

South Dakota State University

# Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange

---

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

---

2021

## Go Talk to Your Employee: A Sequential Mediation Analysis of Leader Communication Frequency and Employee Turnover Intent

Max Weaver

*South Dakota State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/etd>



Part of the [Health and Medical Administration Commons](#), and the [Industrial and Organizational Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Weaver, Max, "Go Talk to Your Employee: A Sequential Mediation Analysis of Leader Communication Frequency and Employee Turnover Intent" (2021). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 5229.  
<https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/etd/5229>

This Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact [michael.biondo@sdstate.edu](mailto:michael.biondo@sdstate.edu).

GO TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYEE: A SEQUENTIAL MEDIATION ANALYSIS OF  
LEADER COMMUNICATION FREQUENCY AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER  
INTENT

BY  
MAX WEAVER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Masters of Science  
Major in Industrial and Organizational Psychology  
South Dakota State University

2021

## THESIS ACCEPTANCE PAGE

Max Weaver

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the master's degree and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree.

Acceptance of this does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Alper Kayaalp  
Advisor

Date

Rebecca Martin  
Department Head

Date

Nicole Lounsbury, PhD  
Director, Graduate School

Date

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
METHOD .....	9
RESULTS .....	12
DISCUSSION.....	13
REFERENCES .....	22

## ABSTRACT

GO TALK TO YOUR EMPLOYEE: A SEQUENTIAL MEDIATION ANALYSIS OF LEADER  
COMMUNICATION FREQUENCY AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENT

MAX WEAVER

2021

Employee turnover has significant negative costs to healthcare organizations. While leadership communication styles and quality have been empirically supported to reduce turnover intentions, our understanding of specific modalities of leader intervention is not well understood. This paper sought to understand how the specific act of communication frequency reduces turnover. Through the lens of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and role dynamic theories, mediating effects of LMX quality and job satisfaction were investigated to further understand this proposed relationship in a sample of healthcare workers in the Midwest/US. Results indicate that communication frequency was negatively related to turnover intent. Furthermore, while LMX and job satisfaction failed to mediate the relationship individually, they did sequentially mediate the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent. These findings provide evidence for the need of investigation into specific leadership practices that enact positive employee attitudes and ultimately reduce turnover intent. As the current Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the need for scalable and effective solutions for retaining staff in healthcare organizations, this study seeks to understand the impact of leaders' communication frequency.

## INTRODUCTION

According to a review of the cost of employee attitudes and turnover of health care workers in the United States, there are approximately 300,000 public health employees distributed among federal (20%), state (30%), and local health departments in the U.S. (50%) (Leider, Harper, Shon, Sellers & Castrucci, 2016). Not only did the authors point out the large representation of health care workers in U.S. society, but they described that the cost to replace an employee ranges between 50% to 200% of one's salary. Due to these costly effects, organizations and researchers have attempted to understand the causes of health care churn, especially that of the nursing workforce. The importance of the staffing, well-being, and retention of nurses has especially increased during a global crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. One of the most popular lines of research within the empirical investigation of turnover: the effect that leaders have.

The importance of leadership communication has been shown both theoretically and empirically (e.g. Jian & Dalisay, 2015; Nei, Snyder, & Litwiller, 2015; Yang, Kuria & Gu, 2020), however, there still lies the question of what specific leader communication practices elicit positive outcomes. Recent research on leadership communication has focused on the style and quality in how a leader communicates with their employee (e.g. De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld, 2010; Jian & Dalisay, 2014; Jian, Shi & Dalisay, 2015). However, some researchers argue that more attention should be given to "routine" work conversations due to their "real-world" application (e.g., Jian & Dalisay, 2015; Macik-Frey, Quick & Nelson, 2007). Said differently, further investigation must be directed towards how leaders can promote effective communication, and routine conversations could be a crucial mechanism in that sense.

Routine work conversations are especially important to investigate in the nursing workforce where time constraints are common and wasted time can be especially costly (e.g. Hemsley, Balandin, Worrall, 2012; Goldsby, Goldsby, Neck & Neck, 2020). These time constraints make it difficult for the nursing leaders to schedule and/or engage in conversation. This raises the question of whether an organization would be wise to invest in the increase in routine conversation. Relevant to this study, the routine conversation is defined more narrowly as short (~10 minute) daily conversations in the context of an organization-wide leader rounding initiative. Leader rounding is defined as scheduled and structured visits from management whereby leaders try to gain actionable information (Baker, 2010). Implemented at over 400 healthcare organizations nationwide by the Studer Group alone, not to mention others (e.g., Press Ganey, Gallup, etc.), rounding is cited as one of the most popular leadership interventions in the healthcare industry (e.g., Studer Group; Hotko, 2020). The implementation of leader rounding is costly, and to my knowledge, there has been no empirical investigation on the effect rounding has on employee turnover. This paper will be of the first to quantitatively assess if leader rounding has a direct effect on employee turnover, conceptualizing rounds as communication frequency in the form of routine conversations.

As such, answering calls of previous research to understand specific mechanisms that foster effective leader communication, namely routine conversations in the form of communication frequency (e.g., Macik-Frey, Quick & Nelson, 2007; Jian & Dalisay, 2015), the goal of this study is to develop a direct path from communication frequency to turnover intent. Drawing on leader-member exchange and role dynamics theories, this paper proposes a sequential model whereby leader communication frequency increases

Leader Member Exchange (LMX) quality, resulting in increased job satisfaction and ultimately, decreased turnover intent. As the current Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the need for scalable and effective solutions for retaining nursing staff, this study seeks to understand the impact of leaders' communication frequency.

### Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

#### Leader Communication Frequency and Turnover Intent

To understand employee attitudes and behaviors, it is crucial to understand communication within the organization as well as interpersonal relationships. Specifically, communication is the primary method for employees to process information, reduce ambiguity, and coordinate their actions (Johnson & LaMontagne, 1993) resulting in increased job satisfaction (Tushman, 1979). The mechanism of communication is multi-faceted, whereby the construct can be examined along several dimensions. Krone, Jablin, and Putnam (1987) defined four mechanistic characteristics: frequency of contact, the mode of which communication is delivered, the content of the message, and the direction of which communication is delivered. Of particular importance in a time-restricted and hectic environment, such as health care, communication frequency is especially relevant.

Communication frequency is conceptualized as the amount of contact between organizational members (Farace, Monge & Russell, 1977). An organization interested in demonstrating its investment in the productivity and well-being of its workforce is obligated to ensure that communication occurs as needed, demonstrating a meaningful organizational norm. Downstream of this norm, is a path towards appreciation and satisfaction with communication practice for the workforce as it increases communication



flows from the top to the bottom of the organization (Mohr & Sohi, 1995), which also relates to decreased turnover intent (Mustamil, Yazdi, Syeh & Ali, 2014). In the context of this study, the norms of organizational flows were directly influenced and increased by leader rounding.

Communication frequency, and resulting communication satisfaction, are especially critical for the supervisor-follower relationship as it is the link between the follower and the organization and allows the supervisor to influence the follower (Johlke & Duhan, 2000). In essence, leaders are the most meaningful conveyers of information and have the greatest ability to directly influence the employees' immediate work environment. This is especially true for nurses as their main duty is treating patients, making them less available for other methods of communication (e.g. email, skype, etc.). Research in the past, as summarized by Jablin (1987), has suggested the influence of communication frequency on turnover intent; however, recent research has neglected this mode of understanding communication in lieu of understanding transformational practices (e.g. supportive communication, transformational leadership behaviors, etc.). While the quality of leader communication is important, there is still a gap and long-neglected clear understanding of how specific leader practices, such as communication frequency, impact employee turnover. In the context of organizations investing in the practice of increasing leader-follower communication frequency, and the evidence of the communication frequency-satisfaction link, it follows that communication frequency is associated with decreased turnover intent. Hence, I predict the following:

**Hypothesis 1:** Communication frequency is negatively related to turnover intent.

### **The Mediating Role of LMX quality**

Whereas typical transformational leadership practices emphasize behaviors that inspire and motivate the follower, leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships are characterized by the reciprocal benefits that the leader and follower gain from the relationship. Benefits gained by the follower include decreased role conflict, increased role clarity, and increased member competence (Gerstner & Day, 1997). This dyadic nature necessitates the exchange of relevant and useful information (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock, 2011) emphasizing mutual learning, accommodation, and information sharing even for employees of different needs and specifications (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). When considering communication frequency, high-LMX relationships are especially important as low-LMX relationships will be ineffective in effectively transferring information. This is because relationships necessitate communication, which is to say that high-LMX relationships are impossible to foster without it.

High LMX relationships are crucial in technical and team-oriented fields such as nursing where the goals of nurses and nursing leaders are shared on a department level, meaning one cannot succeed without the other. When the leader frequently communicates with the follower, they gain the ability to deconstruct what their job duties are while ensuring employee and team productivity and well-being. Gajendran & Joshi (2012) have recently shown that high-LMX relationships paired with frequent communication fosters greater member influence on team decisions. It follows that nurses require frequent input from their leaders to maximize the impact that they have on their team, resulting in better employee outcomes (e.g. job satisfaction, intent to stay, etc.).

High LMX relationships have been shown to negatively relate to turnover intent (e.g. Harris, Wheeler & Kacmar, 2009; Harris, Harris & Brouer, 2009). This is largely due to the benefits that the follower gains from the relationship. Specifically, along with emotional rewards (e.g. recognition), employees in high-LMX relationships reap positive tangible rewards such as increased wages and professional development opportunities (Ballinger, Lehman & Schoorman, 2010). It could be that the extent to which leader communication frequency influencing an employee's intent to leave is manifested by the positive benefits gained from high-LMX relationships. Thus, I make the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2:** LMX quality mediates the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent.

### **The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction**

Leader communication plays a crucial role in employees' level of job satisfaction. Recent research has been directed towards understanding how the nature and style of leader communication (e.g. motivating language; Refozar, Buenviaje, Perez, Manongsong, & Laguardo, 2017) influences job satisfaction. Much of the relationship between leader communication and job satisfaction has to do with the role leaders play in reducing an employee's job stress. Specifically, leaders are responsible for clarifying job roles to ensure employees know how to do their job. Role Dynamics Theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964) labels the stress that can arise from failure to do this as role conflict: the level of assignment confusion and/or inconsistent/competing expectations perceived by the employee (Jian & Dalisay, 2015). When employees hear conflicting information from different sources, much of the "final say" comes from the

authority that their direct manager possesses. Said differently, direct managers are the most important “voice” an employee has toward understanding what is expected of them, which ultimately dictates their satisfaction with the job. Without frequent clarification of what is expected of them from their leader, employees are unable to use the information required to do their job.

The satisfaction derived from leader communication is especially important when considering the flow of information from the top to the bottom of the organization. Communication given from executive management to lower levels can lose nuance and understanding as information trickles down. If an organization does not foster a norm of frequent communication between leader and follower, then any message the organization attempts to convey will sequentially lose meaning (Jian & Dalisay, 2015) and increase the dissatisfaction one has in how that information will contribute to their work environment. For example, if a nursing leader does not follow up on a new procedure/protocol aligned with a strategic initiative such as wearing masks during a Covid-19 pandemic, the nurse will be unclear on what is expected of them, resulting in decreased job satisfaction.

Along with being a goal in its own right, job satisfaction is often seen as a predictor of important bottom-line goals of an organization. Recent studies have found that job satisfaction fully mediates multiple aspects of one’s job (e.g. work-family conflict, task significance/importance, leadership, etc.) and intent to leave (Wang & Yi, 2011; Feng, Su, Yang, Xia & Su, 2017). While there may indeed be a large effect of communication frequency on role conflict, it could also be the downstream effect of increased job satisfaction that has the largest impact on an employee’s intent to stay.

More specifically, leaders that communicate frequently increase the quality of their followers' jobs by clarifying competing information, increasing job satisfaction, and decreasing turnover intent. The above arguments give rise to the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 3:** Job Satisfaction mediates the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent.

### **Sequential Mediation of LMX and Job Satisfaction: A multiple mediation model**

Clearly, leader communication frequency is important in understanding employee attitudes. The frequency of leader-follower communication can enhance communication quality and satisfaction, resulting in higher quality relationships. It can also decrease the level of role conflict, resulting in increased satisfaction with one's job and subsequent increased intent to stay. This raises the question as to whether there is a cumulative effect of high-quality leader relationships and job satisfaction when examining the communication frequency – intent to stay relationship.

The cumulative effect of LMX and job satisfaction builds upon the notion of clarifying expectations to followers. While an employee may at one point be clear in what their role entails, there is inevitably going to be new information from outside their team or even information that trickles down from the top of the organization that changes the employee's work environment. High-LMX relationships emphasize the sharing of information that clarifies expectations within an employee's role as well as allowing the employee opportunities to inform the leader of how best to maintain this responsibility. It is not just that organizations should ensure frequent leader communication to ensure

positive influence and information sharing, but that the leader and follower are both benefiting from the sharing of information in clarifying expectations. The clarifying of expectations is crucial in facilitating a high level of job satisfaction (Zhang, Kaiser, Nie & Sousa-Poza, 2019), and may be the explanation for why some employees are less likely to leave.

Recent research has found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between LMX and Turnover Intent (e.g.; Bhatti, Islam, Mirza, & Ali, 2015 ; Wang & Yi 2011). It follows that communication frequency would only decrease turnover intent to the extent that high-quality relationships increase job satisfaction. A sequential model will be tested whereby LMX and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent. (Figure 1). This model will provide vast economic value to healthcare organizations in understanding effective and scalable initiatives to ensure the satisfaction and retention of its nursing staff. During a crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic, such initiatives are especially crucial. As such, the following hypothesis is posited:

**Hypothesis 4:** LMX and job satisfaction sequentially mediate the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

This study was conducted in a large, non-profit, Midwestern healthcare organization that operates an extensive network of facilities, including regional hospitals, primary care clinics, nursing homes, hospices, urgent care clinics, and home health offices. Employees surveyed for this study were nurses in two different hospitals within

the organization. An e-mail from the human resources division invited the nurses to participate by clicking on a link to an online survey, which resulted in usable responses from 159 individuals (response rate: 49%). Of these, 93% were female and 7% were male, with an average tenure of 10.6 years and age of 38.3. All recipients were informed that this will be a survey to assess employee perceptions and that all data will be anonymous, taking approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. This methodology was chosen to assess the effect of leader rounding, which has been implemented in the organization as an intervention for staff retention and patient satisfaction/safety for 1 year.. As noted earlier, leader rounding is defined as scheduled and structured visits from management whereby leaders try to gain actionable information (Baker, 2010).

## **Measures**

### *Communication Frequency*

Participants were asked to rate the frequency in which their supervisor rounded with them over the past three months. This item was taken and modified from McAllister's (1995) four-item instrument in which employees answer how many times their supervisor speaks with them whilst in the context of a leader rounding initiative: "Over the past 3 months, on average, my leader rounded with me (fill in the blank) times per week." Higher scores indicate perceptions of a higher frequency of communication.

### *LMX Quality*

LMX quality was assessed via the LMX-7 scale (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982), comprising 7 items. Example items include, "Do you know where you stand with your leader, and do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?" and "How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?" All items were

measured on a 7-point scale. Example responses range from 1 ("*Rarely*") to 7 ("*Very often*") and 1 ("*Not a bit*") to 7 ("*A great deal*") respectively. In line with previous research (e.g. Gersner & Day, 1997; Brunetto, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock, 2011), an overall score was computed by averaging across the seven items where a higher score indicates a higher LMX quality. See the complete measure in Appendix A. Reliability for this scale was 0.91.

### *Job Satisfaction*

Job satisfaction was measured via McNichols, Stahl, and Manley's (1978) four-item job satisfaction derived from Hoppock's (1935) pivotal paper. Example items include, "Which one of the following shows *how much of the time* you feel satisfied with your job?" and "Which *one* of the following best tells how you feel about changing your job?" All items will be measured on a 7-point scale. Example responses range from 1 ("*Never*") to 7 ("*All the time*") and 1 ("*I hate it*") and 7 ("*I love it*") respectively. An overall score was computed by averaging across the four items where a higher score indicates a higher level of job satisfaction. See the complete measure in Appendix A. Reliability score for this scale was 0.79.

### *Turnover Intent*

Turnover intent was measured via Nissly, Mor Barak, & Levin's (2005) three-item scale. Example items include "In the next few years I intend to leave this organization," and "I occasionally think about leaving this organization." All items were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 ("*Strongly disagree*") to 7 ("*Strongly agree*"). An overall score was computed by averaging across the three items where a higher score indicates a higher



level of turnover intent. See the complete measure in Appendix A. Reliability for this scale was 0.8.

### *Control variables*

The most recent studies of nursing turnover found age and tenure to be relevant demographic variables in understanding turnover (e.g., McVicar, 2003; Gilmartin, 2013; Nei, Snyder, & Litwiller, 2015). As such, these demographic characteristics were included as possible control variables in the current study.

## **RESULTS**

Descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables are presented in Table

1. Consistent with previous research, Hypothesis 1, that communication frequency negatively relates to turnover intent, was supported ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that a high level of communication frequency is associated with lower levels of turnover intent. Hypothesis 2-4 were tested with model 4 and 6 of the PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013). According to Hayes (2013), these analyses will reveal direct effects, indirect effects, and bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) for indirect effects. An effect is significant when the 95% CI does not include zero. All indirect effects can be found in Table 2. Hypothesis 2, that LMX mediates the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent, was not supported ( $\beta = -0.03$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI[-.12, 0.06]) as the difference between the lower and upper bound of the 95% confidence interval crossed zero for the indirect effect. Hypothesis 3, that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent, was not supported ( $\beta = -0.02$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95% CI[-.07, 0.04]) as the difference between the lower and upper bound of the 95% confidence interval crossed 0 for the indirect effect,

implying that mediation does not occur. Finally, Hypothesis 4, that LMX and job satisfaction sequentially mediate the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent was supported ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95% CI[-.14, -.02]). This model accounted for 54.5% of the variance in turnover intent.

## DISCUSSION

While recent research has focused on the quality and style of leader communication, few studies have examined specific practices that leaders engage in to influence employee attitudes. This study was the first to investigate how leader communication frequency (in the context of leader rounding) decreases turnover intent through the lens of LMX and role dynamic theories. Furthermore, the negative financial and societal well-being in the time of a global pandemic (e.g. Covid-19) highlights the need to understand how organizations can decrease nursing turnover. Specifically, this study sought to understand how communication frequency relates to turnover intent and how LMX and job satisfaction explain that relationship.

Consistent with hypothesis 1, I found that communication frequency was negatively related to turnover intent. It could be that employees appreciated when their leader communicated more frequently. This appreciation inherently leads to increased communication satisfaction and ultimately, increased ability to perform their job to the best of their ability. While communication from executives is important, it is ultimately the direct leader that substantiates cultural norms from the top of the organization. This is especially important during a time such as the Covid-19 pandemic, as healthcare workers are constantly seeing the news, often hearing conflicting information that is ever-changing. Leaders that communicate frequently can have a large effect on how

information is disseminated, resulting in increased satisfaction with communication and decreased turnover intent.

Examining mediating effects allows us to better understand the true relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent. The first mediator investigated was the extent to which LMX quality explains the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent. This effect was not supported. While LMX is developed through the sharing of mutually beneficial information, it could be those additional aspects of how an employee views their leader is relevant. Specifically, transformational aspects of leadership style may be particularly relevant in substantiating a high-LMX relationship. Further research should investigate other leadership constructs (e.g. transformational, authentic, supportive, etc.) in conjunction with communication frequency, LMX, and turnover intent. It could be that other leadership constructs (e.g. transformational, authentic leadership, etc.) moderate the relationship between communication frequency, LMX, and turnover intent or even explain more of the variance than LMX itself.

Contrary to my expectations, job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between communication frequency and turnover intent. There may be more to understanding how the subsequent decrease in role conflict from communication frequency decreases turnover intent. Specifically, in a time where communication is crucial to understanding how to perform one's job in a time of high stress (e.g. Covid 19), it follows that role clarity is actually decreasing work-stressor related constructs (e.g. burnout, work-life balance, etc.). Future research should examine such constructs as possible mediating mechanisms.

While LMX and job satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between communication and turnover intent individually, there was support for a sequential indirect effect. The specific scope of the development of high-LMX relationships and resulting job satisfaction appears to be crucial in comparison to examining the constructs by themselves. Specifically, leaders that communicate frequently may increase high-LMX relationships, but the context of those LMX relationships may be more focused on social aspects of a person's job rather than role-conflict issues. Furthermore, while communicating frequently may increase the satisfaction with communication and subsequent job satisfaction, without an effective leader-follower relationship (i.e. LMX) the communication may not be specific enough to the shared team-related environment in being able to speak to an employee's immediate work environment.

Although the current study sheds light on the mediating mechanisms through which communication frequency decreases turnover intent, there are several limitations. First, this study was conducted in the midst of a global pandemic. While these circumstances allowed for a unique insight into the healthcare industry, it could be that the results are not as generalizable when such a crisis is not happening. Future studies should attempt to replicate this study when the healthcare environment has stabilized. Second, this study utilized a cross-sectional design. This is problematic when trying to understand how communication frequency directly influences high-LMX relationship rather than just how they relate to one another. Measuring LMX quality in a series of data collections would help solidify these findings. Lastly, the measurement of communication frequency was done via a single item measure, which could have

narrowed the scope of what communication frequency is. Future studies should use more robust measures to further investigate this model.

Despite these limitations, my findings have important implications for healthcare organizations. First, frequent leader communication does decrease levels of turnover intent. When time is a limited resource, organizations must prioritize efforts designed to retain staff. This can lead to simple things like frequent routine conversations being overlooked despite the large economic benefit these practices can have to an organization's bottom line. Second, it is important that leaders share and reiterate information that accurately reflects the goals of the organization. Employees hear information from many different sources, but it is ultimately the direct leader that has the "final say" in what is expected of them. Lastly, the information that comes directly from leaders can go a long way in reducing the conflict and subsequent stress from different information sources. This can increase the level of satisfaction with one's job. Said differently, organizations should make it a point that leader communication is practiced in a way that relevant information be communicated frequently between leader and follower, even when some might feel it "goes without saying".

### **Conclusion**

This study was the first to investigate a specific leader practice in understanding employee attitudes and subsequent turnover intent. Specifically, that leader communication frequency is negatively related to turnover intent. Furthermore, the findings highlight that this relationship can be sequential in nature, where mediating mechanisms like LMX and job satisfaction indirectly explain the phenomenon. Organizations looking to promote high-quality leader relationships and ensure that their

staff are satisfied should promote frequent routine conversations. In the context of this study, routine leader communication was influenced by an organization-wide rounding initiative, which appeared to have a direct relationship on turnover intent. While this may seem like a simple practice in the context of transformational leadership theories that dominate the literature, the allocation of time and resources into ensuring this happens can have positive effects on the retention of an organization's staff.

## Appendix A: List of Measures

### **Communication Frequency (derived from McAllister's (1995))**

1. On average, how many times did your Director/Manager round with you, per week, over the past 3 months.

### **LMX (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982)**

1. How well does your leader understand your job problems and needs?
2. How well does your leader recognize your potential?
3. Regardless of how much formal authority your leader has built into his or her position, what are the chances that your leader would use his or her power to help you solve problems in your work?
4. Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader has, what are the chances that he or she would "bail you out" at his or her expense?
5. Do you know where you stand with your leader and do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?
6. I have enough confidence in my leader that I would defend and justify his or her decision if he or she were not present to do so.
7. How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader?

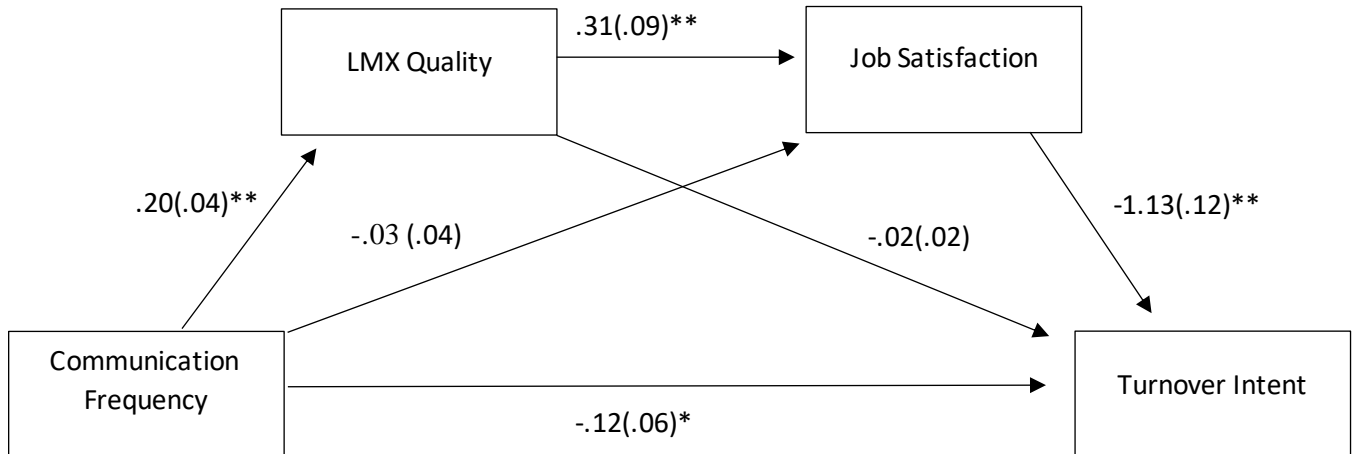
### **Job Satisfaction (McNichols, Stahl and Manley's, 1978)**

1. Which one of the following shows how much of the time you feel satisfied with your job?
2. Choose one of the following statements which best tells how well you like your job.
3. Which one of the following best tells how you feel about changing your job?
4. Which one of the following shows how you think you compare with other people?

### **Turnover Intent (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991)**

1. How likely is it that you will look for a job outside of this organization during the next year?
2. How often do you think about quitting your job at this organization?
3. If it were possible, how much would you like to get a new job?

## Appendix B: Figures and Tables

**Figure 1. Theoretical Model**

*Note. The multiple mediation model. The link between communication frequency and turnover intent is mediated by LMX quality and job satisfaction. Path values are the path coefficients (standard errors).*



**Table 1.** Correlations among variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Age	38.27	12.3	1					
2 Tenure	10.6	9.93	.73**	1				
3 Com. Frequency	2.87	2.24	0	0.04	1			
4 LMX quality	3.13	1.07	0.12	.58*	.58**	1		
5 Job Satisfaction	5.09	1.05	0.1	0.28	.28**	.47**	1	
6 Turnover Intent	3.08	1.57	-0.15	-.19*	-.27**	-.44**	-0.60**	1

*Note.*  $N = 159$ . \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$

**Table 2.** Indirect effects of job satisfaction and LMX on the communication frequency turnover intent relationship.

<b>Mediation</b>	<b>Indirect (a x b)</b>		<b>Lower CI</b>	<b>Upper</b>	<b>n</b>
CF → JS → TI	-.03	(.03 x -1.13**)	-.11	.04	159
CF → LMX → TI	-.02	(.20** x -.09)	-.06	.03	159
CF → LMX → JS →	-.07*	(.20** x .31** x -	-.12	-.02	159

*Note.* CF is communication frequency, JS is job satisfaction, LMX is leader-member exchange, and TI is turnover intent. All coefficients reported are unstandardized. Tenure and age were used as covariates. Bootstrap CI (Confidence Intervals) of 95% were based on a sample size of 5,000; \*indicates significance at  $p < .01$ ; and \*\* indicates significance at  $p < .05$ .

## REFERENCES

- Baker, S. J. (2010). Rounding for outcomes: an evidence-based tool to improve nurse retention, patient safety, and quality of care. *Journal of Emergency Nursing, 36*(2), 162-164.
- Ballinger, G. A., Lehman, D. W., & Schoorman, F. D. (2010). Leader-member exchange and turnover before and after succession events. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 113*(1), 25-36.
- Bhatti, G. A., Islam, T., Mirza, H., & Ali, F. H. (2015). The relationships between LMX, job satisfaction and turnover intention. *Science International, 27*(2), 118-127.
- Brunetto, Y., Farr-Wharton, R., & Shacklock, K. (2011). Supervisor-nurse relationships, teamwork, role ambiguity and well-being: public versus private sector nurses. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 49*(2), 143-164.
- De Simone, S., Planta, A., & Cicotto, G. (2018). The role of job satisfaction, work engagement, self-efficacy and agentic capacities on nurses' turnover intention and patient satisfaction. *Applied Nursing Research, 39*, 130-140.
- De Vries, R. E., Bakker-Pieper, A., & Oostenveld, W. (2010). Leadership = communication? the relations of leaders' communication styles with leadership styles, knowledge sharing and leadership outcomes. *Journal of business and psychology, 25*(3), 367-380.
- Farace, R. V., Monge, P. R., & Russell, H. M. (1977). *Communicating and organizing* (Vol. 1077). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

- Feng, D., Su, S., Yang, Y., Xia, J., & Su, Y. (2017). Job satisfaction mediates subjective social status and turnover intention among Chinese nurses. *Nursing & health sciences, 19*(3), 388-392.
- Gajendran, R. S., & Joshi, A. (2012). Innovation in globally distributed teams: the role of LMX, communication frequency, and member influence on team decisions. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 97*(6), 1252.
- Gerstner, C. R., & Day, D. V. (1997). Meta-Analytic review of leader–member exchange theory: correlates and construct issues. *Journal of applied psychology, 82*(6), 827.
- Gilmartin, M. (2013). Thirty years of nursing turnover research looking back to move forward. *Medical Care Research and Review, 70*(1), 3-28.
- Goldsby, E., Goldsby, M., Neck, C. B., & Neck, C. P. (2020). Under pressure: time management, self-leadership, and the nurse manager. *Administrative Sciences, 10*(3), 38.
- Graen, G., Novak, M. A., & Sommerkamp, P. (1982). The effects of leader—member exchange and job design on productivity and satisfaction: testing a dual attachment model. *Organizational behavior and human performance, 30*(1), 109-131.
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The leadership quarterly, 6*(2), 219-247.

- McNichols, C. W., Stahl, M. J., & Manley, T. R. (1978). A validation of Hoppock's job satisfaction measure. *Academy of Management journal*, *21*(4), 737-742.
- Harris, K. J., Harris, R. B., & Brouer, R. L. (2009). LMX and subordinate political skill: direct and interactive effects on turnover intentions and job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *39*(10), 2373-2395.
- Harris, K. J., Wheeler, A. R., & Kacmar, K. M. (2009). Leader–member exchange and empowerment: Direct and interactive effects on job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *20*(3), 371-382.
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). Process Macro [Computer software and manual].  
<http://www.afhayes.com/spss-sas-and-mplus-macros-and-code.html>.
- Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford publications.
- Hemsley, B., Balandin, S., & Worrall, L. (2012). Nursing the patient with complex communication needs: time as a barrier and a facilitator to successful communication in hospital. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *68*(1), 116-126.
- Hoppock, R. (1935). *Job satisfaction, by Robert Hoppock*. New York and London: Harper and Brothers.
- Jablin, F. M. (1987). Organizational entry, assimilation, and exit. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. H. Roberts, & L. W. Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication: An interdisciplinary perspective* (p. 679–740). Sage Publications, Inc.

- Hotko, B. (2020). Rounding for outcomes: how to increase employee retention and drive higher patient satisfaction. Studergroup. <https://www.studergroup.com/hardwired-results/hardwired-results-01/rounding-for-outcomes>
- Jian, G., & Dalisay, F. (2015). Talk matters at work: the effects of leader-member conversational quality and communication frequency on work role stressors. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 55(4), 483-500.
- Jian, G., Shi, X., & Dalisay, F. (2014). Leader-member conversational quality: scale development and validation through three studies. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 28(3), 375-403.
- Johlke, M. C., & Duhan, D. F. (2000). Supervisor communication practices and service employee job outcomes. *Journal of Service Research*, 3(2), 154-165.
- Johnson, L. J., & LaMontagne, M. J. (1993). Research methods using content analysis to examine the verbal or written communication of stakeholders within early intervention. *Journal of early intervention*, 17(1), 73-79.
- Kahn, R., Wolfe, D., Quinn, R., Snoek, J., & Rosenthal, R. Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity. New York: Wiley, 1964.
- Keller, R. T. (1975). Role conflict and ambiguity: correlates with job satisfaction and values. *Personnel Psychology*, 28(1), 57-64.

- Krone, K. J., Jablin, F. M., & Putnam, L. L. (1987). Communication theory and organizational communication: Multiple perspectives. *Handbook of organizational communication: An interdisciplinary perspective*, 18(1), 40.
- Leider, J. P., Harper, E., Shon, J. W., Sellers, K., & Castrucci, B. C. (2016). Job satisfaction and expected turnover among federal, state, and local public health practitioners. *American Journal of Public Health*, 106(10), 1782-1788.
- Macik-Frey, M., Quick, J. C., & Nelson, D. (2007). Advances in occupational health: from a stressful beginning to a positive future. *Journal of Management*, 33, 809-840.
- McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect- and cognition based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 473-490.
- McVicar A. (2003). Workplace stress in nursing. A literature review. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 44(6), 633-642.
- Mohr, J. J., & Sohi, R. S. (1995). Communication flows in distribution channels: impact on assessments of communication quality and satisfaction. *Journal of Retailing*, 71(4), 393-415.
- Mustamil, N., Yazdi, A. M., Syeh, S. S., & Ali, M. A. (2014). A dimensional analysis of the relationship between communication satisfaction and turnover intention: the mediating role of organizational commitment. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 9(9), 75.

- Nei, D., Snyder, L. A., & Litwiller, B. J. (2015). Promoting retention of nurses: a meta-analytic examination of causes of nurse turnover. *Health care management review, 40*(3), 237-253.
- Nissly, J. A., Barak, M. E. M., & Levin, A. (2005). Stress, social support, and workers' intentions to leave their jobs in public child welfare. *Administration in Social Work, 29*(1), 79-100.
- Roy, A., van der Weijden, T., & De Vries, N. (2017). Relationships of work characteristics to job satisfaction, turnover intention, and burnout among doctors in the district public-private mixed health system of Bangladesh. *BMC health services research, 17*(1), 421.
- Refozar, R. F. G., Buenviaje, M. G., Perez, M. P., Manongsong, J. L., & Laguador, J. M. (2017). Extent of leader motivating language on faculty members' job satisfaction from a higher education institution. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences, 4*(3), 99-107.
- Tushman, M. L. (1979). Work characteristics and subunit communication structure: A contingency analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 82-98*.
- Wang, S., & Yi, X. (2011). It's happiness that counts: full mediating effect of job satisfaction on the linkage from LMX to turnover intention in Chinese companies. *International Journal of Leadership Studies, 6*(3), 337-356.
- Yang, Y., Kuria, G. N., & Gu, D. X. (2020). Mediating role of trust between leader communication style and subordinate's work outcomes in project teams. *Engineering Management Journal, 1-14*.



Zhang, X., Kaiser, M., Nie, P., & Sousa-Poza, A. (2019). Why are Chinese workers so unhappy? A comparative cross-national analysis of job satisfaction, job expectations, and job attributes. *PloS one*, *14*(9), e0222715.