

# Research Capsules

## Construction and Analysis of Organization Climate Surveys

**Author:** Gary N. McLean, Training and Development Research Center, 1954 Buford Avenue, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

### Abstract

The climate survey is an important organizational diagnosis tool. Although the interview approach has been a more widely used tool, McLean suggests that the survey, or questionnaire, method has many advantages over interviewing. Among other benefits, the survey method

- tends to be less costly;
- holds researcher bias constant across respondents;
- facilitates quicker analysis;
- provides for greater

confidentiality.

The advantages of customized versus standardized climate surveys are also presented, with a preference for the customized instrument. Some of its benefits:

- flexibility for the client in terms of survey depth;
- the option to choose what and how many issues the client wants to survey;
- greater relevance to the organization;
- the likelihood of greater ownership of the survey results because of the organization's involvement in its development.

On the other hand, McLean acknowledges the difficulty of developing questionnaires that are valid, reliable, and easily understood by all respondents. In that regard, he provides the reader with such helpful tools as an outline of the basic process and format expectations for constructing a climate survey, a sample survey with an extensive set of questions, and examples of ways to analyze and present the results to provide easily understood feedback to the organization.

The report serves as a guide for practitioners who wish to develop their own climate surveys. Readers are invited to use any questions in the sample survey that meet their needs in putting together customized surveys for their particular organizations.

### Exploring the Accuracy and Value of Self Assessments

**Author:** Dennis A. Joiner, Dennis A. Joiner Associates, Personnel Management Consultants, 6333 Meadowvista Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608; 916/338-3131.

### Abstract

In recent years there has been a trend toward integrating self-assessment components into selection and promotion examination procedures. This paper provides the

results of research on the correlation between assessor ratings and self ratings obtained on the same dimensions from participants in several different assessment-center programs.

It also considers how accurate an individual's self perceptions are when selection and promotion are not potentially biasing factors. Specifically, the author looked at the correlation between participant and assessor ratings of participants' performance in several career-development assessment-center programs and one promotional assessment center (control group).

Each program in the study included a thorough job analysis, custom, job-related exercises, and an assessor-training program. Participants completed forms identical to those completed by the assessors regarding performance in each job simulation exercise. They also completed extensive self-assessment forms regarding their levels of competence in the same dimension categories.

The paper presents the results of comparing the assessor ratings on each dimension factor to the participant self ratings from the exercises as well as from the skills inventory. The results should be valuable for selection specialists who have or are considering the use of self-assessment data as part of their examination processes, as well as anyone who uses self-assessment inventories as a source of information for career-development programs or decisions.

### Effects of Feedback for Training and Development: Selected Research Abstracts

**Authors:** Ronald L. Jacobs, Gayle Shiban, and Tricia Emerson, Training and Development Research Report Series, Graduate Studies in Training and Development, Ohio State University, 160 Ramseyer Hall, 29 West

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## Abstract

"What is the value of providing interpersonal communication skills to supervisors?" That question was posed by a major international corporation. The response was to re-frame the question as follows: "What are the effects of providing feedback to subordinates about their performance?" This report addresses that question by reviewing 23 research studies in an expanded abstract format. Studies were limited to those most relevant to training and development: use of task-oriented settings, involvement of super-ordinate/subordinate relationships, or those resulting in consequences relevant to organizations.

Feedback serves two purposes: it directs behavior toward attaining a goal and stimulates greater effort. Research has consistently shown that feedback improves the performance of individuals under a variety of conditions. Among the specific conclusions are the following:

- Some feedback is always available in a job setting.
- Feedback promotes more efficient acquisition of job tasks.
- Feedback affects motivation as indicated by performance.
- More specific feedback results in more rapid improvements.
- The longer the delay, the less effect on performance.
- When feedback decreases, performance levels drop.
- Some people develop substitute sources of feedback.

The report also discusses the importance of feedback as a solution other than training. Structured feedback provides the most powerful means available to improve job performance, with the least amount of cost required. Information in the report has been found useful in justifying supervisory training programs in providing structured feedback.

**Leadership Style and Team Process:  
a Comparison of the Managerial  
Grid and Situational Leadership**

Author: Faye Caskey, Training and Development Research Center, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

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## Abstract

The Managerial Grid and Situational Leadership are built on differing interpretations and balances of

the constructs Task and Relationship-Maintenance. The monograph deals with literature on the balance. Caskey identifies literatures of

human systems, reviews definitions of leadership and team process literature.

In that context, the two frameworks, Managerial Grid and Situational Leadership, are systematically reviewed, compared, and critiqued. A summary chart compares assumptions, contents, and methodologies.

Based on the comparison, Caskey suggests that Situational Leadership be seen as a strategy for "1-1 supervision for task accomplishment." She questions the validity for team process of the Relationship construct of Situational Leadership. Although the Managerial Grid promises synergistic team process as the end product, the framework cannot be validated because authors utilize copyright to protect framework and instruments from empirical research.

In choosing a framework for training, practitioners must ask whether the framework will produce what it promises in their settings; in other words, does it fit the mission, values, needs, goals, and human resources of the organization?

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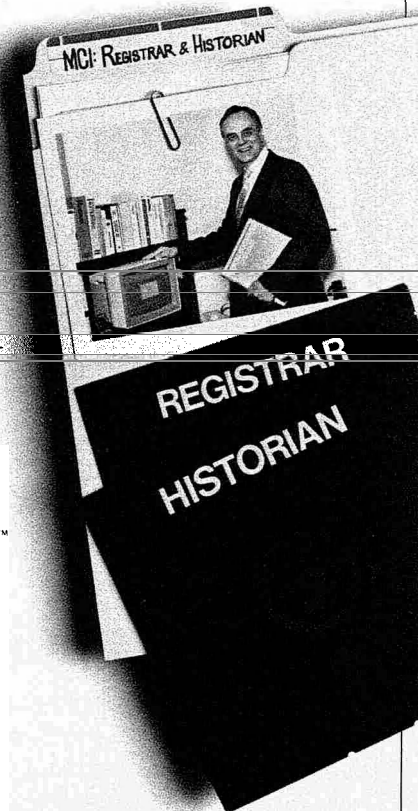
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