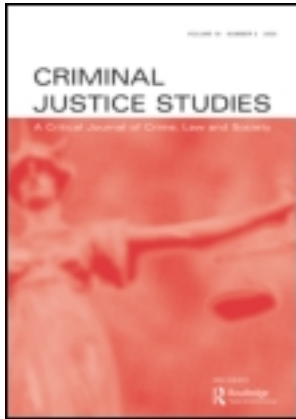


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Criminal Justice Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gjup20>

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Available online: 26 Jan 2007

To cite this article: Eric G. Lambert, Eugene A. Paoline III & Nancy Lynne Hogan (2006): The Impact of Centralization and Formalization on Correctional Staff Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment: An Exploratory Study, *Criminal Justice Studies*, 19:1, 23-44

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14786010600615967>

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The Impact of Centralization and Formalization on Correctional Staff Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment: An Exploratory Study

Eric G. Lambert, Eugene A. Paoline III, & Nancy Lynne Hogan

While the amount of research on prison organizations is increasing, most of the publications in this area have focused on the relationship between organizational centralization and correctional staff job satisfaction. The impact of organizational formalization has been largely ignored. The current study utilized survey responses from 272 staff at a Midwestern high security state prison to examine various forms of centralization and formalization in an attempt to understand their impact on correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. With respect to the two major dimensions of centralization noted by previous research (i.e., decision-making input and job autonomy), it was found that low levels of staff input into decision-making and low levels of job autonomy both had significant negative effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment for both the full sample of employees, as well as the subsample of correctional officers. In addition, formalization was found to have significant positive impacts on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment for the full sample of correctional staff, while mixed results were found for the subsample of correctional officers.

Keywords: Organizational Centralization; Job Satisfaction; Formalization; Organizational Commitment

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Prisons are complex, public organizations, and, thus, there are many different ways to structure, organize, and run them. Nevertheless, the vast majority of prisons in the USA are run as paramilitary, bureaucratic organizations. Centralization, rules, and chains of command are often enforced with a passion. Most prisons try to structure the work environment in order to control the behaviors of employees, especially negative behaviors. Many wardens speak of an employee that will 'fit' into their organization. Few discuss how the organization impacts the occupational functioning of the employee, and fewer seriously consider how to improve the work environment. Based upon a nationwide survey of prison wardens, McShane and Williams (1993) concluded that most wardens 'believed in participatory management styles yet preferred to keep decisions and authority close at hand while keeping line officers removed from the policy process' (p. 52). Like most complex organizations, for prisons to run smoothly, it helps to have satisfied, committed staff. How a prison is structured can impact the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees (Agarwal, 1993). Centralization and formalization are two major forms of organizational structure found in most large organizations, and they both impact job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These, in turn, impact not only the employee, but also the employing organization.

Job satisfaction is an affective/emotional response by an employee concerning his or her particular job (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). Basically, it is 'the extent to which people like their jobs' (Spector, 1996, p. 214). In the correctional literature, job satisfaction has been linked to positive work outcomes, such as greater support for rehabilitation (Kersee, Magnusson, & Rudolph, 1994) and compliance with organizational rules and goals (Fox, 1982). Conversely, low levels of job satisfaction have been linked to negative work behaviors and intentions among correctional staff, such as burnout, absenteeism, turnover intent, and turnover (Jurik & Winn, 1987; Lambert, 1999; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Wright, 1993). As such, administrators should be concerned about job satisfaction, because its consequences are significant.

Organizational commitment is generally defined as having the core elements of loyalty to the organization, identification with the organization (i.e., pride in the organization and internalization of organizational goals), and involvement in the organization (i.e., personal effort made for the sake of the organization) (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). 'Organizational commitment is a bond to the whole organization, and not to the job, work group, or belief in the importance of work itself' (Lambert, Barton, & Hogan, 1999, p. 100). Organizational commitment has been linked to positive correctional staff behaviors, such as higher levels of job performance (Culliver, Sigler, & McNeely, 1991), and inversely linked with negative correctional staff behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover (Camp, 1994; Lambert, 1999; Stohr, Self, & Lovrich, 1992).

Because both job satisfaction and organizational commitment are important in terms of the occupational well being of employees, the current study examines factors that shape both. More specifically, this research focuses on the impact of two structural components of organizations (i.e., centralization and formalization) on correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Classical and Behavioral Schools: Two Competing Thoughts of Organizations

Max Weber probably had the greatest impact on the classical viewpoint (Heffron, 1989). Weber wrote about the concept of modern bureaucracy as a structured, highly efficient organization. Weber pointed out that bureaucracies generally have the following four general characteristics: (1) Routinization—do things according to a master plan so valuable resources will not be wasted when the same issue appears again and again. (2) Written rules or formalization—rules and procedures are spelled out beforehand in writing. (3) Division of labor and expertise—to be broken down by function and specialization. Staff are very limited in their areas of expertise. (4) Hierarchy of authority—the need to control people to ensure the work is done properly.

The Behavioral (i.e., Human Relations) school was developed, in part, to counter the perceived coldness and indifference to employees that many observed in the Classical approach. The Behavioral school postulated that the social and psychological needs of employees have to be met for the organization to be healthy and productive, and the best way to do this is to structure the employing organization in an open, supportive, nonrestrictive way. Specifically, the organization should be decentralized in which employees have more say over their jobs and decision-making in the organization. ‘The Classical authors demanded centralization in the name of control and coordination. The Behavioral authors insisted on decentralization to give more members a greater sense of control over their destinies’ (Fry, 1989, p. 5). Thus, the human relations school advocated a more decentralized structure with fewer rules and restrictions.

It is interesting to note that elements of each of these schools of thought are reflected within prison organizations today. The Classical approach is still alive and well within many prisons. Many prisons are run as paramilitary, bureaucratic organizations. However, not all wardens take the Classical approach. The administrators of some prison organizations value and discuss job satisfaction and organizational commitment of staff as well as the effects of the work environment on staff. These wardens are more aligned with the Behavioral school. In both the correctional literature and in the corrections field, there is an ongoing debate about how to best structure correctional organizations. Thus, there is certainly a need for more research in this area.

Literature Review

According to Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990), every organization uses several dimensions of structure to control and influence employee bonds to the organization such as centralization, formalization, specialization, financial rewards, integration, legitimacy (i.e., fairness in terms of workload, rewards, and punishment), promotion, and so forth. Although it is acknowledged that many structural components comprise organizations, two of the more widely cited concepts outside the field of corrections, centralization and formalization, were examined in this study.

Centralization

Centralization is how power is distributed within an organization (Andrews & Kacmar, 2001). As Tobin (2001, p. 95) notes 'centralization refers to power and the location, division, and amount of decision-making power throughout an organization.' There are two levels of centralization (Dewar, Whetten, & Boje, 1980; Wright, Salyor, Gilman, & Camp, 1997). The first is the degree of input that is permitted among employees in shaping and guiding the future of the organization. This type of centralization is frequently referred to in the literature as the degree of input into decision-making. The second type of centralization is the degree that an employee has control and input over the tasks and order of his/her job. In the literature this form of centralization is frequently referred to as the degree of job autonomy. High levels of both represent a decentralized organization, while low levels of both represent a highly centralized organization.

The Classical school argues that an organization should be a structured hierarchy (Fry, 1989), emphasizing executive decision-making responsibilities, with little, if any, power given to staff. It is argued by some that prisons perform such a critical mission to society that tight controls are needed to ensure success. In order to do this, employee discretion must be minimized by tight organizational control (DiIulio, 1987; Wright et al., 1997).

On the other hand, the Behavioral school argues for power to be vested throughout the organization, including line staff (Fry, 1989). This view is also supported in the correctional literature. Jurik and Musheno (1986) point out that in order to increase the professionalization of correctional staff, not only should more educated and trained staff be recruited, but also that the staff be allowed to have more power within the organizational structure through participation in decision-making. 'Professionalization requires a management style that promotes far greater participation of line personnel in decision-making, particularly decisions related to the fundamentals of client relations and services' (Jurik & Musheno, 1986, p. 477). The Behavioral school further argues that highly centralized and formalized structures cause employees to become dissatisfied and uncommitted (Organ & Greene, 1982). 'It is assumed by proponents of this [human relations] school that employees who are not hindered by strict control and who are allowed to participate in management decisions will be satisfied workers who will be committed to the organization' (Berkson & Hays, 1977, p. 83). There is some support for this postulation in the non-criminal justice literature as well as the correctional literature.

It appears among non-correctional employees, levels of input into decision-making are positively linked to levels of job satisfaction. More specifically, low levels of decision-making input are associated with low levels of job satisfaction, and conversely high levels of input into decision-making are associated with high levels of job satisfaction (Jermier & Berkes, 1979; Kakabadse & Worrall, 1978). Locke and Schweiger (1979) concluded, from a review of the literature, that there is strong evidence that employee participation in decision-making (i.e., decentralization) increases job satisfaction.

Based upon the non-correctional literature, there also appears to be a significant relationship between lack of job autonomy and job satisfaction (Finlay, Martin, Roman, & Blum, 1995; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994). Poulin (1994) concluded, 'Workers who have influence over decisions affecting their jobs and who are given flexibility in carrying out their job tasks tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction than those with less professional autonomy' (p. 35). While a few studies have found no significant relationship between lack of decision-making input and lack of job autonomy (i.e., centralization) and job satisfaction (Curry, Wakefield, Price, & Mueller, 1986; Mueller, Boyer, Price, & Iverson, 1994), the bulk of non-correctional studies suggests that there is a negative relationship for centralization (i.e., low levels of input into decision-making and job autonomy) and job satisfaction.

In the correctional literature, decentralization has also received attention in terms of staff job satisfaction. Using data from Arizona correctional staff, Hepburn and Knepper (1993) found that intrinsic job rewards/aspects (e.g., job autonomy and an opportunity to use one's skills) were positively related to job satisfaction. In a study of employees in the Kentucky Department of Corrections, Dennis (1998) reported that empowerment had a positive effect on job satisfaction. Hepburn (1987) found among correctional officers in prisons across four states that the perception of the ability to influence the prison structure was positively related to job satisfaction. Whitehead and Lindquist (1986) reported that lack of participation in decision-making had a negative impact on job satisfaction among Alabama correctional officers. In addition, Stohr, Lovrich, Monke, and Zupan (1994) reported that employees in participatory management jails had higher levels of job satisfaction than did employees in control-oriented jails. In his study of correctional officers at the Auburn, New York prison facility, Lombardo (1981) found that the lack of input into decisions and responsibility were major sources of job dissatisfaction. However, looking at data from a sample of federal correctional staff aggregated to the institutional level, Wright et al. (1997) found that while job authority positively impacted job satisfaction, participation in decision-making had no significant effect on job satisfaction. DiIulio (1987), from his observational study of three prison systems, argued that prisons with higher control environments were safer, less stressful and, as such, staff were or should be more satisfied. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the correctional empirical findings indicate that high levels of centralization (i.e., lack of input into decision-making and job autonomy) is linked to low job satisfaction and low levels of centralization (i.e., greater input into decision-making and job autonomy) are linked to high job satisfaction.

While there is a large quantity of research that has examined the impact of the degree of centralization on job satisfaction, far less research has been conducted on the impact of centralization on organizational commitment. Moreover, among such studies, the findings tend to be mixed. In several non-criminal justice studies, it was observed that participation in decision-making (i.e., decentralization) had a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment (Morris & Steers, 1980; Rhodes & Steers, 1981). Overall, while there is some support that the degree of centralization has a significant effect on organizational commitment, other studies suggest that there is no relationship (Curry et al., 1986; Mueller et al., 1994).

Only two correctional studies could be located which examined the relationship between the degree of centralization and organizational commitment, and the findings of these two studies tend to mirror the results of general organizational research. More specifically, in a study of five jails, Stohr et al. (1994) found that those institutions that had higher levels of participatory management had higher levels of organizational identification (i.e., a measure that incorporates both organizational commitment and attachment to the organization). Using data aggregated at the facility level, Wright et al. (1997) found that a single measure for participation in decision-making had a positive impact on institution commitment, while a single measure of job autonomy had no effect on institution commitment among federal correctional staff. The results suggest that correctional staff tend to value decentralization over centralization.

Formalization

According to Taggart and Mays (1987), formalization is 'the use of well-defined rules and regulations to govern the behavior of individuals so that actions within the organization become standardized' (p. 1986). Therefore, formalization is the degree that rules, regulations, standards of behavior, activities, and so forth are in written form within an organization (Price & Mueller, 1986), and includes things such as employee handbooks and standard operating procedure manuals (Pandey & Scott, 2002). Formalization is comprised of both codification and observation (Pandey & Scott, 2002). Codification is the placement of rules, procedures, and regulations in writing. Observation is the degree that employees are informed of the codification, and the degree that they are expected to follow the rules and regulations.

The Classical school contends that complex organizations need to have a high degree of formalization. Formalization is part of organizational control since its ultimate goal is to channel the productive behavior of workers and to limit harmful, arbitrary behaviors of both employees and supervisors (Marsden, Cook, & Kalleberg, 1994). Adler and Borys (1996) contend that formalization helps employees become more efficient which increases their motivation, which ultimately leads to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Well-delineated, clear rules also allow employees to carry out their tasks with confidence. According to Deming (1986), formalization allows employees to engage in quality work, which raises their self-esteem.

The Behavioral school, on the other hand, argues that high degrees of formalization are unnecessary. Instead, organizations should have a minimal number of written policies, procedures, and rules so as to allow sufficient latitude for the expression of self-initiative and self-control on the part of the worker (Fry, 1989). It is argued that highly formalized organizational structures cause employees to become dissatisfied and uncommitted (Organ & Greene, 1982). Walton (1985) argued that formalization undermines worker commitment since employees feel constrained and hampered by the formalization control mechanisms.

Formalization and bureaucratic red tape are often confused (Pandey & Scott, 2002); however, Bozeman, Reed, and Scott (1992) made it clear that formalization

and bureaucratic red tape are two distinct concepts. They argued that bureaucratic red tape is the negative result of irrational and irritating rules resulting from excessive formalization and stagnation within an organization. Rainey, Pandey, and Bozeman (1995) offered a similar definition of bureaucratic red tape, in that it is the result of the creation of rules and procedures without ensuring the efficacy of the rules and procedures for meeting organizational goals, objectives, and tasks. Thus, bureaucratic red tape is the result of excessive formalization with little rational forethought in the formalization of rules, procedures, forms, and regulations (Bozeman & Scott, 1996). Nevertheless, formalization and bureaucratic red tape are generally seen as similar phenomena which hurt not only the employee but also the organization.

Although recognized as different forms of organizational control, centralization and formalization have not received the same amount of empirical attention. The amount of research on formalization is far less than that on centralization. In addition, the overall impact of formalization on both employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment is not as clear as that of centralization. Most importantly, formalization has been ignored among correctional researchers.

Like centralization, there has been research on the effects of varying degrees of formalization among non-criminal justice organizational members. For example, among boarding school workers (Schmid & Bar-Nir, 2001) and among health and service workers (Zeitz, 1984), high levels of formalization have been positively linked to job satisfaction. On the other hand, in a study of nine social service departments, it was found that high levels of formalization had negative effects on job satisfaction (Kakabadse & Worrall, 1978). Finlay et al. (1995) found a negative association between high levels of formalization and job satisfaction among Employee Assistance Program (EAP) administrators. In a study of workers at an electronics firm and radio station, Rousseau (1978) observed that high levels of formalization were inversely related to job satisfaction. As such, it appears that the relationship between formalization and job satisfaction is mixed and may depend upon the occupational group or organization that was studied.

With respect to organizational commitment, Podsakoff, Williams, and Tudor (1986) found that high levels of formalization were a positive influence among a sample of hospital, government, and mental health professionals. Likewise, Jermier (1982) found that high levels of formalization were positively associated with organizational commitment among police officers in an urban Midwestern police department, even after controlling for the dangerousness and unpredictability of their assignment. However, in their study of restaurant managers, DeCotiis and Summers (1987) found no significant relationship between formalization and organizational commitment. Among salespeople, high levels of formalization were found to have no direct effect on organizational commitment (Michaels, Cron, Dubinsky, & Joachimsthaler, 1988). Like that of centralization, among the handful of studies that have been conducted on organizational commitment, the effect of high levels of formalization appears to be rather mixed. As previously noted, no published studies could be located which examined the impact of formalization on correctional staff.

Research Questions

The aim of this study is to add to the existing correctional literature by examining the role of both centralization and formalization on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. There has been a fair amount of research that has examined the impact of varying degrees of centralization on correctional staff job satisfaction; however, only one study has included both forms of centralization (i.e., degree of input into decision-making and degree of job autonomy). Wright et al. (1997) examined the impact of both types of centralization on correctional staff job satisfaction of federal correctional staff at the aggregate level (i.e., prison level). There have been no studies that have examined the impact of the two forms of centralization at an individual level. In addition, there has been little empirical research on the impact of the two types of centralization on the organizational commitment of correctional workers. Finally, as previously noted, no published studies could be located that examined the impact of formalization on either correctional staff job satisfaction or organizational commitment.

It was predicted that both high level forms of centralization (i.e., low level of input into decision-making and job autonomy) would have negative effects on correctional officer job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The less power given to an employee in making decisions about his or her work environment, the more likely the employee will be dissatisfied with his or her job and with the organization as a whole. Most adults like to have a degree of input in what they do and how they accomplish a given task (Bruce & Blackburn, 1992). In other words, the greater degree of control a person has over the job, the more that individual will be satisfied with the job, since the work reflects (in part) his or her decisions (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Many individuals do not appreciate highly centralized environments that significantly restrict their actions and responses. People generally want an active part in the decisions that affect them. Bruce and Blackburn (1992) wrote, 'People accept what they help to create' (p. 167). Therefore, a low level of input into decision-making (i.e., high degree of centralization) should have a negative impact on correctional staff job satisfaction.

According to Covey (1989), 'Without involvement, there is no commitment' (p. 143). People identify and extend effort towards those organizations that give them greater degree of control. Therefore, employees are less likely to be attached or committed to an organization with a highly centralized structure with little or no input into decision-making or job autonomy.

Methods

In the fall of 2000, a questionnaire was administered to the staff at a Midwestern correctional institution. The facility was a state run maximum security institution that mainly housed medium to maximum adult male inmates under the age of 26. At full complement, there were 450 employees who were responsible for the supervision of approximately 1,300 prisoners. Due to sick leave, temporary reassignment, annual vacation

leave, etc., it was estimated that only 400–420 employees were available at the time of the survey. The staff were informed that participation was voluntary and that their responses would be anonymous. A cash raffle was used to increase participation. In addition, one follow-up survey was conducted. A total of 272 useable surveys were returned representing a response rate of 60–68%, depending on the actual size of the base population. Respondents represented all areas of the correctional facility, such as correctional officers, case managers, medical staff, industry staff, food service workers, etc. The respondents also represented various administrative levels of the correctional facility, from line staff to supervisors and managers.¹

Measures

Control variables

Personal characteristics (e.g., age, tenure, education level, etc.) have sometimes been observed to have significant effects on correctional staff job satisfaction and/or organizational commitment (Britton, 1997; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Rogers, 1991). As such, the following six characteristics were used as control variables in this study: age, highest educational level, gender, work position, race, and tenure at the correctional facility.

Age was measured in continuous years. Age ranged from 20 to 61 years of age with a median of 44 years. The mean age was 42.55, with a standard deviation of 8.32. In terms of the highest educational level reported, 9% of the respondents had a high school diploma or GED, 50% had some college but no degree, 20% had an associate's degree, 16% a bachelor's degree, 4% a master's degree, and 1% a professional or terminal degree. For the purposes of analysis, educational level was collapsed into a dichotomous variable representing whether a respondent had earned a college degree (1) or not (0). For the dichotomous education variable, 41% had earned some type of college degree (i.e., associate's, bachelor's, master's, or professional) and 59% had not. Gender was measured as a dichotomous variable, with women coded as 0 and men coded as 1. About 76% of the respondents were male and 24% were female. In terms of work position, 50% worked in custody (i.e., correctional officers), 6% worked in unit management (i.e., counselors, case managers, and unit managers), 3% worked in prison industries, 4% worked in the education and vocational department, 3% worked in the medical department, 5% worked in the business office, 3% worked in administration, and 26% worked in other areas. The work position measure was collapsed into a dichotomous variable representing whether the respondent worked in custody (1) or another area (0). For the collapsed measure, 50% of the respondents were correctional officers and 50% worked in other areas. In terms of race, approximately 82% of the respondents were white, 8% were black, 2% were Hispanic, 3% were Native American, and 5% were other. The measure of race was collapsed into a dichotomous variable representing whether the respondents were white (1) or nonwhite (0). Eighty-two percent of the respondents were white and 18% were nonwhite. Tenure at the correctional facility was measured in continuous years. The median tenure was 9 years and ranged from 0 to 26 years. The mean tenure was 9.64 years, with a standard deviation of 6.82.

Centralization

The centralization measures were adopted from Dewar et al. (1980), who measured centralization using a lack of decision-making participation index (DMPI) and a hierarchy of authority about tasks index (HAI).

A total of four items were used to measure the lack of decision-making participation index. The four items utilized a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The four items are presented in Table 1, along with the percentage responses for each item. The four items were entered into a factor analysis using principal axis factoring (Comrey & Lee, 1992). Based upon the eigenvalues and the scree plot, a single factor was extracted.² All four items had factor loading of 0.50 or higher, which was above the cut-off rule of 0.30. The four items were summed to form an index of lack of decision-making participation. The index for lack of participation in decision-making ranged from 4 to 20. The index had a median value of 16, a mean of 15.55, and a standard deviation of 3.12.

Three items were used to measure hierarchy of authority about tasks index (i.e., lack of job autonomy). The three items utilized a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The three items are presented in Table 1, along with the percentage responses for each item. The three items were also entered into a factor analysis. Based upon the eigenvalues and the scree plot, a single factor resulted, and all the factor loadings were 0.47 or higher. The three items were summed to form an index of lack of job autonomy which ranged from 4 to 11. The index had a median value of 8, a mean of 8.00, and a standard deviation of 2.39.

Formalization

Six items were used to measure formalization. The six items were adopted from Oldham and Hackman (1981) (four items) and Finlay et al. (1995) (two items). The six items also utilized a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The six items are presented in Table 1, along with the percentage responses for each item. The six items were entered into a factor analysis, using principal axis factoring. Based upon the eigenvalues and the scree plot, a single factor was extracted, and all six items loaded on the single factor with a loading of 0.30 or higher. The six items were summed to form an index of formalization which ranged from 14 to 30. The index had a median value of 23, a mean of 22.93, and a standard deviation of 2.60.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was one of the two dependent variables of interest. A global, rather than facet (i.e., specific sub-dimensions, such as pay, co-workers, etc.), measure of job satisfaction was used in this study (Cranny et al., 1992). A total of five items were used to construct the global job satisfaction scale, and are reported in Table 1, along with the percentage responses for each item. The five items were also answered by a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The five indicators were adapted from Brayfield and Rothe's (1951) job satisfaction index. The

Table 1 Percentage Results for Items Measuring Centralization, Formalization, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment ($N = 272$)

Item	SD%	D%	U%	A%	SA%
<i>Lack of input into decision-making (DMPI)</i>					
I am frequently asked my input into changes on important institutional matters or procedures (reverse coded).	35	34	13	16	2
I am frequently asked my input on the adoption of new programs at this prison (reverse coded).	31	47	12	9	1
I am frequently asked to participate in the decision of which post I will be assigned to at this prison (reverse coded).	26	47	15	10	2
In ?DOC, staff are frequently asked their input on the adoption of new policies (reverse coded).	25	48	18	7	1
<i>Lack of job autonomy (HAI)</i>					
I have to ask my supervisor before I can do almost anything at this prison.	25	53	7	11	4
At this prison, little action can be taken without a supervisor's permission.	3	47	14	32	4
Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer.	5	39	17	32	7
<i>Formalization</i>					
A 'rules and procedures' manual is readily available for my position.	1	10	4	63	22
This prison has a very large number of written rules and policies.	0	5	9	61	25
At this prison, written rules and procedures are highly emphasized.	2	11	15	62	10
There is a complete written job description for most posts at this prison.	1	4	12	68	15
There is a formal orientation program for new staff at this prison.	4	10	20	58	8
Whatever situation arises, we have procedures at this prison to follow in dealing with it.	1	7	15	70	7
<i>Job satisfaction</i>					
I like my job better than the average worker does.	3	15	23	48	11
Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.	3	20	14	52	11
I definitely dislike my job (reverse coded).	33	44	11	8	4
I find real enjoyment in my job.	8	25	23	40	4
I am fairly well satisfied with my job.	4	16	14	59	8
<i>Organizational commitment</i>					
I am willing to put forth a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help ensure that the prison is successful.	1	10	16	57	16
I tell my friends that this is a great organization to work for.	11	28	26	29	6
I feel little loyalty to this prison (reverse coded).	22	39	16	17	7
I find that my values and the prison's values are very similar.	12	35	30	20	3
I am proud to tell people that I work at this prison.	7	16	23	42	12
This prison really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance.	11	28	30	27	4
I really care about the fate of this prison.	6	7	20	57	11

Table 1 (continued)

Item	SD%	D%	U%	A%	SA%
Deciding to work for this prison was a definite mistake on my part (reverse coded).	32	49	8	7	3
Often, I disagree with the prison agency's policies on important matters (reverse coded).	2	40	26	24	8

Note: SD = strongly agree; D = disagree; U = uncertain; A = agree; SA = strongly agree. Percentage totals may not equal 100% due to rounding. The question mark in ?DOC in the fourth item under *Lack of input into decision-making (DMPI)* represents the initial of the state which is not reported for confidentiality reasons, and DOC stands for the Department of Corrections.

items were entered into a factor analysis, using principal axis factoring. Based upon the eigenvalues and the scree plot, a single factor was extracted, and all five items loaded on the single factor with a loading of 0.74 or higher. The five items were summed to form a global job satisfaction index which ranged from 5 to 25. The job satisfaction index had a median value of 18.00, a mean of 17.50, and a standard deviation of 4.30.

Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is the second dependent variable for the current study. In the organizational literature, the most common method of measuring organizational commitment is the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1982). This index is designed to assess the degree of commitment that an individual has to the employing organization as a whole, and is generally viewed as an accurate measure for the attitudinal dimension of organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Nine items from the OCQ were included in the questionnaire. The nine indicators are reported in Table 1, along with the percentage responses for each item. The nine items were also entered into a factor analysis, using principal axis factoring. Based upon the eigenvalues and the scree plot, a single factor was extracted, and all nine items loaded on the single factor with a loading of 0.46 or higher. The nine indicators were summed to form an organizational commitment index which ranged from 9 to 45. The organizational commitment index had a median value of 31, a mean of 29.75, and a standard deviation of 6.64.

Results

Pearson's r correlation coefficients were calculated, and the results are presented in Table 2. Both measures of centralization had statistically significant negative correlations with the job satisfaction and organizational commitment variables. The formalization index, on the other hand, had a significant positive correlation with correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Of the three, the index for lack of input into decision-making had the largest correlation with job satisfaction, while the lack of job autonomy and formalization indices had similar sized

Table 2 Pearson's r Correlation Matrix for the Control Variables, Lack of Input into Decision-Making, Lack of Job Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment ($N = 272$).

Variable (measured)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age (years)	1.00										
2. Education (1 = degree)	-0.01	1.00									
3. Gender (1 = male)	0.09	-0.10	1.00								
4. Position (1 = officer)	-0.19**	-0.20**	0.23**	1.00							
5. Race (1 = white)	0.06	-0.06	-0.11	0.07	1.00						
6. Tenure (years)	0.40**	-0.25**	0.23**	0.06	0.04	1.00					
7. Lack of input ^a	0.08	-0.19**	0.04	0.35**	-0.06	0.09	1.00				
8. Lack of job autonomy	0.11	-0.10	0.00	0.10	-0.10	0.13*	0.36**	1.00			
9. Formalization	-0.03	0.04	-0.03	-0.12*	0.18**	0.00	-0.30**	-0.21**	1.00		
10. Job satisfaction	-0.02	0.10	-0.16*	-0.21**	0.04	-0.14*	-0.50**	-0.37**	0.36**	1.00	
11. Org. commitment ^b	-0.06	0.11	-0.09	-0.17**	0.10	-0.16**	-0.57**	-0.42**	0.40**	0.75**	1.00

Notes: ^aLack of input into decision-making index. ^bOrganizational commitment. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$.

correlations. The same findings were observed with correctional staff organizational commitment. Finally, it was interesting to note that formalization had statistically significant negative correlations with the two centralization indices.

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression equations were computed with the job satisfaction index and the organizational commitment index as dependent variables. The personal characteristics, the two centralization indices, and formalization index were entered as independent variables. The results of the OLS regression analyses are reported in Table 3.³

The results of the job satisfaction OLS regression equation indicate that approximately 39% of the variance observed in job satisfaction was accounted for by the six control variables, the two centralization measures, and the formalization index. The only control variable to have a statistically significant effect was gender. On average, women reported higher satisfaction in their jobs than did men. The measures for age, education, position, race, and tenure had insignificant effects on correctional staff job satisfaction. Both centralization indices had statistically significant inverse effects on job satisfaction, while formalization had a significant positive impact. That is, employees who felt that they had little input in decision-making and little job autonomy were less satisfied with their jobs. Conversely, the greater the perception of standardized written rules, the more likely employees liked their jobs. The standardized slopes (i.e., β coefficient) indicate that, of all the variables, lack of input into decision-making had the greatest effect on the job satisfaction. Of the remaining variables, lack of job autonomy had the second largest effect, followed closely by formalization. The smallest significant effect on job satisfaction was employee gender.

Turning to the second regression model, organizational commitment, it was found that approximately 45% of the variance observed in job satisfaction was accounted for by the six control variables, the two centralization measures, and the formalization index. None of the control variables had a statistically significant impact. Both measures of centralization had statistically significant effects on correctional staff organizational commitment. Formalization was found to have a significant positive relationship with correctional staff organizational commitment. The standardized regression coefficients indicate that lack of input into decision-making had the greatest impact on organizational commitment.

The full sample is comprised of both correctional officers and employees who are non-correctional officers (i.e., work in other areas of the prison). OLS regression analyses were also performed using a subsample of correctional officers (i.e., employees who were not correctional officers were removed from the data-set for this analysis). This was done for two reasons. First, much of the research conducted to date on correctional staff has limited the analysis to only correctional officers. Second, correctional officers are the largest single group of correctional workers in correctional agencies. Therefore, it is important to identify factors that help shape perceptions and attitudes of correctional officers. The second set of analyses examined the predictors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment for correctional officers. The control variables (minus the dichotomous measure for position) and the indices for centralization and formalization were entered as independent variables. The results are also reported in Table 3.

Table 3 OLS Regression Results of the Impact of Personal Characteristics, Centralization, and Formalization on Correctional Staff Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment for the Entire Sample and a Subsample of Correctional Officers.

Independent variable	Full sample (N = 272)				Subsample (n = 122) of correctional officers			
	Job satisfaction		Org. commitment ^a		Job satisfaction		Org. commitment ^a	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Age (years)	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.08	0.07	0.14	0.12	0.07
Education (1 = degree)	-0.45	-0.05	-0.42	-0.03	0.56	0.06	0.90	0.06
Gender (1 = male)	-1.57	-0.12**	-1.29	-0.08	-1.18	-0.10	0.12	0.01
Position (1 = officer)	0.10	0.01	0.66	0.05	-	-	-	-
Race (1 = white)	-0.55	-0.05	-0.36	-0.02	-0.47	-0.04	-0.13	-0.01
Tenure (years)	-0.04	-0.07	-0.08	-0.08	-0.11	-0.16	-0.21	-0.20
Lack of input into decision-making ^b	-0.49	-0.36**	-0.92	-0.44**	-0.65	-0.39**	-1.15	-0.45**
Lack of job autonomy ^c	-0.40	-0.22**	-0.54	-0.19**	-0.36	-0.21*	-0.65	-0.25**
Formalization	0.31	0.19**	0.55	0.22**	0.26	0.14	0.65	0.23**
R-Squared		0.39**		0.45**		0.31**		0.45**

Notes: ^aOrganizational commitment. ^bDMPI. ^cHAL. B represents the unstandardized regression coefficient which is measured in the metric of the particular independent variable and represents the predicted change in the dependent variable with a one unit change in the independent variable while controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. For example, a one year increase in age is predicted to lead to a 0.05 increase in job satisfaction while controlling for the other independent variables. β is the standardized regression coefficient, and represents the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable in standardized units while controlling for the effects of the other independent variables. β coefficients range from 0 to 1.0/-1.0. A minus sign (-) represents a negative relationship (i.e., a change in the independent variable results in the opposite change in the dependent variable). A β coefficient without a minus sign represents a positive relationship (i.e., a change in the independent variable results in the same direction of change for the dependent variable). For example, a one standard unit change in formalization is predicted to lead to a 0.22 standard unit increase in organizational commitment while controlling for the other independent variables. Since standardized coefficients are metric free (i.e., represent standardized units), β coefficients are valuable in comparing the size (i.e., magnitude) of effects between the independent variables on the dependent variable (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). R-Squared represents the proportion of variance accounted for (i.e., explained by) the independent variables. A proportion multiplied by 100 becomes a percentage. For example, the six personal characteristics, the two centralization measures, and the formalization measure explain about 39% of the variance (observed differences) in the job satisfaction measure. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$.

For the job satisfaction model for correctional officers, both centralization measures had significant negative effects. Of the two, the lack of input into decision-making had a larger effect than lack of job autonomy. Formalization ($p = 0.08$), while close to reaching the generally accepted statistical level of significance, had an insignificant positive impact. Among correctional officers, gender no longer had a significant effect on job satisfaction. For organizational commitment, the same results found for the full sample of correctional staff were observed for the subsample of correctional officers. Both forms of centralization had statistically significant negative effects, while formalization had a positive impact. As with the full sample, the measure for lack of input into decision-making had the largest effect, followed by the measures for lack of job autonomy and formalization, which had similarly sized effects. Finally, none of the personal characteristics had significant effects.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the analyses reported here, there are three main findings. First, personal characteristics have little impact on correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Of the six personal characteristics, only gender had a statistically significant impact on job satisfaction for the full sample. Men were less satisfied with their jobs than were women. The relationship, however, disappeared in the analysis that concentrated on correctional officers only. None of the six personal characteristics had a significant effect on organizational commitment. It appears that the work environment is far more important than personal characteristics in shaping correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The second finding was centralization, regardless of its form, had a negative impact on both correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This finding applied to the analysis of the full sample and the subsample of correctional officers. Of the two forms of centralization measured, lack of input into decision-making had a greater impact on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment among correctional staff as compared to lack of job autonomy. That is, lack of input into decision-making appears to be more important in shaping correctional staff and correctional officer job satisfaction and organizational commitment than lack of job autonomy. In addition, lack of input into decision-making had a larger negative effect on organizational commitment than it did for job satisfaction. It seems that correctional staff do not desire highly centralized power structures, but instead, want some of the power vested with them. Additionally, they want some say in how they perform their job tasks. These findings are clearly more in line with the Behavioral school rather than the Classical school.

The third main finding is that formalization had a significant impact on organizational commitment for both analyses. Formalization appears to help shape correctional staff organizational commitment. While formalization had a significant effect on both organizational commitment models, it was only statistically significant for the full sample job satisfaction model. Stevens, Diederiks, and Philipsen (1992) argue that 'Bureaucracy has the effect of reducing role ambiguity by delineating clear rules and

procedures for work and by enlarging the possibilities for realizing professional and organizational goals' (p. 296). In other non-criminal justice organizations, formalization has been linked to reduced levels of role ambiguity and role conflict (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Johnson, La France, Meyer, Speyer, & Cox, 1998). Thus, clear, written rules (i.e., formalization) may reduce role ambiguity and role conflict which has been found to be negatively associated with job satisfaction of correctional staff (Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980). In addition, formalization may help improve the communication process within large, bureaucratic organizations (Johnson et al., 1998). Finally, Marsden et al. (1994) argued that formalization 'permits specialized departments to work with one another in predictable ways' (p. 914). Since most prisons are complex organizations with many different departments, formalization may allow for an improved work environment which in turn increases staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

For correctional officers, there was no effect of formalization on job satisfaction. A plausible explanation for this is the potential offsetting impact of formalization on correctional officer job satisfaction. Given that the daily job of the correctional officer is an unpredictable assignment, formalized rules and procedures might be regarded as constraining for some while needed for others. The correctional environment has been noted to be laden with hostility and danger, both of which come with little or no notice. Specific rules and regulations may be perceived as obstructing correctional officers' ability to deal with the unpredictable and unexpected aspects of their jobs. On the other hand, some line officers might perceive attempts made by the organization to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety of a dangerous and hostile work environment as a positive outcome.

In general, the results suggest that correctional workers want to share in organizational power. That being said, they also are not opposed to written policies, procedures, rules, or regulations. It appears as if, based on the current study, that correctional personnel only want input into the creation of formalization in the organization.

While usually competing concepts, it is possible to have decentralization with formalization (Marsden et al., 1994). Draft (1986) contended that 'rules define boundaries so that decisions can be made at a lower level without a loss of control' (p. 179). Marsden et al. (1994) further argued that 'formalization through the creation of routines and standard operating procedures serves to channel and limit actions of subordinates, thus reducing the need for direct supervision' (p. 897). Hage and Aiken (1970) reported that centralization and formalization were negatively correlated. On the other hand, other research suggests that centralization and formalization are positively correlated (Pugh, 1968). In this study, both forms of centralization were negatively correlated with formalization. This suggests that employees want a decentralized work environment with formalization. It is however recognized that more research on the subject is needed.

The current exploratory study has illuminated a few important insights, though it is not without some limitations. First, this was only one study of 272 staff at one Midwestern prison. Staff at a multitude of facilities need to be studied to allow for greater generalization of the results found here. Moreover, this study used four to nine

survey questions to measure the two forms of centralization, formalization, job satisfaction, and organization commitment. Future research needs to use more refined and more expansive measures, especially for the different forms of centralization and formalization. There are other methods for measuring centralization and formalization besides using questionnaires that could be used. It is clear that more research is needed before firm conclusions can be reached on the relationship between centralization and formalization to correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment, though the first step has been made with the current study. It is hoped that this study will spark this research.

This study only looked at the impact of a general measure of formalization. As previously indicated, there are positive and negative forms of formalization. Future research should also examine the different types of formalization and see how positive and negative forms of it impact correctional staff. Formalization must be rational and help employees complete their tasks in an effective and efficient manner. Irrational formalization and/or too much formalization may lead to the inability of workers to complete their jobs, leading to frustration and decreased motivation. Adler and Borys (1996) call these opposing forms of formalization, enabling and coercive types of formalization. In this study, bureaucratic red tape and its impact on correctional staff was not examined. Irrational formalization can ultimately lead to red tape. As Bozeman and Scott (1996) argue, excessive formalization is the physiology that can lead to the pathology of red tape. Pandey and Scott (2002) point out that 'red tape, as pathology, becomes manifest when rules become ends in and of themselves without necessarily serving superordinate organizational or social goals' (p. 564).

Based upon past research and the current findings, there is strong evidence to support the conclusion that both forms of centralization negatively shape correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This suggests that correctional administrators should share power with employees, especially input into decision-making, including formalization issues and procedures. This recommendation is, of course, based upon the assumption that the ultimate goal is to increase correctional staff job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It is unclear how decentralization will impact other employee attitudes and behaviors. It must be noted that this study, and most other studies, have not examined the impact of centralization and formalization on other areas, such on productivity, institutional safety, and so forth. These areas clearly need to be studied, and thus should be the targets of future research agendas.

In conclusion, employees are critical elements of a correctional organization. The work environment in a correctional organization has substantial effects on the staff. According to Poole and Pogrebin (1991), 'We should be asking what the organization means to the worker instead of what the worker means to the organization' (p. 170). The knowledge of and ability to understand the antecedents of correctional employee attitudes and behaviors is critical for all parties involved, including correctional administrators, correctional employees, inmates, academicians, and society in general. In an era of increasing inmate populations, rising costs, shrinking budgets, and personnel shortages, it is particularly important to keep staff satisfied and committed. In this

study, it was found that centralization had negative effects on correctional staff job satisfaction and commitment, while formalization had positive effects. Finally, it is hoped that this paper will spur more research and greater insights into the impact of different bureaucratic organizational structures on correctional staff.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Janet Lambert for proofreading and editing the paper. Additionally, the authors thank the anonymous reviewers and the editor for their comments and suggestions, and the Ferris State University interlibrary loan staff for their efforts. Finally, this paper was part of a presentation made at the 2003 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences annual meeting in Boston, MA.

Notes

- [1] The survey was 16 pages in length, and there were 221 questions, covering a wide array of work environment dimensions and issues. The data from this survey have been used in several different papers that have looked at the impact of work–family conflict, organizational justice, fairness, promotional opportunities, feedback, and job characteristics on correctional staff. Therefore, there may be some familiarity in the methods section in the discussion of the data source and the measures of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Nonetheless, none of the aforementioned studies examined the impact of centralization and formalization.
- [2] Factor analysis is a variable reduction technique that uses a statistical procedure to find latent (unseen) variables among a larger set of indicators (i.e., measures/questions). For example, the five survey questions of job satisfaction (see Table 1) all theoretically represent the latent concept of job satisfaction, and factor analysis is used for confirmation. To do this, the questions are entered into principal axis factoring (a type of factor analysis) and the computer produces results (i.e., whether or not the questions are measuring one dimension). The number of factors accepted depends on several tests, but the two most common tests are eigenvalues and the scree plot. Eigenvalues are statistical coefficients that represent the total amount of variance explained by a factor. Eigenvalues above 1.0 are generally deemed acceptable. The scree plot is a plot of the eigenvalues against the factors. The accepted factors are generally cut off when the curve in the scree plot levels off (Comrey & Lee, 1992; Gorsuch, 1983).
- [3] OLS regression allows for the effects of an independent variable to be estimated while controlling for the (shared) effects of the other independent variables and is a frequently used type of multi-variate analysis technique in the social sciences.

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