EFFECTS OF RECEIVER LOCUS OF CONTROL AND

INTERACTION INVOLVEMENT ON THE INTERPRETATION

OF SERVICE COMPLAINTS

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This thesis examined how receivers who vary in Interaction Involvement and Locus of Control (LOC) might differ in their interpretations of service complaints. Locus of control was measured using Rotter's (1966) LOC scale, while Interaction Involvement was measured with Cegala's (1984) Interaction Involvement measure, including a separate assessment of the effects for each sub-scale. Individuals were assigned to four groups based on their Interaction Involvement and LOC scores. The groups were compared with one-another for differences in how complaints were interpreted. Four complaint categories and a corresponding scale were developed to measure these differences. The categories were Subject, Goal, Opportunity, and Accountability. Interaction Involvement was expected to affect how receivers interpret the subject and goal of a complaint, while LOC was predicted to affect understanding of the opportunity and accountability aspects. Two research questions explored possible relationships between the complaint categories and the independent variables for individuals within each group. The study's four hypotheses were not supported, although some evidence was found for a significant relationship between receiver Interaction Involvement and perceived complainant Opportunity, for External LOC individuals only.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter will identify the purpose of the study and define the terms involved in the research. The significance of the study and its theoretical base will also be discussed.

Purpose of the Study

Service complaints are stories that individuals tell about their negatively construed experiences regarding service that they have received from a service provider. These complaints are goal directed in that they are designed to engage the receiver in a cooperative effort.

> Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. (Grice, 1989, p. 26)

An important issue regarding the comprehension of these stories is the extent to which receivers universally recognize the intended purpose and direction established by the complaint. Significant variations are expected to exist among receivers that mediate their understanding of complaints. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine how receiver characteristics affect the interpretation of service complaints.

Complaints can be beneficial in that they allow individuals to express valuable information that may not be communicated in other ways. However, when voiced, complaints are often incomplete expressions requiring the receiver to infer much of the intended information (Doelger, 1984). In addition, complaints are complex messages that include an identity component encoded within the surface message (O'Keefe & Shepherd, 1989). Thus, voicing a complaint commits the complainant to defending both the substance of the message and the identity aspect. For these reasons, complaints are often problematic in nature (Alberts, 1989b) and are worthy of academic study. These equivocal characteristics of complaint messages suggest that the receiver plays a particularly important role in making sense of the complaint and subsequently creating a response that, in turn, affects the remainder of the conversation.

This study attempted to provide an increased understanding of how individuals differ in their interpretations of service complaints, based on two important trait characteristics of the receiver. First, differences in Locus of Control were expected to affect the manner in which individuals interpret and make sense of a complaint. Since individuals are well known to project their own characteristics on others (Gozzi, 1995), internally controlled individuals were expected to attribute more responsibility to the complainant, compared with less powerful individuals. They also may be more attentive to unused opportunities that can be inferred from a complaint (Holt, 1989). In contrast, externally controlled individuals were expected to more frequently attribute the complaint to bad luck or chance and recognize indications of constraints that are faced by the complainant.

Second, Interaction Involvement is a variable that determines the degree to which individuals participate in conversations with others. Highly involved individuals were expected to be able to better detect the issues involved and understand the identity component in complaint messages since they are more perceptive and attentive listeners. In the present study identity is measured in terms of the topics and goals expressed by the complainant. The topics expressed can be perceived as the surface events described in the complaint or as the underlying issues that are implicitly conveyed. The goal of the complaint may be perceived to be identity support for the complainant or simply resolving the explicit subject. Less involved individuals were expected to be more likely to associate the topic of the complaint with the surface events, instead of the underlying identity issues.

Overall, both Interaction Involvement and LOC were expected to mediate the receivers' interpretation of service complaints and provide a partial explanation for their differences in understanding.

Significance of the Study

This study addresses how individuals differentially interpret service complaints. Since these complaints are stories about dissatisfaction and unfulfilled expectations, they have the potential to provide important information to a receiver about another individual. The receivers' interpretations are significant because they have the power to affect the relationship with the complainant, and could become the genesis for interpersonal conflict.

Although the subject of conflict has been widely explored and continues to be a topic of great academic and social interest, the initiating factors of conflict have not received much attention (Witteman, 1992). This study partially addresses this gap by investigating

the role of complaint interpretation as a potential precursor to the initiation of interpersonal conflict. By understanding how complaints and their interpreted meanings differ among people, individuals can better formulate complaint responses and potentially avoid unnecessary conflicts. Also, individuals who understand how expectations are encoded within complaints might better be able to reformulate a complaint message to improve its effectiveness as well as reduce its potential to initiate conflict.

While identity is seldom an explicitly discussed element of messages, its expression is particularly relevant in complaint messages. A satisfactory response to the identity component of the complaint is considered central to avoiding the escalation of the complaint to a state of conflict. This is possible even if the receiver provides an unsatisfactory response to the instrumental component of the complaint. Thus, being able to detect the identity component of a complaint and address it successfully may have significant effects on mediating conflict.

Despite the extensive literature on complaints and conflict, effective complaint resolution has remained an elusive goal for many individuals and organizations. Customers are often more dissatisfied following a complaint episode than they were before the complaint was voiced (Brown, 1997). This research should offer a new perspective on complaint communication by focusing on the differences in receivers' perceptions of the complainant's message. Since these differences are based on receiver characteristics, both complainants and receivers may benefit from a better understanding of how these differences might affect the trajectory of a complaint-based conversation.

Definition of terms

Complaint. A goal oriented story whose pragmatic function is to air a grievance, state dissatisfaction, or voice discontent, about identity or instrumental concerns; and do so by expressing the existing state with an explicit or implied comparison to a desired state. (Also see service complaints.)

Conflict. "An expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals" (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995, p. 44).

Identity. (See role-identity)

Interaction Involvement. "The general tendency for an individual to demonstrate both attentiveness and perceptiveness in interactions" (Cegala, 1981, p. 112). In the present research involvement is measured using the Interaction Involvement Scale.

Locus of Control (LOC). The extent to which an individual views situations in general as being either internally or externally controlled (James, 1957). In the present research, LOC is measured by the Rotter LOC scale.

Response. Responses are the messages provided to a complainant by a receiver for the purpose of addressing the complaint.

Role-Identity. The internalized feelings and deeply held beliefs of self worth that an individual holds regarding appropriate behaviors in a specific relationship.

Service Complaints. Complaints by individuals to express dissatisfaction with the level of service received from a service encounter.

    <u>Service Encounter.</u>   A dyadic interaction between a customer and a customer service provider. (Surprenant & Solomon, 1987)

<u>Theoretical Base</u>

    The theoretical base for this research focuses both on the creation and the interpretation of complaints. In both areas, the role of identity is a central issue. The literature discussing identity encompasses several different terms for essentially the same concepts. These include (a) self and self-presentation, (b) face and face-work, and (c) identity and identity-work (Tracy & Naughton, 1994). Throughout this study, the term "identity" will be used except when referring to specific studies, where the researcher's own terminology will be retained.

    The current discussion of complaints and their interpretation is partially based on Brown and Levinsons' politeness theory (1978, 1987). This theory holds that individuals are motivated to protect both positive and negative face. Positive face is associated with the approval of significant others. This includes the approval of both personal attributes and of behaviors that are open to the judgments of others. Negative face refers to the protection of privacy, personal space, respect, and autonomy.

    Individuals who perceive that they are interdependent with others are then motivated to help protect the others' face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, protecting one's own face is also important, so the potential for conflict arises when these two goals are perceived to be incompatible.

    One type of communication pattern in this category is the use of directives. According to Wilson, Aleman, and Leatham (1998), directives are speech acts that the speaker uses to

get the hearer to perform an action that he or she would not have otherwise performed. They contain information about what action needs to occur, why it is important, and what the consequences might be if the action is not performed. These persuasive messages have been described as intrinsically face-threatening acts for the receiver (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Complaints might be thought of as a weaker form of directive. Like directives, complaints contain demand messages, but they are more complex and less complete in their construction. The identity component of a complaint story is encoded within the surface message and the receiver is provided with a significant amount of indirect or implicit information. Thus, the face-threatening aspect of complaints is more ambiguous than in directives and more open to interpretation by the receiver.

Wilson, Aleman, and Leatham (1998) describe two limitations of politeness theory that are relevant to the understanding of complaint messages. First, politeness theory claims that any speech act only threatens one type of face. However, these researchers suggest that directives may threaten the speaker as well as the listener, and affect both the positive and negative face of the speaker. In a similar way, a complainant is the speaker in a complaint conversation and, therefore, has identity concerns that are expressed during the telling of a complaint.

The second limitation of politeness theory has been described by Wilson, et. al. (1998) as a lack of contextual understanding of how various relationships and situations affect the participants' view of face threats. They examined the specific reasons that message sources had for seeking compliance and determined that these reasons defined the context

for the directive. They also found that individuals would take into consideration the constitutive rules associated with a directive when interpreting the meaning of the directive. These mediating circumstances were shown to affect the threat to face that individuals perceived.

The context of a complaint situation is expected to mediate a receiver's interpretation of the complaint in a way similar to that of a directive. One difference is that complaints are less structured and more implicit, so the receiver has to infer more of the context. In the present study, the complaint scenarios are described briefly without detailed contextual information. This is intended to minimize response variations that would represent co-variants with two measured variables.

Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle provides some guidance to understanding how a receiver interprets complaint messages. This principle includes the maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner. The quality maxim indicates that information provided by the speaker should be reliable. The quantity maxim specifies that the speaker should reveal neither more nor less information than is required by the receiver. The relation maxim calls for the speaker to be relevant in providing the type of information appropriate for the occasion. Finally, the maxim of manner directs the speaker to avoid ambiguity and be direct and concise in presenting information. Taken as a whole, the Cooperative Principle suggests that speakers who are attempting to be cooperative participants in a conversation will design messages that meet these maxims. Likewise, cooperative receivers are those who assume that messages received from others are based on these maxims.

When a receiver feels that information received has deviated from these maxims, he or she uses conversational implicature (Grice, 1975) to infer the intended meaning. Using conversational implicature implies that the receiver is an active participant in the conversation and assumes the task of evaluating messages (Jackson, 1981). According to McCornack (1992), it is because individuals assume the Cooperative Principle that they are able to understand when a statement means something different from the surface meaning.

The present research specifically addresses this issue as it applies to receivers of complaint messages. Individuals will be differentiated by the degree to which they are able to comprehend more than the surface meaning within a complaint message.

A final theoretical perspective important to the present research is social learning theory. Social learning theory found its roots in Hull's (1943) description of human behavior. This framework described behavior in terms of reaction potential, habit strength, and drive. From this background Rotter (1954) developed a theory focused on behavior potential, expectancy and reinforcement. While both Hull and Rotter saw behavior as goal directed, the Rotter theory provided the important concept that behavior is partially a function of an individual's expectancy. Thus, Rotter posited that both expectancy and reinforcement played a role in individual behaviors.

Central to social learning theory is the concept that reinforcement acts to strengthen an expectancy such that a behavior will be followed by reinforcement in the future. When behaviors are enacted and the expected reinforcement does not occur, the expectancy for future reinforcement will be reduced or extinguished (Lefcourt, 1976). Further, expectancies generalize from specific situations to a group of situations that are perceived

to be similar. These generalized expectancies "act to affect behavioral choices in a broad band of life situations" (Rotter, 1966, p. 2).

Working under Rotter's guidance, James (1957) investigated how individuals differed in the expectancy of success on an experimental task, based on being internally or externally controlled. He found significant differences in the expectancies that individuals possess based on whether they are internally or externally controlled. In addition, he found that "the variable [internal-external control] is sufficiently general to be considered an important personality characteristic" (p. 81).

Overall, expectancy reinforcement is presumed to be a significant contributor to how individuals interpret complaints. Individuals who commonly obtain positive reinforcement for their own actions have been shown to attribute different meanings to events than individuals who have not had such reinforcement (deCharms, Carpenter, & Kuperman, 1965; Phares & Lamiell, 1975, Phares & Wilson, 1972; Thibault & Riecken, 1955). These differences will be examined in the present study in terms of Rotter's (1966) locus of control construct.

Summary

This chapter introduced the purpose of the study, defined the significant terms used in the research, and discussed the theoretical basis and significance for this work. The next chapter will review the literature concerning complaint behaviors, involvement, and power, and establish the hypotheses for the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

<u>Introduction</u>

The previous chapter discussed the significance of the proposed study, definitions of significant terms used in the research, and the theoretical justification for this work. This chapter provides a review of the significant literature relevant to the proposed study.

<u>Identity</u>

The present study is concerned with differences in how individuals interpret service complaints. The concept of interpretation itself suggests that a communication process occurs to make sense of information that is available to a receiver. Sense-making has often been said to involve the process of developing shared meaning between individuals. For example, Mead (1934) described human interaction as a process that individuals use to create a shared understanding of symbols and thus shared meaning for events and experiences. This has contributed to the communication paradigm known as symbolic interactionism.

> Symbolic interactionists argue that through our ability to use symbols and hold a shared meaning of those symbols we are enabled to hold "internal conversations" that allow us to create meaning and choose behavioral responses to others' actions. (Sass, 1994, p. 141)

In addition, Sass (1994) argues that these internal conversations create attributional meanings for the behaviors of others.

Mead (1934) described the "self" as the product of the process of interacting with others and the society. In this way individuals are emergent in that their identities develop in response to a generalized or composite "other" (Sass, 1994). Buber (1970) also construed the idea of "self" as emerging through and existing only in the context of others.

McCall (1976) described identity negotiation as "the first task of interaction" (p. 182). According to McCall, as the interactants' identities (described as background issues) are settled, they can turn to the main business (described as the figure) of their interaction. However, McCall indicates that "some act or gesture [on the part of the speaker] may call into question this working agreement on identities, causing a figure-ground reversal" (p. 183). In this case, the receiver will stop listening for the task concerns and begin re-assessing the identity agreement. McCall describes these occurrences as commonly occurring phases that oscillate between task-directed and identity-directed interaction.

An example of how identity concerns influence social interaction was described by O'Keffe and Shepherd (1989). The researchers studied the effects of various persuasive message strategies (integration, separation, and selection) on receiver perception. They expected that high-differentiated receivers would be more likely to interpret complex messages using relationship-relevant and non-task-specific constructs. In other words, these receivers would be more likely to comprehend the identity component in the message. This hypothesis was confirmed. While receivers who were low in differentiation were unaffected by the speakers' characteristics, highly differentiated receivers were influenced. The researchers concluded that it is "important to conceptualize identity management processes within and analysis of individual differences in social cognition and

communicative action" (p. 401). The present research follows O'Keffe and Shepherd's (1989) advice by exploring how receivers might differ in their understanding of the identity component in complaint messages.

<u>Complaints</u>

Complaints are generally described as expressions representing a negative evaluation of a specific experience (Bolfing, 1989; Brandt & Reffett, 1989; Plymire, 1991; Walker, 1995). However, Doelger (1984) emphasizes an important distinction between complaints and negative evaluative statements, suggesting that the two are structurally different. He defines complaints as expressions of dissatisfaction that "stand in contrast to and apart from a normal or desired state of affairs" (p. 15). While the present study follows Doelger's (1984) definition for complaints recognizing the importance of an inherent comparison between the perceived situation and the expected situation, a broader definition will be developed to include the significance of factors addressed in this study.

Complaint messages are important but difficult to understand for several reasons. First, in casual relationships and in interactions among strangers, there is little contextual information available for the receiver to use in understanding the complainant's message. Therefore, the information available is based solely on the explicit messages presented during the immediate episode and some general norms for the appropriate scripts in such an encounter. Second, complaint messages are often incomplete in their construction (Doelger, 1984). If only part of the meaning is explicitly communicated, there is even further need for the receiver to interpret or make assumptions about the true meaning of the message. Third, complaints are inherently encoded with identity messages that represent

the complainant's expectations for identity support. Therefore, this message-within-a-message construct represents a degree of self-disclosure and risk for the complainant. Finally, since the meaning assigned to a complaint is assumed to be the basis of a receiver's response, it is reasonable to conclude that this interpretation process could be an important precursor to interpersonal conflict.

The understanding of complaint behaviors has been advanced through a number of academic disciplines including business, psychology, and communication. Within the business literature, complaints have been examined in a wide variety of studies.

Business studies have examined demographics (Bearden & Oliver, 1985; Bolfing, 1989; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Moyer, 1984; Singh, 1990; Warland, Herrmann, & Willits, 1975; Zaltman, Srivastava, & Deshphande, 1978), personal values (Rogers & Williams, 1990), personality factors (Bolfing, 1989; Fornell & Westbrook, 1979) attitudes about complaining (Bearden & Oliver; 1985; Day, 1984; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Singh, 1990; Sorensen & Strahle, 1990; Zaltman, Srivastava, & Deshphande, 1978), attitudes toward business (Droge, Halstead, & Mackoy, 1997; Hansen, Swan, & Powers, 1997; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Moyer, 1984), non-complaining (Andreason, 1984, 1988; Andreason & Manning, 1990; Hirschman, 1970; Stephens & Gwinner, 1998), supplier responsiveness (Bolfing, 1989; Brown & Beltramini, 1989; Clark, Kaminski, & Rink, 1992; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Krapfel, 1988; Martin & Smart, 1988; Richins, 1983), cost of complaining (Bolfing, 1989; Day, 1984), product price and importance (Bearden & Oliver, 1985; Bolfing, 1989; Day, 1984; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Patterson, Johnson, & Spreng, 1997), consumer experience (Day, 1984; Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981; Moyer, 1984; Singh, 1990),

social climate (Jacoby & Jaccard, 1981), and attribution of blame (Folkes, 1984; Folkes, Koletsky, & Graham, 1987; Richins, 1983).

In spite of this vast array of literature, only a small number of business-related studies have focused on communication-related aspects of complaints. For instance, Garrett and Meyers (1996) developed a categorization of consumer dissatisfaction into the four factors: expectations, performance, equity, and attribution. Also, a few studies (e.g. Day, 1984; Oliver, 1993; Stephens & Gwinner, 1998; Westbrook, 1987) have addressed the affective characteristics of consumers who complain. Interestingly, a frequent theme in many business-related studies of complaints is that the motivation for complaining is incomprehensible, arbitrary, or capricious. For instance, according to Ramsey (1998), "people will complain about almost anything for almost any reason - sometimes, for no reason at all" (p. 16).

Overall, studies of complaint behaviors in the business literature have attempted to provide insights on how to improve customer satisfaction by determining who complains, why they complain, and how to prevent or resolve complaints. To date, however, these studies have not yielded a comprehensive solution for the goal of customer satisfaction. According to Brown (1997), customers sometimes feel more negative about the organization after the organization has attempted to address the complaint. Such experiences clearly demonstrate the need for improved understanding of the meanings associated with complaints and the expectations of complainants, once a complaint has been expressed.

Communication-related studies on complaint behaviors have primarily focused on complaints in personal relationships. These studies include research in: initiating events (Witteman, 1992); anticipating conflict (Cloven & Roloff, 1995); social confrontation (Newell & Stutman, 1988; Newell & Stutman, 1989); verbal aggressiveness (Infante, Riddle, Horvath, & Tumlin, 1992; Infante, Sabourin, Rudd, & Shannon, 1990); spousal complaints (Alberts, 1988; Alberts, 1989a; Cousins & Vincent, 1983); coorientation (Papa & Pood, 1988); the chilling effect (Cloven & Roloff, 1993); sense-making (Cloven & Roloff, 1991); accommodation (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991); attributions (Canary & Spitzberg, 1990; Sillars, 1980); boundary rules (Wilson, Roloff, & Carey, 1998); impact of power (Boster, Kazoleas, Levine, Rogan, & Kang, 1995); withholding complaints (Makoul & Roloff, 1998); communicative responses to complaints (Samp & Solomon, 1998); complaint effectiveness (Alberts, 1989a); and containment versus escalation (Alberts & Driscoll, 1992).

Two studies have focused on the types and nature of complaint messages created in dyadic encounters. First, Alberts (1989b) created a taxonomy of married couples' complaint interactions. This research described complaint types, response types, complaint-response sequencing, and the environment that the complaints were created in. Differences were found between male and female partners as well as between satisfied and dissatisfied couples.

Second, Doelger (1984) recorded actual conversations of individuals to learn how interpersonal complaints are produced, understood (to be complaints), and responded to. The findings from this research included a four-category classification for the strategic

uses of complaints. The categories are (1) conversational structure, (2) social bonding, (3) problem-solving, and (4) interpersonal influence. Doelger also defined the focus of complaints as being (1) first-person, (2) second-person, or (3) third-person. He found that complaints were produced either autonomously or cooperatively and that the receiver's understanding of complaints is affected by background knowledge, sequencing, and language contrast.

Doelger's (1984) taxonomy of complaints did not consider the function of an individual's role identity in complaint formulation. It might be implied that this function is imbedded in his description of complaints as a social bonding process, or for the purpose of interpersonal influence. However, identity support does not occupy a central position in his description of either function. In contrast, the present research hypothesizes that identity support is a core issue in the formulation of complaints.

Complaint formulation

Complaints have been initially described as stories that individuals tell about their dissatisfaction with the existing state or outcome of an interpersonal episode. Since the concern of the present research is to better understand how receivers make sense of the information in complaints, it follows that the formulation of complaint messages also provides valuable information in this regard.

Following Grice's theory of conversational implicature (Grice, 1975), individuals are able to mean more than they say and are capable of conveying non-literal meanings in their messages. As applied to complaint messages this means that individuals may create a story or narrative that includes indirect or incomplete information along with the specific

events that they describe. Also, the structure of the complaint itself contains information about how specific words and phrases within the complaint should be interpreted.

Complaint stories, like all other stories, are presumed to contain information about the teller's identity. Antaki (1994) described identity as being socially constructed and often conveyed through narratives. Thus, stories contain identity information, not just in the text, but also in the management of the telling process. Also, Gergan (1988) found that important events are encapsulated in stories that individuals convey to others. These include sense-making, attributions, relationship status, notions of order, and valued endpoints. Identity is developed and maintained by crafting the narrative with these elements in a desired combination. However, the identity component is seldom the explicit part of a complaint. Goffman (1981) described identity messages as being most often enacted during the process of other, more dominant, communication goals. Also, according to O'Keefe and Shepherd (1989):

> Individuals do not simply enact behaviors that signify a desired
>
> identity; communicators modulate their pursuit of the dominant task to
>
> convey, by the manner in which they pursue that particular task, the
>
> kind of person they want to be and the kind of person they take the
>
> other to be. (p. 376)

The role and importance of the identity component in any specific complaint message is difficult to determine, partially because identity is a complex construct. McCall (1976) described individuals as not having one identity, but rather an identity for every social role that they assume (or even have considered assuming). He defines an individual's *role-*

identity as an "imaginative view of *himself as he likes to think of himself being and acting as an occupant of a particular social position*" (p. 173). McCall emphasizes that this is usually an idealized vision of an individual's conduct and achievement that will likely not be achieved in actual day-to-day performance.

The concept that individuals internalize many different role-identities leads to the definition of self-concept. According to McCall (1976), self-concept and social-self are synonymous and defined as "the organized set of role-identities held by an individual" (p. 174). In this way, the concept of identity is socially constructed and maintained through one's interactions with others. Complaints serve a unique role in this process in that they signal others that an event of concern may also include an identity issue.

Holt (1989) investigated how individuals use conversational markers when telling stories about their roles in organizations. Messages were found to contain action or constraint markers that conveyed information about how these individuals perceived themselves. More powerful individuals told stories that demonstrated their ability to take action and control the events in their organizational lives, while less powerful individuals talked about the constraints that the organization placed on them to prevent them from acting.

Following this work, the present research assumes that individuals also use conversational markers in their complaint stories. These markers may provide clues to indicate the complainant's sense of power as well as possible solutions or limitations to the complaint.

A final aspect to consider is the goal of a complaint. Like any other type of problem, a complaint story has a goal (Newell & Simon, 1972). Holyoak (1986) indicated that individuals analyze problems as a method to understand them, and created a four-component model of analysis similar to the work of Newell and Simon. These components are goal, object, operators, and constraints. The first component of this model is particularly useful to the interpretation of complaint messages, since the goal represents information about the desired state that would resolve the problem.

The present research hypothesizes that a complaint contains a certain degree of "goal talk". While it is possible for individuals to pursue multiple simultaneous goals, the limited time available in any specific complaint episode requires some goals to be pursued to the exclusion of others. Doelger (1984) suggested that two of the major reasons for complaining are social bonding and problem solving. As previously discussed, the present research favors the concept of identity support as a major goal of complaints in contrast to the concept of social bonding. Nevertheless, when complaining, the limited time available requires individuals to trade-off their needs for instrumental and identity goals.

The present discussion on complaint formulation has provided the rationale to develop a formal definition for complaints, as used in this study. The major elements for such a definition have been described as including (1) a state of dissatisfaction, (2) a comparison to a more desired state (even if implicitly), (3) a goal orientation, (4) an identity component, and (5) the structure of a narrative. Combining these elements provides the following definition:

A goal oriented story whose pragmatic function is to air a grievance,

state dissatisfaction, or voice discontent, about identity or instrumental

concerns; and do so by expressing the existing state with an explicit or

implied comparison to a desired state.

Service Complaints

The present research focuses on complaints in the service environment. That is,

complaints expressed by consumers of a service that is provided by another individual.

When providing a service, the provider may be operating independently or as an agent for

another individual or organization.

According to Levitt (1983), services are commonly interpreted by the receiver to be

"promises of satisfaction" (p. 96). This is based on the receiver's perception that a

normative service script is acted out (Smith & Houston, 1983) such that the service

provider ensures a good service experience for the customer. Receivers often interpret the

concept of "good service" to be personalized service that will meet their individual needs

(Surprenant & Solomon, 1987). Thus, complaints in the service environment are similar to

other interpersonal complaints where the complainant is goal directed and has experienced

dissatisfaction based on unfulfilled expectations.

When individuals complain about service, several variations in the complaint message

can be anticipated. First, different types of services create different expectations and,

therefore, the complaint communication is expected to be expectancy based. For instance,

the waiting time expected in a doctor's office may be significantly different than in a fast-

food restaurant. A ten-minute wait has different meanings in each case. Second, within a

specific service context, opportunities for service failure exist throughout the encounter. Since each receiver is unique, any specific service deficiency is mediated by the receiver's perceptions. Thus, a significant complaint by one person might be almost be ignored by another. Finally, since communication characteristics vary among individuals, the expression and formulation of complaints are expected to vary as well.

The present research addresses the potential variety of service complaint messages by utilizing Bitner, Booms & Tetreault's (1990) taxonomy of service complaints. These researchers used the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) to assess 700 critical service incidents in the airline, hotel, and restaurant industries. Approximately half were satisfactory and half were dissatisfactory. Categorizing the dissatisfactory complaints resulted in three distinct groups. These are (1) employee response to service delivery system failures, (2) employee response to customer needs and requests, and (3) unprompted and unsolicited employee actions. Note that in each case the complaint described was a customer's response to the employee, not the employee's response itself.

Bitner et. al (1990) also found specific types of complaints within each major group. For group 1 (employee response to service delivery system failures) complaints were sub-grouped as (a) response to unavailable service, (b) response to unreasonably slow service, and (c) response to other core service failures. For group 2 (employee response to customer needs and requests) complaints were sub-grouped as (a) response to special-needs customers (b) response to customer preferences, (c) response to admitted customer error, and (d) response to potentially disruptive others. For group 3 (unprompted and unsolicited employee actions) complaints were sub-grouped as (a) attention paid to

customer, (b) truly out-of-the-ordinary employee behavior, (c) employee behaviors in the context of cultural norms, (d) gestalt evaluation, and (e) performance under adverse circumstances.

These 12 subgroups were used as the basis of the 12 complaint messages in the present study. One complaint message was created for each sub-group. They were derived from the examples of dissatisfactory incidents provided by Bitner et. al (1990), and modified to form a specific complaint.

Overall, while complaints have been extensively studied, the focus has primarily centered on the instrumental effects of the complaint itself. Although, some studies have highlighted the importance of the complainant's identity, the role of the receiver has not received much attention. In the present study, Interaction Involvement and LOC differences among receivers are expected to differentiate understanding of complaint messages and provide an explanation of how complaints might be resolved or escalated.

Interaction Involvement

Kelly (1955) conceptualized that receivers differ in their interpretation of events based on their personal constructs. He described these as dimensions of judgment that are cognitively employed in the assessment process. Other researchers (Delia, Clark, & Switzer, 1974; O'Keffe, 1984) have investigated how receivers with highly differentiated personal constructs vary from receivers with less differentiated constructs. The findings have supported the conclusion that as receiver construct-differentiation increases, the receiver's perceptions are less closely tied to the immediate event.

Interaction Involvement is a trait characteristic that describes how individuals interact with others. Similar to personal-construct differences, receivers who differ in Interaction Involvement have been found to vary in their understanding of their conversations with others (Villume, 1984; Villaume & Cegala, 1988; Villaume, Jackson, & Schouten, 1989). Specifically, receivers differ in terms of their attentiveness and perceptiveness. These are involvement characteristics that indicate how information and cues are received from others. In a study of over 1,000 self-reports, Cegala (1981) found that approximately 48% of individuals are not generally highly involved in their interactions. Cegala uses the term Interaction Involvement "in reference to the general tendency for an individual to demonstrate both attentiveness and perceptiveness in interactions" (p. 112). Thus, Interaction Involvement may be thought of as a multidimensional construct and includes one's behaviors as well as awareness of others' behaviors.

Cegala (1981) considers the concepts of attentiveness and perceptiveness (as derived from Goffman, 1959, 1963), as central to Interaction Involvement. He identifies perceptiveness in two ways, (1) as the ability to assign appropriate meanings/interpretations to others' behavior, and (2) as the ability to understand what meanings/interpretations others have assigned to one's own behavior. Cegala describes attentiveness as cognizance of another's communicative behavior.

In the original study, Cegala (1981) conceived of two types of perceptiveness factors corresponding to the person whose behavior is being evaluated, self or other. In a later study, Cegala, Savage, Brunner, and Conrad (1982) clarified and modified the elements of Interaction Involvement. These three elements are currently described as responsiveness,

"a tendency to react mentally to one's social circumstances and adapt by knowing what to say and when to say it" (Cegala et al., 1982, p. 233); perceptiveness, "the meanings to assign to self and other's behavior" (Cegala et al. p. 234); and attentiveness, "the extent to which one tends to heed cues in the immediate social environment, especially one's interlocutor" (Cegala, 1984, p. 321).

Other studies have attributed additional importance to the Interaction Involvement construct. Villaume (1984) found that low involved persons used more superficial aspects of a conversation, concentrating on the text and the last words spoken, while high involved persons focused on the meaning and relevance of the received information. Villaume and Cegala (1988) found that low involved persons speak with greater syntactic complexity when conversing with high involved persons. Villaume, Jackson, and Schouten (1989) investigated conversational extensions created by both high and low involved individuals. That is, whether individuals extended the conversation by following the previous speaker's issue or whether they extended the more superficial event. These researchers found that low involved individuals tended to extend the event indicating more attention to the textual content of the message than did more highly involved individuals.

The present research operationalizes receiver involvement in terms of Cegala's (1981) Interaction Involvement Scale, which is included in Appendix D. This self-report measure contains 18 items that will be used uni-dimensionally to assess the participants' trait-involvement with others. The three factors that Cegala reported (perceptiveness, attentiveness, and responsiveness) will be assessed in a research question to determine if any are more strongly related to the complaint categories than the overall measure itself.

Locus of Control

    The present study is concerned with how individuals differ in their interpretation of complaints. While the complainant has the power to construct the complaint and control its explicitness, it is the receiver who controls its interpretation. Thus, understanding differences in individuals that would predict their interpretations of common events would also help explain how they interpret complaints. To accomplish this, the present study utilizes social learning theory and the locus-of-control (LOC) framework as a basis to differentiate individual trait behaviors.

    According to social learning theory, individuals are goal-directed and respond subjectively to their environment based on their previous learning and experience. Over time, individuals attribute their successes or failures to either behaviors they control or behaviors that others control (Rotter, 1966). In this way some individuals, who have been described as internals, have come to believe that they control most of the events in their lives that effect them. Conversely, other individuals, referred to as externals, believe that the events in their lives are primarily controlled by others. These differences become internalized and affect how individuals think of themselves. For example, Hersch and Scheibe (1967) found that internals describe themselves as more powerful, independent, active, and effective than externals.

    Relevant to the present study, is whether an individual's LOC affects their own behaviors, specifically in terms of their attributions of others. A long history of LOC research has established that an individual's LOC affects their actual behaviors. For example, Straits and Sechrest (1963) found that there was a significant difference in LOC

between smokers and non-smokers. Also, McDonald (1970), demonstrated that LOC affected the use of birth control practices by single female college students. Finally, two studies of risk-taking have indicated that internals are more cautious and prefer choices with a higher probability of success as compared to externals (Liverant & Scodel, 1960; Julian, Lichtman, & Ryckman, 1968).

The specific question of how LOC affects the attributions individuals make of others has also been investigated. Phares (1976) suggests that two studies (Thibault & Riecken, 1955; deCharms, Carpenter, & Kuperman, 1965) indicate that:

> internally oriented people not only see themselves as responsible for events but they attribute self-control to the behavior of others and see them as responsible for their own behavior as well. By the same token, externals tend to attribute less responsibility to others just as they do to themselves. (p. 102-103)

Following this, Phares and Wilson (1972) investigated how college students attributed responsibility to individuals that where involved in automobile accidents. Internals were found to attribute more responsibility for the accident to the driver, than did externals. In another study, Phares and Lamiell (1975) provided case histories for subjects to evaluate. The case histories described individuals on welfare, war veterans, and ex-convicts. Internals rated the individuals in the cases significantly less worthy of help than did externals.

Several LOC related studies have been conducted to differentiate the communication-based behaviors and beliefs of individuals. These include studies on interpersonal conflict (Canary, Cunningham, & Cody, 1988), students' reactions to teacher compliance attempts (Wheeless, Stewart, Kearney, & Plax, 1987), powerful speech styles (Hosman, 1997), argumentation and group polarization (Alderton, 1982), communication motivation (Rubin, 1993), cultural differences in disclosiveness (Wheeless, Erickson, & Behrens, 1986), and harassing communication (Booth-Butterfield, 1989).   However, none of these studies specifically address attributions from an LOC differentiated aspect.

The items in the Rotter (1966) LOC scale ask the participant to respond to a wide variety of different situations in a forced choice binary alternative format. Therefore, the scale is additive and the individual items are not comparable. This causes a split-half reliability test to underestimate the internal consistency of the scale. Rotter reports good consistency with test-retest reliability with the average retest resulting in about 1 point less externality. Correlations with the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale range from -.07 to -.35, with a median of -.22. Several factor analyses have failed to produce evidence of multiple factors for this measure.

Complaint Interpretation

From the previous discussion, receiver involvement and LOC are expected to affect how complaint messages are heard. High involvement individuals will have more information about the underlying issues described in the complaint and can use more non-verbal cues to make sense out of the available information. Consistent with Grice (1975),

these individuals will also be better able to utilize conversational implicature to comprehend the structure of the message and recognize more than the surface meaning.

Two aspects of receiver LOC may contribute to receiver's interpretation of a complaint. First, internally controlled individuals (internals) are presumed to be more likely to have the perspective that complainants have the resources and are capable of solving their own problems. With this perspective, internals are predicted to hear more unused opportunities and attribute less significance to constraints in complaint messages, when compared with externals.

Second, internals are expected to hold complainants more accountable for their situation, than would externals. Internals are perceived to be more likely to associate consequences with purposeful action, while externals are more likely to associate consequences with luck or chance.

In general, receivers are expected to comprehend complaints by integrating the available information they perceive. This information is presumed to be assembled from conversational markers detected in the complaint as well as an assessment of the complainant's resources and accountability. It is hypothesized that differences in receiver Interaction Involvement will be associated with the interpretation of issue and event structures that relate to the subject and goal of the complaint. In addition, differences in LOC are expected to be associated with the assessment of resources and accountability.

The model shown in Figure 1 describes the hypothesized relationship between differences in Interaction Involvement and LOC and a receiver's approach to interpreting a complaint message.

High Involvement	**S**: Issue **G**: Identity Support **O**: Opportunities **A**: High	**S**: Issue **G**: Identity Support **O**: Limitations **A**: Low
Low Involvement	**S**: Event **G**: Content **O**: Opportunities **A**: High	**S**: Event **G**: Content **O**: Limitations **A**: Low
	Internal LOC	External LOC

Figure 1. Receiver's Interpretation of Complaints Based on Interaction Involvement and Locus of Control (LOC).

The independent variables in this model are Interaction Involvement and LOC. Involvement determines whether an individual is likely to focus on the issue or the event. Highly involved individuals are predicted to be more issue-oriented and attentive to the underlying messages in the complaint. Less involved individuals are expected to concentrate on the events or surface features of the complaint.

Another involvement characteristic is how individuals interpret the complainant's goals. More involved receivers are expected to detect more identity related goals in

complaint messages, while less involved individuals are more likely to associate the goal directly with the explicitly described subject.

LOC is expected to mediate the degree to which receivers attend to the presence of opportunities or limitations in the description of a complaint, and the degree of accountability attributed to the complainant. Individuals with an internal LOC should hold complainants more accountable and see more unused opportunities in their complaint stories.

The model in Figure 1 describes four characteristics that receivers are expected to attribute to complainants based on their own classification of Interaction Involvement and LOC. These characteristics are dependent variables in the present study, and are attributions projected on the complainant. They are identified as Subject (S:), Goal (G:), Opportunity (O:), and Accountability (A:). Each of these attributions is envisioned to exist in a dialectical continuum such that receivers may perceive an intermediate value for each variable.

The Subject and the Goal are both hypothesized to be affected by a receiver's involvement level. The Subject category is a perception regarding the topic of the complaint and represents the issue-orientation of the receiver. Receivers may perceive that the subject of a complaint is purely instrumental, purely identity related, or some intermediate combination. Similarly, the Goal category represents the perception of what is required to satisfy the complainant. This variable also ranges from completely instrumental (attempting to solve the stated problem) to completely identity related. Although these two variables seem very similar, an identity goal can be quite different

from an identity-based subject. For example, if someone complains about not being invited to a party, the identity-based subject may be a message about being important enough to invite. However, the complainant's goals are less clear. Does this person want an apology, want to be invited to the next party, or just get social support from the hearer?

The Opportunity and the Accountability categories are both hypothesized to be related to the receiver's LOC. Opportunity level is the receiver's perception of how many opportunities exist for the complainant. This variable ranges on a relative scale from high in opportunities to high in constraints. The Accountability variable describes how accountable (for the stated problem) that the complainant is perceived to be by the receiver. This variable ranges from no accountability to fully accountable.

Each of the four quadrants of this model is described in more detail below:

High involvement - internal LOC group.

Because these individuals are highly involved in their conversations, they are expected to recognize and attend to the underlying issues voiced in the complaint without being overly distracted by specific events in the complaint story. They also will see the goal of the complaint as involving identity support of the complainant. Due to their internal LOC, they are expected to detect unused opportunities in the complaint story and tend to hold the complainant accountable for pursuing a solution.

High involvement - external LOC group.

These individuals also are expected to recognize the underlying issues voiced in a complaint, but unlike internally controlled individuals, they are more likely to focus on the constraints or limitations that the complainant might be facing. They identify with the

problems expressed and do not hold the complainant accountable for the situation. They also see identity support as an important part of the goal of the complaint.

Low involvement - internal LOC group.

These low involved individuals are likely to pick-up on the surface events described in the story, perhaps with more attention given to the last information presented. They may miss some key issues or assume that an example given by a speaker represents the entire problem. Since these receivers are internally controlled, they are also likely to hold complainants accountable for their prior actions that resulted in the present situation. They may see the goal of the complaint as being very clear and related directly to the event.

Low involvement - external LOC group.

The low involvement and externally controlled individual is likely to hear the specific events described in the complaint message and interpret the message in terms of the limitations and constraints regarding the event itself. The receiver may identify with the obstacles described in the event story and believe that the complainant has been a victim of circumstance. The goal of the complaint is seen as clear and directly related to the event.

Hypotheses

This study seeks to understand differences in the perception of complaints as they relate to receiver Interaction Involvement and LOC. The first hypothesis addresses the effects of involvement on the perception of issue and event structures that are detected in complaint messages. High involvement individuals are expected to be more likely to describe the subject of a complaint as representing the underlying issues expressed while

low involvement individuals are more likely to describe the subject of a complaint as representing the surface features (events) expressed.

H1:   High Interaction Involvement individuals will interpret the subject of service complaints as being more issue-oriented than will low Interaction Involvement individuals.

The second hypothesis is related to the goals attributed to the complainant. High Interaction Involvement individuals are expected to be more likely to describe the goal of a complainant as consisting of the need for identity support while low involvement individuals are more likely to describe the goal of a complaint as relating directly to the expressed subject.

H2:   High Interaction Involvement individuals will interpret the goal of service complaints as being more identity-related than will low Interaction Involvement individuals.

The third hypothesis is related to the effects of receiver LOC. Externals are more likely to interpret and describe a service complaint in terms of the complainant's limitations while internals are more likely to interpret and describe a complaint in terms of the complainant's opportunities.

H3:   Individuals with an internal LOC will recognize more opportunities that complainants can utilize, when compared with individuals with an external LOC.

The final hypothesis addresses the relationship between perceived accountability and LOC. Internals are expected to more likely describe the complainant as being accountable

for the causes leading to the complaint while externals will tend to disassociate

accountability from the complainant.

H4:   Individuals with an Internal LOC will hold complainants more accountable for their

         situation than will individuals with an external LOC.

<u>Research questions</u>

   The first research question is related to the Interaction Involvement measure. The

Interaction Involvement scale contains three sub-scales that contribute to the overall

Interaction Involvement score. Since the overall Interaction Involvement measure was

used in hypothesis one and two of the present study, it is of interest to know if any of the

three IIS sub-scales are correlated to the corresponding complaint categories. That is, will

the sub-scales correlate with the Subject and Goal categories? Therefore, research

question one is:

RQ1:   To what extent are the three Interaction Involvement sub-scale factors correlated

         with the Subject and Goal categories?

   The second research question is related to differences that might be observable within

each of the four population sub-groups. Central to this study has been the presumption that

distinct groups can be assigned by establishing boundary scores on the Interaction

Involvement and LOC scales, and that these groups would have different interpretations

for service complaints. It is of interest to know if there is a relationship between

Interaction Involvement, LOC, and the complaint categories for individuals that are

assigned to each specific group. Such a relationship would imply that extreme differences

among individuals are not necessary for differences to exist in complaint interpretation.

Research question two addresses this issue and is stated as:

RQ2:   To what extent are Interaction Involvement and LOC correlated with each of the

complaint categories, when measured within each of the population sub-groups?

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature concerning complaint behaviors, Interaction

Involvement and receiver LOC. This review resulted in four hypotheses and two research

questions that have been developed to explain how receivers interpret complaint messages.

The next chapter will discuss the procedures that were used to obtain the sample, the

measurements used to obtain the results, and the methods involved in analyzing the data to

address the hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of literature concerning Interaction Involvement and Locus of Control, and hypothesized how these variables affect a receiver's interpretation of an interpersonal complaint as it might be experienced during a service episode. This chapter will discuss the procedures that were used to obtain the sample, the measurements used to obtain the results, and the methods involved in analyzing the data to address the hypotheses and research questions.

Sample and Procedure

This study involved conducting a survey of volunteer participants. Approval for the use of human subjects was obtained prior to the survey from the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board and a copy of that approval is included in Appendix A. The approval did not require written informed consent, however, the participants were invited to detach and keep the cover page for their own records. The participants consisted of a group of 528 undergraduate communication students from introductory communication classes at a major southern university.

The sample ranged from age 18 to age 46 with a mean age of 20.6. There were 212 male (41%) and 302 female (59%) participants, as well as one person who did not indicate his or her sex. Among the total, 506 participants (98%) reported that they had worked

directly with customers in either part or full time jobs. Customer service experience was not a requirement of the study, but indicated that participants in this age range generally had backgrounds that included being both providers and consumers of service.

The first part of the survey included a complaint story that the participants were instructed to read and respond to. A total of twelve different complaint stories were used in the surveys (Appendix B). Each survey included one of the twelve stories. The complaint stories were systematically randomized during the distribution of the surveys. Participants did not have a choice of which story they received. After reading a complaint story, the participants were asked to answer the complaint scale items (Appendix C) relating to the story. Following the completion of this task, each subject then completed the IIS measure (Appendix D) and the Rotter LOC measure (Appendix E). The survey items included answer selections beneath each question. Respondents were instructed to circle the most appropriate answer for each item. There was no time limit to complete the survey, but all participants were finished within 25 minutes. Thirteen of the 528 surveys were unusable because the participants did not complete all three scales. Thus, the remaining 515 surveys were used for the analysis. Each usable survey was then numbered with an identifier as it was coded into the SPSS program for later analysis.

The sample size established for this study was based on a minimum power of .7 for the experiment. This approach limits the contribution of sample size on type II errors. An a priori estimate of effect size is required to determine the power. For the present study an effect size of .5 SD was assumed. According to Stevens (1986), with such a moderate effect size, a power of .7 for univariate independent samples can be achieved if the sample

size is 50 or greater. To ensure that 50 or more participants were assignable to each of the four groups (Figure 1) required an estimation of the response patterns for the IIS and LOC scales. Prior research using the IIS scale indicates that approximately 48 percent of the population are low involvement individuals (Cegala, 1981). Based on this percentage, at least 105 participants would be required to place the minimum 50 individuals in each category.

For the LOC scale, Rotter (1966) found mean scores of 8.15 (N=575 males) and 8.42 (N=605 females) with standard deviations of approximately 4.0 and a relatively symmetric distribution. Also, Lefcourt (1976) provided a comprehensive list of norms on the Rotter LOC scale for 32 separate studies of various populations. The grand mean from these studies was 9.04. Since these previous studies do not indicate significant skewedness, approximately half of the participants should be classifiable in each of the internal - external categories. If there were no correlation between the IIS and LOC results, then 100 additional participants would provide the 50 person minimum for each group. Although no correlation data for the two scales has been established (as known to the author), a significant correlation could be expected since both measures address social interactions and similar experiences. Therefore, to be confident of achieving 50 samples in each of the four groups, a minimum sample population of 400 was established. During the actual distribution of the survey, the class instructor requested that questionnaires be given to all students in the classes. This resulted in the distribution and collection of 528 surveys.

Measurements

This study utilized three measures, including the Interaction Involvement Scale (IIS), the Rotter (I-E) Locus of Control Scale, and a series of items developed by the author specifically for the present study to identify perceptions from complaint stories.

The Interaction Involvement Scale is a self-report measure using items-constructed in language such as "often I . . .", "I feel . . .", "I will . . .", or "I am . . ." The 18 items ask the subjects to evaluate their own behaviors or feelings during a conversation. A seven-point Likert-type response is used, with choices ranging from "not at all like me," to "very much like me," including the neutral "not sure." The instructions requested that the participants answer each question to represent their most typical manner of conversation. Twelve of the 18 items are reverse coded.

Rubin, Palmgreen, and Sypher (1994, p. 187) describe test-retest reliability of IIS as very good (.81 six-weeks after original testing). The one-year retest reliability was reported to be approximately .6. Reports of internal consistency have varied from Cronbach's Alphas of .63 to .86. The three sub-scales of IIS have also been well studied. Reported ranges for the sub-scales are perceptiveness (.63 to .88), attentiveness (.64 to .87), and responsiveness (.69 to .86). Rubin et al. (1994) describe the evidence for concurrent validity as strong. They indicate that other researchers have found significant sub-scale correlations with variables such as sociability, anxiety, neuroticism, adaptability, appropriate disclosure, perceptiveness, and social composure. In the present research, the combined IIS scale was used as well as the three sub-scales.

The Rotter Internal-External Control scale originated from attempts to measure individual differences in generalized expectancy by Phares (1957). His scale contained 13 items that were stated as external attitudes and 13 items that were designated internal attitudes. James' (1957) dissertation revised Phares' scale using a 26-item scale with additional filler items. Continued work was undertaken to broaden the scale to obtain multiple sub-scales to measure areas such as social desirability, political attitudes, and achievement. An early version consisted of 100 binary forced-choice items, each with one internal and one external choice. The scale was then reduced to 60 items based on internal consistency tests. Based on extensive work with the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crown & Marlowe, 1964), several items were removed. Items that either had a high correlation to the Marlowe-Crown scale or a significant differential split were eliminated.

The Rotter Internal-External Control Scale is a 29 item forced binary alternate choice response format. In other words, the participants are told to select the better of two alternative statements for each item. Six of the items are fillers and not scored. Internal consistency estimates are stable although only moderately high. According to Rotter (1966) this is due to the wide variety of different situations represented in the measure. As such, the test is additive, and split-half reliability testing will tend to underestimate the scale's internal consistency.

Test-retest reliability for a 1-month period is reported as quite consistent in two very different samples (Rotter, 1966). On retest the participants report slightly less externality. Rotter reported Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability correlations to range from -.07 to -.35, with the high variation attributed to different testing conditions.

The complaint measure used in this study was developed by the author to explore hypothesized differences in how individuals interpret complaint messages. Items were devised to have face validity relating to one of the four dependent variables; Subject, Goal, Opportunity, and Accountability. These are continuous variables that were derived from the state communication characteristics described previously in this study. Each of these variables was presumed to represent a distinct factor associated with complaint interpretation.

A pilot study was conducted to obtain verification that participants could understand and respond to various types of complaint message scenarios in a written story format. A total of 58 participants completed an initial complaint measure for one of five complaint stories. The small sample size precluded extensive analysis of the data, but led to the creation of the complaint stories and questionnaire items used in this study. The final complaint questionnaire consists of 24 items organized in four groups: (1) Subject items, (2) Goal items, (3) Accountability items, and (4) Opportunity items. Items were reflected when necessary to be scored as shown in Table 1. The reflected items are S1, S3, G2, G4, G5, O2, O4, O5, A2, A5, and A6.

Table 1

Scoring method for Complaint measure

Category	1	7
Subject (Issue-orientation)	Strong	Weak
Goal (Identity-recognition)	Strong	Weak
Opportunity	Opportunities	Limitations
Accountability	High	Low

Although the individual items are randomly distributed in the final survey, they are listed

below by category.

 Subject items.

 These are items that were intended to determine how the issue-orientation of receivers

affects their perceptions of service complaints. A receiver may be sensitive to the

underlying issues expressed in the complaint, or simply envision the subject as the

explicitly described event:

S1. The complaint is primarily about facts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

S2. The complaint is primarily about emotions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

S3. This complaint describes a simple event.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

S4. There is more than one important issue in this complaint.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

S5. This complaint is really about a specific problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

S6.   There's more to this complaint than just the stated problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Goal items.

These are items that were designed to focus on determining the receiver's impression of

the complainant's goal for complaining. Some individuals are expected to see the goal as

closely associated with the explicitly described event, while others are expected to see the

goal as significantly related to identity support:

G1. This complainant mainly just wanted the stated problem prevented.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

G2.   The person complaining would like to avoid a lot of attention.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

G3.   The goal of this complaint is mainly the social interaction that it produces.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

G4.   The goal of this complaint is just to keep the problem from occurring again.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

G5.   Being reimbursed for lost time, expense, or property is an important goal of this complaint.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

G6.   This person is complaining now, to feel more important.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Accountability items.

These items were devised to determine the degree to which a receiver attributes accountability to the complainants for their situations. The scale ranges from low accountability to high accountability.

A1.   The responsibility for preventing this problem belonged to the person complaining.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A2.The person complaining is not responsible for being in this situation.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A3.The complainant shares the responsibility for this problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A4.The person complaining has likely contributed to the problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A5.   In this situation, the complainant is a mainly a victim of circumstance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A6.   The person complaining should not be held accountable at all for this problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Opportunity characteristics.

These items were devised to determine the degree to which receivers perceive that the complainant has unused opportunities that could be activated to resolve the problem. The concept that individuals might have "choices" is considered to be an equivalent construct.

O1. The person complaining had many options to prevent the problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

O2.   This problem could have been avoided if the complainant had more choices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

O3.   I can think of many opportunities that this person had to solve the problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

O4.   There is not much this person could have really done except complain about it later.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

O5.　When faced with problems like this, there are typically not many choices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

O6.　In a situation like this, there are a lot of opportunities to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Complaint stories.

The service complaint stories developed for this study were derived from the Bitner et. al. (1990) taxonomy and use a modified version of their unsatisfactory service episodes. The stories were created to be somewhat vague and incomplete as experienced in actual complaint messages (Doelger, 1984). As a result, some information is implicit in the stories and receivers are called upon to make sensible attributions about the implicit information.

Method of Analysis

Several statistics were performed in this study including Cronbach's Alpha, t-tests, Pearson Product correlations, and post-hoc Scheffe and Tukey tests. A Cronbach's Alpha was calculated on the Interaction Involvement, LOC, and complaint scales to determine the respective scale reliabilities.

Hypothesis testing was performed with one-tailed difference of means t-tests, with the significance level set to .05. A minimum of 50 participants in each of the involvement and

LOC categories was obtained to ensure sufficient experimental power to provide adequate validity.

Since the purpose of this study was to determine if receiver differences affect complaint interpretation, the testing was designed to compare distinct groups who substantially differ in their IIS and LOC scores. Therefore, some participants who scored in the median range (approximately 20%) of each scale were excluded from the data analysis. Researchers frequently classify respondents as high and low by dividing the sample into thirds and excluding the center third (deVaus, 1986). However, twenty percent were chosen for exclusion in this study as a trade-off between sample size and experimental power. By excluding less than one-third, the group comparisons were relatively more similar, resulting in a slight increase in the likelihood of a Type II error.

After identifying distinct groups, t-tests were performed between each group and their responses to the complaint items. The results were investigated to determine if significant differences existed in the response patterns of the groups. Post-hoc significance testing was performed using Schefee and Tukey tests to verify a t-test finding.

The first research question was tested by performing a Pearson Product correlation between the IIS sub-factors and the Subject and goal components of the complaint scale for each of the four population sub-groups.

The second research question was tested by performing a Pearson Product correlation between the independent variables (IIS and LOC) and the four complaint variables for each of the four population sub-groups. This determined if there were significant correlations

relating the complaint variables to IIS or LOC, independent of the category that an individual is assigned to.

Summary

Chapter three described the sample and the methodology used to obtain the data used in this study. It also explained the instruments used and the statistical analysis that was performed to assess the results. The next chapter will report the results obtained from this analysis in terms of each hypothesis and both research questions.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will describe the results of the data analyzed from the survey. It will

include a discussion of the scales and the results of the statistical tests performed.

Results of Scale Analysis

Interaction Involvement scale.

The IIS measure resulted in a mean score of 84.76 with a standard deviation of 15.07

(n=512). The individual responses ranged from a score of 40 to 122. The results for the

total IIS scale and each sub-scale were calculated as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

IIS Subscale Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Perceptiveness	515	7	28	19.46	3.59
Attentiveness	514	12	35	24.19	4.38
Responsiveness	514	10	56	36.65	9.12
Total IIS	512	40	122	84.76	15.07

The reliability of the Interaction Involvement measure, as applied to the present study, was

calculated with Cronbach's Alpha. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

IIS Reliability

IIS Factor	Standardized Item Alpha (N= 114)
Perceptiveness	.60
Attentiveness	.72
Responsiveness	.87
Total IIS	.87

Locus of Control.

The LOC measure resulted in scores from 1 to 22 with a mean of 10.76 and a standard

deviation of 3.80 (n=510). The mean is slightly biased in an external direction compared

to the grand mean of 9.0 that Lefcourt (1976) reported from an analysis of 32 independent

studies. The standard deviation was also close to Lefcort's report of 4.0. A split-half

reliability analysis was performed for the items that were scored. This resulted in a

reliability of .72 (N = 514), which is comparable to the range of .65 to .79 reported by

Rotter (1966).

Complaint scale.

The complaint scale was developed specifically for this research. The scale consists of

twenty-four items divided into four categories. Responses are formatted in a seven point

Likert-type pattern. The response summaries for each item are reported in Table 4.

Table 4

Complaint Scale Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.D.
Subject					
S1	515	1	7	4.41	1.56
S2	515	1	7	3.85	1.71
S3	515	1	7	4.63	1.55
S4	515	1	7	3.23	1.47
S5	515	1	7	4.94	1.61
S6	515	1	7	3.20	1.51
Goal					
G1	515	1	7	3.57	1.69
G2	515	1	7	2.89	1.63
G3	515	1	7	3.96	1.58
G4	515	1	7	4.35	1.81
G5	515	1	7	3.82	1.81
G6	515	1	7	4.47	1.79
Opport.					
O1	515	1	7	4.54	1.60
O2	514	1	7	4.01	1.57
O3	514	1	7	3.96	1.55
O4	515	1	7	3.52	1.62
O5	515	1	7	3.90	1.64
O6	515	1	7	2.82	1.52
Account.					
A1	515	1	7	5.10	1.74
A2	514	1	7	4.17	1.73
A3	515	1	7	4.36	1.79
A4	514	1	7	3.90	1.72
A5	514	1	7	4.49	1.68
A6	515	1	7	4.33	1.78

A Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability test was performed for each of the four complaint measure categories. Items were deleted, as appropriate, to improve the reliability of each factor until the Alpha was maximized. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Internal Reliability for the Complaint Sub-scales

Sub-scale	Orig. Alpha	Items Deleted	Final Alpha
Subject	.51	None	.51
Goal	.03	G1,G5	.36
Opportunity	.44	O2,O6	.68
Accountability	.74	A5	.81

The sample population for this study was divided into high and low involvement individuals and internally and externally controlled individuals. The method used to make this distinction was to first determine the mean, and then to classify approximately ten percent of individuals around the mean as undifferentiated. This effectively excluded approximately twenty percent of each sample, who were not used in testing the hypotheses. Interaction Involvement and LOC scores for the included participants are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

IIS and LOC Scores Used to Define Categories

Variable	Total N	Mean	Lower 40%	Upper 40%
IIS	512	84.76	<81	>87
LOC	510	10.76	<10	>11

Complaint Scale Correlations

The four complaint categories were tested for independence by performing Pearson

Product correlations among the categories. Significant correlations were found for each of

the categories, ranging from .172 to .557. The results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Complaint Category Correlations

Category	Subject (r)	Goal (r)	Opportunity (r)	Accountability (r)
Subject	1.0	.311**	.172**	.235**
Goal		1.0	.251**	.330**
Opportunity			1.0	.557**
Accountability				1.0

(** significant $p < .01$, N= 514)

Results for Hypotheses testing

The testing of each hypothesis was performed by comparing the means of individual

groups using single-tailed t-test significance testing for two means. The results are shown

in Tables 8 through 11. The first group listed in each comparison of two groups

corresponds to mean one of the corresponding t-test. Since lower scores support the

hypotheses, mean two was subtracted from mean one to calculate the t values. Thus,

significant positive t values provide support for the hypotheses.

<u>Results for Hypothesis One</u>

The first hypothesis indicated that high Interaction Involvement individuals are more likely to perceive the underlying issues in a complaint. To confirm this hypothesis, both groups of high involvement individuals should have a significantly lower Subject score (indicating more issue-oriented responses) than the two groups of low involvement individuals. The results for the high involvement groups compared with the low involvement groups are shown in Table 8.

The results indicate that only the difference between the high involvement - external control group and the low involvement - internal control group was significant. However, this combination represented a change in both Interaction Involvement and LOC. There were no significant relationships among the groups that were either both internal LOC or the groups that were both external LOC. Also, the combined category that represented differences between all of the high and low involvement individuals failed to support the hypothesis.

<u>Results for Hypothesis Two</u>

The second hypothesis related to the goals attributed to the complainant.

High involvement individuals were expected to see complaints as more identity-related than low involvement individuals would. The results of the t-tests for these groups are shown in Table 9. No significant differences were found for any of the group comparisons.

Table 8

Results for H1- Subject Comparison

Comparison	Mean 1	Mean 2	M2-M1	df	t	p
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	23.93	24.77	0.85	167	.96	.169
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Ext.	23.14	23.91	0.77	168	.98	.165
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	23.92	23.91	-0.01	212	-.01	.494
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Int.	23.14	24.77	1.63	212	1.67*	.049
Both High IIS with Both Low IIS	23.63	24.22	0.59	337	1.03	.151

(* significant p < .05)

Results for Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis is related to the effects of receiver LOC. Internals were expected to

be more likely to recognize opportunities that existed for the complainant, when compared

to externals. No significant differences between the groups were found for any of the

comparisons. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 9

Results for H2 - Goal Comparison

Comparison	Mean 1	Mean 2	M2-M1	df	t	p
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	15.78	15.28	-0.50	167	-.80	.212
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Ext.	15.48	15.57	0.09	168	.13	.448
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	15.78	15.57	-0.21	212	-.37	.357
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Int.	15.48	15.28	-0.20	212	-.28	.391
Both High IIS with Both Low IIS	15.67	15.47	-0.20	337	-.45	.327

Results for Hypothesis Four

The final hypothesis addressed the relationship between perceived accountability and LOC. Internals were expected to describe the complainant as being more accountable than would externals. This hypothesis was not supported. Neither of the internal groups found complainants to be more accountable for their situations than did the external groups.

A significant difference between the means (one-tailed) did occur for the low involved - internal LOC group compared to the low involved - external LOC group.

Table 10

Results for H3 - Opportunity Comparison

Comparison	Mean 1	Mean 2	M2-M1	df	t	p
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	15.52	15.94	0.42	172	.57	.285
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Ext.	15.98	15.64	-0.34	162	-.48	.317
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	15.52	15.64	0.12	211	.20	.421
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Int.	15.98	15.94	-0.04	123	-.05	.482
Both Internal with Both External	15.69	15.76	0.07	336	.14	.444

However, post-hoc tests failed to confirm this finding. A post-hoc Tukey test was only significant to .173 and a Scheffe test indicated significance at .221. If this difference were substantiated, it would indicate that individuals in the external group would be more likely to hold complainants accountable for their situation than the internally controlled group (counter to the hypothesis). The results for all the comparisons are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Results for H4 - Accountability Comparison

Comparison	Mean 1	Mean 2	M2-M1	df	t	p
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	21.79	21.05	-.74	172	-.64	.260
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Ext.	22.97	21.19	-1.78	162	-1.86†	.032
High IIS - Int. with Low IIS - Ext.	21.79	21.19	-0.60	211	-.67	.252
High IIS - Ext. with Low IIS - Int.	22.97	21.05	-1.92	123	-1.55	.062
Both Internal with Both External	22.21	21.14	-1.07	336	-1.48	.071

(† Significant at p< .05, but not confirmed by post-hoc tests)

Results for Research Question 1

Research question one asked about the extent to which the Interaction Involvement sub-scale factors might be related to the Subject and Goal components in the complaint scale. Pearson Product correlations were performed for each of the IIS sub-scales against the Subject and Goal responses for each sample population group. The results are shown in Table 12.

While the total Interaction Involvement score was not found to be significant with the Subject or goal categories among any of the sample groups, there were some correlations

with the sub-scales in two of the groups. These were the two groups that consisted of externally controlled individuals. Negative correlations for the Subject category indicate that a stronger issue-orientation corresponds to greater involvement. For the Goal category, negative correlations indicate that identity recognition is associated with higher involvement. Neither of the internal LOC groups experienced any significant correlations.

Table 12

Results for RQ1

Group	Percept	Attent.	Resp.
High IIS - Int. LOC (N=109)			
Subject	.113	-.049	-.051
Goal	-.003	-.026	-.073
High IIS - Ext. LOC (N=65)			
Subject	-.216*	-.233*	.041
Goal	-.087	-.330**	.016
Low IIS - Int. LOC (N=60)			
Subject	-.005	-.017	.065
Goal	.039	-.038	.166
Low IIS - Ext. LOC (N=105)			
Subject	-.021	.232**	-.163*
Goal	-.045	.017	-.206*

(*significant $p < .05$, **significant $p < .01$)

Results for Research Question 2

Research question two asked about the extent to which there was a relationship between Interaction Involvement, LOC, and the complaint categories as assessed within

each sample population group. The relationships between the independent variables and

the four complaint categories were tested for each group. Pearson Product correlations

were calculated for each quadrant as shown in Table 13.

Table 13

 Results for RQ2

Group	IIS Score (r)	LOC Score (r)
High IIS - Int. LOC (N=109)		
Subject	-.004	.038
Goal	-.033	.078
Opportunity	.060	.013
Accountability	-.115	-.025
High IIS - Ext. LOC (N=65)		
Subject	-.147	-.023
Goal	-.158	-.103
Opportunity	-.295**	.097
Accountability	-.057	.038
Low IIS - Int. LOC (N=60)		
Subject	.044	-.089
Goal	.125	-.010
Opportunity	.037	.003
Accountability	.159	-.105
Low IIS - Ext. LOC (N=104)		
Subject	-.009	.028
Goal	-.158	-.155
Opportunity	-.237**	.086
Accountability	-.086	-.082

(** significant $p<.01$)

    The two externally controlled groups revealed significant (to .01) negative correlations

between IIS and Opportunity. This finding was not discovered in the hypothesis testing

since Interaction Involvement was not expected to mediate the perception of opportunities

by a receiver. The negative correlation indicates that higher involved individuals perceive that complainants have more opportunities than do low involved individuals. However, this relationship only existed with individuals in the external LOC group. This appears to be an interaction effect, since neither of the internal LOC groups produced a significant correlation between IIS and Opportunity. Pearson Product correlations were also calculated between LOC and the complaint categories. None of the sixteen LOC correlations was found to be significant.

Summary

   This chapter reported the results of the study providing a detailed description of the findings relating to the complaint scale, the hypotheses, and the research questions. The next chapter will summarize and further interpret the findings.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will summarize the entire study and then discuss and interpret the results

and their implications. In addition, the limitations of the study will be described.

Summary of Study

This study sought to address an issue not extensively covered in communication

literature to date. That is, how might differences among receivers affect the interpretation

of complaint messages? From the existing literature, two well-established characteristics

of individuals were seen as likely to provide a significant contribution to this interpretation

process. First, Interaction Involvement was expected to play an important role in how

individuals perceive the information in a complaint, specifically in regard to the subject

and goal of the complaint. More involved individuals might perceive the subject or goal of

the complaint as being more issue-oriented and related to the complainant's identity, when

compared with less involved individuals who might see only the more superficial surface

events.

Second, Locus of Control (LOC) was thought to influence how individuals perceive a

service complainant in terms of opportunities and accountability associated with the

complaint. Receivers were presumed to project their own characteristics on the

complainant as part of the interpretation process. Individuals who scored low in LOC

(internals), were thought to perceive the complainant as having more opportunities and accountability than individuals with a high LOC score (externals).

This study dealt specifically with service complaints, as they represent common experiences among individuals in a wide variety of interpersonal episodes. Following the complaint taxonomy developed by Bitner, et. al. (1990), the complaint episodes in this study consisted of 12 complaints representing three major categories. The categories are: employee responses to service delivery system failures, employee response to customer needs and requests, and unprompted and unsolicited employee actions. Further, the complaints in each category represented different types of experiences for the complainant. To further generalize the range of possible complaints, the complaint stories were set in the context of three common service-oriented businesses. These were the airline business, the food service business, and the hotel business.

The relatively broad scope of this study proved challenging for several reasons. First, the impressions formed by individuals hearing complaints are certainly complex and multi-faceted. As such, the contributions from variables described in this study were expected to be only a partial explanation for the interpretation of complaints. Thus, small effect sizes were the best that could be predicted, even under ideal circumstances. This difficulty of measuring interpretation is reflected in much of the previous literature, which has been generally limited to measuring levels of satisfaction associated with complaint generation and complaint responses. In an attempt to go beyond the existing research, this study has investigated four distinct (although correlated) concepts that were thought to relate to interpreting and making sense of complaints. That is, this study attempted to measure

differences in the subject, goal, opportunity, and accountability attributed to the complainant by the receiver.

Second, an adequate quantitative measure for assessing various aspects of the interpretation process, as it related to service complaints, was not available. Thus, a measure was developed as part of this study. One challenge for such a scale was to effectively cover these four constructs, yet provide a brief enough measure that could be practically implemented in a limited amount of time. In addition, it was difficult to generate questionnaire items that could effectively distinguish between the concepts addressed in this study, yet, be general enough to be valid for a variety of complaint scenarios.

The complaint scale was created specifically for this study. A previous pilot study with a small number of participants (n=66) established that individuals would effectively respond to various written complaint stories by answering a number of questions about the episode described. The pilot study was too small to evaluate the items by factor analysis or determine their reliability. However, the result of the pilot study was to improve the face validity of the items used in the final study and to avoid some items that had highly skewed responses or generated questions by the participants. Also, the pilot study contained eight items for each of the four categories, resulting in a total of 32 questions. Several participants objected to the number of questions about a singular event, indicating that they grew tired of answering. This feedback was the basis for selecting the final items, changing the wording of some items, and reducing the size of the final measure.

The final complaint scale (Appendix C) consisted of 24 items, six for each of the categories. Ultimately, this number of items limited the overall reliability of the measure, especially since only 19 of the 24 could be used in the analysis (removed items optimized reliability). Among the four categories, only the Accountability factor had good reliability (Alpha = .81).

Third, the infinite variety of service complaints themselves had to be pared down to a manageable but generalizeable number. Fortunately, the Bitner, et al. (1990) taxonomy provided a guide to establish twelve complaints episodes that represented wide variety of everyday service complaints. However, another issue was the dilemma about how much detail to include in the complaint. Longer complaint scenarios would be advantageous from the standpoint of helping the receiver understand more about what was happening, and perhaps compensate for the lack of non-verbal information normally available. However, providing such additional information was thought to increase the risk that individuals would base their interpretations on a specific word or phrase that might inadvertently bias their responses. In addition, a longer complaint was thought to more likely generate a scripted interpretation (Smith & Houston, 1983). Thus, briefer complaint stories were used in the belief that participants would make projective assessments of the complainant and respond as they would in an actual environment with limited information. This follows the approach used in projective psychological testing where ink blots, simple diagrams, and short stories are used as a stimulus to evoke wide-ranging but meaningful responses. The issue of story length was resolved by creating complaint scenarios that varied from 17 to 45 words in length with four being shorter than 25 words and four being

longer than 30 words. In retrospect, the complaints may have been too short, with the result of increasing randomness in the responses.

Finally, it was impractical to recreate many of the actual situations found in the wide range of service complaints. For instance, the complaint scenarios describe three entirely different types of businesses, none of which would be expected to participate in situations where complaints would be the expected result. Also, capturing actual complaints on tape would require surveillance and involve issues of privacy. Another approach would be to stage complaints with either audio or videotape, and then allow the participants to respond to these experiences. This approach would have the advantage of creating a more realistic environment, but would also introduce additional variables through the nonverbal channels. For instance, individual characteristics of the complainant and target, as well as contextual information in the background would likely be cofactors in the episode. Therefore, it was decided to create a range of complaint stories in written form that the participants could read and respond to. In this way it was possible to precisely control the content, and thus generally avoid references to information that was seen as introducing extraneous variables.

Research Findings and Interpretation of Results

The two established measures used in this study created responses as expected. Specifically, the Interaction Involvement scale resulted in a mean score was 84.76 (n=512) and S.D. of 15.07. The sub-scale and total Interaction Involvement descriptives were calculated and reported in Table 2. Differences in the mean and standard deviation for the sub-scale items are primarily due to the different number of items in each sub-scale.

The Interaction Involvement scale reliability was computed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results are shown in Table 3 and are similar to previously reported results by Cegala (1984).

The LOC scores resulted in a mean of 10.76 (N=510) and S.D. of 3.8, which was slightly more external than the general population. However, this is similar to the mean of 10.38 reported for University of Oklahoma students in 1970 (Phares, 1976). A wide variety of studies (Lefcourt, 1976) have demonstrated variability in the mean LOC score for specific populations. Lefcourt investigated 32 independent studies and found a grand mean of 9.0 for the LOC construct.

A split-half reliability check was performed for the scale items, excluding the un-scored items (scored items are the underlined items in Appendix E). The split-half reliability was calculated to be .72, which is consistent with the range of reliabilities reported by Rotter (1966). Rotter reported split-half reliabilities from .65 to .79. He indicated that split-half reliability calculations would underestimate the actual reliability of the measure, since each item measures somewhat different aspects of control.

This study sought to make direct comparisons between sub-groups that were significantly differentiated by both Interaction Involvement and LOC. In that regard, the population was divided into four groups, excluding individuals that fell close to the mean on either the IIS or LOC scale. This created a "dead band" of approximately 10 percent from the mean in all directions. In other words, only the top and bottom 40 percent were included for each scale (Table 6). This served to eliminate approximately 34% percent (N eliminated = 177) of the entire sample because many individuals fell in the dead band for

only one of the two scales. Under this provision, the total sample used for hypothesis testing was 338. The groups consisted of 109 individuals in the high involvement - internal control category, 60 individuals in the low involvement - internal control category, 65 individuals in the high involvement - external control category and, and 104 individuals in the low involvement - external control category.

The final complaint measure, as shown in Appendix C, contained of 24 items. The items consisted of six questions in each of the four categories: Subject, Goal, Opportunity, and Accountability. These four sub-scales were not designed to provide an overall complaint index, but rather provide four independent aspects of complaint interpretation. The direction of the sub-scales was based on consistency with the pilot study, which explains why a low score for the Opportunity and Accountability categories actually represented a high degree of opportunity and accountability respectively. Each of the four complaint variables was treated as a dependent variable, with respect to the two independent variables, IIS and LOC.

Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics for the complaint scale responses. The response range was one to seven for each of the 24 items. The means for all but three items were within one point of the neutral score of four. Item G2 had a mean of 2.89 (N=515), item O6 had a mean of 2.82 (N=515), and item A1 had a mean of 5.10 (N=515). Although item O6 was later removed for reliability reasons, the remaining two items may have produced floor and ceiling effects respectively, resulting in skewed distributions. The standard deviations for all 24 items were fairly consistent, ranging from 1.47 to 1.81.

A Cronbach's Alpha reliability check was performed for each of the four scale categories. The Subject category yielded an original Alpha of .51, which would not be improved by removing any items. Therefore, all six Subject items were used for the remainder of the analysis.

The six Goal items resulted in an initial Alpha of only .03. It was determined that removing G1 would improve Alpha to .25. After repeating the analysis with the remaining five items, it was found that removing G5 would improve the reliability to .36. Removing other items would not improve the reliability, so the remaining four items were used in the study.

An analysis of the initial six Opportunity items resulted in an Alpha of .44 and indicated the removing O2 would result in improved reliability. Removing item O2 improved the reliability to .59, and further indicated that removing O6 would increase the reliability to .68. No further item removals would improve the reliability, so the remaining four items were used for the remainder of the study.

The six Accountability items resulted in an initial Alpha of .75. The reliability analysis indicated that removing A5 would improve the Alpha to .81. No further reliability improvements were indicated, so the final scale utilized the five remaining items.

In total, five items were removed from the initial complaint scale resulting in the final 19-item measure. As shown in Table 5, the final reliabilities for three of the four complaint categories remained poor. Only the Accountability scale resulted in a good reliability.

A Pearson Product correlation was performed for each combination of the four complaint categories (Table 7). The results indicated that all the categories positively correlated with a significance of .01. The Subject and Goal categories correlated to r = .311. This might be expected since the Subject and Goal concepts are similar. However, since the reliabilities of these two measures were poor, it is somewhat surprising that they correlated so well. The strongest correlation occurred between Opportunity and Accountability at r = .557. This was surprising since the items appear clearly distinct for each of these measures. The positive correlation indicates that individuals who found complainants accountable also believed that they had unused opportunities to solve their problems.

The four hypotheses were tested by comparing the individual categories with each other. As described previously, some individuals (N=177) were excluded from the hypothesis testing since they fell in the dead-band of the IIS or LOC scales. The statistic used to test these hypotheses was the one-tailed t-test for two independent means using .05 as the level of significance.

Hypothesis one suggested that high Interaction Involvement individuals are more likely to be issue-oriented than low Interaction Involvement individuals. The results failed to support this hypothesis since the comparison between groups that varied in Interaction Involvement failed to achieve significance. The fact that a significant difference occurred between the high involvement - external LOC group and the low involvement - internal LOC group is suspect since these two groups also differed by LOC. Since the other combinations were not significant, this relationship must be assumed to result from a

contribution of both IIS and LOC. More importantly, the low reliability of the Subject

measure (Alpha = .51) would indicate that this result is probably not be repeatable.

Hypothesis two proposed that high Interaction Involvement individuals would be more

likely to interpret the goal of a complaint as being identity-related. This hypothesis was

not supported in any of the five comparisons. The Goal measure only produced a

reliability of .36 suggesting that significance would be unlikely, even for a strong effect.

Both hypothesis one and hypothesis two attempted to detect differences in how

receivers perceive information from a complainant. They addressed the subject and goal of

a complaint based on very limited information and void of prior knowledge or contextual

information. Although the lack of significance for either of these two hypotheses was

mainly attributed to scale reliability, other factors may have contributed. For instance,

there may not have been enough information in the complaint stories for the participants to

discern the more implicit aspects of the complaints. The Goal component of the complaint

measure may have been particularly sensitive to this issue, since individuals were called

upon to make attributions about the complainants' motives. Another explanation is that

there may, in fact, be no appreciable difference between individuals for their interpretation

of the Subject and Goal components of complaints, based on Interaction Involvement or

LOC.

Hypothesis three was concerned with the opportunities that were perceived to exist in

the complaint message as interpreted by a receiver. This hypothesis was not supported, as

none of the five comparisons was significant (Table 10). Internals were thought to hear

more opportunities in a complainant's story, as they would identify with the described

situation and think of what they would do themselves in a similar situation. In comparison, externals would also see the complainant as like themselves, individuals who do not have much control over the events that affect them. The failure to obtain a significant difference between these groups was likely affected by the weakness of the Opportunity measure itself. The items that made up the Opportunity scale only had an Alpha reliability of .68. Therefore, it is likely that a small effect size would be missed. Another reason for lack of significance may be that individuals use different approaches to make sense of complaints. For instance, some individuals may use an identification approach and project their own characteristics on others, as was presumed in the hypothesis. However, other individuals may use a "differences" approach and, thus, seek to find differences between an individual with undesirable problems and themselves. This would be counter to the hypothesis in that externally controlled individuals would see complainants as more powerful and resourceful, while internals would see complainants as less capable and with fewer opportunities. A mix of these two effects would tend to obscure any relationship between LOC and opportunity as measured in this study. Another explanation would be that there are truly no differences attributable to LOC. Individuals may be relatively unaffected by their own LOC when they attempt to make a cognitive judgement about the opportunities of a complainant.

Hypothesis four also compared the groups who differed by LOC. This hypothesis was not supported for any of the comparisons (Table 11). Internals were expected to hold individuals more accountable for their situation compared with externals. However, one significant relationship was found between differences in accountability level attributed to

the complainant by two of the groups. In the comparison between the low involvement - internal control group and the low involvement - external control group, a significant (.05, one-tailed) difference of means was detected. The direction indicated the external control group held complainants more accountable than did the internals. This finding was counter to the hypothesized relationship, which presumed that internally controlled individuals would project their characteristics on others and hold them more accountable than externals would. Since post-hoc tests failed to support this finding, the actual existence of this relationship is doubtful or small at best. Had this relationship been confirmed, it might imply that there is another mechanism used in the evaluation process other than projection. For instance, individuals who are externally controlled might expect others to be universally more powerful, and therefore more accountable, when compared with internals. If this were the case, then externals might be more likely to blame the complainants for their situation or discount environmental causes. Another explanation is that internals, instead of projecting their own characteristics on others, may see others as weaker or less capable. This would result in complaint interpretations that might be more favorable to the complainant. Finally, there may be no differences in how individuals attribute accountability, or if differences exist, they may be unrelated to LOC.

Research question one asked about the extent to which the Interaction Involvement sub-factors might provide a more robust prediction for the Subject and Goal complaint categories than would the overall Interaction Involvement measure. In that regard, a Pearson Product correlation was performed for each of the three Interaction Involvement sub-scales (attentiveness, perceptiveness, and responsiveness) with the Subject and Goal

complaint categories for each sample population subgroup (Table 12). While no

significant correlations were found with the combined Interaction Involvement scale, some

significant correlations were found in the two groups that represent the externally

controlled population.

The high involvement - external LOC group revealed significant correlations between

Subject and Perceptiveness, Subject and Attentiveness, and between Goal and

Attentiveness. Since low scores in both the Subject and Goal categories represent the

perception of more complex and underlying issues, the negative correlation would be

expected, as more attentive and perceptive individuals should have these characteristics.

Since the overall IIS score was not significant for these groups, it is possible that the

responsiveness data diluted the total score. Although Responsiveness is a component of

Interaction Involvement in general, it is not part of the listening aspect. Therefore, it is

reasonable that Responsiveness is not an appropriate predictor of individuals who better

comprehend the underlying issues in another's complaint stories.

There were also significant correlations for the low involvement - external LOC group.

A positive correlation was found between Subject and Perceptiveness, while negative

correlations were found between Subject and Attentiveness, and between Goal and

Attentiveness. Again, there were no correlations with responsiveness or the overall IIS

score. The positive correlation was significant to .01 and somewhat puzzling. This

indicates that individuals with the lowest perceptiveness scores actually found more

underlying issues in complaint stories than others found. It might be that an interaction

effect occurs in this group with LOC. Both groups that experienced correlations between

Subject and Perceptiveness consisted of externally controlled individuals, but the combination of low involvement and external control may produce a unique perspective among its members. For instance, it might be possible that externally controlled individuals, in general, see others as more powerful and controlling. Within this population, the individuals who are also low-involved, may feel particularly more threatened when faced with a complaint. As a self protective mechanism, these individuals may have an episodically sensitive moment that makes them more perceptive than the average person. However, the overall results associated with this research question must be treated skeptically since both the Subject and Goal categories had poor reliabilities. Nevertheless, further research should clarify this issue and determine if such an interaction effect is commonly experienced with this population.

Research question two asked about the extent to which there might be a relationship between Interaction Involvement, LOC, and the four complaint categories, as measured within each of the four population sub-groups. To answer that question, Pearson Product correlations were calculated to determine if there were relationships between either IIS and LOC and each of the four complaint variables. There were no correlations in either of the internal LOC groups. However, in both external LOC groups there were significant negative correlations between IIS and Opportunity. In the high involvement group the correlation of -.295 was significant to .01 (N=65). The low involvement group correlated to -.237 (N=104) and was also significant to .01. Do to the scale direction, a negative correlation indicates that more involvement equates to recognizing more opportunities. This was not predicted in the hypotheses since Interaction Involvement was not thought to

affect the receiver's perception of a complainant's opportunities. This finding suggests that higher involved receivers see more opportunities in the complaints of others, but only as long as the receivers are externally controlled. This may imply that externally controlled individuals view the opportunities in complaints differently than internally controlled individuals. Externally controlled individuals may presume that others have more power, in general, and therefore more opportunities to exercise choices. Among externals, higher involvement would allow individuals to obtain more information that could then be used to cope with powerful others, and make sense of their behaviors. If the externally controlled receiver is under stress by listening to a perceived powerful complainant, then finding unused opportunities in the complaint story might be an effective method of reducing the need to resolve the problem. Internally controlled individuals may see opportunities in the complaint messages as a personal characteristic independent of the specific situation. In this case, the degree of involvement would not mediate the perception of opportunities in the same way that is apparently present for externally controlled individuals.

Limitations

This study attempted to develop an understanding of how individuals vary in their interpretation of service complaint messages. To accomplish this required a structure that both limited the number of complaints, and yet, ensured a variety that would produce generalizable results. Fortunately, a previously established taxonomy of complaint types was available and served as the guide for twelve different complaint scenarios. However, the same variety that provided the ability to generalize results may also have introduced cofactors that confounded the measure of receiver perceptions. The wide variety of stories

necessarily contained different actors, different interaction patterns, and varying contextual information. While this study utilized a moderately large sample population (n=515), the variety of situations described in the complaint scenarios may have sacrificed the finding of more significant results.

The written story format was another issue relating to the complaint scenarios' effectiveness. Arguably, actual observations or videotaped scenarios would have provided a more naturalistic stimulus for response. In addition, the stories were brief and did not contain any background information. This context-limited approach may have inadvertently excluded many important cues that individuals use in the interpretation of complaints.

The most significant limitation was the complaint scale used in this study. While the four categories (Subject, Goal, Opportunity, and Accountability) represented reasonable metrics for complaint interpretation, the four-factor scale created to measure these categories was problematic at best.   Three of the four categories had poor reliability, even after removing items that reduced reliability. The Accountability measure was the only category with good reliability at .81. Further, since each of the four categories correlated strongly with each other, there was no compelling evidence that each of these concepts is fundamentally distinct. In addition to the scale problems, the poor reliabilities may have been exacerbated by response variations caused by the wide variety of information present in the twelve complaint stories. In other words, the participants responded based on information from the specific complaint that they read, which may have confounded the specific scale items in each category.

A final limitation worth noting is that the sample consisted primarily of freshman students with a mean age of 20.2 years. Although most of the participants reported that they have worked with customers directly, this experience was limited by their ages. In addition, this population was more externally controlled than the general population, which is also consistent with their age range (Phares, 1976). Individuals with more experience in complaint-type interactions may use that experience in their interpretation process, and thus, change the results.

Implications for Future Research

This study explored differences in how individuals interpret service complaints. Specifically, it sought to determine if receiver Interaction Involvement or Locus of Control (LOC) mediated the interpretation of complaints in any of four categories. That is, does Interaction Involvement or LOC affect the receivers' interpretations of the subject or goal of a complaint, as well as the number of opportunities and level of accountability attributed to the complainant? The results did not support the four hypotheses that described the expected relationship between Interaction Involvement, LOC, and the four complaint categories. However, the study did find two significant associations that relate to differences in the interpretation of complaints. First, a significant relationship was found between differences in accountability level attributed by groups who varied in LOC. Externals were found to hold complainants more accountable for their situations. However, this only occurred among low involvement individuals, implying that an interaction effect between Interaction Involvement and LOC could be present. Since post-hoc testing failed to support this relationship and because the reliabilities of the Subject

and Goal measures were poor, it is likely that this result is not repeatable in future research. Nevertheless, future research can seek to determine if such a relationship exists among these variables. Actual differences in accountability attributions could be expected to have important consequences for the complainant. For instance, in actual complaint episodes, it is likely that different perceptions of accountability would result in correspondingly different responses to the complainant, changing the trajectory of the episode. Also, when complainants are not viewed as being accountable for their situation, they may be considered more deserving of assistance.

Second, an unexpected but noteworthy relationship was found between Opportunity level and Interaction Involvement for externally controlled individuals only. High-involved individuals found significantly more opportunities in complaint messages than did low involved individuals. This might be expected since high Interaction Involvement individuals should be better listeners. However, since no similar relationship was found with either of the two groups of internals, this effect appears to be an interaction with LOC. Further research may address this finding and determine the robustness of this effect and explain what characteristics associated with externally controlled individuals could account for this finding. The perception of opportunities in a complaint message is important if it influences the receiver to respond in different ways. For example, a complainant who is perceived to have other alternatives may not get as much assistance and might be considered a lower priority than others who have fewer alternatives. Thus, additional work is needed to clarify these issues.

Future researchers should develop improved scales and investigate more robust methodologies that effectively tap into the relevant constructs associated with complaint formulation and interpretation. The problems experienced with the complaint scale in the present study greatly limited its usefulness in obtaining meaningful results about differences in the groups studied. However, an improved scale alone may not adequately capture receiver differences in terms of such complex concepts of issue-orientation and identity.

Finally, this study lays the groundwork to build additional knowledge about the ways that complaint messages are used for purposes other than satisfying the instrumental needs of the complainant. It invites additional research to explore how complaints are used as social communication to establish or reify identity concerns, to express goals and test their acceptability, or to communicate other needs under a veil of protection afforded by the complaint story. From the complaint receiver's perspective, additional research is needed to better understand how such complaints are understood and interpreted, as well as how those interpretations affect response formulation and impact succeeding messages.

Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the entire research study and a summary of the results from each hypothesis. An interpretation of the results was also included. Implications of the study were discussed along with the limitations.

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY *of*
NORTH TEXAS

Office of Research Services

December 17, 1999

William A. Reed
5902 Old Barn Drive
Arlington, TX 76016

RE: Human Subjects Application No. 99-234

Dear Mr. Reed,

Your proposal titled "Effects of Receiver Power and Involvement on the
Interpretation of Service Complaints" has been approved by the Institutional
Review Board and is exempt from further review under 45 CFR 46.101.

The UNT IRB must re-review this project prior to any modifications you make in the
approved project. Please contact me if you wish to make such changes or need
additional information.

Sincerely,

Reata Busby, Chair
Institutional Review Board

RB:sb

APPENDIX B

Complaint Stories

Story # 1

> We had made advance reservations at this hotel. Now you're telling us that we have
>
> no room, and you're not even willing to help us find another hotel!

Story # 2

> The airline employees at the desk kept giving us the wrong information; we've now been
>
> waiting six-hours!

Story # 3

> One of my suitcases was all dented and looked as though it had been dropped from
>
> 30,000 feet. When I tried to make a claim for my damaged luggage, your front desk
>
> employee insinuated that I was lying and trying to rip off your company!

Story # 4

> My young son, flying alone, was to be assisted by one of your flight attendants
>
> from start to finish. At the Albany airport she left him alone in the airport with
>
> no one to escort him to his connecting flight!

Story # 5

> The waitress is refusing to move me from a window table to a booth, because there aren't any left in *her* section!

Story # 6

Why won't you let me bring my scuba gear on board the plane? Last time you let me bring it on as carry-on luggage!

Story # 7

We missed our flight because of car trouble. The service clerk wouldn't help us find a flight on another airline. Are you <u>not</u> going to help us either?

Story # 8

The hotel night staff wouldn't deal with the noisy people partying in the hall at 3 A. M. last night. -- What are you going to do about it?

Story # 9

If you can break away from watching TV for just a minute or two, do you think you have time to help one of your hotel guests? -- Or do I have to talk to the manager?

Story # 10

The waiter just told me, "If you would read the menu and not the road map, you would know what you want to order". Do all of your employees to act that way?

Story # 11

This is a very expensive restaurant, and your waiter is treating us like dirt because we are only high-school kids on a prom date!

Story # 12

This flight was a nightmare. The air conditioning didn't work. The landing was extremely rough. To top it all off, your flight attendants didn't even ask if I wanted something to drink during the flight.

APPENDIX C

Final Complaint Scale

This Appendix contains the final version of the author's Complaint Scale. The items listed below with an asterisk are reflected when scored.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1) Read the following story about a person complaining. Think carefully about this situation.

2) Then answer the questions by **circling the number** on each line that best describes this complaint.

> *** One of the complaint stories in Appendix B to be inserted here ***

1.   The person complaining would like to avoid a lot of attention.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2.   In a situation like this, there are a lot of opportunities to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3.   This complaint is really about a specific problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4.   This complainant mainly just wanted the stated problem prevented.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5.   This problem could have been avoided if the complainant had more choices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6.   The goal of this complaint is mainly the social interaction that it produces.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7.   This complaint describes a simple event.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8.   In this situation, the complainant is a mainly a victim of circumstance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9.   <u>The complaint is primarily about emotions.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10.   <u>This person is complaining now, to feel more important.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11.   <u>The responsibility for preventing this problem belonged to the person complaining.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12.   <u>The complaint is primarily about facts.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13.   <u>Being reimbursed for lost time, expense, or property is an important goal of this complaint.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14.   <u>The complainant shares the responsibility for this problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. <u>The person complaining had many options to prevent the problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. <u>The person complaining should not be held accountable at all for this problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. <u>I can think of many opportunities that this person had to solve the problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. <u>There's more to this complaint than just the stated problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19. <u>There is not much this person could have really done except complain about it later.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20. <u>There is more than one important issue in this complaint</u>.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21.   The person complaining has likely contributed to the problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

22.   The goal of this complaint is just to keep the problem from occurring again.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23.   The person complaining is not responsible for being in this situation.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24.   When faced with problems like this, there are typically not many choices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX D

Interaction Involvement Scale

DIRECTIONS: There are no right or wrong answers to the following questions. You only need to indicate the extent to which you feel each item describes your own behavior. In responding to some of the items, you might say, "sometimes I do that and sometimes I don't." You should respond to each item in a way that best describes your typical manner of communication--how you behave in most situations. For each statement choose the number from the following scale that best describes your communication in general. Write the number in the space provided before each statement.

---

1. I am keenly aware of how others perceive me during my conversations.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. My mind wanders during conversations and I often miss parts of what is going on.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Often in conversations I'm not sure what to say, I can't seem to find the appropriate lines.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I am very observant of others' reactions while I'm speaking.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. During conversations I listen carefully to others and obtain as much information as I can.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Often in conversations I'm not sure what my role is, I'm not sure how I'm expected to relate to others.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Often in conversations I will pretend to be listening, when in fact I was thinking of something else.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Often during conversations I feel like I know what should be said (like accepting a compliment, or asking a question), but I hesitate to do so.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Sometimes during conversations I'm not sure what the other really means or intends by certain comments.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. I carefully observe how the other is responding to me during a conversation.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Often I feel withdrawn or distant during conversations.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. Often in conversations I'm not sure what others' needs are (e.g., a compliment, reassurance, etc.) until it is too late to respond appropriately.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. I feel confident during my conversations, I am sure of what to say and do.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. Often I'm preoccupied in my conversations and do not pay completed attention to others.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. Often I feel sort of "unplugged" during conversations, I am uncertain of my role, others' motives, and what is happening.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. In my conversations I often do not accurately perceive others' intentions or motivations.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. In conversations I am very perceptive to the meaning of my partners' behavior in relation to myself and the situation.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. Often during my conversation I can't think of what to say, I just don't react quickly enough.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX E

The Rotter Internal-External Control Scale

Instructions

   This is a questionnaire to find out the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives lettered a or b. Please select the one statement of each pair (*and only one*) which you more strongly *believe* to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true rather than the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief: obviously there are no right or wrong answers.

   Your answers to the items on this inventory are to be recorded on a separate answer sheet, which is loosely inserted in the booklet. REMOVE THIS ANSWER SHEET NOW. Print your name and any other information requested by the examiner on the answer sheet, then finish reading these directions. Do not open the booklet until you are told to do so.

   Please answer these items *carefully* but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for *every* choice. Find the name of the item on the answer sheet and black-in the space under the number 1 or 2, which you choose as the statement more true.

   In some instances you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the *one* you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you are concerned. Also try to respond to each item *independently* when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

Scale

*1.   a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
       b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with
           them.

2.   a. Many of the unhappy things in peoples' lives are partly due to bad luck.
       b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3.   a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take
           enough interest in politics.
       b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
    b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
    b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
    b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
    b. People who can't get others to like them just don't understand how to get along with others.

*8. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.
    b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.

9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
    b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a define course of action.

10. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
    b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.

11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
    b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
    b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
    b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyway.

*14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
    b. There is some good in everybody.

15. a. In my case, getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
    b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
    b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little to do with it.

17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control.
    b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
    b. There really is no such thing as "luck".

*19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
     b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.

20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
    b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
    b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
    b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
    b. There is a direct connection between how had I sutdy and the grades I get.

*24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
     b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
    b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26.   a.   People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
            <u>b.</u>   There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.

*27.   a.   There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
            b.   Team sorts are an excellent way to build character.

28.   a.   What happens to me is my own doing.
            <u>b.</u>   Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29.   <u>a.</u>   Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they   do.
            b.   In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as a local level.

Research notes for this instrument:

1. The (*) items are filler questions and are not scored (Asterisks are not printed on survey).

2. Underlined items are added to obtain the score (Underlines are not printed on survey).

3. Higher scores equate to greater externality.

APPENDIX F

Composite Final Survey

Dear possible participant:

I am a graduate student collecting data for research in communication. I am asking your permission to include your responses in this study. You must be 18 years old or older to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at anytime. Further, your responses will be completely anonymous and confidential, you cannot be identified in any way. No known physical, psychological, or social risks are anticipated during the course of this research project. The data collected will be analyzed in terms of statistical results such as means, correlations, etc. There will be only one questionnaire, which will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. If you choose to participate, simply return the questionnaire to the researcher.

This is a study about your experiences in verbally communicating with others. You will be asked to answer a variety of questions about communicating as well as some demographic information that will help define the sample used in this study. You will not be asked for your name or other identifying information. The knowledge obtained in this study will help communication researchers gain a better understanding of specific aspects of interpersonal communication.

If there are any questions regarding this study or related procedures, please contact William Reed at (817) xxx-xxxx.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (940) 565-3940.

If you choose not to participate, or if you are under 18 years old, please return the blank questionnaire.

If you choose to participate, please detach this cover sheet and keep it for your own records.

Demographic Items

The following demographic items are being collected only to describe the sample used in this project. Make a check by the correct answer or fill in the blank.

Age _____

Sex: ____ M   _____ F

Have you been employed before: _____ Only part time   ____Full time

If you have been employed, have
you worked directly with customers?   _____ yes   _____ no

SECTION A

INSTRUCTIONS:

1) Read the following complaint about the service that a person received. Think carefully about this situation.

2) Then answer the questions by **circling the number** on each line that best describes this complaint.

We had made advance reservations at this hotel. Now you're telling us that we have

no room, and you're not even willing to help us find another hotel!

1.   The person complaining would like to avoid a lot of attention.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2.   In a situation like this, there are a lot of opportunities to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3.   This complaint is really about a specific problem.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4.   This complainant mainly just wanted the stated problem prevented.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5.   This problem could have been avoided if the complainant had more choices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6.   The goal of this complaint is mainly the social interaction that it produces.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7.   This complaint describes a simple event.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8.	In this situation, the complainant is a mainly a victim of circumstance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9.	The complaint is primarily about emotions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10.	This person is complaining now, to feel more important.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11.	The responsibility for preventing this problem belonged to the person complaining.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12.	The complaint is primarily about facts.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. <u>Being reimbursed for lost time, expense, or property is an important goal of this complaint.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. <u>The complainant shares the responsibility for this problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. <u>The person complaining had many options to prevent the problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. <u>The person complaining should not be held accountable at all for this problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. <u>I can think of many opportunities that this person had to solve the problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. <u>There's more to this complaint than just the stated problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

19.   <u>There is not much this person could have really done except complain about it later.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

20.   <u>There is more than one important issue in this complaint</u>.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21.   <u>The person complaining has likely contributed to the problem.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

22.   <u>The goal of this complaint is just to keep the problem from occurring again.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23.   <u>The person complaining is not responsible for being in this situation.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

24.   <u>When faced with problems like this, there are typically not many choices.</u>

Strongly Agree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Undecided	Moderately Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION B

DIRECTIONS: There are no right or wrong answers to the following questions. You only need to indicate the extent to which you feel each item describes your own behavior. In responding to some of the items, you might say, "sometimes I do that and sometimes I don't." You should respond to each item in a way that best describes your typical manner of communication--how you behave in most situations. For each statement choose the number from the following scale that best describes your communication in general. Write the number in the space provided before each statement.

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1. I am keenly aware of how others perceive me during my conversations.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. My mind wanders during conversations and I often miss parts of what is going on.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Often in conversations I'm not sure what to say, I can't seem to find the appropriate lines.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. I am very observant of others' reactions while I'm speaking.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. During conversations I listen carefully to others and obtain as much information as I can.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Often in conversations I'm not sure what my role is, I'm not sure how I'm expected to relate to others.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. Often in conversations I will pretend to be listening, when in fact I was thinking of something else.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Often during conversations I feel like I know what should be said (like accepting a compliment, or asking a question), but I hesitate to do so.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Sometimes during conversations I'm not sure what the other really means or intends by certain comments.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. I carefully observe how the other is responding to me during a conversation.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Often I feel withdrawn or distant during conversations.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

12. Often in conversations I'm not sure what others' needs are (e.g., a compliment, reassurance, etc.) until it is too late to respond appropriately.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. I feel confident during my conversations, I am sure of what to say and do.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

14. Often I'm preoccupied in my conversations and do not pay completed attention to others.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. Often I feel sort of "unplugged" during conversations, I am uncertain of my role, others' motives, and what is happening.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. In my conversations I often do not accurately perceive others' intentions or motivations.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. In conversations I am very perceptive to the meaning of my partners' behavior in relation to myself and the situation.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. Often during my conversation I can't think of what to say, I just don't react quickly enough.

Not at All Like Me	Not Like Me	Somewhat Unlike Me	Not Sure	Somewhat Like Me	Like Me	Very Much Like Me
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION C

Each item in this section consists of a pair of alternatives lettered a or b. Please select the one statement of each pair (*and only one*) which you more strongly *believe* to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true rather than the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief: obviously there are no right or wrong answers.

Please answer these items *carefully* but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for *every* choice. Find the name of the item on the answer sheet and circle the number 1 or 2, which you choose as the statement more true.

In some instances you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the *one* you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you

are concerned. Also try to respond to each item *independently* when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

Circle A <u>or</u> B for each question below. Do not circle both.

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1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
    b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2. a. Many of the unhappy things in peoples' lives are partly due to bad luck.
    b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
    b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
    b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
    b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
    b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
    b. People who can't get others to like them just don't understand how to get along with others.

8. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.
    b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.

9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
    b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a define course of action.

10. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a   thing as an unfair test.
     b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.

11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
     b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
     b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
     b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyway.

14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
     b. There is some good in everybody.

15. a. In my case, getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
     b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
     b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little to do with it.

17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control.
     b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
     b. There really is no such thing as "luck".

19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
     b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.

20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
     b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
    b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
    b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
    b. There is a direct connection between how had I sutdy and the grades I get.

24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
    b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
    b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.
    b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.

27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.
    b. Team sorts are an excellent way to build character.

28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.
    b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
    b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as a local level.

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