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AN ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEES' RECALLED ROLE NEGOTIATION EPISODES

By

Letticia Noelle Callies

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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEES' RECALLED ROLE NEGOTIATION EPISODES

By

Letticia Noelle Callies

Despite its importance to employee adjustment and role development, research to date largely overlooks both communicative aspects and contexts of employee role negotiation efforts. This study focuses on the influence of the supervisor-subordinate relationship quality on employee role change efforts, especially elemental negotiation behaviors such as information seeking, information giving, problem-solving, and logrolling during role change attempts. Although the study's hypotheses were not supported, analyses indicate that engaging in problem-solving, versus making simple role requests, is related to giving and seeking more information on ideas/plans as well as success and satisfaction in role negotiation. Employees are also more apt to problem-solve when seeking pivotal role changes and make simple requests when seeking relevant role changes. Implications for future research are discussed.

Dedicated to my Teacher-God, and all the special people
He put in my life that supported me through this project.

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INTRODUCTION

Employees are thought to modify continually their roles to suit their needs, abilities, and desires (Jablin, 2001; Schein, 1968, 1971). One form of modification, role negotiation, involves the exchange of information leading to a revision of supervisory expectations of subordinate roles and behaviors (Miller, Jablin, Casey, Lamphear-Vanhorn, & Ethington, 1996). These information exchanges are characterized by the giving and seeking of information, building upon shared interests, modifying initially proposed positions, and developing a co-orientation or agreement on the nature and manner of the role change (Miller et al., 1996).

Role negotiation is an important communicative event in organizations. Role negotiation represents an active form of adjustment, or role-making (Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987) where employees move beyond received roles (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and attempt to alter the expectations of members of their role set. As an overt communication act, role negotiation involves the management of conversation, facework, persuasion, and bargaining (Jablin, 2001; Miller et al., 1996). In contrast to covert role change forays, role negotiations can be collaborative where the rationale, parameters, and implications of desired role changes are deliberated. In addition, these superior-subordinate information exchanges focus on roles and their enactments, which are the fundamental building block of social systems (Katz & Kahn, 1978), the source of considerable stress and discussion (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991), and the foci of upward influence attempts and conflict management (Jablin, 2001).

Despite its importance to employee adjustment and role development, research to date (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996; Lamphear-Van Horn, Boster, Miller, & Johnson, 2000; Miller, Johnson, Hart, & Peterson, 1999) largely overlooks both communicative aspects and contexts of role negotiation efforts. With the exception of Olufowote and

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Miller (2001) who compared employee reports of successful upward influence tactic use with the importance of the role change, little is known about factors influencing employee role change efforts. Paradoxically, even less is known about elemental negotiation behaviors such as information seeking, information giving, problem-solving, and logrolling (e.g. Jordan & Roloff, 1997; Pruitt, 1983; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988) during role change attempts.

Consequently, in keeping with calls for research on the communicative elements of role negotiation (Jablin, 2001; Miller et al., 1999), this study considers how the perceived quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship influences how employees negotiate their roles. Specifically, this study tests the notion that the relationship quality differentially creates opportunities and constraints on communication exchanges (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga ,1975; Dienesch & Linden,1986; Fairhurst, 2001; Linden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993) as evidenced in employees recall of information giving, information seeking, problem-solving, and logrolling negotiation behaviors (Jordan & Roloff, 1997; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988). The first chapter reviews theory and research related to role negotiation, communicative behaviors associated with role negotiation, and role change contexts as situated in leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships. The next chapter reports the methods used in the investigation. The third and fourth chapters report the results of the investigation and discuss their implications for theory application, respectively.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>Organizational Roles</u>

Roles are socially constructed portrayals of the expected behaviors, responsibilities, and style associated with individuals' positions (Jablin, 2001; Zurcher, 1983). Employee roles encompass jobs, "a set of task elements grouped together under one job title" (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991, p. 319), as well as functions that serve individual, unit, and organizational needs. This composite of tasks and functions may be formally or informally specified and can be assessed by examining the stated expectations of role set members (Jablin, 2001; Katz, 1980). Roles are also associated with certain rights, duties, and privileges (Jablin, 2001), and their centrality to organizing personal and work routines and managing the complex dynamics of interpersonal relations leads Katz and Kahn (1978) to refer to roles as "at once the building block of social systems and the summation of the requirements with which the system confronts the individual members" (p. 186).

Supervisors' expectations of employee tasks and functions that comprise a role can be categorized as pivotal, relevant, or peripheral (Schein, 1968). Pivotal role elements are those critical to task completion or even unit success, and failure to fulfill pivotal expectations is likely to result in disciplinary action. Relevant role elements, less critical to task or unit success, may afford employees with more discretion regarding the manner and timing of completion. Peripheral elements are tangential or picayune, and peripheral expectations can often be sidestepped with few consequences (Zurcher, 1983).

Roles are dynamic, not static, and change in accordance with individual, role set (supervisor, co-workers, and key others), and organizational needs. This investigation is particularly interested in employee-initiated changes to the formal and informal rights,

duties, and privileges that comprise an employee's role (Jablin, 2001). The following considers employees' motivation to change their roles, negotiation as a mechanism for role change, and research to date on role negotiation.

Motivation to Change Roles. The motivation for employees to modify their roles stems from several sources. For one, newcomers may attempt role change in order to align their tasks and responsibilities with their pre-entry expectations. When individuals enter an organization, they are given a position and are primarily subject to others expectations about how the role should be performed (Jablin, 1982; Wanous, 1980). As new hires become more acclimated, they attempt to "individualize" (Jablin, 1982, p. 256) their role by modifying its components to meet their needs, desires, and abilities. Thus, rather than generally accepting the role as dictated by the organization (i.e., role-taking; Katz & Kahn, 1978), employees partake in role-making (Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987) and actively seek to modify elements of their job.

Employees are also motivated to alter their roles when faced with role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict is marked by "the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role sendings that compliance with one would make more difficult the compliance with the other" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 204). In order to avoid recriminations from not fulfilling others' role expectations, employees may negotiate with the role-sender(s) to attain role clarity and reduce the occurrence of conflicting expectations. In turn, role ambiguity, resulting from vague information about the scope of responsibilities, task objectives, available resources, and evaluation standards (Katz & Kahn, 1978), may also pose considerable difficulty for employees (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991). In order to clarify supervisory expectations, subordinates may seek information from their supervisor and/or a co-orientation on task priorities and the basis of task evaluation.

It would be remiss not to point out that some individuals seek role change when they become bored with their set of duties and desire new challenges. Others seek to realign their responsibilities in order to improve their or their unit's efficiency (Axtell et

al., 2000; Frese, Teng, & Wijnen, 1999; Jassen, 2000). At other times, assigned roles may pose formidable challenges and create undue stress (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, & Snoek, 1964; Katz, 1985). Other individuals may desire role changes so that the majority of their responsibilities become ones that they enjoy, will be politically, monetarily, or socially beneficial and/or require less efforts (Zurcher, 1983).

In short, there are many reasons why individuals seek proactively to alter their roles and their supervisor's expectations. Efforts to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency, or convenience through role change are also not confined to organizational entry, but probably occur throughout employees' tenure in the organization (Jablin, 2001). As such, role-making theory (Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987) suggests that individuals co-construct their roles, and the sustaining of role enactments is highly dependent upon others (Katz, 1980; Zurcher, 1983).

Negotiated Changes

Role negotiation "occurs when two or more persons consciously interact with the express purpose of altering the other's expectations about how a role should be enacted and evaluated" (Miller et al., 1996, p. 296). As a forum for supervisors and subordinates to discuss job elements, tasks, and responsibilities as well as employee needs and desires, resulting joint agreements and understandings appear to be central to meeting subordinates' needs and organizational requirements (Jablin, 2001).

Employees may instead opt for other forms of role change where there is minimal interaction with their supervisor. For instance, secondary adjustments, as coined by Goffman (1961), refer to role changes without supervisory approval (Zurcher, 1983). Employees assume (or cease) new tasks/responsibilities on their own initiative and continue to perform such until the supervisor observes the change and then implicitly or explicitly approves the changes or disciplines the subordinate. These changes may significantly improve their job performance or unit efficiency (e.g., new methods or techniques to achieve production goals, trading responsibilities with coworkers) or,

conversely, lessen individual's or their work unit's effectiveness in the eyes of the supervisor. Secondary adjustments are principally covert in nature and have the potential to create gaps between the superior and subordinate in their shared understanding of role objectives and actual performance. Covert actions are likely to result in a host of undesirable outcomes such as violation of trust, demotion, hurt feelings, ostracism, or even dismissal, especially when performance is weakened. In contrast, role negotiation is primarily an overt form of change. Manifested in proposals, stated rationales, and rejoinders between supervisors and subordinates, these negotiations are based on cooperative relationships and, comparatively, open message exchanges. Consequently, this study focuses on role negotiation and its communicative aspects.

The manner by which employees negotiate their roles has considerable importance to communication researchers, primarily because role negotiation processes highlight the importance of information exchange. In some cases, the objective of role negotiations may concur with the supervisors' inclination, and negotiations may go smoothly. At other times, supervisors may be reluctant or even oppose the stated (or suspected underlying) change objective, and negotiations may require considerable reworking of initially proposed ideas, sacrificing a few objectives in order to secure other gains, and/or even accepting additional duties to attain the original objectives. Regardless, exchanges of information between superiors and subordinates are central to the sharing of role requests, expectations, and responsibilities leading to their agreement or co-orientations for role change (Jablin, 2001; Miller et al., 1996).

Through overt message exchanges, role negotiations provide superiors and subordinates with opportunities to set forth personal, task, group, and organizational information pertinent to the requested role change. Such exchanges are likely to include rationales and motivations in support or opposition to the change (Miller et al., 1996). Although at times both parties may be less than forthcoming about their motives or even support/oppose the change, at the very least there is some degree of effort to verbalize the

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desire for and the nature of change. In this respect, role negotiations emulate participative decision-making where subordinates are afforded some degree of authority over their roles and contribute to its co-construction (Seibold & Shea, 2001).

Role negotiation also represents the confluence of upward influence, negotiation, and conflict management behaviors in dyadic settings. Employees use upward influence tactics such as expressing verbal assertiveness, explaining reasons for request, coalitions, upward appeals, ingratiation, and leveraging past favors to press for acceptance of their sought-after change (Kipnis, Schmidt, & Wilkinson, 1980; Olufowote & Miller, 2001; Schriesheim & Hinkin, 1990). Role change requests are likely to be tailored in the most persuasive manner possible to suit the supervisor's interests and unit's needs. In turn, role negotiation may involve "an exchange of proposals and counterproposals as a means of reaching a satisfactory settlement" (Putnam, 1985 p. 129). It would not be surprising for role change requests to undergo several iterations where some elements are dropped and others are included (Miller et al., 1996). Employee conflict management behaviors may also be central to role change efforts when working toward integrative solutions and discussing interpersonal tensions or conflicts (Putnam & Poole, 1987).

Role Negotiation Research. Whereas investigations of upward influence, negotiation, and conflict management may provide valuable insights into role negotiations, such research is presently limited. For instance, upward influence studies rarely examine specific job- or role-related changes as targets or objects of influence and have little consideration for the long-term effect of influence attempts on employee job performance or circumstances (Jablin, 2001; Olufowote & Miller, 2001). Negotiation tactics such as logrolling and integrative tactics (e.g., Jordon & Roloff, 1997) are thought to have a central place in role negotiation (Miller et al., 1996), yet negotiation research typically addresses issues such as hours, wages, and power differentials in dyadic relationships (Putnam & Poole, 1987). A number of investigations of employee conflict management behaviors are at times directed at gaining insight into and improvement in

supervisor management skills (Putnam & Poole, 1987), and these cases typically consider work conditions, complaints, supervisory style, personality differences (Roloff, 1987; Tjosvold, Morishima, & Belsheim, 1999) and performance appraisals (Grisby, 1983) with little regard to employee role changes. Commenting on research on employee upward influence attempts, voice, and perceptions in role/self development, Jablin (2001) asserts that "it is evident that we need to conceptualize and study role negotiation in terms of the interdependent influence and negotiation strategies that newcomers and other organizational members use in the process of negotiating roles over time" (p. 781).

Research to date explicitly examining role negotiations can be grouped into three categories: perceived negotiation ability, proactive socialization, and relationships. For example, Miller et al. (1999) report that the openness of the superior-subordinate communicative relationship and supervisor facilitation of employees' work positively affect insurance company employees' perception of their ability to negotiate their roles. In turn, perceived role negotiation ability is negatively related to their role conflict experiences, but positively related to their reported job satisfaction. In a re-analysis and extension of the same study, Lamphear-Van Horn et al. (2000) find that employee integrative conflict style was positively while nonconfrontation style was negatively related to their role negotiation ability and that role negotiation ability mediated the impact of conflict style on their level of job satisfaction.

Using a longitudinal sample of MBA graduates, Ashford and Black (1996) found that those with a high desire for control are likely to report negotiating job changes with their supervisors and coworkers. Kramer and Noland (1999) report that 65% of a sample of recently promoted employees attempted to change other employees' (i.e., former peers who are now subordinates) expectations while the remainder of the sample sought to change superiors' expectations, especially with regard to guest complaints, customer relations, and training. However, recently promoted employees report that their change attempts frequently fell short of their goals.

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In an examination of upward influence tactics, Jablin and Miller (1993) report that recent college graduates' use of specific influence tactics (e.g., rationality, exchange, ingratiations, coalitions) in role change attempts increased between six months and 18 months following organizational entry. Further, increases in exchange tactic use are linked to newcomers' self-report of higher levels of communication competence and participation in cohesive work groups. Over time, newcomers report a decrease in their use of ingratiation, rationality, and coalition tactics. Olufowote and Miller's (2001) investigation of automobile assembly employees indicates that high LMX employees report using rationality tactics, but low LMX employees report using exchange of benefits tactics to achieve pivotal changes.

In sum, research to date provides initial insights into the antecedents, conditions, communication approach (i.e., upward influence strategy), and general outcomes of role negotiation. While these findings are useful, they still largely overlook the details and dynamics of role negotiation behavior. In particular, there is little understanding of the interactions between subordinates and their supervisors in terms of how employees repackage arguments, the extent to which individuals provide or seek information to create more acceptable positions, how subordinates initiate role change conversations, or how successful role negotiations are achieved. The following section considers several communicative behaviors that employees may use in role negotiations.

Role Negotiation Behaviors. Research on negotiation behaviors in organizations considers a number of perspectives, ranging from bargaining positions and relational tactics to conflict strategies and message exchanges (Putnam & Roloff 1992; Bazerman & Lewicki, 1983). In general, successful and unsuccessful negotiations are thought to revolve around the distributive and integrative approaches. A distributive approach, characterized by the use of threats, positional commitment, and arguments why the other party should concede, reduces the likelihood of joint agreements. Parties polarize or present plans constructed with incomplete information. A collaborative approach,

characterized by the exchange of information and willingness to accept trade-offs, increases the likelihood of joint agreements (Pruitt & Lewis, 1975). Parties have greater opportunities to construct positions leading to successful negotiations when informed of the other's needs and rationale. In an effort to explore communicative behaviors associated with role negotiation, this study examines behaviors considered prominent in successful negotiations: information giving, information seeking, problem-solving, and logrolling (Jordon & Roloff, 1997; Pruitt, 1983; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988).

Information exchange refers to the giving and seeking of information between two parties to ascertain salient issues, to locate areas for trade-offs, and to assign meaning to the other persons actions (Putnam, 1985). Information exchange is thought to be critical in the achievement of integrative agreements (i.e. agreements that reconcile both parties' interests yielding joint benefit as opposed to agreements forced upon one party). According to Pruitt (1981) information exchange and subsequent insights lead to integrative agreements only when bargainers believe that each member is concerned with the needs of the opponent. Carnevale, Pruitt, and Seilheimer (1981) posit that the exchange of information about values and priorities allows negotiators to think simultaneously about both parties' welfare. Information exchanged in role negotiations is likely to fall under evaluative work and descriptive work categories in Hudson & Jablin's (1992) Information-Giving Message Categorization Scheme:

> "Evaluative work information includes utterances expressing opinions or judgments related to discrepancies between expectations and experiences (overt surprises), job stress, self-evaluation of performance, qualities and attributes of the work role, and evaluations of individuals affiliated with the organization and the organization itself....Descriptive work information includes nonevaluative utterances related to such matters as task understanding, causes for task performance, task goals, and task instructions" (Jablin, 2001, p.774).

Employees give information in order to establish or solicit reciprocity, identify positions, and inform the other party about expectations. Key information to be shared in

role negotiations includes the nature of the proposed role (e.g., ideas, plans), its rationale, how others will be impacted, and the employee's ability to perform effectively in the new role configuration (e.g., justifying ability to handle new responsibilities). Fisher and Ury (1981) suggest giving information in general to clarify misunderstandings, to identify future accomplishments, and to reveal the specific desires and concerns of interests that motivate negotiation. Pruitt and Lewis (1975) report that giving information about one's own profit schedule is positively related to joint profit.

Information seeking refers to the soliciting of evaluative and descriptive work information from the other party in order to learn others' expectations and align both parties' positions in hope of reaching an agreement. At the most basic level, employees seek information by asking questions to generate responses from the other party (Fisher & Ury, 1981). In role negotiations, employees may seek supervisory feedback regarding their ideas, rationale, or ability to perform. Tutzauer and Roloff (1988) report that information seeking leads to insight into opponents' priorities, resulting in integrative outcomes and subsequent satisfaction with negotiations. Further, Pruitt and Lewis (1975) report asking for information about the opponents' profit schedule is positively related to joint profit.

A particularly important communicative aspect of employees role negotiations concerns their making simple role-change requests of their supervisor or engaging in problem-solving behaviors. Employees may make simple requests when they seek relatively minor changes in their roles, incur little opposition to their request, and/or solidify their responsibility for a task that they are already performing. Alternatively, employees may engage in problem-solving behavior when the change request involves

role set members, there are equally preferred alternatives, an easy solution to a complex situation does not exist, and/or an innovative solution is required. Problem-solving to facilitate role change requests is a central aspect of integrative agreements where both parties' interests are reconciled and joint benefits result (Pruitt, 1983, Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988). Problem-solving may be especially useful as a means to resolve role conflicts and attain goals, rewards, and role clarity (Roloff, 1987).

One important aspect of problem-solving is logrolling, the trading off or yielding issues of low-priority for gains on high priority issues (Pruitt, 1983; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988). Tutzauer (1992) reports that trade-offs achieved through logrolling lead to settlements beneficial to both parties. Miller et al. (1996) suggest that maternity leavetakers through logrolling may sacrifice something of high value (e.g., guarantees of returning to the same position) to gain other values (e.g., a longer maternity leave). However, the awareness of others' needs (Pruitt, 1981) and self-monitoring (Jordon & Roloff, 1997) may be critical in the planned use of logrolling in negotiations. Hence, while trade-offs among issues can be mutually beneficial (Tutzauer, 1992), Jordan and Roloff (1997) urge participants to be aware and take into account both sides of the issue and be willing to abandon the narrow-minded positions for those more acceptable to others.

To date, negotiation researchers primarily use information giving, information seeking, problem-solving, and logrolling behaviors to examine more macro issues as part of buyers and sellers or labor unions' strategies (Pruitt & Lewis, 1975; Putnam & Jones, 1982; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988). Nevertheless, these negotiation behaviors may provide

valuable insights into the means to successful role negotiations. Consequently, this study asks,

> RQ1: To what degree do employees' report the use of information giving, information seeking, problem-solving versus simple requests, and logrolling in successful role negotiations?

Leader-Member Exchange

According to Graen (1976) and others (e.g., Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Schiemann, 1978), supervisors do not enact the same style or managerial behavior across all their subordinates. Instead, supervisors differentiate in their relationships with subordinates based on employee performance, background, and trustworthiness. High LMX or "in group" relationships are characterized by mutual trust and support (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989), working closely together with internal common goals and mutual influence (Fairhurst, 2001), and social exchanges extending beyond what is required of the employment contract (Linden et al., 1993), leading some to characterize these as "high quality relationships" (Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst, 2001; Fairhurst, Rogers, & Sarr, 1987; Deluga & Perry, 1991).

Dansereau et al. (1975) posit that "negotiating latitude," the extent to which superiors are willing to consider employees' requests concerning role development, is prototypical of high quality LMX relationships. In general, a high degree of negotiating latitude is associated with high quality relationships while a low degree of negotiating latitude is associated with low quality LMX or "out-group" relationships. Low quality LMX relationships are characterized by the use of formal authority, exchanges that are contractual in nature and role-bound, low levels of trust and support, and supervisory perceptions that the subordinate is remiss with regard to work-related issues (Fairhurst, 2001; Linden et al., 1993).

Research evaluating the quality of LMX relationships considers a variety of issues including employee job satisfaction and performance (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen &

Schiemann, 1978), use of upward influence tactics (Deluga & Perry, 1991; Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, & Goodman, 1997; Krone, 1992; Lee & Jablin, 1995; McClane, 1991; Olufowote & Miller, 2001; Waldron, 1991), peer relationships (Sias, 1996), perceived similarities (Linden, et al., 1993), participative decision making (Krone, 1994), and communication expectations and gender (Lee, 1999). A recent meta-analysis (Gerstner & Day, 1997) indicates that high quality LMX relationships are positively related to employee job satisfaction, performance ratings, satisfaction with supervisor, organization commitment, and role clarity, but negatively related to role conflict and turnover. In short, the quality of the LMX relationship yields considerable influence on individuals' work experiences.

However, few studies examine how the nature of superior-subordinate interactions on role-related issues differ due to the quality of the LMX relationship. Such investigations may provide insights into the elements and negotiation behaviors, which contribute to high as well as low LMX employees' success in changing their roles, information that may be helpful for others as they attempt to alter their roles.

Leader-Member Exchange and Negotiation Behaviors. As noted earlier, trust is a distinguishing element in the quality of the LMX relationships (Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987). An investigation of dyadic loyalty (Jennings, 1967) indicates that in-group relationships thrive on openness to ideas, reciprocal support, and propensity to protect subordinates (Graen & Cashman, 1975). In contrast, low LMX employees manifest communication behaviors indicative of low trust in their supervisors such as avoiding interactions, deception and distortion, restrained expression, and few attempts at creating closeness (Lee & Jablin, 1995). A number of other behavioral manifestations in low quality LMX relationships are indicative of low trust within the superior-subordinate dyad. For instance, Fairhurst, et al. (1987) report that low LMX employees with dominant managers have less decisional involvement, less negotiating latitude, and poorer performance ratings than high LMX employees. Low LMX employees have little

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opportunity to discuss role change whereas supervisors of high and medium LMX employees initiate opportunities for discussion of role expectations.

While not specifically examining the element of trust, Fairhurst and Chandler's (1989) analysis of superior-subordinate dialogues certainly portrays supervisors shaping interactions based on the trustworthiness of subordinates' ideas. They indicate that high quality LMX supervisor-subordinate dyads have comparatively collaborative exchanges, which are characterized by ample interactions, offers, and counter offers with minimal power and status differences. As a consequence, high quality LMX dyad dialogues mostly consist of idea exchange and discussion of plans and may not find resolution in a single episode or even over several episodes (e.g., Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989). In low quality LMX dyads, there are few opportunities to discuss issues, and those discussions are characterized by supervisory use of downward influence, giving instructions, few suggestions, and a general unwillingness to continue discussions. Low quality LMX dyad dialogues primarily consist of instruction and disregard of subordinate ideas and opinions, leading to agreement in a single episode in favor of the supervisor through submission of the subordinate.

It is also anticipated that trust (or the lack thereof) in the supervisor-subordinate relationship will have considerable influence on employees' negotiating behaviors. A number of factors increase the likelihood of high LMX employees' negotiating success: negotiating latitude, supervisory supportiveness, receptivity to ideas, opportunities for and influence in decision making, frequent interactions, and the luxury to disagree and continue dialogue over an issue (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Fairhurst et al., 1987; Graen & Cashman, 1975). With access and the ability to present and discuss ideas at length, high LMX employees seeking to change their role through negotiation are likely to present their ideas and plans for change. They are also likely to present a rationale for change in response to supervisory questions. High LMX employees are likely to focus their information seeking efforts on supervisory reactions to role change ideas and the

soliciting of suggestions. The trust and support present in high quality LMX relationships will also enable these employees to engage in problem-solving and logrolling behaviors so that role change objectives can be attained.

Low LMX employees, however, face considerable obstacles in negotiating role change. Supervisors' lack of continuation of their ideas and cutting off of conversation (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Graen & Cashman, 1975) are likely to lead low LMX employees to spend considerable energy justifying their positions and their ability to perform under new a role configuration. As such, the focus of low LMX employees' information giving is likely to consist of justifications of their ability to perform or implement changes. Similarly, low LMX employees are likely to concentrate their information seeking efforts on supervisory expectations of their ability to perform effectively under a new role configuration. In turn, these employees are unlikely to engage in logrolling behaviors unless initiated by the supervisor, and in these cases, logrolling is likely to consist of trade-offs more beneficial to supervisory expectations than to the employee.

Thus, this study hypothesizes,

H1: In successful role changes, high quality LMX employees will be more likely to report giving more information about ideas and plans than low quality LMX employees.

H2: In successful role changes, high quality LMX employees will be more likely to report seeking more information about approval of ideas and plans than low quality LMX employees.

H3: In successful role changes, high quality LMX employees will be more likely to report using problem-solving behaviors than low quality LMX employees. Conversely, low quality LMX employees will be more likely to report making simple requests than high quality LMX employees.

H4: In successful role changes, high quality LMX employees will be more likely to report engaging in logrolling behaviors than low quality LMX employees.

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Chapter 2

METHODS

<u>Participants</u>

Participants in the study were solicited from seven different organizations in the Midwest that were targeted for participation due to their representation of the diverse and hierarchical organizational roles of the larger population in the local business area. These locals were either major departments of large organizations or branches of national firms and employed between 4-1000 employees. In order to participate in the study the employees were required to be full-time employees for at least one month and report to a supervisor. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that any information reported in the survey would be kept confidential and only used for research a purposes. A total of 302 surveys were distributed and 140 (46%) were returned.[1] Out of 140 returned surveys, 65 (46%) reported details of a successful role negotiation episode within the past six months.

Participants providing details of their role negotiation episodes could be described as: about slightly more than half females (57%) and less than half males (43%); having slightly more male supervisors (57%) than females (43%); being employed from 3 to 400 months ($\underline{M}$ = 81, $\underline{Mdn}$ = 33); and reporting to their immediate supervisor from 2 to 288

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[1] The researcher distributed the surveys via mail to two organizations (response rates: local Women's Association 15%; local surveying company, 13%), personal presentation to departments in one organization (response rate: local hospital administrative staff, 63%), and supervisors in five organizations (response rates: copying firm, 50%; cellular phone branch, 100%; local apartment office, 100%; Chamber of Commerce office, 53%).

months (M = 28, Mdn =18). There were no significant differences between research participants reporting the details of a role negotiation episode and those only providing background and demographic information.[2]

Procedure

Following Olufowote and Miller (2001), participants received a survey asking them to describe a successful role change within the last six months that they initiated and negotiated with their supervisors. Instructions related to the limited time frame were deemed effective as a number of those responding to the survey, but those not reporting a role negotiation episode indicated that they were in the process of negotiating a role change or their most recent role change had occurred over six months ago. Returned surveys were divided into two categories, those providing details of a role negotiation and those not. Except to compare background and demographic data between groups, subsequent analysis were based only on those participants providing role negotiation details.

Role Change Stimulus

In order to help participants recall their role change experience, they were given instructions to describe: the aspect of their role that was changed, the reasons for the change, and any dialogue between themselves and their supervisor (See Appendix A). Participants were provided with a sheet of paper on which there were headings marked

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[2] Tests for differences between participants reporting role negotiation details versus those not reporting such information on the distribution of their sex, their supervisor's sex, length of employment, length of reporting to their current supervisor, and their organizational status were non significant. Non-role negotiation reporting participants were half male (50%) and female (50%), with more male supervisors (66%) than female (44%), being employed by their organization for 2 to 384 months (M=102, Mdn=54) and reporting to their current supervisor for 1 to 168 months (M=30, Mdn=17).

"You" and "Supervisor" in the margin to prompt participants' reporting of their interaction during role negotiation.

Survey Measures

Quality of Leader-Member Exchange. The quality of the LMX relationship was measured from the subordinate's perspective using the LMX-7 scale (Graen, Novack, & Sommerkamp, 1982), modified (Fairhurst et al., 1987) to a five point Likert scale where "strongly disagree"=1 and "strongly agree"=5. A confirmatory factor analysis (Hunter & Gerbing, 1982; Hunter & Hamilton, 1986) revealed (χ^2 (21, $\underline{N}$=65) = 3.30, $\underline{p}$< .05, $\underline{SSE}$ > .05) the scale to be unidimensional with factor loadings ranging from .68 to .89, with a reliability of α=.91. To test Hypotheses 1-4, a mean split at 3.00 was computed to create high ($\underline{n}$ = 50) and low ($\underline{n}$ = 15). While the Mean (3.77) and Median (4.00) were considerably higher, the hypothetical Mean was selected to reflect the larger distribution in society (Graen & Scandura, 1987). A test between participants reporting and not reporting role negotiation details in the last six months on LMX revealed a significant difference between the two groups ($\underline{t}$ (134) = 2.98, $\underline{p}$<.05). Specifically, the group reporting role negotiations were more likely to have a higher LMX score ($\underline{M}$ = 3.77) than those not reporting a role negotiation episode ($\underline{M}$ = 3.21).

Negotiation Behaviors. The negotiation behaviors were measured using a modified coding scheme adapted from Jordan and Roloff (1997) and Tutzauer and Roloff (1988). The content of the dialogue in the surveys were analyzed and divided into units of analysis called statements. For the purpose of this study, a statement was an idea, answer, question, or suggestion. Anything that indicated a pause, end of sentence, or shift in topic, conversation, or behavior was the beginning of a new statement. Each turn

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could include more than one statement (e.g., a subordinate who gives an answer followed by a question would be two statements). While the negotiating portion of the survey was formatted in a repetitive vertical list to encourage the reporting of speaking turns (e.g. "You" and "Supervisor"), some participants reported the role change in a paragraph form which included descriptions of the scenario as well as passive interaction dialogue (e.g. "My supervisor was very supportive of the idea" versus the supervisor saying "That is a good idea"). The paragraph descriptions were coded into statements using the portions of the report that indicated or implied passive dialogue during the negotiation versus the descriptive and narrative portions. The coding procedure was divided into six steps (See Appendix B).

First, the statements were unitized. Second, the dialogues were reviewed to separate utterances that were work-related (e.g., evaluative work and descriptive work; Hudson & Jablin, 1992) from general conversations that were not work-related. Third, the dialogues were read through once to identify information giving statements and then again to identify information seeking statements. Information giving statements were evaluative or descriptive work utterances designated as proclamations, informing, or an answer to a question. Information seeking statements were evaluative or descriptive work queries targeted at the supervisor. Any statements that were not information giving or seeking were coded into Miscellaneous. Fourth, the subordinates' information giving and information seeking statements were further analyzed to determine if the information was (a) introducing plans or ideas for change, (b) defending or justifying the subordinate's ability to perform, (c) building trust and/or a positive relationship, or (d) other (See Table 1 for examples).

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Table 1

Examples, Means, Standard Deviations and Ratios of Subordinate Statements

	Actual Examples	Total No. Occurrences	Mean No. Occurrences	Range of Acts	Mean ratio per episode[a]
Communication Acts					
Information Giving		246	3.78 (2.10)	1 - 9	.93 (.15)
Plan/Idea	"I would like to create a task form…"	188	2.90 (1.90)	0 - 8	.73 (.31)
Justification	"I will be really busy with planning…"	56	.86 (1.29)	0 - 5	.19 (.27)
Rapport	"Well, I know this will help the both of us…"	2	.03 (.25)	0 - 2	.01 (.04)
Information Seeking		24	.37 (.80)	0 - 4	.07 (.14)
Plan/Idea	"Could we change the time I come in?"	23	.35 (.80)	0 - 4	.07 (.15)
Justification	--	--	--	--	--
Rapport	--	--	--	--	--
Miscellaneous	"Is now a good time to talk?"	77	1.18 (1.33)	0 - 5	
Integrative Behaviors[b]					
Logrolling	Trade-offs, yielding of issues of high for low	2			
Problem-solving	Elaborate and collaborative information exchange	21			
Simple Request	Initial proposal accepted with no alteration	44			

N = 65 Note. Values enclosed in parentheses represent standard deviations. Dashes indicate that no statements were coded as fitting in this category.

a=Mean Ratio of Act to Total Number of Information Giving and Seeking Acts per Episode

b=Definitions, not examples, are provided for integrative behaviors

Fifth, following Jordon and Roloff's (1997) example of coding a series of negotiation statements, participants' role change dialogues were subsequently coded as a simple request or problem-solving behavior. A simple request was defined as an episode where the subordinate's initial proposal was accepted by the supervisor with minimal effort (e.g., Subordinate: "I would like to change the design of the linen room", Supervisor: "Go for it.") and without elaborate discussion of the proposed idea or plan. Simple requests did not require collaborative efforts to overcome conflicting interests or the discussion of alternative options. In a problem-solving episode the supervisor and subordinate worked together to reach a solution that was beneficial to both parties and the organization (Pruitt, 1983). Problem-solving included: (a) detailed discussion about the rationale and implementation strategies of the plan, (b) discussion and evaluation of potential outcomes, (c) consideration of possible alternatives, and/or (d) modification to ideas or plans following input from supervisor. Sixth, the dialogues were reanalyzed for evidence of logrolling behaviors. Logrolling was defined as trade-offs or yielding on issues of low-priority for gains on high priority issues (Pruitt, 1983; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988).

Following the coding of all reported episodes, miscellaneous statements were disregarded. The number of employees overall information giving statements, information giving ideas/plans, information giving justifications, information giving rapport, overall information seeking, information seeking ideas/plans, information seeking justifications, and information seeking rapport per episode were then calculated and each was divided by the total number of episodic employee statements. These ratios

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of statements served as the dependent variables to H1 and H2.

After the reported episodes were reviewed for information giving and seeking, each episode was coded for problem-solving or simple request behaviors. Episodes were coded as one (1) for problem-solving and zero (0) for simple request. Subsequently, the episodes were reviewed again for the use of logrolling behavior. Episodes showing evidence of logrolling behavior were coded as one (1) and those without logrolling were coded as zero (0). These categorical data served as the dependent variables for H3 and H4.

Sixty-five role negotiation episodes produced 347 statements from the dialogues reported by subordinates. Supervisory statements (n = 256) were not included in this study. For the purposes of assessing reliabilities, a primary coder coded all of the reported episodes and unitized statements. A secondary coder recoded 19 dialogues (29% of the sample) and 111 statements (32% of total subordinate statements). A third coder resolved any disagreements between the first two coders. Reliability of coding as determined by Cohen's kappa was .89, with 95% agreement for information giving ideas/plans, 88% agreement for information giving justification, 100% agreement for information giving rapport, 86% agreement for information seeking ideas/plans, and 95% agreement for miscellaneous statements. Reliability for problem-solving versus simple plans was Cohen's kappa = 1.00, (100% agreement), and 1.00 for Cohen's kappa for logrolling (100% agreement).

Background and Role Change Outcomes. Using Jablin's (1982) organizational status measure with "1=top" and "5=bottom," 5% of participants were in the top fifth of the hierarchy, 14% were in the second fifth, 49% in the middle of the hierarchy, 24% in

the next to bottom fifth, and 8% in the bottom of the hierarchy. Participants also reported perceiving that 37% (n=23) of their supervisors viewed their role changes as a pivotal change while 44% and 19% viewed the role change as relevant and peripheral, respectively (Miller, Meiners, Beery, & Kim, 2000).

In addition, participants reported considerable variability in how easy it was to get their supervisors to agree to role changes like the one they provided here (M = 3.33, SD = .99), the degree of change experienced in the strategic purpose of their job within the last six months (M = 2.94, SD = .94), the degree of change experienced in the manner of performing tasks in the last six months (M = 3.00, SD = .91), their satisfaction with role change (M = 3.27, SD = 1.00), and the extent they were successful in negotiating what they wanted in the role change (M = 3.33, SD = 1.02). Participants responded to the items using five point scales ranging from 1 = low to 5 = high. (The scale anchors are reported in Appendix C).

RESULTS

Research Question One inquired into subordinates' reported use of various communicative acts associated with role negotiation. As reported in Table 1, out of 347 statements reported by participants, 246 (71%) were identified as information giving acts, 24 (7%) were information seeking statements, and 77 (22%) were miscellaneous statements (χ^2 (2, N = 65) = 64.42, p<.0001). When removing miscellaneous statements, the mean ratio of overall reported information giving acts to all other acts per episode was .93 with information giving ideas/plans occurring at M ratio = .73, justification at M ratio = .19, and rapport at M ratio = .01 per episode. The mean ratio of overall reported information seeking per episode was .07, mirroring the M ratio = .07 per episode for employees seeking ideas/plans. Participants did not report any seeking justifications or rapport. Table 2 reports the means, standard deviations, and correlations between these variables and background and outcome variables.

An analysis of the overall role negotiation episodes indicated that in 44 (68%) of these episodes, participants made simple role change requests. In contrast, in 21 (32%) episodes participants engaged in problem-solving behaviors. A final re-analysis of all episodes reported in this study revealed logrolling occurring in two (3%) out of 65 possible instances.

Hypothesis One predicted that high quality LMX employees would report providing more ideas and plans to their supervisors than low LMX employees. T-tests revealed no significant differences (at p<.05) in the mean ratio per episode of giving

Table 2

<u>Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Coefficients</u>

	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) Ratio of information giving overall	.93	.15	-						
(2) Ratio of information giving plans	.73	.31	.45**	-					
(3) Ratio of information giving justification	.19	.27	.01	-.88**	-				
(4) Ratio of information giving rapport building	.01	.04	.06	-.23	.14	-			
(5) Ratio of information seeking overall	.07	.15	-.98**	-.44**	-.03	-.06	-		
(6) Ratio of information seeking plans	.07	0.15	-.99**	-.44**	-.03	-.06	1.00**	-	
(7) Leader-Member Exchange	3.77	.92	.00	-.07	.05	.15	.03	.02	-
(8) Ease of supervisor agreement with change	3.32	.99	-.02	.01	-.04	.09	.04	.04	.67**
(9) Change in strategic purpose of job	2.93	.94	-.10	-.11	.06	.14	.10	.10	.29*
(10) Change in manner of performing task	3.00	.91	-.12	-.00	-.06	.00	.11	.12	.23
(11) Satisfaction with change in role	3.27	1.00	-.10	-.09	.02	.09	.12	.12	.40**
(12) Perceived success in negotiation of change	3.33	1.02	-.08	-.04	-.02	.08	.10	.10	.57**

N = 65

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

Table 2 (con'd)

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Coefficients

	Mean	SD	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
(1) Ratio of information giving overall	.93	.15					
(2) Ratio of information giving plans	.73	.31					
(3) Ratio of information giving justification	.19	.27					
(4) Ratio of information giving rapport building	.01	.04					
(5) Ratio of information seeking overall	.07	.15					
(6) Ratio of information seeking plans	.07	0.15					
(7) Leader-Member Exchange	3.77	.92					
(8) Ease of supervisor agreement with change	3.32	.99	-				
(9) Change in strategic purpose of job	2.93	.94	.26*	-			
(10) Change in manner of performing task	3.00	.91	.28*	.63**	-		
(11) Satisfaction with change in role	3.27	1.00	.50**	.53***	.48**	-	
(12) Perceived success in negotiation of change	3.33	1.02	.58*	.32*	.31*	.72**	-

N = 65

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

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ideas and plans between high and low LMX employees. Analyses of mean differences between high and low LMX employees' ratios of information-giving justifications and rapport were also non significant. No significant differences were present in the ratio of overall information giving acts between the two groups. [3]

The second hypothesis predicted that high quality LMX employees would report seeking information about their ideas and plans for role change to a greater degree than low LMX employees. T-tests revealed no significant differences in the mean ratio per episode of high and low LMX participants' seeking information about their proposed ideas and plans. No significant differences were found for subsequent exploratory analyses of mean differences in ratios of overall information seeking acts between high and low LMX employees.

Hypothesis Three predicted that high quality LMX employees were more likely to report using problem-solving behaviors than low LMX employees while low LMX employees were more likely to make simple role change requests than high LMX employees. Results of a chi-square test revealed no significant differences in the problem-solving and simple request behaviors of high and low LMX employees. Subsequent exploratory analyses inquired into the relationship of problem-solving/simple requests with the giving and seeking of information on role change ideas and plans. Chi-square analyses revealed those making simple requests were more likely to provide between zero to two idea/plan statements while those engaging in problem-solving were

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[3] For tests of H1-2, power analysis for high LMX cells was determined to be .999 for large effects, .960 for medium effects, and .235 for small effects. For low LMX cells, power was determined to be .889 for large effects, .480 for medium effects, and .097 for small effects.

more likely to provide between three to eight idea/plan statements (χ^2 (4, $\underline{N}$ = 65) = 10.65, $\underline{p}$<.05). Similarly, chi-square analyses indicated that those making simple requests were more likely to either never or on one occasion to seek information regarding supervisory reaction to their ideas or plans while those engaging in problem-solving were more likely to seek such information between two and four times per episode (χ^2 (4, $\underline{N}$ = 65) = 14.56, $\underline{p}$<.006).

The fourth hypothesis predicted that high quality LMX employees were more likely to engage in logrolling than low LMX employees. Chi-square tests failed to reveal significant differences in logrolling behavior between high and low LMX participants.

Subsequent post hoc exploratory analyses examined differences in reported role negotiation circumstances and outcomes. Specifically, further analyses centered on the influence of participants' enactment of problem-solving or simple request communicative acts and the quality of LMX relationship on role negotiation circumstances and outcomes. Results of two-way analysis of variance indicated (high/low LMX x problem-solving/simple request) a significant interaction effect for participants' report of their success in getting what they initially sought in their role negotiation ($\underline{F}$ (1,60) = 5.15, $\underline{p}$<.03, $\underline{\eta}^2$ = .08) and near significant interaction for their satisfaction with role negotiations ($\underline{F}$ (1,60) = 3.07, $\underline{p}$<.09, $\underline{\eta}^2$ = .05). Post hoc tests also showed a significant main effect in their enactment of problem-solving versus simple role requests on participants' success ($\underline{F}$ (1,60) = 6.18, $\underline{p}$<.02, $\underline{\eta}^2$ = .09) and their satisfaction with the role change ($\underline{F}$ (1,60) = 6.08, $\underline{p}$<.02, $\underline{\eta}^2$ = .09). Significant main effects were not found for LMX on these outcomes. While these findings must be interpreted cautiously due to the small number of low LMX participants who engaged in problem-solving in the study, as

suggested in Table 3 low LMX employees who engaged in problem-solving reported greater success ($\underline{M}$ = 4.00) and satisfaction ($\underline{M}$ = 4.00) in their negotiations than low LMX employees who offered simple role change requests ($\underline{M}$ = 2.25, $\underline{M}$ = 2.42, respectively). No other significant interactions were present among other role change circumstances or outcome variables.

Post hoc analyses also identified significant differences associated with problem-solving versus simple requests in negotiations circumstances and outcomes. Specifically, employees who enacted problem-solving were more likely to report a greater change in the manner of performing their job ($\underline{M}$=3.35; $\underline{F}$ (1,62) = 4.56, $\underline{p}$<.04, $\underline{\eta}^2$ = .07) than those who made simple requests ($\underline{M}$ = 2.84).

Analyses also revealed that the nature of the role change (i.e., pivotal, relevant, or peripheral) varied between problem-solving and simple request communicative acts (χ^2 (2, $\underline{N}$ = 63) = 6.12, $\underline{p}$<.05). Subsequent analyses revealed that employees seeking pivotal role changes engaged in problem-solving acts to a greater degree than by chance while those seeking relevant role changes made simple requests to a greater degree than by chance. There were no significant differences in participants' report of the ease of getting their supervisor to agree to the role change or change in the strategic purpose of their job.

Finally, post hoc analyses revealed that high LMX employees ($\underline{M}$ = 3.64) reported greater ease in getting their supervisor to agree with the proposed role change ($\underline{F}$ (1,62) = 34.57, $\underline{p}$<.0001, $\underline{\eta}^2$ = .36) than low LMX employees ($\underline{M}$ = 2.21). High and low LMX

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and number of participants per cell tests of LMX by Negotiation for Success in and Satisfaction with Role Negotiation.

| | High LMX | | | | | | Low LMX | | | | | |
| | Problem-solving | | | Simple Request | | | Problem-solving | | | Simple Request | | |
	Mean	Std.	n	Mean	Std.	n	Mean	Std.	n	Mean	Std.	n
Success	3.61	.78	18	3.53	.92	32	4.00	.00	2	2.25	1.06	13
Satisfaction	3.61	.70	18	3.34	.87	32	4.00	.00	2	2.42	1.31	13

employees did not significantly differ in the pivotal, relevant, and peripheral nature of the role requests, change in the strategic purpose of their job, or change in the manner of performing their job.

Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

While it is generally believed that communicative behaviors are vital, even

necessary, for successful change in individual's jobs and work settings (Graen &

Scandura, 1987; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Katz & Khan, 1978), few studies explore the

communication behaviors surrounding role change or contributing to successful role

changes (Jablin, 2001). This study seeks, in an exploratory fashion, to investigate often

glossed-over details of communication related to role change. While results from the

study should be viewed cautiously due to their exploratory nature and the limited sample

of reported role episodes, the study extends insights well-founded in negotiation behavior

research (Jordon & Roloff, 1997; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988) and illuminates selective

aspects of communication within the role-making process (Graen, 1976; Graen &

Scandura). The following discussion considers this study's contributions toward

understanding role negotiation, limitations of this investigation, and suggests directions

for future investigations in this area.

<u>Negotiation Behaviors</u>

Scholarly works on negotiation, particularly on interactions during bargaining

between buyers and sellers (Jordon & Roloff, 1997; Pruitt, 1981; Pruitt & Lewis, 1975;

Tutzauer, 1992; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988) identify a number of communicative behaviors

such as information sharing and integrative procedures (e.g., problem-solving, logrolling,

expanding the pie) that are associated with greater joint gains and satisfaction among

participants. Indeed, this body of research sets forth a template for exploring negotiations

of all sorts within organizational settings.

In comparison to current negotiation and bargaining studies, this study's methodology is both elemental and limited. For some time now, scholars investigating exchanges in interpersonal and financially related bargaining and negotiations commonly consider hundreds or thousands of statements, interaction patterns between participants, and strategies emerging from dialogue (e.g., Bazerman & Lewicki, 1983; Jordan & Roloff, 1997; Putnam, 1985; Putnam & Jones, 1982; Pruitt & Lewis, 1975; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988). These investigations are aided by transcripts of interactions and limited topics at times set within a time frame. In contrast, this investigation relies on the recall of participants who provided information on an interaction that took place up to six months previously. However, the long neglect of communication behaviors associated with role change (Jablin, 2001) and even the potential value of rather broad, inexact conversational recalls in this case outweighs rather substantial methodological disadvantages anticipated by Stafford & Daly (1984). As such, interpretation of these findings should be guided by the recognition that employees are providing details of past conversations and that any one, particular reported episode may not be representative of their other interactions with their supervisor or of other role negotiations.

Within the confines of these limitations, however, this study provides important insights into employee role negotiation behaviors. Moving away from the narrowly defined salary or personal disputes associated with many organizational bargaining and conflict investigations, this research examines episodes affecting work processes and other employees. This study also considers role change efforts deemed "successful" in a very broad sense.

A particularly compelling set of findings from this study concerns the quantity of information giving statements, particularly with regard to giving ideas and plans for change reported across role episodes. Information exchange is a hallmark of integrative agreements (Pruitt, 1983), and it behooves employees to provide information on the parameters of the change and its rationale and to respond to any concerns expressed by their supervisor (Miller et al., 1996). As would be expected in episodes characterized as problem-solving, employees provide more ideas and plans than in episodes characterized as making simple requests. Employees engaging in problem-solving also seek information from their supervisors regarding these ideas and plans more than those making simple requests. Problem-solving may be the most appropriate tactic when role issues are complicated, others (i.e., role set members) are affected, the rationale or strategy for implementation requires explication, alternative actions must be weighed, and/or others must sign off on the idea or plan. Indeed, participants whose role change efforts were characterized as problem-solving report greater change in the manner of performing their jobs compared to those who make simple requests. Similarly, employees seeking pivotal role changes were more likely to engage in problem-solving while those employees seeking relevant role change were more likely to make simple requests. Pivotal changes, which alter the strategic nature of the role change (Schein, 1968), may affect other unit members' core responsibilities and be difficult to reverse if the change does not succeed.

Overall, the need for co-orientation when seeking role modifications and its importance to individuals and their units forms an important link between negotiation research (Pruitt, 1983, 1981; Putnam, 1985; Putnam & Poole, 1987; Putnam & Roloff,

1992; Tutzauer, 1992) and role research (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Jablin, 2001; Kahn et al., 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Data capturing efforts to modify organizational roles can provide researchers with a fertile and important range of issues that parties have high interest in settling amicably and quickly.

<u>Role-making</u>

Graen & Scandura (1987) posit that in role-making supervisors and subordinates define the nature of their dyadic relationship and reveal how they will behave in problematic situations. The role-making process aptly describes employee "individualization" and/or modification of their roles during their assimilation into the organization (e.g., Jablin, 1982; Fairhurst, 2001). While role-making portends to be a critical element in understanding employees actions and adjustments, with few exceptions (e.g., Zurcher, 1983) relatively scant details exist regarding how employees modify their roles and even less is known regarding its communication elements. While narrow in scope, several important initial indicators emerge from this investigation.

As an initial observation, it is interesting to note that two-thirds of participants in this sample make simple requests targeted at relevant role changes while a greater proportion of problem-solving interactions aim at pivotal role changes. Still, there are instances of employees making successful simple requests for pivotal and peripheral changes as well as employees successfully engaging in problem-solving to achieve relevant and peripheral role change. These findings suggest that role negotiations should be conceived very broadly to accommodate a simple request and ascent with little or no prior ground work as well as a protracted (e.g., over several weeks) and possibly difficult information exchanges. It is also evident that over half of the initial sample did not

experience a successful role change negotiation in the last six months, although it is unclear if the lack of negotiated changes is indicative of their overall work experience. For instance, some participants not reporting a role negotiation episode indicated that their most recent successful role negotiation was six months past. Others reported that they were in the midst of role negotiations. For the majority of participants not reporting role negotiation episodes, it is not known whether the others had successfully modified their roles through role negotiation or secondary adjustments, were in jobs that fit their needs and did not require adjustments, whether their supervisors were not receptive to role negotiations, or they had failed to achieve "success" in their negotiation efforts.

With regard to LMX relationship status, the mutual trust and support (Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989), common internal goals, mutual influence (Fairhurst, 2001), and considerable social exchanges provide high LMX employees' (Linden et al., 1993) considerable advantages in role negotiations. For instance, they report greater ease in getting their supervisor to agree to their role change goals, perhaps an outcome of their considerable supervisory access. In contrast, a lack of trust and support plus shortcomings perceived by their supervisors (Fairhurst, 2001; Linden et al., 1993) limit low LMX employees' negotiating latitude.

The emphasis on high LMX employees' prowess, however, should not obscure several important aspects of role negotiation. First, as evident from tests of the hypotheses, LMX status in this study is not a good predictor of employees' reported information giving or seeking behaviors or their engagement in problem-solving or simple requests. It is yet to be determined if the propensity to problem-solve or make simple requests over the course of a superior-subordinate relationship is due to the LMX

relationship, the nature of the proposed role change, or employees intrinsic communication patterns. Nonetheless, the results of this study suggest that role negotiation transcends the simple dichotomies often associated with LMX theory, which would suggest that high LMX employees can while low LMX employees can not negotiate their roles.

Second, while findings related to low LMX employees in this study should be viewed with caution, it is evident that low LMX employees do believe that they can negotiate their roles through problem-solving or making simple requests. Their success suggests that they were able to acquire information regarding their supervisor's preferences and/or needs in order to present or arrive at an acceptable role change. Such information seeking (Ashford & Black, 1996; Miller, et al., 1996) may be indicative of individual's overall reconnoitering pattern or isolated motivation to gather information to achieve a role change in a particular instance. Future role negotiation research should consider individual negotiation skills as some employees may readily accomplish role change through negotiation, regardless of their LMX status. Future investigations should also consider differences in supervisory negotiation skills (even among high LMX dyads) as some supervisors may be able to lead employees to or more quickly find integrative solutions. In considering the implications of low LMX employee role negotiation success, it is important to remember that roles are not static (Katz & Kahn, 1978), but constantly evolving (Jablin, 2001). Successful role negotiations and subsequent competent job performance, especially in the case of low LMX employees, could improve subordinates' relationship standing and result in supervisors being more open and trusting. Alternatively, success in negotiating and performing their roles could lead

some subordinates to become more goal-oriented, more knowledgeable of the social work environment, and emboldened to negotiate other aspects of their role.

<u>Workplace Implications</u>

Negotiation is a chief means to achieve coordination and trust between opposing parties and to gain jointly beneficial outcomes (Pruitt, 1983; Putnam & Roloff, 1992; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988). As employees seek to modify or change their roles in the workplace, it is vital that they understand role negotiation to be a viable means to attain their desired role change. Role negotiation even holds promise for low LMX employees as this study indicates that low LMX employees can successfully negotiate their roles. However, several issues should be considered by parties seeking to negotiate their roles: simple request versus problem-solving, information giving and seeking, and the importance of the role change.

Simple requests and problem-solving are both potential negotiation paths to attain successful role changes. Yet, even in simple requests, a minimal explanation of the rationale for the change, how to implement the change, and how related issues could be handled to everyone's benefit are likely to figure prominently in the immediate supervisor's mind. Problem-solving is likely to entail more elaborate discussion of details and implementation strategies, including alternative options and trade-offs. Such information may provide sufficient details for the supervisor so that the needs of the employee and work unit can be met. In this sense, information giving and seeking form the foundation to negotiations (Fisher & Ury, 1981; Pruitt, 1983, 1981). Integrative agreements, particularly problem-solving, depend on supervisors and subordinates acquiring and disclosing information sufficient enough in scope so the desired role

change can be seen in relation to unit needs and the function of other role set members. While considerable emphasis has been given to employee information seeking in recent years (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996), researchers and organization practitioners should also focus on employees' <u>information giving skills</u> so they can learn to provide detailed information and respond to supervisors' queries and alternative suggestions.

In terms of achieving pivotal role changes, employees' information giving and seeking skills may be particularly crucial. Pivotal changes that alter the strategic nature of the role, may have a profound impact on the unit, and, as suggested by this study, are associated with problem-solving behaviors and considerable information giving and seeking. Those seeking pivotal changes may need to discuss: who will be affected by the role change; who (other than supervisor) will partake in the decision making process; the potential costs/benefits to the subordinate, supervisor, co-workers, and organization; and the anticipated time for and process of implementation.

As noted earlier, comments from several participants in this study not reporting dialogues suggest their supervisor would never listen to their ideas. While these remarks come from the employees' perspective, organizations might consider encouraging their managers to be more open to employee ideas and suggestions for role change. Supervisors could be trained in listening skills as well as the use of negotiation tactics that would benefit themselves, the employee, and the organization as a whole. In other cases, as one conversation between the researcher and a supervisor of participating employees suggests, at times employees need to be more assertive and persistent in their role change requests.

<u>Limitations</u>

To gather data on employee role negotiation episodes as opposed to an artificial laboratory setting, this study relies on participants' recall of the conversations with their supervisors. Further, the mode of collecting the data is written rather than oral. As Stafford and Daly (1984) indicate, the total amount of details recalled using a written mode is significantly lower than when using an oral mode, due to hindrances of the free-flow of ideas that may occur in actual conversations. Akin to interpersonal communication research, participants may be more likely to recall the details of their supervisors' contribution to the conversation than their own (Stafford & Daly, 1984), thereby decreasing reports of their own information giving and seeking behaviors. On a related note, the importance of the change to the participant might also influence the amount of recalled information so that pivotal or possibly more beneficial (e.g., profitable, stress-relieving) changes would be recalled to a greater degree compared to other changes. Future research would be well-served to pursue actual recordings of role change conversations or gather additional information on negotiations through interviews following survey completion. Such detailed data may shed greater insight into employees' use of logrolling behaviors, which may not have been accessed by participants' written reports.

Using a widely-held practice (e.g., Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst et al., 1987; Lee, 1999), participants provided information on their LMX relationships. This study also relies on participants' perception of their supervisors' view of the magnitude or importance of the role change. While participants' perspective is valuable, subordinates tend to overestimate their supervisors' position (Schwab, 1999). Future research should

endeavor to produce a sampling design that obtains information from supervisors and subordinates. In addition to reducing the reliance on participants' perceptions of another's viewpoint, such data may provide a validation on the degree of the parties' co-orientation or agreement on the role change.

While role negotiation episodes reported by participants include recalled information of participants' and supervisors' conversations, only the partcipants' contributions are coded and analyzed. The coding of their information giving, seeking, problem-solving or simple requests, and logrolling behaviors provides insights into employees' mindset, but the influence of supervisors prompting and/or directing conversations on the role change is absent. Future research should seek to assess both supervisor and subordinate information exchange and negotiation behaviors to identify their impact on employee communicative behaviors during their role episodes.

Analyses of the data are also limited due to the number of low quality LMX participants. The comparably small number of low LMX participants reporting role negotiation episodes produces a restricted range of responses, especially in the low LMX by problem-solving cell. Future research should seek to obtain equal numbers of high and low quality LMX participants.

Finally, this study limits the allotted time (i.e., within the last six months) for reporting a past role change. Due to this time restraint, some participants do not report role changes occurring six months prior. It is important to note that a defining role modification may have occurred before these parameters, a modification that may reduce employees' need to engage in role-making. Alternatively, a major role change may have occurred outside the time frame of the study, and that change may have resulted in

employees seeking comparatively minor changes (e.g., simple requests) in the current study. Thus, researchers should consider collecting data longitudinally to assess such possibilities.

Future Research

Organizational scholars' understanding of roles and the fundamental process by which employees modify and change their roles can largely be traced to Katz and Kahn (1978) and Graen (1976). According to Ilgen and Hollenbeck (1991), Katz and Kahn (1978) introduce role properties, their parameters, and role-taking, where supervisors direct or initiate change and subordinates respond by enacting the role in a certain manner. For Graen (1976), in role-making subordinates initiate or modify their roles, and the role development process more closely reflects mutual influence. While these scholars greatly contribute to understanding employees' embracing or modifying their roles, much of the communicative aspects of these processes remains to be explored. Given that role-making is largely a communicative process (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Jablin, 2001; Katz, 1980) and that employees modify their roles throughout their tenure in a position (Jablin, 2001), it seems important to provide supervisors and subordinates with knowledge and skills to aid in negotiating their roles. Approaching role negotiation from a communication perspective promotes the analysis of the flow of information exchange, communicative behaviors associated with role change, forms of reciprocal influence between supervisors and subordinates, and impact of communicative behaviors during role negotiation on future role negotiation attempts.

Future research should consider the degree of complexity or associated issues inherent in the sought role change. The reasons that subordinates enact problem-solving

or simple plans could depend on what individual(s) will be affected by the role change, others who must assent to the role change or participate in the decision making process, and/or whether the role change will be immediate or is introduced over a period of time. Using surveys or interviews to uncover these details would provide greater insight into individuals' negotiating style. Researchers should also consider the complexity of the communication exchanges in role negotiation episodes. Information on supervisors cues, tone of voice, quickness of responses, and the like could provide a more thorough understanding of exchanges during role negotiations.

Future research should also evaluate subordinates' and supervisors' negotiating ability. Individuals vary in their communication skills and savvy in enacting those skills (Jablin & Sias, 2001). Researchers should examine participants' negotiation abilities to determine, for example, if simple plans are offered (versus problem-solving) due to circumstances prohibiting the offering or seeking of ideas for complex role problems behaviors or due to personality orientations affecting their negotiation styles (Putnam & Roloff, 1992; Tutzauer & Roloff, 1988).

In sum, role negotiation is an effective means for employees to modify or change their roles. Through role negotiation, employees can effectively add or lessen their workload, contribute creative and innovative ideas and plans, and participate in the decision making process determining their future role responsibilities. It is hoped that scholars will pursue role negotiation research in order to develop theoretical explanations and practical advice for employees seeking to modify their roles in conjunction with their supervisors. As such, research can provide insight into the details of the communicative aspects of role change and the development of the superior-subordinate relationship.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ROLE CHANGE STIMULUS

Most if not all employees have certain tasks they are required to perform as a member of their organization or company. But from time to time, and for various reasons, employees naturally come up with ideas about changing an aspect of their role(s) that benefited themselves or the organization. In some instances these changes are fundamental aspects of our job(s), and at other times they are unimportant aspects of our job(s).

We are interested in <u>one</u> change that you have sought within your job (in what you do or how you do your job), the importance of the change, and the behaviors and interactions between you and your supervisor to allow the changes.

Here are some examples of changes within their jobs that others have reported: Coming up with new assignments, improving the method of performing a job task, adding to or lessening my responsibilities, changing my work schedule, taking over a co-worker's tasks, creating new protocols, working at home one day a week, implementing an addition to the web site.

In the box below, please describe your <u>successful</u> role change experience and how you negotiated this change with your supervisor. Be sure to describe what you wanted to change, the importance of the change, and any dialogue and behaviors that you recall between you and your supervisor during the role change. Please use the same dialogue format as the example with the separation of what you said and did and what your supervisor said and did. If you need more room, please use the back of the paper. Be sure that your role change experience meet the following criteria:

- One specific change within your job - a change in what you do or how you do your job;
- A change within your current job, <u>NOT</u> a change to a "new job" or position with a new job title or new supervisor; and
- A change that YOU initiated and discussed with your supervisor, <u>NOT</u> a change you made without approval, or a change initiated by your supervisor.

APPENDIX B

SIX STEPS FOR CODING STATEMENTS

1. *Identify statements.* A <u>statement</u> is a single idea, answer, question, or suggestion articulated by an individual partaking in a negotiation. Anything that indicates a pause (where the other party begins talking), end of sentence, or shift in topic, conversation, or behavior is the beginning of a new statement.

    Each turn that an individual takes to speak can include more than one statement. For example, a person may ask, "What additional tasks are available for me to do on my spare time? The reason I am asking is because I have too much dead time and I would like some more work." This example would be three separate statements.

2. *Identify statements into evaluative work and descriptive work or evaluative non-work and descriptive non-work.* "<u>Evaluative work</u> information includes utterances expressing opinions or judgments related to discrepancies between expectations and experiences (overt surprises), job stress, self-evaluation of performance, qualities and attributes of the work role, and evaluations of individuals affiliated with the organization and the organization itself....<u>Descriptive work</u> information includes nonevaluative utterances related to such matters as task understanding, causes for task performance, task goals, and task instructions" (Jablin, 2001, p.774). This portion of the coding separates work related conversations from non-work related conversations.

3. *Code evaluative work and descriptive work statements into one of three categories: information seeking, information giving, miscellaneous.* For each dialogue, first identify all information seeking statements, then review again and identify all information giving statements. Any statements that are not information giving or seeking should be coded into the miscellaneous category.

    <u>Information seeking</u> refers to the soliciting of evaluative and/or descriptive work information from the other party in order to learn others' expectations and align both parties' positions in hope of reaching an agreement.

    <u>Information giving</u> refers to providing evaluative and/or descriptive work information through answering questions or responding to inquiries from the other party in order to establish or solicit reciprocity, identify positions, and inform the other party about expectations.

    <u>Miscellaneous</u> statements include statements that are not directly related to plans or ideas for change, justification of ability, or rapport building. Miscellaneous statements may include introductory dialogue such as "hello, can I have a moment of your time", conversation fillers or slang such as "Yep, Uh huh", concluding statements such as "thank you for your time" or any dialogue related to gossip, friendship, or extracurricular activities.

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4. *Code subordinate information seeking and information giving statements into one of three categories: idea or plan for change, justification, and rapport.* First code all information seeking statements then code all information giving statements.

    Idea or plan for change statements include statements that propose or present the individual's ideas or plans to change an existing work issue or condition. The idea or plan may contain details such as steps and/or time for implementation, additional responsibilities, areas or people that may be affected, rationale, or strategies.

    Examples of idea or plan for change statements:

    "The current computer system needs to be updated with the new customer service software and someone needs to be responsible to make sure we always have the latest version. I would like to take the responsibility to keep up to date with the latest software, and install it on each computer."

    "I think that the sales department needs to be crossed trained in all the areas so that if one of us is overwhelmed with work, the other people can help out. Since I am familiar with all the areas of sales, I would like to be responsible to train my peers and anyone else who would like to be trained."

    Justification statements include statements where the individual is explaining or defending his/her ability to perform additional tasks. Justification statements may contain details such as physical capability or incapability, mental/emotional capability or incapability, availability of time, issues of fairness, reflection on past performance, education, or comparison to others inability to do the same tasks.

    Examples of justification statements:

    "I think that I am capable of doing sales summary reports for the department. I know that I have extra time in my schedule and I think will be able handle more work. I know that my performance when I first started was not the best, but I have improved and my productivity level has increased."

    "I know that I have become friends with most my co-workers, but that will not interfere with my work if I am in charge of the department. I will be fair to everyone. I have taken management courses before and I know what it entails. I don't think that anyone else in this department is more qualified than me to perform this management task."

"Since the company downsized, my duties have increased and I find the workload to be too overbearing. I don't have time to complete all my tasks effectively and I would like to distribute my work among other staff members."

Rapport statements include statements that focus on wanting to build trust or build a positive relationship. Rapport building statements may include references to the current relationship or explicitly stating the desire to improve trust or build trust between the two parties.

Examples of rapport building statements:

"I would really like to see us work together on this project seeing that we have been working with each other for one year now."

"You can count on me to complete this job especially since you have always come through for me."

5. *Identify negotiating behaviors.* Review the dialogue in the episode and identify if the subordinates used simple request or problem-solving techniques to achieve their role change.

A simple request is an episode where the subordinate's initial proposal was accepted by the supervisor with minimal effort and without elaborate discussion of the proposed idea or plan. Simple requests do not require collaborative efforts to overcome conflicting interests or the discussion of alternative options.

Example of simple request:

You:	I think it would be better to copy the travel itinerary and give the traveler the copy as opposed to the original.
Supervisor:	So we wouldn't have to track down the original itinerary because we already have it?
You:	Yup.
Supervisor:	I talked to Linda and told her we were going to keep the original itinerary and give the copy to the traveler.
You:	Okay.

A problem-solving episode is when the supervisor and subordinate work together to reach a solution that is beneficial to both parties and the organization. Problem-solving includes: (a) detailed discussion about the rationale and implementation strategies of the plan, and (b) discussion and evaluation of potential outcomes, (c) consideration of possible alternatives, and/or (d) modification to ideas or plans following input from supervisor.

Example of Problem-solving:

You:	I think we have the opportunity here to expand our role at the hospital when you leave.
Supervisor:	How so?
You:	Instead of me becoming the "Security Manager" I could become the "Safety & Security Manager". I would manage both departments. We could hire a new Safety officer plus an assistant.
Supervisor:	Why would we (Company X) and the hospital want that?
You:	First, we would be expanding the account by 40 hours a week, plus we would cement our Safety service to the hospital.
Supervisor:	Sounds good but the hospital is already going to be upset with Company X with changing safety officers yet again.
You:	Well we could sell it by saying that my new expanded position actually brings more stability and emphasis on safety, especially as the federal inspections are coming up.
Supervisor:	Who and how would we find a new Safety Officer and assistant?
You:	How about that Navy guy who just applied? He has a health related degree and training. And we could promote one of our own for his assistant.
Supervisor:	Let me run this by (Company X boss) and (Company Y Boss).
You:	Okay
Supervisor:	(week or so later) Company X boss said it's a go if Company Y boss buys off on it.
You:	Great, you'll run it by Company Y boss? Do you want me to attend?
Supervisor:	I'll take care of it.
You:	Okay.
Supervisor:	(week or so later) Company Y boss likes the idea. Let's do it.

6. *Identify logrolling behaviors.* Review dialogue and identify if logrolling has been used in the role change episode. Logrolling refers to the yielding or trading off of issues of low-priority for gains on high priority issues.

Example of logrolling:

You:	I would like to start visiting all the clients with the sales representatives.
Supervisor:	That is a big step. How about assisting in preparing the agendas?
You:	That won't give me the experience I really need.
Supervisor:	At least you will be aware of what is being presented.
You:	Okay, I will prepare the agendas as long as I can visit at least one or two clients on occasion.
Supervisor:	That sounds like a great plan.

APPENDIX C

ROLE INFORMATION QUESTIONS

1 = Low, 5 = High

1. It is relatively easy to get my supervisor to agree to changes like the one I just described.

1				5
to a	to a	to	to a	to a
very little	little	some	great	very great
extent	extent	extent	extent	extent

2. *Overall*, how much did the strategic purpose of your job change in the last six months?

1				5
no	minor	some	major	total
change	change	change	change	change

3. Overall, how much did the manner of performing tasks or the way you did your job change in the last six months?

1				5
no	minor	some	major	total
change	change	change	change	change

4. To what extent were you satisfied with the role change?

1				5
to a	to a	to	to a	to a
very little	little	some	great	very great
extent	extent	extent	extent	extent

5. To what extent were you successful in negotiating what you wanted in the role change?

1				5
to a	to a	to	to a	to a
very little	little	some	great	very great
extent	extent	extent	extent	extent

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