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A Calm and Happy Keeper of the Keys

The Impact of ACA Views, Relations With Coworkers, and Policy Views on the Job Stress and Job Satisfaction of Correctional Staff

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Job stress and job satisfaction have both received a considerable amount of attention among studies of organizations in general, and correctional organizations are no exception. Although many work-related factors have been used to explain these two concepts, several important areas have been excluded. The current study builds on existing research by examining job stress and job satisfaction and how they are affected by American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, relations with coworkers, and prison policies. Using survey data collected from a large county correctional system in Orlando, Florida, the findings suggest that ACA views, relations with coworkers, and institutional policies all have significant effects on job stress and satisfaction of correctional staff. The authors also find that these three work environment variables have a far greater magnitude of effects than do the personal characteristics of employees.

Keywords: *job stress; job satisfaction; ACA; coworkers; jail staff*

Correctional institutions and agencies succeed or fail based on their staff, usually the single largest expenditure in a typical correctional budget. Employees are responsible for the numerous tasks and functions

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within a correctional institution. Research on the attitudes and behaviors of correctional personnel has provided empirical support that staff help shape correctional agencies. Furthermore, research has shown that the work environment affects correctional staff. The correctional literature has focused heavily on correctional staff job stress and job satisfaction, because both are important concepts in the field of corrections.

Research on job stress has found that high levels of stress are linked to serious negative outcomes, such as death, health problems, illness, mental health problems, social problems, and decreased job performance (Cheek & Miller, 1983; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Woodruff, 1993). Cheek and Miller (1983) reported that correctional officers have a higher than expected likelihood of hypertension, heart attacks, ulcers, and other stress-related illnesses. Additionally, Woodruff (1993) reported correctional officers die far sooner than average and that stress is the leading reason for the shortened life expectancy.

Correctional researchers have also spent a considerable amount of time and effort studying job satisfaction. Empirical studies have found that a lack of job satisfaction can be detrimental and even devastating to correctional agencies, as low levels of job satisfaction have been linked to increased absenteeism, turnover intent, and actual turnover among correctional staff (Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000; Dennis, 1998; Jurik & Winn, 1987; T. A. Wright, 1993). Absenteeism and turnover are disruptive and costly for correctional organizations, wasting directly and indirectly both human and monetary resources (Lambert, 2002). Low levels of job satisfaction have also been linked to burnout (Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Burnout is harmful to both the employee and the correctional organization, and it significantly detracts from the quality of life for those who suffer from it. Employees who suffer from burnout often do not treat other staff and inmates in a professional, courteous, and polite manner. Moreover, although burned-out employees may be on the job physically, they may have psychologically withdrawn from work, a potentially dangerous outcome for most correctional facilities. Conversely, high levels of job satisfaction have been linked to positive outcomes for correctional staff, such as increased organizational commitment (Robinson, Porporino, & Simourd, 1997), more positive views of inmates (Kerce, Magnusson, & Rudolph, 1994), and greater compliance with official organizational rules and goals (Fox, 1982).

Good, satisfied correctional staff are the foundation of any correctional facility. Also, relatively unstressed, satisfied staff can ensure a productive, professional, humane prison environment, whereas stressed, dissatisfied

correctional staff can create a dangerous, miserable, negative correctional experience for inmates and other staff. Correctional administrators should be concerned about job stress and job satisfaction because they have significant effects on workers and ultimately on the institution itself. As such, the potential antecedents of correctional staff job stress and job satisfaction are important for correctional administrators to understand. Although many different areas of the correctional work environment have been used to explain correctional workers' job stress and job satisfaction, there are still important aspects that have not been examined. The impact of views toward American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, relations with coworkers, and institutional policies are three areas that have received little, if any, attention in the empirical correctional staff literature. Yet these are important areas of the correctional work environment.

Literature Review

Job Stress

Defining job stress in a simple and precise manner has been problematic for researchers because it is a multidimensional concept. The two major dimensions of job stress are stimuli and responses (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987). Stimuli that cause stress are called stressors, which are conditions that place excessive/unusual demands on a person and are capable of engendering psychological discomfort (i.e., stress, physiological pathology, and/or social disability; Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985, p. 507). Conversely, the response to work-related stressors is referred to as job stress. Responses can be physiological, psychological, cognitive, behavioral, affective, and/or emotional and can be either short or long term (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987). Short-term responses generally tend to be in the forms of fatigue, anxiety, and tension, whereas long-term responses usually are in the forms of burnout, depression, substance abuse, and medical problems (e.g., ulcers, heart problems, high blood pressure). To distinguish between short- and long-term responses to stress, long-term responses are generally labeled consequences of stress, whereas short-term responses are labeled job stress (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987).

Stressors found within the work environment can and do cause job stress. Two of the most frequently studied correctional stressors are dangerousness and role stress. Research has found that perceived dangerousness of the job,

because of threats and inmate violence, is a significant cause of stress for many correctional staff (Cullen et al., 1985; Grossi, Keil, & Vito, 1996; Triplett, Mullings, & Scarborough, 1996, 1999; Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, & Wolfe, 1991). Furthermore, working with inmates has been described by a significant number of correctional staff as demanding and stressful (Finn, 1999).

Both role conflict and role ambiguity have also received attention in the correctional staff literature. Role conflict occurs when behaviors for a given job or position are inconsistent with one another (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970), as is the case with many correctional staff who are required to balance the two competing and conflicting functions of custody and treatment (Finn, 1999). Role ambiguity results from the uncertainty or lack of information in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of a given position or job (Rizzo et al., 1970). This is the case for many correctional staff (Finn, 1999), as they sometimes receive directions and orders that are unclear or contradictory. Role conflict has been linked to job stress among correctional officers (Lasky, Gordon, & Strebals, 1986; Pogrebin, 1978; Poole & Regoli, 1980; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Van Voorhis et al., 1991), and role ambiguity has been observed to be associated with job stress (Sims, 2001).

For many correctional staff, role conflict and role ambiguity are intertwined. As a result, some studies use a combined measure, called role problems or role stress. Role problems have been found to increase job stress among correctional workers (Cullen et al., 1985; Grossi & Berg, 1991). Likewise, role stress has been linked to increased job stress among detention care workers (Liou, 1995). Role overload, when an employee is overwhelmed by his or her job duties, also contributes to job stress among correctional workers (Shamir & Drory, 1982). There are two forms of role overload: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative role overload is when a worker is asked to do more tasks than are possible. Qualitative role overload is when the quality of work demanded is beyond what is possible with the quality and availability of resources. In a study conducted at a large southwestern state prison, qualitative, but not quantitative, role overload was found to influence the job stress of correctional officers (Triplett et al., 1996).

Besides dangerousness and role problems, other areas of the correctional work environment have been identified as stressors for staff, such as mandatory overtime, understaffing, shift work, and low pay (Finn, 1999; Woodruff, 1993). Administrative factors associated with correctional job stress are lack of participation in decision making, unfair recognition and rewards, favoritism, and arbitrary and capricious decisions that significantly affect staff (Slate & Vogel, 1997; Woodruff, 1993; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986;

K. N. Wright, Saylor, Gilman, & Camp, 1997). Likewise, lack of autonomy has been found to be a source of stress (Cheek & Miller, 1983), as well as poor communication (Lombardo, 1981). In addition, administrative and supervisory support has been negatively correlated with job stress (Cullen et al., 1985; Van Voorhis et al., 1991). Triplett et al. (1999) also found that behavior-based work on family conflict is an important contributor to work-related stress for female correctional officers.

In sum, the literature suggests that the nature of work and organizational forces leads to work stress (Gerstein, Topp, & Correll, 1987). Moreover, it is not just correctional officers who suffer from job stress—all correctional employees (including supervisors) can become victims of this stress (Weinberg, Evans, Otten, & Marlowe, 1985). Although there is a significant body of literature that has examined potential stressors that lead to increased job stress for correctional workers, not all stressors have been studied. The current study attempts to fill a void in the understanding of job-related stress by examining the impact of ACA standards, relations with coworkers, and policy views on job stress among correctional staff.

Job Satisfaction

According to Muchinsky (1987), *job satisfaction* is “an emotional, affective response resulting from the extent a person derives pleasure from his or her job” (p. 396). Spector (1996) contends job satisfaction is simply “the extent to which people like their jobs” (p. 214). In the job satisfaction literature, there is general agreement that overall job satisfaction is an affective response by an employee concerning his or her particular job in an organization, and this response results from the individual’s overall comparison of actual outcomes with those that are expected, needed, wanted, desired, or perceived to be fair or just (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). In other words, job satisfaction is a subjective, individual-level feeling reflecting whether a person’s needs are or are not being met by a particular job (Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2002). Research has identified several work environment factors associated with correctional staff job satisfaction.

As with job stress, the role problems of role conflict and role ambiguity have been found to have a negative association with job satisfaction across a wide array of correctional institutions (Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986; Van Voorhis et al., 1991; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Additionally, participation in decision making, empowerment, job authority, and intrinsic job rewards/aspects (e.g., job autonomy and an opportunity to use one’s skills) have all been found to be positively

associated with job satisfaction of correctional employees (Hepburn, 1987; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Lindquist & Whitehead, 1986; Stohr, Lovrich, Monke, & Zupan, 1994; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; K. N. Wright et al., 1997). Positive views of supervisors and the administration, perceived supervisory support, and perceived quality of supervision were all observed to have positive associations with job satisfaction of correctional employees (Britton, 1997; Cullen et al., 1985; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Van Voorhis et al., 1991). In addition, inconsistency and poor communication in terms of overall policies, rules, and regulations and supervision have been found to be a source of job dissatisfaction for correctional officers (Lombardo, 1981).

The job factors of skill variety, job autonomy, and feedback have all been empirically linked to increases in job satisfaction (Brief, Munro, & Aldag, 1976). Moreover, perceived promotional opportunities, discretion, variety, authority, and learning opportunity have all been found to be positively correlated with correctional staff job satisfaction (Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Jurik & Winn, 1987).

Overall, there have been numerous studies on correctional job satisfaction that have looked at a wide array of work environment factors. However, only a fraction of the work environment has been explored in terms of its impact on correctional staff job satisfaction. There has been very little, if any, empirical research that has examined effects of ACA standards, relations with coworkers, and policy views on correctional staff job satisfaction.

Research Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that views of ACA standards, relations with coworkers, and policy views will all have significant effects on both job stress and job satisfaction among correctional employees. The ACA is more than 125 years old (ACA, 2004a) and has been a force that has changed and improved the field of corrections primarily by setting standards for correctional institutions that seek accreditation from the ACA. The purpose of the standards is to ensure that a correctional facility is operated in a safe, humane, professional, and effective manner (ACA, 2004b). Numerous correctional institutions have sought and obtained ACA accreditation, which requires adherence to a set of standards. Although there is abundant literature about the benefits of ACA standards (e.g., Bachmeler, 2003; Gondles, 2003; Hill, 2002), no studies could be located that examined staff views about ACA standards on job stress or job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the current study predicts that positive views of ACA standards will have a negative impact on job stress and a positive impact

on job satisfaction. The proposed benefits of ACA accreditation include a safer environment for staff and inmates, increased staff professionalism, and better staff morale (ACA, 2004b). This suggests that those correctional staff with more positive views of ACA standards should express less job stress and greater job satisfaction.

It is also hypothesized that positive relations with coworkers will be inversely related to job stress and positively related to job satisfaction among correctional employees. Humans are social creatures; they desire to have positive interactions with others. Because most staff spend such a large portion of their waking time at work, it is reasonable to hypothesize that they desire positive relationships with their coworkers. Good relations with coworkers should be a buffer to job stress (Brodsky, 1982). However, coworkers can also provide a hostile work environment, even harassing other employees. Coworkers, often competing for the same goals, such as promotion or detail assignments, can get on the nerves of other staff. There has been very limited research on the impact of relations with coworkers on correctional staff job stress. Marston (1993) reported that coworkers can be a source of stress for some correctional employees. In addition, sexual harassment from coworkers has been linked to female correctional officer stress (Jurik, 1988). Moreover, there has been little, if any, research on the impact of relations of coworkers on the job stress of correctional workers. Based on the idea that correctional employees desire a positive relationship with their coworkers, it is predicted that relations with coworkers will have a negative effect on job stress and a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Furthermore, policies are critical for any organization. Without clear policies that are fairly and equally applied across all shifts and areas, a correctional facility faces probable negative events. Policies provide support and guidance for correctional staff. Conversely, the lack of clear and consistent policies is an organizational danger for correctional workers, sometimes more threatening than the perceived (or actual) danger from inmates. The lack of guidelines for organizational performance undoubtedly places workers at odds with their superiors, who scrutinize and punish their work *ex post facto*. As such, clear and consistently enforced policies should help reduce job stress and increase job satisfaction among correctional employees.

Finally, it is predicted that the three work environment measures will have a greater impact on both job stress and job satisfaction compared to personal characteristics. Oftentimes, there is undue focus on the personal characteristics of correctional workers. For example, in a national survey, most top correctional administrators provided reasons for staff turnover that focused on individual characteristics and personalities of employees rather

than organizational forces that often transcend individual differences among workers (Jurik & Winn, 1987).

Method

In the fall of 2001, the Orange County Jail Oversight Commission contracted with the Criminal Justice and Legal Studies Department at University of Central Florida, the purpose of which was to explore concerns and issues among Orange County Corrections Department (OCCD) employees. The OCCD is an ACA-accredited institution. The authors first conducted a series of focus groups designed to understand more fully those work environment problems that might be unique to OCCD employees. Research staff conducted seven 2-hr focus groups, with 48 OCCD employees from different organizational levels and facilities during a 10-day period. Findings from the focus groups assisted in the development of a questionnaire that would be administered to staff at all levels within the department.

During 5 consecutive days in the fall of 2001, the staff from the nine separate facilities of the OCCD, in Orlando, Florida, were surveyed. The OCCD housed approximately 4,000 inmates at the time of the survey. The staff were informed that the survey was completely voluntary in nature and the responses would be anonymous. With the consent of the jail director, personnel received 2 hours of overtime for participating in the survey. There were approximately 1,500 paid employees at the facility during the week the survey was administered, and 1,062 staff members participated in the survey, which resulted in a response rate of 70%.

About 39% of the respondents were Black, 10% Hispanic, 45% White, and 6% Other. Slightly less than 0.5% had less than a high school diploma, 21% had a high school diploma or GED, 43% had some college but no degree, 15% had an associate's degree, 16% had a bachelor's degree, 4% had a master's degree, and slightly less than 1% had a professional or terminal degree. Approximately 4% of the respondents were less than 25 years old, 10% were between 25 and 29 years old, 18% were between 30 and 34 years old, 20% were between 35 and 39 years old, 19% were between 40 and 44 years old, 12% were between 45 and 49 years old, 11% were between 50 and 54 years old, and 6% were 55 years old or older. About 56% of the responding staff were males and 44% were females. Moreover, the respondents represented various administrative levels of the correctional facility, from line staff to supervisors and managers. About 10% of the respondents indicated that they were supervisors of other staff. Respondents represented all areas of the

correctional facility, such as correctional officers, case managers, medical staff, industry staff, food service workers, and so forth. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents worked in custody. Finally, in terms of months at the current job position, the mean tenure was 95 months and ranged from 0 to 336 months.

Dependent Variables

Job stress. For the current study, *job stress* was defined as an individual's feelings of job-related hardness, tension, anxiety, worry, emotional exhaustion, and distress. Job stress was measured by six questions (see Table 1) that were adapted from Crank, Regoli, Hewitt, and Culbertson (1995). The six items were summed together to form an index that had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .78.

Job satisfaction. A global, rather than facet, measure of job satisfaction was used (Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr, 1981; Cranny et al., 1992). A global measure focuses on the broader domain of a worker's satisfaction with the overall job than with specific job facets, such as pay, supervision, and so forth. Job satisfaction was measured using five questions (see Table 1) that were adapted from Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The five questions were summed together to form an index of job satisfaction. The index had an alpha of .83.

Independent Variables

ACA. The views on the ACA policies and procedures were measured (see Table 1). The four questions were developed from focus groups of staff that were conducted prior to the administration of the survey. The four questions were designed to measure views of ACA standards and procedures at the facility and the impact they had on operations. The four questions were summed together to form an index, which had an alpha of .75.

Relations with coworkers. Three questions were used to measure relations with coworkers (see Table 1). The three items were identical to those used by researchers of work group cohesion among health care professionals (Mueller, Boyer, Price, & Iverson, 1994). The questions were designed to measure how people viewed their coworkers in their immediate work group and the degree to which they wanted to interact with them. The three items were summed together to form an index, which had an alpha of .83.

Table 1
Percentages of Responses for the Individual Indicators
of ACA, Policy, Job Stress, and Job Satisfaction
Among Jail Staff (N = 1,062)

Indicator	% SD	% D	% U	% A	% SA
ACA					
ACA accreditation requirements improve day-to-day operations	25	17	25	24	9
ACA requirements are practiced as standard operating procedures	18	25	25	30	3
ACA requirements pertain to critical operations issues	15	20	34	26	5
Even though ACA consumes resources, it is cost-effective	26	12	48	10	4
Relations with coworkers					
To what extent are people in your immediate group friendly? ^a	5	14	4	49	28
To what extent do the people in your work group take a personal interest in you? ^b	11	14	50	43	11
To what extent do you look forward to being with people in your work group each day? ^c	10	16	13	48	15
Policy					
Policies and procedures are applied consistently	34	27	12	22	5
Policies and procedures are enforced consistently	36	28	12	20	4
All shifts and physical units consistently apply policies and procedures	35	27	22	14	3
County personnel policies are clear and objective	19	33	14	30	4
County policies and procedures are adequate for jail operations	16	25	20	33	6
Job stress					
When I'm at work, I often feel tense or uptight	18	32	7	29	14
A lot of time my job makes me very frustrated or angry	14	30	7	29	20
I am usually calm and at ease when I'm working (reverse coded)	7	17	6	49	21

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Indicator	% SD	% D	% U	% A	% SA
Most of the time when I'm at work, I don't feel that I have much to worry about (reverse coded)	25	34	10	26	5
I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work	13	33	9	30	15
There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset	12	26	11	32	20
Job satisfaction					
I like my job better than the average worker does	11	11	18	39	22
I am seldom bored with my job	13	21	8	38	21
Most days I am enthusiastic about my job	12	20	10	43	15
I am fairly well satisfied with my job	12	18	10	45	15
I find real enjoyment in my job	17	24	12	36	10

Note: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; U = uncertain; A = agree; SA = strongly agree; ACA = American Correctional Association. Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

- The response categories for this question were 1 = *not friendly at all*, 2 = *somewhat unfriendly*, 3 = *uncertain*, 4 = *somewhat friendly*, and 5 = *very friendly*.
- The response categories for this question were 1 = *not interested at all*, 2 = *somewhat uninterested*, 3 = *uncertain*, 4 = *somewhat interested*, and 5 = *very interested*.
- The response categories for this question were 1 = *do not look forward to being with them*, 2 = *somewhat do not look forward to being with them*, 3 = *uncertain*, 4 = *somewhat look forward to being with them*, and 5 = *very much look forward to being with them*.

Policy. Views toward correctional policies were measured using five questions (see Table 1). The five questions were developed from focus groups of staff that were conducted prior to the administration of the survey. The five questions measured whether policies were consistently applied, enforced, clear, and appropriate for operations. The questions were summed together to form an index, which had an alpha of .81.

Personal/control variables. Seven measures of personal characteristics were included as control variables: race, education, age, gender, supervisory status, position, and tenure. These personal characteristics are typically included as control variables when examining correctional staff job stress and job satisfaction (Cullen, Link, Cullen, & Wolfe, 1989; Cullen et al., 1985; Lambert, Hogan, et al., 2002). For how the personal characteristics were measured, see Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Measures (N = 1,062)

Variable	Description of Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Race	Dichotomous variable: 0 = <i>non-White</i> , 1 = <i>White</i>	0.43	0.50
Education	Ordinal variable: 1 = <i>high school</i> , 2 = <i>some college</i> , 3 = <i>associate's degree</i> , 4 = <i>bachelor's degree</i> , 5 = <i>graduate degree</i>	2.44	1.14
Age	Ordinal variable in years: 1 = 25, 2 = 25 to 29, 3 = 30 to 34, 4 = 35 to 39, 5 = 40 to 44, 6 = 45 to 49, 7 = 50 to 54, 8 = 55 and more	4.53	1.81
Gender	Dichotomous variable: 0 = <i>female</i> , 1 = <i>male</i>	0.54	0.50
Supervisor	Dichotomous variable: 0 = <i>not a supervisor</i> , 1 = <i>supervisor</i>	0.11	0.30
Custody	Dichotomous variable: 0 = <i>does not work in custody</i> , 1 = <i>works in custody</i>	0.67	0.47
Tenure	Measured in months at current job position	95.33	74.68
ACA views	Four-item index ($\alpha = .75$)	10.90	3.54
Relations with coworkers	Three-item index ($\alpha = .83$)	10.55	3.02
Policy	Five-item index ($\alpha = .81$)	12.42	4.57
Job stress	Six-item index ($\alpha = .78$)	18.20	5.44
Job satisfaction	Five-item index ($\alpha = .83$)	16.42	4.92

Note: Minimum and maximum values ranged from the minimum possible to the maximum possible, except for tenure, which ranged from 0 to 366 months. ACA = American Correctional Association. For dichotomous variables, the mean represents a proportion. α is the symbol for Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Results

The percentages of responses for the individual questions are presented in Table 1. Respondents were divided in their views of ACA requirements at the correctional system. For example, about one third thought that ACA requirements improved daily operations, whereas 42% disagreed and 25%

were uncertain. About a third of the staff felt that ACA standards pertained to critical operations issues, whereas one third disagreed and the remaining one third were unsure. There were differences in responses for the relation with coworkers questions. For example, 11% indicated that their immediate coworkers took a personal interest in them, 43% indicated that their coworkers took somewhat of an interest, 20% were uncertain, 14% marked that their coworkers were somewhat uninterested in them, and 11% indicated that their coworkers were not interested in them at all. There was variation in the views of the respondents toward policy. For example, only a quarter of the responding staff indicated that policies and procedures were consistently applied, whereas 61% felt that they were not and 12% were unsure. There was variation among the responses for the job stress questions. For example, about 45% of the staff indicated that they were tense at work, whereas 50% indicated that they were not. Almost half felt that their job made them very frustrated, whereas 44% indicated that their job did not make them frustrated. Finally, there were differences among the responding staff in their responses to the job satisfaction questions. For example, 60% indicated that they were fairly well satisfied with their job, whereas 32% were not. Forty-six percent marked that they found real enjoyment in the job, whereas 41% did not.

Descriptive statistics for the measures used in this study are presented in Table 2. There appeared to be significant variation in both the dependent and independent variables. The majority of the respondents were non-White (57%), male (54%), worked in custody (67%), and were not supervisors of other employees (90%). The typical respondent was in his or her late 30s to early 40s, had some college but no degree, and had been at their current position for approximately 7 years. The ACA index had a median value of 12 and a mean value of 10.90. The relations with coworkers had a median value of 11 and a mean value of 10.55. The policy index had a median value of 12 and a mean value of 12.42. The job stress index had a median value of 18 and a mean value of 18.20. Finally, the job satisfaction index had a median value of 17 and a mean value of 16.42.

Table 3 presents the correlations among the variables. The indices for ACA, relations with coworkers, and policy all had statistically significant correlations with both job stress and job satisfaction. Those with more positive views of ACA standards generally reported lower levels of job stress and higher levels of job satisfaction. As relations with coworkers increased, job stress decreased and job satisfaction increased. The policy measure had an inverse association with job stress and a positive association with job satisfaction. Among the personal characteristics, supervisory status, working in

a custody position, and tenure had significant correlations with job stress. In general, supervisors reported lower levels of job stress than nonsupervisory staff. Those in custody positions reported higher levels of job stress, and the longer a person was at his or her current job, the greater the job stress was. Race, age, and supervisory status all had statistically significant correlations with staff job satisfaction. Non-White respondents on average reported higher levels of job satisfaction than did their White counterparts. We also find that as age increased, so did job satisfaction. Moreover, supervisors generally reported higher levels of job satisfaction than did nonsupervisory staff. Finally, the work environment measures of ACA, relations with coworkers, and policy views had much larger correlations than did the personal characteristics. The three work environment measures had similar-sized correlations with both job stress and job satisfaction. However, the bivariate associations may not continue once statistical controls for the effects of other independent variables are introduced. Multivariate analysis allows for the effects of a variable to be estimated while controlling for the shared effects with the other independent variables.

Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equations were estimated with job stress and job satisfaction as the dependent variables. The independent variables were the seven personal characteristics and the three indices. The OLS results are presented in Table 4.

Based on the R^2 statistic, 27% of the variance in the job stress measure was explained by the independent variables. Among the seven personal characteristics, only age and tenure had statistically significant effects on job stress. As age increased, job stress decreased. Conversely, as tenure at the current position increased, so did job stress, suggesting a possible problem with job burnout among the surveyed correctional staff. All three index measures had significant impacts on job stress. We also find that as positive views of ACA requirements increased, job stress decreased. An increase in positive relations with coworkers was linked to a decrease in job stress among the staff. Job stress decreased as the policy measure increased. Looking at the magnitude of effects (i.e., values in the β column in Table 4), relations with coworkers had the greatest impact, followed closely by policy views. Tenure, followed closely by ACA and age, had much smaller effects on staff job stress, about one third to half the magnitude of effects when compared to relations with coworkers and policy views.

For the job satisfaction OLS regression equation, 29% of the variance in the job satisfaction index was accounted for by the independent variables. Among the seven personal characteristics, only age had a significant effect. As age increased, job satisfaction rose among the staff. All three work

Table 3
Pearson's *r* Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Race	1.00											
2. Education	0.05	1.00										
3. Age	0.23**	0.15**	1.00									
4. Gender	0.14**	0.08*	0.15**	1.00								
5. Supervisor	0.20**	0.11**	0.16**	0.08*	1.00							
6. Custody	0.00	-0.25**	-0.07	0.26**	0.04	1.00						
7. Tenure	0.12**	-0.01	0.45**	0.11**	0.00	0.16**	1.00					
8. ACA	-0.09**	0.02	-0.04	-0.14**	0.01	-0.20**	-0.19**	1.00				
9. Relations with coworkers	0.08*	0.03	0.04	-0.01	0.14**	-0.10**	-0.05	0.26**	1.00			
10. Policy	-0.02	-0.08	-0.08*	-0.04	0.04	-0.12**	-0.10**	0.52**	0.30**	1.00		
11. Job stress	0.00	-0.03	-0.01	0.05	-0.10**	0.13**	0.13**	-0.27**	-0.36**	-0.35**	1.00	
12. Job satisfaction	0.10**	-0.02	0.14**	0.01	0.15**	-0.05	-0.03	0.33**	0.38**	0.35**	-0.51**	1.00

Note: ACA = American Correctional Association. See Table 2 for a brief description of the variables.

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

Table 4
OLS Regression Results With Job Stress
and Job Satisfaction as Dependent Variables

Variable	Job Stress		Job Satisfaction	
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	β
Race	.17	.02	.67	.07
Education	-.27	-.05	-.14	-.03
Age	-.25	-.08*	.51	.18**
Gender	.19	.02	-.15	-.02
Supervisor	-.36	-.02	.98	.06
Custody	.15	.01	.36	.03
Tenure	.01	.11**	-.01	-.07
ACA	-.13	-.09*	.32	.22**
Relations with coworkers	-.57	-.31**	.46	.28**
Policy	-.30	-.25**	.19	.17**
<i>R</i> ²		.27**		.29**

Note: ACA = American Correctional Association. OLS = ordinary least squares. See Table 2 for a brief description of the variables and how they were measured. *B* represents the unstandardized regression coefficient, which is the change in the dependent variable with a one-unit change in a given independent variable with the other independent variables held constant. β represents the standardized regression coefficient, which is the standard unit change in the dependent variable expected from a one standard unit change in a given independent variable with the other independent variables held constant.

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

environment indices had statistically significant impacts on job satisfaction. As ACA views became more positive, so too did job satisfaction. Relations with coworkers had a positive relationship with staff job satisfaction, as did policy views. Looking at the magnitude of effects, relations with coworkers had the largest effect, followed by ACA views. Age and policy views had similar size effects.

Although not reported in tabular form, additional OLS regression equations were estimated for just the personal characteristics with job stress and job satisfaction as the independent variables. The R^2 for the equation with job stress as the dependent variable and the personal characteristics as the independent variables was only .04. The R^2 for the OLS regression equation with job satisfaction as the dependent variable and the personal measures as the independent variables was only .06. OLS regression equations were computed using only the three indices of the work environment factors of ACA views, relations with coworkers, and policy views as the independent

variables. The R^2 for job stress was .20 and .22 for job satisfaction. In other words, it appeared that the work environment factors of ACA views, relations with coworkers, and policy views were more important in shaping staff job stress and job satisfaction than were all personal characteristics combined.

Discussion and Conclusion

All the hypothesized relationships were confirmed. ACA views, relations with coworkers, and policy all have significant negative effects on job stress of correctional staff. Conversely, all three have significant positive impacts on correctional employee job satisfaction. Finally, the three work environment measures have a far greater magnitude of effects than do the seven personal characteristics on both job stress and job satisfaction.

ACA standards appear to have a positive effect on correctional workers, which is also one of the goals of the ACA. ACA standards are intended to create a safe, humane, professional work environment, and this, in turn, should translate to a lower job stress and increased job satisfaction. To achieve ACA accreditation, administrators must support a professional work environment. In other words, ACA accreditation pushes facilities and their administrators in a positive organizational direction that may increase employee job satisfaction and, at the same time, minimize work stressors. As indicated in the literature review, dangerousness has been linked to increased job stress among correctional employees. Job stress, in turn, has been found to be associated with decreased job satisfaction (Byrd et al., 2000; Grossi et al., 1996; Van Voorhis et al., 1991).

The findings that relations with coworkers has significant effects supports the contention that a cooperative environment where correctional employees work together rather than competing against one another leads to positive outcomes. In a correctional institution, good relations between coworkers is necessary to create an atmosphere of teamwork, and teamwork ultimately leads to a safer, securer, more humane, and more professional work environment. In addition, if a correctional employee has poor relations with his or her coworkers, this probably causes stress because of the increased social friction at work. Moreover, past research has shown that support for coworkers is linked to decreased stress among correctional officers (Finn, 2000). Positive social interaction is important. Good relations with coworkers probably leads correctional staff to look forward to their jobs and enjoy them when they are at work.

Tied to relations with coworkers is the concept of integration, which has been found to affect the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of

workers at a midwestern prison (Lambert, Barton, Hogan, & Clarke, 2002). Integration is creating group cohesion among the workers and departments within an organization (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Miller & Droge, 1986). As Lambert, Barton, et al. (2002) note,

integration is therefore concerned with the extent that an organization allows and stresses that different work groups work together in cooperation and coordination to accomplish the major tasks and goals of the organization, or, oppositely, pits them against one another to compete for scarce resources. (p. 183)

Thus, it appears integrating work groups into the organization leads to increased positive relationships between coworkers, which ultimately translates into greater job satisfaction and decreased job stress among correctional staff.

Finally, the findings suggest that policy views are also important in shaping the levels of job stress and job satisfaction among correctional workers. This makes intuitive sense. Policies are guidelines for how an employee should do his or her job. Without proper and consistent guidance, an employee can become frustrated, leading to increased job stress and decreased job satisfaction. Employees performing tasks nonuniformly or treating inmates inconsistently can be linked to unclear policies or policies that are not consistently applied. This can lead to friction between employees as they disagree which is the best method for carrying out job tasks or treating inmates. Additionally, inmates may complain that they are not treated consistently, which can lead to increased friction and dissatisfaction among staff. Finally, policies need to be enforced consistently. If not, a perception of injustice may arise among staff and inmates who have been treated differently from their counterparts because of inconsistently enforced policies. This type of situation goes to the heart of the organizational fairness theory. Most people want to be treated fairly. Feelings of being treated unjustly can lead to frustration and anger (Greenberg, 1990). These negative emotions ultimately cause stress for many people and a decreased sense of satisfaction. It appears to be so for correctional staff as well. Overall, policies set the boundaries for interaction between employees, supervisors, and inmates. By providing structured direction for responses to daily correctional issues, as well as high-anxiety situations, policies ultimately shape the work environment positively, which again, directly affects job satisfaction and stress.

The findings in this study have administrative (or practical) implications as well. If correctional administrators wish to lower job stress among their employees and to improve the level of staff job satisfaction, they must be

aware of the importance of the impact on their staff of perceptions of ACA standards, relations with coworkers, and policy perceptions. Rather than just indicating that ACA standards are necessary, staff must be made totally aware of the importance of instituting and complying with ACA standards and procedures. They must be shown that ACA standards can lead to a more humane, safer, and securer correctional environment for all involved rather than a perception that the standards are a hindrance to staff. This means that correctional administrators must provide to all workers supported, clear documentation of the results of ACA standards. This goes to the heart of instrumental communication. Agho, Mueller, and Price (1993) define *instrumental communication* as the “degree to which information about the job is formally transmitted by an organization to its members” (p. 1009). More than just giving orders to passive employees, instrumental communication means providing salient information to employees, explaining the information and the importance of it, and answering the questions of employees (Lambert, Barton, et al., 2002). Instrumental communication also means that there has to be ongoing, open communication between superiors and subordinates at all levels of the correctional organization. This requires dedication and sincere effort by correctional administrators and managers.

Correctional organizations differ greatly on the degree of cooperatives and cohesion that they create and reinforce within the work environment. Correctional administrators must go out of their way to create a pleasant work environment in which positive relations with coworkers is encouraged. All employees must feel that they belong and are valued not only by the correctional organization but their coworkers as well. This is not an easy task. It requires the development and maintaining of a high level of esprit de corps among work groups. This can be done through teamwork training and group functions. Staff need to be made aware that their relations with their coworkers not only matter for their safety and well-being but for those around them. All staff should be made to feel like they are part of the correctional family and their efforts are valued by others. Through team-building exercises, this may be possible. In addition, group events should be held that celebrate the accomplishments of workers and to emphasize that all workers are part of the organizational family. Moreover, correctional administrators must work tirelessly to ensure that staff are directed to cooperate and work together rather than compete against one other. Negative behavior between coworkers must not be tolerated, and more important, backstabbing behavior by a correctional staff member toward a fellow employee must never be rewarded. Instead, positive, helping, supportive behaviors by employees toward their coworkers must be recognized and rewarded. The authors realize that team

training programs and group events/activities will take time and money; they are not cost free. Correctional administrators must convince the funding body of why it is important to finance these programs. In the long run, correctional organizations will benefit from these programs because of better relations between coworkers, and this in turn will decrease job stress and heighten job satisfaction within the correctional institution.

Finally, critical attention must first be paid to ensuring the policies encompassing all correctional operations realistically cover the myriad events and problems that are encountered by staff at the correctional facility. Furthermore, workers must be made aware of the policies and how they are carried out, as well as making sure they fully comprehend them. More important, administrators must ensure that policies are consistently and fairly applied by all staff throughout the entire correctional institution. Active supervision and management are necessary. This means administrators, managers, and supervisors must take the time and effort to talk with staff about this issue. Both applications of policies and their outcomes must be fair and just. This means that all members of the correctional administration must work toward this outcome. Consistency and fairness are key here. Ultimately, as this study shows, this will affect the level of job stress and satisfaction among occupational members. Moreover, it might be advantageous for administrators to reward exemplary personnel who embody the policies of the correctional organization instead of merely punishing those who do not follow the policies and procedures.

Although the current research is informative, it is not without its limitations. This study was limited to staff at one correctional institution. Additional research on the concepts used in this study is required at different correctional facilities. Furthermore, only three areas of the work environment were examined. There are numerous other work environment areas that need to be studied in terms of how they affect the job stress and job satisfaction of correctional workers. Finally, research should also examine how these and other work environment factors affect the organizational commitment and job involvement of correctional workers.

In closing, the results support the position that work environment factors are more important than personal characteristics in shaping the attitudes of correctional employees. As such, it is important to take into consideration how the work environment affects correctional staff. In an era of increasing inmate populations, rising costs, and shrinking budgets, it is important to keep correctional staff satisfied with their jobs. Additionally, working in corrections is stressful, and correctional agencies should not be adding to this stress because of work environment factors. To reduce stress, it is recommended that focus be placed on perceptions of ACA standards, relations

with coworkers, and views of policies and how they are applied. The findings from this study not only suggest that they are linked to lower levels of job stress but also increased levels of job satisfaction. Realizing that these work environment areas affect correctional staff job stress and satisfaction is only the first part of the equation. The next part is improving these work areas. Although implementing changes in these areas will not be easy or quick, it should be done. Doing nothing will only lead to the status quo and possibly to increased correctional staff job stress and declining job satisfaction. It is important to remember that staff are the lifeblood of correctional facilities. Improving the work situation is essential for success.

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