TEACHER COMMUNICATION ORIENTATION AND JOB SATISFACTION: A
CORRELATIONAL STUDY

by

SAMANTHA J. VICKERY

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SAMANTHA J. VICKERY

Approved:

Margaret Morris, Ed.D.  Date
Dissertation Committee Chair

Deana Ford, Ph.D.  Date
Dissertation Committee Member

Elaine Thurmond, Ed.D.  Date
Dissertation Committee Member

Vicki Luther, Ed.D.  Date
Director of Doctoral Studies, Tift College of Education

Thomas R. Koballa, Jr., Ph.D.  Date
Dean, Tift College of Education
DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family. A special thank you to my wife, Shani, for encouraging me along the way and delivering iced coffees. To my kiddos, Emerson, Elias, Estelle, and Sullivan, thank you all for dealing with all of the many times I said, “In a minute.”
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ABSTRACT

SAMANTHA J. VICKERY

TEACHER COMMUNICATION ORIENTATION AND JOB SATISFACTION: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

Under the direction of MARGARET MORRIS, Ed.D.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to demonstrate any correlations between the independent variables of socio-communicative orientation, assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, years teaching experience, and the dependent variable of job satisfaction. The researcher used Pearson’s Correlation and multiple regression analysis for this quantitative study. The Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale, and a demographic questionnaire were distributed to potential participants via email. The final number of participants was 33. About 90 participants were necessary for a medium effect size. Therefore, rejecting the null hypothesis was unlikely. Although this study showed no statistically significant correlations between the predictor variables and the dependent variable of job satisfaction, future research should have a larger participant population. Future research should include more participants and examine supplementary data collected from interviews. Case studies could strengthen the claim that the independent and dependent variables are not related. This study was conducted in the middle of a global pandemic when online teaching was prevalent among teachers. This scenario likely had negative impacts on the return rate as it required more online time for teachers.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Teachers account for 4% of the civilian workforce (Ingersoll, 2004). The amount of people in the teaching profession combined with the turnover of teachers each year means that large numbers of people rotate in and out of any given school. According to Ingersoll (2004), high levels of turnover in the teaching profession indicate a different, dire fundamental problem. Additionally, high teacher turnover can be disruptive to the school community (Ingersoll, 2004).

The 21st-century demands of public schools are high, and yet U.S. schools must take on multiple responsibilities to create a trusting community (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Research shows that the learning environment, curriculum and instruction, and access to education are all aspects that affect learning (Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Research also suggests that keeping quality teachers in the profession is a challenge in 21st-century educational system (Ingersoll, 2004; Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Teachers experience high levels of stress and burnout (Ingersoll, 2001, 2004). One of the main reasons for teacher turnover is dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2004; Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

One traditional approach to a job shortage is to increase the supply. However, recruitment of new teachers alone is not going to solve teacher shortages if systematic structures do not address the high level of turnover (Ingersoll, 2004). Supply-related solutions could potentially make the situation worse by adding people to the pool of teacher candidates due to lowering the standards set for recruiting new teachers. In fact, Ingersoll (2004) warned:

By widening the entry gate and increasing the quantity of teachers supplied, districts are able to control labor costs and, hence, control local property taxes. The downside of this
strategy in schools, as an industry, is that it can decrease employee quality and increase employee turnover. (p. 13)

Numerous studies have investigated the area of job satisfaction (Mathis, 2010; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Additionally, numerous studies address teacher communication (Frymier, 2005; Marin & Myers, 2010; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990; Swanson, 2015). However, little research has been done on the correlation between teacher job satisfaction and the ways in which teachers communicate.

Communication plays a key role in classrooms (Aylor & Oppliger, 2003; Myers et al., 2002), for it serves as a direct link among teaching and learning (Frymier, 2005). At the heart of classroom communication is the teacher. Teachers spend hours each day communicating with students in various ways. Students and teachers continually communicate with each other.

Research suggests that the link between teaching and learning is made through communication, with teachers and students influencing each other (Frymier, 2005). In order for students to learn, teachers must be effective, and effective communicators are competent communicators (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). It is critical that teachers get to know their students (Swanson, 2015) because it aids teachers in their ability to recognize and “respond to the students’ reaction to his or her communication” (Swanson, 2015, p. 151). Therefore, it is important to understand and evaluate qualities that make a competent communicator.

The high demands of public schools affect teachers’ decision to remain in education (Ingersoll, 2001, 2004; Learning Policy Institute, 2017). However, research shows that creating a community within schools improves teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Learning Policy Institute, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Building a community requires that educators get to know
their students. This occurs through communication. The purpose of this study was to analyze the communication orientations of teachers and the correlation, if any, to teacher job satisfaction.

**Statement of the Problem**

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education) offered the conclusion that U.S. public schools were failing. This report led to many changes in schools at the federal, state, and local levels. One of these changes was The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which reinforced the need for quality teachers across the United States.

Ingersoll (2001, 2004) described the teaching profession as a constant rotation of people entering the profession and then exiting for one reason or another. Many factors add stress that directly affects a teacher’s job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2004; Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Despite the plethora of studies conducted in the area of job satisfaction (Mathis, 2010; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005), little research has been done on the correlation between teacher job satisfaction and the ways in which teachers communicate although teachers are at the center of communication in the classroom. Therefore, in order to become a competent communicator, a teacher must get to know and bond with their students. This process allows teachers to understand student reactions to how they communicated with the students (Swanson, 2015). Thus, it is important to understand and measure qualities that make a competent communicator and apply this knowledge to teacher education and the classroom.

**Need for the Study**

Little research connecting teacher communication orientations and job satisfaction exists. This study attempted to uncover the correlation between a teacher’s socio-communicative
orientation and their job satisfaction level. Factors included years teaching, gender, and age. This study investigated these factors along with participant data. Findings may be helpful to students as they are deciding on a career. Additionally, results from this study have the potential to inform teacher education programs as well as professional development for school districts.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to analyze communication orientations of teachers and the correlation, if any, to teacher job satisfaction. This study aimed to uncover the correlation between a teacher’s socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction level. Research has addressed teacher job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation, but little research on socio-communicative orientation in teachers exists. Furthermore, there is even less research connecting teacher job satisfaction with teacher communication. This study will add to the research on both teacher communicative orientation and the research on teacher job satisfaction.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study utilized the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Socio-communicative orientation is “when one perceives his or her own assertiveness and responsiveness” (Wooten & McCroskey, 1996, p. 95). A person’s socio-communicative orientation describes their approach to communication with others. Additionally, this idea describes what manner a person believes him or herself to communicate with when interacting with other people (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996).

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:
1. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction?
   a. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ assertiveness level and job satisfaction?
   b. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ responsiveness level and job satisfaction?
2. What is the correlation between gender and job satisfaction and gender?
3. What is the correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction?
4. What is the correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction?
5. What is the combined relationship between assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, years teaching experience, and job satisfaction?

**Assumptions**

This study assumed three factors. First, it assumed that teachers are a specific population for socio-communicative orientation inquiry. Teachers reported their socio-communicative orientation using the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale. Second, it assumed that participants were honest in reporting on both the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale and the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (MCMJSS). Third, it assumed that participants were honest when filling out any and all demographic data collected.

**Limitations**

This study investigated the correlation between a teacher’s socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction level. This study took place in one school district in the state of Georgia. Therefore, findings from this study are not appropriate for generalizations to other
school districts that do not contain similar demographics and culture. Participation was voluntary; thus, data were limited to the responses collected. Many teachers were busy and may have missed the deadline for survey completion due to the timing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The global pandemic may have affected the response rate and thus, the sample size.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

The following definitions are provided to assist the reader:

*Communication competence*, in this study, refers to the ability to which one is able to communicate with others successfully.

*Job satisfaction*, in this study, refers to the ways that teachers self-report factors in their work environment as defined in the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (MCMJSS) (Mohrman et al., 1977).

*Medium effect size* is, according to Field (2013) “simply an objective and (usually) standardized measure of the magnitude of the observed effect” (p. 79).

*Path to certification*, in this study, refers to teacher certification as either a traditional diploma program or an alternative certification program.

*Purposeful sampling* refers to the choice of participants for a reason.

*Socio-Communicative orientation* refers to how a person perceives his or her own assertiveness and responsiveness when communicating (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

**Organization of the Study**

The effect a teacher’s socio-communicative orientation has on his or her job satisfaction will be reported in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study and includes the statement of the problem, the need for the study, the purpose of the study, the research question, the assumptions,
limitations, definitions of key terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter 2 presents the relevant literature related to teacher communication, socio-communication orientation, and job satisfaction. Chapter 3 offers an explanation of the methods for conducting the research for the study and includes the variables, the population and sample size, the data collection instruments used, the process of data analysis, and ethical safeguards. Chapter 4 includes a report of the study’s findings and an analysis of the statistical models used. Lastly, Chapter 5 recaps and summarizes the principal findings of the study. Additionally, Chapter 5 includes a discussion of implications and possibilities for future research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The intent of this study was to examine teachers’ socio-communication orientation, job satisfaction, and years of teaching. Communication plays a key role in classrooms (Aylor & Oppliger, 2003; Myers et al., 2002). Teachers from across one southeastern U.S. school district completed the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990), the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (Mohrman et al., 1977), and a general demographics survey. The items on the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale measure assertiveness and responsiveness of communication (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). The data gathered from these surveys were analyzed quantitatively to provide a communication profile for each of the participants. These data points then provided information on how teachers perceive their own communication in the classroom.

Organization of the Review

This chapter presents an overview of the theoretical framework, followed by the search strategies employed in locating texts, articles, and relevant information, as well as an explanation as to why the searches were necessary and relevant to the study. Next is the provision of detailed information of literature regarding student perceptions; communication in the classroom; socio-communicative style, orientation, and scale; relationships and leadership; and teacher job satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

Communication plays a key role in classrooms (Aylor & Opplinger, 2003; Myers et al., 2002). Teachers and students are constantly communicating with one another. This
communication takes various forms and may be verbal or nonverbal. Frymier (2005) suggested that teachers and students are consistently influencing each other through modes of communication. Communication then becomes a link between students and teachers. Communication is a key piece of educational curriculum and instruction. Therefore, researchers have dedicated enormous amounts of time comprehending the requirements of a teacher, in terms of communication, in order for the teacher to be effective.

According to McCroskey and Richmond (1996), to be effective, one must be competent. Communicators who are competent present as both responsive and assertive in their communication. These traits help instructors communicate with students in an instructional context inside the classroom (Frymier, 2005; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Research has led the researcher to more questions regarding the topic. What happens when teachers are only responsive but are not assertive? Or when a teacher is assertive but not responsive? What effects do assertiveness and responsiveness have in a classroom setting? If these traits are necessary for one to be a competent communicator, researchers need to be able to assess the traits and use the data to inform instruction and curriculum design.

To this end, Richmond and McCroskey (1990) used the theoretical work of Bem (1974) to develop a 20-question instrument to measure a person’s socio-communicative orientation. Socio-communicative orientation describes a person’s approach to communication with others and relates to perceptions a person has of how assertive or responsive they are when communicating. Furthermore, this idea of a socio-communicative orientation provides a framework for the manner in which a person believes him or herself to communicate with other people (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996).
This section of the literature review addresses how the Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale can assist with learning in the classroom through both the curriculum and instruction. To begin, this section is a discussion of the approach taken to researching articles. Background knowledge on classroom communication, socio-communicative orientation, socio-communicative style, and the Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale itself follows. The main portion of the chapter is dedicated to the discussion of studies directly and indirectly tied to students’ learning. These include studies regarding teachers, students, and outside sources. It is important to illustrate the uses of the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale in non-educational settings (outside sources) in order to enhance our awareness of how communication in the classroom and learning are related. These areas of research will be addressed through a curriculum and instruction lens. Finally, all sections end with a summary and a brief description of the next steps.

When searching for articles and texts related to the research, the researcher began broad and narrowed down as she read general information surrounding education, communication, and job satisfaction. The researcher then narrowed the focus to education related to communication and teacher job satisfaction. This yielded numerous irrelevant articles. Therefore, it was necessary to revise the search strategies. The researcher conducted searches in the Mercer Library databases based on educational communication, socio-communicative orientation, and teacher job satisfaction. Searches were completed in the three areas independent of each other. This brought more success than the initial searches. The researcher also expanded the search to include all grade levels instead of just middle grades.
Due to the limited amount of peer-reviewed, research articles using the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale, it is necessary to explain the search strategy process. In order to fully address the topic of socio-communication, the researcher used the Mercer University Library database. Within the database, this began by selecting education topics, which led to accessing other database choices by using the general search bar and altering the dates to avoid outdated information. The years ranging from 2006-2017 yielded few results that fit the research needs; therefore, the researcher increased the data range to include 2000-2019. Additionally, the researcher incorporated articles outside of this date range if others cited them repeatedly and they were critical in the researcher’s understanding of the topic.

The reading and review of several studies led to the realization of the use of socio-communicative orientation and socio-communicative style in reference to the same basic research. This was due to the fact that they both use the same scale to gather data points. The Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale and the Socio-Communicative Style Scale are the same scale but used in a different way. Once the researcher opened the search to both socio-communicative orientation and socio-communicative style, the search was more successful at yielding studies that used the scale. It was a struggle to gain the information necessary to become an expert on the topic.

After many days of deliberating and reading, the researcher expanded the search to include studies not directly tied to Kindergarten through 12th-grade classrooms. This expansion dramatically increased the material available, which in turn lead to a plethora of new ideas and conclusions. The researcher gathered articles and sorted them into the following topics: socio-communicative orientation, socio-communicative style, non-education related, and student
motivation. There was an immediate overlap in topics, and it was evident that different categories supported each other. This process led to the subtopics for this review: classroom communication, socio-communicative style and orientation, student perceptions, and leadership and relationships. To clarify and illustrate the relationship between student learning and the subtopics, Figure 1 displays a hierarchical map. The inclusion of subtopics provides further clarification.

Figure 1

*Hierarchical Map of the Relationship Between Student Learning and Factors Affecting Learning*

Note. Factors according to the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale

It is critical to disclose the use of three articles obtained from *Communication Research Reports*, which publishes articles that are not always peer-reviewed. After eliminating some
articles from this source, the researcher found it necessary to include three in the review for several reasons. The first reason was due to the limited amount of research using the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale in classrooms. The second reason was the authors of the articles. For example, the article “Student Trust of Teacher as a Foundation of Socio-Communicative Style of Teacher and Socio-Communicative Orientation of Student” (Wooton & McCroskey, 1996) and “Temperament and Socio-Communicative Orientation” (Cole & McCroskey, 2000) were both co-authored by James McCroskey, who is one of the authors of the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale. Richmond, Smith, Heisel, and McCroskey, who created the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale (2002), wrote the article, “The Association of Physician Socio-Communicative Style with Physician Credibility and Patient Satisfaction.” The third reason was the frequency of the citations of, and references to, these articles by other authors. After reading the information in these articles with an abundance of caution and a critical eye, the researcher concluded they contained content and resources worth including in this literature review. However, it is worth noting that the information presented from these articles should be read with a critical eye.

**Student Perceptions**

In order to understand why learning takes place and why it does not, it is imperative to comprehend the association between communication and learning. Myers et al. (2002) explored students’ motivation for communicating with their college instructors in the classroom. More specifically, the study focused on how students’ motives to communicate are influenced by how they categorize their instructor’s communication style and how students perceive their own communication orientation. The ways in which students perceive instructors communicate with
them have been linked to students possessing or lacking motivation to communicate with the instructors (Myers et al., 2002).

Many students form perceptions of a teacher before class even begins (McCroskey et al., 2004). This can be due to the fact that the student may have met the teacher before, taken a class previously with the teacher, or provided information on the teacher from someone else. If the teacher is a complete stranger to the student, the student will quickly begin to form perceptions of the teacher. The perceptions may start out as superficial but will soon develop with increased exposure of the student to the teacher. According to McCroskey et al. (2004), students primarily base their perceptions on a teacher’s nonverbal and verbal communication, specifically, what a “teacher says and how he/she says it” (p. 199). When looking at classroom communication, perceived assertiveness and responsiveness of the instructor impact how a student views other means of communication from that instructor (Myers et al., 2002). It is important to note that other forms of communication from the instructor may take nonverbal forms. Therefore, it is critical to understand how students perceive teacher communication, as well as how it relates to how the teacher perceives his or her own classroom communication.

Myers et al. (2002) used the socio-communicative orientation/style scale to aid in their research on students’ motivations to communicate with their instructors. They sought to discover what makes one student more likely than another student to communicate with their instructor. To measure the responsiveness and assertiveness levels of the participants, the researchers administered two versions of Richmond and McCroskey’s (1990) Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale. As discussed earlier, responsiveness refers to behaviors oriented around others (Cole & McCroskey, 2000; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Mottet & Beebe, 2006).
Additionally, assertiveness refers to a more self-oriented mind-set (Allen et al., 2008; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Participants completed one version to measure their own perceptions of their assertive and responsive behavior and then completed a second version to measure how assertive and responsive they perceived their instructors’ communication to be. It is important to note that participants also completed the Student Communication Motives Scale (Myers et al., 2002). This scale asks students to respond to questions related to their motivation for communicating with their instructors (Myers et al., 2002). While this review does not address the details of the two later scales directly, it is important to note their connection to assertiveness and responsiveness in communication.

In Myers et al.’s (2002) study, the researchers’ primary goal was to add to the body of research surrounding students’ motives to communicate with their instructors. Additionally, the researchers wanted to see if there was a significant correlation between students’ motivation to communicate with their instructors and students’ gender. The Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale provided Myers et al. (2002) with a tool to use when trying to find a connection between motivation and communication in the classroom. Further findings of Myers et al.’s (2002) study suggest that students consider perceptions of their assertiveness and responsiveness, as well as their perceptions of their instructor’s assertiveness and responsiveness, when making decisions regarding communicating with that instructor. For example, if students perceive an instructor as responsive, students may be more willing to communicate with the instructor, which may lead to more participation in class (Myers et al., 2002).
The responsiveness measure suggests to students that the instructor is caring and has created a supportive climate in the classroom that allows for student participation (Myers et al., 2002). Additionally, research suggests that students’ perceptions of teacher responsiveness, assertiveness, and teacher immediacy are all positively associated with student perceptions of how caring their teachers are (Teven, 2001). Myers et al. (2002) suggested that future research could build upon their study to look at how the instructors’ flexibility in the classroom influences students’ motivation to communicate.

Furthermore, by contributing to research regarding student perceptions of instructor communication style, educators are able to design and implement instructional strategies that are relevant and appropriate to foster positive communication in the classroom. Perceived assertiveness and responsiveness of the instructor has an impact on how students perceive their own learning. When teachers are perceived to be responsive and flexible, they have the potential to allow more learning to take place (Myers et al., 2002).

As discussed previously, communication is a direct link between teaching and learning (Frymier, 2005). In order for students to learn, teachers must be effective, and effective communicators are competent communicators (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Others perceive competent communicators as assertive and responsive. Assertiveness and responsiveness are two traits that enable researchers to measure an instructors’ communication competence. Additionally, an instructor’s socio-communicative orientation affects the classroom environment (Myers et al., 2002).

The various techniques that teachers use to present information to students play a role in how students perceive their instructor (Marin & Myers, 2010). Specifically, the way students
perceive their instructor’s socio-communicative orientation is positively linked with how students perceive their instructor’s effectiveness. For example, students who perceive instructors to have a balance of assertiveness and responsiveness also view them as effective teachers. Furthermore, this positive association increases student motivation for communicating with instructors. Students’ levels of motivation to communicate with their instructor have been associated with how students perceive their instructors’ communication (Myers et al., 2002). In terms of classroom communication, perceived assertiveness and responsiveness of the instructor impacts how a student perceives other forms of communication by the instructor, as well as the instructor’s effectiveness (Myers et al., 2002).

School leaders expect teachers to embody a collection of characteristics, including communicative competence (Swanson, 2015). Socio-communicative orientation relates directly to a teacher’s level of clarity in their teaching. A study completed by Swanson (2015) used both the Socio-Communicative Style Scale and the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to assess the relationship between Spanish teachers’ cognitive flexibility, socio-communicative orientation, and the relation between these two ideas. Results from the study suggest that Spanish teachers are less likely to be dominant, forceful when communicating, or controlling. The results also show that teachers who were found to be competent were skilled at connecting with students (Swanson, 2015). Findings like these suggest that if students believe instructors are competent communicators, students may foster trust between themselves and the instructors.

Trust

In teacher-student relationships, trust is an important factor (Wooton & McCroskey, 1996). When students trust their teachers, they are more likely to be receptive to instruction.
Therefore, trust is a key component of maximizing learning. Wooton and McCroskey (1996) hypothesized that if students perceive teachers to be more responsive and assertive, they will trust them more. Wooton and McCroskey (1996) used the Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale for two different data points. The first data point was as a measure of the teacher’s socio-communicative style as perceived by the students. The second was a self-report measure by the students on their own socio-communicative orientation. Wooton and McCroskey (1996) also used a self-report on how much the students trusted their teachers, but findings are not addressed in isolation as the nature of this study was the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale and student learning.

The results of Wooton and McCroskey’s (1996) study imply that students have more trust in responsive teachers than they do in unresponsive teachers. This correlation was separate from a students’ responsiveness score, gathered from the student’s Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale. Therefore, when a student perceives an instructor to be responsive, the student will likely have more trust in that instructor. As a result, the researchers concluded that students trust highly responsive instructors, regardless of how responsive the students are to that instructor (Wooten & McCroskey, 1996). The results also suggest there is no impact on trust for increased or decreased assertiveness from the teacher. However, Wooton and McCroskey (1996) highlighted that overly assertive teachers may appear overpowering, which could have negative effects outside of a student’s trust in a teacher. Wooton and McCroskey (1996) recommended future research on the level of assertiveness in an effective teacher. For example, is there a level of assertiveness that is appropriate for college-level teaching that is not appropriate for the
elementary level? Wooton and McCroskey (1996) also suggested future research on the implications of assertiveness on types of classroom instruction.

In regard to classroom instruction, the results of Wooton and McCroskey’s (1996) study suggest that teachers should exhibit a high level of responsiveness in order to gain a higher level of student trust. If a student has a high level of trust in his or her teacher, the student is more likely to be more receptive to learning in that class. However, Wooton and McCroskey (1996) noted that teachers who are both responsive and assertive are likely to have positive outcomes in the classroom. There is a necessary balance, and future research should address the appropriate balance for the classroom. Future research in the field should also examine the effects of assertiveness in teachers beyond student trust to add to this growing body of research (Wooton & McCroskey, 1996).

In regard to teaching, instructors need to know their students and gain students’ trust in order for effective teaching to occur (Wooton & McCroskey, 1996). To expand on this idea, a study by Cole and McCroskey (2000) explored the relationship between temperament and socio-communicative orientation. Temperament, in this case, refers to traits, which can coexist but tend to be grouped into categories to help simplify differences in behavior among individuals (Cole & McCroskey, 2000). These groupings can help researchers understand different behaviors.

According to Cole and McCroskey (2000), research on traits has been very successful in the communication field, and the researchers used the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to explore potential connections between communication and temperament. The results of Cole and McCroskey’s (2000) study revealed a strong connection among the socio-communicative orientation and temperament. The high association between the two measures is high suggests...
that socio-communication orientations are likely genetically based. Specifically, there is overlap in the temperament and communication-related traits suggesting that the two areas share a common origin (Cole & McCroskey, 2000). These findings may help explain why it is difficult to train someone to be more or less assertive or responsive. Cole and McCroskey (2000) suggested that an individual may learn to be more assertive or more responsive in a controlled situation (such as training), but it is unlikely that their behaviors outside of that environment would change.

While more research is necessary in the field, the study by Cole and McCroskey (2000) identifies another use for the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale in the classroom setting. Using the scale as a measure to look into the relationship among these two ideas increases the growing body of communication research—and teaching is a high communications-based profession. Interactions between students and teachers consistently take place. In order for proper instruction to take place in the classroom, students and teachers must understand one another. Knowing how to communicate with one another to reach the desired outcome is part of this understanding. Using the scale as a measure to explore the potential connections shared with the socio-communicative orientation and temperament can also add to research on effective teaching. This would contribute to the research on effective teaching because teachers need to be competent communicators to be effective teachers (Richmond & McCroskey, 1992), and competent communicators are both assertive and responsive.

**Communication Competence**

McCroskey and Richmond (1996) perceived responsiveness and assertiveness as vital components of successful interpersonal communication. Communication competence is apparent
in people who are both responsive and assertive (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Richmond & McCroskey 1990, 1992). According to Mottet and Beebe (2006), responsive and assertive students report additional internalization of their learning and appear more driven and self-directed when it comes to studying.

Mottet and Beebe (2006) suggested that how responsive students are in the classroom may influence how instructors evaluate student work that is subjective. Responsive behaviors may affect teaching and learning in an instructional context (Ellis, 2000; Harper & Hughey, 1986). Students who are high in both responsiveness and assertiveness report more internalization of their learning; therefore, they are more motivated to study (Mottet & Beebe, 2006).

In their study, Mottet and Beebe (2006) examined college students’ communication competence and sought to determine if their communication competence related to how their instructors assessed their work. In order to explore this idea, the researchers felt that it was important to take into account students’ socio-communicative style or their communication competence. The instructor participants (graduate teaching assistant and adjunct instructors) completed the Socio-Communicative Style Scale for students in their class. Mottet and Beebe (2006) concluded, “Student responsive behaviors may contribute to meeting some of the interpersonal needs that instructors have” (p. 308). Furthermore, “student responsive behaviors may be an additional source of rater bias that influences instructor subjective assessments of student work” (Mottet & Beebe, 2006, p. 306). All forms of communication were positively related to instructor feedback (Mottet & Beebe, 2006).
Allen et al. (2008) emphasized the necessity of evaluation of work happening in classrooms in order for improvement to occur. Evaluations of teachers and professors have become widespread (Allen et al., 2008). Furthermore, nonverbal immediacy is directly tied to socio-communicative orientation. A large body of research indicates that students’ perceptions of the nonverbal immediacy of their instructors positively relate to how students evaluate course content and instruction for that professor (McCroskey & Richmond, 1992). Nonverbal immediacy can be described as openness and approachability, which are shown through eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. These are actions that are nonverbal. While these means of communication differ from one’s perceived levels of assertiveness and responsiveness, it is important to discuss immediacy as it relates to both socio-communicative orientation and style so that researchers can understand classroom communication and student learning.

A study by Allen et al. (2008) links immediacy with perceived assertiveness and responsiveness in instructors. Allen et al. (2008) noted a lack of research to “determine if the predispositions and orientations of student perceivers skew perceptions of instructors’ behavior” (p. 21). The researchers constructed the study to examine if college students’ predispositions to avoid nonverbal or oral communication and/or their socio-communication orientation related to perceptions of their instructors’ socio-communicative style and immediacy. Allen et al. (2008) also examined if the avoidant orientations influenced students’ satisfaction with their instructors as well as affective and cognitive learning. For the purposes of the current study, the researcher addresses only the results related to socio-communicative orientation/style and its effects on student learning.
Allen et al. (2008) hypothesized that “there is a positive relationship among students’ reports of their immediacy, socio-communicative orientation, perceptions of instructors’ immediacy and socio-communicative style, cognitive and affective learning, and affect toward the instructor” (p. 26). Allen et al. (2008) collected data from the 256 participants in the study by using several self-report measures as well as measures assessing instructors’ communication. Students took both the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale and the Socio-Communicative Style Scale. Students took the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to provide self-reported information on their own communication style. Students then took the same survey again but focused on their instructors’ communication style (Allen et al., 2008).

The data collected from the Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale administered by Allen et al. (2008) aided in showing a significant, positive relationship between students’ perceptions of their assertiveness, responsiveness, and immediacy and their instructors’ assertiveness, responsiveness, and immediacy. The data suggest that students who see “themselves as more immediate also perceive instructors as more nonverbally immediate, assertive, and responsive” (Allen et al., 2008, p. 34). Additionally, students’ responsiveness and assertiveness were significantly and positively correlated with student perceptions of the instructors’ assertiveness, responsiveness, and immediacy. Finally, the students’ socio-communicative orientation, along with their immediacy, significantly and positively related to “cognitive learning and affect for the course, for behaviors taught in the course and for the instructor” (Allen et al., 2008, p. 34). It is also important to note that the study’s data showed a significant correlation between students’ perceptions of their instructors’ socio-communicative style and their own socio-communicative orientation. Allen et al. (2008) noted that they did not
expect to find a correlation between the two datasets due to the fact that socio-communicative orientation and style are not dependent on the same perceptions (McCroskey & Richmond, 2000; Wooten & McCroskey, 1996).

**Communication in the Classroom**

In order to understand the impact that the Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale can have on student learning, it is critical to understand the basics of classroom communication. Use of the Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale has occurred only a few times in the world of educational communication research. Therefore, it was necessary to gather related research on classroom communication to fully understand the scale and its implications for student learning. Classroom communication is essential to learning. *Figure 2* is a visual representation of the importance of communication on student learning. Communication links teaching and learning and affects all aspects of a classroom.
At the heart of classroom communication is the teacher. To become a competent communicator, a teacher must get to know and bond with their students (Swanson, 2015). Getting to know students helps teachers perceive and react to students’ reactions of how he or she communicates (Swanson, 2015). Therefore, it is important to understand and possess the ability to measure qualities that make a competent communicator.

**Instructional Communication**

In 1978, Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey published one of the first books on classroom communication, *Communication in the Classroom*. In the book, Hurt et al. (1978) described teaching as communicative action. Communication is constantly taking place in a classroom.

Figure 2

*Link Relationship Between Student Learning, Teaching, and Communication*
This may be verbal or nonverbal communication. Hurt et al. (1978) suggested that there is a
difference between knowing and teaching, and communication is the key to that difference. As
Swanson (2015) stated, “It is not enough for the instructor to possess only strong content
knowledge when addressing students” (p. 153). It is imperative that teachers are excellent
communicators, and instructional communication focuses on the function of communication in
teaching and training (McCroskey et al., 2014).

Since the start of research on instructional communication, researchers have worked to
distinguish the communication behaviors that have the ability to decrease or increase the
effectiveness of reaching particular learning goals as they relate to classroom instruction
(McCroskey et al., 2006). Researchers “have found that students’ perceptions of their teachers’
communication behaviors of nonverbal immediacy, clarity, and/or socio-communicative style
(assertiveness and responsiveness) are highly related with instructional outcomes such as
affective learning” (McCroskey et al., 2006, p. 404). Understanding the role that assertiveness
and responsiveness play in instructional outcomes is important to understanding how to use the
Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale to aid in student learning. The ways in which
communication affects daily life in the classroom are varied and complex; understanding teacher
communication is critical.

**Teacher Communication**

No two teachers communicate exactly the same way. The different ways in which teachers communicate introduce variances into classroom instruction (McCroskey et al., 2004). The communication patterns of teachers are often consistent and observable by their students. Teachers are constantly communicating with students, and this communication can take verbal
and nonverbal forms (McCroskey et al., 2009; Katt et al., 2009). The ways in which students perceive teacher communication can be embodied by three variables: responsiveness, assertiveness, and nonverbal immediacy (Katt et al., 2009). This section of the literature review focuses on the responsiveness and assertiveness measures as these are measured using the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990).

Immediacy refers to the level of perceived relationship of two people, which can be psychological or distance related (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). The constructs of assertiveness and responsiveness have their basis in the Social Styles Model, also referred to as socio-communicative style (Richmond & McCroskey, 1989). According to Katt et al. (2009), assertiveness and responsiveness have an orthogonal relationship; however, both are considered to have a positive relationship with the way students perceive teachers’ immediacy. Teacher immediacy is linked to perceptions of a teacher’s credibility (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998) and student learning (Frymier, 1994; Frymier & Shulman, 1995). If assertiveness and responsiveness have a positive relationship with the way students perceive their teacher’s immediacy, and teacher immediacy is linked to student learning, it is possible to deduce that student learning is directly tied to a teachers’ assertiveness and responsiveness (see Figure 3). Teachers must acknowledge that they are not only providing students with information, but they are also setting up the ways in which their students perceive them (Banfield et al., 2006).
In 2004, McCroskey et al. advanced a general model of instructional communication that originated from research conducted by Mottet and Beebe in 2006. This model, based on the rhetorical model of instructional communication (Mottet & Beebe, 2006), proffers six components considered key to instructional communication: teacher communication behaviors, teachers, student perceptions, students, instructional outcomes, and the instructional environment (Mottet & Beebe, 2006). The six key components to instructional communication, according to McCroskey et al. (2004), discuss topics of communication inside a classroom. These subtopics are critically important to instructional practices and the instructional process itself. It has been shown over and over that communication is a critical piece of a classroom (Aylor & Opplinger, 2003; Myers et al., 2002). Moving beyond the classroom environment, research has shown the link between teaching and learning is communication (Frymier, 2005). Understanding the ways in which students perceive teacher communication is critical in order to address the student-teacher communication link. When looking at teacher communication research, there is a great deal devoted to understanding what it takes for a teacher to be an effective communicator. However, less is known about the effects of how teachers perceive
themselves as communicators and how this perception affects student learning and teacher effectiveness. General instructional communication in the classroom is tied to how teachers see themselves as communicators (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

*Aspects of Instructional Communication*

**Socio-Communicative Style**

One approach to analyzing the effectiveness of communication in the classroom is to use the socio-communicative style/orientation (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Socio-communicative style and orientation are offshoots of the same idea. Socio-communicative style refers to a person’s own thoughts on their responsiveness and assertiveness (Cole & McCroskey, 2000; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Porter et al., 2007;
Richmond & McCroskey, 1990; Wooten & McCroskey, 1996). Mottet and Beebe (2006) used words such as friendly, warm, and compassionate to describe responsive communicators. Responsiveness in communication is shown through behaviors that are oriented toward others (Cole & McCroskey, 2000; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Mottet & Beebe, 2006).

Alternatively, being assertive means that one is more self-oriented. Assertive people are willing to take a stand, and although they possess strong personalities, they are able to hold their ground without attacking others (Allen et al., 2008; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Customarily, responsive behaviors are associated with femininity, and assertive behaviors are associated with masculinity (McCroskey & Richmond, 1995). Regardless of their traits and associations, a competent communicator is able to act and think in a way that is appropriate to a given situation (Dilbeck & McCroskey, 2008).

**Socio-Communicative Orientation**

Socio-communicative orientation is how assertive and/or responsive an individual thinks they are when communicating with others (Frymier, 2005; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990; Richmond et al., 2002). While this concept is linked to socio-communicative style, the two differ in that style is grounded in observed rather than self-reported behaviors (Cole & McCroskey, 2000; Wooten & McCroskey, 1996). Wooten and McCroskey (1996) noted that the two views differ by who has ownership of the perception of communication. When dealing with socio-communicative orientation, the person taking the scale has ownership.

Responsiveness and assertiveness are the two main domains forming a person’s socio-communicative orientation. However, flexibility may also come into play in one’s socio-communicative orientation (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). People must be willing to change.
If people are willing to change, they tend to have more confidence in their behaviors. Swanson (2015) referred to this as self-efficacy. Individuals who embody flexibility are typically willing to try new strategies and enter new situations that may require adapting. While the main aim of this review is to link the use of the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale to student learning, it is important to recognize that some research notes the role of a third factor in an individual’s socio-communicative orientation.

**Socio-Communicative Style/Orientation Scale**

Richmond and McCroskey developed a scale to measure a person’s socio-communicative style and/or orientation in 1990. The Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale contains 20 items: 10 that measure assertiveness and 10 that measure responsiveness (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Assertiveness is one’s characteristics of independence and dominance (Cole & McCroskey, 2000). The scale items dealing with assertiveness are as follows: defends own beliefs, forceful, independent, has a strong personality, assertive, willing to take a stand, dominant, competitive, aggressive, and acts as a leader (Allen et al., 2008; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). Assertiveness is often seen as an individual’s ability to stand up for him or herself. Responsiveness, perceived as being other-oriented, deals with one’s traits of being helpful and warm (Cole & McCroskey, 2000).

According to Richmond and McCroskey (1990), aggressive communicators receive a low score in responsiveness but a high score in assertiveness. Those who are highly responsive and score low in assertiveness are submissive communicators. Those who score high in both categories are seen as competent communicators. Consequently, the two traits are not seen as competing factors but rather factors that work together to predict successful communication and
cannot be independent of each other (Mottet & Beebe, 2006; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996).

*Figure 5* is an example of the scale.

**Figure 5**

*Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTRUCTIONS: The questionnaire below lists twenty personality characteristics. Please indicate the degree to which you believe each of these characteristics applies to you while interacting with others 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. Work quickly; record your first impression.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Defends own beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Responsive to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Forceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Has strong personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sympathetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Assertive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sensitive to the needs of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Willing to take a stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Tender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Acts as a leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Competitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scoring:**
For your assertiveness score, add responses to items 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14, 18, and 20.
For your responsiveness score, add responses to items 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17.

*Note.* This scale is designed to measure responsiveness and assertiveness. The scale is available for researchers to use for free. Reprinted from J. C. McCroskey and V. P. Richmond, *Fundamentals of Human Communication: An Interpersonal Perspective*, 1996, p. 127. Copyright 1996 by Waveland Press.

Richmond and McCroskey’s (1990) scale can be used when talking about both socio-communicative orientation and socio-communicative style. When dealing with socio-communicative orientation, survey administrators ask respondents to respond to statements as they see themselves on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly
agree) (Allen et al., 2008; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990).

Conversely, when dealing with socio-communicative style, survey administrators ask respondents to answer questions based on another individual (Allen et al., 2008; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). This allows use of the same scale for two different means (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996; Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). The versatility of the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale adds to its potential for adding to the growing body of research surrounding communication and student learning.

This study offers discussions of studies using McCroskey and Richmond’s (1996) scale for both socio-communicative style and orientation. Both uses of the scale are the subject of discussion to emphasize the impact the Socio-Communicative Orientation/Style Scale can have on teacher communication research and the possible link to student learning. The research addresses both uses of this scale to illustrate the lack of research available on how teachers perceive their own communication in the classroom and how this affects student learning.

**Relationships and Leadership**

The studies discussed in the following paragraphs are not education studies. Researchers did not conduct these studies in an educational setting, and participants were not teachers and students. However, due to the limited availability of research using the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale in the classroom, it was important to include these studies and explain their connections and implications for classroom communication and student learning. In a classroom, a teacher is in charge of managing behavior and learning outcomes for their students. In much the same way, managers and leaders oversee their employees. Key points can be taken from these studies and applied to the classroom setting.
Current research has examined how individuals’ assertiveness and responsiveness affect their leadership within a particular organization. Furthermore, Porter et al. (2007) examined how temperament affects the organizational environment. This study extended the body of research surrounding a supervisor’s temperament by adding a communication piece. To examine the correlation between individuals’ assertiveness, responsiveness, and their ability to lead, Porter et al. (2007) used the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale in conjunction with other measures to gain the needed data.

Porter et al.’s (2007) study extended research conducted by McCroskey et al. (2004), which presented findings regarding a teacher’s temperament and how it affects his or her students. Porter et al. (2007) examined the same findings but in a different setting. The researchers applied the study to a supervisor-subordinate context rather than a classroom. Porter et al. measured a supervisor’s temperament and the effects on a subordinate’s job satisfaction and perceptions of their supervisor’s credibility and socio-communicative style, approachability, and motivation. Porter et al. (2007) found that a supervisor’s temperament affected how a subordinate perceived their supervisor’s communication. These findings aligned with McCroskey et al.’s (2004) findings that a teacher’s temperament affected students’ perceptions of their teacher’s communication.

The extension of McCroskey et al.’s (2004) study to a non-education setting implies that researchers can extend the non-educational use of the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to educational settings. For example, research findings imply that there is great potential for communication relationships between subordinates and supervisors to affect job satisfaction on either side (Porter et al., 2007). If studies have shown related results taking the Socio-
Communicative Orientation Scale from an educational setting to a non-educational setting, it is possible that the studies previously mentioned could be completed in an educational setting. These studies would add to the growing body of research on communication as it relates to student learning.

As instructors get to know students, they make connections. When these connections are made, instructors learn about individual students. This has large implications for teaching and learning in the classroom. If a teacher is able to make a connection with a student and learn more about that particular student, then he or she is able to personalize the learning in the classroom. The Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale can aid in research regarding classroom communication by helping to identify those individuals that display communication competence.

**Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale Classroom Uses**

In conclusion, the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale has the potential to contribute to research surrounding classroom communication and how it affects student learning. Instructional communication researchers have devoted countless hours analyzing what it requires for a teacher to be an effective communicator. Richmond and McCroskey (1996) indicated that successful communicators are assertive as well as responsive. Research has shown that responsiveness and assertiveness are traits that aid teachers in communicating effectively with students (Frymier, 2005; McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). It is critical that teachers are excellent communicators. McCroskey et al. (2014) suggested that instructional communication spotlights how communication operates in teaching. This plays a key role in understanding effective teacher communication (McCroskey et al., 2014).
Since early instructional communication research, researchers have worked to distinguish the communication behaviors that have the ability to decrease or increase the effectiveness of reaching student learning targets through classroom instruction (McCroskey et al., 2006). Communication affects life in the classroom in varied, complex ways. It is essential that research continues to expand the knowledge base of how teacher communication affects student learning. When researchers use the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, they are gathering data related to teacher communication in a reliable way. If taken by students, the scale provides a snapshot of a teacher’s perceived communication style, and if taken by the teacher themselves, the scale provides information on how the teacher perceives his or her own communication (Richmond & McCroskey 1990). The two measures on the scale, assertiveness and responsiveness, are both predictors of communication competence. Therefore, these data points allow researchers to establish connections between differences in communication and other aspects of the classroom environment.

As explained throughout this review, the uses for the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale vary. Furthermore, use of the scale has a wide array of implications for a positive impact on student learning. When educators are aware of different communication styles, they are able to design and implement a variety of instructional strategies that are relevant to particular situations. As discussed by Dilbeck and McCroskey (2008), competent communicators are able to act and think in ways that are appropriate for given situations. The Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale can be used to aid in learning in the classroom by way of both instruction and curriculum design.
Currently, most of the studies in the area of socio-communicative orientation and style deal with college-level teachers (instructors) and the college classroom setting. Future researchers should gather and analyze appropriate data to see if the same patterns apply to all levels of education. If the same patterns do not occur, what is happening at the lower educational levels in terms of teacher-student communication? What is being done to address the curriculum of a class in terms of communication styles? Student perceptions of their teacher’s assertiveness and responsiveness relate to students’ trust of their teachers and perceptions of teacher immediacy. These traits aid in student learning, and the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale can serve as a tool to assess these traits.

**Teacher Job Satisfaction**

In relation to the teaching profession, job satisfaction has been linked to higher salaries, more professional learning opportunities, as well as better working conditions (Hanushek, 2007). Teacher job satisfaction has a direct effect on a school and its students. Teachers who are not satisfied may leave the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001, 2004). Exacerbating the issue is the alarming rate that teachers leave the profession altogether (Ingersoll, 2001). Concern regarding the issue of teacher retention has led to a nationwide effort to find and retain highly qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). In part, No Child Left Behind legislation leads this effort.

**Years Teaching Experience**

According to Perrachione et al. (2008), turnover among teachers is higher than in other professions. Currently, under policies like No Child Left Behind, teachers are almost exclusively expected to concentrate on improving student achievement scores. Teachers and students feel the effects of No Child Left Behind on a daily basis. Many teachers report wanting to leave the
profession and feeling discouraged (Powell et al., 2009). Unfortunately, a large number of teachers leave the profession because of the added pressure that they feel (Kim et al., 2017; Powell et al. 2009), despite their years of service.

**Path to Certification**

Evans (2011) suggested that normalization of alternative certification programs for teachers has opened the profession to many people. Whitford et al. (2017) found teachers from traditional certification programs and teachers from alternative certification programs “do not present discernable differences in effectiveness” (p. 681). In fact, people entering the teaching profession through an alternative certification program bring with them various life experiences and skills that are beneficial in the field of education (Evans, 2011). However, highly qualified and highly satisfied are not synonymous. To inform teacher retention efforts, more research regarding the job satisfaction of teachers is necessary (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, 2004). The following sections address existing research of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, for a variety of variables can affect job satisfaction (Perrachione et al., 2008), and teacher burnout.

**Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors**

In a study of teacher retention, Herzberg (1966) developed a two-factor theory highlighting the influence of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Later, in 2008, Perrachione et al. also conducted a study focused on keeping teachers in the profession by scrutinizing how a teacher’s professional experiences affect one staying in the teaching profession. Perrachione et al.’s (2008) research supported Herzberg’s (1966) earlier work on the topic of job satisfaction, for they found that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a role in teacher job satisfaction.
Therefore, the choices a teacher makes in the workplace, as well as workplace conditions (such as salary), play a role in a teacher’s level of satisfaction with his or her job.

The intrinsic factors of job satisfaction correlate with how a person experiences work activities on a personal level (Herzberg, 1966). In the teaching profession, these include classroom activities and interactions with students, parents, and other staff members. Furthermore, Ingersoll (2004) recommended increasing teacher job satisfaction by offering better compensation packages, which in turn would help retain teachers and possibly prevent teacher burnout. Ingersoll (2004) also emphasized a need for the implementation of different programs in high-poverty schools to reduce teacher stress. However, these plans remain tenuous.

Extrinsic factors are related to things that affect a person outside of work. These factors may include administration support, salary, resource availability, and parental involvement (Baker, 2007). Research suggests that teachers need to feel supported in order to do their best work (Baker, 2007). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) found that a supportive environment, an extrinsic factor, can have a positive influence on how satisfied a teacher is with their job. When this does not happen, teachers are unmotivated and more likely to feel unsatisfied with their work. These situations can lead to teachers leaving their current school or the profession altogether (Ingersoll, 2001).

**Gender**

As one of the earliest theories on job satisfaction, Herzberg’s (1966) theory takes into account both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, as well as demographic factors, when determining a person’s level of job satisfaction. Examination of the demographic variable of gender has yielded contrary results. According to Perrachione et al. (2008), the gender demographic does not have a
significant effect on a teacher’s decision to stay in the profession. However, a study by Fraser and Hodge (2000) suggests “male and female faculty experience daily struggles differently” (p. 184). Additionally, Toutkoushian and Bellas (2003) found part-time faculty, who were predominantly female, expressed greater satisfaction with their job than did full-time faculty members.

**Burnout**

*Burnout* is a term often used in conjunction with job satisfaction. In 1976, Maslach began reporting evidence that human service workers were experiencing burnout. However, the topic of teacher burnout has gained less attention (Kim et al., 2017). In schools, stress and burnout refer to “issues with large numbers of teachers reporting negative work experiences” (Kim et al., 2017, p. 250). Teacher burnout, in part, can be attributed to a teacher’s work experiences (Kim et al., 2017).

**Summary**

A large body of research related to job satisfaction in general exists (Kim et al., 2017; Teven, 2001, 2007); however, research that combines job satisfaction and communication is sparse. The lack of research is especially true when it comes to job satisfaction levels of teachers. Examining job satisfaction research as well as socio-communicative orientation research may aid current and future teachers. This study focused on five predictor variables (assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, and years teaching experience), as well as job satisfaction.

Chapter 3 provides a description of this qualitative study and the instrumentation and procedures used to determine if a relationship exists between job satisfaction and
communication. Thus, the study focused on connections among the predictor variables and job satisfaction. In this study, the researcher examined teachers’ communication orientation and job satisfaction. Data were analyzed quantitatively to provide information on how teachers see themselves as communicators and how this related to job satisfaction. This study provides generalizable data of the sample as a whole (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Lichtman, 2013).
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to analyze communication orientations of teachers and the correlation, if any, to teacher job satisfaction. This chapter presents the procedures the researcher employed to collect data for the study. The chapter begins with a reiteration of the research questions and hypotheses. Next, the research design section offers and explanation and justification for the chosen experimental design. In the participant section is a description of participants and the selection process. Then, the procedure section clearly details the steps used by the researcher. Next, the materials section describes each instrument and questionnaire used to gather data. Following this, in the measures section, the researcher describes the data collection procedure for each variable. After this, the researcher details how data were analyzed. Chapter 3 ends with a summary of information presented in the chapter.

Hypotheses and Reiteration of Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction?
   a. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ assertiveness level and job satisfaction?
   b. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ responsiveness level and job satisfaction?

2. What is the correlation between gender and job satisfaction and gender?

3. What is the correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction?
4. What is the correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction?

5. What is the combined relationship between assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, years teaching experience, and job satisfaction?

The researcher made the following hypotheses:

- There would be a positive correlation between job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation,
- There will be no relationship between job satisfaction and gender;
- There will be a positive relationship between path to certification and job satisfaction
- Years teaching experience and job satisfaction will be positively correlated
- Teachers with more years of experience will be more satisfied in their job.

**Research Design**

This study utilized quantitative methods. The research contained a posttest only, non-random, one-group, correlational design. By using a correlational design, the researcher was able to express a relationship between variables statistically (Field, 2009). A correlational design allowed the researcher to “observe what naturally goes on in the world without directly interfering with it” (Field, 2009, p. 872). This correlational study of teacher socio-communicative orientation and job satisfaction included five predictor variables: assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, and years teaching experience. The outcome variable will be job satisfaction.

**Participants**

Following approval from the Mercer University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A), the researcher utilized purposeful selection to choose participants from one school
district in Georgia. The following criterion guided participant selection: actively employed as a teacher of students in a grade level between K-12 in the selected Georgia public school district.

Field (2013) found 90 participants are necessary for a medium effect size. Therefore, the researcher aimed to have at least 270 potential survey participants, which is a return rate of just less than 35 percent. To encourage participation, the researcher solicited survey completion with the use of a raffle for a 25-dollar Amazon gift card. However, only 33 participants volunteered.

**Protection of Subjects and Participants**

To protect participants from unethical practice, the researcher obtained institutional review board permission (IRB) by engaging in two review boards for approval. The first was through Mercer University in order to gain approval for the study itself. The second was with the school district in order to gain permission to use the district’s teachers as potential participants. The researcher truthfully explained the purpose of the study and maintained strict confidentiality for participants’ data. All participants were advised of their rights, and the researcher collected permission from each participant with a signed consent form. Participants received the option to drop out of the study at any time. In order to guarantee confidentiality for the survey data collection, the researcher assigned each participant a number in place of their name. A password-protected laptop ensured protection of stored data.

**Procedures**

The following is a sequential list of the procedures followed by the researcher:

1. Received Mercer Institutional Review Board permission.
2. Received district level permissions to access potential participants’ email addresses.
3. Collected all K-12 teacher e-mail addresses from district website.
4. Communicated with district principals at each building about the forthcoming email.

5. Emailed the three instruments (Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale, and the demographic survey) to all intended K-12 teacher participants.

6. Allowed K-12 teacher participants two weeks to complete all three instruments and sign informed consent form.

7. After 7 days, sent a reminder email.

8. After 12 days, sent a final reminder email.

9. After 14 days, closed the surveys and questionnaire.

10. After closing the instrument submissions, selected a random participant for the raffle and contacted that participant via email to receive a 25-dollar Amazon gift card.

11. Sent a thank-you email to all K-12 teacher participants and informed them there was a winner of the raffle.

12. Accessed statistical data from the completed Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale, and the demographic questionnaire.

13. Input data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.


**Materials**

The researcher collected data from several different sources. These were the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale, and the demographic questionnaire. This section provides descriptions of these instruments.
Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale

Participants completed the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (see Appendix B), developed and validated by Richmond and McCroskey (1990). The scale, which consists of 20 personality traits that measure the respondent’s responsiveness and assertiveness, uses a 5-point Likert rating system that ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 means the respondent disagrees strongly, and 5 means the respondent agrees strongly. The participants rates themselves using the Likert system on all 20 personality traits, such as “defends own beliefs” or “helpful”. According to Richmond and McCrokey (1990), the reliability for assertiveness and responsiveness items on the scale is above .80. These reliability statistics are at or above Field’s (2009) recommended level of .70. Access to the scale is on James McCroskey’s website, where he has linked research tools available to researchers free of charge (McCroskey, 2007).

Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale

Participants also completed the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (see Appendix C). Susan Mohrman receives credit for its creation. Designed to assist in the measurement of intrinsic, extrinsic, and job satisfaction overall (Mohrman et al., 1977), the instrument includes eight items divided into two sections comprised of four items each. A 6-point Likert-type scale is used to measure each item. In each section, the highest possible score is a 6; the lowest possible score is a 1. An overall job satisfaction score, which ranges from 8 to 48, derives from combining the scores from each section.

The first section on the scale measures intrinsic factors, and the second section measures extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors include the feeling of self-respect or self-esteem, opportunities for personal growth/development, worthwhile feelings, and present job in relation to past
experiences. Extrinsic factors include respect and fair treatment from supervisors, being informed, supervision, and opportunities in the work place.

The scale is available on the public domain. Mohrman et al. (1977) reported that the reliability for the intrinsic portion of the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale ranges from .81 to .87. Additionally, reliability for extrinsic items on the scale ranges from .77 to .82. These reliability statistics are at or above Field’s (2009) recommended level of .70. The researcher obtained permission from Susan Mohrman to use the scale in this study.

**Demographic Questionnaire**

The researcher utilized Google forms to create the demographic questionnaire, which asks participants to provide the following six demographics: gender, race, age, grade level of current teaching assignment, years teaching experience, path to certification (see Appendix D). Race, years teaching experience, and age are open-ended questions; gender and path to certification are dichotomous, and grade level is multiple-choice. The researcher used race, age, and grade level only to describe the participants.

**Measures**

This section presents descriptions of the quantitative instruments used. Established scales were used to measure job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation. A demographic questionnaire was also used to collect participant data.

**Job Satisfaction**

The outcome variable, job satisfaction, was calculated using the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale. The outcome variable, as quantified by the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale, was measured as a discrete variable. A discrete variable can
only take certain value on the scale that it uses (Field, 2013). A sum score was totaled for the entire instrument by adding the individual scores from each of eight questions. Participants answered each of the eight questions by selecting a level from a 6-point Likert scale. Therefore, the sum score for job satisfaction could fall between 8 and 48.

**Socio-Communicative Orientation**

The researcher used the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to determine the predictor variable, socio-communicative orientation. Participants completed the 20 items on the scale questions, and the sum score generated by adding the score from each question on the instrument. Participants answered each question using a 5-point Likert scale with levels 1 to 5. Therefore, the sum score for socio-communicative orientation was between 20 and 100 for each participant. The predictor variable of socio-communicative orientation was measured as a discrete variable. A discrete variable can take only take certain value on the scale that it uses (Field, 2013). The values ranged from 20 to 100.

**Assertiveness**

The researcher used the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to determine the predictor variable, assertiveness score. Participants completed the 10-question scale related to assertiveness. The sum score for assertiveness generated by adding the score from each question pertaining to assertiveness on the instrument. Participants answered each question using a 5-point Likert scale with levels 1 to 5. Therefore, the sum score for assertiveness was between 10 and 50. The predictor variable of assertiveness was measured as a discrete variable. A discrete variable can only take certain value on the scale that it uses (Field, 2013). The values ranged from 10 to 50.
Responsiveness

The researcher used the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale to determine the predictor variable, responsiveness score. Participants completed the 10-question scale related to responsiveness. The sum score for responsiveness generated by adding the score from each question pertaining to responsiveness on the instrument. Participants answered each question using a 5-point Likert scale with levels 1 to 5. Therefore, the sum score for responsiveness was between 10 and 50. The predictor variable of responsiveness was measured as a discrete variable. A discrete variable can only take certain values on the scale that it uses (Field, 2013). The values ranged from 10 to 50.

Gender

Participants’ responses on the demographic questionnaire determined the predictor variable of gender. Gender was measured as a categorical variable, since there were only two choices: male and female (Field, 2013).

Path to Certification

Participants’ responses on the demographic questionnaire determined the predictor variable of path to certification. This predictor variable offered only two choices: traditional teacher education program and alternative certification program.

Years Teaching Experience

Participants’ responses on the demographic questionnaire determined the predictor variable of years teaching experience. This predictor variable was self-reported by participants using a number. Participants received instructions to only include completed years of teaching.
Data Analysis

Data analysis included statistical analysis of the research questions. To answer the first research question, the researcher conducted a simple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between the predictor variable, socio-communicative orientation, and the outcome variable, job satisfaction. Additionally, to answer research question 1a, the researcher conducted a simple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between the predictor variable, assertiveness, and the outcome variable, job satisfaction. A simple linear regression allowed the researcher to look at the relationship between the predictor variable and the outcome variable.

To answer research question 1b, the researcher again conducted a simple linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between the predictor variable, responsiveness, and the outcome variable, job satisfaction. A multiple linear regression was used to determine the relationship between the outcome variable of job satisfaction and the predictor variables of gender, path to certification, and years teaching experience when controlling for socio-communicative orientation. Multiple linear regression analysis was used for the research questions 3 through 5, as it allowed the researcher to determine the relationship between the outcome variable and more than one predictor variable.

The researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the strength of relationship between the predictor and outcome variable. The data were checked for missing values and outliers. In addition, the researchers checked all appropriate assumptions. This correlational study allowed for use of simple linear regression analysis, as well as multiple linear regression analysis. The researcher used SPSS to perform analyses, which are displayed in Chapter 4 in the form of tables and figures.
Summary

To summarize, the researcher chose a quantitative approach to examine specific factors (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011) in order to gain an understanding of teaching as the profession relates to communication and job satisfaction. The researcher examined the relationship between K-12 teachers’ socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction, including isolating assertiveness and responsiveness levels. Additionally, the researcher examined the relationship between job satisfaction and gender, path to certification, and years of teaching (individually), while controlling for socio-communicative orientation.

The researcher administered the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale and the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale to a sample of K-12 teachers in a public school district in the state of Georgia. The items on the communication scale measure assertiveness and responsiveness (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). The items on the job satisfaction scale measure the extent a person is satisfied with his or her job (Mohrman et al., 1997). Additionally, the researcher administered a demographic questionnaire at the same time. All instruments and the questionnaire were accessible through email. Data were analyzed using SPSS software to run a linear regression analysis, as well as multiple linear regression analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the analyses.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Chapter 2 included literature of related studies pertaining to job satisfaction and socio-communication orientation and showed that there is still a need for research surrounding teacher job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2001, 2004). Chapter 3 described the methodology used for data collection. This chapter presents the results and findings from data collected and analyzed on predictors of job satisfaction of 33 Kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers in a public school system. In this chapter are a brief background of the study and its purpose, recap of the research questions that guided the study, description of the data cleaning, verification that all assumptions were met, and application of quantitative analysis to depict the findings.

Background of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the connections among the predictor variables and job satisfaction. The researcher examined the communication orientation of teachers and job satisfaction as well as gender, path to certification, and years teaching. The researcher analyzed data collected from 33 participants. All participants were Kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers at one public school district in Georgia. Participants were chosen through purposeful sampling based on their current job and publicly available e-mail addresses.

Review of the Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction?
a. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ assertiveness level and job satisfaction?

b. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ responsiveness level and job satisfaction?

2. What is the correlation between gender and job satisfaction and gender?

3. What is the correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction?

4. What is the correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction?

5. What is the combined relationship between assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, years teaching experience, and job satisfaction?

**Data Cleaning**

Data cleaning prepares the data for analysis. It is a process that can identify missing, incomplete, and outlying data points (Field, 2009). After gather data from participants, the researcher organized the data according to participant. To protect participants, the researcher assigned each participant an identification number in lieu of participant name. Data cleaning procedures included visual inspection of the data, which revealed no missing data points for all seven variables. Utilization of a box and whisker plot identified one outlier for the variable assertiveness. This outlier, which was greater than 1.5 times the interquartile range, was removed from the data analysis (see Figure 6).
The descriptive statistics in *Table 1* show the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the predictor variables and the outcome variable. The descriptive statistics came from the 32 data points in this study. The mean of socio-communicative orientation was 76.09 with a standard deviation of 8.67. The mean of assertiveness was 32.03 with a standard deviation of 5.76. The mean of responsiveness was 44.06 with a standard deviation of 5.89. The mean of gender was .31 with a standard deviation of .47. The mean of path to certification was .63 with a standard deviation of .49. The mean of years teaching experience was 15.91 with a standard deviation of 6.23. The mean of job satisfaction was 34.75 with a standard deviation of 7.30.
Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics of Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCO</td>
<td>76.09</td>
<td>8.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>32.03</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>44.06</td>
<td>5.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path to Certification</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching Experience</td>
<td>15.91</td>
<td>6.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>34.75</td>
<td>7.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation*

**Assumptions**

All assumptions for correlations and multiple regression were met. The outcome variable had a linear relationship to the predictor variables. The data can be described by a linear model (Field, 2009). Linearity was checked with a visual inspection of the scatterplots (see *Figure 7*). Variables were measured at the interval level or were categorical with only two possible values; zero and one. According to Field (2009), categorical variables are point-biserial correlations but, once coded, are run the same way as a normal Pearson correlation. All data samples were paired. Paired data means that each participant has values for each variable pertaining to the correlations. Independence of observation was met as there was a lack of autocorrelation. Residual terms should not be correlated (Field, 2009). Furthermore, for the multiple regression, the assumption of homoscedasticity was checked with a visual inspection of scatterplots (see *Figure 8*). There was a random pattern and not a distinct pattern of the residuals (Field, 200).
Independence of observations was assumed. Each observation was independent of the other observations.

Figure 7

*Linear Relationship*
Socio-Communicative Orientation and Job Satisfaction

Pearson’s correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation scale score. The relationship between K-12 teachers’ socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction was not significant, $p = .334$, at the .05 level (Field, 2009). Although not significant, the results showed a medium, positive correlation between socio-communicative orientation scale score and job satisfaction scale score (see Figure 9). The results did not support the researcher’s hypothesis that there is a significant, positive relationship between job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation scale.
Figure 9

*Correlation of Socio-Communicative Orientation and Job Satisfaction*

![Scatter plot showing the correlation between SCO and Job Satisfaction. The plot indicates a positive correlation with an R² value of 0.112.](image)

**Assertiveness and Job Satisfaction**

Pearson’s correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between job satisfaction and assertiveness. The relationship between K-12 teachers’ assertiveness and their job satisfaction was not significant, $p = .177$, at the .05 level (Field, 2009). The correlation was minimal, and it did not show a statistically significant correlation between assertiveness and job satisfaction. Although not significant, the results showed a small, positive correlation between job satisfaction and assertiveness (see Figure 10). The results did not support the researcher’s hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and assertiveness.
Pearson’s correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between responsiveness and job satisfaction. The relationship between responsiveness and job satisfaction was not significant, $p = .319$, at the .05 level (Field, 2009). The correlation was minimal, and it did not show a statistically significant correlation between responsiveness and job satisfaction (see Figure 11). Although not significant, the results showed a medium, positive correlation between responsiveness and job satisfaction. The results did not support the researcher’s hypothesis that responsiveness and job satisfaction are significantly, positively correlated.
Gender and Job Satisfaction

Pearson’s correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between gender and job satisfaction. The relationship between K-12 teachers’ gender and job satisfaction was not significant, \( p = .117 \), at the .05 level (Field, 2009). The correlation was minimal, and it did not show a statistically significant correlation between gender and job satisfaction. Although not significant, the results showed there was a weak, negative correlation between gender and job satisfaction (see Figure 12). The results did not support the researcher’s hypothesis that there is...
no correlation between gender and job satisfaction. Gender was coded and measured as 0 = female, 1 = male.

Figure 12

*Correlation of Gender and Job Satisfaction*

![Scatter Plot of Gender by Job Satisfaction](image)

**Path to Certification and Job Satisfaction**

Pearson’s correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction. The relationship between K-12 teachers’ path to certification and job satisfaction was not significant, \( p = -.108 \), at the .05 level (Field, 2009). The correlation was minimal, and it did not show a statistically significant correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction (see *Figure 13*). Although not significant, the results showed a weak, negative correlation. The results did not support the researcher’s hypothesis that there was
a significant, positive correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction. Path to certification was coded and measured as 0 = alternative, 1 = traditional.

Figure 13
Correlation of Path to Certification and Job Satisfaction

Pearson’s correlation was calculated to determine the correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction. The relationship between K-12 teachers’ years teaching experience and job satisfaction was not significant, \( p = .095 \), at the .05 level (Field, 2009). The correlation was minimal, and it did not show a statistically significant correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction. Although not significant, the results showed there was a
weak, positive correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction (see Figure 14). The results did not support the researcher’s hypothesis that there was a significant, positive correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction.

Figure 14

Correlation of Years Teaching Experience and Job Satisfaction

A multiple linear regression was used to determine which of the predictor variables predicted the outcome variable of job satisfaction. The multiple regression revealed none of the predictor variables significantly influenced job satisfaction, \( F(5,26) = 1.41, p = .253 \). The
following equation shows the constant term and coefficients of each variable used to predict job satisfaction:

\[ JS = 9.77 + 0.33 \text{ (ASSERT)} + 0.35 \text{ (RESPON)} - 4.38 \text{ (GENDER)} - 4.03 \text{ (CERT)} + 0.20 \text{ (EXPER)}. \]

The results support the correlation results: none of the predictor variables statistically predicted the outcome variable (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

*Correlation of Predictor Variables and Job Satisfaction*

![Correlation Graph]

**Summary**

This chapter presented the data and analysis of the 33 participants in a posttest only, non-random, one group correlational design study. Data cleaning for the study was explained. The
data cleaning included the complications and solutions for how the data analysis was performed. The assumptions for conducting a correlation and linear regression were presented and met. Additionally, the data analysis was presented. The data analysis led to the conclusion that none of the predictor variables had a statistically significant correlation to the outcome variable of job satisfaction. Chapter 5 presents an overview of the research, a discussion of the results, the limitations of the study, and the implications from the study. Furthermore, the researcher makes recommendations for further research studies in the areas of teacher job satisfaction and teacher communication.
Numerous variables influence a person’s level of satisfaction in their job (Perrachione et al., 2008). Job satisfaction, as an intrinsic factor, relates to how a person experiences different work activities (Herzberg, 1966). In a classroom, this includes interacting with students and parents, as well as day to day classroom activities. Unsatisfied teachers may leave the profession, which has a direct effect on schools and students (Ingersoll, 2001, 2004).

Interacting with students and teachers requires hours of communication on a daily basis. Socio-communicative orientation relates to perceptions that a person has of how assertive and/or responsive his or her communication with others is (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). Socio-communicative orientation describes the manner in which individuals believe they communicate (McCroskey & Richmond, 1996). In classrooms, communication plays a critical role in teaching and learning (Aylor & Opplinger, 2003; Frymier, 2005; Myers et al., 2002). However, there is very little research regarding any correlation between job satisfaction and communication.

This study did not find a significant correlation between the predictor variables of socio-communicative orientation, assertiveness, responsiveness, years teaching experience, gender, path to certification, and the outcome variable of job satisfaction. However, this study is still significant as it adds to the limited body of research surrounding communication and job satisfaction within the teaching profession, while also looking at demographic data to enhance the data analysis and implications for future research.

This chapter provides an overview of the findings from this correlational study. This chapter also presents a discussion of the analysis, limitations, and areas for future research.
Chapter 5 connects findings from this study to previous research in the areas of communication and job satisfaction

**Overview of the Research**

Participants were 33 K-12 teachers chosen through purposeful sampling based on their current job placement as K-12 teachers at one public school district in the state of Georgia. Participants received access to the Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohorman Job Satisfaction Scale, and a demographic questionnaire. The Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale score, as well as the two components separately served as predictor variables, along with gender, path to certification, and years teaching experience. The Mohrman-Cooke-Mohorman Job Satisfaction Scale score served as the outcome variable.

**Research Questions Revisited**

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ socio-communicative orientation and their job satisfaction?
   - a. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ assertiveness level and job satisfaction?
   - b. What is the correlation between K-12 teachers’ responsiveness level and job satisfaction?

2. What is the correlation between gender and job satisfaction and gender?

3. What is the correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction?

4. What is the correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction?
5. What is the combined relationship between assertiveness, responsiveness, gender, path to certification, years teaching experience, and job satisfaction?

**Socio-Communicative Orientation and Job Satisfaction**

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation. The results did not support this hypothesis; however, numerous new questions and thoughts arose. The researcher believes the results related to the small sample size and a different outcome would have occurred if there were more participants. Even if the findings did not support the hypothesis, the researcher believes that there would be statistically significant results. These results might show a negative or a positive correlation, but it would provide more information for future research.

**Assertiveness and Job Satisfaction**

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between assertiveness and job satisfaction. The results did not support this hypothesis; however, numerous new questions and thoughts arose. The assertiveness and job satisfaction correlation was weak, and the researcher believes this was due to the small sample size. However, it is also interesting to look at the difference between the correlation with assertiveness and job satisfaction and socio-communicative orientation and job satisfaction. Assertiveness is one of the two components of socio-communicative orientation, but the study results show a much lower correlation with assertiveness than the overall socio-communicative orientation score. The researcher wonders if this has to do with the characteristics of assertiveness alone. Are these characteristics that a person is less likely to recognize in themselves, and therefore, the data are not accurate?
Responsiveness and Job Satisfaction

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between responsiveness and job satisfaction. While there was a positive correlation, it was not statistically significant. It is interesting to note that the $p$ value of .319 for assertiveness and job satisfaction was very close to the $p$ value of .334 for socio-communicative orientation and job satisfaction overall. The researcher perceives this as an avenue for further exploration. Are the traits of responsiveness more likely to be internalized and therefore recognized by an individual? Does this translate to their score and therefore the overall socio-communicative orientation score?

Gender and Job Satisfaction

The researcher hypothesized that there would be no correlation between job satisfaction and gender. The study did not support this hypothesis, as the correlation was minimal. The $p$ value was -.117. Again, the researcher feels that the results may differ with a larger sample size. However, Perrachione et al.’s (2008) study and this study showed no significant correlation between gender and job satisfaction. The researcher in this study feels that this may be an area that differs based on grade level. This is an area to explore in future research.

Path to Certification and Job Satisfaction

The researcher hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between path to certification and job satisfaction. The hypothesis was not supported, which surprised the researcher. The researcher thought that teachers who went through a traditional education program would be more satisfied in their job. This is an area with a previous research database, but there is room for more specific research by grade level and even breaking it down into previous job experiences.
Years Teaching Experience and Job Satisfaction

The researcher hypothesized that years teaching experience and job satisfaction would be positively correlated. The results of the study did not support the hypothesis and only showed a weak ($p = .095$) correlation between years teaching experience and job satisfaction. The researcher believes this was directly tied to the low number of participants. If there were more participants, and a greater range of years of experience, the researcher thinks that there would be more of a correlation. Further research, with a larger sample size, would help to determine if this correlation is negative or positive. The researcher still believes this correlation would be positive.

Summary of the Results

This posttest only, non-random, one group correlational study investigated the correlation between six predictor variables and the outcome variable of job satisfaction. A correlational designed allowed the researcher to express a relationship between variables statistically (Field, 2009). Pearson’s correlation coefficient did not show a statistically significant correlation between any of the predictor variables and the outcome variable of job satisfaction. This suggests that socio-communicative orientation, assertiveness, responsiveness, years teaching experience, gender, and path to certification do not influence teacher job satisfaction. However, while not statistically significant, it is still important to note that the predictor variable of socio-communicative orientation and job satisfaction did have a medium, positive correlation ($p = .334$).

This study supported previous research by Perrachione et al. (2008) regarding gender and job satisfaction. Perrachione et al.’s (2008) study and this study showed no significant correlation between gender and job satisfaction. Future research should focus on differences in
gender and job satisfaction when broken down by grade level taught and years teaching experience to ensure that critical data points are not being left out of the growing body of research.

In 2011, Evans suggested that normalization of alternative teacher certification programs has opened the doors for many different people to the profession of teaching. These people bring with them their varied life experiences and skills. Research also suggests that teachers from traditional and alternative certification programs are equally as affective (Whitford et al., 2017). This study supports that idea by suggesting that job satisfaction is not strongly correlated to how a teacher obtains their teaching certification. This is important to keep in mind when we develop teacher training programs.

**Limitations**

The main limitation of this study was the small sample size. Only 33 participants volunteered, and data cleaning resulted in the removal of an outlier, resulting in data from 32 participants. A sample size of 90 was necessary for a medium effect size (Field, 2013). No statistically significant conclusions were able to be made from the data analysis. One possible reason for the small sample size was the timing of the study. This study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the surveys went out shortly before winter break. The combination of these two timing issues likely had an impact on the number of responses the researcher collected.

A second limitation of this study was that all participants taught in the same school district. This was an intentional limitation due to the sampling methods. However, it still limits the generalizability of the study’s results. Are there differences between different school
districts? What about the differences in geographical locations? There are many different avenues that could be perused in terms of location.

Another limitation for this study was the timing. The surveys and demographic questionnaire were sent out shortly before winter break and closed over winter break. Therefore, it can be assumed that many teachers did not see the email or did not want to participate due to the timing. Additionally, the timing of this study is interesting, given the global pandemic, which has changed the teaching profession in many ways. This may have skewed the data points of job satisfaction as many participants are currently experiencing a changing work environment.

**Implications**

This study supports the conclusion that socio-communicative orientation and job satisfaction have a linear relationship; however, the correlation is not significant \( r = .334 \). This adds to a limited body of research surrounding communication and job satisfaction. This linear relationship shows the potential for future work bridging the areas of teacher communication and teacher job satisfaction. This work is important because the body of research that combines job satisfaction and communication is limited. The researcher found almost no research that directly links communication (socio-communicative orientation) and job satisfaction. The research is nonexistent when specified to socio-communicative orientation and teacher job satisfaction. This is problematic because teachers account for 4% of the civilian workforce (Ingersoll, 2004). Additionally, the demands on public schools are high, and keeping quality teachers is a challenge (Ingersoll, 2004). Communication provides a link between teaching and learning (Frymier, 2005). Teachers spend much of their day communicating with students; therefore, communication is a large piece of the teaching profession.
The large body of research on job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2017; Teven, 2001, 2007) dwindles when communication is introduced. This is particularly true when examining job satisfaction levels of teachers. This correlation, even though it is not statistically significant, has the ability to further research connecting teacher job satisfaction and teacher socio-communicative orientation. This is important because work experiences relate to burnout, and working conditions of teachers is a major reason that teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs (Kim et al., 2017). Issues surrounding teacher job satisfaction need to be discussed. This study shows that there is a correlation between socio-communicative orientation and teacher job satisfaction.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study added to the limited body of research on teacher communication and job satisfaction. This study may lead future research surrounding communication and its impacts on teachers’ satisfaction levels with their jobs. This, in turn, can have positive effects on the teaching environment and student learning. Research shows that when teachers are satisfied with their jobs, they are less likely to leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher preparation programs should take into account the ways teachers communicate; specifically, teacher’s communicative orientation. Taking communication into account when preparing teachers for the workforce will help provide teachers with tools to be competent communicators. Being a competent communicator is at the heart of teaching, given that teachers spend hours communicating with students each day. In order to be a competent communicator, teachers need to get to know their students (Swanson, 2015). Getting to know a student means more
communicating. It is critical that the areas of communication and job satisfaction are integrated in research.

Additionally, future research should collect and analyze data to see if patterns in higher education also apply to K-12 education. If different patterns are found, then what are the different patterns in lower educational levels? This study did not collect data on the particular grade teachers taught. These data would be helpful to gather in future research to see if the correlations, even though they were only weak to medium, still are present when data are disaggregated by grade-level. This simple data piece would improve this study. Would there be some statistically significant data? Would some grade levels have positive correlations while others have negative correlations when looking at the predictor variable of socio-communicative orientation and the outcome variable of job satisfaction?

Moreover, looking at the research questions through a qualitative lens would provide different data points. Future research could include focus groups and individual interviews to gather more information beyond statistical data points. There are individual stories and situations that can be recorded through qualitative research that cannot be gathered in quantitative research. Given the recent, and still current, global pandemic, the individual stories collected through qualitative research has the potential to add further data to this area of research.

Furthermore, the interesting timing of this study has changed the teaching profession in many ways. This may have skewed the data points of job satisfaction as many participants are currently experiencing a changing work environment. Numerous teachers spent the first half of this school year teaching from home, which means communicating with students virtually and not face to face. This was likely the type of communication teachers had with students when they
filled out the surveys; therefore, their answers may change when face-to-face instruction resumes. Additionally, this was the first virtual teaching experience for many teachers, which could further impact how participants answered the surveys. This is an area of need for future research. The idea of what keeps a teacher satisfied in their job is forever altered for many, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The results of this study did not show a significant correlation \( (p = .108) \) between years teaching experience and job satisfaction however, it did not take into account the age of the participating teachers. It would be interesting to break this down by age to see if there is any correlation between job satisfaction and years teaching experience when controlling for age. Are younger teachers more satisfied in the teaching profession? Is this due to the changing landscape of teaching? The researcher also feels it will be valid to look further into any correlation between age and years of teaching experience. Are teachers that are younger but started teaching right out of college more satisfied than older teachers who went through another career first? The different lived experiences and dynamics that these individuals would bring with them may affect how they communicate with others as well. This is an area that may benefit from a mixed-methods study. The researcher sees the ability of a mixed-methods study to collect data points for teaching years and age but allowing room for individual stories and journeys. This has the potential to be a rich study that could dive into multiple areas.

Another area of future research includes using multiple study sites. This would allow the researcher to compare and contrast the differences between different school districts, different schools within a district, as well as look at differences in geographical locations. Would the results differ for study sites in a large city as opposed to study sites in a rural area? Do these
differences and similarities branch off even more when socioeconomics are taken into account? The political landscape of different geographical locations many also play a part in how teachers see themselves in terms of communicators. There is room for research here bringing political science research into education and job satisfaction.

The literature presented earlier in Chapter 2 lacked studies combining communication and job satisfaction. This is an important area for future research given the current state of public education. The need for quality teachers is still present (Ingersoll, 2004). Future research should focus on these two variables while keeping in mind past research regarding job satisfaction and other predictor variables such as gender and years of teaching.

**Conclusion**

This study did not yield statistically significant results. However, insights into what is not highly correlated to teacher job satisfaction were revealed, and these can play an equally important role in further the body of literature available. This correlational study focused on K-12 teachers only and did not recruit higher education teachers as participants. Perhaps there are more significant correlations when discussing teacher job satisfaction and communication with adults? However, it is critical to look at any and all factors that contribute to teacher job satisfaction, including communication. After all, communication has been shown to link teaching and learning (Frymier, 2005). Teacher education programs have the ability to tailor programs to meet the needs of pre-service teachers. Allowing pre-service teachers to explore the ways they communicate by identifying their socio-communicative orientation can help teachers prepare for the demands of the teaching professions. We can be hopeful that the more prepared new teachers are, the less likely they will be to leave the profession due to a lack of job satisfaction.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL
Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Ms. Samantha Vickery
Tift College of Education
Tift College of Education - Atlanta
3001 Mercer University Drive
Atlanta, GA 30341

RE: Teacher Communication and Job Satisfaction: A Correlational Study (H2012317)

Dear Ms. Vickery:

On behalf of Mercer University's Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research, your application submitted on 04-Dec-2020 for the above referenced protocol was reviewed in accordance with the 2018 Federal Regulations (21 CFR 56.110(b) and 45 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under category(ies) .7 per 63 FR 60364.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 08-Dec-2020. The protocol expires on 07-Dec-2021. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:
The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of any connections between a teacher's socio-communicative orientation and job satisfaction.

NOTE: You MUST report to the committee when the protocol is initiated. Report to the Committee immediately any changes in the protocol or consent form and ALL accidents, injuries, and serious or unexpected adverse events that occur to your subjects as a result of this study.

We at the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance are dedicated to providing the best service to our research community. As one of our investigators, we value your feedback and ask that you please take a moment to complete our Satisfaction Survey and help us to improve the quality of our service.

It has been a pleasure working with you and we wish you much success with your project! If you need any further assistance, please feel free to contact our office.

Respectfully,

[Signature]
Ava Chambless-Richardson, Ph.D., CIP, CIM.
Director of Research Compliance
Member
Institutional Review Board

"Mercer University has adopted and agrees to conduct its clinical research studies in accordance with the International Conference on Harmonization's (ICH) Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice."

Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
Phone: 478-301-4101 | Email: ORC_Mercer@Mercer.edu | Fax: 478-301-2329
1501 Mercer University Drive, Macon, Georgia 31207-0001
APPENDIX B

SOCIO-COMMUNICATIVE ORIENTATION SCALE
Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale
The questionnaire below lists twenty personality characteristics. Please indicate the degree to which you believe each of these characteristics applies to you while interacting with others 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. Work quickly; record your first impression.
* Required

1. Email address *

2. helpful *

   *Mark only one oval.*

   

   1 2 3 4 5

   

3. defends own beliefs *

   *Mark only one oval.*

   

   1 2 3 4 5

   

4. independent *
   
   *Mark only one oval.*

   1  2  3  4  5
   
   

5. responsive to others *
   
   *Mark only one oval.*

   1  2  3  4  5
   
   

6. forceful *
   
   *Mark only one oval.*

   1  2  3  4  5
   
   

7. has strong personality *
   
   *Mark only one oval.*

   1  2  3  4  5
   
   
8. sympathetic *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

9. compassionate *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

10. assertive *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

11. sensitive to the needs of others *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5
12. dominant *

Mark only one oval.

1  2  3  4  5

13. sincere *

Mark only one oval.

1  2  3  4  5

14. gentle *

Mark only one oval.

1  2  3  4  5

15. willing to take a stand *

Mark only one oval.

1  2  3  4  5

90
16. **warm** *
   
   *Mark only one oval.*

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17. **tender** *
   
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18. **friendly** *
   
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19. **acts as a leader** *
   
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20. **aggressive**

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21. **competitive**

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APPENDIX C

MOHRMAN-COOKE-MOHRMAN JOB SATISFACTION SCALE
Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale

For each statement, choose your level of satisfaction (1-6) with various areas of your job. One indicates a low level of satisfaction and 6 indicates a high level of satisfaction.

* Required

1. Email address *

Intrinsic Satisfaction
1= low 6= high

2. The feeling of self-esteem or self-respect you get from being in your job. *

   Mark only one oval.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

   Low □ □ □ □ □ □ High

3. The opportunity for personal growth development in your job. *

   Mark only one oval.

   1 2 3 4 5 6

   Low □ □ □ □ □ □ High
4. The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment in your job. *

*Mark only one oval.*

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5. Your present job when you consider the expectations you had when you took the job. *

*Mark only one oval.*

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Extrinsic Satisfaction

1 = low 6 = high

6. The amount of respect and fair treatment you receive from your superiors. *

*Mark only one oval.*

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7. The feeling of being informed in your job. *

*Mark only one oval.*

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8. The amount of supervision you receive.*

*Mark only one oval.*

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9. The opportunity for participation in the determination of methods, procedures, and goals.*

*Mark only one oval.*

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APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following to the best of your ability.

* Required

1. Email address *

2. Race

3. Years of Teaching Experience

4. Age

5. Gender

   *Mark only one oval.*
   - Male
   - Female

6. Path to Certification

   *Mark only one oval.*
   - Traditional
   - Alternative
To: Mohrman, Susan <smohrman@marshall.usc.edu>
Subject: Job Satisfaction Scale

Good Evening,
My name is Samantha Vickery. I am working on my PhD at Mercer University. My study will focus on the connection, if any, between teacher communication orientation and job satisfaction. I would like to use your job satisfaction scale if that is possible. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Samantha Vickery

From: Mohrman, Susan <smohrman@marshall.usc.edu>
Date: Mon, Aug 26, 2019 at 12:26 AM
Subject: RE: Job Satisfaction Scale

Dear Samantha,

That scale has long been in the public arena, and you are of course very welcome to use it. I wish you well on your research.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Mohrman
Senior Research Scientist
Center for Effective Organizations
Marshall School of Business
University of Southern California
COMMUNICATION RESEARCH MEASURES

These are measures that have been developed by researchers who are, or at one time were, faculty members or graduate students at West Virginia University. They were developed for use by researchers and may be used for research or instructional purposes with no individualized permission. There is no cost for this use. Please cite the source(s) noted at the bottom of the measure when publishing articles based on research using these instruments.

Sources:
