

Human Communication. A Publication of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association.
Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 451 – 464.

The Impact of Communication Traits on Leader-Member Exchange

Paul E. Madlock
West Virginia University

Matt, M. Martin
West Virginia University

Leah Bogdan
West Virginia University

Melissa Ervin
West Virginia University

Paul E. Madlock is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Communication Studies at West Virginia University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Paul E. Madlock, West Virginia University, Department of Communication Studies, P.O. Box 6293 108 Armstrong Hall WVU, Morgantown, WV 26506-6293. Telephone: (304) 293-3905 office (304) 293-8667 fax. E-mail: pmadlock@mix.wvu.edu. Co-authors: Dr. Matt Martin PhD., Chair of the Department of Communication Studies at West Virginia University, Leah Bogdan & Melissa Ervin MA West Virginia University.

A version of this study was presented at the 2007 Eastern Communication Conference. The manuscript is not considered for publication at any other journal.

Abstract

The current study examined the effects of communication traits on quality of leader-member exchange (LMX) with the goal of supporting and extending prior LMX research. Specifically, the study examined subordinates' self-reported traits of communication apprehension, affirming communicator style, and communicator competence, as well as their perceived quality of LMX. The findings demonstrated that the communication traits examined in the study were significantly related to LMX quality and that communication apprehension was found to be the greatest predictor of LMX quality. The findings indicate that trait research regarding leadership is relevant and continues to expand our understanding of the complexities and dynamic process between leadership and communication.

Key words: Leader-Member Exchange Theory, communication apprehension, affirming communicator style, socio-communicative orientation, cognitive flexibility, and communicator competence.

The Impact of Communication Traits on Leader-Member Exchange

Why is it that some employees appear to have a great relationship with their superiors while other employees appear to be alienated as a result of limited or low quality interactions with their superior? According to Graen, Dansereau, and Minami (1972), the relationship quality between a superior and subordinate can be determined by the quality of their communication exchanges. This notion forwarded by Graen et al. served as the basis for the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). Additionally, Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975) indicated that personality and the personal characteristics of individuals may influence the communication exchange process between superiors and subordinates in such a way that the quality of the LMX relationship is affected. Surprisingly, research examining the influence of personality characteristics, such as traits on the quality of LMX, has been limited. Even more surprising, given the communicative nature of LMX, research examining the influence of personal characteristics on the quality of LMX through a communication lens has been scarce.

One way of examining the influence of personal characteristics on LMX quality through a communication lens is by way of communication traits. Previous research by McCroskey, Heisel, and Richmond (2001) provided a link between personality and communication traits in which they examined the relationship between the big three personality dimensions and communication variables. Their findings indicated that extraversion was positively correlated with the communication variables of argumentativeness, tolerance for disagreement, self-acceptance, affect orientation, communication competence, immediacy, compulsive communication, assertiveness, and responsiveness and was found to be negatively correlated with touch apprehension, shyness, and communication apprehension. On the other hand, neuroticism was positively correlated with touch apprehension, shyness, and communication apprehension while being negatively correlated with immediacy, self-acceptance, assertiveness, and communication competence. Lastly, psychoticism was found to be positively correlated with argumentativeness, verbal aggression, and tolerance for disagreement while being negatively correlating with responsiveness.

With a link established between personality characteristics and communication variables, and in following with the notion forwarded by Dansereau et al. (1975) that personality and personal characteristics may influence LMX quality, the current study examined the influence of communication traits on LMX quality. Specifically, this study examined subordinates' self-reported communication traits of communicator competence (comprised of assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility), affirming communicator style (comprised of friendly, relaxed, and attentive communicator styles), and communication apprehension for their influence on the subordinates' perceptions of LMX quality with their superior, with the goal of determining which of the communication traits previously mentioned would serve as the greatest predictor of LMX quality between superior and subordinate. The specific communication traits were chosen for the current study because they represent different categories of traits such as communication apprehension (considered to be an apprehension trait), communicator style (considered to be a presentation trait), and communication competence (considered to be an adaptation trait). The variables of LMX, communicator competence, affirming communicator style, and communication apprehension are discussed in more detail below.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member Exchange Theory is based on the works of Dansereau et al. (1975), Graen and Cashman (1975), and Graen (1976), originally under the title of Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory. The central tenets of LMX pose that supervisors distribute resources (e.g.,

decision-making influence, tasks, and support) differently among their various subordinates based on the leader-member relationships that vary in degree of quality as a result of communication exchanges between the superior and subordinate (Graen et al., 1972).

Dansereau et al. (1975) suggested that in developing relationships with members, leaders form two groups based on the quality of their exchanges. The employees with high-quality exchanges were termed the “in-group” and are given preferential treatment by their leaders in the way of social support, trust, decision making, and influence. “Out-group” members, those subordinates who experienced low-quality leader-member exchanges, are not afforded preferential treatment and are met with little support from their superiors. Additionally, becoming a member of either the “in-group” or “out-group” is based on how subordinates involve themselves with expanding their role with their supervisor through communication and negotiation (Graen, 1976).

From a slightly different perspective, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), suggested that LMX should be evaluated by means of quality, not as a dichotomy of “in-group”–“out-group.” Further, Graen and Uhl-Bien suggested that LMX is actually on a continuum, with extremely high-quality relationships at one end and extremely low-quality relationships on the other end. As such, the quality continuum perspective posited by Graen and Uhl-Bien was the criterion utilized by the current study to evaluate LMX.

Prior research examining organizational outcomes as a result of high-quality LMX have indicated positive relationships with subordinate job satisfaction (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982), articulated dissent (Kassing, 2000), low turnover (Graen, Liden, & Hoel, 1982), and superior performance ratings (Liden & Graen, 1980). Subsequently, low LMX quality was found to be associated with high levels of defensive communication and burnout (Becker, Halbesleben, & O’Hair, 2005), low job performance ratings (Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska, & Gully, 2003), and low levels of communication satisfaction (Lamude, Scudder, Simmons, & Torres, 2004).

Despite the number of empirical investigations into the effects of LMX, there remains only scant attention devoted to communication or personality traits as potential antecedents of this phenomenon. Prior research examining the influence of personality traits on LMX quality has found cynicism to be negatively related to LMX quality (Kunze, 2006) whereas subordinate’s trait self-efficacy was found to be positively related to LMX quality (Schyns & von Collani, 2002). Fairhurst, Rogers, and Sarr (1987) found that supervisors and subordinates differed in quality of LMX relationships based on the supervisors’ dominance, with high levels of dominance being related to low-quality LMX. Additionally, Tierney, Farmer, and Graen (1999) found the personality characteristic of cognitive style to be positively related to LMX quality. The following sections highlight the traits included in the current study.

Communicator Competence (Assertiveness, Responsiveness, and Cognitive Flexibility)

Communicator competence is an adaptation trait, in which there are countless labels, appellations and definitions to accompany it. However, relevant to the current study, the conceptualization of communicator competence forwarded by McCroskey and Richmond (1996) was used. This conceptualization asserts that in order for a person to be perceived as a competent communicator they must possess the ability to be assertive, responsive, and versatile/flexible. Given this definition, it would appear that subordinates who are communicatively competent would be more likely to engage in quality communication exchanges with their superiors. The following will offer a greater understanding as to each of the three elements that define a competent communicator, beginning with flexibility.

Flexibility is a person's ability to view situations from differing ways in order to adapt to the situational requirements (Bochner & Kelly, 1974) and is the opposite of dogmatic, rigid, and unyielding behaviors (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). According to Parks (1994), flexibility is a critical component of communicator competence, whereas Martin and Rubin (1994) noted that in order for a person to be flexible, first the person must be cognitively flexible.

Prior research findings indicate that cognitive flexibility was positive related to assertiveness, responsiveness, and self-efficacy (Martin & Anderson, 1998), interpersonal communication competence (Rubin & Martin, 1994), collaboration (Dunleavy & Martin, 2006), and argumentativeness (Martin, Anderson, & Thweatt, 1998).

The additional two components of communicator competence were founded on the work of Bem (1974) and are considered to be a person's socio-communicative orientation (SCO), which is the way a person sees his or her own communicative behaviors of assertiveness and responsiveness (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Assertive individuals are described as dominant, independent, and competitive, contrary to responsive individuals who are described as empathic, friendly, helpful, and gentle (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990; Rubin & Martin, 1994).

A number of research studies have examined SCO in the instructional setting and to a lesser extent in the organizational context. One such study examining SCO in the organizational setting was that of Martin, Anderson, and Sirimangala (1999) whose findings indicated that competent communicators tended to use collaboration and control conflict strategies more than individuals seen as noncompetent. Another example of SCO in the workplace was that of McCroskey and Richmond (2000), whose research findings indicated positive relationships between subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' assertiveness and responsiveness and the supervisors' credibility and attractiveness, as well as the subordinates' attitude toward the supervisor and their communication with that supervisor.

Based on the literature reviewed, it would appear that subordinates who were competent communicators (assertive, responsive, and flexible) would likely engage in high-quality communication exchanges with their supervisor. Another variable to consider is that of affirming communicator style.

Affirming Communicator Style

Communicator style is referred to as a presentation trait, which according to Norton (1978), is "the way one verbally or paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meanings should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood" (p. 99). Norton identified 10 dimensions of communicator style of which Infante and Gorden (1981) and Montgomery and Norton (1981) considered friendly, relaxed, and attentive to represent an affirming communicator style.

Infante and Gorden (1989, 1991) conducted a number of studies examining the effects of affirming communicator style from both the superiors' and the subordinates' perspective. Specifically, findings indicated that the affirming communicator style of a superior resulted in greater levels of employee satisfaction and commitment (Infante & Gorden, 1991), whereas the affirming communicator style of a subordinate served as a predictor of the supervisor's satisfaction with that subordinate (Infante & Gorden, 1989).

As a result of the research examined, it would appear that subordinates who are affirming communicators (friendly, relaxed, and attentive) would experience high-quality communication exchanges with their supervisor. The final communication trait considered in the current study is that of communication apprehension.

Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension (CA) is an apprehension trait that is defined as "an

individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). McCroskey also noted that communication apprehension is typically considered an individual trait that is closely related to the constructs of shyness and reticence. Trait CA refers to a person's disposition to feel consistently anxious in a number of communicative experiences across time, situations, and contexts (McCroskey & Beatty, 1984; Richmond & Roach, 1992).

Research examining CA in the organizational setting has indicated that employees high in CA find occupations requiring less communication more desirable (Daly & McCroskey, 1975; Klopff & Cambra, 1979) and tend to hold positions such as support personnel (Shockley-Zalabak & Morley, 1984). During employment interviews, prospective employees high in CA talk less, look at the interviewer less, are less positive, and ask fewer questions than do individuals low in CA (Ayres, Keereetawee, Chen, & Edwards, 1998).

High CA individuals also find it more difficult to become and remain members of an organization (Richmond & Roach, 1992) and are perceived as less competent, less successful, require more training, and have difficulty establishing positive relationships with coworkers (Falcione, McCroskey, & Daly, 1977; McCroskey & Richmond, 1979). Once an employee high in CA establishes themselves in a position, they are perceived to be less productive, less likely to advance, and express lower job satisfaction and lower satisfaction with their supervisors (Richmond, McCroskey, & Davis, 1982; Richmond & Roach, 1992). Based on prior research findings in the workplace indicating a negative relationship between employee communication apprehension and organizational outcomes, it follows that there would be a negative relationship between a subordinate's communication apprehension and the quality of communication exchanges with their supervisors. Therefore, it would be expected that subordinates who are communication apprehensive would perceive a lower quality LMX relationship with their supervisor than non-communication apprehensive subordinates. Therefore, it would be expected that subordinates who are communication apprehensive would perceive a lower quality LMX relationship with their supervisor than non-communication apprehensive subordinates. As such the following hypotheses were advanced:

H1: There will be significant positive relationships between communicator competence (assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility), affirming communicator style (friendly, relaxed, and attentive), and LMX quality.

H2: There will be significant negative relationship between communication apprehension and LMX quality.

As such, the purpose of the study was to determine which of the previously highlighted communication traits reported by subordinates would serve as the greatest predictor of LMX quality between superiors and subordinates. Therefore, the following research question was advanced:

RQ: To what extent can subordinates' perceived quality of LMX be predicted based on the subordinates' reported communication apprehension, affirming communicator style (friendly, relaxed, and attentive), and communicator competence (assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility)?

Method

Participants and Procedures

The participants were 202 working adults from a variety of organizations ($n = 104$, 51.5% male) and ($n = 98$, 48.5% female), whose overall tenure ranged from 1 to 37 years ($M = 6.0$, $SD =$

7.8). Eighty-three participants reported working for a female supervisor, 117 reported working for a male supervisor, and 2 did not respond. Participant age ranges included: 18-20 (16.3%), 21-25 (43.6%), 26-30 (11.4%), 31-40 (9.4%), and 41 years of age and older (19.3%). Participants reported working for a variety of organizations that included education (12.9%), government (4%), service (55.4%), high tech (3.5%), manufacturing (8.4%), and civil service (1.0%), with 14.9% reporting other. For organizational position, 4.5% reported holding top management positions, 12.4% middle management positions, 16.3% lower management positions, 56.4% non-management positions, and 10.4% reported other organizational positions.

Students enrolled in communication courses at a large Mid-Atlantic university contacted employees who participated in the study. The students were instructed to deliver the questionnaire to full-time working adults. Participants were approached in non-work settings so as to preserve the confidentiality of both the participants and their organizations. The questionnaire utilized for the study was comprised of a variety of instruments, including scales measuring subordinates' perceptions of their communication traits and their quality of LMX with their supervisor.

Measures

Leader-Member Exchange was measured by the 7-item LMX 7 Questionnaire (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Seers & Graen, 1984). The instrument was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale varying in seven differing response sets to match the original instrument. Cronbach's alpha for the current study was .91 ($M = 25.2$, $SD = 5.3$).

Communicator Competence was measured by the 20-item Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measure (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990) and the Cognitive Flexibility Scale (Martin & Rubin, 1995). The Assertiveness-Responsiveness instrument measures the perceptions of an individual's assertiveness and responsiveness. Ten items measure assertiveness and ten items measure responsiveness on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the current study for assertiveness was .85 ($M = 35.7$, $SD = 6.2$) and for responsiveness was .85 ($M = 39.4$, $SD = 5.1$). The Cognitive Flexibility Scale consists of 12 items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the current study was .82 ($M = 44.8$, $SD = 6.4$).

Affirming Communicator Style was measured by the friendly, relaxed, and attentive dimensions of the Communicator Style Measure (Infante & Gorden, 1981, 1989; Montgomery & Norton, 1981). The 12-item instrument was comprised of three four item measures of the dimensions of friendly, relaxed, and attentive. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the present study for friendly was, .73 ($M = 14.6$, $SD = 2.4$), for relaxed was .71 ($M = 13.4$, $SD = 2.9$), for attentive was .73 ($M = 14.0$, $SD = 2.4$), and for overall affirming communicator style was .83 ($M = 42.0$, $SD = 6.2$).

Communication Apprehension was measured by the PRCA-24 (McCroskey, 1982). The 24 items measure overall communication apprehension as well as apprehension in the contexts of groups, meetings, interpersonal, and public. The 24-item instrument was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The scale was recoded so that higher scores reflected higher levels of communication apprehension. Cronbach's alpha for the present study was .96 ($M = 56.2$, $SD = 14.7$).

Results

The first hypothesis predicted positive relationships between communicator competence (assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility), affirming communicator style (friendly,

relaxed, and attentive), and LMX quality. The second hypothesis predicted a negative relationship between communication apprehension and LMX quality. As shown in Table 1, Pearson correlations support both hypotheses.

Table 1: Correlations among Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 LMX	---						
2. Assertiveness	.363**	---					
3. Responsiveness	.145*	.150*	---				
4. Cognitive Flexibility	.450**	.321**	.193**	---			
5. Friendly	.302**	.378**	.346**	.268**	---		
6. Relaxed	.333**	.467**	-.028	.111	.322**	---	
7. Attentive	.395**	.417**	.302**	.421**	.658**	.475**	---
8. Communication Apprehension	-.574**	-.538**	-.175*	-.459**	-.449**	-.637**	-.509**

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

The research question asked which of the following communication traits self-reported by subordinates would be a stronger predictor of the subordinate's perceived LMX quality with their superior: communicator competence (assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility), affirming communicator style (friendly, relaxed, and attentive), or communication apprehension. Three separate multiple regression were conducted. First, LMX quality was regressed on a linear combination of assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility to determine which component of communicator competence was a greater predictor of LMX quality. Second, LMX quality was regressed on a linear combination of friendly, relaxed, and attentive to determine which component of affirming communicator style was a greater predictor of LMX quality. Third, LMX quality was regressed on a linear combination of assertiveness; responsiveness; and cognitive flexibility; friendly, relaxed, and attentive communicator styles; and communication apprehension to determine which predictor variable was a greater predictor of LMX quality.

Because preliminary analyses indicated that the predictor and/or criterion variables differed by participants' sex, supervisors' sex, participants' status, and organizational type, and that participants' overall tenure was related to the predictor and/or criterion variables¹, a block containing these variables were entered into the model first. For the first regression, variables of

¹ Preliminary analyses indicated that relaxed communicator style, $t(199) = 2.03, p < .05$; and responsiveness, $t(200) = -3.59, p < .05$, differed by participant sex. Relaxed communicator style $t(197) = 2.13, p < .05$; and attentive communicator style, $t(198) = 2.70, p < .05$, differed by superiors' sex. Cognitive flexibility, $F(4, 197) = 2.67, p < .05$; LMX, $F(4, 195) = 2.56, p < .05$, differed by organizational status. Assertiveness, $F(6, 195) = 2.84, p < .05$, differed by type of organization. The number of years of participants' work experience was related to LMX, $r = .18$.

communicator competence (assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility) were entered into the model in separate block on the second step.

Results of the first regression indicated that the addition of the communicator competence block, improved the model's ability to predict LMX quality, $\Delta R^2 = .23$, $F(3, 188) = 20.51$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .29$, $F(8, 188) = 9.45$, $p < .001$, with cognitive flexibility being a greater predictor of LMX quality, $\beta = .36$, $p < .001$, than was assertiveness, $\beta = .21$, $p = .002$, and responsiveness, $\beta = .08$, $p = .254$.

Results of the second regression indicated that the addition of the affirming communicator style block, improved the model's ability to predict LMX quality, $\Delta R^2 = .18$, $F(3, 187) = 14.81$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .24$, $F(8, 187) = 7.21$, $p < .001$, with attentive communicator style being the only significant predictor of LMX quality, $\beta = .29$, $p < .001$.

A final regression of LMX was performed beginning with a block containing the variables of participants' sex, supervisors' sex, participants' status, organizational type, and participants' tenure entered into the model first, followed by second block containing the variables of assertiveness; responsiveness; cognitive flexibility; friendly, relaxed, and attentive communicator styles; and communication apprehension were entered together in the aforementioned order. The results indicated that communication traits accounted for $\Delta R^2 = .36$, $F(7, 183) = 15.97$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .41$, $F(12, 183) = 10.70$, $p < .001$. Communication apprehension and cognitive flexibility were found to be the only significant predictors of LMX quality, with communication apprehension being a greater predictor of LMX quality than was cognitive flexibility. The standardized regression coefficients appear in Table 2.

Table 2: Standardized Regression Coefficients for the Research Question

	LMX Quality β
Participants' Sex	-.112
Participants' Tenure	*.127
Supervisors' Sex	.056
Org Status	.021
Org Type	.033
Assertiveness	.010
Responsiveness	.044
Cognitive Flexibility	*.205
Friendly Communicator Style	.034
Relaxed Communicator Style	.006
Attentive Communicator Style	.111
Communication Apprehension	*-.411

*Notes: Participants' Sex: male = 1, female = 2; Supervisors' Sex: male = 1, female = 2; Organizational Status: 1 = non-management, 2 = lower management, 3 = middle management, 4 = top management; Organizational Type: 1 = high tech, 2 = manufacturing, 3 = service, 4 = education, 5 = civil service, 6 = government, 7 = other. * $p < .05$; standardized regression coefficients are for the model in which all predictors are entered.*

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to support and extend prior research by examining subordinates' self-reported communication traits of communicator competence (comprised of assertiveness, responsiveness, and cognitive flexibility), affirming communicator style (comprised of friendly, relaxed, and attentive communicator styles) and communication apprehension, for their influence on subordinates' perceptions of LMX quality with their superior. The goal was to determine which of the communication traits previously mentioned would serve as the greatest predictor of LMX quality between superior and subordinate.

One way the current study supported prior research was through determining that personal characteristics, such as communication traits, did in fact influence LMX quality between superior and subordinate. The current study extended prior research through the determination of specific communication traits that were found to be significantly correlated with LMX quality.

The current study found that communication apprehension and cognitive flexibility were both significant predictors of LMX quality between superiors and subordinates. Communication apprehension was found to have the strongest negative relationship with LMX quality and was the greatest negative predictor of LMX quality, whereas cognitive flexibility was found to have the strongest positive relationship with LMX quality and was the greatest positive predictor of LMX quality between superiors and subordinates.

Specifically, subordinates who are communicatively apprehensive tend to have lower quality LMX relationships with their superiors than to those employees who are less apprehensive. This finding is important to scholarship in that it extends the notion forwarded by Graen (1976) that quality of LMX evolves through communication. As such, the current findings indicated that the influence of communication apprehension appeared to prevent a quality LMX relationship between superior and subordinate from occurring. The current finding is also of value because it extends the work of Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis (1982) by adding LMX quality to the number of negative outcomes as a result of communication apprehension.

To the contrary, subordinates who are cognitively flexible tend to experience greater quality LMX relationships with their superiors than subordinates who were less cognitively flexible. Importantly, this finding suggests that cognitive flexibility may facilitate the dyadic communication between supervisor and subordinate by providing the subordinate with the ability to adapt his or her communication to any variety of situations forwarded to them by their supervisor (Bochner & Kelly, 1974). Additionally, the current findings support the role of cognitive flexibility in Parks' (1994) hierarchy of competence in communication. Cognitive flexibility may offer a person the ability to adapt and advance from level to level through Parks' control hierarchy, thus allowing the person the capacity to achieve the highest level of communication competence possible, resulting in enhanced dialogue between supervisor and subordinate.

From a practitioner's point of view, the study suggests the positive outcomes associated with high quality LMX relationships such as job satisfaction (Fix & Sias, 2006), performance beyond the job requirements (Graen & Cashman, 1975), safety communication, safety commitment, and to accident prevention (Hoffman & Morgeson, 1999), and teamwork (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991, 1995) can be modified through communication. Thus, management training programs could therefore target specific communication traits in order to maximize the positive results of LMX quality and potentially have a positive impact on the bottom line.

A second point of importance relevant to the current study is the association between LMX quality and a self-managed workforce. According to Uhl-Bien and Graen (1991), high-quality LMX relationships promote an environment that is favorable to a self-managed workforce by creating an atmosphere in which subordinates are willing to go above the minimum job requirements and manage themselves. Thus, by examining LMX through a communication lens it allows organizational scholars and practitioners alike the ability to identify specific communication traits such as those examined in the current study, in order to advance the greatest opportunity to cultivate high quality LMX relationships and the possible advancement of self-managed teams.

Limitations and Future Direction

Although the current research study presented significant results with respect to the influence of subordinates' communication traits on LMX quality with their superior, it is not without limitations. One is that the current study did not include the perceptions of the superior. Future studies could expand upon this research by examining the perceptions of the superior. This point of view is valuable because superiors may evaluate this relationship quite differently and for different reasons than those forwarded by their subordinate.

References

- Ayres, J., Keereetaweep, T, Chen, P., & Edwards, R. A. (1998). Communication apprehension and employment interviews. *Communication Education, 47*, 1-17
- Becker, J. A. H., Halbesleben, J. R. B., & O'Hair, D. H. (2005). Defensive communication and burnout in the workplace: The mediating role of leader-member exchange. *Communication Research Reports, 22*, 143-150.
- Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 42*, 155-162.
- Bochner, A. P., & Kelly, C. W. (1974). Interpersonal competence rationale, philosophy, and implementation of a conceptual framework. *Speech Teacher, 23*, 279-301.
- Daly, J. A., & McCroskey, J. C. (1975). Occupational desirability and choice as a function of communication apprehension. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 21*, 309-313.
- Dansereau, F., Graen, G. B., & Haga, W. J. (1975). A vertical dyad linkage approach to leadership within formal organizations: A longitudinal investigation of the role making process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 13*, 46-78.
- Dunleavy, K. N. & Martin, M. M. (2006). A convergent validity study of the decision-making collaboration scale. *North American Journal of Psychology, 8*, 339-344.
- Fairhurst, G. T., Rogers, L. E., & Sarr, R. A. (1987). Social structure in leader-member interactions: Manager-subordinate control patterns and judgments about the relationship. *Communication Yearbook, 10*, 395-415.
- Falcione, R. L., McCroskey, J. C., & Daly, J. A. (1977). Job satisfaction as a function of employees' communication apprehension, self-esteem, and perceptions of their immediate supervisors. *Communication Yearbook, 1*, 363-376.
- Fix, B., & Sias, P. M. (2006). Person-centered communication, leader-member exchange, and employee job satisfaction. *Communication Research Reports, 23*, 35-44.
- Graen, G. B. (1976). Role-making process within complex organizations. In M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp.1202-1245). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Graen, G. B., & Cashman, J. (1975). A role-making model of leadership in formal organizations: A developmental approach. In J. G. Hunt & L. L. Larson (Eds.), *Leadership frontiers* (pp.143-166). Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- Graen, G., Dansereau, F., & Minami, T. (1972). Dysfunctional leadership styles. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 7*, 216-236.
- Graen, G. B., Liden, R. C., & Hoel, W. (1982). The role of leadership in the employee withdrawal process. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 67*, 868-872.
- Graen, G. B., Novak, M. A., & Sommerkamp, P. (1982). The effects of leader member exchange and job design on productivity and satisfaction: Testing a dual attachment model. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 30*, 109-131.
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1991). The transformation of professionals into self-managing and partially self-designing contributors: Toward a theory of leader-making. *Journal of Management Systems, 3*, 33-48.
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *Leadership Quarterly, 6*, 219-247.
- Hoffman, D. A., & Morgeson, F. P. (1999). Safety-related behavior as a social exchange: The role of perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange. *Journal of*

- Applied Psychology*, 84, 286-296.
- Infante, D. A., & Gorden, W. I. (1981). Similarities and differences in the communicator styles of supervisors and subordinates: Relations to subordinate satisfaction. *Communication Quarterly*, 30, 67-71.
- Infante, D. A., & Gorden, W. I. (1989). Argumentativeness and affirming communicator style as predictors of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with subordinate. *Communication Quarterly*, 37, 81-90.
- Infante, D. A., & Gorden, W. I. (1991). How employees see the boss: Test of an argumentative and affirming model of supervisors' communicative behavior. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 56, 294-304.
- Kacmar, K. M., Witt, L. A., Zivnuska, S., & Gully, M. S. (2003). The interactive effect of leader-member exchange and communication frequency on performance ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 764-772.
- Kassing, J. W. (2000). Investigating the relationship between superior-subordinate relationship quality and employee dissent. *Communication Research Reports*, 17, 58-69.
- Klopf, D., & Cambra, R. (1979). Apprehension about speaking in the organizational setting. *Psychological Reports*, 45, 58.
- Kunze, M. G. (2006). An examination of the linkages between personality, leader-member exchange, and experienced violation of the psychological contract. *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*, 66, 4093.
- Lamude, K. C., Scudder, J., Simmons, D., & Torres, P. (2004). Organizational newcomers: Temporary and regular employees, same-sex and mixed-sex superior-subordinate dyads, supervisor influence techniques, subordinates communication satisfaction, and leader-member exchange. *Communication Research Reports*, 21, 60-67.
- Liden, R. C., & Graen, G. B. (1980). Generalizability of the vertical dyad linkage model of leadership. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23, 451-465.
- Martin, M. M., & Anderson, C. M. (1998). The Cognitive Flexibility Scale: Three validity studies. *Communication Reports*, 11, 1-9.
- Martin, M. M., Anderson, C. M., & Sirimangkala, P. (1999). Subordinates' socio-communicative orientation and their use of conflict strategies with superiors. *Communication Research Reports*, 16, 370-376.
- Martin, M. M., Anderson, C. M., & Thweatt, K. S. (1998). Individuals' perceptions of their communication behaviors: A validity study of the relationship between the Cognitive Flexibility Scale and the Communication Flexibility Scale with aggressive communication traits. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 13, 531-540.
- Martin, M. M., & Rubin, R. B. (1994). Development of a measure of interpersonal communication competence. *Communication Research Reports*, 11, 33-44.
- Martin, M. M., & Rubin, R. B. (1995). A new measure of cognitive flexibility. *Psychological Reports*, 76, 623-626.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1977). Oral communication apprehension: A summary of recent theory and research. *Human Communication Research*, 4, 78-96.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1982). Communication competence and performance: A research and pedagogical perspective. *Communication Education*, 31, 1-7.
- McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The communication apprehension perspective. In J. A. Daly, J. C. McCroskey, J. Ayers, T. Hopf, & M. M. Ayres. (Eds.), *Avoiding communication: shyness, reticence, and communication apprehension* (2nd ed., pp. 13-38). Beverly Hills,

- CA: Sage.
- McCroskey, J. C. (2001). *An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication* (8th Ed). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Beatty, M. J. (1984). Communication apprehension an accumulated communication state anxiety experiences: A research note. *Communication Monographs*, *51*, 79-84.
- McCroskey, J. C., Heisel, A. D., & Richmond, V. P. (2001). Eysenck's BIG THREE and communication traits: Three correlational studies. *Communication Monographs*, *68*, 360-366.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1979). The impact of communication apprehension on individuals in organizations. *Communication Quarterly*, *27*, 55-61.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (1996). *Fundamentals of human communication: An interpersonal perspective*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2000). Applying reciprocity and accommodation theories to supervisor/subordinate communication. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *28*, 278-289.
- Montgomery, B. M., & Norton, R. W. (1981). Sex differences and similarities in communicator style. *Communication Monographs*, *48*, 121-132.
- Norton, R. W. (1978). Foundation of the communicator style construct. *Human Communication Research*, *4*, 99-112.
- Parks, M. R. (1994). Communication competence and interpersonal control. In M. L. Knapp & G. R. Miller (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (pp. 589-620). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (1990). Reliability and separation of factors on the assertiveness-responsiveness measure. *Psychological Reports*, *67*, 449-450.
- Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Davis, L. M. (1982). Individual differences among employees, management communication style, and employee satisfaction: Replication and extension. *Human Communication Research*, *8*, 170-188.
- Richmond, V. P., & Roach, K. D. (1992). Willingness to communicate and employee success in U.S. organizations. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *10*, 95-115.
- Rubin, R. B., & Martin, M. M. (1994). Development of a measure of interpersonal communication competence. *Communication Research Reports*, *11*, 33-44.
- Schyns, B., & von Collani, G. (2002). A new occupational self-efficacy scale and its relation to personality constructs and organizational variables. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *11*, 219-241.
- Seers, A., & Graen, G. B. (1984). The dual attachment concept: A longitudinal investigation of the combination of task characteristics and leader-member exchange. *Organizational Behavior & Human Performance*, *33*, 283-306.
- Shockley-Zalabak, P., & Morley, D. D. (1984). High apprehensiveness within the organization: How and with whom do they talk. *Communication Research Reports*, *1*, 97-103.
- Tierney, P., Farmer, S. M., & Graen, G. B. (1999). An examination of leadership and employee creativity: The relevance of traits and relationships. *Personnel Psychology*, *52*, 591-620.