

Communication Style of Employed and Unemployed Men and Women in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study aims at exploring how the state of employment/unemployment affects a person's self-assessment of his/her communicative abilities? Knowing and assessing one's personal communication style and fine tuning it with the passage of time is essential for success in business life as it creates lasting impressions on people. The common perception is that women who work are more confident, open and outspoken as compared to women who are not involved in work-pressure environment. Similarly, employed men have a commanding and dominant style of communication, which is not the case with unemployed young men who may show signs of frustration and low self-esteem in the way they express themselves verbally and non-verbally. On the basis of a 50-item CSM (Communicator Style Measurement) questionnaire evaluated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1.00 to 5.00, we distributed survey forms among young men and women in Pakistan. The determination of mean values by evaluating responses gathered lead to the determination of dominant communication style of each stratum based on ten independent variables, which are Dominant, Dramatic, Contentious, Animated, Impression Leaving, Relaxed, Attentive, Open, Precise and Friendly. Since a person's communicator style is a combination of two or more styles, once we identify the dominant communicator styles and differences between communicator styles of employed men, employed women, unemployed men and unemployed women, it will help us flex our style to suit social situations and audience. In a society like Pakistan where people are often unable to express themselves effectively in working environment, the differences in communicator style this study highlights will ultimately aid in the general understanding of differences and how they can be overcome for effective communication professionally.

Keywords: Dominant communicator style

1. Introduction

Everyone has had experiences of saying something that was perfectly acceptable to a coworker or a friend and then being surprised when the same behavior irritated someone else.

This arises because of different communication styles, which are a person's preferred way of verbal, non-verbal and para-verbal interaction. Self-awareness on one's own communication style helps people to understand three key relationships: relationships with self, with other persons and with members of a group. Although the golden rule tells us to treat others the way we want to be treated, but would a Contentious person like to be communicated to in the same way? Hence, the ability to identify and if need be, adapt to the other person's communication style can afford one a crucial advantage in day-to-day dealings. Understanding other people's communication styles also increases our acceptance of their way of doing things.

Unemployment is sky high in a third-world country like Pakistan. There are very few relevant job openings for fresh graduates especially in the field of engineering and IT; the technological fields for which the country is dependent on operating multi-nationals, foreign investors and overseas projects to generate jobs for local population. The ongoing recession has, as a domino effect, forced many a corporate giants to shut down their businesses in Asian and African countries. As a consequence, many young professionals have lost their jobs and fresh graduates' unemployment rate is climbing. There is a marked difference between the communication style of the youth that is failing to secure jobs in the market and of those young boys and girls that manage to get employed relatively sooner. We know that level of confidence is a key factor affecting individuals' communication style and young jobless people rate themselves as low on confidence and self-esteem. We intend to study how this employment status is affecting their communication and how they need to flex their communication style to come across as confident and self-assured. This will help them perform better in job interviews and in other verbal and written communication with prospective employers.

In our study, we intend to build a better understanding of personal communication styles and their effects on other people. We would identify the dominant communication style of employed and un-employed men and women in Pakistan by analyzing them on eight dimensions: Dominant, Dramatic, Contentious, Animated, Impression Leaving, Relaxed, Attentive and Friendly. Since more people are a combination of two or more of these styles, we will ultimately find out the dominant communication style in each case. Accurate self-knowledge is truly the starting point for effectiveness at work. This study will help answer questions like, "Whether working women are more assertive in their communication than unemployed women?" Both men and women should know their natural communication style. This way, if they find it difficult to connect with other people, they can mirror the audience's predominant communication style for effective communication, often termed as 'style flexing'.

2. Literature Review

Significant research has been done on communication style differences across culture, among which a prominent study established is that white Americans tend to be more dominant while black Americans are more dramatic. Across gender, another study found that gender has a significant influence on communication styles. But no research has been done on variation in communication style in context of state of employment across genders. (Arvind Singhal and Motoko Nagao, 1993) took into account American and Japanese cultures to study their communication styles oriented towards assertive behaviors and assessing their perceptions for assertive behavior as communication competence. Since cultures in both countries vary significantly in terms of individualism versus collectivism, high context versus low context and masculine versus feminine, thus affecting the communication style in both countries. Assertive behaviors are taken to be more reflective of individualism as opposed to collectivism. Reports indicate Asians to be less assertive than white people. Different hypothesis were put forth to study the differences between the two cultures in context of assertiveness and perceptions towards assertiveness. College Self-Expression Scale was used to test these two dimensions between people of these two countries.

Findings suggest that although Americans were rated higher on assertiveness and their perception of assertiveness as compared to Japanese, they still were rated lower while measuring the perception of assertiveness as communicator's competence. Also, Japanese displayed greater gender differences as compared to Americans. Focus groups, consisting of public administrators, were conducted to collect and analyze qualitative data on gender and communication style in (Janet Mills and JoAnn Wandell, 1985). The question raised was whether gender affects communication and relationships at work?

The communication style of men was described as directive, authoritarian and impersonal whereas women were described to be nurturing and emotional by the focus group members. It was also addressed that in meetings, the ideas and opinions of women get ignored often because they speak in a soft and gentle manner whereas the same ideas are taken seriously when men later state them forcefully. As a consequence, women stay quiet and if they have to communicate, they do so in male overtones. With better communication, men and women can negotiate and collaborate without gender being a factor. (I.C. Mc Manus, J.M. Kidd and I.R. Aldous, 1997) used CSM questionnaire to get normative feedback on self-perceptions of communicative ability from undergraduate medical students and general practitioners. The study found that male doctors see themselves as less dominant, less dramatic, less animated, less contentious and more open. Female doctors, on the other hand, see themselves as less contentious, more animated, better listeners and more open.

Predominant communication style of employees in an organization is studied in (Faisal Ibrahim and Dr. Narimah Ismail) and a relation is formed between individual communication style and demographic factors. The study was based on the intent that communication style of a group of individuals can be equated with learning the organizational culture. Study reported a significant difference in the friendly style between males and females where male organizational peers were found to be friendlier. In dominant communication styles, attentive style was found to be the most used style with a mean value of 3.18 on a scale of 5, followed by relaxed style with a mean value of 3.04. The least used styles were found to be contentious and dramatic with mean values of 1.81 and 1.82 respectively. Some employees, termed as the 'in group', appear to have affable relationship with their supervisors and managers and manage to get preferential treatment by their leaders in the way of social support, trust, decision making and influence (Paul E. Madlock, Matt, M. Martin, Leah Bogdan and Melissa Ervin). Contrarily, for some employees, termed as the 'out group', relationships with superiors is low-quality and limited and therefore are met with little support from their superiors. Building on the finding by Graen, Dansereau, and Minami (1972) that the relationship quality between a superior and subordinate can be determined by the quality of their communication exchanges, this study examined subordinates' self-reported traits of communication in order to study their effects on quality of leader-member exchange (LMX). Communication apprehension was found to be a great predictor of LMX quality along with cognitive flexibility which has less effect. The conceptualization asserts that in order for a person to be perceived as a competent communicator, he must possess the ability to be assertive, responsive and versatile/flexible. It will affect the level of job satisfaction as well.

Communication competence of the leader and his leadership behavior on employee's communication and job satisfaction are studied in (Paul E. Madlock, 2008). Several hypothesis and research questions were put forward to analyze this impact, by observing the level of significance of leader's communication competence and his task and relational leadership style on job satisfaction as well as communication satisfaction of employees. This also includes the study of questions as to which supervisor behavior dominantly impacts employee job and communication satisfaction. A number of questionnaires were used to carry out the study namely Leadership Style Questionnaire, Communicator Competence Questionnaire, Abridged Job In General scale and Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory. Results showed the presence of a strong relationship between communicator's competence and communication satisfaction whereas a moderate relationship between communicator competence and employee's job satisfaction. Similarly, a strong relationship was existent between leader's task oriented leadership and communicator competence indicating weak relationship present with employee job satisfaction.

While correlating the communication style of the managers with their effectiveness as supervisors (Jerry L. Allen, Edward J. Rybczyk and Ben Judd, 2006), two types of questionnaires were used for assessing communication style of managers and gauging leadership effectiveness and they are CSM (Communication Style Measure) and LOQ (Leadership Opinion Questionnaire). CSM consists of ten sub constructs namely dominant, dramatic, contentious, animated, impression leaving, relaxed, attentive, open, friendly and the final being communicator image. LOQ on the other hand takes two factors to assess the leadership effectiveness and they are structure i.e. supervisor's role in achieving goals and consideration i.e. how much a supervisor is concerned for his/her subordinates. These two factors combined together makes 83% of the variant personalities of managers all over.

Various tests were conducted in the paper to test the validity of three hypothesis and these relate to the subordinates views on their manager's communication style and their leadership effectiveness keeping in view their respective gender. The results show that the three variables namely friendly, impression-leaving and relaxed call for 59% of the total manager's effectiveness, with friendly accounting for 46% of the total effectiveness. Studies reveal that subordinates rated male managers more positively on communicator image and effectiveness as compared to female managers and that environmental setup in which the manager leads also decides manager's communication style. So, this shows while appointing supervision authority to someone, a firm must look for that person's communicative style and ability because it affects manager's effectiveness.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

Our target was to find out whether young employed men and women in Pakistan have different communication style? And what is the predominant style of each. We also compared the communication style of employed and unemployed women. For this purpose, we used Norton's Communicator Style Measurement questionnaire. It is a self-rater form with 51 items anchored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1-Strongly Agree to 5-Strongly disagree. The participants require less than 10 minutes to fill the form and are judged on 9 independent variables: Animated, Attentive, Contentious /Argumentative, Dominant, Dramatic, Friendly, Impression Leaving, Open and Relaxed. The evaluative result of these is a dependant variable, the communicator style.

The sample size was calculated using Power and Precision Version 4. The study will enroll 17 people per group, for a total of 34 people to allow us to conclude that the mean response is different for Employed Men than for Employed Women. Similarly, with a sample of 20 subjects per group the study will allow us to conclude that the mean response differs for Unemployed Men versus Unemployed Women. With these sample sizes, the study will have power of 80%. This means that there is 80% likelihood that the study will yield a statistically significant effect. The scale is composed of 5 possible responses, which range from Strongly Disagree at one end to Strongly Agree at the other. Because these responses follow a logical sequence we can assign a numerical score to each response (from 1 to 5), and compute a mean and standard deviation for each group.

The null hypothesis is that the mean response for Employed Men and Employed Women and similarly for Unemployed men and Unemployed women is identical. Our intent is to disprove the null, and conclude that the mean response is different. The sample for the study was drawn from Rawalpindi and Islamabad encompassing fresh university graduates (un-employed) and young organizational employees in Sales, Marketing and Engineering/IT fields. 82.35% and 84.62% of the employed and unemployed females were between the age group of 22-25 years respectively whereas 17.65% and 15.38% fell into the 25-32 years age group. Among employed men, 5.8% were below 24 years of age, 70.5% were between 24-29 years age group whereas 29.4% were between 30-35 years of age. The considerably low average age of surveyed employed women is due to the fact that mostly women in Pakistan do not work after initial 3-6 years into their careers.

3.2 Procedure

For easier approachability, survey forms were distributed by hand and via email in universities and in offices to employees. Over a two-month period, we got a total of 56 responses. Filling in the questionnaire and returning it to the researcher implied consent to participate in our study.

In a male-dominated society like Pakistan, men are expected to be dominant and assertive in every facet of social life. From an early age, men take on responsibility of looking after the women and younger members of their family, by virtue of which being a decision maker, taking charge of situations and earning for family livelihood are ingrained in them, instilling in them a dominant attitude. Women, on the other hand, are not socially acceptable when they assume assertive roles. We therefore believe that employed men tend to communicate in a confident, forceful, self-assured and business-like manner. They use loud volume of voice, prolonged eye contact, give orders and are the center of attention. We formulated the hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Employed men are more dominant in their communication than employed or unemployed women.

Working women do not constitute a large percentage of the population in Pakistan as compared to the Western world. The small percentage that does boast of a working experience has a good exposure and high self-confidence. This confidence and flamboyancy shines through their communication styles and leaves an impression on people. They may exhibit controversial interactive manner. Hence, our hypothesis 2 states that:

Hypothesis 2: Employed women are more impression-leaving in their communication than employed men.

Employed women work side-by-side men and develop androgynous behavior over time to fit in well in corporate environment. They try to shed away shyness in communication and learn to speak their minds unreservedly. They are more social, candid and approachable. We formulated our hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3: Communication style of employed women is more open than unemployed women.

It is the tendency of women to exaggerate and generalize when they talk. However, in workplaces, women learn to be direct and brief in their conversations. Precision, in communication, involves explaining concepts unambiguously and employed women have a higher control of the content than unemployed women.

Hypothesis 4: Employed women are more precise in their communication than unemployed women.

3.3 Design and Measuring Instruments

The first section of the questionnaire was concerned with the respondents’ personal and occupational data. The respondents were asked their age, gender and state of employment/unemployment. This was followed by a 45-item Communicator Style Measurement (CSM) Questionnaire Form with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.919. The 6 filler questions were ignored. The items for measuring the styled were later analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean) to determine the level of predominance. All questions relate to general face-to-face communication situations. The participants were asked to follow their first inclination and to not spend too much time on each question.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.919	.922	45

4. Findings

Findings suggest that overall employed men and women in Pakistan rate themselves to be friendly, attentive and expressive in their communication. They neither agree nor disagree on being contentious and open in their communication.

Table 2: Employed Men and Employed Women in Pakistan

		Statistics										
		Friendly	ImpressionLeaving	Relaxed	Contentious	Attentive	Precise	Dramatic	Open	Dominant	Communicative	Animated
N	Valid	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	17
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17
Mean		2.5000	2.5588	2.8971	2.9853	2.5515	2.8897	2.8162	2.9926	2.8529	2.7353	2.6029

For employed men and employed women, findings suggest that employed men rate themselves as friendlier than employed women whereas employed women rate themselves as more impression leaving than men. Employed men state that they are more relaxed in their communication than employed women while employed women rate themselves as more attentive in communication than employed men. Similarly, employed women are rated as more expressive in their communication style while both employed men and women are equally dominant in their communication.

Table 3: Employed Women Statistics

		Statistics										
		Friendly	ImpressionLeaving	Relaxed	Contentious	Attentive	Precise	Dramatic	Open	Dominant	Communicative	Animated
N	Valid	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	2.4118	2.3971	3.0000	2.8529	2.4853	2.9559	2.7500	2.9706	2.8529	2.7059	2.3529

Table 4: Employed Men Statistics

		Statistics										
		Friendly	ImpressionLeaving	Relaxed	Contentious	Attentive	Precise	Dramatic	Open	Dominant	Communicative	Animated
N	Valid	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Mean	2.5882	2.7206	2.7941	3.1176	2.6176	2.8235	2.8824	3.0147	2.8529	2.7647	2.6029

In a comparison carried out between employed women and unemployed women, it was found that employed women rate themselves as friendlier than unemployed women. Employed and unemployed women rate themselves as being equally relaxed and contentious in their communications. Unemployed women rate themselves as precise and expressive than employed women, while employed women say that they are more open in their communication than unemployed women. Unemployed women have the higher communicative ability as compared to employed women.

Table 5: Unemployed Women Statistics

		Statistics										
		Friendly	ImpressionLeaving	Relaxed	Contentious	Attentive	Precise	Dramatic	Open	Dominant	Communicative	Animated
N	Valid	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Missing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Mean	2.7167	2.4375	2.9875	2.8375	2.3750	2.5875	2.9125	3.4375	2.8625	3.0700	2.2750

5. Discussion

On the basis of the results obtained from the three categories i.e. employed men and women and unemployed women, we can see that all three categories are equally dominant in their communication style with their reported means as 2.852, 2.852 and 2.862. This disproves our hypothesis 1.

Results obtained for the variable impression leaving suggest that employed women are more impression leaving in their communication style than employed men with the reported mean for employed men as 2.72 and for employed women as 2.397. So, this proves our hypothesis 2.

Results were compared on the openness of the communication style of employed and unemployed women, and on the basis of the means which are 2.97 for employed women and 3.43 for unemployed women our hypothesis 3 gets proved.

While testing for our fourth hypothesis we found out that unemployed women are more precise in their communication than employed women with their means as 2.58 and 2.97, so this disproves our hypothesis 4.

6. Limitations

Responses from unemployed males could not be obtained, because it was tough to locate unemployed men. Since men are the bread-winners in Pakistan society, they prefer a low-paying job over being jobless. Due to non-availability of unemployed male data, we could only test our results on 3 categories i.e. employed men, employed women and unemployed women. So, the validity of results only lies within these three categories. Moreover, convenience sampling resulted in majority responses from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Future prospects of this study could be relating these ten dimensions to the age, gender and experience of the respondents and carrying out regression analysis.

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Appendix: Communicator Style Measurement (CSM)

Age:		
Gender:		
Employed:	Yes	No

Please answer the questions below on following scale

5.00=Strongly Disagree, 4.00=Disagree, 3.00=Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2.00=Agree, 1.00=Strongly Agree

Item No	5.0 0	4.0 0	3.00	2.0 0	1.0 0
1. I readily express admiration for others.					
2. What I say usually leaves an impression on people.					
3. I leave people with an impression of me which they definitely tend to remember.					
4. To be friendly, I habitually acknowledge verbally other's contributions.					
5. I am a very good communicator.					
6. I have some nervous mannerisms in my speech.					
7. I am a very relaxed communicator.					
8. When I disagree with somebody I am very quick to challenge them.					
9. I can always repeat back to a person exactly what was meant.					
10. I am a very precise communicator.					
11. I leave definite impression on people.					
12. The rhythm or flow of my speech is sometimes affected by my nervousness.					
13. Under pressure I come across as a relaxed speaker.					
14. My eyes reflect exactly what I am feeling when I communicate.					
15. I dramatize a lot.					
16. I always find it very easy to communicate on a one to one basis with strangers.					
17. Usually, I deliberately react in such a way that people know that I am listening to them.					
18. Usually I do not tell people much about myself until I get to know them well.					
19. Regularly I tell jokes, anecdotes and stories when I communicate.					
20. I tend to constantly gesture when I communicate.					
21. I am an extremely open communicator.					
22. In a small group of strangers I am a very good communicator.					
23. In arguments I insist upon very precise definitions.					
24. In most social situations I generally speak very frequently.					
25. I find it extremely easy to maintain a conversation with a member of the opposite gender whom I have just met.					
26. I like to be strictly accurate when I communicate.					
27. Often I physically and vocally act out what I want to communicate.					
28. I readily reveal personal things about myself.					
29. I am dominant in social situations.					
30. I am very argumentative.					
31. Once I get wound up in a heated discussion I have a hard time stopping myself.					
32. I am always an extremely friendly communicator.					
33. I really like to listen very carefully to people.					
34. Very often I insist that other people document or present some kind of proof for what they are arguing.					
35. I try to take charge of things when I am with people.					
36. It bothers me to drop an argument that is not resolved.					
37. In most social situations I tend to come on strong.					
38. I am very expressive nonverbally in social situations.					
39. The way I say something usually leaves an impression on people.					
40. Whenever I communicate, I tend to be very encouraging to people.					
41. I actively use a lot of facial expressions when I communicate.					
42. I very frequently verbally exaggerate to emphasize a point.					
43. I am an extremely attentive communicator.					
44. As a rule, I openly express my feelings and emotions.					
45. Out of a random group of six people, including myself, I would probably have a better communicator style than a=5 of them, b=4 of them, c=3 of them, d=2 of them, e=1 of them, f=None of them (answer this question by either typing a, b, c,d,e or f in the following answering box)					