STYLE AND SATISFACTION: AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTRUCTOR COMMUNICATOR STYLE AND INSTRUCTOR JOB SATISFACTION

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The study sample was composed of 110 teaching faculty at Vernon College, a multi-campus northwest Texas community college in Wichita Falls, TX. Participants completed two surveys: the Socio-communicative Orientation Scale (SCO) and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT). Demographic information was collected as well for generalizability purposes. As measured by the SCO, communicator style is a multi-dimensional concept including aspects of assertiveness and responsiveness communication behaviors; the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions acted as independent variables. Instructor job satisfaction acted as the independent variable. The strength of the independent variables was measured separately in ratio to job satisfaction. Regression analysis results demonstrated that the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is not a statistically significant contributor to instructor satisfaction. However, the responsiveness dimension can explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction. Beta weight and structure coefficient analysis confirmed the initial regression results for both independent variables. Further, commonality analysis clarified that the two independent variables within the study are in fact orthogonal in nature, meaning that they do not overlap and are not correlated. Hence, the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is directly related to relationship building in an educational context and may be considered in professional development activities. With respect to sampling methods and use of the SAT instrument, recommendations for future research are included as well.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

The elements within a teaching environment include the context/situation, the students, the instructor(s), the instructors’ verbal and nonverbal behaviors, the student perceptions of the instructor, and the desired instructional outcomes (McCroskey, Valencic, & Richmond, 2004). An additional component in the complex transaction of instructional elements is the communicator style of the instructor. Essentially, communicator style is defined as “the way one verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood” (Norton, 1983, p.47).

In an instructional context, communicator style aids in instructor self-identity and directly affects student perceptions of the teacher (Norton, 1983). Additionally, students reportedly respond more favorably to certain teacher communicator styles (Norton & Nussbaum, 1980). Furthermore, research in the area of the relational teaching approach posits that, when teachers implement a variety of competent communication strategies and behaviors, job satisfaction increases (Graham, West, & Schaller, 1992). Because instructor communicator style appears to be an integral part of the transactional communicative component of teaching, the guiding question of this study is: Can instructor communicator style explain instructor job satisfaction?

Need for the Study

The traditional scholarship of instructor satisfaction is couched in a situational perspective, that is, variables inherent to the teaching environment have been studied and their subsequent relationship to instructor satisfaction reported. Such literature includes collegial relationships, student quality and/or relationships, and administration and institutional
cultural/climate. Additionally, motivational characteristics inherent in educational environments have been reported as having a positive correlation to instructor job satisfaction, those characteristics being achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and salary (Hagedorn, 2000).

While dispositional traits, or personality constructs, are examined in relation to job satisfaction in a variety of business and industry settings (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), few research studies focus specifically on the impact of personality constructs on instructor job satisfaction. More importantly, few to no studies correlate instructor communicator style to instructor job satisfaction.

Furthermore, communication is clearly linked to employee satisfaction. Anderson and Martin (1995) posited that employees engage in communication interactions with superiors and colleagues in an attempt to satisfy the interpersonal needs of pleasure and inclusion. Thus, employee satisfaction appears to involve both a task and relationship dimension. As instructors both disseminate information (task dimension) and build relationships with students (relationship dimension) using the communication process, it is important to examine a variety of aspects that impact that process. To that end, research in the area of the relational teaching approach posits that, when teachers use competent communication strategies and behaviors, job satisfaction increases (Graham et al., 1992). Furthermore, satisfaction pertaining to the job ultimately leads employees to perform well.

Hence, additional research in the area of instructor communication style as it relates to instructor satisfaction adds value to the current body of instructor satisfaction scholarship with regards to instructor competence as well as increased career satisfaction in higher education. As a result, the study of instructor communicator style relative to instructor job satisfaction adds to
instructor job satisfaction scholarship and related fields. As increased job satisfaction ultimately leads employees to perform well, such inquiry adds insight into the research involving instructor job satisfaction, which in turn, reinforces classroom communication interaction and ultimately enhances classroom learning and engagement.

Theoretical Framework

The current study examined instructor job satisfaction in relation to the dual dimensions of instructor communicator style, those dimensions being assertiveness and responsiveness. With that, the theoretical framework of the study is predicated on the intersection of the dispositional model of job satisfaction and communicator style theory. Because instructor job satisfaction is the dependent variable in the current study, the foundation of the theoretical framework is job satisfaction theory.

Fredrick Herzberg, known as “the father of job enrichment,” posited the theory of employee satisfaction, described in a two-dimensional framework consisting of both motivational and hygiene factors. Motivational factors, according to Herzberg, are those aspects of the job environment that create satisfaction by fulfilling employees’ needs for meaning and personal growth. Herzberg identified achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement as key motivational elements critical to job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2005).

Furthermore, hygiene factors, according to Herzberg, do not actually motivate employees, but rather are aspects of the job that serve to reduce dissatisfaction, if handled effectively. Herzberg noted that company policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations, and work conditions are key hygiene characteristics. The presence and effective handling of
these factors are critical in reducing elements of employee job dissatisfaction for employees
(Herzberg et al., 2005).

Communicator style, while not listed specifically in Herzberg’s hygiene inventory regarding job satisfaction, is certainly a derivative of hygiene theory. Herzberg, however, did cite interpersonal relations (relationships with superiors, subordinates, and peers) as key in the reduction of job dissatisfaction if handled effectively and appropriately (Castillo & Cano, 2004). Because the communication process encompasses aspects of communicator style and thus has an influence on the effectiveness of interpersonal relations, communicator style is a derivative of the hygiene aspect of Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory.

Extrapolating from Herzberg’s pioneering theories, the dispositional model frames job satisfaction in a personal perspective, stating that certain relatively stable personality characteristics influence job satisfaction, independently of both job characteristics and the situation (Franek & Vecera, 2008). Adding substance to the dispositional model is the core self-evaluations model, as proposed by Judge, Locke, Durham, and Kluger (1998). Judge et al. (1998) argued that there are four core self-evaluations that determine one’s disposition towards job satisfaction. These core evaluations include self-esteem (the value one places on his/her self), general self-efficacy (the belief in one’s own competence), locus of control (believing one has control over her/his own life, as opposed to outside forces having control), and neuroticism (the degree to which one has a negative outlook on life).

Higher levels of self-esteem and general self-efficacy lead to higher work satisfaction, having an internal locus of control leads to higher job satisfaction, and lower levels of neuroticism lead to higher job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002). Based on this dispositional model of job satisfaction, the foundation of this study’s conceptual theoretical framework, instructor job
satisfaction was quantified within the community college faculty at Vernon College, in Wichita Falls, TX using the Plax, Kearney, and Downs (1986) Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT).

Because communicator style, measured by the Socio-communicative Style/Orientation Scale (SCO), was the independent variable in the proposed study, the impact variable, another aspect of the conceptual framework became evident: communicator style theory. Similarly aligned with the personality/dispositional constructs posited by Judge et al. (2002) are the communication style constructs advanced by Norton (1983), including friendly, impression-leaving, relaxed, contentious/argumentative, attentive, precise, animated/expressive, dramatic, open, dominant, and communicator image. Regarding such communication style in a classroom context, Norton (1986) offered that such communication behaviors are recurring and powerful because such communication patterns have the ability to create experiences. Due to the recurring nature of instructor communication patterns in repeated encounters (such as the classroom), it is impossible not to have “style” (p. 36).

Later, Richmond and McCroskey (1990) adapted the work of Norton and others to refine a measure that examines constructs of communication style, dispositional/personality aspects of masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974), and the dual dimensions of assertiveness and responsiveness (Lashbrook, 1974; Merrill and Reid, 1981) to produce the Socio-communicative Style/Orientation Scale (SCO). The scale measures dual dimensions of both assertiveness and responsiveness communication behaviors. The assertiveness dimension refers to an individual’s communication behaviors that reflect a willingness to speak up for one’s self and one’s ideas. Adjectives and descriptors used to describe varying degrees of assertiveness include defends own beliefs; is independent; has a strong personality; is forceful, assertive and dominant; is willing to take a stand; acts as a leader; is aggressive, and competitive (Allen, Long, & O’Mara, 2008).
The responsiveness dimension refers to the degree in which an individual’s communication behaviors reflect sensitivity to others and their feelings. Adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of responsiveness include helpful, responsive to others, sympathetic, compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others, sincere, gentle, warm, tender, and friendly (Allen et al., 2008).

Reflective of the big three personality model, a model that explains personality from the extravert, neurotic, and psychoticism perspective, Weaver (2005) determined that a strong link exists between self-perceptions of personality and self-perceived communicative styles. His investigation noted that extraverted personalities endorse a more expressive and supportive (responsive) communication style. Such extraverted personalities that endorse both an expressive and supportive communicator style are aligned with a “competent” communicative style/orientation as posited by Anderson and Martin (1995). Alternatively, Weaver reported that the psychoticism personality type endorses more of a socially callous, contentious, and unresponsive (assertive) communication style. The psychoticism personality type is aligned with a more “non-competent” communicative style/orientation as posited by Anderson and Martin. Weaver further concluded that individuals displaying the neurotic personality type endorse an “illusive” communication style that is characterized by deceptiveness and acquiescence, a communicative style/orientation referred to as “submissive” by Anderson and Martin.

Personality constructs as offered by Judge et al. (2002) have both a positive and negative correlation to job satisfaction, and are reportedly linked to communicator style as evidenced by Weaver (2005). With this notion in mind, such inherent communication styles/constructs as noted by Norton (1983), advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1990), and further refined by Anderson and Martin (1995) may also have similar positive and negative associations regarding
instructor job satisfaction. The data analysis documented in the results section of this report support such a supposition.

Based on Norton’s (1978, 1983) theory of communicator style and advanced by Richmond and McCroskey’s (1990) socio-communicative style theory, the current study measured dual dimensions of assertiveness and responsiveness of instructor socio-communicative orientation within the community college faculty at Vernon College using Richmond and McCroskey’s Socio-communicative Style/Orientation Scale (SCO). This measure ultimately answered the research question at hand: Can instructor communicator style explain instructor job satisfaction?

Similarly, the classroom communication dyad between instructor and students is a reciprocal transaction, meaning that if students are motivated and satisfied by instructor communication behaviors, or conversely, unmotivated and dissatisfied with the communication exchange, the instructor may likely be affected as well. As noted earlier, this dyadic relationship between instructor and students is based on interpersonal communication dynamics and social influence. Just as the instructor’s communication style appears to affect student satisfaction/dissatisfaction—inversely, this study reflected that instructor job satisfaction is affected as well.

The previously discussed conceptual framework links the dispositional model of job satisfaction (inherent instructor qualities as related to job satisfaction) and communicator style theory. This conceptual framework, in summary, clarifies that instructor communicator style is an inherent quality much like personality constructs and may positively or negatively affect instructor job satisfaction. Inclusion of these interrelated concepts helps to explain the
importance or relevance of the research objective at hand: Can instructor communicator style explain instructor job satisfaction?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction. Much research is available regarding individual differences, or dispositional attributes, such as gender, age, job level, personality, and self-efficacy and their respective effects on job satisfaction in a variety of business and industry settings (Franek & Vecera, 2008; Furnham, Petrides, Jackson, & Cotter, 2002). This study extends such dispositional research on job satisfaction into an educational context with an examination of instructor communicator style as the dispositional characteristic as it relates to instructor job satisfaction.

Teaching is an intensive and concentrated act of communication on the part of the instructor. Moreover, the core of the teaching profession is rooted in the communication process; hence, communication is a significant and integral component of teacher satisfaction. Yet there are many gaps in the research as to how a variety of communication variables affect teacher job satisfaction (Miller, Stiff, & Ellis, 1988), the communicator of the instructor being one of those variables. Whereas prior dispositional research has centered on personality and its relationship to job satisfaction, this study examines instructor communicator style (a self-perception of communication behaviors) as a dispositional construct and quantifies its relationship to instructor satisfaction. By measuring instructor communicator style via the SCO and instructor job satisfaction via the SAT, the objective of the current study was to determine whether instructor communicator style is a significant factor regarding instructor job satisfaction.
Research Question

The guiding question in this initial exploratory investigation was: Can instructor communicator style explain instructor job satisfaction? Because there are dual and unique dimensions of the Socio-communicative Style/Orientation Scale, assertiveness and responsiveness, the guiding question in this investigation became two-fold. To meet the guiding research objective, the strength of the relationship between the dual dimensions of communicator style (assertiveness and responsiveness) which act as the independent/impact variable, were measured via the SCO alongside instructor job satisfaction, the dependent criterion variable as measured by the SAT. More specifically, via regression analysis, is there a statistically significant positively correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction? In essence, to examine the relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction, two research questions were advanced:

R1: What is the strength of the relationship between the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction?
R2: What is the strength of the relationship between the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction?

By measuring the strength of the dual yet distinctive dimensions of instructor communicator style as per the SCO, this investigation’s guiding question, “Can instructor communicator style explain instructor job satisfaction?” was succinctly answered.

Delimitations

1. As per the generated power analysis, the minimum number of participants required for the survey sample was 111. The study gleaned 110 successful respondents.
2. The return rate of the surveys was higher than expected because the researcher collected surveys in a controlled, yet voluntary environment.

3. Respondents hailed from three distinctive campus sites (traditional, commuter, and CTE—Career and Technical Education).

4. Established, reliable survey instruments including the Teacher Satisfaction Scale and the Socio-communicative Style/Orientation Scale were implemented.

Limitations

1. The research was confined to surveying the faculty at a North Central Texas community college, Vernon College, in Wichita Falls, Texas. Hence limiting the study to such an exact sample— instructors in a community college setting—decreased the generalizability of the ultimate product across populations other than community college instructors.

2. The study used self-reporting measuring instruments. Self-reporting instruments measuring both dependent and independent variables often raise the issue of validity for a variety of reasons, most notably the response bias of participants (Razavi, 2001). Similar to response bias, respondents may not accurately perceive, recall, and report their communication behaviors in the survey instrument.

3. The current research design did not adequately control for other extraneous variables that may account for instructor satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Definitions of Terms

- **Assertiveness**: refers to an individual’s communication behaviors that reflect a willingness to speak for one’s self and one’s ideas. Adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of assertiveness include defends own beliefs; is independent; has a strong
personality; is forceful, assertive, and dominant; is willing to take a stand; acts as a leader; is aggressive and competitive (Allen et al., 2008).

- **Communicator style**: “the way one verbally, nonverbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered or understood” (Norton, 1983).

- **Dispositional job satisfaction**: advances the idea that certain relatively stable personality characteristics influence job satisfaction, independently of both job characteristics and the situation (Franek & Vecera, 2008).

- **Responsiveness**: refers to the degree in which an individual’s communication behaviors reflect sensitivity to others and their feelings. Adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of responsiveness include helpful, responsive to others, sympathetic, compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others, sincere, gentle, warm, tender, and friendly (Allen et al., 2008).

- **Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation (SCO)**: 20-item measure of assertive and responsive communication behaviors. Used as an “other” reporting instrument, the SCO is referred to as “socio-communicative style”; used as a self-reporting measure, the SCO is referred to, as in this study, to socio-communicative orientation (Anderson & Martin, 1995).

**Summary**

Teaching is an act of communication, and instructor communicator style is an integral part of that process. In addition, communicator style is an inherent quality, much like personality constructs. While dispositional traits, or personality constructs, are examined in relation to job satisfaction in a variety of business and industry settings (Judge et al., 2002), few studies focus specifically on the dispositional characteristics, or personality constructs, on instructor job satisfaction. Because communicator style is a similar concept from the dispositional model perspective and because the communication process is an integral part of teaching, this initial
exploratory study sought to determine if instructor communicator style is a relevant factor regarding instructor job satisfaction.

Because communicator style, as measured by the SCO, is a multi-dimensional concept including aspects of assertiveness and responsiveness communication behaviors, the strength of those dimensions was measured separately in ratio to job satisfaction, thus answering the guiding research question in this query. Chapter 2 presents a detailed literature review that includes instructor communicator style scholarship (the independent, impact variable) as well as instructor job satisfaction scholarship (the dependent, criterion variable).
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this study, the researcher answered the following research inquiry: Is there a statistically significant positively correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction? To answer that question, the researcher determined (a) the strength of the relationship between both the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of dimension of instructor communicator style to that of instructor job satisfaction.

Classroom communication is interpersonal in nature. With that, the relational approach to teaching is evident in much of the existing instructional communication scholarship. Additionally, the relational teaching approach posits that, when teachers use competent communication strategies and behaviors, job satisfaction increases (Graham et al., 1992). With this idea in mind, this study examined the relationship between aspects of instructor communicator style as linked to instructor job satisfaction.

Based on the dispositional theory positing that constructs of personality affect job satisfaction, the current study examined a unique dynamic within that interpersonal classroom exchange: the impact of instructor communicator style on instructor job satisfaction. Specifically, the current study adopted a dispositional approach in an attempt to answer the following inquiry: Can instructor communicator style explain instructor job satisfaction?

To begin to answer the guiding question of this inquiry, the survey of literature provides an overview of current scholarship in the following areas: instructor communicator style (the independent, impact variable within the study as measured by the Socio-communicative
Orientation Scale), as well as instructor satisfaction (the dependent, criterion variable within the study as measured by the Teacher Satisfaction Scale).

Instructor Communication Style

To fully describe instructor communicator style, two definitions of communicative style theory must first be advanced: Norton’s communicator style theory (1978) and Richmond and McCroskey’s socio-communicative style/orientation (1990). Communicator style is characterized as “consistently recurring communication patterns of micro-behaviors which are likely to occur again within a predictable time period—in essence, giving form to content” (Norton, 1983, p. 47). Moreover, communicator style is defined by the following characteristics: It is observable, multifaceted, multi-collinear (meaning that style variables are not dependent on each other), and variable (but sufficiently patterned) (Norton, 1983). Norton’s definition further identified 10 subconstructs (independent variables on his Communicator Style Measure scale) that describe facets of communicator style including: friendly, impression-leaving, relaxed, contentious/argumentative, attentive, precise, animated/expressive, dramatic, open, dominant, and communicator image. These various style subconstructs are described as follows: A friendly communicator gives positive feedback to recognize, encourage, and reinforce others. Impression-leaving style is characterized by leaving a memorable impression on others. Relaxed style is characteristic of individuals who appear calm and have a collected manner of interacting, even in tense situations. Contentious communicators possess an argumentative style, often challenging others and requiring them to prove their stance on a subject (Norton, 1983, pp. 62-74).

Additionally, the attentive subconstruct of the style measure is illustrated as listening to others carefully as well as providing effective verbal and nonverbal feedback cues such as eye
contact and head nods. Persons with a precise style communicate in a specific and unambiguous manner. Animated communicators are distinguished by constant gestures and facial expressions. Dramatic speakers act out information both physically and vocally through jokes, stories, and exaggerations. Persons with an open style of communication disclose personal information and express emotions more freely. Finally, dominant communicators are characterized as taking charge of social situations, speaking frequently, and controlling situations (Norton, 1983, pp. 62-74).

The last subconstruct on Norton’s CSM scale is communicator image (which is closely related to the self-perceived independent variables of assertiveness and responsiveness in the current study). According to Norton (1978), “Communicator image is a person’s opinion or perception of his or her own communicative ability—hence, this is an evaluative response that may be viewed as either positive or negative” (p. 58). Used as a self-measurement tool, the SCO measures instructor image or self-perception of the assertiveness and responsiveness dimension of communicative behavior.

The concept of socio-communicative style/orientation (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990) is an amalgam of a variety of methods used to qualify communicator style patterns including Norton’s (1978) theory of communicator style that described communicator as a set of constructs; Bem’s (1974) characterization as aspects of masculine and feminine communication behaviors; and finally categorized as assertiveness, responsiveness, and versatile communicative behaviors by Lashbrook (1974) and Merrill and Reid (1981). Socio-communicative style/orientation refers to a communicator’s skill in initiating, adapting, and responding to the communication patterns/behaviors of others as is typically measured via two dimensions: assertiveness and responsiveness (Thomas, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1994). A dual-use scale,
socio-communicative style is the use of such communicative behaviors as perceived and measured by others; socio-communicative orientation is the perceived use of such communicative behaviors by the individual—a measure as perceived by the self (Anderson and Martin, 1995).

The assertiveness dimension of Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale refers to an individual’s communication behaviors that reflect a willingness to speak for one’s self and one’s ideas. Adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of assertiveness include defends own beliefs; is independent; has a strong personality; is forceful, assertive, and dominant; is willing to take a stand; acts as a leader; is aggressive and competitive (Allen et al., 2008). Kearney (1984) argued that highly assertive teachers are more effective in the classroom; they are more task-oriented and driven towards excellence in the college classroom. Additionally, assertive communication, regardless of context, is highly valued and elicits positive results (Kearney, 1984). Furthermore, assertive instructors are perceived as more immediate and direct and thus recognized as communicatively competent (Thomas, 1994).

Additionally, the responsiveness dimension of Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale refers to the degree in which an individual’s communication behaviors reflect sensitivity to others and their feelings. Adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of responsiveness include helpful, responsive to others, sympathetic, compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others, sincere, gentle, warm, tender, and friendly (Allen et al., 2008). Highly responsive instructors are more effective in their teaching practices, utilize more relationally immediate behaviors, and are thus perceived as more communicatively competent (Kearney 1984; Thomas, 1994).
The assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of Socio-communicative Style/Orientation have been applied to studies that correlate instructor socio-communicative style (the measure assertiveness and responsiveness behaviors as perceived by others) to such aspects as student affect toward teacher and course material (Wanzer & McCroskey, 1998); student learning and motivation (Hellman, 2003); student trust (Wooten & McCroskey, 1996); and student perceptions of instructor credibility and situational motivation (Martin, Chesebro, & Mottet, 1997).

In a classroom setting, the communicative behavior of the instructor has a significant influence and thus affects students’ perceptions of the instructor. McCroskey et al. (2004) correlated the influence of instructor communication behaviors with student perceptions and evaluations. Their research concluded that instructors who were more nonverbally immediate, assertive, and responsive yielded more positive instructional outcomes. Additionally, instructional communication scholarship asserts that effective instructors most often demonstrate relaxed, impression-leaving, friendly, and dramatic style constructs (Andersen, Norton, & Nussbaum, 1981; Norton & Nussbaum, 1980). Furthermore, instructors’ who more liberally use the friendly, attentive, and relaxed style constructs are rated more favorably by students. Conversely, instructors who more liberally use the dominant and contentious style characteristics are rated less favorably by students (Potter & Emanuel, 1990).

In addition to addressing effective instructor communication behaviors correlated to instructor communication style, instructor communicator style has been shown to be positively correlated to students’ communication motives (Myers, Mottet, & Martin, 2000), affect student evaluations of instructors (Scott & Nussbaum, 1981) and ultimately affect student learning outcomes (Andersen et al., 1981). Furthermore, communicator style scholarship reports that
students’ perceived learning is attributed to perceived instructor communicator style. Reported styles that are perceived to affect learning include impression leaving, relaxed, friendly, open, attentive, and dramatic (Andersen et al., 1981; Kearney & McCroskey, 1980; Myers & Horvath, 1997; Nussbaum & Scott, 1979; Scott & Nussbaum, 1981).

Finally, Javidi, Downs and Nussbaum (1988) contended that award-winning teachers (teachers awarded outstanding teacher awards) use more of a dramatic style in the classroom, whereas non award-winning teachers do not. Conclusively, from a style perspective, Norton (1983) noted that “ineffective teachers are those who are “not very lively or animated, do not signal enough attentiveness or friendliness, do not have a precise style, are not very relaxed, and do not use a dramatic style” (p. 238).

Much literature clearly reflects the students’ perceptions and response to instructor communication behaviors, and such perceptions and responses are important to advance because classroom communication is transactional and reciprocal. However, the objective of the present researcher was to examine the instructors’ own perceptions of their communicative behavior via the SCO scale and thus indicate a self-report of instructor job satisfaction. With this, the researcher determined whether a significant correlated relationship could be identified between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction.

With instructor communicator style and job satisfaction in mind, one final point about communication style should be noted: Anderson, Martin, and Riddle (2001) posited that an employee’s communicative style can influence a number of outcome variables, including job satisfaction and commitment. Using aspects of Norton’s (1978) communicator style theory, Anderson et al. (2001) reasoned that Norton’s relaxed, friendly, and attentive communicative behaviors represented an opened communication in employee relationships. With this
supposition in mind, Anderson et al. (2001) assessed that relaxed, friendly, and attentive communicator styles relate positively to organizational satisfaction and commitment.

The current study furthered the findings of Anderson et al. (2001) regarding scholarship in communication behaviors as positive correlates to job satisfaction in an educational context. This study asked the following: Is there a significantly positive correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction? Subsequently, to answer this question, the researcher must further ask: What is the strength of the relationship between the dual dimensions of assertiveness and responsiveness and instructor job satisfaction? The following section describes a variety of variables that have been positively correlated with instructor job satisfaction.

Instructor Job Satisfaction

Instructor job satisfaction is created by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Rhodes, Neville & Allan, 2003). Intrinsic motivators are closely aligned with the aspect of motivation in Herzberg’s motivational theory. Leading determinants of satisfaction in the teaching profession include such intrinsic motivators as the actual work—the practice of teaching—(Truell, Price, & Joyner, 1998) as well as the positive interaction and contact teachers have with students (Burgoon, Stern, and Dillman, 1995; Gilchrist, 2000). According to Mottet (2002), “students’ verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors clearly influence how teachers perceive them and how teachers perceive their own teaching effectiveness, teaching satisfaction, and their own motivation to teach” (p. 15).

In addition, teacher self- and collective-efficacy are cited as positive, intrinsic, factors leading to teacher job satisfaction (Bandura, 1977; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Borgogni, & Steca, 2003; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teacher self-efficacy refers to teachers’ belief that they can
positively influence student learning outcomes. Conversely, teacher collective efficacy refers to a teacher’s belief in the teaching profession as a whole and its overall ability to influence educational outcomes (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Other intrinsic factors of teacher satisfaction include collected teacher skills and abilities (Chapman & Lowther, 1982) trust in pupils (Van Houtte, 2006), autonomy (Kim, Twombly, & Wolf-Wendel, 2008) and overall teaching competence (Ma & MacMillan, 1999).

Secondary determinants of instructor satisfaction include such extrinsic factors as pay, promotion, and job security (Rhodes et al., 2003), which are closely aligned aspects of hygiene within Herzberg’s motivational theory.

Leading determinants of dissatisfaction in the teaching field include stress, low salary, and amount of time spent on non-teaching duties (Plax, Kearney, & Downs, 1986). In addition, difficulties with administrators, inconsistent support staff, excessive clerical/paperwork, and lack of recognition for a “job well done” are cited as top reasons for job dissatisfaction in teaching (Chapman & Lowther, 1982).

Demographic studies conclude that female teachers are more satisfied than males (Bogler, 2005; Ma & MacMillan, 1999; Chapman & Lowther, 1982). Although demographics such as age, education level and seniority fail to adequately explain variances in teacher satisfaction (Bogler, 2005) length of service showed decreased satisfaction (Ma & MacMillan, 1999).

Providing a synthesis of research regarding predictors of instructor job satisfaction, Hoyle, Thompson, and McNamara (1997) compiled a listing of empirical findings as contained in the first 26 volumes Educational Administration Quarterly regarding a variety of predictor variables as related to instructor job satisfaction. Predictor variables occurring more than 10
times were gender (30 times), age (27), organizational size (18), length of tenure in current position (16), role ambiguity (15), absenteeism (14), travel time to work (14), salary (13), satisfaction with pay (13), role conflict (12), school level (12), absence-reporting method (12), and rule observation (10). Hoyle et al. (1997), add that, of all the predictor constructs listed, approximately half are of a demographic nature, and the remainders are organizational in nature (p. 19).

As the Hoyle et al. (1997) meta-analysis demonstrates, interpersonal/relational communication variables that may serve to predict or explain levels of instructor job satisfaction are not examined. Such a gap suggests that additional scholarship regarding relational communication variables research in an education context is warranted. In an attempt to bridge this gap, the completed study answered the question: Is there a significantly positive correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction?

Summary

The preceding literature review discusses tenets of instructor communicator style and relative effects of that style in the classroom. In addition, instructor job satisfaction is described from a situational/organizational and demographic perspective. Because instructional communication scholarship is limited as pertains to personality constructs, disposition, or communicator style of the instructor as determinants of job satisfaction, this study expanded current literature by examining the relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction.

Much literature examines not only instructor use of communicator style, but student reaction and/or perception of such style behaviors. In this transactional process, instructor
communicator style is a dispositional characteristic that subsequently has the ability to influence instructor satisfaction.

As instructor communicator style appears to be an integral part of the transactional communicative component of teaching, this study thus expands on that notion by answering the guiding question of inquiry: Is there a significantly positive correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction? By determining the strength of the relationship between the distinct dimensions of instructor communicator style, assertiveness and responsiveness, Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the methodology used in this investigation.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this study, the researcher answered the following guiding research question: Is there a significantly positive correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction? In answering that question, the researcher determined (a) the strength of the relationship between the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction and (b) the strength of the relationship between the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction.

This chapter includes a discussion of the research design, population and sample, power analysis, and instrumentation implemented within the study. Additionally, data collection and data analysis procedures are specified.

Research Design

This inquiry followed a non-experimental, quantitative, ex post facto design using self-reporting survey instruments. Quantitative research methods were used in this study to determine whether a set of perceived behavioral factors, in this case, communicator style, are correlated with instructor job satisfaction. With quantitative research methodologies, the researcher attempted to draw conclusions about a certain population using a small sample drawn from that specific population (Gall et al., 1996), which was appropriate for this investigation. To determine if a significantly positive correlated relationship exists between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction, participants completed a one-shot survey design that consisted of a single observation at one fixed point in time (Trochim, 2006). Additionally, descriptive statistics presented demographic information of the sample population.
Population

According to the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement (1998), “Community college faculty receive scant attention from postsecondary researchers—or worse, are simply dismissed as a separate, and by implication lesser, class of college professors” (p. 43). As community college faculty populations are an underrated, yet a valuable research commodity, the target population of this study was community college faculty.

The mission of community colleges across the U.S. is to provide access to higher education to all those who may benefit from postsecondary educational training; to offer transfer, vocational, remedial, and academic programs; and, in as much, to do so at the 2-year level (Twombly and Townsend, 2008). By the fall of 2003, 43% of all full- and part-time faculty members in public, nonprofit higher education institutions were in public community colleges (“Almanac,” 2005).

For community college faculty, the emphasis of work is on teaching, the average teaching load being five 3-hr courses per semester as reported in 2004 (Townsend & Rosser, 2007). With that, consistently reported is the fact that approximately two thirds of community college faculty members are employed on a part-time basis. However, Twombly and Townsend (2008) emphasize that full-time faculty conduct the bulk of the teaching load (p. 12).

From a national perspective, the community college professoriate is reported as evenly divided between men and women, mostly Caucasian, and, on average, 50 years of age. While some community college faculty members retain doctoral degrees, the standard academic credential is typically a master’s degree with 18 graduate hours in the teaching field. Career and technology education (CTE), or vocational and technical fields such as allied health, drafting,
welding, generally require the baccalaureate degree or less, when combined with work experience in the teaching field (Townsend & Twombly, 2007).

Regarding teaching areas, Levin et al. (2006) concluded that the majority of full- and part-time faculty members nationwide (47%) teaches in the liberal arts, while approximately 40% teach in professional areas (e.g., business and nursing), 8% in vocational areas, and 4% in developmental education (Levin et al., 2006).

As the sample for this study was garnered from a Texas community college, a closer look at the Texas community college faculty population is warranted. According to the Texas Public Community and Technical Colleges 2005 Statewide Factbook, pertaining to gender, of the 30,959 Texas community college faculty members who taught during the 2003-2004 academic year, 50.4% are male and 49.6% are female. The average faculty member is 48 years of age, and has taught for 7 years, including 6 years at their current college. In addition, regarding degrees held, faculty members holding a doctorate comprised 12% of all faculty. Faculty with master’s degrees represent 56% of the faculty, and those with bachelor degrees represent 17% of the faculty. Those faculty members with associate’s degrees represent 6% while those with a certificate comprise 1%. Finally, regarding faculty status, 70% of faculty members are part-time, while 30% are full-time for the entire year.

Community college faculty demographic data from national as well as state sources are included for the purpose of generalizability. As the sample population demographic data of this study is comparable to national and state demographics, the results of this study should be generalizable to faculty at similar academic institutions across the nation as well as the state of Texas.
Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 110 teaching faculty at Vernon College, a multi-campus northwest Texas community college in Wichita Falls, TX. Like its institutional counterparts in the academic world, Vernon college provides instruction in core academic coursework that transfers to 4-year colleges and universities; educates students for careers in a variety of allied health and technical fields; provides customized training to business and industry; offers personal enrichment courses to students of all ages; and presents theater, choral, and athletic programs of interest to the entire community (Vernon College, 2009).

The current study utilized two survey instruments firmly based in communication scholarship: the Socio-communicative Orientation Measure advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1990) and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT) constructed by Plax et al. (1986). Running a preliminary power analysis with an arbitrary effect size of .30 (medium) and a level of significance at .05, the power of the study is .950. Such a return indicated that the researcher, with 111 participants completing and returning the survey instrument, had a speculated 95% chance (a probability of .950) of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is false. The sample return rate yielded 110 usable surveys for this study.

Instrumentation

Communicator style has been conceptualized and measured in a variety of fashions. Robert Norton defined communicator style as “the way in which one verbally and ‘paraverbally’ interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted or understood” (1978, p. 99). Adapting Norton’s groundbreaking theories in communication style, Kearney and McCroskey (1980) developed a 36-item Likert-style measure to determine the extent to which both the inherent characteristics of assertiveness, responsiveness, and versatility impacted affective
learning and behavioral commitment. Finally, Richmond and McCroskey (1990) adapted the work of Kearney and McCroskey (1980), developing a 20-item measure of assertiveness and responsiveness behaviors, the Socio-communicative Style/orientation Scale (SCO).

As a self-report measure (as the instrument is used this case), the instrument assesses the way in which an individual perceives his/her own communication behavior, or socio-communicative orientation. Used as an “other-report” measure, the instrument assesses how others perceive the person’s communication behavior—or socio-communicative style (McCroskey & Richmond, 2000; Thomas et al., 1994).

Used as a self-report measure, the socio-communicative orientation measure lists 20 personality characteristics and asks respondents to rate on a Likert scale how well they perceive that each personality trait describes them. Descriptors used to identify varying degrees of assertiveness include defends own beliefs; is independent; has a strong personality; is forceful, assertive and dominant; willing to take a stand; acts as a leader; is aggressive and competitive (Allen et al., 2008). Descriptors used to identify varying degrees of responsiveness include helpful, responsive to others, sympathetic, compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others, sincere, gentle, warm, tender, and friendly (Allen et al., 2008).

Regarding reliability, scores for the SCO appear to be internally consistent. Previous studies report reliability coefficients ranging from .83 to .91 for the assertiveness dimension and from .83 to .93 for the responsiveness dimension (Anderson & Martin, 1995; Patterson & Beckett, 1995; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990; Wooten & McCroskey, 1996). In the current study, a Cronbach’s alpha was performed for reliability, generating a .82 reliability coefficient for the assertiveness dimension and .85 for the responsiveness dimension. Compared to
reliability coefficients from prior studies, this analysis revealed internal consistency for the SCO within the current study as well.

The concept of instructor job satisfaction has historically been aligned with general theories of job satisfaction that are based on worker attitudes toward pay, their coworkers, and working conditions. However, Plax et al. (1986), creators of the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT) theorized that a teacher’s job satisfaction is garnered primarily from classroom experiences; hence, they developed the SAT. The SAT is composed of six questions, three which measure teacher satisfaction regarding the teaching profession and three that measure satisfaction regarding interaction with students.

Because the SAT asks six questions that fall into an ordinal pattern with responses including, very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied/somewhat dissatisfied, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied, each response is given a numerical value. Very satisfied is scored as 5 down to Very dissatisfied which is scored as a 1.

In a study performed by Plax et al. (1986), alpha reliability estimates were reported as .88 and .85 for the teaching aspect and .85 and .86 for the student aspect. Furthermore, when the SAT was scored as “one-dimensionally,” reported reliability estimates were .76 and .91. A Cronbach’s Alpha was performed for the SAT as well, generating a .75 reliability coefficient. Compared to reliability coefficients from prior studies, this analysis does not confirm internal consistency for the SAT within the current study. Desired reliability coefficients are generally .80 and above (Henson, 2001). A discussion for improving the reliability coefficient is included in the “Implications” section of this study.

Plax et al. (1986) offered validity of the SAT, noting a significant relationship between the satisfaction dimensions and teachers’ use of behavior alteration techniques. They
summarized that teachers may be “more or less satisfied as a function of their abilities to effectively manage students” (p. 385).

The SAT may be treated as a single measure of teachers overall satisfaction, or, as two related measures of satisfaction, one toward teaching and one toward students Plax et al. (1986). For the purpose of the current study, the researcher implemented the SAT as a single measure of overall instructor satisfaction.

Data Collection Procedures

Approval to conduct the study at Vernon College was received from Instructional Dean Gary Don Harkey. Official permission to conduct the study based on guidelines set forth in the application was received from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Texas.

One hundred twenty paper-and-pencil surveys were distributed to Vernon College faculty during a required 2010 staff development seminar. Faculty completed the surveys voluntarily, 113 were successfully returned, and of those, 110 were used in the data calculation of the study, yielding a 94% response rate.

Data Analysis

Regression was the statistical measure used in this study. Regression analysis is used when the researcher wants to learn more about the relationship between several independent variables and a dependent, or criterion, variable (Gall et al., 1996). To determine if instructor communicator style can explain instructor satisfaction, the dual dimensions of the SCO, assertiveness and responsiveness, acted as the independent/impact variables and reported teacher satisfaction acted as the dependent variable. Specified at the .05 level of significance, the statistical significance test for the analysis implemented the $R$, which reported the statistical
power of the variance between the independent/impact variables (the dual dimensions of instructor communicator style) and the dependent/criterion variable (instructor job satisfaction).

Beta weights, structure coefficients, and commonality analysis were used to further clarify the regression results in this study. As multiple predictor variables are complex with respect to their effects on the impact variable, full examination is warranted for accurate interpretation, especially when the predictor variables are highly correlated, thus displaying multicollinearity. However, the beta weight and structure coefficients are many times never computed or omitted from the analysis altogether (Courville & Thompson, 2001; Leach & Henson, 2007; Nimon, Gavrilova, & Roberts, 2010).

In addition, many researchers tend to singularly explore the impact of beta weights for the respective predictors/variables in their studies. However, this methodology is appropriate only when the predictor variables are perfectly uncorrelated. Consequently, the failure to analyze structure coefficients in conjunction with beta weights may cause inaccurate interpretation in regression as well, especially when multicollinearity is present between predictors/variables (Tong, 2006).

Commonality analysis was the final layer of interpretation regarding the regression effects within this study. According to Nimon (2010), beta weighs and structure coefficients provide valuable insight regarding regression effects, however they are remiss in revealing a complete and conclusive analysis. In conjunction with an examination of beta weighs and structure coefficients, commonality analysis provides a conclusive interpretation of the regression effects, fully explaining aspects such as the loci and effects of suppression, and multicollinearity (p. 10). Effectively, according to Thompson (2006), commonality analysis partitions regression effects into constituent, non-overlapping segments. Nimon (2010) clarified
that this partitioning process produces both unique and common effects. Further, unique effects reveal how much variance is unique to an observed variable. In contrast, common effects reveal how much variance is common to two or more variables in a given analysis (p.11). Both the unique and common effects respective to the variables of assertiveness and responsiveness are included in Chapter 4 of this study.

While commonality analysis adds an additional and valuable perspective when interpreting regression effects, Nimon, Lewis, Kane, and Haynes (2008) concur that few researchers actually implement the process, adding that manually computing commonality coefficients is labor intensive. A discussion of the regression commonality analysis as it relates to the initial regression results, beta weights, and structure coefficients is provided in Chapter 4 of this study.

Regarding effect size, this study employed a “strength of association indices.” According to Ferguson (2009), “strength of association indices” estimates the shared variance between two or more predictors/variables. Within this type of analysis, the most commonly used strength of association measure is $R$, which indicates the degree of shared variance between two variables. Ferguson (2009) recommended that, when an $MR$ and $MR^2$ are used where a small to moderate effect size is expected, an effect size estimate between .2 and .5 is in order (p. 532). Thus, the effect size computed was the recommended .30, or moderate effect size in this study.

Additionally, with regression analysis, several statistical assumptions were addressed, including normal distribution of variables; an assumed linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables; reliability of variables (reported without error); and an assumption of homoscedasticity (Osborne & Waters, 2002). An initial scatter plot analysis was conducted to visually confirm the assumptions of a normal distribution and linear relationship.
between the variables. A simple inspection of the regression output as calculated by SPSS determined whether the variables were reliable.

As noted by Osborne and Waters (2002), the assumption of homoscedasticity was addressed. Homoscedasticity simply means that the variance of errors is the same across all levels of the independent variable. If the variance of error differs, heteroscedasticity is evident. Slight variance is acceptable; however when heteroscedasticity is significant, the analysis may be seriously weakened. As suggested by Osborne and Waters, this researcher addressed the assumption of homoscedasticity by visual examination of a plot of the standardized residuals as indicated by the regression standardized predicted value via the SPSS readout analysis.

Summary

In this investigation, the researcher implemented both the Socio-communicative Orientation Scale (SCO) advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1990) and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT) constructed by Plax et al., (1986) to answer the following question: Is there a statistically significant positively correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction? To that end, the researcher measured the strength of the relationship between the dual dimensions of assertiveness/responsiveness of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction. Demographic information was collected for generalizability purposes. The recommended effect size of .03 was established and the assumptions of a regression analysis were considered.

A regression analysis was conducted in an attempt to determine statistical significance among the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction. To further clarify the study’s results, beta weights and structure coefficients were examined, and a regression commonality analysis was examined. Chapter 4
presents a discussion of the statistical output of the data and implications of the results of the study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if instructor communicator style is a relevant factor that can explain instructor job satisfaction. The study employed both the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (SCO) advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1990) and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT) as advanced by Plax et al., (1986).

Survey data were collected from 110 faculty members at Vernon College, a multi-campus North Texas community college. Participants voluntarily completed a “one-shot” paper-and-pencil survey during a campus wide faculty development seminar. The processed data concluded that the assertiveness dimension of the SCO is not correlated to instructor job satisfaction. However, the responsiveness dimension is positively correlated to instructor job satisfaction. Chapter 4 further reviews the data assessment, descriptive statistics, statistical assumptions, and data analyses relevant to answering the current research objective: Is there a statistically significant positively correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction?

Data Assessment

This inquiry followed a non-experimental, quantitative, ex post facto causal-comparative design. After data collection and analysis, the researcher used regression analysis to determine the impact, or relationship, of the independent variable (instructor communicator style) to the dependent variable (instructor job satisfaction). To determine such relationship, the dual dimensions of instructor communicator style, assertiveness and responsiveness, acted as the independent/impact variables examined in regard to instructor satisfaction, the
dependent/criterion variable. Specifically, regression analysis was implemented to measure the strength of the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of instructor communicator style separately in ratio to job satisfaction.

Descriptive Statistics

Data collected from the sample population included demographic characteristics categorized by gender, age, faculty status (full-time or part-time), instructional area of expertise, and preferred mode of course delivery (in-class, Internet, hybrid, ITV). Additional categorized population characteristics included level of education and years of teaching experience.

One hundred twenty paper-and-pencil surveys were distributed to faculty during a required fall 2010 college-wide staff development seminar at Vernon College. Of those surveys distributed, 113 were successfully returned, and of those, 110 were used in the data calculation of the study. Of the 110 faculty successfully surveyed, 45 were male and 65 were female. Seventy-one reported as full-time faculty status and 39 reported as part-time/adjunct status.

Additionally, of the 110 faculty surveyed, 73 reported as academic instructors (core course instructors in English, mathematics, history and speech) whereas 37 reported as career technology education (CTE) (certification instructors in such areas as nursing, allied healthcare, welding, automotive and heating/cooling and air conditioning instruction).

Furthermore, when asked how long they had been in the teaching field, 34 reported as having been in the teaching field between 0-5 years; 58 reported being in the teaching field 6-20 years; and 17 reported being in the teaching field 21 years and up. One respondent left the “years of service” question unanswered.

When asked the preferred mode of instruction, 91 preferred the face-to-face method; 5 preferred Internet-based instruction; and 13 preferred a hybrid approach (a portion of the
instruction online and a portion devoted to classroom instruction). One respondent left the “preferred mode of instruction” question unanswered. Interestingly, no faculty member surveyed preferred the interactive television mode (ITV) of instruction.

Finally, when asked the highest degree obtained, 15 had completed an associate’s degree; 15 had completed a bachelor’s degree; 69 had completed a master’s degree; and 9 had completed a doctoral degree. Two respondents left the “highest degree obtained” question unanswered.

Table 1

Demographics of Sample, N=110

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Information</th>
<th>Sample Information</th>
<th>Sample Percentage</th>
<th>State Percentage†</th>
<th>National Percentage‡</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-20 years</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 years and up</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree Received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unanswered</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†As per the Texas Public Community and Technical Colleges 2005 Statewide Factbook.
‡ As per ASHE 2007 Higher Education Report
** Average years of teaching is reported as 7 years. Information is not broken down further.
As the demographics of the sample are reported and evaluated comparably against state and national demographic data (see Table 1), this study’s results are not generalizable across any other populations other than community college instructors across the nation.

Regarding the measures, scores for the SAT and each dimension of the SCO (assertiveness and responsiveness) were calculated to determine means and standard deviation. An independent samples $t$-test was employed via Excel to generate descriptive statistics for each construct. The SAT is an ordinal-scaled measure consisting of six questions (three regarding satisfaction with teaching and three regarding satisfaction with students), with 5 being the highest score for each question (see Table 2). Treated as a single measure of teachers’ overall satisfaction, this study reported a mean score of 3.9 with a $SD = .5$. A prior study by Plax et al. (1986) reported a mean score of 4.39 and a $SD = .63$ (p. 383). The summary statistics reported for SAT in Plax et al. were scaled by a factor of 5. The statistics reported here have removed that scaling factor.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCO</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCO</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, descriptive statistics for both the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of the SCO are identified in Table 2. Each dimension has a possible score of 50 for
each participant. In this study, a mean score of 37.2 was reported for the assertiveness dimension with a $SD = 5.9$. For the responsiveness dimension, a mean score of 41.2 was reported with a $SD = 5.1$ (see Table 2). A prior study by Myers (1998) reported a mean score of 37.09 with $SD = 8.45$ for the assertiveness dimension and a mean score of 36.4 with $SD = 10.55$ for the responsive dimension (p. 8).

Finally, a correlation between all three variables is included. The correlation matrix (see table 3) primarily reveals that there is no relationship/overlap between the independent variables of assertiveness and responsiveness. This primary finding is discussed further via a commonality analysis in the Data Analysis section.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ASST</th>
<th>RESP</th>
<th>SAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ASST</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESP</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAT</strong></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>.458</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation is significant at the .05 level (one-tailed).

**Statistical Assumptions**

Because this study employs regression analysis, several assumptions follow, including (a) normal distribution of variables; (b) an assumed linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables must exist; (c) reliability of variables (reported without error); and (d) an assumption of homoscedasticity (Osborne & Waters, 2002).
Addressing these assumptions, an initial scatter plot analysis was conducted to visually confirm the assumptions of a normal distribution and linear relationship between the variables. A simple inspection of the regression output as calculated by SPSS determined whether the variables are reliable.

Regarding the reliability assumption, a Cronbach’s alpha was performed for reliability, generating a .82 reliability coefficient for the assertiveness dimension and .85 for the responsiveness dimension. Compared to reliability coefficients from prior studies of .83 to .91 for the assertiveness dimension and from .83 to .93 for the responsiveness dimension (Anderson & Martin, 1995; Patterson & Beckett, 1995; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990; Wooten & McCroskey, 1996), this analysis revealed internal consistency for the SCO within the current study as well.

Similarly, a Cronbach’s alpha was performed for the SAT as well, generating a .75 reliability coefficient. Compared to reliability coefficients from prior studies, .76 and .91 (Plax et al., 1986), this analysis could not confirm internal consistency for the SAT within the current study. A minimum .80 reliability coefficient is recommended to confirm internal consistency (Henson, 2001). Implications for this reliability limitation are discussed in the Implications section of Chapter 5.

Finally, as noted by Osborne and Waters (2002), the assumption of homoscedasticity was addressed. Homoscedasticity simply means that the variance of errors is the same across all levels of the independent variable. If the variance of error differs, heteroscedasticity is evident. Slight variance is acceptable; however when heteroscedasticity is significant, the analysis may be seriously weakened. As suggested by Osborne and Waters (2002) this researcher addressed the
assumption of homoscedasticity by visual examination of a plot of the standardized residuals as indicated by the regression standardized predicted value via the SPSS readout analysis.

Following along with such statistical assumptions, both dimensions of the SCO scale were measured against mean SAT scores as reported in the collected survey data. Via Excel, both assertive and responsive scores were matched against SAT scores in an attempt to determine whether a linearly related pattern was evident. A scatter plot analysis revealed a slight linear relationship between the assertiveness dimension of the SCO and SAT scores. Such a linear analysis suggests that, as the assertive dimension and satisfaction are parallel, a relationship between the variables may exist (see Figure 1).

An additional scatter plot analysis identified a slightly more positive linear relationship between the responsiveness dimension of the SCO and SAT scores than did the assertiveness dimension. Again, such a linear analysis suggests that, as the dimension of responsiveness increases, job satisfaction appears to increase slightly as well (see Figure 2).

In essence, both the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of the SCO appeared to have a linear relationship with satisfaction scores. Furthermore, with a slightly positive relationship between the responsiveness dimension and satisfaction scores, a slightly positive
linear relationship was evident between responsiveness variable of instructor communicator style and instructor satisfaction. However, as the graph reflected, the plots are not completely, positively linear, so a more statistical investigation was in order.

![Satisfaction Scores vs. Responsiveness Scores](image)

*Figure 2. Scatter plot analysis: Responsiveness dimension of the SCO Related to Satisfaction.*

**Data Analysis**

For the current study, a regression analysis was implemented comparing both dimensions of the SCO independently with the SAT. Beta weights, structure coefficients, and commonality analysis were used to further interpret and clarify the results. Initially, regression results revealed that instructors’ assertiveness dimension of the SCO does not significantly explain job satisfaction, $\beta = .002$, $t = -0.017$, $p > .05$. In contrast, instructors’ responsiveness dimension of the SCO does significantly explain job satisfaction, $\beta = .342$, $t = 3.759$, $p = .000$ (see Table 4).

Additionally, the $MR$ value recorded as .342; the $MR^2$ value then being .12, $p < .001$, meaning that 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction can be explained by the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style (see Table 4). Hence, a statistically significant positive relationship between the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction was established both visually and statistically.
Further regarding $MR$ and $MR^2$, regression analysis also revealed an adjusted $MR$ ($MR^2_{adj}$) of .10 of as well (see Table 4). By estimating the amount of error variance that may accompany future studies (due to smaller sample size, more predictors, larger samples, less predictors, etc.), the adjusted R (corrected effect size) may more accurately determine the effect size and thus, aid in generalizability of future replication research of this study (Leach & Henson, 2007). In essence, all things being remotely equal, a researcher replicating the current study might expect 10-12% variance of instructor communicator style explaining instructor job satisfaction as per the $MR^2$ and $MR^2_{adj}$ as reported by the regression analysis in this study.

Table 4

Regression Results for the ASST/RESP Dataset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$MR$</th>
<th>$MR^2$</th>
<th>$MR^2_{adj}$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Unique</th>
<th>Common</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>$% MR^2 (r^2_s)$</th>
<th>Unstandardized B Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASST</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>-0.017</td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESP</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>3.759</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.116</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.1167</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>2.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance level is $\alpha = .05$.

Beta weights and structure coefficients were considered in this study as well. Regression results reported a beta weight ($\beta$) of -0.002 and structure coefficient ($r^2_s$) of 0.009 for the assertiveness dimension—a near zero or negligible effect on the impact/criterion variable. This additional examination of the beta weight ($\beta$) and structure coefficient affirms that the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is not a contributor to instructor job satisfaction. (see Table 4).

Regression further reported a beta weight ($\beta$) of .342 and structure coefficient ($r^2_s$) of 1.0 for the responsiveness dimension—a significant effect on the impact/criterion variable. This additional examination of the beta weight ($\beta$) and structure coefficient affirms that the
responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is a significant contributor to instructor job satisfaction (see Table 4).

Implementing a commonality analysis via SPSS as advanced by Nimon (2010) was the final layer in interpreting the regression effects. Commonality coefficients for the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style reveal a .0000 for unique effects and a .0001 for the common effects. As unique effects reveal how much variance is exclusive to an observed variable, the .0000 clarifies that less than .01% of the 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction is attributed to the assertiveness dimension of the SCO. Additionally, the .0001 commonality coefficient generated for the common effects between assertiveness and responsiveness clarify that there is no overlap or interaction between the two variables (see Table 4).

Commonality coefficients for the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style reveal a coefficient of .116 for the unique effects and a coefficient of .0001 for the common effects. As unique effects reveal how much variance is exclusive to an observed variable, the .116 coefficient clarifies that 12% of the variance in job satisfaction is due to the responsiveness dimension of the SCO. Additionally, the .0001 commonality coefficient generated for the common effects between responsiveness and assertiveness further clarifies that there is no overlap or interaction between the two independent variables in this study (see Table 4).

Finalizing the commonality analysis, the unstandardized coefficient B 0.000 for the assertiveness dimension (see Table 4) affirmed that the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is not a contributor to instructor satisfaction when the responsiveness variable is held constant. However, the unstandardized coefficient B 0.033 of the responsiveness dimension of instructor satisfaction concluded that, as the responsiveness dimension of instructor
satisfaction increases by 1 point and assertive dimension is held constant, instructor satisfaction increases by 0.033 points.

Furthermore, with an unstandardized coefficient B of 0.00 for the assertiveness dimension of instructor satisfaction, an unstandardized coefficient B of .033 for the responsiveness dimension, and a constant/baseline (which acts as an anchor for the scores), a practical satisfaction equation is as follows:

\[
\text{Satisfaction} = 2.526 + 0 \text{ ASST} + .033 \text{ RESP}
\]

Summary

The objective this initial exploratory analysis was to determine if instructor communicator style can explain instructor job satisfaction. Preliminary scatter plot graphing of the survey data implied that a slight linear relationship existed between both the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of the SCO, respectively, to SAT levels. Upon additional investigation, regression analysis reflected that the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is not correlated to instructor satisfaction. However, the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is positively correlated to instructor satisfaction. From the statistical analysis, we can further conclude that the responsiveness dimension is significant at the 0.01 level.

An examination of beta weights and structure coefficients with respects to each variable, assertiveness and responsiveness, was conducted and confirmed the initial regression analysis results. A commonality analysis concluded that the variables in the study are mutually exclusive, clarifying that no interaction or overlap exists regarding the regression results.

Conclusively, instructor communicator style, with respect to the responsiveness dimension, can explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction. Such an analysis
concludes that higher responsiveness behaviors impact instructor satisfaction in a positive manner; hence, instructor communicator style serves as a statistically significant descriptor regarding instructor job satisfaction. A practical satisfaction equation resulted as well.

Chapter 5 serves to provide a synthesis and discussion of the research findings and offers recommendations for further research. In addition, implications for practice of the study findings are advanced.
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Because the communication process is integral to a teaching/learning environment, the guiding purpose of the preceding study was to determine if instructor communicator style could explain instructor job satisfaction. To determine whether a significant relationship exists between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction, the study employed both the Socio-communicative Orientation Scale (SCO) advanced by Richmond and McCroskey (1990) and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT) as advanced by Plax, et al., (1986). Data was collected from 110 faculty members at Vernon College, a multi-campus North Texas Community College. Participants voluntarily completed a “one-shot” paper-and-pencil survey during a required campus-wide faculty development seminar.

A regression analysis was conducted in an attempt to determine statistical significance among the assertive and responsive dimensions of instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction. Beta weights, structure coefficients, and a commonality analysis were implemented to further clarify the results. Conclusively, instructor communicator style, with respect to the responsiveness dimension, can explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction. Hence, instructor job satisfaction, with respect to the responsiveness dimension, is a statistically significant contributor to instructor job satisfaction. Chapter 5 provides a synthesis of the research findings, a discussion of those findings, and recommendations for further research. In addition, this chapter provides implications for practice of the study findings.
Synthesis of Findings

An initial scatter plot visual analysis indicated that a linear relationship existed between both dimensions of instructor communicator style and instructor satisfaction. Additional investigation via regression analysis concluded that the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style does not contribute to instructor satisfaction. However, the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is a statistically significant predictor of instructor job satisfaction at the .01 level (having a calculated p-value of .000, with a level of significance initially established at the .05 level). Thus, the responsiveness dimension is able to explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction. Conclusively, regression analysis confirmed that instructor communicator style, with respects to the responsiveness dimension, is a statistically significant in explaining instructor job satisfaction.

An analysis of beta weights, structure coefficients clarified the regression results. Commonality analysis revealed that there is no overlap or interaction between the two independent variables in this study. A prior study by Thomas et al. (1994) reported that the dual dimensions of the SCO are in fact non-collinear, or uncorrelated. Thomas et al. (1994) report that the unique dimensions of assertiveness and responsiveness are in fact orthogonal in nature, meaning that they are mutually exclusive and there is no correlation between the dimensional scores (p. 111). In the current study, the examination of beta weights and structure coefficients, in conjunction with a commonality analysis, confirmed this mutually exclusive, uncorrelated relationship between the dual dimensions of assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions as measured by the SCO.

Finally, with an unstandardized coefficient B of 0.00 for the assertiveness dimension of instructor satisfaction, an unstandardized coefficient B of .033 for the responsiveness dimension,
and a constant/baseline, a practical satisfaction prediction equation (regression equation) emerged:

\[
\text{Satisfaction} = 2.526 + 0 \times \text{ASST} + .033 \times \text{RESP}
\]

This study concludes that instructor communicator style, with regards to the responsiveness dimension of the SCO, explains 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction and is subsequently a statistically significant correlate of instructor job satisfaction.

**Discussion**

This study acted as an initial exploratory analysis regarding instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction. While personality constructs have been correlated to job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2002), there is little research linking communicator style to job satisfaction. This study has attempted to fill that gap in the teaching field. Reflecting on the Delimiters as reported in Chapter 1, the researcher deems this a successful venture in that the minimum number of participants required for the survey sample was 111—and 110 actually were surveyed; the return rate of the surveys was higher than expected because the researcher collected surveys in a controlled yet voluntary environment, and established, reliable survey instruments were implemented.

Regression analysis was implemented to answer the guiding research question, “Is there a statistically significant positively correlated relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction?” As with this study, regression analysis is most often used when a researcher wants to learn more about the relationship between several independent, or predictor variables, and a dependent, or criterion, variable (Gall et al., 1996). Because communicator style (as measured by the SCO) is a multi-dimensional concept including aspects of assertiveness and
responsiveness communication behaviors, the strength of those dimensions was measured separately in ratio to job satisfaction.

Initial regression analysis determined that the assertiveness dimension of instructor satisfaction is not a contributor to instructor job satisfaction. The assertiveness dimension refers to an individual’s communication behaviors that reflect a willingness to speak for one’s self and one’s ideas. Referencing earlier citations in this research, the variety of adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of assertiveness include defends own beliefs; is independent; has a strong personality; is forceful, assertive, and dominant; is willing to take a stand; acts as a leader; is aggressive and competitive (Allen et al., 2008).

Kearney (1984) argued that highly assertive teachers are more effective in the classroom, more task-oriented, and more driven towards excellence in the college classroom. Additionally, assertive communication, regardless of context, is highly valued and elicits positive results (Kearney, 1984). Furthermore, assertive instructors are perceived as more immediate and direct and, thus, are recognized as communicatively competent (Thomas, 1994).

Weaver (2005) maintained that a strong link exists between self-perceptions of personality and self-perceived communicator styles. Weaver (2005) likened such assertive communication behaviors with a psychoticism personality type—one which exhibits more of a socially callous, contentious communicator style. The psychoticism personality type is aligned with a more “non-competent” communicative style/orientation as posited by Anderson and Martin (1995). Furthermore, instructors who more liberally use the dominant and contentious style characteristics from the assertiveness dimension are rated less favorably by students (Potter & Emanuel, 1990). With this discussion in mind, while an important aspect in classroom
management, it is not surprising that the assertiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is not a significant contributor to instructor job satisfaction.

Additionally, regression analysis determined that the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is a statistically significant correlate of instructor job satisfaction. Able to explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction, instructor communicator style, with respects to the responsiveness dimension, is also a statistically significant correlate of job satisfaction in terms of practicality. The responsiveness dimension of communicator style refers to the degree in which an individual’s communication behaviors reflect sensitivity to others and their feelings. Referencing earlier citations in this research, the variety of adjectives/descriptors used to describe varying degrees of responsiveness include helpful, responsive to others, sympathetic, compassionate, sensitivity to the needs of others, sincere, gentle, warm, tender, and friendly (Allen et al., 2008).

From a personality perspective Weaver (2005) argued that extraverted personalities endorse a more expressive and supportive (responsive) communication style. Such extraverted personalities that endorse both an expressive and supportive communicator style are aligned with a “competent” communicative style/orientation as posited by Anderson and Martin (1995).

Furthermore, instructors who more liberally use the friendly, attentive, and relaxed style constructs from the responsiveness dimension are rated more favorably by students (Potter & Emanuel, 1990). Finally, research in the area of the relational teaching approach—which is closely aligned with the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style—posits that, when teachers implement a variety of competent communication strategies and behaviors, job satisfaction increases (Graham et al., 1992). With this discussion in mind, it is not surprising that
the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is a significant contributor to instructor job satisfaction.

Finally, as reported in the Limitations section of Chapter 1, the current research design could not adequately control for other extraneous variables that may account for instructor satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Many variables impact instructor satisfaction as evidenced earlier in this inquiry. Intrinsic qualities mediating instructor satisfaction cited earlier include teacher self- and collective-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Caprara et al., 2003; Gibson & Dembo, 1984); collective teacher skills and abilities (Chapman & Lowther, 1982); trust in pupils (Van Houtte, 2006); instructor autonomy (Kim et al., 2008) and overall teaching competence (Ma & MacMillan, 1999). Extrinsic determinants of instructor satisfaction cited earlier include such factors as pay, promotion, and job security (Rhodes et al., 2003).

As reported in this analysis, instructor communicator style, with respect to the responsiveness dimension, can explain 12% of the variance in within instructor job satisfaction, and thus, is a statistically significant predictor of instructor job satisfaction. With all the other cited variables that may act as determinants of instructor job satisfaction, this researcher reasons that a 12% variance in explaining instructor job satisfaction may be as prominent as any other determining variable. Future research examining instructor job satisfaction may be able to answer such a hypothesis.

The preceding analysis supports the conclusion that instructor communicator style, with respect to the responsiveness as measured by the SCO within this study, can explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction. Thus, instructor communicator style is positively and statistically correlated variable with regard instructor job satisfaction (as measured by the SAT). As positively correlated from a practical perspective, findings regarding the relationship between
instructor communicator style, with respect to the responsiveness dimension, and instructor job satisfaction could have an impact on both future research options as well as practical implications in the field of teaching.

Recommendations for Future Research

This inquiry acted as an initial exploratory study, in essence, determining whether instructor communicator style in any way can impact or explain instructor job satisfaction. Specifically, this inquiry adds value to the dispositional/personality scholarship in the area of job satisfaction, supporting the idea that an instructor’s communicator style is significantly correlated to instructor job satisfaction. Furthermore, the preceding inquiry adds value to scholarship in the independent areas of communication studies, educational research, and organizational/job satisfaction analysis. While this inquiry satisfactorily answered the research objective, recommendations for further research are apparent. The following discussion notes the assertions for further study by this researcher.

As previously stated in the Limitations section of Chapter 1, this study was confined to surveying the faculty at a single North Central Texas community college—Vernon College in Wichita Falls, Texas. Hence limiting the study to such a small sample greatly decreased the generalizability of the ultimate product. Because the previous study used a limited convenience sample, a replication study using a more stratified sample is strongly recommended. For example, Vernon College belongs to the North Texas Community College Consortium, a network of over 25 community colleges in North Central Texas. A replicated study using this or similar networks that might include university populations would provide a much broader, more generalizable research product than results garnered from a singular institution.
In this study, the assertiveness dimension was determined not to be correlated with instructor job satisfaction (p-value of .986 set against a significance level of .05). As noted earlier, lower correlation values, that is, values not determined as statistically significant, can still be meaningful and have practical significance (Gall et al., 1996). With this in mind, previously cited scholarship, regardless of context, reported assertiveness communication behaviors as highly valued and eliciting positive results (Kearney, 1984). Additionally, assertive instructors are perceived as more immediate and direct and, thus, are recognized as competent communicators (Thomas, 1994).

Conversely, Weaver (2005) associated assertive communication behaviors with a psychoticism personality type—one which exhibits more socially callous, contentious communicator behavior and is thus more aligned with a “non-competent” communicative style/orientation, as posited by Anderson and Martin (1995). With this discussion in mind, further inquiry into the impact of assertive communication behaviors in relation to instructor satisfaction may be warranted.

In addition to recommending a more stratified sampling technique with replicated studies, as well as further inquiry regarding the assertiveness dimension with regards to instructor satisfaction, this researcher recommends further inquiry regarding instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction in the form of an ANOVA. Implementing the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to measure in a study that examined the communication motives of assertive and responsive communicators, Anderson and Martin (1995) performed a median split of both the assertiveness and responsiveness items and thus categorized instructors into four specific socio-communicative styles/orientations. Those styles/orientations include:
competent (high assertive, high responsive); non-competent (low assertive, low responsive); aggressive (high assertive, low responsive); and submissive (low assertive, high responsive).

Because such specific communicative styles/orientations exist based on a median split categorization, this researcher’s analysis was only able to determine that (a) assertiveness is not a contributor to instructor job satisfaction and (b) the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style is positively correlated to instructor communicator style. Thus, results from this study would seem to suggest that only the responsiveness dimension can predict job satisfaction. However, Anderson and Martin’s analysis surmised otherwise, suggesting that both high assertive, high responsive scoring on the SCO garners a “competent” communicator. With this example in mind, additional research implementing an ANOVA, combined with a more stratified sample, is suggested that correlates each style/orientation as advanced by Anderson and Martin (1995) to instructor job satisfaction. A possible research question/hypothesis is as follows:

R1: Can specific instructor socio-communicative style/orientation (competent, non-competent, aggressive, and submissive) predict instructor job satisfaction?

H1: No differences will occur in instructor job satisfaction based on instructor socio-communicative style/orientation.

In addition, as demographic information was collected from participants with this study (i.e. gender, faculty status, instructional area of expertise, and preferred mode of course delivery, level of education, years of teaching experience), further research using such demographics as instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction may be warranted. Examples of research questions/hypotheses based on demographic information might include but are not restricted to the following:
R2: Based on gender, how does instructor communicator style relate to/impact/or predict instructor job satisfaction?

H2: There will be no statistically significant difference between gender categories and instructor communicator style as related to instructor job satisfaction.

R3: Based on faculty status (full time/adjunct), how does instructor communicator style relate to/impact/or predict instructor job satisfaction?

H3: There will be no statistically significant difference between faculty status and instructor communicator style as related to instructor.

R4: Based on area of instructional expertise, how does instructor communicator style relate to/impact/or predict instructor job satisfaction?

H4: There will be no statistically significant difference between areas of instructional expertise and instructor communicator style as related to instructor job satisfaction.

R5: Based on years of teaching, how does instructor communicator style relate to/impact/or predict instructor job satisfaction?

H5: There will be no statistically significant difference between years of teaching and instructor communicator style as related to instructor job satisfaction.

R6: Based on favored method of course delivery (i.e., in-class vs. online delivery), how does instructor communicator style relate to/impact/or predict instructor job satisfaction?

H6: There will be no statistically significant difference between favored methods of course delivery and instructor communicator style as related to instructor job satisfaction.
Finally, a continued/ongoing analysis via case study may be warranted. A continued or ongoing analysis would entail communication skill workshops emphasizing assertive and responsive communication skills delivered as instructor staff development exercises/applications. After certain intervals of time, periodic examination using both the Socio-communicative Style/Orientation Scale (SCO) and the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (SAT) would be implemented in an attempt to determine whether such workshops tend to increase assertive and responsiveness scoring among faculty and subsequent impact on instructor job satisfaction.

The preceding discussion includes several recommendations for further research including replication with a more stratified sample and further inquiry regarding the assertiveness dimension of communicator style and its subsequent impact on instructor job satisfaction. Also advanced is a supplementary in-depth analysis that considers demographic implications as related to instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction and a continued/ongoing analysis via case study to determine the nature of the relationship between instructor communicator style and instructor job satisfaction over a period of time. In addition to the various recommendations for further research regarding instructor communicator style as related to instructor job satisfaction, implications for practice are noted in the next section.

Implications for Practice

Because communication is an integral component of the teaching/learning environment, effective communication strategies are essential. Routinely, instructors in higher education are recruited for their subject matter expertise, not for their communication/delivery skills. Hence, the most practical impact of this study comes in the form of competent classroom application.

Initial regression analysis determined that the assertiveness dimension of instructor satisfaction is not a contributor to instructor job satisfaction. However, this study determined that
instructor communicator style, with respect to the responsiveness dimension, is able to explain 12% of the variance in instructor job satisfaction, and with all other extraneous variables influencing instructor satisfaction, instructor communicator style may be as prominent as any other. Additionally, in regards to practical significance, the responsiveness dimension of instructor communicator style, is directly related to relationship building in an educational context.

As reported in the Instrumentation section of Chapter 3, a Cronbach’s alpha was performed for the SAT, generating a .75 reliability coefficient. Desired reliability coefficients are generally .80 and above (Henson, 2001). Future researchers may consider re-examining the instrument and consider omitting certain items on the SAT survey instrument that contribute to such a low reliability coefficient.

With omission of items on the survey in mind to improve reliability, the SAT is composed of six questions, three which measure satisfaction regarding the teaching profession and three that measure satisfaction regarding interaction with students. As students are a “fluctuating” variable, future researchers may consider omitting the three questions that pertain to satisfaction regarding interaction with students. By using only the questions that solely measure satisfaction regarding the teaching profession, the reliability coefficient of the SAT may increase in future replicated studies.

Regarding practicality and implications for instructor communications style as it relates to instructor satisfaction, this researcher must acknowledge instructional communication competence. The practicality of this study points to effective and competent communication behaviors and their subsequent impact in educational contexts. Because the instructor-student dyad is an interpersonal relationship that involves social influence (Mottet, Frymier, & Beebe,
2006), communication competence is a critical aspect of such influence in an educational context. Furthermore, the appropriate use of a variety of communications behaviors by an instructor elicits perceptions of competence by students, thus producing satisfaction among all participants.

In identifying award-winning, competent teaching practices, participants in a study conducted by Worley, Titsworth, Worley & Cornett-DeVito (2007) contended that, with all else considered in the teaching environment—which includes but is not limited to knowledge, assessment, and adapting to students—effective communication skills are paramount to content. While content is certainly important, it is directly tied to communication behaviors. In essence, award-winning teachers use a wide variety of communication behaviors.

Effective, competent classroom communication behaviors (both verbal and nonverbal), elicit immediacy and connection with students. Such communication behaviors contribute to motivation, engagement, effective classroom interaction and climate, and affective and cognitive learning outcomes as well as class attendance (Ellis, 2000; Kerssen, Griep, Hess, & Trees, 2003; Chen, 2000)

Providing instructors with additional communication skill sets as well as sharpening existing skill sets adds to an instructor’s communicative delivery alternatives. Workshops emphasizing the intersection of assertive and responsive communication skills will help create more dynamic and satisfying interaction in the classroom, thus impacting student performance, motivation, and engagement. Enhanced student interaction and performance outcomes in turn affect instructor satisfaction. Furthermore, satisfied employees are more productive and happy employees, and providing instructors with such additional communicative tools/options for delivery and interaction can only contribute to increased satisfaction and productivity.
Summary

The purpose of the preceding study was to determine whether instructor communicator style is significantly correlated to instructor job satisfaction. The present analysis determined that instructor communicator style, with regard to the responsiveness dimension, can explain 12% of the variance of instructor job satisfaction. Furthermore, a practical satisfaction equation (regression equation) emerged.

While the objective of this inquiry was successfully achieved, recommendations for further research, including replication and extension of the existing research, have been advanced. Finally, the researcher discussed implications for classroom application/practice including skill set workshops emphasizing assertiveness and responsiveness training as these concepts relate to instructional communication competence.
Please circle all that apply regarding your personal and professional experience in teaching:

1. Gender
   Male  Female

2. Faculty status
   Full-time  Part-time

3. Area of Instruction
   Academic  Workforce

4. Number of Years Teaching Experience
   0-5 years  6-10 years  11-20 years  21+ years

5. Preferred mode of instruction
   Face-to face  Internet  Hybrid/Blended  Interactive TV

6. Highest Degree Obtained
   Associates  Bachelors  Masters  Doctorate
REFERENCES


