is still unresolved. While the present study did not obtain an overall difference in job satisfaction based on trust, there was sufficient evidence to suggest that a lower level of trust is at least partially responsible for decreased job satisfaction. Speci-
fically, the issue of interpersonal trust may be more relevant to individuals on a social level, i.e., when distrust is sensed, individuals will act to alter the relationship. More research is necessary to clarify the relationship between trust and job satisfaction and to determine if specific levels of trust exist which allow for both efficiency and individual satisfaction. While it may not be possible to identify actual "levels," such efforts would add to an understanding of how important trust truly is to employees in organizations.

The relationship between information distortion and job satisfaction is also still unresolved. Results suggest that a negative correlation may exist between these two variables. In the present study, however, this correlation was not significant. More research will be necessary to understand the nature of this relationship; it is possible that information distortion may act as an intervening variable between trust and job satisfaction.

Another unanticipated finding was that female participants empathized more with the public in the TBT controversy than did their male counterparts. This conclusion is based on the responses to the "loyalty" question that was included on the post-experimental questionnaire; while no significant differences were obtained between the two conditions of perceived trust, a significant difference was
obtained based on sex. While this finding could be construed to mean that females were less inclined to identify with their given role (i.e., as an employee for a company), personal observations of the participants during the experiment led this researcher to believe that this possibility is highly unlikely. Female participants were usually quite anxious to act the part of an employee; they took time to carefully read their role descriptions and asked questions in order to better understand how to behave within their roles. Therefore, the results seem to indicate that the female participants felt more loyalty to the public than did the male participants. Future research might do well to include some measure of differences due to sex; it is possible that research on the issue of trust and information distortion may well reinforce previous findings on the greater empathetic ability of women (Alvy, 1973). While the above finding is interesting in its own right, it is noteworthy that no other differences due to sex were observed in the present study. That is, females did not significantly differ from males in their message-sending behavior in this study.

Finally, this research is particularly relevant to the study of boundary spanning in organizations. As Adams (1976) has noted, boundary spanners may often perform their duties at a distance from their organizations. The result of this situation is that boundary spanners must frequently
be concerned with the way their actions are perceived by superiors working within the organization. Thus, when an act that could benefit the organization might appear to be disloyal, a boundary spanner might possibly choose to safeguard his or her good standing by taking a less optimal (but more "loyal") course of action (Adams, 1976). The present study has demonstrated that our metaperspectives (i.e., how we think others see us) can indeed influence communication. "Boundary spanners" in this experiment were seen to send messages on the basis of their perceptions of a superior's attitude toward them. In addition, perceptions of distrust from a superior seem to have resulted in a consequent distrust of that superior. A significant aspect of this process, especially with respect to boundary spanning, is that this potentially dysfunctional situation can result from perceptions that are incorrect. That is, a boundary spanner's perceptions of a superior, or of a superior's attitudes, may often be inaccurate. This likelihood seems increased if boundary spanners frequently operate outside their organizations. Just as an organization's outcomes may be diminished when boundary spanners become more concerned with communicating the "proper impression," an organization's goals may suffer if boundary spanners feel the need to present themselves in a positive light on the basis of inaccurate perceptions of a superior's attitudes. Accurate and timely communication between boundary spanners
and their superiors will thus be essential if such "misunderstandings" are to be avoided.

**Conclusion**

The need to consider the "human" aspects of organizations has been recognized since the time of the Hawthorne studies in 1930 (Koehler, Anatol, & Applbaum, 1976; Roethlisberger & Dick, 1939). This humanistic approach emphasized the importance of social and emotional factors in human motivation, and recognized the central role of communication in organizational effectiveness. The present study focused upon a specialized organizational role that revolves around the need to communicate effectively: the boundary spanner. The results indicate that the perception of interpersonal trust in a superior/subordinate relationship does have some influence on the behavior of a message-sending boundary spanner. Message senders who believe they are trusted by their superior tend to sharpen more favorable messages than message senders who believe they are distrusted, possibly in an attempt to buoy their superior's spirits. This study also suggests that subordinates who perceive they are distrusted may respond with a kind of loyalty display; these subordinates did not seem to level unfavorable information when compared to trusted subordinates. However, this finding will require further substantiation because of its low power estimate (power=.10).
These conclusions are tentative and will require further testing. What does seem clear is that a boundary spanner will attend to aspects of the environment as a function of "their own wants and needs" and "how and in what context they expect that information to be utilized" (Leifer & Delbecq, 1978). As long as this is so, trust will certainly be a factor that will have an impact on the accuracy and effectiveness of communication in organizations.
The boundary spanning function has received considerable attention from researchers in organizational innovation. Their location at the periphery of the organization makes boundary spanners prime candidates for introducing new ideas from the environment. For example, Tushman's study (1977) of an R and D laboratory examined the transmission of information across both external boundaries (environment to organization) and internal boundaries (sub-unit to larger organization). Tushman identified "communication stars" who functioned as key individuals in communicating across these different boundaries, thus reasserting the importance of boundary spanning individuals in maintaining an atmosphere of openness and creativity. For more information on boundary spanning and innovation, see Leifer and Delbecq (1978), Leifer and Huber (1977), Pierce and Delbecq (1976), and Rogers and Rogers (1976).

The "boss" was Bill Gorak, a 24-year old hall director for one of the largest dormitories on the University of Delaware campus. It was felt that his experience at this position, which included supervising a staff of 10 resident assistants and 30 security monitors, made him uniquely qualified for role-playing the part of the superior in this study.

The judges were three students at the University of Delaware: two were graduate students in Communication and one was a senior psychology major. These individuals were believed to be well suited for the task because they each possessed a general background in social science research. At the same time they could react to the items on the same level as the undergraduate participants because they were told no more about the simulation than were the participants. Thus, it was hoped that the judges' rankings would approximate the participants' reactions to the information items.
The 70 information items used in this study were the creation of the author. However, I owe a great debt to S. Prakash Sethi, whose book, *Up Against the Corporate Wall*, gave me the inspiration for the situation used in the simulation.

It should be noted that some of the job satisfaction items were worded in such a way that a response of 1 indicated low satisfaction and a response of 5 indicated high satisfaction. This factor was accounted for during data analysis by creating a computer card that in effect reversed the order, i.e. $1=5$, $2=4$, $3=3$, $4=2$, $5=1$. The consistency of the analysis was thus maintained.
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Company and Role Description: Perceived Trust Condition

The Situation

Lansing Chemical Company is one of the largest chemical companies in the U.S.A., with offices overseas as well as throughout the United States. The company enjoys a fine reputation for its outstanding contributions in the areas of antibiotics, agricultural chemicals, food additives, and other chemical fields. Lansing's image has always been one of promoting the public's welfare.

Recently this image has been threatened by a controversy surrounding one of Lansing's agricultural products, a chemical insecticide known as TBT. This controversy revolves around an incident involving a boy in South Carolina. It seems that the boy became seriously ill after eating a fish caught in a local stream. Testing at the hospital discovered that the fish had contained a high level of TBT, which has been used by farmers in the area for several years. Apparently the chemical has filtered from the fields into the stream and worked its way into the food chain.

The incident, picked up by the press, has received national attention. Certain environmental groups have latched onto the TBT issue and are rallying members in an effort to "combat big business's immoral pursuit of profits while displaying a total lack of concern for the impact its products have on the environment." The issue is a potentially explosive one, with Lansing sitting right on top of the powder keg.

Your Role

You are an employee who works in the marketing department of Lansing Chemical Company. Your boss, who is responsible for the marketing of TBT, is right in the middle of the company's effort to gather information and form a strategy for handling the situation. However, because TBT is not the only product for which your boss is responsible, he will not have the time to concentrate all of his efforts on the TBT issue. Therefore, it will be necessary for him to delegate responsibility to his employees for keeping him up to date on any developments concerning the TBT controversy.

It is important that you understand a little about your relationship with your boss to understand your role more fully. Your work relationship with your boss has never been
better. For as little time as you have been working for him and the company, you feel he places a great amount of trust in you. He's always ready to share his ideas with you, and has taken you into his confidence on many work matters. For example, you were one of the first to know about the split-up of the accounting department into 2 separate divisions. The boss let you know about that change almost as soon as he heard about it. He's always made you feel like an insider as far as trusting you with information goes. In addition, your boss seems to trust you with some of the more difficult assignments that come along. Why else would he give you that last choice assignment when you have less experience than most of the people working for him? He's also not afraid to share his personal feelings with you, and treats you like a human being, not just an employee. You feel that he tells you what you need to know without going into detail and trusts you to get the job done right.

Directions

You are about to have a meeting with your boss. He wishes to discuss the TBT issue with you and tell you what he wants you to do. Your job will be to follow your boss's orders and carry out the assignment to the best of your ability. After the meeting, you will return to your office and find a packet sitting on your desk. Please open this packet and follow the directions on the first page.
Appendix B

Company and Role Description: Perceived Distrust Condition

The Situation

Lansing Chemical Company is one of the largest chemical companies in the U.S.A., with offices overseas as well as throughout the United States. The company enjoys a fine reputation for its outstanding contributions in the areas of antibiotics, agricultural chemicals, food additives, and other chemical fields. Lansing's image has always been one of promoting the public's welfare.

Recently this image has been threatened by a controversy surrounding one of Lansing's agricultural products, a chemical insecticide known as TBT. This controversy revolves around an incident involving a boy in South Carolina. It seems that the boy became seriously ill after eating a fish caught in a local stream. Testing at the hospital discovered that the fish had contained a high level of TBT, which has been used by farmers in the area for several years. Apparently the chemical has filtered from the fields into the stream and worked its way into the food chain.

The incident, picked up by the press, has received national attention. Certain environmental groups have latched onto the TBT issue and are rallying members in an effort to "combat big business's immoral pursuit of profits while displaying a total lack of concern for the impact its products have on the environment." The issue is a potentially explosive one, with Lansing sitting right on top of the powder keg.

Your Role

You are an employee who works in the marketing department of Lansing Chemical Company. Your boss, who is responsible for the marketing of TBT, is right in the middle of the company's effort to gather information and form a strategy for handling the situation. However, because TBT is not the only product for which your boss is responsible, he will not have the time to concentrate all of his effort on the TBT issue. Therefore, it will be necessary for him to delegate responsibility to his employees for keeping him up to date on any developments concerning the TBT controversy.

It is important that you understand a little about your relationship with your boss to understand your role more fully. Your work relationship with your boss has never been as close as you would like it to be. Whereas he seems ready
to open up and share ideas with other employees, he never has really taken you into his confidence about work matters. For example, you were the last one in the department to find out about the split-up of the accounting department into 2 separate divisions. The boss knew about it ahead of time, as did a few insiders that he knows and trusts, but you did not hear about it until it happened. You've always felt, well, like an outsider in the department. Your boss will give you assignments and go through the motions with you, but you've always sensed that he doesn't quite trust you enough to do a job right. Why else would that last choice assignment be given to Stevens, who has 2 years less experience with the company? You'd like to get to know your boss better, but it's hard when he never opens up and tells you his personal feelings about things. He is always very formal and business-like with you. You get the feeling he tells you only what he thinks you need to know to get a job done, so you never get the whole picture about what is going on.

Directions

You are about to have a meeting with your boss. He wishes to discuss the TBT issue with you and tell you what he wants you to do. Your job will be to follow your boss's orders and carry out the assignment to the best of your ability. After the meeting, you will return to your office and find a packet sitting on your desk. Please open this packet and follow the directions on the first page.
Appendix C

Information Items

X1) 29 people were arrested in a protest of TBT staged at Lansing's corporate headquarters in Philadelphia, Pa. on March 25.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X2) Phone calls about the article have been coming in from various newspaper columnists who wish to further question your boss about his statements. In the article, your boss seems to support accusations that Lansing is involved in illegal business dealings.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X3) Reports from the sales department indicate that Lansing's new sugar substitute is a success, with supermarkets constantly ordering more to match consumer demand.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X4) "Lansing Company has been a leader in developing hardier strains of food crops, and has contributed substantial sums of money to higher education. Those who protest their production of TBT would do well to look at the whole picture." - Editorial appearing in the Chicago Tribune

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X5) A new job candidate that your boss wanted very badly has accepted a position with Lansing in your department.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X6) While some coverage of the TBT issue has been negative, an equal number of articles have been favorable: ... "The Lansing PR department has handled a delicate situation with the utmost professionalism." - Forum Magazine

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted
Appendix C (continued)

X7) Newspapers report that a lawsuit will be filed by the parents of Michael Young, a boy who has suffered brain damage as a result, claim the parents, of eating fish containing TBT over a long period of time.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X8) Several Lansing employees have received abusive phone calls and letters after their promotion notices were printed in the paper. One was informed that he was to be tried as a "corporate criminal."

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X9) Lansing received recognition for its contribution to a better society at the annual business and agriculture convention in New York.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X10) Lansing has lost a $100,000 law suit to a former female employee who claimed she was sexually harassed by her boss.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X11) On April 26, students at the University of Florida held a demonstration that protested on-campus recruiting by Lansing and TBT. The crowd became unruly and police resorted to tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X12) The commercial TV campaign for Lansing's new food additive has been totally ineffective.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted

X13) The federal government has initiated an investigation of reports claiming that TBT has been found in fish in a new location, an area in which farmers have not been using the insecticide.

Expanded upon  Searched further  Unchanged  Summarized  Omitted
Appendix C (continued)

X14) Students at the University of Illinois prevented Lansing interviews from taking place by blocking the entrance to the placement building. They were calling for an end of the production of TBT.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X15) A merger largely to the advantage of Lansing has been agreed upon by one of Lansing's competitors. The merger has been desired by Lansing for the past 2 years, and is a huge success for the company.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X16) Lansing's research department has finally gotten the okay from the government to start production of its new birth control pill for men.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X17) A women's group has filed charges of sexual discrimination against Lansing.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X18) At Cornell, 3 potential Ph.D. candidates canceled their interviews with Lansing at the last moment, resulting in Lansing canceling the visit.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X19) "It is quite possible that a majority of college students do support Lansing's right to recruit." - Newsweek Magazine

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X20) Reports from hospitals indicate that Lansing's new pain-killing drug effectively reduces post-operative pain for patients.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted

X21) The accounting department has okayed your boss's budget for the new fiscal year.

Expanded upon Searched further Unchanged Summarized Omitted
Appendix C (continued)

X22) Farmers have mailed letters supporting Lansing and its production of TBT, sighting its crucial role in controlling the potentially destructive pest called the Ring Caterpillar.

X23) Some faculty members at Penn State organized a forum on "TBT and the environment" that was met with standing-room-only crowds. It was conducted in an orderly fashion and both sides were represented in the discussion.

X24) PCT, another of Lansing's insecticides, is now being investigated by the federal government for possible harmful side effects.
Appendix D

Directions for Information Items

Directions

Enclosed in this packet is a set of "information items" that have come to your attention through memos or word-of-mouth. You have collected this information, but you have not really examined each message yet to decide whether or not the boss needs to see it. So, what you must now do is look over these items and decide how you will send them to your boss. Specifically, you must indicate for each item whether it should be:

1) Expanded upon - you would like to emphasize certain details of the message and/or add your own insight to it;

2) Searched further - request more information regarding the message, find out more about it;

3) Unchanged - leave the message as is;

4) Summarized - condense the message to reduce its impact;

5) Omitted completely - do not include it in your report to your boss.

To do this, simply circle one of the five options located beneath each item.

You will have 20 minutes to do this task. At the end of this time, you will place the information items back into the packet and report back to your boss with your results (simply tell him your choices). If you have any questions, please ask the experimenter at this time. If not, get to work!
Appendix E

Questionnaire: Trust, Company Loyalty, and Information-sending

Questionnaire

Please indicate how you feel about each of the following statements by circling the phrase below each statement that best describes your feelings toward it.

1. I feel that my boss trusts me to do my job correctly.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Undecided
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

2. I trust my boss to treat me fairly within our work relationship.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Undecided
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

3. In the TBT controversy, my sympathies lie more with:
   - The company
   - The public

4. Why did you send the information you did, change other information, or omit it? Please answer this as completely as possible.
Appendix F

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire

This blank contains 18 statements about jobs. You are to circle the phrase below each statement which best describes how you feel about your present job (with Lansing Chemical Company). There are no right or wrong answers. We should like your honest opinion on each one of the statements. (SA=strongly agree; A=agree; U=undecided; D=disagree; SD=strongly disagree)

1. My job is like a hobby to me.
   SA A U D SD

2. My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.
   SA A U D SD

3. It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs.
   SA A U D SD

4. I consider my job rather unpleasant.
   SA A U D SD

5. I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.
   SA A U D SD

6. I am often bored with my job.
   SA A U D SD

7. I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job.
   SA A U D SD

8. Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work.
   SA A U D SD

9. I am satisfied with my job for the time being.
   SA A U D SD
Appendix F (continued)

10. I feel that my job is no more interesting than others I could get.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

11. I definitely dislike my work.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

12. I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

13. Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

14. Each day of work seems like it will never end.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

15. I like my job better than the average worker does.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

16. My job is pretty uninteresting.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

17. I find real enjoyment in my work.
    SA  A  U  D  SD

18. I am disappointed that I every took this job.
    SA  A  U  D  SD
Appendix G (continued)

X16) Lansing's research department has finally gotten the okay from the government to start production of its new birth control pill for men.

X20) Reports from hospitals indicate that Lansing's new pain-killing drug effectively reduces post-operative pain for patients.

X21) The accounting department has okayed your boss's budget for the new fiscal year.

Favorable-Important

X4) "Lansing Company has been a leader in developing hardier strains of food crops, and has contributed substantial sums of money to higher education. Those who protest their production of TBT would do well to look at the whole picture." - Editorial appearing in the Chicago Tribune

X6) While some coverage of the TBT issue has been negative, an equal number of articles have been favorable: . . . "The Lansing PR department has handled a delicate situation with the utmost professionalism." - Forum Magazine

X9) Lansing received recognition for its contribution to a better society at the annual business and agriculture convention in New York.

X19) "It is quite possible that a majority of college students do support Lansing's right to recruit." - Newsweek Magazine

X22) Farmers have mailed letters supporting Lansing and its production of TBT, sighting its crucial role in controlling the potentially destructive pest called the Ring Caterpillar.

X23) Some faculty members at Penn State organized a forum on "TBT and the environment" that was met with standing-room-only crowds. It was conducted in an orderly fashion and both sides were represented in the discussion.

Unfavorable-Unimportant

X2) Phone calls about the article have been coming in from various newspaper columnists who wish to further question
your boss about his statements. In the article, your boss seems to support accusations that Lansing is involved in illegal business dealings.

X8) Several Lansing employees have received abusive phone calls and letters after their promotion notices were printed in the paper. One was informed that he was to be tried as a "corporate criminal."

X10) Lansing has lost a $100,000 lawsuit to a former female employee who claimed she was sexually harassed by her boss.

X12) The commercial TV campaign for Lansing's new food additive has been totally ineffective.

X17) A women's group has filed charges of sexual discrimination against Lansing.

X18) At Cornell, 3 potential Ph.D. candidates canceled their interviews with Lansing at the last moment, resulting in Lansing canceling the visit.