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RUNNING HEAD: MANAGER-SUBORDINATE

The Rochester Institute of Technology

Department of Communication

College of Liberal Arts

The Relationship between Hotel Managers' Communication Styles and Subordinate

Employee Attitudes and Personal Relationships

By

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A paper submitted

In partial fulfillment of the Master of Science degree

in Communication and Media Technologies

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOTEL MANAGERS' COMMUNICATION STYLES AND SUBORDINATE EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

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Abstract

Assertiveness and responsiveness are two qualities managers must possess to maintain an organizational work environment with employees. Using McCroskey and Richmond's Assertiveness-Responsiveness test, subordinate employees' perceptions of their managers' communication styles were assessed to determine if there was any relationship with employee perceptions and personal relationships with managers. Subordinate employees at the Holiday Inn Rochester Airport and the RIT Inn and Conference Center served as a convenience sample. The results show that overall, employees like more responsive managers. Although statistically nonsignificant, assertiveness was positively related to having a good relationship. The results, overall, indicate that the assertiveness and responsiveness relate to one another in the fact that they do not overall affect the manager-subordinate personal relationship.

Keywords: assertiveness, responsiveness, employee relations, communicative style, subordinates, managers, supervisors, hotel industry

The Relationship between Hotel Managers' Communication Styles and Subordinate Employee Attitudes and Personal Relationships

A manager specifically exercises leadership through communication by interacting with groups to overcome barriers (Mezzacapa, 2000). Organizations depend on communication between managers and subordinates to achieve organizational success. According to Snow and Yanovitch (2003), "everything a person does is a potential communication tool and the more personalized the better" (p. 68). A manager personalizes communication through relational management. Creating personal relationships allows managers to balance cohesion, unity, and task management in a work setting. Recent research has called for managers to increase communication satisfaction between management and subordinates (Campbell, White, & Johnson, 2003).

In the hotel industry, several departments, such as housekeeping and food and beverage, make up part of the hotel unit in which managers delegate responsibility to their subordinate employees. Managers appear to take on leading roles because of their status within the company. A common assumption is that managers act as though their job title guarantees success as a manager (McNamara, 1997-2008). According to van Vuuren, de Jong and Seydel (2007), "through communication, information is shared to provide a fundamental understanding of the tasks that are to be performed as well as the goals to which the organization is striving" (p. 116). The reasoning does not guarantee good communication skills among all managers. At a minimum, a manager must be able to organize work processes and performance, delegate responsibility to employees and direct people from one task to another. To be effective, a manager would possess these organizational qualities and establish a relationship with their subordinates.

Two qualities managers must possess to maintain positive organizational settings are assertiveness and responsiveness. They must be able to stand up for themselves, be considerate to others, and be able to listen. One way to measure the degree to which managers possess these qualities is the Assertiveness-Responsiveness test which determines manager communication style (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990).

Assertiveness is defined as “the perceived effort a person makes to influence or control the actions and thoughts of others” (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990, p. 53). Assertiveness has proved to be a significant predictor of leadership (Bacon & Severson, 1986). Consequently, managers who are assertive in performing their duties are more likely to assume leadership roles. Having a more assertive character allows managers to demonstrate assertive behavior to their subordinates.

Responsiveness refers to a person’s ability to express feelings and emotions. Though it is a predictor of leadership, responsiveness is not as well recognized as assertiveness (Bacon & Severson, 1986). However, interacting with subordinates will influence employees’ attitudes of their managers because employees will experience more responsiveness and feedback.

Noted communication scholars McCroskey and Richmond previously investigated Management Communication Style (MCS) and reported that managers have habitual patterns of communication that affects how others perceived them (McCroskey & Richmond, 1979; McCroskey & Richmond, 1982). These patterns limit managers from having versatile communicative relationships. The socio-communicative orientation (SCO) and socio-communicative style (SCS) are instruments used to understand how individuals perceive their own communication behaviors and the behaviors of others (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). These are basic elements of communication competence. The SCS contains specific variables to

measure perceptions of assertiveness and responsiveness that can identify how managers communicate to their subordinate employees. Richmond and McCroskey (1990) developed the measurement to understand how subordinate employees perceived managers' communication styles.

A manager's ability to be assertive and responsive to their subordinate employees can be influenced by the manager-subordinate relationship. McCroskey (1996) concluded that students who felt their teachers were assertive and responsive had more personal trust in those teachers. Would the same relationship hold true with hotel employees and their managers? This study investigated how subordinate hotel employees perceive their manager's communication style and how the communication affects the manager-subordinate personal relationship. In an organization, a communication style must be enforced in order to be effective. A communication style would have to be consistent over time to take effect (McCroskey & Richmond, 1979).

The assertiveness-responsiveness measure of the Socio-Communicative Scale was used to measure how subordinates perceive their managers' communication styles (See Appendix A). McCroskey and Richmond's (1989) Generalized Attitude measure tests for attitudes on various subjects, and was used in this investigation to assess subordinate employees' attitudes regarding their personal relationship with their manager (See Appendix A). The following research question and hypothesis guide the investigation:

R1 What is the relationship between managements' communication style and subordinate employees' attitudes about their manager?

H1 Managers' responsiveness and the quality of personal relationship subordinates have with them are significantly and positively related.

Rationale

The study was designed to measure the relationship between subordinate employees' attitudes and their managers' communication style. Though previous research has been conducted that identifies socio-communicative style, this investigation breaks new ground. A common assumption is that managers believe they are natural leaders in their position. However, with evidence from subordinate employees, managers will not only understand their communication style, but discover subordinates' attitudes.

McCroskey and Richmond previously studied the relationship between assertiveness and responsiveness (1990, 2000). They determined the relationship between assertiveness and responsiveness was unclear. McCroskey (2000) indicated that each variable was independent of one another. The results were drastically different from one another and showed no relationship. The results vary because assertiveness and responsiveness perceptions depend on the manager-subordinate situation. The manager and/or the subordinate could be highly aggressive which would impact the perception. Meanwhile, the manager and/or subordinate could be calm in another situation. Ultimately, perceptions will vary making it difficult to discover a relationship. Testing for correlation between assertiveness and responsiveness will determine if a relationship exists between the two communication qualities.

Relationship-oriented behavior influences managers to improve their communication style by consistently communicating their concerns to their subordinates (Powers, 1991). In order to reach all subordinates, managers must be versatile with their approach. However, McCroskey (2000) reasoned that supervisors' and subordinates' communication styles tend to become similar. Powers (1991) found that subordinate employees do their jobs better when managers express concern for and interest with them. The study found that employees need managers to

communicate with them in order to improve job performance and satisfaction and concludes that with management interest or interaction, job performance will benefit organizational goals. Surveying subordinate employees' attitudes about their managers' communication can be measured using the Generalized Attitude measure (McCroskey & Richmond, 2006). Managers who have a versatile communication approach will benefit subordinate perceptions and improve the manager-subordinate relationship.

Another theory to consider is the population sample. There are a diverse number of people typically working in the hotel industry with extensive or little to no educational background. Weerakit (2007) claimed that if hotel managers understood the versatility in communication that must be demonstrated, managers would be more effective in the hotel industry's customer and employee competitiveness. Therefore, communicative competence will vary among each individual. Managers must then consider adjusting their communication approach to each individual. However, the point is to discover the communication styles in relation to the personal relationship. This investigation will determine if manager-subordinate relationship is more positive or negative in relation to the managers' communication behaviors.

Literature Review

When managers demonstrate effective communication behavior to their subordinate employees, they apply a communicator style through verbal and nonverbal behaviors. This is known as rapport management in which "language is used to manage social relations" (Campbell, White, & Johnson, 2003, p. 166). Campbell, White & Johnson's (2003) research suggests that manager-subordinate exchange involves greater levels of information exchange resulting in employees having a greater opportunity to participate in the management decision

process. Thus, the relationship improves. In this part of the communication process, subordinate employees are satisfied when managers have an open, friendly, calm and relaxed demeanor. For example, managers are assertive when they openly communicate with their employees and responsive when they can communicate in a friendly manner. Their versatile rapport management allows them to vary the communication style to reach all employees. Having an assertive and responsive manager-subordinate relationship will improve the overall organizational setting.

Much of James McCroskey's research centered on personal relationships. McCroskey (2000) investigated how managers relate to their subordinate employees and vice versa. When managers use techniques like rapport management to relate to their employees, they develop a personal relationship to improve the organizational communication. As well as personal relationships, assertiveness and responsiveness are two important qualities for managers to possess because they create opportunities to improve communication and develop a receptive relationship. McCroskey developed a method for respondents to measure these behaviors.

The Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measurement was the basis for McCroskey and Richmond's (2000) study on subordinate employee perceptions of supervisors' communication style. Full-time employees were surveyed, and it was determined that supervisor assertiveness was positively correlated to subordinate perceptions of their communication style. Manager responsiveness was also positively correlated to subordinate perceptions of supervisors' communication style. When managers are responsive to their subordinates and assertive about job performance, employees have a positive attitude about their managers' communication styles (McCroskey & Richmond, 2000). Employees who feel managers do not have these qualities are less inclined to report a positive outlook about their managers.

Based on a study conducted in a Southwestern financial institution, survey results showed that supervisors' receptiveness would improve the work motivation of subordinate employees (Penley & Hawkins, 1981). The survey asked respondents to rate the responsiveness of the supervisor to subordinate employees' questions and concerns, the degree to which supervisors are receptive to the idea of listening to subordinates, and the degree of praise supervisors give subordinates when they succeed. To achieve high levels of motivation, receptiveness means follow-up and communication. Not only must supervisors be receptive, they must address questions and concerns of their subordinates. Along with McCroskey & Richmond (2000), Penley and Hawkins (1981) discovered that job performance excels with proper feedback and responsiveness.

Managers who provide the proper receptiveness can evaluate individual subordinate's perceptions about the feedback subordinates receive (Quaglieri, 1981). A large eastern insurance company was surveyed on the feedback subordinates receive from managers about their job performance. Two questionnaires rated the frequency of receiving feedback and how effective the feedback was. The results indicate that employees receive feedback from their co-workers more frequently than managers. Therefore, McCroskey's Assertiveness-Responsiveness test will be useful to determine if managers are indeed assertive and responsive when they communicate. Quaglieri (1981) determined that supervisors should discuss specific task-oriented terms in order to evaluate job performance. Managers who can be assertive and receptive to their subordinates can further motivate subordinates to develop and ultimately improve the personal relationship that could affect subordinate attitudes about their managers' communication styles. Though Penley and Hawkins (1981) and Quaglieri (1981) have limitations to their study such as the

sample size, both tests held similar results which can be used as an example for the organizations.

Assertive and responsive managers can not only improve job performance, but improve employee instrumentality. Penley and Hawkins (1981) say instrumentality is “employees’ perceptions of the results of personal performance” (121). Employees feel better about their work and the good work reflects back to the managers. Ultimately, this improves the relationship between managers and subordinates. Employees who understand their managers’ communication style improve employee attitudes about their managers’ communication style.

In order to determine personal attitudes about subjects such as manager communication styles, McCroskey took another approach. McCroskey (2006) conducted several studies searching for people’s attitudes towards ideas such as Brazil, the Ku Klux Klan and capital punishment using the Generalized Attitude Measure. He generated their overall attitude. McCroskey then made a transition and conducted a study to measure subordinate attitudes of supervisors’ communication (Richmond & McCroskey, 2000). The reliability estimates were strong and hypotheses were generally supported. Therefore, knowing people’s attitude about different subjects, specifically employees’ relationships with their managers, will support whether or not the personal relationship is affected by managers’ communication style.

On the other hand, the first validity test of the Generalized Attitude Measure proved its face value when nine doctoral students who were trained and experienced in measurement examined the test. McCroskey failed to indicate where the other tests (capital punishment, Ku Klux Klan) were administered. Therefore, McCroskey’s test may be valid, but only with highly academic individuals. This could cause question on the validity of the Generalized Attitude test with hotel employees.

Though McCroskey reasoned that manager and subordinate communication styles may become similar over time, subordinate perceptions may not measure to be the same in this investigation. As McCroskey found (2006), assertiveness and responsiveness are not related. His research found no true relationship. However, because he found no relationship does not limit the outcome of this investigation. There is no intention of only proving a correlation between assertiveness and responsiveness. Rather, the issue is to also discover if managers that are more assertive or responsive have significant and positive or negative personal relationships with subordinate employees. So the personal relationship depends on manager communication style perceptions.

Managers use certain qualities to relate to their employees in order to develop a relationship. For example, Campbell and Martin (2001) used the Humor Orientation Scale to measure participant's perceptions of their immediate manager's production of humor. There was a positive relationship between employee perceptions of manager humor and responsiveness, but no relation between employee perceptions of humor and manager assertiveness. Managers attempted to use their humor to build a personal relationship. On the other hand, Wooten and McCroskey (1996) found that student perceptions of their teachers' assertiveness and responsiveness had a significant impact on whether students trusted their teacher. Perceptions of greater assertiveness and responsiveness were related to higher levels of personal trust. This suggests that managers who can relate to employees and are versatile when it comes to using these qualities, develop a positive relationship with their subordinates. Consequently, subordinates in a hotel setting who have a personal relationship with their managers would have a more positive attitude of their managers' communication style. Specific qualities like humor, assertiveness and responsiveness can affect employees and influence their perceptions on

managers' communication skills. The Assertive-Responsive measurement can determine whether managers are versatile when it comes to being assertive with their employees, yet being able to responsive or receptive (Bacon & Severson, 1986).

In the hotel industry, employees from all departments interact with one another frequently. Managers from one department often take responsibility for subordinates in another department. Subordinates, therefore, view communication behaviors from other managers as well. Based on Anderson et al's, (1997) study of the Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measurement on the Chinese culture, they concluded that different cultures did not affect the outcome of the study. Students, staff and faculty from a Beijing university answered a survey that determined that communication styles are relatively consistent across different cultures. This suggests that the Assertiveness-Responsiveness measurement would apply in an environment where people are in constant communication with one another. With the variety of employees in the hotel industry, it is assumed subordinates can identify whether managers have an assertive or responsive communication style. However, their communicative competence may vary. Being from a different culture or ethnicity may not affect the study; however, knowledge of the topic or idea may be limited. Hotels employ people of different academic and cultural backgrounds. Given the wide range of backgrounds competence levels may impact the results of the survey.

There are three key components that ensure effective communication (Obuchowski, 2003). In order for subordinates to respect and follow the message being communicated, managers must create a meaningful community that will foster trust. Managers who serve in these communities must be able to navigate through communication barriers and effectively transition through any changes. Managers must be open to renewal. Encouraging comments and feedback from their employees continues a renewal communication process (Obuchowski,

2003). With these three components, managers must be versatile in order to be perceived as good communicators. Those who can transition in several communication styles in order to overcome organizational barriers will benefit relations with subordinate employees.

Method

Guaranteeing effective communication between management and subordinate employees involves commitment from both staff and managers to work with one another in order to meet job objectives. In a hotel environment, shifts overlap and job responsibilities depend on individual employees from each department to complete essential tasks to make the department and consequently the hotel successful. Directions from management that are assertive guarantee employees receive self-assured guidelines. Management that is responsive can provide feedback to employees and generate feedback from their subordinates.

Assertiveness and responsiveness are two qualities that ensure an effective communication style when used productively. Richmond & McCroskey (1990) use the Assertiveness-Responsiveness measurement with the Socio-communicative scale. The instrument is designed to measure the perceptions of communication behaviors. The alpha reliability estimates for the measures of assertiveness and responsiveness are generally above .80. The assertiveness-responsiveness measure was found to have successful reliability (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990). Anderson and Martin (1995) report coefficient alphas of .87 for assertiveness and .89 for responsiveness. The 20-item measure was tested on 224 college students. The reliability estimates were reported with assertiveness at .88 and responsiveness at .93. These two components make a significant contribution to social behavior patterns and communication style. The variables (assertiveness and responsiveness) are intermingled making

it tedious to identify which numbers measure which communication factor. However, it is beneficial for users because there will be no pattern to distract honest perceptions. Tomas, McCroskey and Richmond (1994) believed that “the scale should be orthogonal so that any observed joint association between them and immediacy could not be explained as a simple function of colinearity stemming from measurement error” (pg. 111). Doing this, McCroskey & Richmond (1990) found the variables to factor separately.

Employees from the Holiday Inn Rochester, NY Airport and RIT Inn and Conference Center completed a survey that measures perceptions of managers’ communication style. The 20 questions required respondents to answer from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The 10 assertive qualities include question 2- defending own beliefs, question 3- independent, question 5- forceful, question 6- strong personality, question 9- assertive, question 11- dominant, question 14- willing to take a stand, question 18- act like a leader, question 19- aggressive and question 20- competitive. The ten responsive qualities include being question 1- helpful, question 4- responsive to others, question 7- sympathetic, question 8- compassion, question 10- sensitive to the needs of others, question 12- sincere, question 13- gentle, question 15- warm, question 16- tender and question 17- friendly. The survey is located in Appendix A.

Following these 20 questions, respondents were asked six questions to assess their attitude about their personal relationship with their managers based on McCroskey and Richmond’s (1989) Generalized Attitude Measure. The questions followed a seven-point Likert scale asking respondents to rate their attitudes. The scale was slightly altered to include only a *good* and *poor* rating to generate an accurate idea of subordinate employee attitudes (see Appendix A). The seven point scale ranged from “good” at “1” to “poor” at “7.” Consequently the values are reversed.

Early tests of reliability for the Generalized Attitude measure proved supportive for the instrument. In the major tests that used this measurement, the validity correlations obtained were .92 and .93 (McCroskey, 2006). When Richmond and McCroskey (2000) studied subordinates' perceptions of their supervisor's communication style the reliability estimates were .95 for attitude toward the supervisor and .96 for attitude towards the supervisor's communication. Though hypotheses have generally been supported, the measurement can only be used for a single dimensional attitude. Two variables in one Generalized Attitude Measure question would require two separate questions. Researchers also have to be careful with how sentences are organized. If the question is not a one dimensional attitude then people can get confused by the wording and what the question is really asking.

Data Collection

The two full service hotels served as a convenience sample for this investigation. Employees completed a survey that measured their manager's assertiveness and responsiveness. The survey was personally distributed to each employee. Employees completed the survey on their own time whether at home or on break from work. A date was set by which time completed surveys were to be returned to the Human Resource department.

Instrument

Managers' socio-communicative style was measured using the 20-item Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measurement (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). The survey included 10 items discussing assertiveness as well as 10 items discussing responsiveness.

Following the 20 questions, six questions followed as a generalized attitude measure to understand employees' perceptions of the assertiveness- responsiveness communication style (McCroskey, 2006).

Comparing the results of the Assertiveness-Responsiveness test and the Attitude measure will determine whether a relationship exists between subordinate employees and hotel managers. The mean was determined for both responsiveness and assertiveness. This number was used in Spearman's Rho to determine if the relationship between managers and subordinates is significant and positive or negative. Spearman's Rho also determined if there was a positive or negative correlation between assertiveness and responsiveness. Whether or not there was a correlation between assertiveness and responsiveness, Spearman's Rho concluded whether the qualities were related in the manager-subordinate personal relationship. Though this sample is not enough evidence to create a generalized assumption, the test will served as an example of the type of the relationship that exists with employees in the hotel industry.

Results

Of the 125 surveys distributed to hotel employees at both the Holiday Inn Rochester, NY Airport and the RIT Inn and Conference Center, a total of 69 completed surveys were collected for a response rate of 55%. A two-tailed Spearman's Rho test was used to determine if a relationship existed between subordinate employees attitudes toward their manager's communication style and the overall personal relationship (see Appendix C for all statistical tests using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

Question 1 of the Generalized Attitude test asked subordinates to rate on a seven-point Likert type scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" how well or poor their relationship is with their manager. Assertiveness was significant and positively related to subordinates' personal relationship with their manager ($r = .29$, $p = .01$). Responsiveness was also significant and positively related to subordinates' personal relationship with their manager

($r = .58$, $p = .000$). In this case, the more assertive and responsive a manager was, the better the personal relationship but the relationship appears much stronger for responsiveness.

Question 2 asked subordinates how good or poor they feel the communication is with their manager. Assertiveness was positively but not significantly related to manager-subordinate communication ($r = .13$, $p = .29$). Responsiveness was significantly and positively related to outside work communication between subordinates and managers ($r = .55$, $p = .000$). Evidently, assertiveness has no effect on the quality of communication concerning issues outside of work. However, the more responsive the managers were perceived to be, the better the subordinates rated communication with the managers regarding issues outside of work.

Question 3 asked respondents to rate how good or poor their friendship is with their manager. Assertiveness was positively but not significantly related to manager-subordinate friendship ($r = .08$, $p = .49$). Responsiveness was significantly and positively related to the overall personal relationship between subordinates and managers ($r = .55$, $p = .000$). The positive correlation indicates that the more responsive subordinates perceived their managers, the better they reported the friendship to be.

Question 4 asked respondents to rate their personal relationship with their manager and provided examples of feeling comfortable talking and having a conversation outside of work. Assertiveness was positively but not significantly related to the overall personal relationship between subordinate and managers ($r = .12$, $p = .31$). However, responsiveness was significantly and positively related to the personal relationship ($r = .62$, $p = .000$). Overall, subordinates feel comfortable talking with managers they perceived to be responsive while assertiveness was not related to subordinates' perceptions of being comfortable.

Question 5 asked respondents to rate how well or poor their comfort level is with their managers. Assertiveness was significant and positively related to the comfort level between managers and subordinates ($r = .27, p = .03$). The more assertive the manager was, the more comfortable the subordinate employee. The same was true for responsiveness except that the relationship was much stronger ($r = .55, p = .000$). With that being said, subordinates appear to be content with assertive and responsive managers.

Finally, assertiveness was positively but not significantly related to the overall relationship between managers and subordinates ($r = .20, p = .09$). How assertive a manager was perceived had no effect on the personal relationship with subordinate employees. On the other hand, responsiveness was positively and significantly related to the overall personal relationship between managers and subordinates ($r = .46, p = .000$). The results show that overall, employees like more responsive managers. However, assertiveness did not appear to strain the relationship. Although statistically nonsignificant, assertiveness was positively related to having a good relationship.

Overall, the results indicate responsiveness is strongly related to personal relationships between managers and subordinates. Assertiveness was previously defined as “the perceived effort a person makes to influence or control the actions and thoughts of others” (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990, p. 53). Only in questions 1 and 5 did assertiveness have significant and positive results. The rest of the questions produced nonsignificant results for assertiveness. Though it was assumed that assertiveness would harm the manager-subordinate relationship, results indicate that subordinates are not significantly affected by assertive behavior. In fact, assertiveness appears to be positively related at times.

Spearman's Rho was used to test for correlation between assertiveness and responsiveness. The results indicate a significant and positive relationship ($r = .45$, $p = .000$). Below is a table showing the correlations. Though McCroskey (2006) indicated that assertiveness and responsiveness are not related, this study shows that the communication qualities are not that distinct. When it comes to the manager-subordinate relationship, neither quality negatively affects the personal relationship. These results show that both qualities are related to good personal relationships as well as each other. However, it must be remembered that the sample chosen may be quite different from those used in previous research. Although a convenience sample, the respondents chosen were all individuals who work in the service or hospitality industry. The emphasis on making people feel welcome may have influenced how managers and subordinates relate to each other as well as to guests. Furthermore, the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, is culturally diverse. Cultural differences could also affect perceptions of assertiveness, especially with regard to people in positions of authority such as managers.

Table 1

 Test for correlation among Assertiveness and Responsiveness

Generalized Attitude Measure Responsiveness		Assertiveness
1.	.294(*)	.576(*)
2.	.129	.546(*)
3.	.084	.545(*)
4.	.124	.615(*)
5.	.269(*)	.551(*)
6.	.200	.462(*)
Overall Correlation		.45(*)

Note: Correlations marked with an asterisk (*) were significant at $p < .05$.

Discussion

The first research question asked “what is the relationship between managements’ communication style and subordinate employees’ attitudes about their manager?”

Responsiveness refers to a person’s ability to express feelings and emotions. The results conclude that subordinate employees have a positive relationship with managers who are responsive. This communication style is generally considered more approachable by subordinate employees. A manager who is considerate and more receptive to employees’ perceptions is more likely to generate a positive response from subordinates.

On the other hand, assertiveness does not appear to harm the manager-subordinate relationship. The results were positive with this variable. Assertiveness describes someone who seeks to be influential or have more control (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Managers who seek to influence or control may not be as well liked as managers who are more responsive, but their behavior does not appear to affect the relationship with subordinates. Though managers may be more direct with their communication approach, subordinates do not perceive this as something harmful to the relationship. Assertiveness can actually help the relationship in that subordinates know what the manager thinks and feels. Consequently, managers who are direct and influential in their leadership role are not jeopardizing relationships with subordinates. In fact, they may even develop positive relationships with their subordinates.

These variables then are not that distinct. Assertiveness and responsiveness are related in the fact that they do not negatively affect a manager-subordinate relationship. Since assertiveness was positively related even if nonsignificant, subordinates do not necessarily have bad relationships with their managers. Someone who is assertive may not be viewed as positively as

a manager who is more responsive. However, an assertive manager may not be viewed negatively either.

The first hypothesis stated that managers' responsiveness and the quality of personal relationship subordinates have with them are significantly and positively related. Responsiveness showed a significant and positive relationship to the quality of the manager-subordinate relationship. This could be the result of increased motivation employees receive with feedback. Quangeliri (1981), Penly & Hawkins(1981), and Richmond & McCroskey (2000) reported increases in the quality of job performance in their studies. Consequently, the more responsive managers are to their employees, the more positive the relationship and performance outcome.

It is not surprising that responsiveness created a positive personal relationship. People react better to someone who is neither controlling nor manipulative. This does not necessarily mean that the manager's communication style is any better. A manager must still be assertive. McCroskey & Richmond (2000) found that if managers are responsive to their subordinates and assertive about job performance, employees have a positive attitude about their managers' communication style. Therefore, the qualities are related and can impact the manager-subordinate relationship.

In each question, subordinates rated their perceptions of their relationship with managers in the work setting. Questions relating to the communication, comfort level, friendship and overall personal relationship indicate how subordinates perceive the personal relationship. But how does the personal relationship relate to manager's communication style? Is the personal relationship significant to organizational communication style? Assertive and responsive managers have a positive relationship with their subordinates, but does this carry both in the work setting and the personal relationship outside of work? Do subordinates understand the

difference between the two relationships? Having a personal relationship with managers can cause confusion for the work relationship. Subordinates can have a positive relationship with a manager who is assertive and responsive, but the relationship might not be positive outside of work. Identifying the difference between the two relationships, at work and outside of work, could have impacted the results.

Subordinate employees in this situation may not consider responsiveness and assertiveness two characteristics that would affect a personal relationship. In the work environment, a manager who is both assertive and responsive can generate positive feedback and improve the organizational structure. However, in terms of a personal relationship, assertiveness and responsiveness may not be that important.

Because the variables are related, in this situation, employees may have a difficult time deciphering the difference between the two. A manager who develops a positive relationship with an assertive and responsive communication style may develop habitual patterns in order to keep the positive relationship with their employees. Because employees do not have significant issues with their communication style, managers do not have to change. Therefore, employees see both variables as positive making the ability to critique managers' communication styles more challenging.

These results, however, are subordinate employee perceptions. Subordinates' perceptions are opinions or attitudes of their manager's communication style. How they perceive their manager's style does not guarantee accuracy. A number of factors could affect the communication style. Managers might not have administration communication experience. Their management history may be different from another manager. One manager may be more responsive with one subordinate and more assertive with another. Because of the small sample

size, strong attitudes can drastically affect the outcome of the survey and skew the actual communication style the manager may possess.

This study had a number of limitations that ultimately affected the results. Both hotels served as a convenience sample. All surveyed employees voluntarily participated. Also, the communicative competence varied among employees. Subordinate employees varied from college-educated to high school dropouts. This could have affected the respondents' ability to understand the survey. Since people voluntarily participated, they could have significantly impacted the results. For example, those who had strong opinions either for or against their managers might have been more likely to have volunteered and thus affected the outcome. The sample was very diverse as well. A few participants understood Spanish as their first language, so a Spanish written survey was distributed (see Appendix B). The cultural barrier could have impacted the results. Another limitation factor is the length of employment with each hotel. Those staying longer may have a bias toward the organization while those being there only a few months may not have had an in-depth knowledge of their manager's communication style. Another limitation is the number of surveys received. Roughly 70 completed surveys is not a large enough sample to generalize to other contexts. A better test would be a random sample of all hotels that would significantly increase the sample size. A larger sample size would produce less error and more accurate conclusions.

Bacon & Severson (1986) believe responsiveness is not as prevalent or as important as assertiveness. The results of this study showed that responsiveness and assertiveness are positively related to personal relationships. The number of subjects in the study and the limited variation in the study locations affect the results. More variation might provide a better understanding of the manager-subordinate relationship.

Another factor to consider is the various manager-subordinate relationships that exist in a hotel setting. Hotel departments communicatively overlap to function as a successful organizational setting. Subordinates often interact with other department managers. For example, a housekeeper may need to communicate with the sales manager after speaking with a guest who inquires about staying longer. This interaction will start a relationship. The housekeeper may have a positive attitude about the sales manager and a negative attitude about the housekeeping manager. This could create confusion when surveying subordinate employees. Though the survey indicated respondents were to rate their attitude of their own manager, attitudes may vary depending on the rate and frequency of interaction with managers.

On a final note, McCroskey and Richmond discovered that managers often have habitual patterns when it comes to their communication style (McCroskey & Richmond, 1979; McCroskey & Richmond, 1982). With the results of this study, subordinates may have limited perceptions of their manager's communication style because it might not be that versatile. This poses a limitation to the present study. Managers may not have the proper training, range of experience, or necessary skill when it comes to communication. Their communication style then affects how subordinates perceive them. Ultimately, discovering the type of communication style the manager has could affect the relationship just reported.

Conclusion

With the goal of discovering hotel managers' communication style, subordinate employees must do their part to provide feedback about their managers. Managers are not guaranteed to be leaders. A job title does not assure success. Managers must possess specific qualities to be defined as good communicators. Because managers are those who take the lead in

overcoming organizational barriers, someone who is assertive and responsive will influence employee perceptions. What has to be determined is whether there is a relationship between assertiveness and responsiveness and the personal relationship employees might have with their managers in other contexts.

In future studies, it would be interesting to observe the assertive and responsive communication behaviors. The effects of communication behavior on subordinates could depend on other variables such as gender, work environment, cultural background, and variety of hotel departments. Actually observing the behavior will allow for research to determine what encourages or discourages assertive and responsive communication behavior. Additional variables can be investigated as well. Their gender, job responsibilities, degree of communicative competence or apprehension could all affect their attitude toward their manager. Introducing these variables could further clarify how subordinates come to perceive their manager's communication style.

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Appendix A

SocioCommunicative Style Scale (SCS)

Assertiveness-Responsiveness Measure

INSTRUCTIONS: The questionnaire below lists twenty personality characteristics. Please circle the degree to which you believe each of these characteristics applies to *your* department manager by marking whether you (5) strongly agree that it applies, (4) agree that it applies, (3) are undecided, (2) disagree that it applies, or (1) strongly disagree that it applies. There are no right or wrong answers. Record your first impression.

1. Helpful

Your manager takes the time to help you with solving problems and assisting with job performance

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

2. Defends own beliefs

Your manager stands by his/her opinion and integrity while at work

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

3. Independent

Your manager does not depend on others to do his/her job

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

4. Responsive to others

Your manager is available to respond to employees' questions and concerns

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

5. Forceful

Your manager consistently pressures you to complete job responsibilities

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

6. Has strong personality

Your manager is opinionated

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

7. Sympathetic

Caring and understanding are two qualities your manager demonstrates when you have any personal or work-related problems

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

8. Compassionate

Your manager knows and cares about issues in your life

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

9. Assertive

Your manager is confident when delegating job tasks

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

10. Sensitive to the needs of others

Your manager shows concerns for all employees

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

11. Dominant

Your manager's personality overpowers others

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

12. Sincere

Honesty is a quality you would give your manager

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

13. Gentle

Talking to your manager is easy and comfortable

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

14. Willing to take a stand

Your manager supports your ability to do your work

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

15. Warm

The work environment is comfortable when your manager is around

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

16. Tender

Your manager has a calm work demeanor

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

17. Friendly

You see your manager as a friend

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

18. Acts as a leader

Your manager works hard to overcome organizational problems

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

19. Aggressive

Your manager's personality is strong and forceful

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

20. Competitive

Working with your manager is like trying to win a game

(1) Strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

Generalized Attitude Test

The next set of questions ask for your opinion on the personal relationship you have with your manager. Circle the number closest to your opinion.

1) How would you rate your relationship with your manager?

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Poor

2) How would you rate the communication with your manager about issues other than work?

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Poor

3) How would you rate your friendship with your manager?

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Poor

4) How would you rate your personal relationship? (Are they someone you feel comfortable talking to? Is your manager someone you could have a conversation with outside of work?)

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Poor

5) How would you rate your comfort level with your manager?

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Poor

6) Your overall relationship with your manager is?

Good 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Poor

What department do you work in? _____ (ex: Food & Beverage, Housekeeping, Front desk)

How long have you been employed at the Holiday Inn? _____

Employee Survey (Spanish)

INSTRUCCIONES: El siguiente cuestionario lista veinte características de la personalidad. Por favor, encierre en un círculo la opción que crea aplique a SU gerente de departamento, de acuerdo a la siguiente estructura:

5 – De acuerdo con que aplica totalmente

4 – De acuerdo con que aplica

3 – Indeciso

2 – En desacuerdo con que aplique

1 – Totalmente en desacuerdo con que aplique

No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Por favor, responda con su primera impresión.

1. Su gerente toma el tiempo para ayudarlo a resolver problemas y asistirle en el desenvolvimiento de su trabajo:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

2. Su gerente es leal a la opinión e integridad emitidos por este en el área de trabajo:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

3. Su gerente no depende de otras personas para realizar su trabajo:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

4. Su gerente esta disponible para responder preguntas y aclarar dudas por parte de los empleados:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

5. Su gerente le presiona constantemente para que realice sus quehaceres laborales:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

6. Su gerente es obstinado y dictatorial:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

7. Compasión y entendimiento son dos cualidades que su gerente demuestra al tratar tanto asuntos personales como de trabajo:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

8. Su gerente sabe y se preocupa por asuntos personales en la vida de sus empleados:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

9. Su gerente demuestra confianza cuando asigna las áreas:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

10. Su gerente se muestra preocupado por todos los empleados:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

11. La personalidad de su gerente abrumba a los demás:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

12. Honestidad es una cualidad que usted daría a su gerente:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

13. Hablar con su gerente es fácil y confortable:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

14. Su gerente apoya la habilidad de sus empleados para realizar sus funciones:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

15. El ambiente de trabajo es confortable cuando su gerente está en los alrededores:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

16. Su gerente se muestra calmado en la toma de decisiones:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

17. Usted ve a su gerente como un amigo:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

18. Su gerente trabaja duro para sobreponer barreras organizacionales:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

19. La personalidad de su gerente es fuerte y poderosa:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

20. Trabajar con su gerente es como tratar de ganar un juego:

(1) Totalmente en desacuerdo (2) En desacuerdo (3) Neutral (4) De acuerdo (5) De acuerdo totalmente

Las siguientes preguntas hacen referencia a la relación personal que usted tiene con su gerente.

1) ¿Cómo calificaría la relación con su gerente?

Buena 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pobre

2) ¿Cómo calificaría la comunicación con su gerente sobre asuntos no relacionados a trabajo?

Buena 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pobre

3) ¿Como calificaría su amistad con su gerente?

Buena 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pobre

4) ¿Como calificaría su relación personal con su gerente? (Ejemplo: ¿Es su gerente alguien con quien pueda hablar? ¿Es su gerente alguien con quien usted puede entablar una conversación fuera del área laboral?)

Buena 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pobre

5) ¿Como calificaría su nivel de confort con su gerente?

Buena 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pobre

6) ¿En sentido general, la relación con su gerente es?

Buena 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Pobre

¿En qué departamento trabaja? _____ (Ejemplo: Front Desk, Food & Beverages, House Keeping).

¿Qué tiempo tiene trabajando en el Holiday Inn? _____

Appendix B

Employee Survey Cover Letter

To: RIT Inn and Conference Center Team Members

I am a RIT College of Liberal Arts masters student. My masters thesis is looking to identify a relationship between employees attitude about their managers communication style and the manager-employee personal relationship. This survey was designed to discover if a relationship exists. There are 26 questions that consist of a scale for you to rate your answer.

Part 1 (questions 1-20) ask you to rate the communication qualities your manager may or may not have. Your answer can range from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Part 2 (questions 1-6) ask you to rate your attitude on your personal relationship with your manager. Answers range from (1) good to (7) poor. No more than ten minutes will be necessary in order to complete the survey.

This survey is completely voluntary. If you choose to complete the survey, I am the only person who will see the results. I am collecting the data and calculating the results. The only results management will see are the final conclusions to my calculations. The survey does not ask for your name so it will be entirely anonymous and confidential. Please return the completed survey to the human resource department.

Again, I am doing this for my masters thesis. This is **not** for the hotel. I appreciate your participation in this process. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Tess Kittelberger

Tess.Kittelberger@marist.edu

Appendix C

Nonparametric Correlations

Correlations with Assertiveness

		Assertiveness	Question 1
Spearman's rho	Assertiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.014
		N	69
	Question 1	Correlation Coefficient	-.294(*)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.014
		N	69

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

		Assertiveness	Question 2
Spearman's rho	Assertiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.289
		N	69
	Question 2	Correlation Coefficient	-.129
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.289
		N	69

			Assertiveness	Question 3
Spearman's rho	Assertiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.084
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.493
		N	69	69
	Question 3	Correlation Coefficient	-.084	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.493	.
		N	69	69

			Assertiveness	Question 4
Spearman's rho	Assertiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.124
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.311
		N	69	69
	Question 4	Correlation Coefficient	-.124	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.311	.
		N	69	69

			Assertiveness	Question 5
Spearman's rho	Assertiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.269(*)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.025
		N	69	69
	Question 5	Correlation Coefficient	-.269(*)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.
		N	69	69

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

			Assertiveness	Question 6
Spearman's rho	Assertiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.200
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.099
		N	69	69
	Question 6	Correlation Coefficient	-.200	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.099	.
		N	69	69

Correlations with Responsiveness

			Responsiveness	Question 1
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.576(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 1	Correlation Coefficient	-.576(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

			Responsiveness	Question 2
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.546(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 2	Correlation Coefficient	-.546(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

			Responsiveness	Question 3
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.545(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 3	Correlation Coefficient	-.545(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

			Responsiveness	Question 4
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.615(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 4	Correlation Coefficient	-.615(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

			Responsiveness	Question 5
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.551(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 5	Correlation Coefficient	-.551(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

			Responsiveness	Question 6
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.462(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 6	Correlation Coefficient	-.462(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations between Assertiveness and Responsiveness

			Responsiveness	Question 6
Spearman's rho	Responsiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.451(**)
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	69	69
	Question 6	Correlation Coefficient	.451(**)	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	69	69

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).