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A study of role ambiguity, role conflict, and job satisfaction for selected noncertified Nebraska personnel

Black, Rick Douglas, Ed.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1988

A STUDY OF ROLE AMBIGUITY, ROLE CONFLICT, AND JOB SATISFACTION

FOR SELECTED NONCERTIFIED NEBRASKA PERSONNEL

by

Rick D. Black

A DISSERTATION

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Major:  Interdepartmental Area of Administration,
Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor L. James Walter
and Professor William Sesow

Lincoln, Nebraska

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# TITLE

A STUDY OF ROLE AMBIGUITY, ROLE CONFLICT, AND JOB SATISFACTION

FOR SELECTED NONCERTIFIED NEBRASKA PERSONNEL

## BY

Rick D. Black

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# A STUDY OF ROLE AMBIGUITY, ROLE CONFLICT, AND JOB SATISFACTION

## FOR SELECTED NONCERTIFIED NEBRASKA PERSONNEL

Rick D. Black, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 1988

Advisors:  L. James Walter and William Sesow

The purpose of the study was to make recommendations to school administrators for establishing work environments in which employees can be most productive by measuring the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in selected noncertified employee groups.  Specific research questions addressed were:  Are there significant differences in the variables for clerical, custodial and maintenance, and food service workers when considered by (1) role group and (2) other demographic factors?  Also, (3) how do the employee groups compare with other groups in national measures for job satisfaction?

The variables studied were found to have distinct qualities according to previous studies.  The review of literature substantiated the findings that there is a correlation between the three variables when tested to measure perceptions in role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction.

The population for the study included the noncertified public school employees presently employed in Class II, III, and VI school districts in Nebraska.  A random sample was drawn from these classifications of districts.  The return rate was 73.0 percent of the 580 surveys; the completed surveys were analyzed for this study.

An analysis of variance for the role conflict and role ambiguity variables found significant differences between the role groups. The Tukey test for significant pair-wise mean differences found: custodial/maintenance workers had higher levels of role conflict and lower levels of role ambiguity than clerical and food service workers; role conflict was lower for workers 61 and over than in all categories except the 21-30 age category; and role ambiguity was higher for all groups older than 21-30 years.

Significant differences existed in six of ten job satisfaction subscales. Custodial/maintenance workers had lower levels of satisfaction on all subscales. The age groups of 41-50 and 21-30 exhibited low levels of job satisfaction.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

supported me in every way possible, and provided me with the inspiration to complete this task.  Hopefully some of the sacrifices that had to be made by Kyle and our children, Erin, Courtney, Devon, and Josh can finally begin to be repaired.

R.D.B.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I is divided into seven sections consisting of the context of the study, the problem statement, the research questions that were addressed, the definition of terms, assumptions, limitations of the study, significance of the study, and design of the study.

## Context of the Study

Over the last twenty-five years attention has been paid to improving the performance of employees. Much research has been conducted related to the need for clear job descriptions, skill development, and job satisfaction in a variety of vocations. The effects of productivity, based upon how workers feel about their jobs, have been examined by business and industry. Employee participation and input into improvements in the workplace can be found in research on quality circles and theories X, Y, and Z (Ouchi, 1981). Only limited research has been conducted in education to determine if there is a relationship between employee understanding of their roles, what obstacles slow their progress, and how satisfied they are with their jobs.

Within education, the concept of staff development is recognized as an effective vehicle for delivering needed skills and information to improve job performance. Howey, Bents, and Corrigan (1981) pointed out the increasing efforts of educators to meet the needs of certified staff through staff development programs. When certified

staff members were involved in the planning of programs to meet perceived or identified needs, the results of the interventions were much more effective in changing behaviors. Morale levels were increased when the certified employees took part, and changes were more likely to occur. However, similar efforts have not been frequently conducted to address these issues with noncertified staff.

Noncertified employees play an important role in education, whether it be in the role of secretary, food service worker, or custodian. These people perform tasks that allow certificated staff members to concentrate on the task of educating students. With today's constraints on school budgets, the need for a well-trained, knowledgeable support staff is important. Through training and a thorough understanding of the assigned position, the unnecessary duplication of effort, mistakes in carrying out duties, and the costly misuse of materials and supplies can be avoided. As with certified staff, when noncertified employees have difficulties carrying out their assigned duties efforts must be made to correct the problem. When noncertified staff are able to carry out their duties with a minimum of direct supervision, the building administrator will be able to devote more time and attention to instructional matters.

A study conducted by Greenfield and Blase (1981) about performance-shaping factors in jobs revealed:

> Effective performance results when effort overcomes job-related interferences and leads to the achievement of valued outcomes and rewards as determined by the individuals' perceptions of their needs. Effective performance increases satisfaction, involvement, and motivation which, in turn, results in continued and, perhaps, increased effort.

DiGeronimo (1986) stressed the need to meet with clerical and custodial staff to review their concerns and suggestions for improving operations. The vast majority of support personnel want to do an effective job, and they want to be considered an important part of the educational team. By showing an interest in support staff input, "morale will improve as well as the overall efficiency and productivity of the staff" (p. 26). The administrator, if successful, is able to manage certificated staff as well as non-teaching classified staff effectively.

Knowledge of the selection, management, and training of all staff members demands continuous honing of managerial skills for administrators (Kent, 1986). The critical role which the school environment plays in achieving educational excellence is important. For example, if the building is too hot or too cold, students' minds are not on learning but rather on their levels of physical discomfort. The need for knowledgeable, well-trained staff to fill the positions that control the environment is a necessity. The management of staff is improved by the assurance that staff members understand their roles and supervisor expectations (Hutchinson, 1972).

When a person does not understand the job or possess the necessary skills to complete a task successfully, distress and job dissatisfaction may result. Brauer (1980), in her study of subject area consultants and building principals, and Rippe (1983), in his study of school administrators and teachers, attempted to measure the factors that interfere with job effectiveness. The authors indicated that when a lack of clarity existed for workers in job expectations, their

levels of job satisfaction were negatively affected. The authors further revealed that job satisfaction levels were lower for employees who received a variety of conflicting instructions from different supervisors. Careful alignment of employee abilities with assigned positions must occur to increase the likelihood of worker success. When this alignment happens, both the individual and the organization benefit (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Every position in a formal organizational structure, according to classical organizational theory, should have a specific job description so the employee can be held accountable for specific job responsibilities to provide guidance and direction for the individual worker (Bell, 1982). If individuals do not know what authority they have, what they are expected to accomplish, and how they will be evaluated, they are more likely to be hesitant to make decisions. The result will most likely be the use of a trial and error method which may result in the use of either avoidance techniques or defense mechanisms and an increased level of anxiety and dissatisfaction. When this occurs, the individual is not likely to perform effectively (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Kuiper and Van Huss (1981) used studies of managerial, supervisory, and professional level workers to examine the effects of ambiguous and conflicting expectations upon lower-level office employees. They found that when ambiguity exists, workers' levels of frustration and confusion were elevated. The understanding of role stresses experienced by office employees appears to be just as essential as the understanding of stresses experienced by supervisory

and managerial employees. To reduce the possibilities of these stresses, understanding and communication of expectations must occur.

Herman (1980) studied the work of district noncertified personnel and determined that management is responsible for keeping productivity high. This can occur through clear expectations and the development of a sense of belonging through employee involvement. If individuals do not understand their role (role ambiguity) or if employees sense a high level of expectation for productivity from their supervisor and only a moderate level of production for their co-workers (role conflict), decreased efficiency in their individual job will result. Landy and Trumbo (1980) stated, "Research on conflict and ambiguity is likely to increase considerably the understanding of work-related stress, job satisfaction, and leader effectiveness."

A major problem in an organization results when an unclear chain of command causes confusion. Difficulties also arise when the feeling of a lack of involvement in decision making exists among the employees. Feelings of alienation and confusion can lead to employee dissatisfaction within the organization (Thompson & Pitts, 1979). Dissatisfaction often results in observed employee ineffectiveness. According to a study by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970), a clear chain of command allows for a reduction of stress and an increase in satisfaction and productivity, particularly when directions are given by one superior.

Historically, little attention has been paid to employee input regarding their jobs and what skills or knowledge they need to perform their duties effectively (Zachmann, 1981). Frequently, job descriptions do not exist or employees roles are so undefined in the organizational

structure that the result is confusion on the part of the employees. If employees do not know what authority they have, what they are expected to accomplish, or how they will be evaluated, they will be more reluctant to make decisions. This reluctance frequently leads to an increase in anxiety and dissatisfaction and a diminished level of employee effectiveness (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Further study regarding the relationship of role ambiguity, role conflict, and job satisfaction in educational settings is needed due to the lack of previous attention given to these areas. Similar stresses exist among certified and noncertified personnel and, according to Kuiper and Van Huss (1981), even less consideration has been given to how these dimensions affect the roles of noncertified personnel.

## Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to make recommendations to school administrators regarding the establishment of work environments in which noncertified employees can be most productive by measuring the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in selected noncertified employee groups.

## Research Questions

The specific research questions examined in this study were:

1. What are the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among noncertified school employee groups?

2. Are there relationships between levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in noncertified school employee groups

when grouped by the demographic factors of age, sex, educational level, years in current position, and current position?

3. How do selected school employee groups in Nebraska compare with other employee groups found in national studies on job satisfaction?

## Definitions of Terms

Clerical staff. Those employees charged with keeping records (attendance, hot lunch, etc.), handling correspondence, receptionist duties, and/or financial record keeping in the school.

Custodial/maintenance staff. Those employees assigned the care, upkeep, and maintenance of a building.

Food service staff. Those employees assigned to the preparation, serving, and clean-up of all aspects related to school lunch programs.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction includes the level of morale, the feelings of a person toward the work environment, a person's tone or attitude, and a degree of happiness with one's position.

Noncertified staff. Those individuals, with the exception of bus drivers and teacher aides, employed by school districts to provide support services directly to administrators, teachers, or to the physical plant. It is not necessary for noncertified staff members to hold a certificate or license to be employed in their roles.

Role ambiguity. The perceptions of individuals about the degree to which required information is available to them as the occupant of a given role within an organization (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Role conflict. The perceptions of individuals about the in-congruence of demands placed upon them as the occupant of a given role within an organization (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Staff development. A broad category composed of inservice, training, personal growth, and professional growth components. Staff development includes those programs, activities, and growth experiences which promote an effective and productive work environment. Activities are both mandatory and voluntary in nature.

## Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the following assumption was made:

1. All instruments that were returned were answered honestly.

## Limitations of the Study

1. The results of this study may be generalized only to non-certified employees in Class II, III, and VI schools in Nebraska.

2. The recommendations made were based solely upon employee perceptions of job satisfaction, role conflict, and role ambiguity.

3. The study was limited to the relationships of the three work perception variables: job satisfaction, role conflict, and role ambiguity.

## Significance of the Study

The staff of a school system is composed of diverse personalities performing specialized tasks to support a sound educational program for the students in that system. Increasing importance has been given to the improvement and development of certified staff. A number of studies (Bell, 1982; Booth, Norton, Webster, & Berry, 1976; Kahn, 1961; Kuiper & Van Huss, 1981) found that continuity of staff members is necessary to develop and maintain high quality programs. This continuity logically carries over into the area of noncertified personnel. The need to provide constant direction to an employee, regardless of that person's role, detracts from the time that could be spent on the delivery and development of educational opportunities to students.

Factors that increase stress and dissatisfaction with the job were identified in this study. These factors include elements that have resulted in workers leaving their jobs or in being less effective than expected. The results of the study can provide school districts with information concerning the feelings of noncertified staff members about their roles. The results of the study can be used by school districts, universities, colleges, and professional organizations to recognize the importance of training and developing noncertified employees.

## Design of the Study

### Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of the noncertified school employees employed in Class II, III, and VI school districts as classified by the Nebraska Department of Education. The sample consisted of employees from the clerical, custodial, and food service areas of the school districts and included representation of either 10 percent of the schools or 10 schools per class of district, whichever was greatest. Since the purpose of this study was to give direction to those school administrators charged with working with all facets of schoool operation, Lincoln and Omaha school districts were omitted from the study as they had administrators whose sole purpose was to work with the supervision and training of clerical, custodial, and food service staff members. A random sample of schools was drawn from each classification of school size category by the Management Information Systems section of the Nebraska Department of Education. A computer printout was prepared listing a random selection of Class II, III, and VI schools. Schools in each classification were contacted until the criterion of 10 percent of the schools or 10 schools, whichever was greatest, was achieved.

### Instrumentation

The Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman Scale (1970), as revised by Brauer (1980), was used to measure the role conflict and role ambiguity of the respondents. Minor changes were made in the Likert-type scale of the instrument. Seven choices for each item, ranging from very

true to very false, were provided on the original instrument; four choices, ranging from almost always to almost never, were provided on the Likert-type scale of the adapted instrument. The Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman Scale (1970) was selected based upon its reported reliability level of .879.

Job satisfaction was measured by the Work Environment Scale (WES) which was developed in 1974 by Insel and Moos. The WES includes ten subscales that measure the social environments of different work settings. Form R (Real Form), which measures the existing work environments, was selected. Three basic domains are examined by the ten subscales; they are grouped as follows: the Relationship dimension, the Personal Growth dimension, and the System Maintenance/System Change dimension. Each of the ten subscales consists of nine separate, yet related, questions. The 90-item, ten subscale Form R has shown internal consistency of nearly .80. The level of intercorrelation between subscales and test-retest reliability ranges from .69 to .83.

## Procedures

The superintendents of the randomly selected Class II, III, and VI school districts were contacted by a letter requesting their assistance in the study by both allowing the staff members to participate and by informing the author of the number of noncertified staff members employed by the district. When the signed agreement to participate was received from the participating school's superintendent, letters explaining the study and the survey instruments and self-addressed, stamped envelopes to be returned directly to the researcher were sent in the determined

quantities to the school districts. The districts distributed the letter, surveys, and envelopes to the participants. If the school refused to participate, the next school in the designated classification was contacted until a 10-school or 10-percent level of participation in each class of schools was reached. Each superintendent and study participant received a copy of the group results from the survey.

The participants received two separate surveys. They were asked to complete the Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman Scale and the Work Environment Scale as each related to their current district assignment. The respondents were asked to complete the surveys and return them within ten days. A check-off system was used to ensure return by districts agreeing to participate. The analysis was completed on those surveys returned.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## Introduction

The review of literature was undertaken to identify those
theoretical hypotheses and findings regarding the relationships between
and among three variables:  role conflict, role ambiguity, and job
satisfaction.  Chapter II is divided into five sections:  role theory,
role conflict, role ambiguity, job satisfaction, and research findings
about the relationships of these variables.  The literature review
includes research in education concerning certified and noncertified
staff members  and in work settings other than education where research
on the three variables has been done previously.

## Role Theory

Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) found that individuals within
an organization are likely to experience dissatisfaction and be inef-
fective in their performance when the expectations within organizations
are inconsistent.  Lowered organizational productivity may result from
worker dissatisfaction and ineffectiveness.  A clear description of
the worker's role and a complete description of how an employee's
effectiveness will be judged must be given to each person.  If this is
not done, employees will experience role ambiguity which will lead to
either or both lowered productivity and dissatisfaction within the
organization.

Most studies examining the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction have used samples of managerial, supervisory, or professional personnel. In a study done by Kuiper and Van Huss (1981), a need for clarity of roles and expectations was confirmed in a sample of lower-level school district office employees. The findings indicated that the need for employees to understand their position and the expectations of supervisors exists in support personnel just as it exists in managers and supervisors. When clarity and expectations are lacking, job satisfaction can be adversely affected.

The behavior of workers was found to be affected by the role of individuals in a study conducted by Argyle (1972). According to Argyle, the role of the individual is often changed if a worker is replaced by another despite attempts to standardize roles through job descriptions.

Kahn, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) completed a study concerning the evolvement of a particular role for an individual employee. A model was developed (Figure 1) to illustrate the intervening forces by which individuals adjust to ambiguity and conflict in their roles. The authors concluded that this need for adjustment may result from the interaction of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction experienced by the individual within the organization. A cyclical pattern evolved which demonstrates the multiple roles that each individual performs in the day-to-day fulfillment of the position.
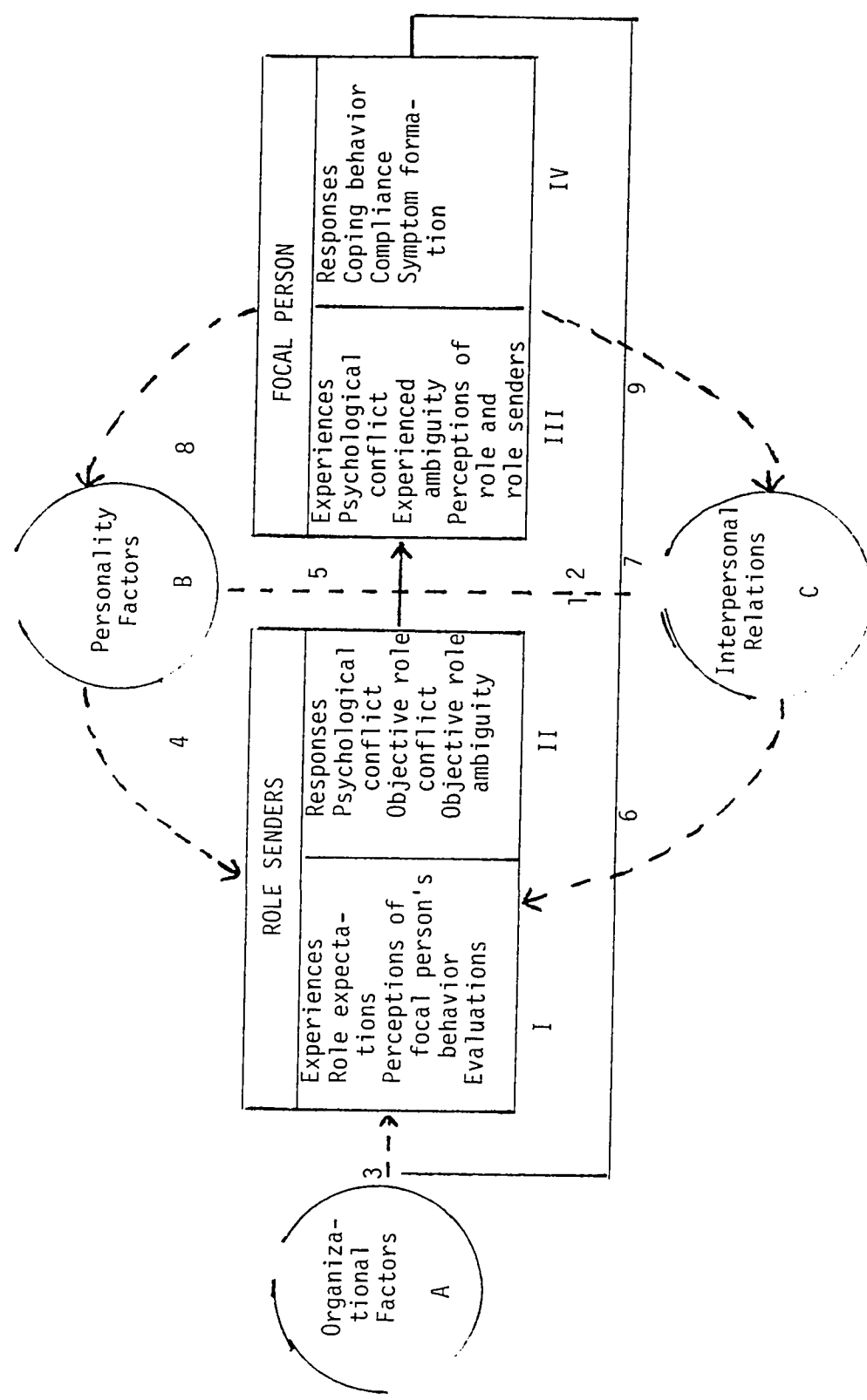
Figure 1

Theoretical Model of Factors Involved in Adjustment
to Role Conflict and Ambiguity

## Role Conflict

According to Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970), role conflict is defined as "the perceptions of individuals about the incongruence of demands placed upon them as the occupant of a given role within an organization." Porter, Lawlor, and Hackman (1975) pointed out that while the demands of the organization and the individual may frequently be the same, there are times that it is not possible for individuals to meet both their needs and those of the organization. In these cases, choices must be made as to which demands will be met, and as a result, the individual is in a state of role conflict. The authors further found that in these types of situations individuals will choose the demands with the highest payoff or those that are least likely to result in negative consequences for the worker.

Miles and Perrault (1976) stated that role conflict is related to unsatisfactory personal and organizational outcomes. According to the authors, a direct relationship may exist between role conflict and such work-related outcomes as job dissatisfaction, job-related tension and anxiety, lack of confidence in the organization, and "unfavorable attitude toward role senders."

Hamner and Tosi (1984) suggested that role conflict was more important as a predictor of job dissatisfaction than role ambiguity in "low-level nonsupervisory" employees. They further stated that the opposite was true in supervising or managerial employees.

In a 1964 study, Kahn, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal described four types of role conflict that exist in individuals and organizations.

Landy and Trumbo (1980) confirmed that the areas of person-role conflict, inter-role conflict, inter-sender conflict, and intra-sender conflict were situations most workers are faced with at sometime in their career. Kahn et al. (1964) defined these types of conflicts as:

1. Person-role conflict: inconsistency between the focal person's values and the defined role behavior.

2. Inter-role conflict: inconsistent expectations associated with two or more roles held by the focal person.

3. Inter-sender conflict: incompatible expectations held for the focal person by two or more senders.

4. Intra-sender: incompatible expectations conveyed by a single role sender. (pp. 18-20)

Misunderstanding of what role is or from a change in expected behavior may result in person-role conflict. In order for this type of conflict to be resolved, a change in role expectation or a change in the individual worker's values must occur.

When more than one role is held by one person, inter-role conflict occurs. An executive secretary is one example of a person having a number of roles. Kuiper and Van Huss (1981) pointed out that in this position a person serves as an allocator of supplies, is privy to various information ranging from confidential to general knowledge, and monitors activities of other employees. This may result in the supervisor expecting the executive secretary to act in one manner while fellow clerical workers expect a different attitude and method of operation. Katz and Kahn (1966) found that persons in management and supervisory positions are more likely to experience conflict in

complex organizations. A clearly outlined, single flow of authority from top to bottom will result in a reduction of inter-role conflict according to Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970).

Kahn et al. (1964) pointed out the high incidence of inter-sender conflict within organizations. According to the authors, 48 percent of industrial workers experience this type of conflict. Personality needs of individuals, when in conflict with the bureaucratic role designed by the organization, tend to lead to a decline in self-esteem and personal satisfaction or effectiveness in the role. In these instances, an increase in role conflict will result as the level of personal control over one's position diminishes. Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) mentioned one example of role conflict in the medical field was the dual authority role of medical staff and the hospital management team. Some theorists (Kahn et al., 1964; Miles & Perrault, 1974) have found that the potential for role conflict is higher in boundary-role positions than in other positions because incumbents are subject to the influence attempts of many different organizations. The diverse demands on noncertified staff from faculty, administrators, students, parents, and other school clientele may account for this conflict according to Kuiper and Van Huss (1981).

The fourth type of conflict is intra-sender conflict. This conflict is most likely to occur when supervisor-enforced policies are either unclear or are unfairly or inconsistently enforced. Herman (1980) found that many personnel concerns are rooted in communication problems. An exchange of information must occur between supervisors

and subordinates that will lead to a better understanding of managerial
expectations and employee abilities. Improved communications may help
employers understand the organization's decision-making process and
environment.

## Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity has been defined by VanSell, Grief, and Schuler
(1977) as "the degree to which clear information is lacking regarding
(a) the expectations associated with a role, (b) the methods for ful-
filling known role expectations, and/or (c) the consequences of role
performances." For example, a secretary might experience role
ambiguity in the following cases:

1. Information is lacking whether behavior A (screen all
   incoming calls) or behavior B (screen incoming calls
   only when the boss is in conference) is expected;

2. Information exists that a particular outcome (create
   an environment that adds to the employer's productivity)
   is expected, but information is unclear about what
   behavior will yield that outcome;

3. The consequences of a behavior (screen all incoming
   calls) are unclear.

Role ambiguity can be conceptualized objectively, as correlates of
job or organizational structure, or subjectively, as individual
idiosyncratic reactions (VanSell et al., 1977).

A positive relationship between role ambiguity and such un-
desirable behavioral outcomes as job dissatisfaction, job-related
tension, anxiety, and unfavorable attitudes toward role senders has
been repeatedly found in role perception studies. In a comprehensive

review of the literature on role perceptions, VanSell, Brief, and Schuler (1977) identified 17 correlational studies in which role ambiguity was positively related to job dissatisfaction or negatively related to job satisfaction.

In a 1964 study of industrial workers by Kahn et al., 35 percent of the employees claimed the scope and responsibilities of their jobs were unclear. Ambiguity was more prevalent in new jobs or those for which no specific guidelines existed. Workers with a need for structure were more likely to possess role ambiguity (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Beehr (1986) examined situational variables in the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction. He found that in cohesive groups job dissatisfaction was more closely related to role ambiguity than in noncohesive groups. Beehr's interpretation was that cohesive groups have more opportunity to discuss their uncertainties about the requirements of their roles and to convert their anxieties into job dissatisfaction with other workers in the organization. Less cohesive groups are more likely to direct their responses to role ambiguity internally and feel self-dissatisfaction rather than dissatisfaction with the work or organization.

## Job Satisfaction

Moss (1981) defined job satisfaction as the "level of morale or feelings that one has toward his or her work environment." A person's degree of happiness or attitude toward the assigned position has been mentioned frequently when researchers discussed job satisfaction.

Eight main criteria for quality of work life were identified by Mueller (1978):

1. Adequate and fair compensation

2. Safe and healthy working conditions

3. Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities

4. Future opportunities for continued growth and security

5. Social integration in the work organization

6. Constitutionalism in the work organization

7. Total life space

8. Social relevance of work life (p. 12)

The quality of work life is used synonymously with job satisfaction. The criteria identified by Mueller provide definite areas to consider when attempting to understand what may affect employee attitudes or behaviors in relation to the work place. Although the eight criteria work in combination, any one element that is perceived adversely may lower the level of job satisfaction.

Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) studied the variables of satisfaction with work, pay, co-workers, supervision, and promotion opportunities in determining the level of job satisfaction in clerical workers. They found low levels of satisfaction in the areas of pay and opportunities for promotion, while the supervisor and co-worker dimensions were relatively high in levels of satisfaction.

In a 1976 study, Booth, Norton, Webster, and Berry used an adapted version of Moos' (1974) Work Environment Scale to determine differences in work environment perceptions using custodians, janitors,

and maintenance workers as part of the sample. The findings indicated that high levels of satisfaction existed in the areas of peer cohesion and supervisor support, while lower levels of satisfaction occurred in the work pressure and clarity subscales.

Thompson and Pitts (1979) emphasized the need for the exchange of information between supervisors and subordinates. Improved communications lead to better understanding or a clarity in expectations. By modifying jobs to meet individual needs fulfillment through the performance of a given task, satisfaction is likely to increase as well as the performance of the employees.

Bell (1982) discussed the importance of feedback to improve clarity on the job. If attainment of the identified work goal occurs, satisfaction and increased productivity occur. Feedback or communication not only allows work goal to work output comparisons to exist, but also energizes the worker (see the dotted line in Figure 2).
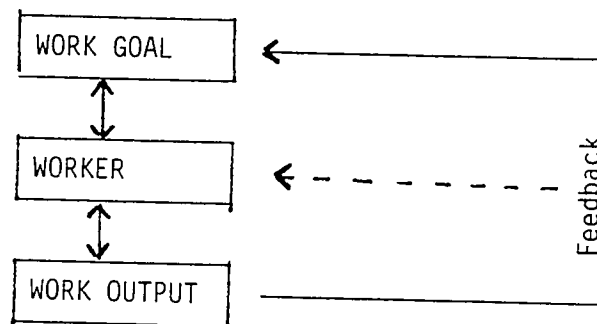
Figure 2

The Importance of Feedback to Job Clarity

At least 12 key elements exist in Bell's (1982) Staff Productivity
Model that are important in causing human energy to flow through the
system, resulting in optimum work output. There is a continuum from
low to high at each level. Each element is shown similarly, with the
positive end of the continuum on the right; that is, high goal clarity
is positive and low goal clarity is negative.



```
   ┌──────────────┐
   │  WORK GOAL   │◄─────────────────────────────────────┐
   └──────────────┘                                       │
          ▲                                               │
Lo   ┌ Goal Clarity      ┐  Hi                            │
                                                          │
Lo   ┌ Goal Commitment   ┐  Hi                            │
                                                          │
Lo   ┌ Goal Conflict     ┐  Hi                            │
          │                                               │
          ▼           None    Experienced Consequences  Many
                                                          │
       WORKER  — — — —  None    Available Consequences   Many
          ▲                                               │
          │           Lo     Work Freedom              Hi
Lo   ┌ Role-Person Match ┐  Hi   Lo  Perceived Value of Work  Hi
                                                          │
Lo   ┌ Tools and Training ┐  Hi  Lo  Clear & Rapid Performance  Hi
                                                          │
Lo   ┌ Reward and Expectations ┐  Hi                      │
                                                          │
Lo   ┌ Obstacles         ┐  Hi                            │
          │                                               │
          ▼                                               │
   ┌──────────────┐                                       │
   │ WORKER OUTPUT │──────────────────────────────────────┘
   └──────────────┘
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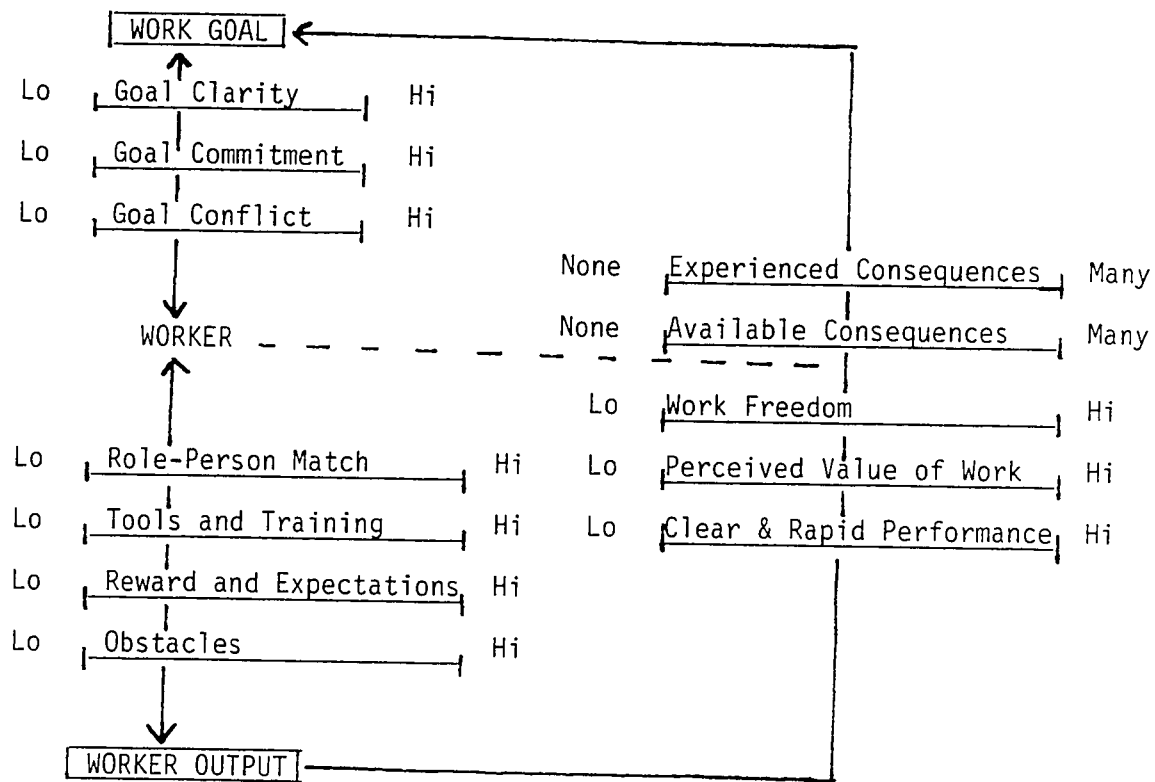
Figure 3

Staff Productivity Model

Source:  Bell, C. R. (1982, February).  Energize your staff to improve
         productivity.  Management Review, 47.

Organization stresses, which lead to job dissatisfaction, are developed by role conflicts that managers acquire in trying to satisfy conflicting demands and in trying to cope with stresses caused by uncertainty in role or functions (Mueller, 1978). As seen in Figure 3, the higher the element is on the continuum, the greater the success rate will be for the worker and the higher the level of job satisfaction.

The relationship of job satisfaction to various psychological factors is illustrated in Figure 4. Individuals act because of certain driving forces within themselves called "need." The need hierachy is important to the supervisor of noncertified workers (Kahalas, Groves, & Bonham, 1976). An inherent difficulty exists when attempting to understand the behavior of the worker without first knowing what need demands have caused the behavior. Need deficiency often results in unwanted behaviors. The job and the work environment play a major role in satisfying these needs.

| Stimulus (cause) $\longrightarrow$ | Needs (wants) Tensions Discomforts $\longrightarrow$ | Overt Behavior (effect) $\longrightarrow$ | Achievement (end) |
|---|---|---|---|
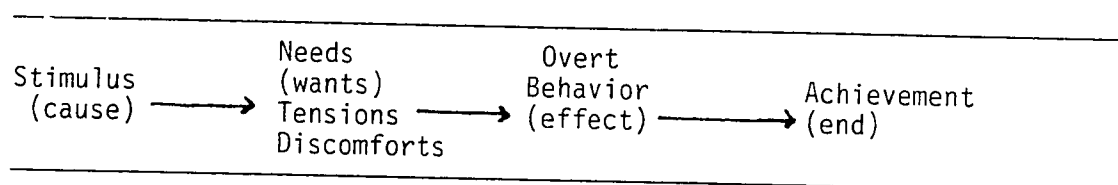
Figure 4

Simplified Overt Behavior Model

Source:  Kahalas, H., Groves, D., & Bonham, W. T. (1976, July). How to deal with your custodians. School Business Affairs, 169.

Individual effort is determined by the value of an expected reward and the probability that the reward depends on the effort. Performance is a direct result of the effort with two intervening variables: the person's abilities and traits and the individual's role perception. Performance results in the reward which leads to satisfaction provided that the intervening variable, expected reward, is present (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975).

Peters and Waterman (1982) emphasized the need for respect for the individual if the organization seeks to increase efficiency and productivity. They pointed out that "mollycoddling" was not necessary. In order for organizational officials to be effective, they must display tough-minded respect for the individual and a willingness to provide training, establish reasonable and clear expectations, and grant practical autonomy to the individuals to step out and contribute directly to the job.

Peters (1985) continued to stress the positive effects of a "person" orientation in organizations. He pointed out that tough-mindedness can be productive in organizations that are measurement-happy and performance-oriented when the toughness comes because of mutually high expectations and peer review rather than from dictatorial managers and complicated, restrictive control systems. When the feelings of high expectations from supervisors and peers exist, along with the feeling of being needed, workers will accept the challenge of performing against standards, especially if the standards are achievable and are ones the worker plays a role in setting.

An urgent challenge to top management is to develop motivational measures and a managed work climate in order to maintain an acceptable and stimulating quality of work. Management officials must relieve stress and tension, resolve conflict, and redirect uncertainty in order to accomplish these goals (Mueller, 1978).

As indicated in the literature, job satisfaction is a multifaceted and real element of the work environment. The employee's perception of the work place can affect the level of productivity. Throughout the studies conducted which relate to job satisfaction, the need for clarity of the expectations communicated to the employee appears as a critical element. The need exists for communications and knowledge of results relating to job performance to occur between supervisors and subordinates. Communications and the knowledge of results are essential ingredients toward increased levels of job satisfaction.

### The Relationship of Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity, and Job Satisfaction

Samples of managerial, supervisory, or professional personnel have been used in most studies in which the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction has been examined. A frequently observed negative correlation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction was confirmed by Kuiper and Van Huss (1981) in their sample of lower-level office employees.

Kuiper and Van Huss (1981) added to the understanding of the relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction by using several dimensions of job satisfaction instead of a global job

satisfaction measure. The strength of the relationship was strongest in dimensions reflecting experiences in the immediate work environment: the work itself, supervision, and co-workers. It was weakest on dimensions reflecting policies and practices normally controlled by forces of individuals who were further removed from the employee's immediate work environment, such as pay and the opportunities for promotion. The findings indicated that when the employee had clearly outlined expectations for the role assigned, the level of job satis-faction was high. Supervisors and managers can affect the work environ-ment positively by increasing the level of clarity of expectations for a given position. If ambiguity exists for a given position, job satisfaction will be adversely affected.

House and Rizzo (1971) stated that a lack of policy and philosophy, a lack of clear performance standards or feedback, and the ambiguous and frequent changing of directions are conducive to role conflict and ambiguity. If the internal climate is viewed as incongruent with the external environment, high levels of role conflict could be expected. Where an organization and its leaders exercise management techniques which are not employee-centered, the result will be role conflict, role ambiguity, anxiety, job dissatisfaction, and organiza-tional ineffectiveness.

A strong relationship between role conflict and the independent variables of supportive leadership and organizational practice was found to exist in the House and Rizzo (1971) study. A much stronger relationship was found between role ambiguity and job satisfaction than between role conflict and job satisfaction. Employees of the

organization placed more importance on role ambiguity when compared to the responding managers. While role conflict was consistently related to organizational effectiveness, role ambiguity was more clearly related to job satisfaction and the inclination to leave the organization. In his study of the social psychology of work, Argyle (1972) stated:

> When a person experiences role conflict or ambiguity he tends to be tense and unhappy, is dissatisfied with his job, tends to withdraw from social contact with those exerting conflicting pressure, and becomes bad at his work. He may also attempt to resolve conflict or ambiguity in various ways by giving one demand priority over another, bargaining with those exerting pressure on him, seeking official clarification or guidance, or trying to make changes in the organizational structure. Organizations can avoid or reduce role conflict by introducing appropriate rules, e.g., preventing husband and wife from working in the same part of the organization, or protecting from sanctions people who might easily incur them, such as lawyers or union organizers. (p. 191)

The focus of the study by Brauer (1980) was the examination of the issues of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in middle-management positions in educational settings. Brauer found the correlation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction to be less among lower-level employees than among those persons in higher-level positions. However, Kuiper and Van Huss (1981) found that school office secretaries reported significantly higher levels of ambiguity than did executive secretaries and those classified as office managers. Perceptions of role ambiguity and job satisfaction of three clerical and secretarial groups were measured in the Kuiper and Van Huss study. According to the mean scores of the three groups, a higher level of role ambiguity existed among school office

personnel than among executive secretaries or those designated as clerks and bookkeepers. School office personnel also had the lowest level of job satisfaction. The fact that school office secretaries, food service workers, and custodial employees occupy a position that consists of more boundary-spanning activities than employees at other levels makes this finding less surprising. Some theorists (Kahn et al., 1964; Miles & Perrault, 1976) have stated that the potential for role stress is higher in boundary-role positions than in other positions because incumbents are subject to influence attempts from many sides. The diverse demands made by faculty, administrators, students, parents, and other school clientele may account for the higher level of role ambiguity found in school office secretaries.

One of the problems in attempting to relate job satisfaction with role conflict or role ambiguity is that there are many different definitions of job satisfaction. When determining or describing job satisfaction different needs are frequently measured (Brauer, 1980). House and Rizzo (1971) measured the relationship of the organization to the outcomes of the job through the intervening variables of role ambiguity and role conflict. They found that role conflict and role ambiguity were important intervening variables that mediate the effects of various organizational practices on individual and organizational outcomes. The instrument developed by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970), which was designed to measure role conflict and role ambiguity, was administered to a sample of central office, research, and engineering divisions of a major firm. The authors found

role ambiguity and role conflict to be independent dimensions. They found that role conflict and role ambiguity correlated:

1. negatively with need fulfillment

2. more strongly with direct leader behavior

3. with classical leadership and organizational practices

4. weakly but positively with stress and the desire to leave the organization  (p. 162)

Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman found, overall, that role ambiguity correlated more highly with the satisfaction variables than did role conflict.

## Summary

The absence of a clear role description or inconsistent expectations for persons in a role will result in a reduction in job satisfaction levels for individuals and a subsequent loss in productivity. Role conflict, defined as the incongruence of demands placed upon the occupant of a role within the organization, may force a worker to choose between meeting individual needs or the needs of the organization. Role ambiguity, the perceptions possessed by the individual regarding the degree to which information about the role is available to the person, may result in dissatisfaction, anxiety, lack of trust in supervisors, dislike for fellow workers, and eventually less effective work. According to Rippe (1983), role ambiguity and role conflict occur in all workers to some degree during their work life.

The presence of job satisfaction, the feelings that workers have about the job, is more likely if organizations are employee-centered and if management officials relieve stress and tension,

reduce conflict, and clearly describe the role and its expectations to the workers. The relationship of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction has been shown to be stronger between role ambiguity and job satisfaction in research studies of both professionals and noncertified educational staff.

Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) developed a questionnaire to measure the variables of role conflict and role ambiguity. These variables were found to be independent concepts in their study and in later comparable studies in which participants from a variety of occupational levels and areas were used. The developers and subsequent researchers who used the instrument reported a reliability level of over .85. Moos and Insel developed the Work Environment Scale (WES) to measure job satisfaction. Researchers that measured specific, rather than global or general, areas of satisfaction using the WES reported a reliability level of .80.

According to the survey of the literature, a direct relationship has been found between the levels at which role conflict and role ambiguity existed in an organization or employee and the level of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction levels have been shown to be an important factor in the productivity levels in a variety of work settings. Those people in leadership roles need to explore and develop practices within the organization to address the issues of role ambiguity, role conflict, and job satisfaction at the operative level. In order to increase job satisfaction and productivity, the levels of conflict and ambiguity must be decreased.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to make recommendations to school administrators regarding the establishment of work environments in whcih noncertified employees can be most productive by measuring the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in selected noncertified employee groups. Four sections are included in Chapter III: selection of the sample, design of the study, instrumentation, and data analysis.

## Selection of the Sample

The population for this study consisted of the noncertified public school employees who were employed in Class II, III, and VI school districts as classified by the Nebraska Department of Education at the time the study was conducted. The sample consisted of representatives from the clerical, custodial and maintenance, and food service areas of employment. The sample included representation of either 10 percent of the schools or 10 schools per class of district, whichever was the greatest. The school districts in the state of Nebraska were classified in the following manner at the time of the study. The public schools districts of the state of Nebraska have been described in Chapter 79 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

Class I. Districts maintaining only elementary grades (K-6 or K-8) under the direction of a single school board.

Class II. School districts that embrace a territory having a population of one thousand inhabitants or less and maintain both elementary and high school grades (K-12) under the direction of a single school board.

Class III. School districts that embrace a territory having a population of more than one thousand and less than one hundred thousand inhabitants and maintain both elementary and high school grades (K-12) under the direction of a single school board.

Class IV. School districts that embrace a territory having a population of one hundred thousand and less than two hundred thousand inhabitants and maintain both elementary and high school grades (K-12) under the direction of a single school board.

Class V. School districts that embrace a territory having a population of more than two hundred thousand inhabitants and maintain both elementary and high school grades (K-12) under the direction of a single school board.

Class VI. School districts in the state that maintain only a high school (7-12 or 9-12) (Nebraska School Laws, 1987).

Since the purpose of this study was to give direction to those school administrators charged with working with all facets of school operations, Class I, IV, and V schools were eliminated from the sample. Differences in the methods of staffing in Class I schools would limit the use of recommendations in these settings. Class IV (Lincoln) and Class V (Omaha) schools were omitted from the study as they were large enough to employ administrators whose principal

responsibility consisted of the training and supervision of non-certified staff.

A stratified random sample of schools was drawn from the Class II, III, and VI schools by the Management Information Services Division of the Nebraska Department of Education. In order to obtain a representative sample of sufficient quantity and to balance the representation across the classification of schools, the sample was to consist of 10 of the 54 Class II schools; 10 percent (23) of the 222 Class III schools; and 10 of the 23 Class VI schools. Officials of the Management Information Services provided a computer printout that listed school districts alphabetically in the three classification categories. Three sets of mailing labels to be used for contacting the superintendent of the districts were also provided. An additional eight schools in each classification were included on the printout and served as alternates when a district initially selected refused to participate. This ensured the level of participation in the study would remain at the desired 10-percent or 10-school level.

Once the schools were identified, superintendents from each of the districts were contacted by letter to request their cooperation in allowing their noncertified staff members to participate. The superintendents were requested to return information, by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to the researcher indicating the number of noncertified staff employed by the district. The letter stated that the results of the study would be shared with all participants. Each of the superintendents was asked to show approval by signing the

participation agreement letter and returning it with the required information (see Appendix A). The superintendents who agreed to allow the participation of employees received the appropriate number of copies of the two survey instruments, a set of instructions (see Appendix B), and stamped, self-addressed envelopes for each employee. Once completed, the surveys were returned directly to the researcher. To increase the likelihood of honest responses, the superintendents did not have access to individual survey instruments once they were completed.

If a district did not choose to participate in the study, the superintendent of the next school on the computer printout was contacted to request participation until a full complement of schools resulted. As seen in Table 1, over 76 percent of the schools contacted in each classification chose to participate in the study. Three schools in Class II, three schools in class VI, and seven schools in Class III districts chose not to participate in the study. Fifty-six schools were contacted to meet the designated level of 43 total schools.

For the purpose of this study, noncertified staff members were asked to identify themselves as part of the clerical, custodial, or food services areas of assignment. Those staff members contacted who did not perceive themselves to be a part of one of these three categories were asked to check "other role" and were not included in the analysis of the data. Respondents were asked to identify the number of years they had served in their present position.

TABLE 1

Study Participation Rate

|  | Class II | Class III | Class VI | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Districts contacted | 13 | 30 | 13 | 56 |
| Districts electing to participate | 10 | 23 | 10 | 43 |
| Districts electing not to participate | 3 | 7 | 3 | 13 |
| Rate of participation (percentage) | 76.92 | 76.67 | 76.92 | 76.80 |

## Instrumentation

The Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) scale, with modification by Brauer (1980), was used to measure role conflict and role ambiguity. Reliability levels in excess of .80 have been reported by the authors. In her study of middle management positions in educational organizations, Brauer (1980) modified the original instrument from a seven-item Likert-type scale to a four-item, forced choice format. Brauer reported a reliability alpha level of .879 and a standardized item alpha level of .883 for the modified instrument. These reliability findings support the data reported by Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman. A copy of the instrument is included in Appendix B.

Respondents were asked to select from four choices (almost always, often, seldom, and almost never) the responses which best matched their perceptions of their job. Role conflict and role ambiguity

items were interchanged among questions 11 to 24 and were stated in positive and negative forms. Role conflict items were designed to measure each of the four categories of role conflict: person-role, inter-role, inter-sender, and intra-sender.

Job satisfaction was measured by the 90-item Work Environment Scale (WES). Reliability levels in excess of .80 have been reported for the WES. Test-retest reliabilities were in the acceptable range for each of the ten subscales, ranging from a low of .69 for clarity to a high of .83 for involvement. Respondents were asked to respond true or false to each of the 90 statements. A copy of the instrument is found in Appendix B.

The Work Environment Scale (WES), developed by Moos and Insel, is comprised of ten subscales that measure the social environments of work settings. These subscales are grouped into three sets of dimensions (see Table 2). The responses to the 90-question survey, nine responses for each subscale, were scored using a simple template provided by the test publisher. The raw score for each sub-scale was tallied and then converted to standard scores using the Form R Score to Standard Score Conversion Table for General and Health-Care Work Setting Table (Moos, 1981).

Questions 1 through 10 of the survey were designed to gather demographic data that was important in determining differences among the three employee groups in the five areas in which information was sought.

TABLE 2

Subscales of the Work Environment Scale and
Descriptions of the Dimensions

| Subscale | Dimension |
| --- | --- |
| | Relationship Dimensions |
| 1. Involvement | The extent to which employees are concerned about and committed to their job |
| 2. Peer Cohesion | The extent to which employees are friendly and supportive of one another. |
| 3. Supervisor Support | The extent to which management is supportive of employees and encourages employees to be supportive of one another |
| | Personal Growth Dimensions |
| 4. Autonomy | The extent to which employees are encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions |
| 5. Task Orientation | The degree of emphasis on good planning, efficiency, and getting the job done |
| 6. Work Pressure | The degree to which the press of work and time urgency dominate the job milieu |
| | System Maintenance and System Change Dimensions |
| 7. Clarity | The extent to which employees know what to expect in their daily routine and how explicitly rules and policies are communicated |
| 8. Control | The extent to which management uses rules and pressures to keep employees under control |
| 9. Innovation | The degree of emphasis on variety, change, and new approaches |
| 10. Physical Comfort | The extent to which the physical surroundings contribute to a pleasant work environment |

The Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Scale and the Work Environment Scale were used as two separate instruments. The questions designed to gather the demographic information were included as a part of the Rizzo et al. instrument. The two surveys and cover letters were mailed in sufficient quantities to the superintendents of the randomly selected school districts. The superintendents distributed the instruments and cover letters to the appropriate noncertified work groups. The surveys were returned directly to the researcher in a pre-addressed, stamped envelope. A copy of the cover letter and the instruments are included in Appendix B.

All fully completed surveys that were returned within 25 days following their distribution were included in the study. A total of 580 surveys were distributed and 425 surveys were returned (see Table 3). This represented a return rate of 73.28 percent.

TABLE 3

Survey Return Rate

|  | Clerical | Custodian/ Maintenance | Food Service | Other | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sent | 154 | 213 | 213 | - | 580 |
| Returned | 122 | 129 | 117 | 57 | 425 |
| Return percentage | 79.22 | 60.56 | 54.93 | 10.0 | 73.28 |

Fifty-seven surveys that were returned were either answered incompletely or were classified in the "other" role category. These surveys were not included in the analysis of data. For this study, 368 of 425 subjects (86.59 percent) were included.

Clerical workers had the highest rate of return (79.22 percent). Food service workers had the lowest rate of return (54.93 percent).

The Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Scale consists of 14 questions. Reponses to the eight role conflict and six role ambiguity items were summed to provide a scale score of the two variables. To calculate the value for the role conflict dimension, responses were recorded as follows: 1 = 4 points; 2 = 3 points; 3 = 2 points; and 4 = 1 point. This resulted in a possible range of 8 to 32 points; the higher the scale the higher the level of role conflict. Role ambiguity scores were summed, resulting in a possible range of 6 to 24 points in that category. The higher the score, the greater the level of role ambiguity.

## Data Analysis

Frequency counts for each of the responses to the eight role conflict, six role ambiguity, and ten WES subscales were completed. Mean scores by item and mean scores for the three variables in each of the three groups were obtained. Mean scores were also computed for each of the three groups by the demographic factors of sex, age, educational level, years in current position, and current position. Median scores were reported for the demographic factors of age and years in current position.

Data analysis was conducted to determine if significant differences existed at an _alpha_ level of .05. An analysis of variance was used for research questions one and two where comparisons of the three variables and comparisons of the five demographic factors were completed. A regression analysis was computed to determine relationships between the three variables for each of the three groups.

The use of an Apple IIe computer eased the analysis of data. Demographic data, numerical scores for each role conflict-role ambiguity question, and total raw scores for each of the ten subscales of the WES were entered for each respondent into the computer using a prepared program entitled "Freewriter." Specific statistical analyses were used for research questions one and two while research question three was addressed narratively. The SPSS-X program, developed at Northwestern University, was used to analyze the data statistically.

Research question one asked, "What are the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among noncertified school employee groups?" The mean, range, median, and standard deviation were calculated for each work group classification and for the noncertified group as a whole. Frequency counts for each of the responses to the items on the instruments were obtained. The use of these measures allowed for comparisons between groups.

Research question two asked, "Are there relationships between levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in noncertified school employee groups when grouped by the demographic variables of sex, age, educational level, years in current position,

and current position?" Mean scores for each of the three groups were computed based upon the five demographic variables. Median levels were reported for the categories of age and years in current position. An analysis of variance was conducted to determine if significant differences existed at an alpha level of .05. The multi-group, multiple nature of the study required the use of the Wilks-Lambda multivariate analysis of variance. A Tukey $t$-test was used to test the significance of difference in and between the three role groups. When a significant F ratio results from an analysis of variance, a Tukey $t$-test is necessary to test the statistical significance between particular group means or combinations of group means.

Research question three asked, "How do selected school employee groups in Nebraska compare with other employee groups found in national studies on job satisfaction? The results reported in the Moos and Insel (1974) Work Environment Scale Manual allowed for comparisons to be made on each subscale between the three role groups in the study and national samples. Further comparisons were made on the job satisfaction subscales between category scores reported for clerical workers by Kuiper and Van Huss (1981) using the Job Descriptive Index and the three role groups in the study.

## Summary

The procedures described in Chapter III were used to investigate whether there were significant differences between and among three role groups regarding role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction.

The population included the noncertified support staff groups of clerical, custodial/maintenance, and food service personnel in Nebraska public schools. Five hundred eighty respondents were selected randomly to complete the Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity Scale as revised by Brauer (1980) and the Work Environment Scale, Form R, developed by Moos and Insel. Respondents indicated their perceptions of 14 role conflict and role ambiguity questions and 90 job satisfaction items.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to make recommendations to school administrators in establishing work environments in which noncertified employees can be most productive by measuring the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in selected noncertified employee groups. Specific research questions analyzed were:

1. What are the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among noncertified school employee groups?

2. Are there relationships between levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in noncertified school employee groups when grouped by the demographic factors of age, sex, educational level, years in current position, and current position?

3. How do selected school employee groups in Nebraska compare with other employee groups found in national studies on job satisfaction?

The perceived levels of role conflict and role ambiguity were measured by the Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman Role Conflict-Role Ambiguity Scale, while the level of job satisfaction was measured by responses to the Moos and Insel Work Environment Scale Form R. Demographic data for question two were collected as part of a cover sheet for the two survey instruments. Five hundred eighty survey packages were distributed randomly, with 368 completed and returned, a return rate of

63.45 percent.

## Characteristics of the Sample

The frequency distribution of respondents by the demographic categories of current position, sex, age, level of educational attainment, and the number of years in position is found in Table 4. The number of people responding was evenly distributed according to current position, with 122 (33.15%) clerical, 129 (35.05%) custodial and maintenance, and 117 (31.80%) food service workers comprising the sample. This represented a return rate of 79.22 percent of the clerical workers, 60.56 percent of the custodial and maintenance, and 54.93 percent of the food service workers counted for the study.

Slightly more than 74 percent of the 368 respondents were female. The range of the respondents' ages was 53 years (21-74 years old), the mean was 48.18 years old, and the median was 48 years old. The largest number of respondents were between the ages of 41-50 years (110 respondents) and 51-60 years (120 respondents). The smallest number of respondents (18) were in the 21-30 year category.

There were respondents in each of the eight educational attainment categories, with 55.43 percent, or 204 respondents, reporting a high school diploma or graduate equivalency diploma (G.E.D.) as the highest level of attainment. Over one-third of the respondents, 132 or 35.87 percent, received some sort of postsecondary training in technical schools or in a college or university.

TABLE 4

Respondent Distribution by Demographic Category
(N = 368)

| Category | N (Percent) | Range | Mean | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Current position | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 (33.15) | | | |
| Custodial/maintenance | 129 (35.05) | | | |
| Food services | 117 (31.80) | | | |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 273 (74.18) | | | |
| Male | 95 (25.82) | | | |
| Age | | | | |
| 21-30 | 18 ( 4.89) | | | |
| 31-40 | 74 (20.11) | | | |
| 41-50 | 110 (29.89) | | | |
| 51-60 | 120 (32.61) | | | |
| 61 and over | 46 (12.50) | | | |
| Total | 368 | 21-74 | 48.18 | 48.00 |
| Educational attainment | | | | |
| Less than high school | 31 ( 8.42) | | | |
| High school diploma/GED | 204 (55.43) | | | |
| 1-2 years techical school | 43 (11.68) | | | |
| 1-2 years college | 51 (13.86) | | | |
| Graduate technical school | 23 ( 6.25) | | | |
| College diploma | 5 ( 1.36) | | | |
| Hours beyond college diploma | 10 ( 2.72) | | | |
| Training armed services only | 1 ( 0.27) | | | |
| Years in position | | | | |
| 1-5 years | 134 (36.42) | | | |
| 6-10 years | 111 (30.16) | | | |
| 11 or more years | 123 (33.42) | | | |
| Total | 368 | 1-34 | 8.17 | 7.00 |

The number of years that respondents had worked in the present position was reported in range (1-34 years), mean (8.17 years), and median (7.00 years) scores. The distribution of workers in the years in current position category was evenly distributed across the group. Over 36 percent of the respondents were in their present position 1-5 years; 30 percent had been in that role 6-10 years, and 33 percent had served 11 or more years (11-34 years).

## Research Question One

Research question one asked: "What are the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among noncertified school employee groups? Frequencies and means were calculated for each of the 14 role conflict-role amgiguity items and the 10 subscales measuring job satisfaction. The responses to each item are illustrated in Tables 5 and 6.

Mean scores for the three employee groups were calculated for each of the three variables: role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction. An analysis of variance was used to measure the differences in role conflict and role ambiguity between the three role groups: clerical, custodial and maintenance, and food service workers. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was completed to test the significance between the three role groups on the job satisfaction variable.

With significance established through the use of ANOVA and MANOVA on the variables, further testing was necessary to determine significance within the three groups. A univariate analysis, utilizing

TABLE 5

Frequency of Responses for All Groups on the Role Conflict
and Role Ambiguity Items

| Item | Almost Always (1) | (%) | Often (2) | (%) | Seldom (3) | (%) | Almost Never (4) | (%) | Mean | S.D. |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| | | | | Role Conflict | | | | | | |
| 11 | 23 | 6.25 | 25 | 6.79 | 89 | 24.18 | 231 | 62.77 | 1.565 | .871 |
| 13 | 6 | 1.63 | 53 | 14.40 | 112 | 30.43 | 197 | 53.53 | 1.641 | .786 |
| 15 | 14 | 3.80 | 43 | 11.68 | 82 | 22.28 | 229 | 62.23 | 1.571 | .842 |
| 19 | 37 | 10.05 | 88 | 23.91 | 82 | 22.28 | 161 | 43.75 | 2.003 | 1.040 |
| 20 | 8 | 2.17 | 35 | 9.51 | 72 | 19.57 | 253 | 68.75 | 1.451 | .755 |
| 21 | 10 | 2.72 | 42 | 11.41 | 117 | 31.79 | 199 | 54.08 | 1.628 | .792 |
| 23 | 2 | 0.54 | 30 | 8.15 | 95 | 25.82 | 241 | 65.49 | 1.438 | .666 |
| 24 | 13 | 3.53 | 61 | 16.58 | 113 | 30.71 | 181 | 49.18 | 1.745 | .858 |
| | | | | Role Ambiguity | | | | | | |
| 12 | 3 | 0.82 | 20 | 5.43 | 58 | 15.76 | 287 | 77.99 | 3.709 | .604 |
| 14 | 35 | 9.51 | 41 | 11.14 | 73 | 19.84 | 219 | 59.51 | 3.293 | 1.002 |
| 16 | 5 | 1.36 | 15 | 4.08 | 35 | 9.51 | 313 | 85.05 | 3.783 | .578 |
| 17 | 6 | 1.63 | 18 | 4.89 | 80 | 21.74 | 264 | 71.74 | 3.636 | .654 |
| 18 | 23 | 6.25 | 45 | 12.23 | 80 | 21.74 | 220 | 59.78 | 3.351 | .922 |
| 22 | 4 | 1.09 | 12 | 3.26 | 93 | 25.27 | 259 | 70.38 | 3.649 | .599 |

## TABLE 6

### Frequency of Responses for All Groups on the Job Satisfaction Subscales

| | Low 1 | (%) | 2 | (%) | 3 | (%) | 4 | (%) | 5 | (%) | 6 | (%) | 7 | (%) | 8 | (%) | High 9 | (%) | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Involvement | 10 | 2.72 | 8 | 2.17 | 18 | 4.89 | 18 | 4.89 | 30 | 8.15 | 51 | 13.86 | 66 | 17.93 | 83 | 22.55 | 84 | 22.87 | 6.758 | 2.099 |
| Peer Cohesion | 1 | 0.27 | 20 | 5.43 | 21 | 5.71 | 23 | 6.25 | 60 | 16.30 | 62 | 16.85 | 74 | 20.11 | 69 | 18.75 | 38 | 10.33 | 6.196 | 1.928 |
| Supr. Support | 23 | 6.25 | 27 | 7.34 | 18 | 4.89 | 41 | 11.14 | 46 | 12.50 | 67 | 18.21 | 76 | 20.65 | 57 | 15.49 | 13 | 3.53 | 5.503 | 2.206 |
| Autonomy | 14 | 3.80 | 16 | 4.35 | 33 | 8.97 | 39 | 10.60 | 54 | 14.67 | 63 | 17.12 | 83 | 22.55 | 51 | 13.86 | 15 | 4.08 | 5.625 | 2.033 |
| Task Orient. | 4 | 1.09 | 12 | 3.26 | 9 | 2.45 | 19 | 5.16 | 22 | 5.98 | 42 | 11.41 | 58 | 15.76 | 85 | 23.10 | 117 | 31.79 | 7.149 | 1.985 |
| Work Pressure | 26 | 7.07 | 45 | 12.23 | 57 | 15.49 | 57 | 15.49 | 59 | 16.03 | 36 | 9.78 | 40 | 10.87 | 31 | 8.42 | 17 | 4.62 | 4.620 | 2.253 |
| Clarity | 6 | 1.63 | 7 | 1.90 | 18 | 4.89 | 31 | 8.42 | 50 | 13.59 | 71 | 19.29 | 98 | 26.63 | 82 | 22.28 | 5 | 1.36 | 6.141 | 1.710 |
| Control | 9 | 2.45 | 22 | 5.98 | 40 | 10.87 | 36 | 9.78 | 57 | 15.49 | 76 | 20.65 | 74 | 20.11 | 38 | 10.33 | 16 | 4.35 | 5.495 | 1.978 |
| Innovation | 74 | 20.11 | 41 | 11.14 | 37 | 10.35 | 60 | 16.30 | 50 | 13.59 | 48 | 13.04 | 31 | 8.42 | 18 | 4.89 | 9 | 2.45 | 3.959 | 2.398 |
| Physical Comfort | 20 | 5.43 | 29 | 7.88 | 34 | 9.24 | 61 | 16.58 | 54 | 14.67 | 73 | 12.23 | 45 | 12.33 | 36 | 9.78 | 16 | 4.35 | 5.079 | 2.151 |

the Bonferroni inequality treatment, determined that six of the ten job satisfaction subscales had significant differences at the 0.01 level. The use of the Bonferroni technique was necessary due to the multi-group, multi-variable nature of this study. The univariate analysis, while determined to be appropriate by the Bonferroni adjustment, made rank ordering of the variables in terms of significance impossible.

The final analysis performed was a Tukey-HSD procedure. The Tukey test was used to determine if pair-wise differences existed between the groups at a significant level. Once the significant F ratio was determined, the Tukey follow-up tested the statistical significance of differences between the group means.

The analysis of variance for the variable of role conflict by position was examined (see Table 7). The lowest perceived level of role conflict was reported by food service workers (11.47), while custodial and maintenance workers reported the highest degree of role conflict (15.02). The analysis of variance determined that significance between groups did exist. The Tukey follow-up technique was used to determine that pair-wise differences of means existed between the clerical and custodial/maintenance and the custodial/maintenance and food service workers. The mean differences of 2.54 and 3.55, respectively, were determined to be significant at the .005 level. There was no significant difference between the means of the clerical and food service workers.

Role ambiguity scores as perceived by the three role groups are found in Table 8. The highest level of role ambiguity was reported

TABLE 7

Analysis of Variance by Position--Role Conflict
Levels of Perceived Role Conflict

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clerical | 122 | 12.47 | 3.51 |
| Custodial/Maintenance | 129 | 15.02 | 4.50 |
| Food Service | 117 | 11.47 | 3.31 |
| Overall | 368 | 13.04 | 4.10 |

ANOVA by Position

| Source | SS | DF | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 830.95 | 2 | 28.34 | .0001** |

Tukey Follow-up by Position

| Group Compared | Mean Difference |
|---|---|
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 2.54* |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 3.55* |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 1.00 |

*Significant at the 0.05 level

**Significant at the 0.0001 level

TABLE 8

Analysis of Variance by Position--Role Ambiguity
Levels of Perceived Role Ambiguity

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clerical | 122 | 21.44 | 2.83 |
| Custodial/Maintenance | 129 | 20.61 | 3.79 |
| Food Service | 117 | 22.28 | 2.32 |
| Overall | 368 | 21.42 | 3.13 |

ANOVA by Position

| Source | SS | DF | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between groups | 171.12 | 2 | 9.09 | .0001** |

Tukey Follow-up by Position

| Group Compared | Mean Difference |
|---|---|
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.83 |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 1.67* |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.84 |

*Significant at the 0.05 level

**Significant at the 0.0001 level

by the food service workers (22.28) Custodial and maintenance workers reported the lowest level of role ambiguity with a mean of 20.61.

The analysis of variance by position for the variable role ambiguity determined that a significant difference existed between groups. The difference in means, as determined with the Tukey follow-up, was significant when comparing the food service and custodial/ maintenance role groups. There was no significance between the clerical and custodial/maintenance or the clerical and food service workers.

The job satisfaction mean scores for each role group and the differences between the groups are shown in Table 9. The custodial and maintenance group was the only group that scored below the overall mean for noncertified employees (6.15), with a 5.39 score on the Relationship dimension. The same group, with a mean of 5.20, was the only group below the 5.79 overall mean on the Personal Growth dimension. On the System Maintenance/System Change dimension, the overall mean was 5.16. Only one group, the food service workers, scored above the mean with a 5.67 score.

Each of the three dimensions of the Work Environment Scale (1974) are comprised of subscales which measure specific work setting perceptions. In order to explain the differences between the three groups of noncertified employees on the job satisfaction measure, a three-step data analysis process was used. The first step was a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). As shown in Table 10, the Wilks-Lambda test determined that a significant F ratio existed.

The second step in the analysis was the univariate follow-up test which utilized the Bonferroni inequality treatment. A significant

TABLE 9

Levels of Perceived Job Satisfaction by Role Group

| Dimension | Clerical (N=122) | Custodial Maintenance (N=129) | Food Service (N=117) | Overall (N=368) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationship | | | | |
| Mean | 6.65 | 5.39 | 6.47 | 6.15 |
| S.D. | 1.89 | 2.22 | 1.82 | 1.97 |
| | | | | |
| Personal Growth | | | | |
| Mean | 6.14 | 5.20 | 6.10 | 5.79 |
| S.D. | 1.99 | 2.22 | 2.05 | 2.08 |
| | | | | |
| System Maintenance/ System Change | | | | |
| Mean | 5.05 | 4.83 | 5.67 | 5.16 |
| S.D. | 2.19 | 1.95 | 1.87 | 2.01 |

TABLE 10

Multivariate Analysis for Job Satisfaction

| Wilks-Lambda | Approximate F | Significant F |
|---|---|---|
| 0.645 | 8.689 | .0005* |

*Significant at the .0005 level

F level ratio was determined to exist in six of the ten subscales
(see Table 11). In the Relationship dimension, significant F levels
were found to exist in the Involvement and Peer Cohesion subscales.
The Autonomy and Task Orientation subscales in the Personal Growth
dimension were significant, while the System Maintenance/System Change
dimension had two significant subscales--Clarity and Control. Due to
the multiple subscales in the job satisfaction instrument, levels of
significance needed to be less than the 0.01 level.

The third step in the analysis was a Tukey follow-up to test
significant differences determined by the univariate analysis. The
Tukey test was used to examine if pair-wise differences on the six
subscales existed between the three groups. The test compared mean
differences between the pairs. The job satisfaction dimension and
subscale scores are shown, with role group comparisons included, in
Tables 12, 13, and 14. The custodial and maintenance workers had
lower levels of satisfaction (5.39) in the Relationship dimension than
the clerical (6.65) and food service workers (6.47) (see Table 12).
In the Involvement and Peer Cohesion subscales the differences in mean
scores for the custodial and maintenance workers were significantly
different when compared to the other two groups. There were no sig-
nificant differences between the groups on the Supervisor Support
subscale.

In Table 13, the lowest level of overall satisfaction (5.20)
in the Personal Growth dimension was shown by the custodial and
maintenance group. The subscale Autonomy had significant mean

TABLE 11

Univariate Follow-up Test for Job Satisfaction

| Variable | SS | DF | F | Probability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Relationship Dimension | | | | |
| Involvement | 211.90 | 2 | 27.44 | .0005* |
| Peer Cohesion | 128.15 | 2 | 18.88 | .0005* |
| Supervisor Support | 42.78 | 2 | 4.47 | .0120 |
| Personal Growth Dimension | | | | |
| Autonomy | 49.37 | 2 | 6.13 | .0020* |
| Task Orientation | 207.44 | 2 | 30.50 | .0005* |
| Work Pressure | 45.43 | 2 | 4.55 | .0110 |
| System Maintenance/ System Change Dimension | | | | |
| Clarity | 93.83 | 2 | 17.46 | .0005* |
| Control | 137.73 | 2 | 19.31 | .0005* |
| Innovation | 52.85 | 2 | 4.68 | .0120 |
| Physical Comfort | 19.35 | 2 | 2.10 | .1240 |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

TABLE 12

Tukey Follow-up to Significant Univariate Tests
on the Relationship Dimension
Job Satisfaction by
Current Position

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clerical | 122 | 6.65 | 1.88 |
| Custodial/Maintenance | 129 | 5.39 | 2.22 |
| Food Service | 117 | 6.47 | 1.82 |

Tukey Follow-up by Position

| Group Compared by Dimension | Mean Difference |
|---|---|
| Involvement | |
|   Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 1.71* |
|   Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 1.44* |
|   Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.27 |
| Peer Cohesion | |
|   Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 1.31* |
|   Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 1.15* |
|   Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.16 |
| Supervisor Support | |
|   Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.24 |
|   Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 0.36 |
|   Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.11 |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

TABLE 13

Tukey Follow-up to Significant Univariate Tests
on the Personal Growth Dimension
Job Satisfaction by
Current Position

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clerical | 122 | 6.14 | 1.99 |
| Custodial/Maintenance | 129 | 5.20 | 2.22 |
| Food Service | 117 | 6.10 | 1.77 |

Tukey Follow-up by Position

| Group Compared by Dimension | Mean Difference |
|---|---|
| Autonomy | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.85* |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 0.19 |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.66* |
| Task Orientation | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 1.19* |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 1.80* |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.60* |
| Work Pressure | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.32 |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 0.37 |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.07 |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

TABLE 14

Tukey Follow-up to Significant Univariate Tests on
the Systems Maintenance/Systems Change Dimension
Job Satisfaction by Current Position

| Group | N | Mean | S.D. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clerical | 122 | 5.06 | 2.19 |
| Custodial/Maintenance | 129 | 4.83 | 1.95 |
| Food Service | 117 | 5.67 | 1.87 |

Tukey Follow-up by Position

| Group Compared by Dimension | Mean Difference |
|---|---|
| Clarity | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.66* |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 1.23* |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.57* |
| Control | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.14 |
| Custodial Maintenance vs. Food Service | 1.37* |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 1.23* |
| Innovation | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.24 |
| Custodial/Maintenance vs. Food Service | 0.39 |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.21 |
| Physical Comfort | |
| Clerical vs. Custodial/Maintenance | 0.36 |
| Custodial Maintenance vs. Food Service | 0.15 |
| Food Service vs. Clerical | 0.32 |

*Significant at the 0.01 level

differences between clerical and custodial/maintenance and between food service and clerical workers. While there were no significant differences between any of the groups on the Work Pressure subscale, there was a significant difference between all three group pairs on the Task Orientation subscale. The mean difference between the custodial/maintenance and food service workers of 1.80 was the largest difference between the groups on any of the subscales.

There are four subscales which comprise the System Maintenance/System Change dimension. Significant differences in mean scores were found in the subscales of Clarity and Control (see Table 14). Food service workers were more satisfied than the other two groups throughout the dimension. There were differences between all three group pairs on the Clarity subscale. Custodial/maintenance and food service workers and food service and clerical workers exhibited significant differences on the Control subscale.

Six subscale categories were identified where significant differences existed. Job satisfaction by current position analysis is summarized in Table 15. Significantly lower levels of satisfaction existed among the custodial and maintenance workers on the Involvement and Peer Cohesion subscales. Clerical workers exhibited higher levels of satisfaction on the Autonomy subscale and, along with food service workers, were significantly more satisfied on the Task Orientation subscale than the custodial and maintenance workers. Custodial employees were significantly less satisfied on the subscale category of Clarity and food service workers were the most satisfied group in the Control

TABLE 15

Summary of Job Satisfaction Differences by Current Position

| Group | N | Mean | Clerical | Custodial/ Maintenance | Food Service |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Involvement | | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 | 7.45 | | * | |
| Cust./Maint. | 129 | 5.74 | * | | * |
| Food Service | 117 | 7.17 | | * | |
| | | | | | |
| Peer Cohesion | | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 | 6.70 | | * | |
| Cust./Maint. | 129 | 5.40 | * | | * |
| Food Service | 117 | 6.55 | | * | |
| | | | | | |
| Autonomy | | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 | 6.13 | | * | * |
| Cust./Maint. | 129 | 5.28 | * | | |
| Food Service | 117 | 5.47 | * | | |
| | | | | | |
| Task Orientation | | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 | 7.38 | | * | * |
| Cust./Maint. | 129 | 6.19 | * | | * |
| Food Service | 117 | 7.98 | * | * | |
| | | | | | |
| Clarity | | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 | 6.19 | | * | * |
| Cust./Maint. | 129 | 5.53 | * | | * |
| Food Service | 117 | 6.76 | * | * | |
| | | | | | |
| Control | | | | | |
| Clerical | 122 | 5.15 | | | * |
| Cust./Maint. | 129 | 5.01 | | | * |
| Food Service | 117 | 6.38 | * | * | |

*Pairs of groups significantly different at the 0.01 level

Note: In the subscales of Supervisor Support, Work Pressure, Innovation, and Physical Comfort, no significant differences existed.

category. Custodial and maintenance workers were significantly dif-
ferent (less satisfied) from clerical workers on the subscales of
Involvement, Peer Cohesion, Autonomy, Task Orientation, and Clarity.
Food service workers were significantly more satisfied than custodial/
maintenance workers on the subscales of Involvement, Peer Cohesion,
Task Orientation, Clarity, and Control. Of the six subscales where
the Tukey test identified pair-wise differences, the food service and
clerical groups differed on the four subscales of Autonomy, Task
Orientation, Clarity, and Control.

## Research Question Two

The second research question was: "Are there relationships
between levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction
in noncertified employee groups when grouped by the demographic factors
of age, sex, educational level, years in current position, and by
current position?" Selected demographic variables were used to more
closely examine the relationship between the identified role groups.
A multivariate analysis of variance to determine significant mean dif-
ferences was calculated within each of the demographic factors: sex,
age, education level, and years employed. The current position data
was addressed in research question one. Age was the only demographic
variable for which a significant mean difference was found. No
significant differences were found in the categories of sex, educational
level, and years of employment in the current position.

As reported in Table 16, role conflict for those in the age

TABLE 16

Significant Mean Differences by the Demographic
Variable of Age

| Group/Age | N | Mean | Age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 21-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61 & Over |
| Role Conflict | | | | | | | |
| 21-30 | 18 | 17.27 | | | | | |
| 31-40 | 74 | 17.55 | | | | | * |
| 41-50 | 110 | 17.59 | | | | | * |
| 51-60 | 120 | 17.57 | | | | | * |
| 61 & over | 46 | 15.63 | | * | * | * | |
| Role Ambiguity | | | | | | | |
| 21-30 | 18 | 21.43 | | * | * | * | * |
| 31-40 | 74 | 19.83 | * | | | | |
| 41-50 | 110 | 19.59 | * | | | | |
| 51-60 | 120 | 18.98 | * | | | | |
| 61 & over | 46 | 18.77 | * | | | | |
| Job Satisfaction | | | | | | | |
| Relationship Dimension | | | | | | | |
| 21-30 | | 4.62 | | * | | * | * |
| 31-40 | | 6.37 | * | | * | | |
| 41-50 | | 4.81 | | * | | * | * |
| 51-60 | | 5.93 | * | | * | | |
| 61 & over | | 6.72 | * | | * | | |
| Personal Growth Dimension | | | | | | | |
| 21-30 | | 4.92 | | | | | |
| 31-40 | | 5.65 | | | * | | |
| 41-50 | | 4.42 | | * | | * | * |
| 51-60 | | 5.73 | | | * | | |
| 61 & over | | 5.91 | | | * | | |
| System Maintenance/ System Change Dimension | | | | | | | |
| 21-30 | | 5.10 | | | | | |
| 31-40 | | 4.65 | | | | | |
| 41-50 | | 4.15 | | | | | * |
| 51-60 | | 5.14 | | | | | |
| 61 & over | | 5.36 | | | * | | |

*Pairs of group means significantly different at the 0.01 level

category of 61 and over was significantly lower than those in the 31-40, the 41-50, and the 51-60 year categories. Role ambiguity was significantly higher for the age groups older than the 21-30 category. Significant differences were found in all three dimensions of the job satisfaction categories. Job satisfaction in the Relationship dimension was significantly lower for the 21-30 and the 41-50 age categories. In the Personal Growth dimension, the level of satisfaction was significantly lower in the 41-50 age category, while in the System Maintenance/System Change dimension, the 61 and over age category was significantly more satisfied than the 41-50 age group.

## Research Question Three

Research question three asked: "How do selected school employee groups in Nebraska compare with other employee groups found in national studies on job satisfaction? Analysis of variance was conducted to determine if differences between the means existed at the 0.01 alpha level. A comparison between the selected employee groups and the general work group used in validation studies by Moos (1974) is shown in Table 17. A comparison of the mean scores for each subscale indicated that clerical workers in Nebraska had higher levels of satisfaction on eight of the ten subscales, but scored lower on the Innovation and Physical Comfort categories. The custodial/maintenance group conversely had lower levels of satisfaction on seven subscales, scoring higher than the national mean in the areas of Task Orientation, Control, and Physical Comfort. The food service employees had lower levels of satisfaction on two areas, Autonomy and Innovation, while they were

TABLE 17

Comparison of Nebraska and National Work Groups
on Job Satisfaction

| Subscales | National (N=1442) | Clerical (N=122) | Custodial/ Maintenance (N=129) | Food Service (N=117) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Involvement | 5.95* | 7.45* | 5.74 | 7.17* |
| Peer Cohesion | 5.70 | 6.70 | 5.39 | 6.55 |
| Supervisor Support | 5.68 | 5.80 | 5.04 | 5.69 |
| Autonomy | 5.54 | 6.13 | 5.28 | 5.47 |
| Task Orientation | 5.90* | 7.38* | 6.19 | 7.92* |
| Work Pressure | 4.40 | 4.91 | 4.14 | 4.84 |
| Clarity | 5.60 | 6.19 | 5.53 | 6.76 |
| Control | 4.88* | 5.15 | 5.01 | 6.38* |
| Innovation | 4.42 | 4.11 | 3.46 | 4.36 |
| Physical Comfort | 4.89 | 4.77 | 5.31 | 5.16 |

*Significantly different at the 0.01 level

at the national mean in the category of Supervisor Support.

The WES utilizes a method of raw score conversion by which scores are converted to standard scores. A group profile for the three work groups is shown in Figure 5. This profile indicated that while few dramatic changes occurred among the groups between subscales, the custodial/maintenance employee group ranked below national norms in overall job satisfaction. Clerical and food service employee groups scored at or above the national norm on seven of the ten subscales.
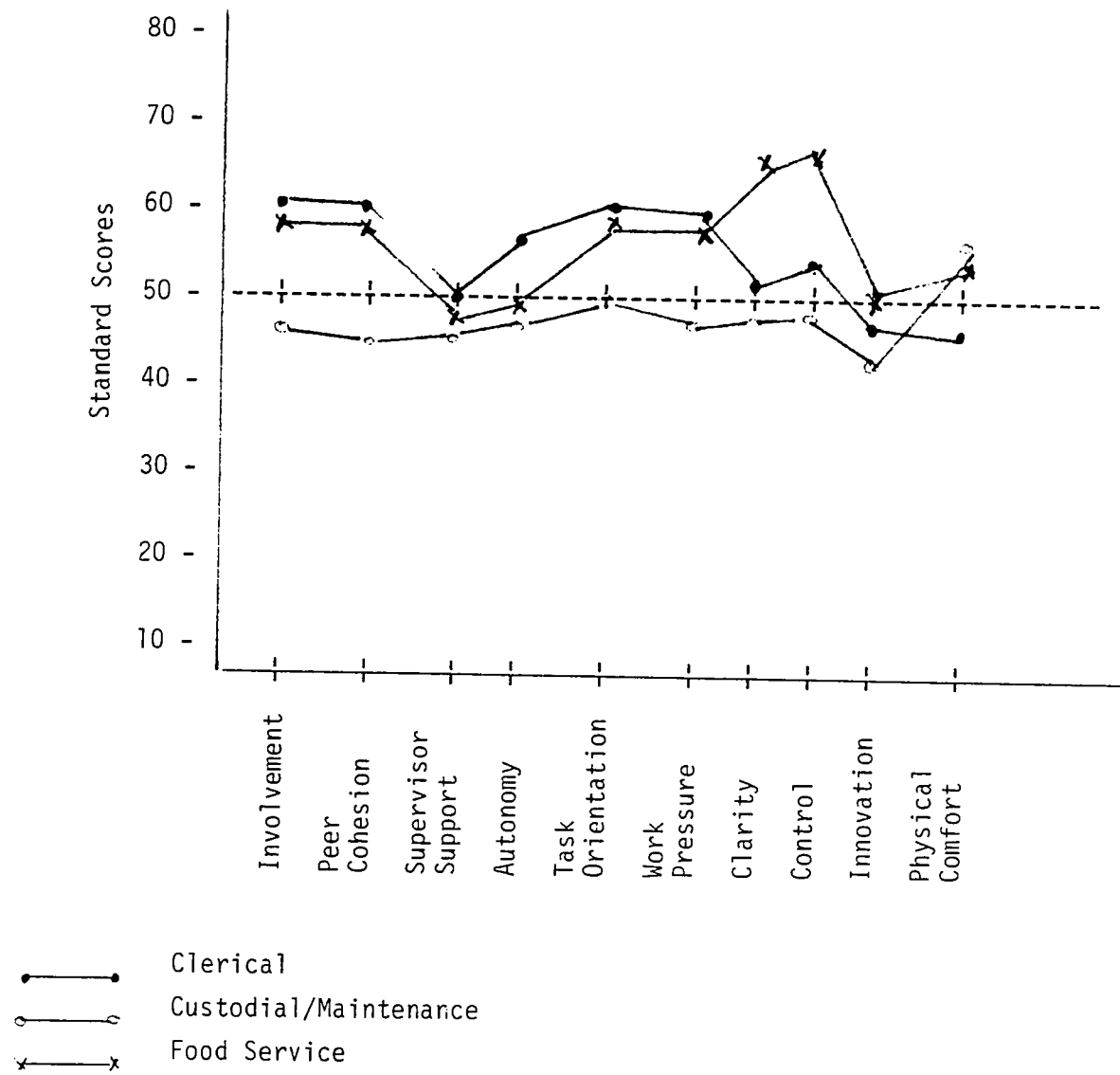
FIGURE 5

Form R Profiles for Work Groups

All three employee groups had lower levels of job satisfaction on the subscales of Supervisor Support and Innovation.

## Summary

An analysis of the data collected for this study found that there were significant differences at the .05 _alpha_ level between non-certified employee groups in Nebraska for the variables of role conflict and role ambiguity. Significant mean differences at the 0.01 level were found to exist in job satisfaction subscales through the use of univariate tests of significance. Further analysis of job satisfaction to test for pair-wise, or group differences found significant differences existed in all three groups. Custodial and maintenance workers perceived higher role conflict, lower role ambiguity, and lower overall job satisfaction than the clerical or food service workers. Food service workers perceived low levels of role conflict, high levels of role ambiguity, while indicating higher levels of job satisfaction on five of ten of the job satisfaction subscales. Clerical workers had moderate levels of role conflict and role ambiguity and indicated the highest levels of job satisfaction on the remaining five of the ten WES subscales.

Significant differences of mean scores were found in perceived levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction when the noncertified workers were compared by the demographic factor of age. Role conflict in the age 61 and over category was significantly lower than in all the categories other than the 21-30 age group. Role

ambiguity was significantly higher for all the age groups older than 21-30 years of age. The age groups of 41-50 and 21-30 exhibited lower overall levels of job satisfaction.

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into three parts: a summary of the study, conclusions based upon the findings, and recommendations based upon the conclusions. The summary includes a review of Chapters I, II, and III in the study and the findings from Chapter IV. The conclusions section addresses the research questions that were posed for the study. Implications for practicing administrators in Class II, III, and VI districts in Nebraska for improving the work environment for noncertified employees are addressed in the recommendations section.

## Summary

The purpose of this study was to make recommendations to school administrators for establishing work environments in which noncertified school employees can be most productive. The recommendations were based upon the results from the measurement of the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in selected noncertified school employee groups. These recommendations are found in this chapter. Specific research questions addressed were:

1. What are the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among noncertified school employee groups?

2. Are there relationships between levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction in noncertified employee groups when grouped by the demographic factors of age, sex, educational level, years in current position, and current position?

3. How do selected school employee groups in Nebraska compare with other employee groups found in national studies on job satisfaction?

Role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction are variables that have distinct and separate qualities. Correlations between these three variables, particularly job satisfaction and role conflict, have been found in a variety of settings by a number of researchers. The use of the Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman instrument to measure role conflict and role ambiguity was supported by the literature with reported reliability in excess of .80. THe Work Environment Scale by Moos and Insel had reported reliability scores above .80 when measuring levels of job satisfaction. In all work groups involved in the study, role conflict and role ambiguity were found to exist. The clarity of expectations and employee involvement in decision making had an impact on levels of role conflict and role ambiguity, and eventually upon the degree of job satisfaction.

The population for this study included noncertified employee groups represented by clerical, custodial/maintenance, and food service workers in the public schools of Nebraska. A random sample of the role groups was drawn by the Management Information Services section of the Nebraska Department of Education. The sample was drawn from Class II, III, and VI school districts within the state of Nebraska. Slightly more than 76 percent of the 56 school districts contacted agreed to participate. Five hundred eighty survey packages were distributed. Three hundred sixty-eight respondents fully completed and returned the survey package which consisted of the Rizzo, House,

and Lirtzman instrument to measure role conflict and role ambiguity and the Work Environment Scale to measure job satisfaction.

Frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations were calculated for the three variables, for the three role groups, and for five demographic categories. An analysis of variance was calculated to determine significant differences between role groups and groups by demographic categories for each variable. A three-part analysis was done to determine significant differences in mean scores on the ten subscales of the job satisfaction instrument. A comparison was made to determine differences in the level of job satisfaction for non-certified Nebraska employee groups and groups in national studies.

## Findings

Data collected and analyzed for this study indicated that the levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction were measurable among noncertified employee groups. The resulting information indicated that relationships did exist between the employee groups for the three variables and that a comparison to other employee groups in national studies could be performed.

To answer question one, the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction were reported as perceived by noncertified employee groups. The following pairs of groups by each of the three variables were found to be significantly different:

### Role conflict

1. Custodial/maintenance workers reported higher levels of role conflict than food service and clerical workers.

Role ambiguity

1. Food service workers reported higher levels of role ambiguity than custodial/maintenance workers.

Job Satisfaction

1. In the Relationship dimension, clerical employees were more satisfied than custodial/maintenance and food service workers on the subscales of Involvement and Peer Cohesion.

2. In the Relationship dimension, food service employees were more satisfied than custodial/maintenance workers on the subscales of Involvement and Peer Cohesion.

3. In the Personal Growth dimension, clerical employees were more satisfied than food service and custodial/maintenance workers on the Autonomy subscale. Clerical workers were more satisfied than custodial/maintenance workers on the Task Orientation subscale.

4. In the Personal Growth dimension, food service workers were more satisfied than custodial/maintenance workers on the Autonomy subscale. Food service workers were more satisfied than the other role groups on the Task Orientation subscale.

5. In the Systems Maintenance/Systems Change dimension, food service workers were more satisfied than clerical and custodial/maintenance workers on the subscales of Clarity and Control.

6. In the Systems Maintenance/Systems Change dimension, clerical workers were more satisfied than custodial/maintenance workers on the Clarity and Control subscales.

Other important findings relevant to research question one include:

1. Role conflict means scores for noncertified employee groups were comparable to the findings of Rippe (1983) for certified staff members (see Chapter II).

2. Role ambiguity levels for noncertified workers were much higher than for certified staff as reported in the Rippe (1983) study (see Chapter II).

3. Custodial and maintenance workers reported higher levels of role conflict, lower levels of role ambiguity, and lower levels of job satisfaction than the other role groups in this study.

4. Food service workers reported the lowest level of role conflict and the highest degree of role ambiguity, while having moderate levels of job satisfaction when compared to other role groups.

Research question two addressed the question of significant differences in relationships between noncertified employee groups for the same three variables using demographic categories. Significant differences were found in the pairs of groups for the categories of age and current position. Current position was addressed in question one.

### Age--role conflict

1. Respondents in age groups 31-40, 41-50, and 51-60 reported higher levels of role conflict than those in the 61 and over category.

### Age--role ambiguity

1. Respondents in the 21-30 age group reported a lower level of role ambiguity than those in age categories 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 61 and over.

## Age--job satisfaction (WES)

1. Respondents in age groups 31-40, 51-60, and 61 and over were more satisfied than those in age groups 21-30 and 41-50 on the Relationship dimension.

2. Respondents in the 41-50 age group reported lower levels of satisfaction on the Personal Growth dimension.

3. Respondents in the 61 and over category were more satisfied on the Systems Maintenance/Systems Change dimension than the other age groups.

Relative to research question two, the demographic factors of sex, educational level, and years in the current position had no significant impact on role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction.

Research question three compared perceived levels of job satisfaction that existed in selected Nebraska school employee groups with other employee groups in national studies designed to profile norms for the WES. The groups used to establish the national mean score consisted of 1442 randomly selected persons from a variety of work settings. Significant differences which were found to exist included:

1. Food service and clerical respondents reported higher levels of satisfaction on the Involvement subscale of the WES.

2. Respondents from the clerical and food service groups were more satisfied with the degree of Task Orientation of the WES.

3. Food service respondents reported higher levels of satisfaction on the Control subscale of the WES.

Other important findings relevant to question three included:

1. Clerical workers had higher levels of job satisfaction on eight of the ten subscales measured by the WES.

2. Custodial/maintenance respondents reported lower levels of job satisfaction than the national group on seven of the ten WES subscales.

## Conclusions

The conclusions for this study are organized according to the research questions that were addressed. In drawing conclusions and making inferences based upon the findings that resulted when noncertified workers and role groups were examined, it is important to review the definitions for each of the variables. Role conflict is the perceptions that workers have regarding the incongruence of various demands in their given role from a number of people. Role ambiguity is the perceptions of workers concerning the amount and clarity of expectation that exists in order for the jobs to be completed. Finally, job satisfaction is the level of morale or happiness experienced by the individual toward the work environment.

In research question one, consideration was given to the present levels of role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction among 368 noncertified school employees and between the role groups of clerical, custodial and maintenance, and food service workers. Role conflict scores for the employee groups were very comparable to mean scores for certified staff members found in studies by Brauer (1980) and Rippe (1983). This is not surprising since both noncertified and

certified staff members frequently receive a variety of signals from a number of similar sources. Expectations or demands from students, patrons, peers, and administrators are often given, and there are times when these demands are not congruent. Confusion, frustration, or a sense of being overwhelmed can easily result.

Role ambiguity by contrast was much higher for noncertified employees than for certified personnel in the studies by Brauer and Rippe. One explanation for this may be attributed to recent legislative efforts that place minimal requirements upon administrators and boards of education for the observation and evaluation of certified staff members. Clearly outlined expectations for job performance and feedback must be provided, thereby reducing ambiguity or lack of clarity in expectations. Mandated observation and evaluation requirements for noncertified staff members presently do not exist.

Custodial and maintenance workers consistently perceived themselves to have higher levels of role conflict, lower levels of ambiguity, and lower levels of job satisfaction than the clerical or food service workers. This bears out the findings of a previously cited study by Hamner and Tosi (1984) who found that role conflict was a more important predictor of job dissatisfaction than was role ambiguity. While clerical workers and food service workers appear to be under the direction of the building administrator, the custodian seemingly answers and responds to demands from all directions within the building. While custodians are expected by the administration to carry out regular maintenance routines, this regularity is frequently interrupted by emergencies or pressing demands that interfere. This may cause

internal or overt conflict.

Food service workers reported the lowest level of role conflict while reporting the highest level of role ambiguity. The fact that this group reported only moderate levels of job dissatisfaction further bears out Hamner and Tosi's (1984) findings. It was interesting to note that while the food service workers reported the highest level of role ambiguity, their scores on the job satisfaction subscales of Clarity and Control were significantly higher than custodial and maintenance workers. The ambiguity or lack of clear expectations did not diminish the level of job satisfaction of this group. It appears that while role ambiguity may have existed, the demands placed upon the food service workers were not so diverse nor received from so many sources as to give rise to the high degrees of role conflict. It would seem the expectation was to prepare the daily meal, take care of kitchen needs, and only infrequently deal with unrelated demands or requests.

The job satisfaction dimensions and subscales provided further insight into role group job perceptions. On two of the three subscales in the Relationship dimension, Involvement and Peer Cohesion, custodial and maintenance workers were less satisfied than the other two role groups. One possible reason for these differences is that custodial and maintenance workers often work in isolation. The opportunity to develop a cohesiveness with other staff members is limited. The noncertified staff member may not receive overt encouragement to attend staff functions or have an opportunity to interact with other staff members (certified or noncertified) on a regular basis. The

feeling may emerge that no one cares about or understands them or their role. When this occurs the level of involvement or commitment by the employee to the workplace may diminish.

In the Personal Growth dimension, clerical workers felt positive about the amount of Autonomy and Task Orientation that were present in their positions. Clerical workers perceived they possessed the latitude to make some of their own decisions and were allowed some degree of self-sufficiency. It appears that food service and clerical workers felt better about the degree of emphasis that is placed upon appropriate planning, efficiency, and task completion than did custodial and maintenance workers. Perhaps the differences that exist in the nature of the work each group performs may account for the workers' perceptions. Clerical and food service workers are involved in a product-type position and as a result receive more frequent feedback. Custodial and maintenance workers are involved in a more service-related situation where keeping machinery running and the building looking attractive are normal expectations. Frequently the feedback they receive, if they receive any, is negative when things are not running properly.

Clarity and Control were the subscales on which the custodial and maintenance workers were found to be much less satisfied than the other groups on the System Maintenance/System Change dimension. Custodians exhibited a need to know what to expect in the daily routine and how rules and policies are communicated. A lack of this type of information ties directly into the Control subscales, where satisfaction with the extent to which management uses rules and pressures to control employees is considered. These two factors tie directly into role

ambiguity and lead to role conflict for employees. In order to reduce role conflict and ambiguity, an administrator should use clear expectations expressed in rules and policies to evaluate employees.

In research question two, several demographic categories were examined to determine if differences in role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction existed among noncertified employees as a result of age, sex, educational level, and years in current position. Demographic factors such as sex, educational level, and the number of years in the current position had little or no effect on any of the variables. The large number of females who participated in the study, 273 of 368 respondents, may be one explanation why no significant differences by gender existed. The 95 males responding to the study were all a part of the 129-member custodial and maintenance role group. The differences found in this study between custodians and the other two role groups are attributed, therefore, to the nature of the work rather than the gender of the workers.

There were no differences that could be attributed to the level of educational attainment. This may be true because the sample had little difference in achieved level of attainment. Over 92 percent had at least a high school diploma, while only four percent had a college degree or beyond.

It would seem logical that the longer a person is in a position the clearer idea he or she would have of that job (role ambiguity). In this study, however, it made little difference when considering the length of time a person served in a particular position.

It is of interest to note the age of the worker was a variable that contained significant differences. Role conflict increased with age until middle age (50 years) when it began to decrease. A variety of reasons might explain this:

1. If workers have been in a position for a number of years their level of understanding of the role enables them to recognize priorities.

2. With maturity frqeuently comes a respect for perceived knowledge of the position that may be possessed by the worker. This would result in fewer people giving directions to the worker.

3. With age the level of anxiety may be reduced as workers' thoughts turn toward retirement.

Younger workers reported higher levels of role ambiguity. As the age of workers increased across each age category, the level of role ambiguity decreased. If experience in a role is associated with increasing age, it is logical to assume that the longer a person is in a role the better the understanding of expectations. Since the years in position category for this study was not determined to be significantly different, another conclusion could be that as a person ages and encounters more life and work experiences greater clarity of employer expectations will emerge.

Two groups reporting overall lower levels of job satisfaction were the 21-30 and 41-50 age categories. This may be partially the result of the fact that younger workers who are dissatisfied with their jobs tend to leave rather than trying to work out differences of

opinion or feelings of dissatisfaction. Workers at the midpoint of their working life may begin to question whether or not other career options exist. It is at these times that satisfaction with the current position may be at a lower level. Another factor that may explain lower satisfaction in 41-50-year-old noncertified employees is that during those years workers are frequently either re-entering the workforce after raising families or they are making career changes out of choice or necessity. These workers may become like the 21-30-year-old new employee in terms of role ambiguity. Perceived levels of job satisfaction may increase with age and longevity in a position as the highest levels of satisfaction were reported in the 61 and over and 51-60 age categories.

For research question three, comparisons were made between the noncertified employee groups in Nebraska and the national norming group used for the Work Environment Scale. The low level of job satisfaction found among custodial and maintenance workers in Nebraska held true as they scored below the national average on seven of ten subscales. The reported high levels of role conflict may account for the lower satisfaction levels on the subscales. Conversely, the role groups of clerical and food service workers were found to be above the national average on a majority of the ten subscales.

Some of the conclusions discussed in research question one may explain the lower levels of job satisfaction for custodial and maintenance workers when compared to the national group. Nebraska custodial and maintenance workers reported a high level of satisfaction on the

subscale Physical Comfort. This is the one subscale where the comments are quasi-evaluative of the very environment of which the custodial and maintenance group is in charge. The questions in this subscale talk about the temperature in the buiding, adequacy of lighting, draftiness, and ventilation. As a result, a positive score would be expected in this category.

Supervisor Support and Innovation were areas in which all three Nebraska groups showed low levels of job satisfaction. It would appear that a perceived lack of managerial support or encouragement and a lack of emphasis on change or new approaches existed to some degree. One of the increased trends nationally with certified school employees has been shared decision making and increased autonomy. These same methods have not been found in the same setting with noncertified staff.

Throughout this study the food service and clerical workers were perceived as being satisfied with the environment in which they worked. The category of Innovation, in which both groups scored below the national mean, has been discussed. Food service workers scored lower in the Autonomy subscale. This may be due to the fact that the environment in which they worked was controlled, with advance planning a necessity. The menus are planned months in advance and supplies, usually in sufficient quantity, ordered. The opportunity for workers to be self-sufficient or autonomous when making their own decisions is limited.

Clerical workers were well below the national group in Physical Comfort. The diversity that existed between districts in the age

of buildings and adequacy of heating and cooling systems makes specific
conclusions to this difference impossible to determine.

## Recommendations

Class II, III, and VI school districts in Nebraska vary in many
demographic aspects from the geographic size of the district, to
students enrollments, to budget size, to the number of staff employed.
Frequently, the number of noncertified staff employed by the district
is at a level which forces a variety of demands to be placed upon the
incumbents of these positions. Their roles may include building re-
sponsibilities as well as district-wide duties. The difficult task of
finding a time for meetings between noncertified staff and administrators
is compounded when staff members work in different blocks of time or in
more than one location within the district. In districts where there
are no specialists assigned to the supervision and training of non-
certified employees, time and personnel constraints usually cause the
attention of the administrator to be focused upon students and certified
staff rather than noncertified employees. This would appear to be
common practice until emergencies or high levels of need to communicate
with these role groups arise.

According to the findings of the study, role conflict existed
in all three employee groups that were examined. A need exists for
districts to look at ways to reduce role conflict. Clearly establish-
ing and utilizing channels of communication are ways to address this
concern. Designating and scheduling a time during the school year

where the administrator can meet with the work group or several repre-
sentatives of the group to discuss concerns or ideas is one way to
establish these lines of communication. Employees must feel they are
able and expected to bring questions or concerns to the employer when
they arise rather than allowing them to go unresolved.

For noncertified staff, particularly custodial/maintenance and
clerical workers who respond to requests and demands that frequently
interrupt their routines, additional methods for helping to prioritize
and schedule their work should be developed. Controlling emergency
interruptions, such as a sick child or an inoperative heating system,
will not be possible. However, interruptions in the schedule, such as
last-minute typing and copying requests for teachers or an unscheduled
construction project, can be addressed by establishing a procedure that
sets deadlines. The use of a work order system for needed maintenance
work or for clerical work that needs to be typed, duplicated, or dis-
tributed should be considered. Staff members and administrators need
to understand that last-minute requests raise everyone's anxiety level.
These types of requests need to be minimized.

In schools where job descriptions are not in existence, staff
members should be involved in the development of the documents. It
is evident from data collected in the study that noncertified workers
in Nebraska frequently lacked clear direction of what was expected
of them or how their performance would be measured. Methods of two-
way communication must be developed to clarify expectations and role
descriptions. Staff members could be called together and asked to
write down the tasks they perform on a daily, weekly, monthly, and

annual basis. This process will not only allow the staff members to identify tasks in a categorized manner, but it also gives the administrator an in-depth look at each role. Once the tasks are identified, written job descriptions and role-specific performance evaluations should be developed for each position.

School districts that presently have job descriptions and evaluation programs in existence for noncertified staff need to conduct a periodic review. The employees should be involved by asking them to examine the existing documents and react to them. Employees need the opportunity to discuss with supervisors the daily routine, and supervisors need to understand what the employee does on a day-to-day basis. Revisions may need to be made in the documents to more accurately reflect the current expectations for the role.

The development of job-specific, performance evaluations and a commitment to providing feedback to employees are essential components for the reduction of role conflict and role ambiguity. Employees might become more productive and work environments improved when expectations are clarified and job-specific feedback regarding their performance is provided. The reduction in job tension that is associated with a lack of direction or frequent interruption can be accomplished when workers and supervisors understand that frequent communication needs to occur.

The existence of role conflict, role ambiguity, and low levels of job satisfaction in noncertified employees can result in valuable administrator time being diverted from other matters pertaining to

school operations. For this reason, administrators should consider measuring the level of these variables within their districts. Consideration should be given to first using the Ideal Form of the Work Environment Scale (WES) prior to using Form R, or the Real Form. A study of the differences between employee perceptions of the ideal and actual environments would provide valuable insight for administrators. The use of the WES allows researchers to determine which of the specific dimensions or subscales of satisfaction need to be addressed. Once levels of job satisfaction have been identified, further analysis of the causes of job dissatisfaction need to be conducted so that steps can be taken in planning for training, supervision, inservice, and ongoing staff development.

Understanding the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity, and job satisfaction is important to local school district administrators. Evidence exists that reducing role ambiguity for employees who have a low need for clarity by developing job descriptions will have no consequential results. However, for employees with a high need for clarity, positive outcomes have frequently resulted. Studies have shown (Beehr, 1986; Bell, 1982; Kuiper & Van Huss, 1981; Mueller, 1978; Rippe, 1983) that individuals who saw their work environment as higher in involvement, supervisor support, autonomy, task orientation, and clarity tended to feel they were accomplishing more at work and reported less emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

School districts need to work in conjunction with other school districts, educational service units, community colleges, and the Department of Education to provide for inservice opportunities and

staff development programs which might help reduce role conflict and role ambiguity and increase job satisfaction. The perceived satisfaction levels of innovation, involvement, and control among non-certified employees were at or below the expected mean. Involving employees in clarifying job descriptions and planning ways to meet individual and organization needs deals directly with those perceptions. Job satisfaction levels of supervisor support and work pressure are also addressed when communication occurs and a commitment is made to providing growth experiences for all staff.

Noncertified employees are most frequently members of the local school community. They have been hired to fill a necessary role in the operation of the school. The positions that are filled by non-certified employees enable certified staff members to concentrate on the variety of tasks directly related to the education of students. Unless attention is paid to reducing the levels of role conflict and role ambiguity and increasing job satisfaction in noncertified staff, districts cannot expect high levels of productivity from the workforce. Enhancing the productivity of an organization, while improving the quality of employee work life, should be a goal and priority of administrators in school districts.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Request for Superintendent Participation

April, 1988

Dear Fellow Superintendent,

The role of a noncertified staff employee in public school education is a very valuable one as you well know. It is a role that over the years has received little attention from researchers. Several studies in other fields, such as business and industry, have looked at how clearly the job is explained to the employee. As a past elementary school principal and as a present superintendent of schools, it is my feeling that information regarding employee perceptions about the work environment from a noncertified staff member's point of view would be very valuable.

I am requesting your assistance in gathering information regarding this topic. Your school was randomly selected and is among the ten percent of the Class II, III, and VI schools in Nebraska that I am examining. If you agree to allow your noncertified employee groups to be a part of the study, I would send to you a sufficient quantity of surveys to be distributed to clerical, custodial, and food service employees. They would be asked to complete a ten-question demographic sheet, a fourteen-item role survey, and a 90-item, true-false job satisfaction survey. The surveys would be returned directly to me in a postage-paid envelope.

Group results will be provided to all districts and participants in the study.

Please return the enclosed response sheet in the enclosed addressed and postmarked envelope within the next ten days. Mark your decision to participate or your refusal to be a part of this study.

Your assistance in this project would be deeply appreciated. The results will provide practicing district administrators with recommendations in meeting the needs of noncertified staff members.

Sincerely,


Rick D. Black
Superintendent, Conestoga Schools

Educational Doctoral Candidate--UNL

encs.

_____ Yes, we would be willing to participate in the study. The number of noncerfified employees in our district are:

    Clerical  (not teacher aides)     _____

    Custodial/Maintenance     _____

    Food Service     _____


_____ No, we choose to not be a participant in this study.

          Signed _____

          School District _____

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter and Instruments

April, 1988

Dear Partners in Education,

The role of a noncertified staff employee in public school education is one that has received very little attention over the years. Several studies in other fields, such as business and industry, have looked at the need for a person to clearly understand the expectations of supervisors and to have the job clearly explained to the employees. As a past elementary school principal and as a present superintendent of schools, it is my feeling that information regarding employee perceptions about their work environment from a noncertified staff member's point of view would be very valuable.

I am surveying clerical, custodial, and food service employee groups in Class II, III, and VI districts in Nebraska. Your district and you have been selected to be a part of the study. The results of this study will be shared with each of the participants and districts when the project is completed. Enclosed in this packet are two survey instruments and a stamped and addressed envelope. You are asked to complete each survey instrument completely after carefully reading the instructions. Insert the completed surveys into the envelope and return it directly to me within 10 days.

When responding to any of the statements on the surveys, think of your current role, work place, and condition of employment as it is most of the time. Be assured that only group data will be shared. All personal data provided in your responses will be treated confidentially.

Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated. Hopefully the results will bring needed attention to the important role that you, as a noncertified staff member, fill in the operation of our educational system.

Sincerely,


Rick D. Black
Superintendent, Conestoga Schools

Educational Doctoral Candidate, UNL

encs.

Questionnaire

<u>Part I</u>

____ 01-02.   Please indicate your sex by placing the correct symbol on the blank to the left.

____ 03-04.   Please write your age as of January 1, 1988, on the blank to the left.

____ 05-06.   Indicate your level of educational attainment by selecting the best response from the list below:

1 = less than a high school diploma
2 = high school diploma or GED
3 = 1-2 years training in technical school
4 = 1-2 years of college
5 = graduate or technical school
6 = college diploma
7 = hours beyond college diploma
8 = postsecondary training solely in armed services

____ 07-08.   Please indicate total number of years you have had in your current position.

____ 09-10.   Please indicate your current position by selecting the best response and placing it in the blank to the left.

1 = Clerical
2 = Custodial/maintenance
3 = Food Services
4 = Other role
      Please specify _____

Part II

For each of the following fourteen statements, indicate how you feel about your job at your present place of employment by selecting the best response from the list below and placing the appropriate symbol on the blank to the left of the statement.

1 = Almost always          3 = Seldom

2 = Often                  4 = Almost never

____11.  I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it.

____12.  I know exactly what is expected of me.

____13.  I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.

____14.  There are clear, planned goals and objectives for my job.

____15.  I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.

____16.  I know what my responsibilities are.

____17.  Explanation is clear of what has to be done.

____18.  I feel certain about how much authority I have.

____19.  I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently.

____20.  I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.

____21.  I have to do things that should be done differently.

____22.  I know that I have divided my time properly.

____23.  I work on unnecessary things.

____24.  I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others.

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not been filmed at the request of the author.
They are available for consultation, however,
in the author's university library.

These consist of pages:


100-104, Work Environment Scale