

Criminal Justice Review

<http://cjr.sagepub.com/>

The Influence of Individual, Job, and Organizational Characteristics on Correctional Staff Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Eric G. Lambert and Eugene A. Paoline

Criminal Justice Review 2008 33: 541 originally published online 3 September 2008

DOI: 10.1177/0734016808320694

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://cjr.sagepub.com/content/33/4/541>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:

[Published in Association with Georgia State University, Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology](#)

Additional services and information for *Criminal Justice Review* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://cjr.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://cjr.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://cjr.sagepub.com/content/33/4/541.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Nov 7, 2008

[OnlineFirst Version of Record](#) - Sep 3, 2008

[What is This?](#)

The Influence of Individual, Job, and Organizational Characteristics on Correctional Staff Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Eric G. Lambert

University of Toledo, Ohio

Eugene A. Paoline III

University of Central Florida

As staff performance is vital to the survival of correctional institutions, much empirical attention has been paid to studying the causes and consequences of their attitudes and behaviors. The current study adds to this body of knowledge by examining the factors that explain three central occupational attitudes—job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. More specifically, using survey data collected from a large county correctional system in Orlando, Florida, this research assesses the impact of key demographic, job, and organizational characteristics within and across jail staff attitudes toward job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This article finds that the more powerful predictors of each of these attitudes are job and organizational characteristics. Among the dependent variables, job stress has an inverse relationship with job satisfaction, and job satisfaction had a powerful positive association with organizational commitment.

Keywords: *corrections; jail staff; job stress; job satisfaction; organizational commitment*

Corrections is big business in any sense of the word, as over US\$35 billion are spent each year for correctional systems in the United States. Moreover, there are approximately 1.5 million adults housed in American correctional facilities, employing over 400,000 people (Pastore & Maguire, 2006). Although corrections is big business, it is unlike most other organizations found in society, as approximately 70% of the costs of operating prisons is for direct payments of wages and fringe benefits (Camp & Lambert, 2005). Armstrong and Griffin (2004) were correct when they argued “correctional institutions are unique work environments in both context and purpose” (p. 577). Correctional work is often regarded as a daunting occupation that holds little prestige in our society (Griffin, 1999). Unlike many other organizations, corrections is not involved in the processing

Authors' Note: Eric G. Lambert and Eugene A. Paoline equally contributed to the article. The authors thank Janet Lambert for proofreading and editing the paper. In addition, the authors thank the editor and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. These comments and suggestions improved the article. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Eugene A. Paoline, University of Central Florida, Department of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies, Orlando, FL 32816-1600; e-mail: epaoline@mail.ucf.edu.

or production of inanimate objects, or providing services to willing clients or customers. Correctional organizations deal with inmates, many of whom are violent and being held against their will (Jayewardene & Jayasuriya, 1981). Because of the complexities of dealing with the unique correctional environment, staff are critical. In fact, correctional organizations usually succeed or fail because of their employees' performance. Satisfied, committed staff, who do not suffer from undue job stress, can help a facility become a model correctional organization. Conversely, overly stressed, unhappy, and uncommitted staff can lead to failure and disaster for a correctional organization.

As staff are an integral component of the success of correctional organizations, there has been a demand for more research on how working in corrections affects employees. Part of this literature has examined the impact of the work environment on correctional workers, and how it relates to their occupational attitudes. Three prominent occupational attitudes identified are job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000; Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Griffin, 2001; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Lambert, 2004; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 1999; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2002b; Slate & Vogel, 1997; Stohr, Lovrich, Monke, & Zupan, 1994; Triplett, Mullings, & Scarborough, 1996, 1999). These attitudes have significant effects on the intentions and behaviors of correctional staff. Most of the research on corrections has focused primarily on job satisfaction and job stress. Only in the past 10 years has there been an increased focus on the antecedents of correctional staff organizational commitment. Overall, empirical research has uncovered many salient causes of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Unfortunately, there have not been systematic studies examining how different areas of the work environment impact the attitudes of correctional employees. The current study examined the impact of demographic (i.e., race, education, age, gender, rank, position, and tenure), job (i.e., dangerousness of the job, job variety, and role strain), and organizational characteristics (i.e., instrumental communication, formalization, input into decision making, and promotional opportunity) on the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of correctional workers. It is necessary to examine the work environment in a structured manner to determine whether the major dimensions are equally important in helping shape correctional staff attitudes or whether one or more dimensions are more important to one type of occupational attitude but not another. This information is necessary so that scholars and correctional administrators can better understand the work environment and how it impacts correctional employees. Finally, we explore potential relationships between job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Literature Review

Three salient occupational attitudes are job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Job stress is generally defined in the correctional literature as feelings of work-related hardness, tension, anxiety, frustration, worry, emotional exhaustion, and/or distress (Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985; Grossi, Keil, & Vito, 1996; Van Voorhis, Cullen, Link, & Wolfe, 1991). Job stress occurs as a result of stressors in the work environment and has been found to have numerous negative effects on correctional staff. For

example, high levels of stress in correctional staff often result in higher than expected likelihoods of hypertension, heart attacks, and other stress-related illnesses, which can ultimately affect the life expectancy of the employee (Cheek & Miller, 1983). It has been reported that correctional workers die sooner than expected when compared to the national life expectancy, and stress was the leading reason for the shortened life expectancy (Cheek, 1984; Woodruff, 1993). Moreover, job stress has been linked to divorce, substance abuse, and suicide among correctional staff (Cheek, 1984). Finally, correctional job stress has negative effects on the employing organization, having been found to be positively related to turnover intent (Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Slate & Vogel, 1997).

Job satisfaction is "the fulfillment or gratification of certain needs that are associated with one's work" (Hopkins, 1983, p. 7). It is basically the degree that a person likes his/her job (Spector, 1996). Like job stress, job satisfaction has significant consequences. Higher levels of job satisfaction have been found to be associated with greater support for rehabilitation and compliance with organizational rules (Fox, 1982). Conversely, low levels of job satisfaction have been found to be related to burnout, absenteeism, turnover intent, and turnover (Byrd et al., 2000; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Lambert, Edwards, Camp, & Saylor, 2005; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Wright, 1993).

Organizational commitment is a bond that the employee has with his/her organization. Although there are many different views of how a person can bond to an organization, there are two major views of organizational commitment. The first is that a person is bonded to the organization because of sunken costs (e.g., pension with the organization; Becker, 1960). This form of organizational commitment is labeled calculative commitment. "With calculative commitment, an employee 'calculates' in some manner the costs and benefits (e.g., monetary, social, physical, lost opportunities, etc.) of working for a given organization. These calculations determine the level of commitment to the organization" (Lambert et al., 1999, p. 100). This form of commitment is "a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual—organizational transactions and alterations in side-bets or investments over time" (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972, p. 557).

The second major view of organizational commitment is attitudinal. Attitudinal commitment is primarily concerned with emotional, mental, and/or cognitive bonds to an organization, such as loyalty, wanting to belong, attachment, and belief in the value system and goals of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Under this approach, it is the strength of the person's feelings toward and views of the organization, belief in its goals, loyalty, identification to and cognitive desire to belong that determines the level of commitment (Steers, 1977). Of the two forms of commitment, attitudinal commitment is more frequently measured for several reasons (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). First, calculative commitment measures have been criticized as being underdeveloped and not fully measuring organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Wallace, 1997). Second, attitudinal measures are more likely to be linked with positive employee outcomes, such as lower turnover and absenteeism and increased support for the organization (Randall, 1990). For example, higher levels of attitudinal organizational commitment have been linked to higher levels of job performance (Culliver, Sigler, & McNeely, 1991). Conversely, lower levels of attitudinal organizational commitment have been found to be related to correctional staff absenteeism and turnover (Camp, 1994; Lambert et al., 2005; Stohr, Self, & Lovrich, 1992). Finally, it is easier for correctional administrators to affect

employees' attitudinal commitment than it is to affect calculative commitment (Lambert et al., 1999). In this study, organizational commitment refers to attitudinal commitment and is viewed as an affective bond between the worker and the employing organization.

Outside the field of criminal justice, it is theorized that there are three major groups of antecedents for occupational attitudes—personal/demographic, job, and organizational characteristics (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982; Steers, 1977). There is evidence that personal characteristics are associated with correctional staff occupational attitudes. For example, gender, age, education, race, tenure, and supervisory status, have all been found to be associated with correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Blau, Light, & Chamlin, 1986; Britton, 1997; Byrd et al., 2000; Camp & Steiger, 1995; Griffin, 2001; Lambert, Barton, Hogan, & Clarke, 2002; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2002a; Rogers, 1991); however, although some studies have found a relationship, others have found no relationship (e.g., Lambert et al., 2002b). More importantly, the overall impact of personal characteristics on occupational attitudes of correctional workers appears to be small compared to the impact of job and organizational characteristics (Jurik & Winn, 1987; Lambert et al., 2002a, 2002b).

It is theorized and supported by empirical findings that the work environment is critical in helping shape the occupational attitudes of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. The work environment refers to the factors or characteristics that comprise the overall work conditions and situations, both tangible and intangible, for an employee. The correctional work environment is complex; therefore, it is helpful to break it up into separate dimensions. Although there are many facets of the work environment, job and organizational characteristics are two major dimensions. Job characteristics relate to a particular job that is being done by an individual (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). Examples of job characteristics are job variety, role strain, task significance, task identity, and supervision (Hackman & Lawler, 1971). In this study, dangerousness of the job, job variety, and role strain were measured. One fairly unusual aspect of working in corrections is that the job is often considered to be a dangerous one. Dangerousness refers to this perception by the employee (Cullen et al., 1985). Job variety is the degree of variation in the job (Price & Mueller, 1986). Some jobs are highly repetitive whereas other jobs have considerable variation. Role strain results because of role problems, such as role ambiguity and role conflict, which result from the job (Hepburn & Knepper, 1993). Organizational characteristics differ from job characteristics in that they are more global and affect all employees of an organization rather than the employees occupying a particular job within the organization.

The organizational dimension refers to how an agency arranges, manages, and operates itself (Oldham & Hackman, 1981). Major forms of organizational structure are formalization, centralization, instrumental communication, integration, organizational justice (i.e., fairness of outcomes and procedures), and promotional opportunity (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990). In this study, formalization, centralization, instrumental communication, and promotional opportunity were examined. Formalization is the extent to which (written) rules and procedures are established and known by organizational members (Bluedorn, 1982). Centralization refers to the degree of input employees are allowed in decision making (Bluedorn, 1982). Instrumental communication is the "degree to which information about the job is formally transmitted by an organization to its members" (Agho, Mueller, & Price,

1993, p. 1009). Promotional opportunity refers to the perceived opportunities for promotions that a person has with the employing organization (Lambert et al., 2002a).

There has been a considerable amount of research that has examined the impact of the different aspects of the work environment on correctional staff. It has been reported that dangerousness, role strain, role overload, and lack of input into decision making all have been linked to higher levels of job stress for correctional staff (Cullen et al., 1985; Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Grossi & Berg, 1991; Grossi et al., 1996; Shamir & Drory, 1982; Slate & Vogel, 1997; Triplett et al., 1996, 1999; Van Voorhis et al., 1991; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986). Job variety, job autonomy, dangerousness, role strain, input into decision making, training, supervision, perceptions of pay, work-family conflict, perceived promotional opportunity, organizational justice, integration, and job feedback all have significant relationships with job satisfaction for correctional staff (Brief, Munro, & Aldag, 1976; Cullen et al., 1985; Griffin, 2001; Hepburn & Knepper, 1993; Jurik & Halemba, 1984; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Lambert, 2002, 2003; Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2003; Lambert, Reynolds, Paoline, & Watkins, 2004; Stohr et al., 1994; Van Voorhis et al., 1991; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Wright, Saylor, Gilman, & Camp, 1997). Much less research has been done on correctional staff organizational commitment. Job feedback, supervision, input into decision making, organizational justice, integration, promotional opportunity, and instrumental communication have been found to have significant impacts on organizational commitment among correctional workers (Lambert, 2003, 2004; Lambert et al., 2002, 2002a; Stohr et al., 1994; Wright et al., 1997). Aside from the impacts that different aspects of the work environment have on the occupational attitudes of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, these attitudes have also been found to impact one another.

Overall, the literature suggests that job stress impacts job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and job satisfaction impacts organizational commitment. Specifically, individuals who perceive their jobs to be low in stress are generally more satisfied with their jobs. Past research studies support a negative relationship between job stress and job satisfaction (Blau et al., 1986; Byrd et al., 2000; Grossi et al., 1996; Lambert, 2004; Robinson, Porporino, & Simourd, 1997; van Voorhis et al., 1991; Walters, 1993). There has been less research on the impact of job stress on organizational commitment; however, those who experience higher levels of stress from the job might blame the organization for creating and allowing the stress, and, as such, are less likely to bond with the organization. Two studies of prison staff suggest that job stress has an inverse association with organizational commitment (Lambert 2004; Robinson et al., 1997). Job satisfaction is postulated to be a powerful antecedent of organizational commitment (Lambert et al., 1999). Staff who are displeased with their jobs generally blame the organization, which, in the end, leads to reduced commitment to the organization. In a study of staff at a Midwestern prison, it was reported that job satisfaction had a powerful, positive impact on organizational commitment (Lambert, 2004).

Four salient conclusions can be gleaned from the correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment literature. First, although the impact of many different dimensions of the work environment on correctional staff occupational attitudes have been studied, not all areas have been explored. For example, the impacts of instrumental communication, formalization, and promotional opportunity on job stress have received

little attention in the literature. Second, few studies have examined the impact of variables on all three salient correctional worker occupational attitudes of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment simultaneously. Looking at how work environment variables impact each of the three occupational attitudes in the same study allows for a better understanding regarding how each of the occupational attitudes is shaped. Third, there has been little research on how the three occupational attitudes are related to one another, particularly in terms of the impact of job stress and job satisfaction on organizational commitment. Fourth, no published study could be located that examined whether job and organizational characteristics differ in their impact on employees depending on the type of occupational attitude being examined. It is unclear of how job and organizational characteristics together help shape correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. A few studies have explored the impact of specific job and/or organizational characteristics; however, these studies often examine the work environment in a piecemeal fashion and rarely involve multiple measures of both major dimensions of the work environment. Nevertheless, there is some indication in the correctional staff literature that job and organizational characteristics may have different effects on correctional staff occupational attitudes.

In a study of Midwestern prison staff, Lambert et al. (2002) found that instrumental communication and integration (both types of organizational characteristics) had a greater impact on organizational commitment than they did on job satisfaction. The authors argued that organization structure variables would have a greater impact on organizational commitment than job characteristics because job characteristics are directly related to a person's occupation, whereas organizational factors reflects one's organization as a whole. In another analysis of the data from the same Midwestern prison staff, Lambert et al. (2002a) examined the impact of organizational fairness, promotional opportunities, and job feedback on organizational commitment. Although they found all three had significant impacts, job feedback had the smallest effect. They concluded the reason that job feedback had the smallest effect was that it probably represented more of a job characteristic than it did a type of organizational factor, arguing that the organizational variables of fairness and promotional opportunities would have a greater impact on correctional staff organizational commitment than would job characteristic variables. These two studies suggest that job characteristics have a greater impact on correctional staff job satisfaction, whereas organizational characteristics have a stronger effect on correctional staff organizational commitment. These postulations, however, have not been tested.

Research Questions

The current study addressed four research goals. The first research goal was to examine the impact of demographic (i.e., race, education, age, gender, rank, position, and tenure), organizational (i.e., instrumental communication, formalization, input into decision making, promotional opportunity), and job characteristics (i.e., dangerousness, job variety, and role strain) on correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. As previously indicated, the effects of several of these variables on correctional staff occupational attitudes have never been or have not fully been explored.

The second goal of this research was to determine whether the effects of the aforementioned variables changed depending on the occupational attitude being studied. This information is crucial to understanding how the work environment helps shape the attitudes of correctional employees.

The third research goal was to determine how the three occupational attitudes that served previously as dependent variables were related to one another. Specifically, the impact of job stress on job satisfaction was explored. Likewise, the effects of job stress and job satisfaction on organizational commitment were tested.

Finally, the fourth goal of this research was to determine whether demographic, job, or organizational characteristics were more important in explaining the variance of each of the three occupational attitudes. The correctional literature suggests that demographic characteristics are the least important influence on correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. In addition, the literature hints that job characteristics are more important in shaping job satisfaction, and organizational characteristics are more important in explaining organizational commitment.

Method

Respondents

In the fall of 2001, the Orange County Jail Oversight Commission contracted with the Criminal Justice and Legal Studies department at University of Central Florida, the purpose of which was to explore concerns and issues among Orange County Corrections Department (OCCD) employees. The county contains one major city (i.e., Orlando) and ten other municipalities, all of which exclusively use the county jail for local detention needs. The OCCD is an American Correctional Association (ACA) accredited institution, and housed approximately 4,000 inmates at the time of the survey. Ordered according to the inmate average daily population, the jail was among the 15 largest jails in the country at the time data for this project were collected, and the third largest in Florida (Beck, Karberg, & Harrison, 2002).

The research team first conducted a series of focus groups designed to understand more fully those work environment problems that might be unique to OCCD employees. Research staff conducted seven 2-hour focus groups, with 48 OCCD employees from different organizational levels and facilities during a 10-day period. Findings from the focus groups assisted in the development of a questionnaire that would be administered to staff at all levels within the department.

During five consecutive days in the fall of 2001, the staff from the nine separate facilities of the OCCD, in Orlando, Florida, were surveyed.¹ The staff were informed that the survey was completely voluntary in nature and the responses would be anonymous. With the consent of the jail director, personnel received two hours of overtime for participating in the survey. Respondents represented all areas of the correctional facility, such as correctional officers, case managers, medical staff, industry staff, food service workers, and so on. Moreover, the respondents represented various administrative levels of the correctional facility, from line staff to supervisors and managers. The jail employed approximately 1,500 paid employees at the time of the survey, and 1,062 staff members participated in the survey, resulting in a response rate of 70%.²

In terms of respondents,³ approximately 40% were Black, 11% Hispanic, 43% White, and 6% other. With respect to educational status, 21% had a high school diploma or GED, 41% had some college but no degree, 16% had an associate's degree, 18% had a bachelor's degree, and 4% had a graduate or professional degree. In terms of age, approximately 4% of the respondents were less than 25 years old, 10% were between 25 and 29 years, 18% were between 30 and 34 years, 20% were between 35 and 39 years, 19% were between 40 and 44 years, 12% were between 45 and 49 years, 11% were between 50 and 54 years, and 6% were 55 years old or older. For gender, about 54% of the respondents were men, and 46% were women. About 10% of the respondents indicated that they were supervisors of other staff. Respondents represented all areas of the correctional facility, such as correctional officers, case managers, medical staff, industry staff, food service workers, and so on. About 67% of the respondents worked in custody, and 32% held noncustody positions. The median tenure was 72 months and ranged from 0 to 336 months.

Measures

Job stress. A measure inquiring about an individual's feelings of job-related tension, anxiety, worry, emotional exhaustion, and distress was utilized, based on six items (i.e., "When I'm at work, I often feel tense or uptight;" "A lot of time my job makes me very frustrated or angry;" "I am usually calm and at ease when I'm working [reverse coded];" "Most of the time when I'm at work, I don't feel that I have much to worry about [reverse coded];" "I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work;" and "There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset"), which were adapted from Crank, Regoli, Hewitt, & Culbertson (1995). The items were answered using a 5-point Likert-type of scale of *strongly disagree* (coded as 1), *disagree* (2), *uncertain* (3), *agree* (4), and *strongly agree* (5). The six items were summed together to form an additive index which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .78.

Job satisfaction. A global, rather than facet, measure of job satisfaction was used (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992), which focuses on the broader domain of a worker's satisfaction with the overall job than with specific job facets, such as pay, benefits, coworkers, or supervision. Job satisfaction was measured using five items (i.e., "I like my job better than the average worker does;" "I am seldom bored with my job;" "Most days I am enthusiastic about my job;" "I am fairly well satisfied with my job;" and "I find real enjoyment in my job"), which were adapted from Brayfield and Rothe (1951). The items were answered using a 5-point Likert-type of scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The five items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .83.

Organizational commitment. To measure organizational commitment, respondents were queried regarding their bond to the entire employing organization. The two survey items utilized (i.e., "I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization [jail]" and "this job really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance") were adopted from the work of Mowday et al. (1982), and were answered using a 5-point Likert-type of scale

ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The two items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .72.

Instrumental communication. Instrumental communication was measured by five survey questions (i.e., "How well informed are you on what is to be done;" "How well informed are you on what is most important about the job;" "How well informed are you on how the equipment is used;" "How well informed are you of what you need to know to do the job correctly, including computer software;" and "How well informed are you about rules and regulations"). The items were measured using a 5-point scale of *not informed at all* (1), *informed very little* (2), *informed somewhat* (3), *informed* (4), and *very well informed* (5), which were adapted from Curry, Wakefield, Price, & Mueller (1986). For this study, the five items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .89.

Formalization. Five items were used to measure formalization (i.e., "A 'rules and procedures' manual exists and is readily available within this organization;" "Whatever situation arises, we have procedures to follow in dealing with it;" "My organization keeps a written record of everyone's job performance;" "Job guidance is readily available;" and "There is no policy manual for my job" [reverse coded]), all of which were adopted from Oldham and Hackman (1981) and Taggart and Mays (1987). The five items also utilized a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .60.

Input into decision making. Input into decision making was measured using four items from Curry et al. (1986) (i.e., "How much does your job allow you to make decisions on your own;" "How much freedom do you have as to how to do your job;" "How much say do you have over what happens on your job;" and "How much does your job allow you to take part in making decisions that affect you"). The items were answered using a 5-point response scale of *not at all* (1), *very little* (2), *some* (3), *a lot* (4), and *a great deal* (5), and were summed together to form an additive index with an alpha value of .88.

Promotional opportunity. Perceived opportunity to be promoted within the organization was measured using five items (i.e., "There is a good opportunity for advancement;" "There is a good chance to get ahead;" "Promotions are regular;" "There are chances for promotion;" and "I'm in a dead-end job" [reverse coded]) derived from Curry et al. (1986). The five items were answered using a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .84.

Dangerousness. Perceived dangerousness of the job was measured using five items from Cullen et al. (1985; i.e., "In my job, a person stands a good chance of getting hurt;" "There is not really much chance of getting hurt in my job [reverse coded];" "I work in a dangerous job;" "A lot of people I work with get physically injured in the line of duty;" and "My job is a lot more dangerous than other kinds of jobs"). The five items were also answered using a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The items were summed together to form an additive index which an alpha value of .79.

Job variety. Four items, adapted from Curry et al. (1986), were used to measure perceived job variety/routinization (i.e., “My job requires that I do the same things over and over again [reverse coded];” “My job requires that I keep learning new things;” “My job requires me to be very creative;” and “I get to do a number of different things on my job”). As with many other measures, the job variety items had a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The four items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .65.

Role strain. Role strain (i.e., consisting of role ambiguity and role conflict) was measured using seven items (i.e., “I know that I have divided my time properly;” “I feel certain how much authority I have;” “I know what my responsibilities are;” “I know what is exactly expected of me;” “The rules that we’re supposed to follow never seem to be very clear;” “The rules and regulations are clear enough here that I know specifically what I can and cannot do on my job;” and “There are so many people telling us what to do here that you can never be sure who the real boss is”). The items were derived from Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970), Cullen et al. (1985), and Poole and Regoli (1983), and were answered using a 5-point Likert-type response scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The seven items were summed together to form an additive index which had an alpha value of .72.

Personal/demographic characteristic variables. Measures of race, education, age, gender, supervisory status, position (i.e., working custody or not), and tenure were included as demographic characteristic variables, and they were measured as described in Table 1. These demographic characteristics are often included as variables when examining correctional staff attitudinal states, such as job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2002b).

Results

The descriptive statistics for all the variables are reported in Table 1. There appeared to be significant variation in both the dependent and independent variables. The median and mean were similar to one another for each variable, which suggested that the variables were normally distributed. All the indices had a Cronbach’s alpha value (i.e., a measure of reliability) higher than .60, a level which is generally viewed as acceptable (Gronlund, 1981). In addition, a principal factor analysis for each latent variable (i.e., index) was conducted. Specifically, the items for a particular index were entered into a factor analysis using principal axis factoring, a type of test for construct validity (Gorsuch, 1983). Based upon the Eigenvalues and the Scree plot, a single factor was extracted for each latent concept. All the items for a particular latent concept had factor loading of .50 or higher, which was above the cutoff rule of .30.

Pearson’s *r* correlation coefficients were calculated, and the results are presented in Table 2. In examining the correlations between independent variables and job stress, we found that, of the seven demographic characteristic variables, working in custody, being a supervisor, and tenure were statistically correlated with job stress. Those who worked in custody generally reported higher levels of job stress, supervisors reported lower levels of job stress, and those with higher tenure reported greater levels of job stress. All the organizational and

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Measures (N = 1062)

Variable	Description Of Measure	Med	Min.	Max.	Mean	St. dev.	Rel.
Race ^a	0 = <i>Non-White</i> , 1 = <i>White</i>	0	0	1	0.43	0.50	
Education ^a	0 = <i>No college degree</i> , 1 = <i>College degree</i>	0	0	1	0.38	0.49	
Age	Ordinal measure in years 1 = 25, 2 = 25-29, 3 = 30-34, 4 = 35-39, 5 = 40-44, 6 = 45-49, 7 = 50-54, 8 = 55+	4	1	8	4.53	1.81	
Gender ^a	0 = <i>Female</i> , 1 = <i>Male</i>	1	0	1	0.54	0.50	
Supervisor ^a	0 = <i>Not a supervisor</i> , 1 = <i>Supervisor</i>	0	0	1	0.10	0.30	
Custody/ position ^a	0 = <i>Does not work in custody</i> , 1 = <i>Works in custody</i>	1	0	1	0.67	0.47	
Tenure	Measured in months	72	0	336	95.33	74.68	
Instrumental communication	5 item index ($\alpha = .89$)	17	5	25	16.96	4.37	3.39
Formalization	5 item index ($\alpha = .60$)	17	5	25	17.04	3.78	3.41
Input into decision making	4 item index ($\alpha = .88$)	12	4	20	12.01	3.75	3.00
Promotional opportunity	5 item index ($\alpha = .84$)	15	5	25	14.97	5.13	2.99
Dangerousness	5 item index ($\alpha = .79$)	20	5	25	18.69	4.93	3.74
Job variety	4 item index ($\alpha = .65$)	12	4	20	11.94	3.54	2.99
Role strain	7 item index ($\alpha = .72$)	18	7	35	18.48	5.05	2.64
Job stress	6 item index ($\alpha = .78$)	18	6	30	18.20	5.44	3.03
Job satisfaction	5 item index ($\alpha = .83$)	17	5	25	16.42	4.92	3.28
Organizational commitment	2 item index ($\alpha = .72$)	6	2	10	5.98	2.37	2.99

Note: Med., Min., Max., St. dev., and Rel. stands for median value, minimum value, maximum value, standard deviation, and relative value (the mean of the summed index divided by the number of indicators), respectively. α is the symbol for Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a measure of internal consistency reliability. The number of missing cases ranged from 21 (Organizational commitment) to 189 (Supervisor).

a. Dichotomous variables, for which the mean represents a proportion.

job characteristic indices had significant correlations with staff job stress. Specifically, instrumental communication, formalization, input into decision making, promotional opportunity, and job variety all had negative correlations with job stress, whereas dangerousness and role strain both had a positive correlation. The size of the correlations were similar for all the indices except for job variety, which was lower.

Turning next to our second dependent variable of interest, job satisfaction, we found that race, age, and supervisory status all had statistically significant correlations with job satisfaction. White employees had higher job satisfaction compared to Nonwhite staff. As age increased, so did job satisfaction. Supervisors generally reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Among the other variables, we found that all the organizational factors and job

Table 2
Pearson's r Correlation Matrix ($N = 1062$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Race	1.00															
2. Education	0.02	1.00														
3. Age	0.23**	0.14**	1.00													
4. Gender	0.14**	0.09**	0.15**	1.00												
5. Supervisor	0.20**	0.11**	0.16**	0.08*	1.00											
6. Custody	0.00	-0.22**	-0.07	0.26**	0.04	1.00										
7. Tenure	0.12**	0.01	0.45**	0.11**	-0.02	0.16**	1.00									
8. Inst. comm.	0.11**	0.01	0.08*	-0.05	0.17**	-0.17**	-0.07*	1.00								
9. Formal	0.04	-0.08*	-0.03	-0.06	0.13**	-0.05	-0.12**	0.51**	1.00							
10. Input	0.15**	0.07*	0.14**	-0.01	0.27**	-0.12**	0.01	0.54**	.41**	1.00						
11. Prom. opp.	0.01	-0.15**	-0.13**	0.00	0.15**	0.19**	-0.16**	0.32**	.46**	0.41**	1.00					
12. Dangerous.	-0.04	-0.16**	-0.12**	0.26**	-0.01	0.49**	0.09*	-0.26**	-.14**	-0.25**	0.01	1.00				
13. Job variety	0.09**	0.04	0.19**	0.08*	0.17**	-0.02	0.01	0.31**	.28**	0.44**	0.31**	-0.05	1.00			
14. Role strain	-0.04	0.06	-0.09**	0.01	-0.15**	0.14**	-0.02	-0.56**	-.50**	-0.50**	-0.34**	0.26**	-0.31**	1.00		
15. Job stress	0.00	-0.03	-0.01	0.05	-0.10**	0.13**	0.13**	-0.38**	-.35**	-0.44**	-0.44**	0.36**	-0.22**	0.43**	1.00	
16. Job sat.	0.10**	-0.02	0.14**	0.01	0.15**	-0.05	-0.03	0.44**	.41**	0.51**	0.44**	-0.20**	0.48**	-0.42**	-0.51**	1.00
17. Org. com.	-0.02	-0.05	0.06	-0.03	0.10**	-0.09**	-0.14**	0.47**	.46**	0.45**	0.51**	-0.20**	0.45**	-0.46**	-0.49**	.67**

Note: Inst. Comm. = instrumental communication; Formal. = formalization; Input = input into decision making; Prom. Opp. = promotional opportunity; Dangerous. = dangerousness; Job Sat. = job satisfaction; and Org. Com. = organizational commitment. See Table 1 for a brief description of the variables. The number of missing cases based on pairwise deletion ranged from 21 to 266.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

characteristic indices had significant correlations with staff job satisfaction. Instrumental communication, formalization, input into decision making, promotional opportunity, and job variety all had positive correlations. Dangerousness and role strain had negative correlations. Job stress had an inverse correlation with job satisfaction.

For organizational commitment, our final dependent variable, the demographic characteristics of being a supervisor, working in custody, and tenure had significant correlations. Supervisors were more committed, whereas custody officers and those with greater tenure were less committed. Similar to our job satisfaction results, all the organizational and job characteristic indices had significant correlations with organizational commitment. Instrumental communication, formalization, input into decision making, promotional opportunity, and job variety all had positive correlations. Dangerousness and role strain both had inverse correlations. All the indices had similar sized correlations with the organizational commitment measure except for dangerousness, which was lower. Job stress had a negative correlation. Not only did job satisfaction have a positive correlation with organizational commitment, it had the largest sized correlation.

Separate Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression equations were computed with the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment indices as the dependent variables. For each of the three OLS regression equations, the demographic variables and the organizational and job characteristic indices were entered as independent variables. For the job satisfaction model, job stress was also entered as an independent variable. For the organizational commitment equation, job stress and job satisfaction were also included as independent variables. Based upon the correlation matrix in Table 2, the Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) statistics (not reported), and the tolerance statistics (not reported), there appeared to be no issue with collinearity or multicollinearity.⁴ The results of the OLS regression analyses are reported in Table 3.

The OLS regression model for job stress accounted for 46% of the observed variance in job stress. In the multivariate analysis, three of the seven demographic characteristic variables had a statistically significant impact on job stress when controlling for the shared effects of the other variables. Supervisors generally reported higher levels of stress than nonsupervisors. Those in custody reported less stress than those in noncustody. As tenure increased, so did job stress. Among the organizational characteristic measures, instrumental communication, input into decision making, and promotional opportunity all had significant inverse effects on job stress. As each increased, job stress decreased. Among the job characteristic measures, perceived dangerousness of the job and role strain had significant positive relationship with job stress. As each increased, job stress also increased. By using the standardized regression coefficients (i.e., the β in Table 3), it is possible to compare the magnitude of the impact of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable job stress because standardized regression coefficients are metric free (i.e., represent standardized units) and thus can be compared to one another (Loehlin, 1992). Among the variables with significant effects on job stress, dangerousness had the largest sized effect, followed by promotional opportunity, role strain, input into decision making, instrumental communication, tenure, position, and supervisory status. Role strain, input into decision making, instrumental communication, tenure, position, and supervisory status had effects which were almost half of that of either dangerousness or promotional opportunity.

Table 3
OLS Regression Results on the Impact of Demographic Variables, Organizational Structure, and Job Characteristics on Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment (*N* = 1062)

Variable	Job Stress		Job Satisfaction		Organizational Commitment	
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Demographic characteristics						
Race	0.22	.02	.27	.03	-.35	-.08*
Education	-0.54	-.05	-.24	-.02	-.17	-.04
Age	-0.05	-.02	.31	.11**	.05	.04
Gender	-0.54	-.05	-.36	-.04	.01	.01
Supervisor	1.34	.08*	-.74	-.05	-.41	-.05
Custody/position	-1.28	-.11**	-.20	-.02	-.54	-.11**
Tenure	0.01	.11**	.00	.00	-.01	-.08*
Organizational characteristics						
Instrumental comm.	-0.15	-.12**	.16	.13**	.04	.08*
Formalization	-0.01	-.01	.06	.04	.04	.07*
Input into decision making	-0.22	-.15**	.11	.08*	-.04	-.06
Promotional opportunity	-0.27	-.26**	.19	.19**	.10	.22**
Job characteristics						
Dangerousness	0.40	.36**	-.03	-.02	.01	.03
Job variety	0.01	.01	.40	.28**	.10	.16**
Role strain	0.18	.15**	.03	.03	-.03	-.07*
Job attitudes						
Job stress	—	—	-.27	-.28**	-.04	-.10**
Job satisfaction	—	—	—	—	.18	.39**
<i>R</i> -squared		.46**		.52**		.59**

Note: See Table 1 for a description of the variables and how they were measured. *B* represents the unstandardized regression coefficient, and β represents the standardized regression coefficient. After listwise deletion the *n* for the job stress model was 599, the *n* for the job satisfaction was 588, and the *n* for the organizational commitment model was 586.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$

The OLS regression model for job satisfaction accounted for 52% of the variance in job satisfaction. Of the seven demographic characteristics, only age had a statistically significant relationship with the job satisfaction index in the multivariate analysis. As age increased, job satisfaction also increased. Multivariate analysis also showed that of the organizational measures of instrumental communication, input into decision making, and promotional opportunity each had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction after controlling for the shared effects of the other independent variables. Among the job characteristics, only job variety had a significant impact; it had a positive relationship with job satisfaction. Job stress had a significant negative effect. Based upon the standardized regression coefficients, job variety and job stress had the largest impacts on job satisfaction, followed by promotional opportunity, instrumental communication, age, and input into decision making.

The OLS regression model for organizational commitment accounted for 59% of the variance in organizational commitment.⁵ Among the demographic characteristic variables, race, working in custody, and tenure each had statistically significant effects. White staff, custody officers, and staff with higher tenure, in general, reported lower levels of organizational commitment as compared to Nonwhite, noncustody staff, and staff with lower tenure, respectively. Instrumental communication, formalization, and promotional opportunity all had positive impacts on organizational commitment. For the job characteristics, job variety and role strain had an impact on organizational commitment. Job variety had a significant positive relationship, whereas increases in role strain were associated with decreases in organizational commitment. Job stress had a negative impact and job satisfaction had a positive impact on organizational commitment. Looking at the standardized regression coefficients, job satisfaction had the largest sized effect, followed by promotional opportunity, job variety, working in custody, job stress, tenure, instrumental communication, formalization, and role strain.

Finally, to determine the impact of the three groups of variables (i.e., demographic, job, and organizational characteristics), each group was entered into an OLS regression equation without the other two groups. The results are presented in Table 4. For job stress, with only the demographic characteristics entered as the independent variables, the *R*-squared statistic of explained variance was .04. With only the organizational characteristic indices as the independent variables, the *R*-squared was .30. For the job characteristics, the *R*-squared was .26. For job satisfaction, the *R*-squared with only the demographic characteristic variables was .06. With only the organizational measures, the *R*-squared was .36, and for the job characteristic indices, it was .34. For organizational commitment, the equation with only the demographic characteristic variables had an *R*-squared of .07. When only the organizational characteristic measures were entered into the OLS regression equation, the *R*-squared was .40. Finally, the equation with only the job characteristic measures had an *R*-squared of .33. Overall, across each of the dependent variables, organizational characteristics were the most powerful, followed by job characteristics. Demographic characteristics accounted for very little of the variance of the three occupational attitudes.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although there are many conclusions that can be drawn based upon the current study, we focus on four major ones. First, the impact of the various measures (i.e., demographic, job, and organizational characteristics) differed from one another in terms of their impact on a particular occupational attitude, and they also varied in their effects across the three occupational attitudes. Second, organizational and job characteristics are more important than demographic characteristics in helping shape the occupational attitudes of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Third, both organizational and job characteristics are important in helping shape the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment levels of correctional workers. Fourth, job satisfaction is a powerful antecedent of organizational commitment.

Although supervisory status, working in custody, and tenure had significant effects on job stress, the work environment variables explained a far greater amount of job stress in

Table 4
OLS Regression Results for Demographic Characteristics, Organization Structure,
and Job Characteristics Variables Entered as Separate Blocks ($N = 1062$)

Variable	Job Stress		Job Satisfaction		Organizational Commitment	
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	β
Only demographic characteristics entered						
Race	-0.02	-.01	0.55	.06	-.24	-.05
Education	-0.05	-.01	-0.74	-.07	-.48	-.10**
Age	-0.25	-.08	0.48	.18**	.19	.15**
Gender	0.44	.04	-0.29	-.03	-.03	-.01
Supervisor	-1.52	-.08*	1.83	.11**	.69	.09*
Custody/position	1.19	.10*	-0.76	-.07	-.51	-.10*
Tenure	0.01	.14**	-0.01	-.12**	-.01	-.20**
<i>R</i> -squared		.04**		.06**		.07**
Only organizational characteristics entered						
Instrumental comm.	-0.18	-.14**	0.18	.16**	.11	.20**
Formalization	-0.08	-.05	0.14	.10**	.09	.15**
Input into decision making	-0.36	-.24**	0.39	.30**	.10	.15**
Promotional opportunity	-0.28	-.27**	0.21	.22**	.15	.32**
<i>R</i> -squared		.30**		.36**		.40**
Only job characteristics entered						
Dangerousness	0.30	.27**	-0.11	-.11**	-.04	-.09**
Job variety	-0.17	-.11**	0.56	.40**	.23	.35**
Role strain	0.36	.33**	-0.27	-.27**	-.15	-.32**
<i>R</i> -squared		.26**		.34**		.33**

Note: See Table 1 for a description of the variables and how they were measured. *B* represents the unstandardized regression coefficient, and β represents the standardized regression coefficient. After listwise deletion the *n* for the job stress model was 599, the *n* for the job satisfaction was 597, and the *n* for the organizational commitment model was 608.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$

this study, suggesting that the work environment is the major cause of job stress for these correctional workers. Of the demographic characteristics, only age had a significant relationship with job satisfaction. It appears that as correctional workers age, they become more satisfied with their jobs. This may be a result of older workers finding positions they enjoy and also acquiring the necessary skills to do the job. In terms of organizational commitment, those who worked in custody were less committed to the job, which may be a result of the difficulty of working in custody. In addition, supervisors had greater commitment than nonsupervisory staff, which makes intuitive sense since supervisors have more vested in the organization and have a greater say in the day to day operations. More importantly, none of the seven demographic characteristics had significant effects consistently across all three types of occupational attitudes. It appears that the effects of demographic characteristics vary by the type of attitude being examined, although exerting the most relative influence on organizational commitment.

Not surprisingly, instrumental communication had a negative effect on job stress and positive effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. A lack of instrumental communication makes completing tasks difficult, which leads to frustration and ultimately stress. Providing information makes a person's job easier and more successful, which in turn probably leads to the person liking their job. Finally, instrumental communication can make an individual feel more like a valued member of the organization, which probably leads to greater individual commitment. As such, it appears that instrumental communication is a critical element in the work environment for correctional staff.

On the other hand, formalization, as measured by input into decision making, only had a significant relationship with organizational commitment in our multivariate analyses. It could be that formalization provides guidance to employees which in turn increases their bond to the organization. Conversely, formalization was not linked to either job stress or job satisfaction. It may be that organizational characteristics which are proximal to the work performed by an employee have a greater impact on the individual than those organizational characteristics which are further removed (Morris & Steers, 1980). That is, those forces which directly and regularly affect a worker should have a much greater impact on the employee's occupational attitudes than those that do not regularly affect him/her (Morris & Steers, 1980). Formalization is an organizational factor that correctional staff probably do not give much thought.

Another organizational factor, input into decision making, had a significant negative effect on job stress. Conversely, allowing correctional workers to have input increases their job satisfaction. Not allowing staff to have input may lead to frustration regarding how they are to accomplish their tasks, ultimately leading to increased levels of job stress. Allowing input about how their jobs, are to be completed allows employees to be more effective at their jobs, which leads to increased pride, and, hence, greater job satisfaction. Surprisingly, in multivariate analysis, input into decision making did not have a significant relationship with organizational commitment. It could very well be that there is no relationship. Another explanation is that the measure used focused more on input involving the person's job rather than the organization in general. As such, input in the job is tied more to job satisfaction, whereas input into the organization is connected more to organizational commitment. In this study, input into decision making was not related to organizational commitment, but was important in shaping job stress and job satisfaction.

Perceptions of promotional opportunities had powerful significant effects for all three occupational attitudes. This makes sense, given that many people are looking for a career rather than just performing a job. If an employee does not perceive an opportunity for career advancement, they may feel that they are in a dead-end job, resulting in job stress. In addition, a perception of opportunities to move forward also increased job satisfaction. Likewise, promotional opportunity had a positive relationship with correctional staff organizational commitment. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1990) wrote, "More than earnings, we think, opportunity for promotion is a key weapon in the corporatist arsenal for winning the compliance and commitment of employees: workers who perceive that they have a career with the company are more likely to be committed to its goals and fortunes over a long period of time" (p.105). It appears that opportunity for promotion is also a powerful organizational factor for correctional staff. It had the largest magnitude of effect on job satisfaction and

organizational commitment, and the second largest effect on job stress. The results suggest that promotional opportunities within corrections should not be ignored or the occupational attitudes of staff will suffer. This is not to say that institutions have to promote all personnel, as this may not be a feasible option. What it does mean is that there should be clear pathways of fair opportunities for promotion. Fair, clear, objective criteria (as opposed to informal/good old boy methods) might mitigate negative feelings by personnel should they not be chosen for promotion. Moreover, opportunities provided by institutions to make staff better candidates for promotion (e.g., special training, skill development, etc.), should they arise, or other nonpromotion incentives (e.g., incentive pay, job rotation, etc.), might also work toward staff feeling less stressed, more satisfied, and more committed.

Turning next to job characteristics, we find that dangerousness leads to increased job stress and decreased job satisfaction. The perception of working in a dangerous job probably causes workers to be on edge, apprehensive, even fearful. These are powerful psychological states that, in the long run, put strain on a person. In fact, dangerousness had the largest effect on job stress. Being uneasy and concerned at work is stressful. Moreover, if workers cannot feel comfortable and safe at work, it is unlikely they would like their jobs. Dangerousness did not have a significant relationship with organizational commitment. It could be that the jail staff did not blame the organization for their perceptions of working a dangerous job, as they expected some level of danger when they accepted a career in corrections.

Job variety had significant relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Having a job that requires different tasks provides one with stimulation (as opposed to boredom) which is a positive outcome. In addition, the employees who enjoy job variety can attribute it to the organization, which increases their positive feelings toward the institution. Job variety, however, did not have a significant relationship with job stress in the multivariate analysis. Although most people do not desire repetitive jobs, it does not mean that a lack of variety causes so much of a strain that a person feels occupational stress.

As expected, role strain led to stress. Ambiguity and conflicting directions generally lead to frustration for most people. It appears that correctional staff are no different. Role strain was also linked to decreased organizational commitment. Role stress generally arises because of supervisors, managers, and/or administrators, which probably leads most workers to blame the organization. It is difficult to bond with an organization that causes discomfort. Interestingly, role strain was not related to job satisfaction in the multivariate analysis. This suggests that one's occupational satisfaction derived from more direct aspects of the work (e.g., danger, promotional opportunities, job variety, etc.) over more abstract concepts such as role ambiguity and conflict.

The results indicate that the three occupational attitudes (our dependent variables) are associated with one another. Job stress is inversely related to job satisfaction. It makes sense that workers who report job stress tend to be less satisfied with their jobs in general. Job stress is a negative outcome that causes people to look unfavorably toward their jobs in the long run. Job stress also had negative association with organizational commitment. Workers who experience stress from work probably blame the organization for their painful experience, which ultimately means that they are less likely to form a bond with the organization. Job satisfaction not only had a positive impact on organizational commitment, but it had the largest impact of all the independent variables in the equation. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are much more likely to become committed to the organization.

People with job satisfaction generally see the organization in a more positive manner and are more appreciative toward the organization for providing them with a job that meets their needs and wants; therefore, correctional organizations should not only be concerned with increasing job satisfaction because of its links to greater support for rehabilitation, compliance with organizational rules, and decreased burnout, absenteeism, turnover intent, and turnover (Byrd et al., 2000; Fox, 1982; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Kerce, Magnusson, & Rudolph, 1994; Lambert et al., 2005; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Wright, 1993), but also because increases in job satisfaction should lead to increases in organizational commitment, which also has positive outcomes for the organization and employees. Furthermore, the fact that the three occupational attitudes are linked together means that the demographic, organizational, and job characteristics have not only direct effects but also indirect effects. Specifically, these variables indirectly affect job satisfaction through job stress and affect organizational commitment indirectly through both job stress and organizational commitment.

The impact of demographic characteristics on the three occupational attitudes was much less than that of organizational and job characteristics, which is congruent with the correctional research outlined in our literature review. Demographic characteristics only accounted for a small proportion of the variance of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. On the other hand, job and organizational characteristics accounted for far more variance. In fact, they accounted for five to ten times more of the variance than the demographic characteristics. This makes sense in light of the postulation made earlier that forces that directly and regularly affect a worker should have a much greater impact on the employee's occupational attitudes than those that do not frequently hamper the employee (Morris & Steers, 1980). Practically, this is encouraging news for organizational leaders who wish to reduce the job stress and improve the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of their employees, as these are two aspects that are generally within the control of most top correctional administrators.

As with all studies, this one had limitations. To begin, staff at only one, albeit large, jail agency in the southeast were surveyed. Future research should work toward replicating these findings across institutions of varying size and locations. One area that seems to be a logical extension of the work presented in this manuscript is the prison setting. The literature suggests that jails are different from prisons, especially with respect to how the work environment may affect staff (Lambert et al., 2004). The nature and effects of these differences should continue to be the focus of researchers. We also recommend that additional components of the occupational environment be explored, utilizing a variety of measures. Many of the latent concepts (i.e., the concepts measured by indices) were measured using only a handful of items. For example, organizational commitment could be measured with more than the two items utilized in the current study. How a concept is measured might influence the results and raises the issue of validity and reliability. Future research needs to examine whether more detailed and extensive measures of the latent concepts would yield the same results. This will ensure that validity and reliability measurement errors are minimized when researching job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among correctional staff. Furthermore, it is important to note that an attitudinal measure of organizational commitment was used in this study. It is possible that different results would have been observed if a calculative measure of organizational commitment was utilized.

There has been very little research on the antecedents of calculative commitment among correctional staff. This should be explored to see if the same antecedents help shape both forms of organizational commitment or if different work environment factors shape each type of commitment. Moreover, this research only measured four organizational characteristics and three job characteristics. There are other types of both that should be included in future research so as to provide a more accurate picture of how the work environment impacts correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

In conclusion, employees are the driving force of correctional organizations. Thus, it is important to study the forces that shape the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of correctional staff. Our findings supported the notion that organizational and job characteristics are related to correctional staff attitudes toward job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Like others, we found that demographic characteristics were weakly related to these occupational attitudes. In addition, we found that job stress had a negative impact on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and job satisfaction was a powerful predictor of organizational commitment. This suggests that not only does the work environment have direct effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, it also has indirect effects, through job stress for job satisfaction and job stress, and job satisfaction for organizational commitment. Although we have attempted to add to the growing body of knowledge on corrections, there is clearly much more work to be done.

Notes

1. The nine facilities include a juvenile center, work release center, central booking, main/traditional jail facility, and five facilities that are podular/direct supervision units or new generation units. As such, inmates are housed in either a traditional (i.e., combining linear and podular/remote supervision) or new generation areas. Staff working in the new generation facilities that encourage individual creativity and more advanced interpersonal skills might be expected to have a more positive work experience, thus influencing job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (the dependent variables of interest in this study). Given these differences in assignment, it would seem prudent to capture this variation later within the statistical models. We did not include a facility measure in this article based on findings, utilizing the same data, from another study of the Orange County Corrections Department (OCCD; Applegate & Paoline, 2007).

2. The fact that the staff received a monetary incentive by the jail director to take part in the survey could be responsible for the rather high response rate. That being said, it was still up to the employee to report to a training room at the main facility to be surveyed. Surveys were administered at three different times (i.e., 6.00 a.m., 3.00 p.m., and 10.00 p.m.) across each of the three primary work shifts. Those that did not take part in the survey were either physically absent from work during this week (e.g., sick, injured, vacationing, training, etc.), did not want to be surveyed, or did not want to (or could not) come in before or after their shift to take part in the survey.

3. Although there is no reason to believe that the sample of respondents that we surveyed is any different from the overall OCCD population, data are not available for complete comparisons (i.e., for all of the demographic characteristics included in our analyses). We do have data with respect to national and state jail figures for gender, ethnicity, and custody variables that compare favorably. Comparisons to national and state data reveal that our sample of OCCD staff include more females (44%—compared to 34% nationally and 40% in Florida), Blacks (39%—compared to 24% nationally and 33% in Florida), Hispanics (10%—compared to 8% nationally and 9% in Florida), and Other races (6%—compared to 2% nationally and 1% in Florida), and slightly fewer custody personnel (68%—compared to 74% nationally and 74% in Florida; Stephan, 2001). We thank an anonymous reviewer for stimulating this thought.

4. None of the Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic values for the independent variables were greater than 2.21, which is far lower than the VIF values of 7, which indicates an issue of multicollinearity (Maruyama,

1998). In addition, across all three equations, none of the independent variables had low tolerance values (i.e., all were above .47), which indicates no problem with multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

5. As the organizational commitment index had a smaller range than the other dependent variables, and could be viewed more as an ordinal level measure, Ordered Logistic regression was also computed. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) results tend to be robust for ordinal data, but it is sometimes argued that it is more appropriate to use ordered regression (Long, 1997). We found no differences in terms of statistically significant predictors or explained variance (i.e., the Cox and Snell pseudo *R*-squared was .51 and the Nagelkerke pseudo *R*-squared was .52), so we report the more easily interpretable OLS results.

References

- Agbo, A., Mueller, C., & Price, J. (1993). Determinants of employee job satisfaction: An empirical test of a causal model. *Human Relations, 46*, 1007-1027.
- Applegate, B. K., & Paoline, E. A., III. (2007). Jail officers' perceptions of the work environment in traditional versus new generation facilities. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 31*, 64-80.
- Armstrong, G., & Griffin, M. (2004). Does the job matter? Comparing correlates of stress among treatment and correctional staff in prisons. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 32*, 577-592.
- Beck, A. J., Karberg, J. C., & Harrison, P. M. (2002). *Prison and jail inmates at midyear 2001*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Becker, H. (1960). Notes on the concept of commitment. *American Journal of Sociology, 66*, 32-42.
- Blau, J., Light, S., & Chamlin, M. (1986). Individual and contextual effects on stress and job satisfaction: A study of prison staff. *Work and Occupations, 13*, 131-156.
- Bluedorn, A. (1982). A unified model of turnover from organizations. *Human Relations, 35*, 135-153.
- Brayfield, A., & Rothe, H. (1951). An index of job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 35*, 307-311.
- Brief, A., Munro, J., & Aldag, R. (1976). Correctional employees' reactions to job characteristics: A data based argument for job enlargement. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 4*, 223-230.
- Britton, D. (1997). Perceptions of the work environment among correctional officers: Do race and sex matter? *Criminology, 35*, 85-105.
- Byrd, T., Cochran, J., Silverman, I., & Blount, W. (2000). Behind bars: An assessment of the effects of job satisfaction, job-related stress, and anxiety on jail employees' inclinations to quit. *Journal of Crime and Justice, 23*, 69-89.
- Camp, S. (1994). Assessing the effects of organizational commitment and job satisfaction on turnover: An event history approach. *The Prison Journal, 74*, 279-305.
- Camp, S., & Lambert, E. G. (2005). The influence of organizational incentives on absenteeism: Sick leave use among correctional workers. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 17*, 144-172.
- Camp, S., & Steiger, T. (1995). Gender and racial differences in perceptions of career opportunities and the work environment in a traditionally White, male occupation. In N. Jackson (Ed.), *Contemporary issues in criminal justice: Shaping tomorrow's system* (pp. 258-290). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Cheek, F. (1984). *Stress management for correctional officers and their families*. College Park, MD: American Correctional Association.
- Cheek, F., & Miller, M. (1983). The experience of stress for correctional officers: A double-bind theory of correctional stress. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 11*, 105-120.
- Crank, J., Regoli, R., Hewitt, J., & Culbertson, R. (1995). Institutional and organizational antecedents of role stress, work alienation, and anomie among police executives. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 22*, 152-171.
- Cranny, C., Smith, P., & Stone, E. (Eds.). (1992). *Job satisfaction: How people feel about their jobs and how it affects their performance*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Cullen, F., Link, B., Wolfe, N., & Frank, J. (1985). The social dimensions of correctional officer stress. *Justice Quarterly, 2*, 505-533.
- Culliver, C., Sigler, R., & McNeely, B. (1991). Examining prosocial organizational behavior among correctional officers. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 15*, 277-284.
- Curry, J., Wakefield, D., Price, J., & Mueller, C. (1986). On the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Academy of Management Journal, 29*, 847-858.

- Dowden, C., & Tellier, C. (2004). Predicting work-related stress in correctional officers: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 32, 31-47.
- Fox, J. (1982). *Organizational and racial conflict in maximum-security prisons*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Gorsuch, R. (1983). *Factor analysis* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Griffin, M. (1999). The influence of organizational climate on detention officers' readiness to use force in a county jail. *Criminal Justice Review*, 24, 1-26.
- Griffin, M. (2001). Job satisfaction among detention officers: Assessing the relative contribution of organizational climate variables. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 29, 219-232.
- Gronlund, N. (1981). *Measurement and evaluation in teaching*. New York: MacMillan.
- Grossi, E., & Berg, B. (1991). Stress and job satisfaction among correctional officers: An unexpected finding. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 35, 73-81.
- Grossi, E., Keil, T., & Vito, G. (1996). Surviving "The Joint": Mitigating factors of correctional officer stress. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 19, 103-120.
- Hackman, J., & Lawler, E. (1971). Employee reactions to job characteristics. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 55, 259-286.
- Hepburn, J., & Knepper, P. (1993). Correctional officers as human service workers: The effect of job satisfaction. *Justice Quarterly*, 10, 315-335.
- Hopkins, A. (1983). *Work and job satisfaction in the public sectors*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allonheld.
- Hrebiniak, L., & Alutto, J. (1972). Personal and role-related factors in the development of organizational commitment. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17, 555-573.
- Jayewardene, C., & Jayasuriya, D. (1981). *The management of correctional institutions*. Toronto, Canada: Butterworths.
- Jurik, N., & Halemba, G. (1984). Gender working conditions and the job satisfaction of women in a nontraditional occupation: Female correctional officers in men's prisons. *Sociological Quarterly*, 25, 551-566.
- Jurik, N., & Winn, R. (1987). Describing correctional security dropouts and rejects: An individual or organizational profile? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 24, 5-25.
- Kerce, E., Magnusson, P., & Rudolph, A. (1994). *The attitudes of navy corrections staff members: What they think about confinees and their jobs*. San Diego, CA: Navy Personnel Research and Development Center.
- Lambert, E. (2003). Justice in corrections: An exploratory study of the impact of organizational justice on correctional staff. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 31, 155-168.
- Lambert, E. (2004). The impact of job characteristics on correctional staff. *The Prison Journal*, 84, 208-227.
- Lambert, E., Barton, S., Hogan, N., & Clarke, A. (2002). The impact of instrumental communication and integration on correctional staff. *Justice Professional*, 15, 181-193.
- Lambert, E., Edwards, C., Camp, S., & Saylor, W. (2005). Here today, gone tomorrow, back again the next day: Absenteeism and its antecedents among federal correctional staff. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 33, 165-175.
- Lambert, E., Hogan, N., & Barton, S. (1999). The missing link between job satisfaction and correctional staff behavior: The issue of organizational commitment. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 24, 95-116.
- Lambert, E., Hogan, N., & Barton, S. (2002a). Building commitment among correctional staff: The issue of feedback, promotional opportunities, and organizational fairness. *Corrections Compendium*, 27(3), 1-5, 24-28.
- Lambert, E., Hogan, N., & Barton, S. (2002b). Satisfied correctional staff: A review of the literature on the antecedents and consequences of correctional staff job satisfaction. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 29, 115-143.
- Lambert, E., Hogan, N., & Barton, S. (2003). The impact of work-family conflict on correctional staff job satisfaction. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27, 35-51.
- Lambert, E., Reynolds, M., Paoline, E. A., III, & Watkins, C. (2004). The effects of occupational stressors on jail staff job satisfaction. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 27, 1-32.
- Lincoln, J., & Kalleberg, A. (1990). *Culture, control and commitment: A study of work organization and work attitudes in the United States and Japan*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Loehlin, J. (1992). *Latent variable models: An introduction to factor, path, and structural analysis* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Long, J. (1997). *Regression models for categorical and limited dependent variables: Advanced quantitative techniques in the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maruyama, G. (1998). *Basics of structural equation modeling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Mathieu, J., & Zajac, D. (1990). A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates, and consequences of organizational commitment. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 171-194.
- Meyer, J., & Allen, N. (1984). Testing the side-bet theory of organizational commitment: Some methodological considerations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69, 372-378.
- Morris, J., & Steers, R. (1980). Structural influences on organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 17, 50-57.
- Mowday, R., Porter, L., & Steers, R. (1982). *Employee-organization linkages: The psychology of commitment, absenteeism and turnover*. New York: Academic Press.
- Mowday, R., Steers, R., & Porter, L. (1979). The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 14, 224-247.
- Oldham, G., & Hackman, J. (1981). Relationships between organizational structure and employee reactions: Comparing alternative frameworks. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26, 66-83.
- Pastore, A., & Maguire, K. (Eds.). (2006). *Sourcebook of criminal justice statistics* (31st ed.). Retrieved on March 19, 2006, from <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/>
- Poole, E. D., & Regoli, R. M. (1983). Professionalism, role conflict, work alienation, and anomia: A look at prison management. *Social Science Journal*, 20, 63-70.
- Price, J., & Mueller, C. (1986). *Absenteeism and turnover among hospital employees*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Randall, D. (1990). The consequences of organizational commitment: Methodological investigation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 11, 361-378.
- Rizzo, J. R., House, R. J., & Lirtzman, S. I. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15, 150-163.
- Robinson, D., Porporino, F., & Simourd, L. (1997). The influence of educational attainment on the attitudes and job performance of correctional officers. *Crime and Delinquency*, 43, 60-77.
- Rogers, R. (1991). The effect of educational level on correctional officer job satisfaction. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 19, 123-137.
- Shamir, B., & Drory, A. (1982). Some correlates of prison guards' beliefs. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 8, 233-249.
- Slate, R., & Vogel, R. (1997). Participative management and correctional personnel: A study of the perceived atmosphere for participation in correctional decision making and its impact on employee stress and thoughts of quitting. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 25, 397-408.
- Spector, P. (1996). *Industrial and organizational psychology: Research and practice*. New York: John Wiley.
- Steers, R. (1977). Antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 22, 46-56.
- Stephan, J. J. (2001). *Census of jails, 1999*. Washington, DC: United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Stohr, M., Lovrich, N., Monke, B., & Zupan, L. (1994). Staff management in correctional institutions: Comparing DiIulio's "control model" and "employee investment model" outcomes in five jails. *Justice Quarterly*, 11, 471-497.
- Stohr, M., Self, R., & Lovrich, N. (1992). Staff turnover in new generation jails: An investigation of its causes and preventions. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 20, 455-478.
- Tabachnick, B., & Fidell, L. (1996). *Using multivariate statistics* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper Collins.
- Taggart, W., & Mays, L. (1987). Organizational centralization in court administration: An empirical assessment. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 11, 180-198.
- Triplett, R., Mullings, J., & Scarborough, K. (1996). Work-related stress and coping among correctional officers: Implications from organizational literature. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 24, 291-308.
- Triplett, R., Mullings, J., & Scarborough, K. (1999). Examining the effect of work-home conflict on work-related stress among correctional officers. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 27, 371-384.
- Van Voorhis, P., Cullen, F., Link, B., & Wolfe, N. (1991). The impact of race and gender on correctional officers' orientation to the integrated environment. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 28, 472-500.
- Wallace, J. (1997). Becker's side-bet theory of commitment revisited: Is it time for a moratorium or a resurrection? *Human Relations*, 50, 727-749.
- Walters, S. (1993). Gender, job satisfaction, and correctional officers: A comparative analysis. *Justice Professional*, 7, 23-33.

- Whitehead, J., & Lindquist, C. (1986). Correctional officer burnout: A path model. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 23, 23-42.
- Woodruff, L. (1993). Occupational stress for correctional personnel. *American Jails*, 7, 15-20.
- Wright, K., Saylor, W., Gilman, E., & Camp, S. (1997). Job control and occupational outcomes among prison workers. *Justice Quarterly*, 14, 525-546.
- Wright, T. (1993). Correctional employee turnover: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 21, 131-142.

Eric G. Lambert is a faculty member in the Department of Criminal Justice at the University of Toledo. He received his PhD from the School of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany. His research interests include criminal justice organizational issues, job and organizational effects on the attitudes, intentions, and behaviors of criminal justice employees, the evaluation of correctional interventions, the ethical behavior of criminal justice employees and students, and international attitudes toward criminal justice issues.

Eugene A. Paoline III is an associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies at the University of Central Florida. He holds a PhD in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany. His research interests include police culture and the use of coercion, occupational attitudes of criminal justice practitioners, and theoretical development in criminal justice. He is the author of *Rethinking Police Culture* (2001, LFB Scholarly Publishing), and he is currently working on a National Institute of Justice grant geared toward examining the variation in American less-than-lethal use of force policies and the various outcomes associated with the different policies.