An Exploratory Study of Employee Perceptions of Organizational Climate Openness and Freedom of Expression in a Large Public Utility

Alison Vickery Rider

University of Nebraska at Omaha

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

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An Exploratory Study of Employee Perceptions of Organizational Climate Openness and Freedom of Expression in a Large Public Utility

A Thesis
Presented to the Department of Communication and the Faculty at the Graduate College University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts University of Nebraska at Omaha

By Alison Vickery Rider

April 1988
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to

Richard A. Rider
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest appreciation to my
family and friends
for making the journey tolerable and possible,
especially my husband, Rick, my mother, Ardith Vickery,
my children, Aaron, Adrian and Megan,
and my beloved friends
Mary Tourek, Mary Ferdig and Sue Forbes.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Like most formal organizations in the United States, the Omaha Public Power District is a bureaucratic hierarchy. In organizations such as OPPD, decision making and information sharing flows generally from the top down. Organizational stability is reached by establishing and maintaining standard operating procedures, and control is ever concentrated atop the pyramid.

For many years, this structure seemed to serve the needs of customers and employees. It is a system well-suited toward internal and external environments that are predictable and orderly.

But the demands of ever-changing conditions have been straining the ability of organizations such as OPPD to respond, compete, and in some cases survive. Mink (1979) says bureaucracies are experiencing "dysfunctional internal rigidity, increasingly diverse workers, and a complex rapidly changing environment (p. 6)."

The Newtonian world view and the bureaucratic system have outlived their triumphs. This decay has been a long time in coming . . . We must now seek an alternative way to organize human energies toward common ends (Mink, p. 7).

Adaptability, not predictability, will be the survival tool of the "new" organization. The ultimate measure of this adaptability, says Mink, is the ability of the organization to respond to its environment, both internally and
externally. Internal responsiveness is, according to Mink, developed and maintained through collaboration not through authority. "This collaboration involves managers and staff participating together in planning and implementation. This process assumes that people have the capacity for creativity, responsibility, and growth, given opportunities to develop (Mink, p.10)."

What Mink has described is an open organization. One where data and energy are continuously exchanged and interchanged, internally and externally. But moving from an organizational perspective that is bureaucratic to one that is open can necessitate a "fundamental reorientation (Mink, p.15)."

In developing the Performance 100% Program for the Omaha Public Power District, President Bernie Reznicek and collaborator Dr. Sang Lee seemed to understand the need for a fundamental reorientation. In their words, OPPD was to undergo a cultural change, with communication becoming much more open, flowing upward and laterally as well as downward. The functions of information sharing and decision making would move toward lower levels of the organization. Taking risks would not only be allowed and endured, but actually encouraged.

The time has arrived to achieve a quantum leap rather than an incremental change to enhance the quality of work life (QWL) and the organizational effectiveness. The top management is ready, employees are ready, the resources are available, and the community is waiting
for such an innovative program. QWL will be the most significant management undertaking ever attempted at OPPD (Lee, 1985).

The announcement of this new program was exciting to some, but received with uncertainty and even resistance by others. It was my own eager anticipation of cultural change that initiated my interest in studying the openness of the communication climate at OPPD. It seemed to me the very success of the program hinged on the ability of the organization to move toward openness and all that it implies and encompasses—flexibility, tolerance, risk-taking, trust, sharing. In my thinking, the system would need to become more open in order to accept and experiment with the new management philosophies incorporated in the program. Perhaps more importantly, an open environment appeared to be a primary goal of the program itself.

An important first step toward creating this new culture, it seemed, would have been to evaluate and describe the corporate climate. In Lee’s original proposal to OPPD this step was considered critical:

". . . a thorough QWL audit is an essential exercise before plunging into a major people-oriented program. As a matter of fact, most QWL program failures have been attributed to the lack of thorough front-end preparations. The purpose of the audit is to identify areas for improvement in current operations, attitudes of employees, and the readiness of top management (Lee, 1985).

The estimated cost of the audit and a desire by the president to move forward more quickly with implementation of
the program meant elimination of this step in the process.

As the official Performance 100% program did not begin with the audit as recommended by Lee, this author felt that some evaluation of employee perceptions—even on a very limited basis—was important for the organization. This interest led to the initial impetus for the current study.

With this interest in mind, the current study attempts to explore some aspects of OPPD’s organizational climate with respect to general systems qualities, particularly openness, and also to consider how these characteristics relate to superior/subordinate communication.

Survey of Literature

Before an attempt is made to develop methods for measuring communication climate openness, several areas of communication literature must be reviewed, specifically those relating to general systems theory, organizational climate and supervisor/subordinate communication. Articles and research studies concerning communication in organizations abound. Whatever the focus or the frame of reference—the structure of the organization, the communication network, the climate of the organization, communication between supervisor and subordinate, or any others—or the time frame of the writing, it seems most writers agree that no single theory or group of theories adequately explains the phenomenon of human communication within an organizational setting.
In weighing the merits of finding "the" theory, Redding (1979) asks:

Can the same theory . . . validly encompass concepts and findings from such (admittedly ad hoc) topics as: (1) interpersonal communication between superiors and subordinates, (2) the uses and effects of mass media tools in "corporate employee" programs, and (3) communication structures or "networks" in the frame of reference of large, complex organizations? The most plausible answer appears to be "no (p. 312)."

Redding suggests instead we look for integrative theories, with the understanding that each would be appropriate for only a limited domain.

In an effort to build understanding about human communication, a number of researchers favor one or more of the "systems" perspectives. Depending on which systems perspective is chosen, specific principles of each theory may vary. However, several foundational principles appear to be rather constant, and at least three of these are used as reoccurring themes in this report. They are as follows:

1. A system is a "whole which functions as a whole by virtue of the interdependence of its parts (Fisher, 1978, p. 197)." Fisher explains this means the "components of the system do not characterize the systemic nature of the whole, but the relationships--more specifically, the interdependent relationships of the components--provide the system with its unique characteristic of wholeness (p. 197)."
2. In a system, there are various hierarchical levels which increase in complexity. Boulding (1956) describes eight hierarchical levels. Fisher (1978) presents three levels: the subsystem, the system and the suprasystem. Each individual is considered a subsystem. Two or more individuals interacting "provide the pattern or the structure or the organization of the communication system (p. 208)." Within the context of the suprasystem, Fisher says the interaction between and among individuals takes on meaning, "the individuals constrain, structure, or pattern the social interaction of the communicative system; and the significance of that interaction is a function of the system's relationship with its suprasystem, that is, its environment (p. 209)."

3. Social systems are open systems, with permeable boundaries. The concept of openness pertains to all hierarchical levels within the system, between and among the levels of the system and between the system and the outside environment.

The flow of information across the boundaries of the system suggests that the nature of the functional relationship between the system and its suprasystem affects to no small extent the structural-functional behaviors of the systems. . . . Any understanding of a given system must involve an understanding of the transfer of information across systemic boundaries both upward and downward in the hierarchy (Fisher, 1978, p. 204).

The research and writings included in this survey are grounded on the three systems principles identified above,
particularly as they pertain to the topics of: (a) communication climate and (b) communication attitudes and behaviors of individuals, most importantly those pertaining to the supervisor/subordinate relationship.

**Climate**

**Interdependence-Wholeness.** Viewing communication through a systems perspective requires that one take into account the relationships between the behavior and attitudes of individuals in the system and the aspects of the organization itself. The individuals effect the system; the system effects the individuals. Poole and McPhee (1983) describe this paradox: "People create, maintain, and control organizations, yet organizations attain a life of their own and often overshadow, constrain, and manipulate their members. Who controls whom: Which is the primary cause and which the derivative (p. 195)?"

Within the systems perspective of pragmatics, Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) say the terms communication and behavior are synonymous. All behavior, not only speech, is communication, and all communication--even the communicational clues in an impersonal context--affects behavior (p. 22).

A phenomenon remains unexplainable as long as the range of observation is not wide enough to include the context in which the phenomenon occurs. . . If the limits of the inquiry are extended to include the effects of behavior on others, their reactions to it, and the context in which all of this takes place, the focus
shifts from the artificially isolated monad to the relationship between the parts of a wider system. The observer of human behavior then turns from an inferential study of the mind to the study of the observable manifestations of relationship. The vehicle of these manifestations is communication (p. 20).

Similarly, according to Tagiuri (1968), "It seems as if there were an interaction between the actor and the environment, with the environment presenting itself, so to speak, in different forms depending upon its actor (p. 13)." It is this interaction of the actor and the environment within an organization which Tagiuri says has come to be known as the study of organizational climate.

One of the most frequently used operational definitions of climate was offered by Tagiuri (1968):

Organizational climate is a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of an organization that (a) is experienced by its members, (b) influences their behavior, and (c) can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the organization (p. 27).

Payne and Pugh (1976) explain the concept of climate has to do with the psychological meaningfulness of the environment for individual organization members. Lawler, Hall, and Oldham (1974) view climate as a "generalized perception of the organization which the person forms as a result of numerous experiences in the organization (p. 143)."

Although the precise definitions of climate may vary, as do the dimensions that are identified as most critical to influencing climate, writers and researchers tend to
agree that communication is one of the most important elements. Gibb (as cited in Redding, 1972) characterized the dimensions of "supportive" and "defensive" climates in terms of communication. Forehand and Gilmer (as cited in Taguiri, 1968) included "communication networks" among their five aspects of organizational climate.

Not only does communication influence climate, climate influences communication, and in turn the organization at large. Redding (1972) observes, "The 'climate' of the organization is more crucial than are communication skills or techniques (taken by themselves) in creating an effective organization (p. 111)." A number of studies have been aimed at better understanding the influence communication has on organizational climate, and Jablin (1980a) summarized the communication climate and network research up to 1980 in a comprehensive overview. Albrecht (1979) looked specifically at the role communication plays in the perception of climate, particularly the impact of "key communicators" in the environment.

Because organizational climate is both perceived by and affected by individuals, and individuals are in turn affected by the climate, the climate of an organization can not be understood separately from the individuals in it. The concepts of interdependency and wholeness when used to understand the relationship between individuals at one level and the organizational climate at another are very
interrelated to the next system principle, the existence of hierarchical levels.

Levels of hierarchy. Before beginning this portion of the discussion, it is important to differentiate present use of the term "hierarchy" and also the phrase "hierarchical levels" from how this term and phrase are used in the "Results" and "Discussion" chapters of this report. In the present context, the meaning concerns multidimensionality of the organization with levels that increase in complexity, for example from that of a single individual, to a group (two or more), to a larger group (department or division), to the whole organizational system. Later in this report, hierarchy refers to a structure dimension, that of the job position level of individuals within the OPPD organization.

Jablin (1980a) says the level or unit of analysis is important because it affects how phenomena are measured and the power of the results. He contends most communication climate studies have focused on the individual as the unit of analysis, and he passes on a warning issued by Falcione and Werner (as cited in Jablin, 1980a) concerning the intermixing of levels within specific studies:

Using different measures which purport to measure a construct at one level of analysis, and another instrument which measures another related construct, but at a different level of analysis can be hazardous business. What we find may be more artificial than real (p. 333).

In his systems model of organizational climate, Evans
(1978) includes the concept of multiple levels in defining climate: "Organizational climate is a multidimensional perception of the essential attributes or character of an organizational system (p.110)." Like Fisher (1978), Evans says, there are at least three systems levels to be concerned with: the subsystem, the system, and the suprasystem. Mink, Schultz and Mink say (1979) these levels can be used to describe the "individual person, the work group, and the entire organization (p. 11)" from a systems perspective.

Researchers concerned with organizational climate historically have focused on one level of analysis or another. Concepts are either individual (micro) attributes or organizational (macro) attributes (Payne & Pugh, 1976).

Poole and McPhee (1983) warn researchers not to focus on one level or another because that makes it impossible to explain the integration of individuals into a suprapersonal organization or "to account for the way a member-created organization acquires an influence of its own over its creator (p. 196)." They call for a move beyond viewing a single level of analysis to an "intersubjective" level of analysis, "one that links or bridges members' perspectives together, depicting them as an organization-wide or department-wide force. The manner of this linkage is the critical defining characteristic of the construct (p. 196)."
Poole and McPhee propose that the theory of "structuration" is ideally suited for the study of climate:

[It] aims to trace the processes by which organizations are created and maintained in interaction while they simultaneously shape and channel that interaction. . . For the structurational perspective climate is a collective attitude, continually produced and reproduced by members' interaction (p. 213).

**Openness.** Both the concepts of "wholeness" and "hierarchical" levels are properties identified with open systems. According to Watzlawick (1967), "With the development of the theory of hierarchically arranged open subsystems, the system and its environment need no longer be artificially isolated from one another; they fit meaningfully together within the same theoretical framework (p. 123)." To incorporate Watzlawick's description into an organizational setting, individuals could be conceptualized on the level of a system and the organization with its climate on the level of the environment or suprasystem.

Kast and Rosenzweig (cited in Mink, et al, 1979) contend openness is a matter of degree:

Open systems exchange information, energy, or material with their environments. Biological and social systems are inherently open systems; mechanical systems must be open or closed. The concepts of open and closed systems are difficult to defend in the absolute. We prefer to think of open-closed as a dimension; i.e., systems are relatively open or relatively closed (p. 7).

When an organizational system can be characterized as being relatively open, it is also most likely a healthy
system "with mechanisms for organizing around purposes and information flow, rather than preordained centers of power. Such an organization values its history and develops a shared view of future direction, strengths, and weaknesses. It incorporates internal and external mechanisms for obtaining and responding to feedback (Mink, Schultz, and Mink, 1979, p. 13)."

Openness, say Mink et al., as a value in an organization, underlies all others and is "reflected in tolerance for diversity and creativity in setting and achieving goals (p. 32)." In the forward to the Mink book, Lippett describes an open organization as an energy exchange system:

Organization openness calls for restructuring work to provide opportunities for the worker to express initiative, responsibility, and competence -- elements that contribute to the higher need for self-fulfillment. If the desire for self-fulfillment triggers creativity, inventiveness, ingenuity, the worker's self-fulfillment results in both high personal satisfaction and greater output (p. xiii).

There appears to be empirical evidence linking openness to other organizational concepts, such as job satisfaction (Burke and Wilcox, 1969; Jablin, 1978b; Falcione, 1974; Glauser, 1984). Indik, Georgopoulos and Seashore (1961), and Willits (1967) (both cited in Redding, 1972) and Trombetta (1981) report openness is directly correlated with organizational performance. Although the evidence seems overwhelming that openness does have a great deal to
do with a variety of factors, one study (Rubin and Goldman, 1968) reported finding no relationship between managerial effectiveness and openness of communication between supervisors and subordinates.

The property of openness in organizations has frequently been viewed as a dimension of the organizational climate. A variety of terms has been used in trying to get at the openness concept—accessibility (Follert, 1980), information-sharing (Gerloff, Wofford and Summers, 1978), and disclosure (Steele, 1975).

Steele (1975) says he prefers the term "disclosure" to the term "openness" because it implies choice. To increase the disclosure patterns in an organization (to have a more open environment) is to gain control over the environment, not give it up:

The difference is whether you think of control as an attempt to control people or control events. Low disclosure tends to emphasize control of people. Higher disclosure tends to generate control over events and activities, since there are more potential sources of action and reaction (p. 116).

To be a self-correcting, effective, growth-oriented system, Steele contends that organizations must do more than perform disclosure rituals, they must constantly demonstrate the sharing of new content information with members (p. 119).

Steele recommends viewing the disclosure patterns (or openness) of an organization through a modified version of
Lewin's force field analysis. "A simple way of visualizing the level of disclosure in an organization is to think of it as a dynamic equilibrium, with a relatively balanced field of forces, some tending to increase disclosure ('driving forces') and others tending to block or reduce disclosure and promote secrecy ('restraining forces') (p. 159)."

Examples of driving forces that push toward disclosure include employees' desire to learn, their interest in what is happening in the organization, and their need for collaboration. Forces that tend to reduce disclosure include the desire to maintain control, fear of failure, and the lack of appropriate disclosure skills. To change the disclosure pattern in the direction of more openness, Steele says the organization must increase the forces which push toward disclosure or decrease the forces which block disclosure, or both.

Steele says the most difficult task is to change people's attitudes about disclosure within the organization. This, he says, involves not only changing the formal structure, but also getting people to behave differently, reducing the risks so that they will continue the new behavior until a change in attitude follows. Steele makes clear there is a relationship between the overall disclosure climate and the behavior and attitudes of individuals within the system, which illustrates the
concepts of interdependency and hierarchical levels within an open system.

Although it appears to be universally agreed that open systems are composed of different levels of systems, subsystems and suprasystems, which are interdependent upon each other and inseparable from one another, researchers find it very difficult to study communication within organizations and account for the multidimensional levels. Writers on communication frequently acknowledge the existence of multiple levels when discussing the limitations of their studies, but the studies themselves, more often than not, focus on the level of the system where interpersonal communication occurs.

**Supervisor-Subordinate Communication**

**Definition and "direction."** At this level in the system, a frequent target of organizational communication research is the relationship between supervisors and subordinates. Jablin (1979) defines the superior/subordinate relationship as being "limited to those exchanges of information and influence between organizational members, at least one of whom has formal authority to direct and evaluate the activities of other organizational members (p.1202)."

When viewing the superior/subordinate relationship, researchers have often focused on how that relationship affects such factors as job satisfaction, organizational performance, and employee perceptions toward the
organization. One of the most important concepts that arises when addressing factors having to do with supervisor and subordinate communication is openness—what is its value, how is it achieved, how does it effect the supervisor/subordinate relationship, what impact does it have on an employee’s attitude about the company, and how does it effect performance?

Typically, the direction of communication exchanged in superior/subordinate interactions is both downward, from superior to subordinate, and upward, from subordinate to superior. Speaking of openness, Redding (1972) said the "direction" of the message is an important consideration. He describes "openness in message sending, especially in the sense of candid disclosure of feelings, of 'bad news' and of important company facts." Openness in "message receiving," Redding says, concerns "encouraging, or at least permitting, the frank expression of views divergent from one's own; the willingness to listen to 'bad news' or discomforting information (p. 330)."

**Impact of supervisor openness.** Theorists seem to concur that openness plays an important role in the supervisor/subordinate relationship and in the subordinate’s view of the organization at large. White (1972) places the responsibility of creating an open environment on the supervisor. "The manager, more than anyone else in the unit, by his own practices establishes standards
and patterns of behavior for other members in the unit.

If the manager communicates openly with his subordinates, they are more likely to be open with him [emphasis added] (p. 158)."

Rogers (cited in Rings, 1979) who developed the Organizational Communication Network Openness Instrument, echoes White's view by contending the superior is generally assumed as having the responsibility for setting the stage for an environment conducive to communicative openness. Wilcox and Burke (1969) demonstrated a positive correlation between the openness of the superior and the openness of the subordinate.

Chaney and Teel (1972) found that supervisors' openness was a crucial factor in influencing the level of employee participation:

The "successful" supervisors by words and actions made clear their genuine interest in employee ideas and feelings. They created an open supportive atmosphere; they identified areas where they needed help; they actively solicited employee comments; they listened attentively to those comments, without making snap judgements; and they provided feedback at every meeting about what they were doing to implement employee suggestions (p. 173).

While many researchers point out the important role played by the supervisor in creating an open communication climate, a number of theorists also note that subordinates play a part in the communication patterns that develop. Gemmill (cited in Jablin, 1978b) says one of the most common complaints managers and supervisors voice is that
employees are not open and honest when communicating upwardly. Vogel (cited in Jablin, 1978b) found evidence that subordinates are afraid to say how they really feel. Other researchers say employees distort information passed on to bosses (Read, 1962; O'Reilly and Roberts, 1974). In some cases, employees may even feel that they could be punished if they disclose negative information to their superiors (Argyis, 1966).

Researchers Baird (1974), Stull (1975) and Jablin (1978a), each chose to explore the communication characteristics of openness in superior/subordinate relationships in completing doctoral dissertations at Purdue University. In looking at subordinates’ "upward communication freedom" with superiors, Baird (1974) found that both willingness to talk and actual talk about a topic is a function of the individual’s perception of the other’s willingness to listen.

Adding to Baird’s findings, Stull (1975) looked at superior and subordinate attitudes toward various types of supervisory responses to task-relevant and non-task-relevant open messages sent by subordinates. Willits (cited in Stull, 1975) defined task-relevant openness as accurately sharing information about organizational objectives, while non-task-relevant openness concerns personal attitudes, opinions, tastes, interests, etc. Stull discovered that both subordinates and supervisors in his
study preferred supervisory responses that were accepting (encouraging) or reciprocating ("owning-up" to one's feelings, ideas, etc.), rather than neutral-negative (unfeeling, cold or "nonaccepting"). Stull contends that acceptance and reciprocation by the supervisor toward openness of communication from the subordinate is seen as a reward by the subordinate. Johnson and Noonan (cited in Stull, 1975) also concluded that positive acceptance increases the frequency and completeness of continued communication openness.

Jablin (1978b) studied the attitudes of subordinates toward five types of message responses. He identified distinctions that characterize the types of responses given in open and closed relationships.

One of the more important ideas about the supervisor-subordinate relationship is that an employee's view of this relationship influences his or her view of the organization at large. Gerloff, Wofford and Summers (1978) identified a relationship between a manager's interpersonal style and the subordinate's perception of the prevailing information-sharing norms of the organization. According to Richmond and McCrosky (1979), a supervisor's management communication style directly impacts employees' perceptions of both the supervisor and the organization. Baird and Diebolt (1976) found that the subordinate's relationship with the company was positively correlated with the quality of
relationship and frequency of communication with his or her supervisor and that the frequency of communication affects the way subordinates perceive their relationship with their supervisor.

The influence of trust on openness. A discussion of supervisor/subordinate communication would seem incomplete without some mention of the role played by "trust." Studies by Mellinger (1956) and Read (1962) underscore the importance of this concept in the development of the supervisor/subordinate relationship. According to Mellinger, "a communicator who lacks trust in the recipient of his communication tends to be motivated to conceal his own attitudes about an issue. The accuracy of the recipient's perceptions is impaired accordingly (p. 115)."

Roberts and O'Reilly (1974) found positive correlations of trust to a subordinate's estimate of the accuracy of information received from his superior. They also contend that subordinates who trust their superiors desire interaction with them and are more satisfied with communication in general. "Intuitively, interpersonal trust seems an important antecedent to the openness and accuracy with which people, including superiors and subordinates, interact (p. 212)."

A number of other studies have also shown that trust in one's superior is strongly related to both the frequency
and accuracy of upward communication. Glauser (1984) concludes that "trust and communication share a reciprocal relationship; trust develops via communication, and frequency and accuracy of communication are by-products of trust (p. 622)."

Cutlip and Center (1971) draw the conclusion that before there can be effective employee communication, there must be a climate of trust. Likert (cited in Jablin, 1980a) goes even further to say openness of communication, which is based on trust, is essential to having an effective organizational climate.

**Purpose of the Study**

Based upon the review of general systems theory literature, particularly as it pertains to organizational communication climate and to supervisor/subordinate relationship, a self-report questionnaire was constructed to discover employee perceptions of openness at OPPD. In other words, a limited communication audit was to be conducted.

The general purpose of the audit was the audit was to determine aspects of openness of communication at OPPD by exploring the organizational climate, including supervisor/subordinate relationships, employee/upper management relationships, demographic differences and organizational structure, all in the context of a large public utility implementing a program of organizational change.
Based upon the literature, the survey was constructed in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees perceive various levels of the organizational hierarchy to be?

2. What relationship, if any, exists between how open employees feel various levels of the organization are in communicating downward and how open employees feel those same levels are in receiving upward communication?

3. What relationship, if any, exists between how open employees view their supervisors and how open they view the communication climate in general?

4. What relationship, if any, exists between how open employees view upper management and how open they view the communication climate in general?

5. What differences, if any, are there in how much freedom employees feel they have to express themselves depending on who else is present?

6. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisors, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their length of service with the company? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their length of service?

7. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisors, upper management, and the
organization at large, depending on their age? Do employees feel differently about freely expressing themselves under various conditions depending on their age?

8. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisor, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their job position? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their job position?

9. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisors, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their reporting division? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their reporting division?

10. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view supervisors, upper management, and the organization as a whole, depending on their work location? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their division?
CHAPTER II
Research Design and Procedures

Setting and Subjects

The Omaha Public Power District is an electric utility company serving 238,000 customers throughout a 5,000-square-mile area in eastern Nebraska. Subjects of the study were the 2,022 permanent employees working full time at OPPD during the month of February in 1986.

The timing of the study was planned to coincide with the beginning of a new corporate-wide program called Performance 100%. An important goal of the program was to raise the level of service provided for customers and to subsequently increase customer satisfaction with the utility. Also through the program, the management style then in place—a traditional, somewhat authoritarian, top-down style—was to be challenged, and a participative management philosophy was to begin taking root.

Employees were told that through a quality of work life program, the climate of the organization should evolve into an environment where individuals would have increased opportunity for contributing their ideas, expressing themselves creatively, taking risks, and sharing in the decision-making process.

It became clear that in order to change the culture of the organization in the direction stated, communication behavior, rules, and patterns would have to become more
open than in the past. Not only was a more open climate needed in order to make the desired changes, but an open climate was also a stated goal of the program.

This study was designed to discover aspects of organizational climate by exploring employee perceptions about communication openness at the time Performance 100% was initiated in early 1986. Originally, a follow-up study was to have been conducted in August 1986 to measure what, if any, differences would be found in perceptions of openness after the program had been in place for six months. The original research design was based on several assumptions concerning how the Performance 100% program would proceed at OPPD and on assumptions concerning the researcher's capability to code and analyze data generated by the initial survey. Due to factors beyond the researcher's control and assumptions that proved inaccurate, the followup study was not conducted.

In addition to uncovering employee perceptions of the communication climate at OPPD, the study met a secondary goal of providing baseline information concerning how much employees understood about the goals of Performance 100% and what their feelings were about the program.

**Instruments**

The "Employee Communication Questionnaire" (see Appendix A) was the instrument used to explore employee perceptions about the Performance 100% program and about
the communication climate. The questionnaire is a 56-item survey divided into four primary areas: Section I includes seven questions concerning respondents' knowledge of and attitudes about a then-new employee program, "Performance 100%"; Section II has 33 questions concerning respondents' views of the communication climate at OPPD and their descriptions of their own communication behavior as it pertains to freedom of expression; Section III lists five demographic questions; and Section IV contains open-ended questions about Performance 100% and about communication in general at OPPD.

Section I. Employees were asked if they had heard about Performance 100% and if so, where had they received their information. They were asked to write down the goals of the program in an open-ended question, and in a multiple choice question employees were asked to choose the answer that best fits how they felt about the program. In two questions, respondents were to select which, if any, Performance 100%-related programs they were familiar with.

The questions in Section I were developed from information provided by management for preparation of various employee communication materials about the Performance 100% Program.

For this and other sections of the survey, interviews with seven employees were conducted to test questions for
clarity and to review the accuracy of information about the Performance 100% program. Personnel were selected because of their familiarity with the program from different perspectives within the organizational hierarchy. The group reviewing the questions included two vice presidents, the administrator of the Performance 100% program, the manager of the employee training and education department, and three employees in the Corporate Communication Division.

Section II. Beyond the face validity of the questions and the review for clarity described above, the questions used to discover employee perceptions about the communication climate were not tested for reliability or validity. It is recognized that these factors would have to be further developed for use beyond exploratory purposes.

The questions for Section II were largely based on examples of driving and restraining forces acting on communication openness provided by Steele in his adaptation of Lewin's force field analysis (Steele, 1975). An example of a driving force would be encouragement from supervisors or upper management for employees to openly offer suggestions or ideas. Examples of restraining forces include the level of perceived risk in disagreeing with a supervisor and in speaking freely in a group situation.

Other sources for questions were the 1985 ConAgra Organizational Review and the International Communication
Association Audit (ICA). While specific information is not known about the reliability and validity of questions adopted from the ConAgra questionnaire, questions adapted from the ICA audit were part of a 188-item instrument which was tested in six drafts over three years. Questions used in this study were taken from the "Relationship" section of the ICA instrument which was reported by the authors to have a .901 reliability rating.

Questions were chosen to represent the targeted levels within the organizational hierarchy and to address both the downward and the upward flow of communication.

In formating the questionnaire, questions were organized in two different groups: (a) those that probe employees' perceptions about the openness of the communication environment and (b) those that concern employees' perceptions of their own communication behavior in specific situations, particularly as that behavior relates to freedom of expression.

The first 20 questions in part one of Section II concern employee attitudes about the openness of the communication climate. Employees are asked to rank their level of agreement with each statement by choosing among five answers on a Likert-type scale. The answer choices ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

In this portion of the survey, each statement targets
communication with others who represent a specific level within the organizational hierarchy—the respondent’s immediate supervisor, co-workers, those from another work group, and the corporation’s senior managers—or the question targets the communication climate in general at OPPD. Most statements concern the flow of communication either upward or downward, although two statements speak of lateral communication with a work group or with employees in other departments.

In the second part of Section II, employees are asked to describe their own communication behavior under certain conditions as it concerns freedom of expression. The conditions include: (a) alone with a co-worker; (b) in group of co-workers; (c) alone with his or her supervisor; (d) in a group with his or her supervisor; (e) alone with a member of senior management; and (f) in a group with a member of senior management. Only employees who supervise others were asked to answer three questions concerning their communication behavior when they are with a subordinate, alone and in a group.

Answer choices for part two of Section II were also on a five-point Likert-type scale. However, answer choices here differed from part one, ranging from very frequently to very seldom.

Section III: Demographics. Demographic information was
sought in five areas: (a) number of years at OPPD; (b) age; (c) employee position in organizational hierarchy; (d) reporting division; and (e) work location.

These questions were selected basically for two reasons. Three of the demographic questions—age, years of service, and reporting division—had been used on OPPD’s 1985 Employee Attitude Survey. By repeating these demographics with the same groupings used in the OPPD survey, comparisons between the two studies would be possible. More importantly, a number of research studies in the field of organizational communication have viewed the climate through the demographics of age, tenure, and job position. By selecting like variables, the results of this study could be used to compare with other findings.

Respondents were encouraged to complete the demographic questions, but it was clearly stated any item could be left blank.

Section IV: Open-ended comments. Two questions in the survey asked employees to write in any additional comments they might have about: 1.) the Performance 100% program; and 2.) communication in general at OPPD.

Procedures

Each employee was sent an "Employee Communication Questionnaire" through OPPD’s interoffice mail service on Feb. 15, 1986. The mailing list was provided by OPPD’s Employee Relations Division which maintains the names and locations
of all full time permanent employees.

Along with the questionnaire, employees received a letter (see Appendix B) stating that the purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data for a research project needed to complete an academic degree. It was stated in the letter that OPPD management had reviewed the survey and given the researcher permission to distribute it to employees through the company mail system. Employees were assured that although the company would be provided the results of the survey, the study was the researcher's personal project, and all original questionnaires would become the personal property of the researcher.

Also included in the distribution to employees was a pre-addressed envelope for returning questionnaires through the interoffice mail to the researcher. Employees were asked to complete and return the questionnaires within two weeks, by Feb. 28, 1986. A short notice in the weekly employee newsletter reminded employees about the survey and urged their cooperation in filling it out.

Questionnaires were returned to the researcher's OPPD office. Envelopes remained sealed until transported off site. Once opened, each question on every survey was individually coded. This information was then transferred to computer scan sheets for entry into the computer system at the University of Nebraska-Omaha by the Computing Services Department.
CHAPTER III

Results

Of the 2,022 questionnaires, 1,056 were returned and 1,039 were usable for analysis. Seventeen were not sufficiently completed or instructions were not followed.

The results from the seven questions pertaining to Performance 100%, Section I, are listed in Appendix C. These results will be presented to OPPD management along with a compilation of responses from the open-ended questions in Section IV.

The results presented in this chapter are from Sections II and III: the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), correlation coefficients, analyses of variance for the 33 communication questions, and the demographic information. The number and percentages of respondents answering the five demographic questions, along with the number and percentages for the actual population at the time of the survey, appear in Table 1 on page 34.

Question Means and Standard Deviations

Questions 8-27 concern the communication climate, and questions 28-40 concern communication behavior as it pertains to freedom of expression. These questions were re-numbered 1-33, and the answers were coded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Climate</th>
<th>Freedom of Expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = strongly agree</td>
<td>1 = very frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = agree</td>
<td>2 = frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = neutral</td>
<td>3 = occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = disagree</td>
<td>4 = seldom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = strongly disagree</td>
<td>5 = very seldom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Demographic Information for Respondent and Actual Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Category</th>
<th>Respondent Total</th>
<th>% of Total Respondent Population</th>
<th>Actual OPPD Population</th>
<th>% of Total OPPD Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of years worked at OPPD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19 years</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+ years</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,039</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,022</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reporting Division</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Operations</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Operations</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Production</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Services Operations</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Systems Services</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Accounting</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,039</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,031</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 25</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,039</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,022</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Management</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>1,640</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,035</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>2,031</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Location</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown office area</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other metropolitan Omaha office area</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>(INFORMATION FOR ACTUAL OPPD POPULATION NOT AVAILABLE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural office area</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside on line or construction crew</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating Plant</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please name, if desired)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>981</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discrepancies in totals on actual populations due to time frame of OPPD reports.
The means and standard deviations for questions 1-33 (8-40 on the original questionnaire) are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Communication Climate and Freedom of Expression Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Climate</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 (8) In general, people in my area seem willing to participate in Performance 100% programs.</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>Q11 (18) Our own vice president often meets in person with people in our area to discuss projects, plans or problems.</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 (9) Our supervisor encourages us to get involved with Performance 100% programs.</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>Q12 (19) Employees in our area may initiate a contact with our vice president to seek information, offer opinions or make a suggestion.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 (10) Upper management has fully explained to employees what Performance 100% is all about.</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Q13 (20) The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 (11) Overall, employees are kept informed about what is going on throughout the organization.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Q14 (21) I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward with me.</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5 (12) My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at OPPD.</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>Q15 (22) My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 (13) The organization makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Q16 (23) We have access to the people or information needed to get the job done.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 (14) In my work area, people are open and honest with each other.</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Q17 (24) Whenever I am given an assignment, I feel I know what is expected and I have ample direction to get the job done.</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8 (15) Employee suggestions and ideas are welcome and taken seriously by upper management.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>Q18 (25) Employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions at OPPD.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9 (16) Employees are encouraged to discuss projects or problems with others at every level of the organization.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Q19 (26) When we have a new assignment or problem to solve, the people in our area share ideas on how to get the job done or to find a solution.</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10 (17) Upper management at OPPD is candid with employees about controversial and sensitive issues.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Q20 (27) We often meet with employees from other departments or divisions to discuss mutual projects or concerns.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of Expression</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>freedom of expression</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21 (28) When I am with my co-workers, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>Q28 (35) When I am alone with someone from upper management, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22 (29) When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>Q29 (36) When I am in a group where someone from upper management is present, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23 (30) When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to disagree with the views of another supervisor or manager.</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Q30 (37) When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to express an opinion, even if it's negative.</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24 (31) When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with the views of other employees who are present.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>Q31 (38) When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25 (32) When I am in a group with my supervisor, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>Q32 (39) When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with a subordinate who is present.</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26 (33) When I am in a group, I feel comfortable suggesting new ideas.</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>Q33 (40) If it will help get the job done, I say what's on my mind, regardless of who is present and the situation at hand.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27 (34) When I am alone with someone in upper management, I feel free to express my opinion, even if it is negative.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( ) Numbers in parentheses are the original numbers used on questionnaire.

**Question Relationships**

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed for the 33 questions in Section II. On 472 of the 528 total correlation coefficients computed (89% of the correlations) \( p < .05 \). On 459 (87%), \( p < .01 \). In every instance where \( p > .05 \), one of the two variables is from the first part of Section II (the communication climate portion) and the
other variable is from the second part of Section II (the freedom of expression portion).

In all, a total of 38 correlation coefficients were found to be above .5000 (accounting for more than 25% of the variance). In each case, $p < .001$. These 38 coefficients appear in Table 3 on page 38.

The most common "type" of correlation pattern occurs when both statements target the same hierarchical level—the supervisor, upper management or the organization at large—but concern different communication directions. That is, one of the statements has to do with communication flowing upward toward the particular level, and the second statement concerns communication downward from that same level.

**Analyses of Variance**

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed on the 33 questions in Section II to identify significant differences among answer means of the employee groups in each of the five demographic areas. In cases where $p < .05$, Student-Newman-Keuls multiple comparison tests were made on the means of each group within that demographic area to determine specific differences.

For the "Years of Service" question, respondent subject groups were recombined prior to data analysis in order to better balance the number in each group. Those reporting 20 to 29 years of service (119 employees) were added to
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| P | < .001 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| M | MAGNITUDE > .5 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

### TABLE 3

**PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS ON 33 QUESTIONS IN SECTION II**

1. In gsr.oral, people in my area seem willing to participate in Performance 100% programs.
2. Our supervisor encourages us to get involved with Performance 100% programs.
3. Upper management has fully explained to employees what Performance 100% is all about.
4. Overall, employees are kept informed about what is going on at OPPD.
5. My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at OPPD.
6. The organization makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think.
7. In my work area, people are open and honest with each other.
8. Employees' suggestions and ideas are welcome and taken seriously by upper management.
9. Employees are encouraged to discuss projects or problems with others at every level of the organization.
10. Upper management at OPPD is candid about controversial and sensitive issues.
11. Our own VP often meets in person with us to discuss projects, plans, or problems.
12. Employees in our area may contact our VP to seek information, offer opinions/suggestions.
13. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information.
14. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward with me.
15. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say.
16. We have access to the people or information needed to get the job done.
17. Whenever given an assignment, I feel I know what is expected and have ample direction to get it done.
18. Employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions at OPPD.
19. When we have a new assignment or problem, people in our area have ideas on how to get the job done.
20. We often meet with employees from other departments or divisions to discuss problems or concerns.
21. When I am with my co-workers, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.
22. When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.
23. When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to disagree with another supervisor or manager.
24. When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with the views of other employees present.
25. When I am in a group with a supervisor, I feel free to disagree with his/her views.
26. When I am in a group, I feel comfortable suggesting new ideas.
27. When I am alone with someone in upper management, I feel free to express my opinion, even if negative.
28. When I am alone with someone from upper management, I feel free to disagree with his/her views.
29. When I am in a group with someone from upper management, I feel free to disagree with his/her views.
30. When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to express an opinion, even if it is negative.
31. When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to disagree with his/her views.
32. When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with a subordinate who is present.
33. If it will help get the job done, I say what's on my mind, regardless of the situation.
those having more than 30 year's service (105) to form a single group of 224 subjects, or 22% of the 1,005 who answered this question. The other three years of service groups were comparable in size. Those reporting 1 to 4 years comprise 27% of the total; those with 5 to 9 years comprise 23% of the total; and those with 10 to 19 years make up 29% of the total.

Tables 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 show the F ratio, the significance level for each question, and among which groups significant differences occurred.

Mean Distribution Tables 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 are used to show the relative "position" of means for each subgroup within the five demographic areas—years of service, age, job position, division, or work location—compared to the means of the other subgroups in that same demographic area on each question.

In each table, the horizontal column heading names the subgroups within that demographic area. The left stub column is titled "position." The number of positions in each table corresponds to the number of groups within that demographic area.

For instance, in Table 9, "Mean Distribution for Each Years of Service Group," there are four years of service groups shown across the horizontal column head and positions 1-4 shown in the left stub column. Position 1 indicates which group has the lowest mean on each question, and
position 4 shows which group has the highest.

Reading Table 9 across Position 1, the group with 0-4 years of service has the lowest mean on Questions 4, 9, 14, 16, 18, and 32. Those with 5-9 years and also those with 10-19 years do not have the lowest mean on any of the questions. Those with 20 or more years had the lowest mean on Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 27, 28. In contrast, position 4 shows that those with 0-4 years had the highest mean once, on Question 4, while those in the 5-9 years group had the highest mean of the four groups a total of 14 times.

In each of the five Mean Distribution Tables, the lower the position number, the lower the mean is compared to others in that demographic area, and the greater degree of perceived openness. In turn, the higher the position, the higher the mean, and the lesser degree of perceived openness. The tables can be used to show overall answer patterns, such as which groups appear to be answering more positively and which more negatively. The tables are also useful in viewing how individual groups can vary positions depending on the particular questions.
Table 4
Years of Service
Analysis of Variance for Section II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>Significant Differences Between Groups*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>(4) (1,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4) (3,1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>8.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4) (3,2,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>(1,4) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4) (1) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4,1) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>(4,1) (1,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,4) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4) (1,3) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>8.57</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4) (3,1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(4) (3,1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(4,1) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>(1,4,2) (4,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>(1,4) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(1,4) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>(4,3) (3,1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>(4,3,1) (3,1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>(1,3,2) (2,4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Group 1 = 0-4 yrs, Group 2 = 5-9 yrs, Group 3 = 10-19 yrs
Group 4 = 20+ yrs

Generalized groupings based on Student-Newman-Keuls procedure.
Groups within parentheses do not differ from each other (p < .05).
Table 5
Age
Analysis of Variance for Section II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>Significant Differences Between Groups*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4,1) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>13.48</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4) (1,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>15.40</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4) (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,5,4,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4,1) (1,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>9.21</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,5,4) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>(4,1,5,2) (1,5,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,4,5) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,4,5) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4,1) (3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4,1) (1,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,4,1) (1,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,5,4) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>(5,1,4,2) (1,4,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (5,4) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(4,5) (3,1,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(4,5,1,3) (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.025</td>
<td>(2,3,1,5) (3,1,5,4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Group 1 = under 25 yrs, Group 2 = 25-34 yrs, Group 3 = 35-44 yrs, Group 4 = 45-54 yrs, Group 5 = 55+ years

Generalized groupings based on Student-Newman-Keuls procedure. Groups within parentheses do not differ from each other (p < .05).
Table 6  
Job Position  
Analysis of Variance for Section II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>Significant Differences Between Groups*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>23.05</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>42.62</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>(1) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>36.44</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7</td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>30.32</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>18.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>9.97</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>9.76</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>11.03</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>(1) (2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>17.76</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q16</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q19</td>
<td>38.99</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20</td>
<td>22.18</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q21</td>
<td>22.66</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>(1,2) (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q25  4.09  .017  (1,2) (3)
Q26  17.43  .000  (1,2) (3)
Q27  21.28  .000  (1) (2) (3)
Q28  14.08  .000  (1) (2) (3)
Q29  5.24  .006  (1) (2,3)
Q30  10.68  .000  (1,2) (3)
Q31  7.53  .001  (1,2) (3)

*Group 1 = Upper Mgmt (Division Managers, Vice Pres., Pres.)
Group 2 = Exempt (Supervisory and non-contract professionals)
Group 3 = Contract (Employees covered by union contract)

Generalized groupings based on Student-Newman-Keuls procedure.
Groups within parentheses do not differ from each other (p < .05).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ques.</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>Significant Differences Between Groups*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>12.12</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,9,8,4,7) (8,4,7,1,6) (6,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>12.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,9,8,4) (8,4,1,7) (7,2,6,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(7,5,8,1,9,4) (9,4,2) (2,3,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(7,5,8,4,9,1,6) (6,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(9,5,8,4) (8,4,1,6,2,3,7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(7,8,4,9,5,1) (2,6,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(8,9,5,4,7,1) (5,4,7,1,2) (7,1,2,6) (2,6,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>(8,7,9,4,5,1,2,3) (4,5,1,2,3,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,7,8,1,9,4,6) (9,4,6,2) (6,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,5,8) (5,8,4,9,7) (8,4,9,7,2) (7,2,3,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,5,8,9,7) (5,8,9,7,4,2,3,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,8,4,7,5) (8,4,7,5,9,6) (7,5,9,6,2,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,8,9,3,4,2,7) (7,1,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(5,8,9,4,3,2,7,6) (7,6,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q17</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>(5,9,8,2,4,7,1,3) (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(9,5) (5,4,7,6,8,2,3) (7,6,8,2,3,1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>(5,3,9,6,4,2,8) (8,1,7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Group 1 = Electric Operations, Group 2 = Production Operations, Group 3 = Nuclear Production, Group 4 = Engineering, Group 5 = Cust. Servs. Operations, Group 6 = Management Systems Servs., Group 7 = Accounting, Group 8 = Finance, Group 9 = Other

Generalized groupings based on Student-Newman-Keuls procedure. Groups within parentheses do not differ from each other (p < .05).
### Table 8

**Work Location**

**Analysis of Variance for Section II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>F Ratio</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Significant Differences Between Groups*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,1) (4,6,2) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,1,2,4) (2,4,6) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,6,4,1) (6,4,1,2) (2,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,3,6,2,4) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,3,2,6) (6,4,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,1,6,4,2) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1,3,6,2,4) (4,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,6,4,1,2) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11</td>
<td>9.14</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(2,3,4,6) (3,4,6,1) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12</td>
<td>6.24</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,4,2) (1,6,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(3,4,6,2,1) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(3,1,5,6) (5,6,2,4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>(1,3,5) (3,5,2,6,4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q20</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>(1) (2,6,3) (6,3,5) (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q23</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>(1,5,3) (5,3,2,4,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q24</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>(1,4,5,6,3) (4,5,6,3,2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q26</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>(1,5,4,2,6) (5,4,2,6,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>(5,1,4) (1,4,2,3,6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Group 1 = Downtown, Group 2 = Other Metro Office,
Group 3 = Rural Office, Group 4 = Line or Construction Crew,
Group 5 = Generating Plant, Group 6 = Other

Generalized groupings based on Student-Newman-Keuls procedure.
Groups within parentheses do not differ from each other (p < .05).
Table 9
Mean Distribution for Each Years of Service Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Group</th>
<th>0-4 Years</th>
<th>5-9 Years</th>
<th>10-19 Years</th>
<th>20 Plus Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position 1</td>
<td>4, 9, 14, 16, 18, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lowest mean of four groups on these questions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 2</td>
<td>1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13</td>
<td>2, 3, 11, 12, 27, 28</td>
<td>4, 9, 14, 16, 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 3</td>
<td>2, 11, 12, 27, 28</td>
<td>3, 14, 18, 32</td>
<td>1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 27, 28</td>
<td>14, 18, 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Highest mean of four groups on these questions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows mean pattern for each years of service group in Section II where p < .05 and a Student-Newman-Keuls test ordered the group means. The "position" indicates where the mean for each question fell for each years of service group (1=lowest, 2=second lowest, 3=second highest and 4=highest) in relation to other three groups.
Table 10
Mean Distribution for Each Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Under 25 Years</th>
<th>25-34 Years</th>
<th>35-44 Years</th>
<th>45-54 Years</th>
<th>55-Plus Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Lowest mean of five groups on these questions)</td>
<td>4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 17, 18</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7, 27, 28</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7, 16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17</td>
<td>4, 6, 13, 18, 27, 28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 18, 28, 32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6, 4, 13, 16, 18, 7, 8, 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16, 18</td>
<td>1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 17, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (Highest mean of five groups on these questions)</td>
<td>1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 27, 28, 32</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 shows mean pattern for each age group in Section II where p < .05 and a Student-Newman-Keuls test ordered the group means. The "position" indicates where the mean for each question fell for each age group (1=lowest, 2=second lowest, 3=middle, 4=second highest and 5=highest) in relation to other four groups.
Table 11 shows mean pattern for each job position group in Section II where $p < .05$ and a Student-Newman-Keuls test ordered the group means. The "position" indicates where the mean for each question fell for each age group (1-lowest, 2-middle and 3-highest) in relation to other two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Upper Management</th>
<th>Exempt</th>
<th>Contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12 shows mean pattern for each age group in Section II where p < .05 and a Student-Newman-Keuls test ordered group means. The "position" indicates where the mean for each question fell for each division group (1=lowest, 2=second lowest, 5=middle, 8=second highest and 9=highest) in relation to other eight groups.
Table 13
Mean Distribution for Each Work Location Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Location</th>
<th>Downtown</th>
<th>Other Metro Office</th>
<th>Rural Office</th>
<th>Line or Const. Crew</th>
<th>Generating Plant</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position 1</td>
<td>4, 5, 8,</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1, 2, 3,</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lowest mean of six groups on these questions)</td>
<td>15, 20,</td>
<td>6, 10,</td>
<td>12, 13, 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22, 24, 26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 2</td>
<td>1, 2, 6,</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4, 5, 8,</td>
<td>12, 13, 24</td>
<td>23, 26</td>
<td>3, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14, 32</td>
<td>11, 15, 29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2, 5, 12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1, 3, 10,</td>
<td>4, 15, 24, 29</td>
<td>13, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11, 26, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 4</td>
<td>3, 10, 4</td>
<td>4, 8, 13,</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2, 6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1, 5, 11, 14, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12, 29</td>
<td>15, 23,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 5</td>
<td>11, 13, 1</td>
<td>1, 3, 6, 10, 14</td>
<td>24, 32</td>
<td>4, 5, 8, 23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2, 12, 29, 15, 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>24, 29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14, 15, 20</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 23, 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Highest mean of six groups on these questions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 shows mean pattern for each work location group in Section II where p < .05 and a Student-Newman-Keuls test ordered the group means. The "position" indicates where the mean for each question fell for each work location group (1-lowest, 2-second lowest, 5-second highest and 6-highest) in relation to other four groups.
CHAPTER IV
Discussion

The communication climate of a large organization such as the Omaha Public Power District is dynamic and multifaceted. The network of dimensions which work together to create and recreate this climate is complex. This study attempts to examine more closely just one of those dimensions: the property of communication openness.

Perceptions about the openness of the communication climate at OPPD vary across the organization and also within individuals, depending on the circumstances and the players involved. It would be difficult to draw one all encompassing conclusion about the openness of the communication climate based on this research. However, some patterns have emerged.

The major findings are as follows: (a) Employees seem to experience more openness in relationships with supervisors than they do with either upper management or with the organization as a whole; (b) the extent to which employees feel they can and should openly communicate upward to their supervisors, upper management, and the organization in general, is largely a reflection of how open they feel communication flows downward to them from any of those levels; (c) the attitudes of upper management toward employee ideas and suggestions influence how employees view the overall communication climate of the organization; (d) those at the
earlier and later ends of the tenure and age spectrums say the organization is more open than do those in the middle years; (e) most employees feel they can speak openly in private with one other individual, unless that individual is someone from upper management; and (f) employees generally tend not to disagree with anyone in a group situation.

The discussion that follows more thoroughly addresses the major findings above by considering each of the ten research questions.

1. What differences, if any, are there in the degree of openness employees perceive for various levels of the organization?

There appear to be definite differences in the degree of openness respondents perceive concerning three levels within the organization: the immediate supervisor, upper management, and the organization at large.

Employees seem to have more positive feelings about the openness of communication with supervisors than they do for communication with upper management or with the organization at large. The mean for every question concerning communication with a supervisor was lower than the mean of any question targeting upper management or the organization at large. Two of the lowest means (the most positive) on the questionnaire were calculated for statements concerning communication with a supervisor:

Q14. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward with me. (Mean = 2.57)
Q15. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say. (Mean = 2.47)

In contrast, the means for all seven statements concerning the openness of communication with upper management were above 3.5, and the two highest means recorded on the survey concerned communication with upper management:

Q11. Our own vice president often meets in person with people in our area to discuss projects, plans or problems. (Mean = 3.88)

Q29. When I am in a group where someone from upper management is present, I feel free to disagree with his or her views. (Mean = 3.84)

Employees feel somewhat less negative about the openness of communication in general at OPPD than they do about communication with upper management:

Q6. The organization makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think. (Mean = 3.48)

Q13. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information. (Mean = 3.34)

2. What relationship, if any, exists between how open employees feel various levels of the organization are in communicating downward and how open they feel those same levels are in receiving upward communication?

There does seem to be a relationship between how open employees feel various levels of the organization are in communicating downward and how open employees feel those same levels are in receiving upward communication. Although a causal relationship is not claimed, the results indicate that employees who perceive an open flow of communication to them from a particular level of the
organization are more likely to believe that same level is open to their ideas and opinions. On the other hand, when they do not feel a particular level is communicating openly with them, they do not feel that level is receptive to what they have to say.

Another relationship that concerns employee perceptions about the upward and downward flow of communication is that overall, employees seem to feel there is more openness in communicating upward than downward. For all three levels—supervisor, upper management, and the organization at large—employees almost always give more positive answers for statements concerning the upward flow of communication compared to the flow downward.

Table 14 on page 56 illustrates the differences in employee perceptions of the openness of upward compared to downward communication flow and also the relationship that exists between how employees feel about communication flow to and from specific organizational levels. In each of the seven pairs of statements shown, both statements deal with the same organizational level: three pairs concern the supervisor, two concern upper management, and two deal with the organization at large. In each case, the first statement in the pair has to do with communication flow upward, and the second statement deals with communication downward. In every pair but one (questions no. 6 and
no. 4), the mean for the statement having to do with upward communication is lower, that is, is more positive, than the statement concerning downward communication. The correlation coefficient is shown for each of the five statement pairs. In each case, the coefficient is above .5000.

Table 14
Relationship Between Upward and Downward Communication with a Specific Level in Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements about Communication</th>
<th>Level of Organization</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q15. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.6060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5. My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at OPPD.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22. When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>.6064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q15. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.8228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q14. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward.</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. Employee suggestions and ideas are welcome and taken seriously by upper management.</td>
<td>Upper Mgmt.</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.5147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10. Upper management at OPPD is candid with employees about controversial issues.</td>
<td>Upper Mgmt.</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q12. Employees in our area may initiate a contact with our vice president to seek information, offer opinions or make a suggestion.</td>
<td>Upper Mgmt.</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.5727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q11. Our own vice president often meets in person with people in our area to discuss projects, plans or problems.</td>
<td>Upper Mgmt.</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6. The organization makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think.</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.5753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4. Overall, employees are kept informed about what is going on throughout the organization.</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18. Employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions at OPPD.</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Upward</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.6370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information.</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Downward</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. What relationship, if any, exists between how open an employee views his or her supervisor and how open he or she views the communication climate in general?

A number of researchers (Gerloff, Wofford and Summers, 1978; Richmond and McCrosky, 1979; and Baird and Diebolt, 1976) found strong evidence that an employee's view of communication with a supervisor is closely related to his or her view of the organization at large. A similar relationship was not necessarily apparent in the present study.

Each statement in the questionnaire which concerned communication with a supervisor was compared to each statement concerning communication with upper management and also to each statement concerning communication in general at OPPD. In only one case was the resulting correlation coefficient above the .5000 significance level, on Questions 4 and 5 below, with a .5138 coefficient.

Q4. Overall, employees are kept informed about what is going on throughout the organization.

Q5. My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at OPPD.

4. What relationship, if any, exists between how open employees view upper management and how open they view the communication climate in general?

While the results of this study do not reveal a strong relationship between the openness of the supervisory relationship and how open employees perceive the organization to be, the openness of upper management does appear to
influence employees' feelings about the openness of the organization at large. Four of the five questions which target the openness of the organization are strongly related to a statement about the receptiveness of upper management to employee ideas and suggestions. The questions and the corresponding correlation coefficients are shown in Table 15.

Table 15
Relationship Between Perceived Openness of Upper Management and of the Organization at Large

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements About Communication at Large</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient with Question 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q8. Employee suggestions and ideas are taken seriously by upper management (mean = 3.26)</td>
<td>Q8. Employee suggestions and ideas are taken seriously by upper management (mean = 3.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6. The organ. makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think. (mean = 3.48)</td>
<td>Q6. The organ. makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think. (mean = 3.48) .6351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9. Employees are encouraged to discuss projects or problems with others at every level of the organization. (mean = 3.45)</td>
<td>Q9. Employees are encouraged to discuss projects or problems with others at every level of the organization. (mean = 3.45) .6267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q13. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information. (mean = 3.34)</td>
<td>Q13. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information. (mean = 3.34) .5485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q18. Employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions at OPPD. (mean = 3.22)</td>
<td>Q18. Employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions at OPPD. (mean = 3.22) .5981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems from these relationships that employees who feel their ideas are taken seriously by upper management --those 25 employees who hold the positions of president, vice president or division manager--also feel the
organization in general has an open communication climate. In turn, those who find upper management closed to their ideas and suggestions probably perceive the communication climate of the organization to be closed as well.

Taking into account that upper management receives comparatively low marks for openness in this study, it may be assumed that this group of top level employees (2% of employee population) is having an overall negative influence on how the vast majority of the population views the openness of the organization at large. It is interesting to note that upper managers see themselves as receptive to employee ideas and suggestions as evidenced by the mean of their answers to Question 8 (mean = 2.25). The mean on this question for exempt employees (mean = 2.88) and the mean for contract employees (mean = 3.38) differed significantly from the upper management mean.

5. What differences, if any, are there in how much freedom employees feel they have to express themselves depending on who else is present and on how many are present?

When respondents were asked how free they would feel to express themselves in various situations, there were pronounced differences in answer means depending on who else was present and on whether more than one person was present. Only those supervising others were asked to answer three questions concerning communication with subordinates.
Six questions are listed in Table 16, two targeting each of three organizational levels: supervisor, upper management, and subordinate. Along with each question is the answer mean and the combined percentage of respondents who answered seldom or very seldom and the combined percentage of those who answered frequently or very frequently.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>% Who said Seldom or Very Seldom</th>
<th>% Who said Freq. or Very Freq.</th>
<th>Level of Organiza.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q31. When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>2.20 5.9%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>Subord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q32. When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with a subordinate who is present.</td>
<td>2.89 25.3%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>Subord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q22. When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to openly express myself, even if it is negative.</td>
<td>2.52 16.7%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>Superv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q25. When I am in a group with a supervisor, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>3.20 36.6%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>Superv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q28. When alone with someone from upper management, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>3.67 57.6%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>Up. Mgt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q29. When I am in a group where someone from upper management is present, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.</td>
<td>3.84 65.6%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>Up. Mgt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 65% (a total of 660) of the respondents chose seldom (325) or very seldom (335) when asked how free they feel to disagree in public with a member of upper management. While employees feel slightly more comfortable.
disagreeing with a member of upper management when they are alone with that person, only 159 (15.8%) say they would do so frequently or very frequently. In contrast, substantially fewer, only 36.6% (375 total who answered seldom or very seldom) do not feel free to disagree with their supervisor in a group, and only 16.7% (171) do not feel free do so when they are alone with their supervisor.

Of the 288 respondents who answered the questions concerning subordinate communication, only 5.9% answered seldom or very seldom when asked if they felt free to disagree with a subordinate when they were alone. A higher percentage of respondents feel more uncomfortable—25.3% answering seldom or very seldom—when asked how free they feel to disagree with a subordinate in a group setting.

A Pearson product-moment correlation shows that the degree of freedom an OPPD employee feels in expressing himself or herself when alone with a supervisor is closely related to the employee’s perception of how open that supervisor is. A positive correlation (.6006) exists between: (a) how interested supervisors are perceived to be in listening to what their employees have to say (no. 14); and (b) how free employees feel they are to express an opinion (even a negative one) when they are alone with a supervisor (no. 22). A positive correlation (.6064) also exists between those who believe their supervisor is honest and
straight forward and those who say they feel free to express themselves when alone with their supervisor.

The correlation test did not reveal similar relationships between how much freedom employees feel to express themselves when alone with upper management and any of the four questions about the openness of upper management.

The relationships identified between the degree of freedom of expression employees feel when alone with supervisors and their perceptions of the openness of the supervisor are similar to findings by several researchers (Chaney and Teel, 1972; Rogers, cited in Rings, 1979; White, 1972; Wilcox and Burke, 1969). Redding (1972) concludes from a study by Willits that the degree to which a subordinate would be "frank" in discussing his or her opinions with a supervisor is largely (perhaps entirely, Redding says) a function of how permissive a listener the superior is perceived to be.

In a related study, Redding (1972) summarized a 1970 research study by Gemmill who said managers must do all in their power to create a climate in which subordinates feel confident they will not be penalized for disclosing their true opinions and feelings to their bosses.

6. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisors, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their length of service with OPPD? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their length of service?
Table 4 on page 41 shows the results of the Student-Newman-Keuls (SNK) procedure for the years of service groups. Based on these results, there appear to be significant differences in how employees with various lengths of service tenure feel about: (a) how open the organization is; and (b) how much freedom they have to express themselves. SNK identified significant differences between the means of at least two groups on 18 of the 33 questions in Section II.

The means for longest-term employees differ significantly on 16 out of 33 questions from the means of the 10-19 year employee and on 14 of 33 questions from the means of those with 5-9 years. By comparison, the means for those with 20-plus years differ significantly from the newest employees on eight questions. This pattern indicates that the longer-term employees agree more often with newer employees in how they feel about the openness of communication than they do with any other group. On 25 out of 33 questions (more than 75% of the Section II questions) there was no significant difference in means found between the longest- and the shortest-term employees. At the same time, on only one question did the mean for those with 5-9 years differ significantly from the mean for those with 10-19 years. This indicates that the feelings about the openness of communication by these two employee groups are relatively similar almost all the time.
In all cases where a significant difference was reported between the most-years and the least-years group, the questions concerned either Performance 100% or communication with upper management. A possible explanation for the difference in answer means on questions concerning Performance 100% is that at the time of the study only supervisors and managers had participated in Performance 100% presentations and training programs. Most newer employees are not hired in at the supervisory level and would not have had access to information about the program. It would also seem likely that newer (often younger) employees may perceive less access to the highest levels of management than employees who have been with the company for many years and who, in fact, may have worked along the way with some of the people in those higher positions.

Table 9 on page 47 shows the rank order distribution of means by years of service group for each of the 18 questions where a Student-Newman-Keuls test revealed a significant difference. By viewing the general pattern of means in this format, it can be visually demonstrated that employees at the earlier and later ends of their careers find the organizational climate to be more open than do those in the middle years. This pattern is consistent with the findings of other researchers who report a "V" shape phenomenon occurring in attitude patterns when age or tenure are considered in an organizational setting.
Herman and Hulin (1972) describe the "V" shape as an answering pattern that shows new (or younger) employees to have a relatively positive attitude which drops off during the mid-career (or middle-age) years and then rises again as the employee nears retirement. One of the first to identify the pattern was Herzberg et al. (1957) who reported morale was initially high for young workers, decreased for middle-aged workers, and then increased again.

Table 9 on page 47 visually demonstrates the "V" pattern at OPPD by showing that means for those with the most years and those with the least are concentrated near the top of the "V," while means for those in the 5-9 and the 10-19 are nearer the bottom of the "V."

Overall, employees with five to nine years most often had the highest mean of the four years of service groups. There was not one instance where those with five to nine years of service reported the lowest- or second-lowest mean on any of the questions where a Student-Newman-Keuls test was conducted.

With only three of the freedom of expression questions showing a significant difference between years of service groups, it is difficult to make generalizations in this area. It is not surprising that on two of those three questions, both of which deal with upper management, employees with the most years of service feel the greatest degree of freedom to say what they think. It is likely that longer-
term employees are themselves closer in job position to upper management or have worked with people holding those positions during their years with OPPD.

In contrast, however, the longest-term employees are least likely to disagree with a subordinate in a group situation (Question 32), while those with less than five years are most likely to do so. It is not known how many respondents who answered the questions about subordinates had less than five years of service, but it is assumed they represent a comparably small percentage of respondents as few new employees have supervisory responsibilities.

In summary, the data indicate that those who have worked at the company the longest and those who are just beginning their OPPD career feel the organization is more open than those in their middle years. Those with 5-9 years of service are the most negative about the openness of the communication climate and less negative about the degree of freedom they feel in speaking out under certain conditions.

7. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisor, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their age? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their age?

As shown on Table 5 on page 42, the Student-Newman-Keuls procedure identified significant differences between age group means on 19 of the 33 questions. Similar to the
years of service pattern, the oldest employees, those over
55 years, had the lowest mean of the five age groups on the
greatest number of questions (eight of 19). That is, they
were the employees most likely to agree with statements
made about the openness of the communication climate.

The means for the next-closest age group, those 45-54,
were similar to those 55 and older, and in no instance was
there a significant difference between the means of these
two groups on any question. Also similar to the years of
service pattern, the means for those at the opposite end of
the spectrum, those 25 and under, only differed signifi­
cantly from the older employees on questions concerning
Performance 100%.

In contrast, the means of the two other age groups,
those 25-34 and those 35-44, frequently differ from the
older two age groups and also from the youngest employees.
Those 35-44 showed significant differences with the 25-34
year group only on Questions 4, 17 and 28. On Question 4,
the mean for the 35-44 age group differed significantly
from every other age group.

Q4: Over all, employees are kept informed about what is
going on throughout the organization. (Mean = 3.55 for
35-44 age group, Total mean = 3.36)

Those most likely to agree with this question were age 25
and under, with a mean of 3.02.

As shown in Table 10 on page 48, employees in the 35-44
age range were most likely to have the highest mean out of the five groups, a position they had on 11 of 19 questions on which a Student-Newman-Keuls was conducted. Only on Questions 27 and 32 did those 35-44 years old have a mean that was not the highest or second-highest recorded. Both questions have to do with freedom of expression in a group situation, Question 27 with a member of senior management and Question 32 with a subordinate. On Question 27, the mean for the 35-44 age group fell in the middle of the five age groups and it was second lowest on Question 32.

Oddly, those with 25-34 years and those 45-54 years were in exact opposite positions on questions 27 and 32. The 45-55 year group is most likely to express opinions in a group with a member of senior management present (Question 27), and those in the 25-34 year group are least likely to do so. When the situation involves disagreeing with a subordinate in a group situation (Question 32), the two age groups switch positions, with those 25-34 years old most likely to disagree and those 45-54 years old least likely to disagree. Interestingly, the mean for the 45-54 year group is almost identical on both questions (mean for no. 27 = 3.12, mean for no. 32 = 3.13). It is the 25-34 year group whose mean differs radically depending on whether the communication target is a subordinate (mean = 2.57) or a member of senior management (mean = 3.57).

In general, the "V" shaped pattern for age group means
closely resembles that for years of service group, with the older employees and the younger employees feeling the climate is more open than those in the middle. The age groups most consistently negative about the openness of the communication climate are those 25-34 and those 35-44 years old. In almost every case, their answers differ significantly from the other three age groups: below 25, 45-54, and 55 plus. While comparisons may be made concerning the general "V" pattern such as found in the "years of service" groups, the wide spread in the number of respondents in each age group makes it more difficult to draw conclusions.

8. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisor, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their job position? Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their job position?

Employees at various job position levels within the organization appear to feel quite differently about how open the organization is. As shown in Table 6 on page 43, the Student-Newman-Keuls test revealed significant differences between group means on 29 of the 33 questions.

On 26 of the 29 questions where a Student-Newman-Keuls test was conducted, the mean for contract employees differed significantly from both the other groups. On just two questions do both contract and exempt employees differ significantly from upper management, on Questions 4 and 13,
which each have to do with the openness of the organization in general. Upper management is much more likely to say the organization keeps employees informed and that the organization encourages open sharing of information than the rest of the employee population.

Upper management also feels a greater degree of freedom to express opinions and to disagree publicly than those in the other two groups, regardless of the specific situation or who is present. On all 10 questions in the freedom of expression part of the survey where Student-Newman-Keuls revealed significant differences between group means, upper management had the lowest mean, often more than a full point lower than the contract group.

In every case where a Student-Newman-Keuls procedure ordered group means, those in upper management had the lowest mean (perceived the greatest degree of openness in the communication climate, regardless of the organizational level or the direction of communication); exempt employees were in the middle position; and contract employees had the highest mean (felt the most negative about the openness of the communication climate). This pattern is illustrated in Table 11 on page 49 where the rank order position of the means for each SNK question is shown by group.

The contrasts between the views of the three groups are also apparent when viewing the differences in the sampling of question means shown in Table 17 on page 71.
Table 17
Comparison of Means by Job Position Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Upper Management</th>
<th>Exempt</th>
<th>Contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2. Our supervisor encourages us to get involved with Performance 100% programs.</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5. My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at OPPD.</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8. Employee suggestions and ideas are welcome and taken seriously by upper management.</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q27. When I am alone with someone in upper management, I feel free to express my opinion, even if it is negative.</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other studies have also found that the higher up employees are in the organization the more positive they feel about communication. Glauser (1984) reported that superior/subordinate dyads at higher organizational levels engage in more participative collaboration. Jablin (1982) found that subordinates high in the organization perceived significantly more openness in relationships with superiors than subordinates low in the organization. Monge, Edwards and Kirste (1978) say the single best predictor of a person's total communication amount appears to be his organizational status, and higher status individuals spend more time communicating than lower status people.

An interesting phenomenon is also noted in the response rate for the three different levels. Only 2% (20 out of
1,039 respondents) who answered the job position question reported they were a division manager or above. However, this represents 80% of the actual upper management population of 25 total employees. By comparison, 74% of the respondents (741 out of 1,039) reported they were a contract employee. However, the 741 employees represent a 45% response rate for this group which actually totaled 1,640 (81% of the work force) at the time of the survey.

9. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view supervisors, upper management and the organization at large, depending on their reporting division. Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on their reporting division?

Table 7 on page 45 shows the F ratio and significance level for the 19 questions where ANOVA demonstrated significant differences between means of division groups and a Student-Newman-Keuls test was conducted. Sixteen of the 20 communication climate questions resulted in a significant difference between the means of at least two divisions. Only two of the freedom of expression questions which had \( p < .05 \) showed a significant difference between means of divisional groups.

Cell sizes varied considerably, from 23 to 255, when subjects were divided according to their reporting division. Combined, the three major operating divisions, Electric Operations, Production Operations and Nuclear Production, account for about 60 percent of those responding to
this demographic question. The remaining five divisions plus "other," which represents 11 smaller divisions at OPPD, account for only 40 percent of the respondents. Table 1 on page 34 shows the respondent population and the actual population, as of February 1986.

Table 12 on page 50 illustrates the answer patterns for the nine divisional groups on questions where the Student-Newman-Keuls revealed significant between-mean differences. The "position" shows where the mean for each group on each question falls in relation to the other eight groups. Each question is identified by number in the appropriate box. For instance, by looking at Customer Service Operations, it can be seen that this group had the lowest mean--had the most positive answer among the nine division groups--on questions 1, 2, 10, 14, 15, 17 and 23. By comparison, Production Operations (group 2), Engineering (group 4), and Management Systems Services (group 6), were never in the position of having the lowest of nine means.

When questions are viewed in this manner it appears that employees in various divisions have markedly different feelings about the communication climate and about how they view the openness of communication with various levels within the organization.

For example, Nuclear Production had the highest mean (the most negative response) six times, second-highest
mean eight times and third-highest mean one time, a total of 15 times out of 19 questions in the most-negative positions. Similarly, Management Systems Services also had means in these three positions a total of 15 times.

Divisions whose means for questions were skewed the opposite direction, that is they clustered toward position one, two and three (the lowest, second-lowest or third-lowest mean), included Customer Services Operations (15 times in those three positions) and Finance (16 times).

Looking at individual questions, some interesting patterns also emerge. On all but four of the 19 questions, the means for Nuclear Production fell in one of the three bottom (most negative) positions. Of those four, three concern communication with a supervisor:

Q14. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward with me.

Q15. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say.

Q23: When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to disagree with the views of another supervisor or manager.

The fourth question, no. 32, is the only one where Nuclear Production registered the lowest mean among the nine division groups.

Q32. When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with a subordinate who is present.

It is interesting to note that question 32—the only one where Nuclear Production recorded the lowest mean--
was also the only question on which Customer Services Operations had a mean in the highest (most negative) position. These two divisions represent different hemispheres of the scale on practically every question. Like Nuclear Production, Management System Services (the other group with 15 means in the highest three positions) recorded its lowest mean on question 32. Also like Nuclear Production, MSS recorded its second-lowest mean on question 23. Both questions 23 and 32 concern freedom of expression.

Almost opposite of Nuclear Production and Management Systems Services, Customer Services Operations had 15 of the 19 means in one of the top three (most positive) positions. Those four questions not in one of the lower mean positions were no. 32 (shown above), and questions 6, 9, and 13, all of which concern communication on an organizational level:

Q6. The organization makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think.

Q9. Employees are encouraged to discuss projects or problems with others at every level of the organization.

Q13. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information.

On questions concerning communication with supervisors or with upper management, CSO has consistently low means. There appear to be dramatic differences in the way employees reporting to the CSO Division and those in MSS and Nuclear Production view the openness of communication.
There are also pronounced differences within particular divisions in how employees view communication depending on which level of the hierarchy is targeted.

Employees in Electric Operations seem to feel quite differently about the openness of communication with upper management than they do about the openness of communication with their supervisors. Electric Operations scored the lowest mean among the nine division groups on questions 11 and 12, both concerning communication with upper management, specifically the vice president. The Electric Operations means for both questions were significantly different than at least half of the other eight divisions.

Q11. Our own vice president often meets in person with people in our area to discuss projects, plans or problems. (EO mean = 3.49, Total mean = 3.88)

Q12. Employees in our area may initiate a contact with our own vice president to seek information, offer opinions or make a suggestion. (EO mean = 3.25, Total mean = 3.56)

In contrast, Electric Operations means for three questions concerning communication with an immediate supervisor fall in highest or second-highest (most negative) positions among the nine division groups. On question 14, the mean for Electric Operations employees differs significantly from four other groups: Production Operations, Nuclear Production, Customer Services Operations and "Other." On question 15, significant differences were computed between Electric Operations and each of the three divisions.
mentioned above, as well as with the Finance and Engineering Divisions. Significant differences were not computed on either question with Management Systems Services or Accounting. The questions are:

Q14. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward with me. (EO mean = 2.84, Total mean = 2.57)

Q15. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say. (EO mean = 2.79, Total mean = 2.47)

In general, a fairly even distribution of means is noted for Electric Operations and Accounting which have means spread out across the nine possible positions. The most "neutral" group, Engineering, has all 19 means clustered near the center, spreading only from position three to position six.

It is interesting to note that Management Systems Services and Nuclear Production which recorded the highest means on the majority of questions--the groups most inclined to speak negatively about the openness of communication--are also the groups which have the most positive responses concerning their freedom to express themselves. It should be noted that employees in these divisions are also comparatively younger and more high-tech oriented (computer operations and nuclear power plant workers) than employees in the Production Operations, Electric Operations or Customer Services Operations Divisions.

In contrast, those in divisions with a comparatively...
older population base appear to feel less freedom in openly expressing themselves, even with a subordinate, especially if it is in a group situation.

Differences in climate within a single organization were noted by Jablin (1980a) in his overview of communication climate literature. He concluded that organizations are probably composed of multiple communication climates, with some dimensions common across climates and some unique to each. Evan (1968) also contended that, at least in the broader arena of organizational climate, members of different organizational subunits tend to have different perceptions of the climate. This, Evans says, is because of different role-set configurations, different sub-goals and a different commitment to the goals of subunits compared to the goals of the organization as a whole.

10. What differences, if any, are there in how open employees view their supervisor, upper management, and the organization at large, depending on their work location. Do employees feel differently about the degree of freedom they have to express themselves depending on work location?

Table 8 on page 46 shows the F ratio and significance level for 19 questions where ANOVA demonstrated significant differences between means of work location groups and a Student-Newman-Keuls test was conducted.

The work group most likely to differ significantly from the other groups was "generating plant." On six occasions, the mean for those who work in a generating plant differs
significantly from every other group. On 10 of the 13 questions concerning communication climate (part one of Section II) on which a Student-Newman-Keuls was conducted, generating plant workers have a mean that differs significantly from no fewer than three of the five other groups. Generating plant workers are predominately those who work in the Production Operations and Nuclear Production Divisions.

Generating plant workers differ significantly from all other groups on questions concerning communication in general and with upper management. By comparison, they are more moderate in how they felt about the openness of communication with supervisors. In contrast, line and construction crew members feel comparatively more positive about communication in general and with upper management, while registering the most negative answers on questions concerning communication with supervisors. As shown in Tables 12 and 13, the response pattern for line and construction crew members is quite similar to the answer pattern for the Electric Operations Division, to which all line and construction crew employees report. Likewise, almost half of the generating plant employees are in the Nuclear Production Division and the answer patterns have similarities.

Employees who work in the downtown area (almost 35% of the respondents) and those who work in a rural office
(5.6%), were most likely to answer positively. Downtown workers were more negative about communication in general and communication with upper management than most other groups except generating plant employees. However, downtown employees are comparatively more positive about communication with supervisors. They also say they feel more freedom to express themselves than those outside the downtown area, that is unless they are in a group situation with a member of senior management.

Rural employees give relatively high marks for openness to the organization, to supervisors, and to upper management. However, they do not feel very free to openly express themselves. In fact, these employees are the least likely of the five work location groups to even make suggestions or offer new ideas in a group setting.

Summarizing, differences are apparent in how employees in various work locations feel about the openness of communication and the degree of freedom they feel they have to express themselves similar to differences shown for division groups. Although a relationship exists between work location and division, there is no exact match between the two demographic areas which can be used for accurate comparisons. For instance, a number of Customer Services Operations employees work out of a downtown office location, while many others are assigned to outlying service centers or rural offices. The Engineering Division is
headquartered out of an office building near the Electric Building, but engineers often spend more time at a plant or in the field.
CHAPTER V

Conclusions

From a general systems perspective, functioning human organizations are open systems. Important questions to ask about OPPD are: how open is it and how well is it functioning? They are questions of degree. The degree of openness within the organization and the value placed on openness not only plays a critical role in defining OPPD's environment but in the company's ability to function as well.

In launching the Performance 100% Program, OPPD management appeared to understand the connection between communication and organizational effectiveness. OPPD made a commitment to increase the openness of the organizational climate primarily through the initiation of a quality of work life program. Increased openness was to become both a method and an outcome.

In the introduction to Developing and Managing the Open Organization (Mink, 1979) Lippett's comments lead us to believe OPPD's plan to increase openness was indeed the direction to go if building an environment that would enable employees to be more creative, inventive, and ingenious was the goal:

Organization openness calls for restructuring work to provide opportunities for the worker to express initiative, responsibility, and competence—elements that contribute to the higher need for self-fulfillment. If the desire for self-fulfillment triggers creativity, inventiveness, and ingenuity, the worker's self-fulfillment results in both high personal satisfaction and greater output (p. xiii).
As one would expect, the initial thrust and support for the program was to come from upper management. These highest-level employees were not only to articulate the goals of the program and their commitment to them, they were also to demonstrate new management behaviors that would nurture the open environment and lead the company to cultural change.

The results of this study seem to support the importance of top management’s role in building employee perceptions about the climate of the organization. In fact, the communication behavior of top managers may be one of the most—if not the most—important factors influencing employee perceptions about the openness of the environment.

In addition to illustrating the underlying influence of upper management on employee perceptions of openness, other important conclusions may be drawn from the study:

* The degree of openness employees feel in their ability to communicate upward to various levels of the organization is closely related to how open employees feel that particular level is in communicating downward.

* Employee feelings about the openness of communication with supervisors are generally more positive than they are for communication with upper management or for the organization at large.

* Employees feel the various levels of the organization are more open about seeking and receiving communication than in communicating downward.
* Employees who believe upper management seriously considers their ideas have a more positive view of the openness of the communication climate in general.

* The vast majority of employees do not feel free to disagree with a superior — alone or in a group — particularly anyone from upper management.

* Supervisors perceived as good listeners are also thought to be honest and straightforward. Employees who say their supervisor has these qualities also feel free to express themselves openly when alone with their supervisor.

* Employees beginning their careers (those less than 25 years old) and those with many years of service (those over 45) are consistently more positive about the openness of the communication climate than those in their middle years.

* The older employees are (and the longer they have been employed), the more likely they are to disagree with someone from upper management and the less likely they are to disagree with a subordinate in a group situation.

* The higher up an employee's job position is in the organization, the more open he or she perceives the communication climate to be.

* Those in upper management view themselves as more open than others at OPPD perceive them to be.

* Employees in OPPD's Nuclear Production and Management Systems Services Division are consistently more negative in their feelings about the openness of the communication climate than employees in other divisions.

* Employees in OPPD's Customer Services Operations and Finance Divisions are consistently more positive in their feelings about the openness of the communication climate than employees in other divisions.

* Employees in OPPD's Electric Operations Division are more positive about the openness of communication with their vice president than all other divisions while they are the most negative about communication with their supervisors.

* Employees who work in a generating station are more negative about the openness of communication than those at any other work location.
Employees working in downtown and rural offices perceive more openness in the communication climate than employees out in the field, in generating plants or in other Omaha offices. However, rural employees feel less freedom to express themselves under any circumstances than employees at any other location.

These results would seem to have important consequences for an organization desiring (or proclaiming to desire) an open environment. As long as employees perceive a relatively high degree of risk in openly expressing themselves, and this study indicates they do, and as long as employees do not perceive that top management itself demonstrates open communication, it seems unlikely they would believe openness is really an essential value of the organization or that they would choose to behave in a more open manner.

Limitations

Perhaps the most critical limitation of this study is that one of the original purposes of the investigation was not carried out due to factors beyond the researcher's control. Initially, an important aspect of the study was to measure what, if any, changes would occur over time in employees' attitudes about the Performance 100% Program, in the openness of the communication climate, and in the degree of freedom employees say they feel in expressing themselves. To measure changes over time, two surveys would have been conducted six months apart. However, since the study was exploratory in nature, the single survey does appear sufficient to begin describing the communication
climate at OPPD as it pertains to openness and also the degree of freedom employees say they feel in expressing themselves.

Another major limitation of the study is that questions used in the survey were not pretested. This, of course, creates the problem of not being able to say with any degree of certainty that questions used actually target the dimensions intended. Also, by not pretesting, questions that are not clear or which are subject to misinterpretation are not eliminated or revised.

It would also have been beneficial to have combined the questionnaire method of data collection with other methods, particularly observation of employee group discussions, content analyses of employee communication tools, and interviews with employees at various levels of the organization.

Caution must also be taken in drawing conclusions from single variables evaluated through one-way Analyses of Variance. No single dependent variable can fully represent the complex organizational situation. The analysis is, however, valuable in looking at overall tendencies of the demographic areas and in making generalized statements about answering patterns. It is risky, however, to view with confidence individual items through univariate ANOVA.

Finally, information contained within this study must be understood only within the context of OPPD, and results
are specific only to the employees who responded to the survey. Care must be taken when extrapolating conclusions to analyze or provide insight into the attitudes and behaviors of employees who work at other large organizations.

**Recommendations**

As an underlying goal of OPPD's Performance 100% Program is to change the organization, and as increasing organizational openness is one of the fundamental changes essential to the program’s success, it seems appropriate that a follow-up study be conducted to measure what changes, if any, have occurred in employee attitudes toward openness as a result of the quality of work life program. For this purpose, it would seem useful to include a selection of the more clearly defined variables from this questionnaire. However, prior to using the instrument again, the overall soundness of the measuring instrument would need to be improved, including a factor analysis on questionnaire variables and other efforts that could help establish instrument’s reliability and validity.

I would also suggest that the dimension of trust be explored in relation to and in conjunction with the openness construct. The level to which employees trust management--their supervisor, top-level executives or the organization at large--may be closely associated with their feelings about the openness of the communication climate.
and their willingness to express themselves freely.

Also, to discover the forces that are at work on organizational openness it would seem beneficial to identify what information and feelings employees say they do disclose, how much they share, under what circumstances and with whom. The analysis should include what subjects or feelings employees say are more risky or even taboo to discuss and what spoken or unspoken, official or unofficial rules exist prohibiting disclosure of certain information.

If OPPD management truly wants to create an open environment, it would seem almost essential that a more targeted communication audit be performed. This would, of course, make use of various data collection methods referred to previously. To focus attention on existing problems, one could use the findings from this study to select areas where additional data gathering and analysis might prove worthwhile. For example, as employees view upper management as relatively closed, and as upper management has a great deal of influence over employee perceptions of the communication climate, interviews could be conducted with top managers to further probe these concerns from their point of view. In addition, observation of communication episodes between upper management and their staff or in conference with other top management personnel might prove enlightening. Interviews with those who report to upper management would give another perspective of the problem, as would discussion with
employees throughout each top manager's reporting areas. From those determinations, communication training programs and problem-solving strategies could be tailored to meet various needs. For example, if one of the key problem areas is found to be that employees throughout the company are reluctant to freely express themselves in group settings, training and practice might be developed to change behavior in that particular area. Also, if top managers are indeed found to be more closed— or even that they are perceived in that regard— training could be developed for them to increase their receptivity for openness and to practice open discussion behaviors. If individuals are more open than they are perceived to be, perhaps they would need to learn how to more convincingly demonstrate that openness to employees.

In his initial proposal to OPPD, Lee recommended OPPD conduct a thorough audit to identify employee attitudes relating to the prescribed changes and to the environment in general. He suggested various inquiries be targeted specifically toward each of the three levels within the organization: first level employees, middle management and top management. For example, the areas of evaluation for top managers included identifying their organization values, commitment and support for QWL, willingness to share authority and responsibility, and willingness to accept organizational change.
Knowing that much of the attitudinal change would not come about automatically, Lee (1985) recommended:

"mind-stretching training programs, inspiration from top management, and various group brainstorming sessions to energize creativity . . . We hope to train people in such a way that they can actually try out on-the-job behavioral change techniques between training sessions and bring back data and results for analysis and recommendation (p. 4)."

Lee's recommendations appear to be sound. Unfortunately, they were also ignored, presumably to save time and money. Perhaps a stronger warning should have been signaled by Lee concerning the serious ramifications of implementing the program without incorporating these critical data gathering and evaluation processes.

Finally, concerning recommendations for OPPD, I would suggest that if management sincerely values openness and desires to create a more open environment, management at all levels must demonstrate more openness by sharing information to employees and, where appropriate, to the public. In most cases, this is information that does not need to be kept secret, and in truth, is often widely known through non-official channels. This action should help deepen employee trust in management that the goal of openness was genuine. Another important step would be for management to make it "safer" and more rewarding for employees to openly express themselves and to share their ideas and opinions.
By not being open with corporate information, by not giving the bad news with the good, by not demonstrating trust in employees by sharing information, by making it difficult and uncomfortable for employees to speak out, the organization undermines its credibility and reinforces the perception that closed communication behavior by management, employees, and work groups is the much preferred and by far the safer choice at OPPD.
APPENDIX A

Summary of results from Section I:
Performance 100%
APPENDIX A

Section I -- Performance 100%

One of the original purposes of this study was to see what, if any, relationship there is between employee communication attitudes and employee knowledge of and involvement in the Performance 100% Program, particularly any changes in attitude that might occur over time as knowledge about and involvement in the program grew. Therefore it was important to find out how much employees had heard about the program and what they understood it to be, how they had received their information about the program, what subprograms they had knowledge of or had participated in, and what their initial feelings were about the program.

Although the follow-up study was not conducted, the results from this portion of the questionnaire are summarized in this appendix. The data may prove valuable at some future time should another study be undertaken.

Results of Section I of the questionnaire indicate that almost all employees (99.2%) had heard about the program at the time of the survey, February 1986.

Of those who said they had heard about Performance 100%, the largest percentage (40%) said they had received most of their information about the program from a corporate slide presentation. Another 28% said they learned most about the program from top management. Because the president or a vice president spoke at each slide
presentation, there is probably some confounding of the results of these two answer choices. The third most frequently cited source for receiving information about Performance 100% was "Flash," the employee monthly magazine.

Of the 929 respondents who completed an open-ended question asking for a description of the stated corporate goals of the Performance 100% Program (1. make it easy and pleasant for customers to do business with OPPD; and 2. establish a Quality of Work Life program for employees), 28% answered correctly, while 44% provided an answer judged partially correct, and 29% gave incorrect answers. Answers did not have to reflect the same wording as the stated goals, but needed to indicate the respondent understood that the program includes both customer service and employee satisfaction/participation elements.

When asked to identify which, if any, Performance 100% programs they had participated in, 40 percent said they had been involved with the Level Payment Signup Drive, and 81 percent said they had been playing "Safety Bingo." Only 20% said they had participated in the Customer Service Improvement Suggestion Program, and just 10% had participated in Resources Management.

Asked to select a statement that best describes their feelings about Performance 100%, employees most frequently chose the answer "I like the ideas that are being talked about, but I am somewhat skeptical that things will
really change much." Below are the answer choices and the percentages of respondents choosing each:

20.3% I am very enthusiastic about the program and look forward to the changes being talked about.

6.6% I plan to participate in future programs, but don’t feel particularly enthused.

46.7% I like the ideas that are being talked about, but I am somewhat skeptical that things will really change much.

8.4% I don’t agree with the whole Performance 100% philosophy and think it’s a waste of time and money.

9.5% I don’t know how I feel yet, but I’m not opposed to the ideas presented.

2.3% No opinion.

6.2% Other (an open-ended response)

While more than 55% of respondents said they had heard about the "Quality of Work Life Program," only 7.6% said they had participated in a Quality of Work Life training program. Only 6.7% reported they had participated in a Resources Management training program, and 3.2% said they had received customer contact training.
APPENDIX B

Employee Communication Questionnaire
Employee Communication Questionnaire

Instructions for marking. Please read each question carefully and circle the answer that comes closest to reflecting your own feelings about communication and the Performance 100% program. In some cases, you are asked to write your own comments in the space provided.

1. Have you heard about the Performance 100% program? yes / no / don't know
   If you answered "no" or "don't know," please continue with question No. 6.

2. Where did you receive most of your information about Performance 100%?
   (Please identify the three best sources of information using the list below. Rank them in order, with No. 1 being the most complete and accurate source.)
   _____ My supervisor
   _____ Top management
   _____ Slide presentation
   _____ Flash magazine
   _____ This Week
   _____ Other employees
   _____ News media
   _____ Performance 100% training program
   _____ Other (please indicate)
   _____ Don't know

3. What do you think are the goals of the Performance 100% program?

4. Please place an "X" in front of any Performance 100% programs listed below that you have been involved with.
   _____ Level Payment Program signup drive
   _____ Safety Bingo
   _____ Resources Management
   _____ Customer Service Improvement Suggestion Program
   _____ Other (please name)
   _____ Have not participated in any Performance 100% programs
5. Based on what you know about Performance 100%, what are your feelings about Performance 100%? (Please place an "X" by the one answer that best matches your own feelings.)

- I am very enthusiastic about the program and look forward to the changes being talked about.
- I plan to participate in future programs, but don't feel particularly enthused.
- I like the ideas that are being talked about, but I am somewhat skeptical that things will really change much.
- I don't agree with the whole Performance 100% philosophy and think it's a waste of time and money.
- I don't know how I feel yet, but I'm not opposed to the ideas presented.
- No opinion.
- Other (please specify). __________________________
  __________________________
  __________________________

6. Have you heard about the Quality of Worklife program? yes / no / don't know

7. Which of the special Performance 100% training programs have you participated in? (Place an "X" by each program that you have been involved with.)

- Quality of Worklife workshop
- Resources Management workshop
- Customer Contact training
- I have not participated in any Performance 100% training programs
- Other (please specify). __________________________
  __________________________
The following questions ask you to what extent you agree with each statement. Please select the response that best matches your own feelings about communication at OPPD. Answers range from "strongly agree" (far left "X") to "strongly disagree" (far right "X"). Please circle your answer.

(For purposes of this questionnaire, the term upper management refers to employees who are at the division management level or above. The term supervisor refers to your immediate superior.)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>In general, people in my area seem willing to participate in Performance 100% programs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Our supervisor encourages us to get involved with Performance 100% programs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Upper management has fully explained to employees what Performance 100% is all about.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Overall, employees are kept informed about what is going on throughout the organization.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on at OPPD.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>The organization makes a sincere effort to find out what employees think.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>In my work area, people are open and honest with each other.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Employee suggestions and ideas are welcome and taken seriously by upper management.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Employees are encouraged to discuss projects or problems with others at every level of the organization.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Upper management at OPPD is candid with employees about controversial and sensitive issues.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Our own vice president often meets in person with people in our area to discuss projects, plans or problems.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
19. Employees in our area may initiate a contact with our vice president to seek information, offer opinions or make a suggestion.  

20. The organization as a whole encourages open sharing of information.

21. I can depend on my supervisor to be honest and straightforward with me.

22. My supervisor is interested in listening to what I have to say.

23. We have access to the people or information needed to get the job done.

24. Whenever I am given an assignment, I feel I know what is expected and I have ample direction to get the job done.

25. Employees are encouraged to openly express their opinions at OPPD.

26. When we have a new assignment or problem to solve, the people in our area share ideas on how to get the job done or to find a solution.

27. We often meet with employees from other departments or divisions to discuss mutual projects or concerns.

The following questions concern your own feelings about how you communicate with others at OPPD. Please select the answer that best matches your own communication behavior. Answers range from "very frequently" (far left "X") to "very seldom" (far right "X"). Please circle your answer.

28. When I am with my co-workers, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.

29. When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to openly express my opinion, even if it is negative.
30. When I am alone with my supervisor, I feel free to disagree with the views of another supervisor or manager.

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<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

31. When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with the views of other employees who are present.

<table>
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<th>Very Frequently</th>
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<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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32. When I am in a group with my supervisor, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.

<table>
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<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<td>X</td>
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33. When I am in a group, I feel comfortable suggesting new ideas.

<table>
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<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

34. When I am alone with someone in upper management, I feel free to express my opinion, even if it is negative.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

35. When I am alone with someone from upper management, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

36. When I am in a group where someone from upper management is present, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

The following three questions are directed toward employees who have others reporting to them. If you are not in a supervisory job, please disregard and continue with question No. 40.

37. When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to express an opinion, even if it's negative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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38. When I am alone with a subordinate, I feel free to disagree with his or her views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

39. When I am in a group, I feel free to disagree with a subordinate who is present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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40. If it will help get the job done, I say what's on my mind, regardless of who is present and the situation at hand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
Data gathered from the following questions will be used to divide the survey results into meaningful groups to evaluate specific employee concerns. This information will never be used to identify any individual. You are assured of complete confidentiality, but you may leave a question blank, if you wish, and continue with the rest of the survey.

42. How many years have you worked for OPPD?
   ____ 0-4
   ____ 5-9
   ____ 10-19
   ____ 20-29
   ____ 30+

43. In which division are you employed?
   ____ Electric Operations
   ____ Production Operations
   ____ Nuclear Production
   ____ Engineering
   ____ Customer Services Operations
   ____ Management Systems Services
   ____ Corporate Accounting
   ____ Finance
   ____ Other

4. What is your age group?
   ____ up to 25
   ____ 25 to 34
   ____ 35 to 44
   ____ 45 to 54
   ____ Over 55

45. Which group best describes your level of job position?
   ____ Division manager and above
   ____ All other managers, supervisors, and exempt employees
   ____ All employees covered by one of the union contracts
46. Where do you spend the majority of your time at work?
   ______ Downtown office area
   ______ Other metropolitan Omaha office area
   ______ Rural office area
   ______ Outside on line or construction crew
   ______ Generating Plant
   ______ Other (please name, if desired)__________________________

47. Please write below any additional comments you have about Performance 100%
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

48. Please write below any additional comments you have about communication in general at OPPD or in your area.
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

Thank you very much for completing the survey. Please return it to Alison Rider, Room 711, interoffice mail in the self-addressed envelope provided. It is marked "confidential" and will remain sealed until opened by me.
APPENDIX C

Letter to OPPD employees
January 27, 1986

Dear OPPD Employee:

You are being asked to participate in a project designed to provide OPPD with valuable information about employee communication. In addition, your involvement will assist me in reaching a personal goal -- that of writing a thesis as required to receive a master's degree in communication from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Attached you will find a questionnaire which asks you for information about your communication experiences at OPPD and about the Performance 100% program. The data provided will be used to study OPPD employee communication. The information will also be used by me not only for research purposes, but to enhance my understanding of communication at OPPD.

May I ask you to take a few minutes of your time to answer the questions and return the survey by February 14? You will find a self-addressed envelope enclosed which you may use to send it back through interoffice mail.

Sometime later this year, a follow-up survey will also come your way. Every employee is being asked, in confidence, to complete both questionnaires as candidly as possible. Responses will not be used in any way to identify survey respondents. You are assured that everyone completing a survey will remain completely anonymous, both to me and to OPPD.

Thank you very much for participating in this project.

Sincerely,

Alison Rider
Supervisor-Publications

Attachments
REFERENCES


