BUREAUCRATS: THE EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROFILES OF THEIR COMMUNICATOR STYLES AND PREDISPOSITIONS

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2020

BUREAUCRATS: THE EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROFILES OF THEIR COMMUNICATION STYLES AND PREDISPOSITIONS

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Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

There has been a long-standing perception by the American public that bureaucrats are incompetent. Public administration scholars have studied the negative perceptions of bureaucrats and the work of these scholars has brought about a dichotomous characterization of bureaucrats. On one end, scholars characterized bureaucrats as incompetent individuals with truncated personalities who add to the inefficiencies of the bureaucracy (Hummel, 2008). At the other end scholars find bureaucrats to be ordinary individuals with a remarkable sense of purpose, competence, and dedication (Goodsell, 2015).

The characterization of bureaucrats serves as the backdrop to the study's purpose which was to develop communicator profiles of government bureaucrats. Developing a taxonomy of profiles of their communicator styles and predispositions allowed us to gain an understanding of the competency levels, as it pertains to communication, that exist in current modern bureaucracies which supported *and* opposed the negative long-standing perception of the general American public toward bureaucrats. The taxonomy of communicator profiles may provide bureaucrats with self-awareness, and concrete understanding of their communication predispositions and styles when performing their jobs. This concrete knowledge may enable bureaucrats and their managers to seek ways in which to enhance communication styles and predispositions during service delivery as well as provide opportunities to mitigate their predispositions so that they may interact

with the public in manner that is more in-line with that of responsible public service characterized by kindness, charity, and benevolence (French, 1983). A public sector workforce that interacts with the public with higher levels of communication competency creates an environment of perceived effectiveness, and citizens who come face-to-face with bureaucrats will experience a higher-level quality of service which in turn will ameliorate the perceptions held by the public of bureaucrats. Knowledge of communication trait levels may result in enhanced, positive experiences between citizens and bureaucrats which will bring about stability, function, and effectiveness in bureaucracies necessary for a free society and democratic polity (Goodsell, 2004).

Keywords: Bureaucracy; Bureaucrats; Public Service; Public Servants; Communication Traits; Verbal Aggressiveness; Argumentativeness; Taking Conflict Personally; Direct Personalization; Communicator Style; Affirming Style; Survey; Research Design; Psychology.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this degree and work to my Abuelo, Dr. Filiberto Enrique Alcalá Jimenez, whose admirable work ethic, passion, dedication to, and care for his patients as if they were his family inspired me to seek to serve others the same way. Moreover, his multiple degrees and specializations set the tone for who I wanted to become and why I wanted to pursue this doctorate degree.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of Melissa Wardell, Maurice Johnson, and Condit Dow. To Melissa's memory who made herself manifest through the words of my brother-in-law Sean who shared that the more challenging things got, the closer I was to finishing. To the memories of Mr. Johnson and Condit who planted the seed for me to pursue a doctorate during and right after my undergraduate studies. I am sad that you won't see me graduate in person, yet grateful that your words and memory will be with me when I walk to receive my degree.

Melissa, Mr. Johnson, and Condit, you are all sorely missed, yet warmly remembered. May you all rest in peace. Thank you for encouraging me to complete my doctorate degree and for believing in me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Gracias a Dios.

Authoring a dissertation is a very lonely task. It is accomplished by dedicating a multitude of hours to sitting in front of a computer and writing until your gaze is blurry. However, completing a dissertation is not a task accomplished alone. This dissertation is a product of the abundance of love many people have gifted me throughout my life. The first being my mother, who has dedicated her whole life to ensuring I become the best version of myself. It is her love for me that carried me through the dark valleys that this task made me face. My father and my brother have also been instrumental in my life and in me completing this task. Like clockwork, they both called me when I was struggling to keep on, they both infused me with motivation to carry on.

As I mentioned, while I did the writing of this dissertation, it was my wife, Richelle, that carried the biggest burden of this dissertation. Without her taking on the duties of parenting on her own during the days I was at a coffee shop working on my dissertation, our daughter, Isadora, would not have developed and thrived the way she has. Her selfless love ensured I completed this, and like my immediate family, she pushed me every day to see pass my anxieties and my self-sabotaging.

Our daughter Isadora deserves equal credit, as her unconditional love for me and patience while I needed to write also served as fuel to keep writing.

Next, of course, are my professors who devoted not only their time but their energy to ensuring I completed my dissertation. Dr. Cox, thank you for being the one that made all of this possible, from the moment I showed up at your office as a recent graduate looking to enroll in the public administration master's program, until the last days of this dissertation. You set the course for me to dream big with what I could accomplish with my post-graduate education.

Dr. Beckett, you truly helped me become better every day. You always led the way to submitting high quality work and you always ensured I was giving you my best, and when I wasn't you redirected me and showed me that it could be done. I cherish the conversations we had that lighten the journey, and I cherish the tough love you gave me.

Dr. Oh, I was so grateful for your charisma and infusion of fresh ideas when you joined the department. In a brief period of time, you showed all of us how to become critical thinkers and how to think about things innovatively. Without any hesitation you were always available to discuss topics and ideas no matter how outrageous they seemed.

Dr. Walter, I have enjoyed becoming friends with you. You sparked in me a desire to help others learn and improve. This dissertation is inspired by the work you did as a consultant. I appreciate your openness and inviting me to reflect on my journey in a way I hadn't before.

Dr. Rancer, I know the amount of gratitude I have for you will not be served well by the words I will share here, however, I must at least try. This work is a tribute to your extensive work in the field of communication traits. From my master thesis to this dissertation, you gifted me with the knowledge of and now passion for communication traits. Instantly, you welcomed me into the field, you introduced me to your peers with

the same amount of respect and esteem that you would any other colleague. You guided me through submitting my first research paper to a regional association where we earned top paper. Since then, you have gently encouraged me to carry on with my research and done so in a very elegant manner. You stood by me when I felt alone in the journey and you took me out of the weeds so that I could keep working.

To all of you, I am deeply grateful for your dedication, your energy, your patience, and above all your support to help me get this done.

Dr. Lyons, Dr. Saunders, and Dr. Subich, you all were instrumental to this process. I appreciate the extraordinary efforts you went through to make sure I was able to graduate. All of you demonstrated exemplary service to me as a student, thank you!

A special thank you to Dr. Stephens, Dr. Deevers and Dr. Berry. Dr. Stephens and Dr. Deevers, thank you for allowing me to reach out to you with method and statistical analyses questions and for helping sort through them!

Dr. Berry, you set me up with my research assistantship which helped cover the majority of my studies, and which gave me the marvelous opportunity to work with Dr. Leahy and Dr. Stephens. You recognized talents in me that I was yet to discover by myself. I appreciate you cheering me on!

John Garofalo, John Petures, and my Akron Community Foundation family also deserve immense thanks as they nurtured and supported me during the final haul.

One more big thank you, to my colleague, Dr. Deborah Wallace. Deb, you helped me figure out what my research strengths were, how to make the best use of my knowledge, and you kept pushing me to get this done even when you had already completed your journey. Friends like you make for a wealthy life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

*"Although they are normally regarded as low-level employees, the actions of most public service workers actually constitute the services 'delivered' by government." (*Lipsky, 1980, p. 3)

Can you recall a recent time when you encountered the bureaucracy? When you last renewed your driver's license, how did that make you feel? Did you feel like a person or a number when you processed a request for a copy of your birth certificate? Were you treated with respect when you applied for your marriage license? How about the time where you had to obtain a death certificate for a loved one who passed away; did you feel the person behind the desk or window cared for or about you? More importantly, did you form a positive or negative impression of the person providing you the service? Did the person seem competent in their role?

These questions ask you to reflect on common interactions most of us have had or will have with the organism in charge of implementing our nation's laws, policies and instructions, the bureaucracy (Goodsell, 2005, p. 17). For those living in countries with modern, democratic governments, there will be a vast number of times when they will have to encounter or interact with the bureaucracy. In those encounters citizens interact with bureaucracy by way of public employees, individuals who are the implementers and enforcers of government's laws, policies, processes, and procedures. It is these

individuals who must guide citizens through the series of hoops and red tape to get what they need from government agencies or organizations. The experiences citizens have when interacting with bureaucrats, in turn, shape or confirm the image of and feelings toward government.

"As a type of organization, [bureaucracy] is all around us and we are familiar with its workings. At the same time, we find bureaucracies to be alienating and frustrating institutions" (De Jong, 2016, p.2). The bureaucracy, often characterized as undemocratic or even threatening to democracy, is a hierarchical institution that can provide capacity and expertise to carry out complex social tasks (Meier & O'Toole Jr., 2006, p. 1). Encounters with the bureaucracy can leave people feeling mistreated, disrespected, talked down to, and dehumanized. "On the one hand, the bureaucracy may seem to be so routinized as to be uncaring; on the other hand, it may seem so arbitrary and cruel" (Denhardt, 2008, p. 1). Citizens may be left feeling as though the government employees care little for them and their needs. The people encountered guarding the bureaucracy are individuals with their soul and rationale ripped out of them and transferred onto organizational structures (Hummel, 2008).

Every interaction with bureaucracy is not necessarily a negative one, occasionally, citizens also encounter a relaxed, friendly, attentive, individual willing to explain the processes that govern the services we are to receive. Think, for example, about a time when you forgot a paper, or missed a deadline or failed to follow the proper process or procedure and yet the public employee went out of her way to help you or redirect you in a way that made you feel understood and validated. This may be a clerk at the DMV who

went out of their way to explain which documents and fees were required when you questioned recent changes.

Examples of the above benevolence of public employees exist. An example of such is presented in the following scenario.

Scenario One. A small business owner encountered a public employee that was friendly, attentive, and relaxed who supplied excellent service and helped them navigate state food regulations. In that interaction, the state's Department of Agriculture was inspecting the small business. During the interaction, the inspector showed a high sense of empathy, agreeableness, and courteousness. The state food inspector was willing to work with the business owner's schedule. The inspector was also sharing suggestions to help safeguard the business from falling out of compliance due to equipment malfunctioning. Additionally, the inspector, after meeting with the business owner and inspecting the business premises, offered to send the inspection reports via email as a courtesy to the business owner who was pressed for time. Throughout the entire interaction, the state public employee provided excellent service while efficiently and effectively following the process of carefully inspecting the business owner's production and storage spaces.

The inspector's willingness to accommodate the business owner's needs, his friendly demeanor and helpfulness left the business owner feeling respected and cared-for; more importantly, the business owner perceived the inspector as a very *competent bureaucrat* – a concept that many will find oxymoronic.

Students of public administration are familiar with the perception that the administrative branch of government, the bureaucracy, and the individuals in it, the

bureaucrats, are incompetent. This perception is highlighted and evidenced in one of the most introductory works of the public administration field of study: Richard J. Stillman's *Public Administration: Concepts and Cases* (2005). Within the first quarter of the book, Stillman presented three cases that addressed this. What follows is an introduction and summary of these cases which highlight bureaucratic failures and the importance of effective bureaucracies.

The first case, "The Blast in Centralia No. 5: A Mine Disaster No One Stopped," about an Illinois coal mine explosion during World War II, written by John Barlow Martin, "is an example of administrative reality that, for some, [confirms] their suspicions about the inherent corruption of modern administrative enterprises" (Stillman, 2005, p. 30). The case study "stresses the ineffectiveness of the administrative structure on which all disaster victims were dependent for survival" (p. 30). Stillman concludes that "[a] functioning, ordered public administration… is an inescapable necessity for maintaining the requisites of a civilized modern society" (p. 30).

Interactions with bureaucracy in a democratic society as the United States are almost inevitable, and citizens rely on the bureaucracy to be an effective provider of services that they are entitled to, however, sometimes reliance on the bureaucracy is literally a matter of life and death, as was true in Stillman's (2005) second case study, "How Kristin Died," written by the father of the deceased. George Lardner narrates "[his daughter's] attempts to rely on the bureaucratic system and the subsequent breakdown of that system to protect her from a brutal 'stalker'" (Stillman, 2005, p. 63). Lardner's essay, unconsciously "underscores the importance of a well-functioning, effective bureaucracy… in order to protect the lives and safety of all of us" (Stillman, 2005, p. 63).

Bureaucratic inefficiencies are not limited to interactions with the public. Public bureaucrats may also experience system breakdowns within their organization and between organizations as Stillman (2005) presented in "The Columbia Accident" case. The case recounts the 2003 Space Shuttle Columbia disaster. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) failure was categorized by the case author, Maureen Hogan Casamayou, as "one of the worst recent disasters experienced by America's space program" (Stillman, 2005, p. 111). Casamayou emphasized "how the enormous political influences placed upon NASA led to a chain of flawed internal decisions to ignore the long-standing foam problems" (Stillman, 2005, p. 112). While a piece of foam was considered the cause for the accident, Casamayou, as well as Tompkins (2004), attribute poor communication between agency engineers and shuttle program managers as one of the reasons for the accident, and ultimately, the demise of the space program. The level at which communication became the center of the issue, is highlighted at the end of Casamayou's essay where she illustrates that "[engineers] had to argue from the premise that the situation was safe, and therefore their job was to convince others the situation was unsafe. Normally, the reverse is what characterizes an organization with a healthy risk-averse culture" (Stillman, 2005, p. 120).

The three cases above, set the tone for those pursuing graduate degrees in public administration. Newly minted students of public administration will have a challenging time making a case for bureaucracy when some of the very first lessons learned are about life-ending inefficiencies caused by incompetent, or truncated bureaucrats. The sentiment against bureaucracy, if not set already by the students' own experiences with it,

then is certainly set for them when they are exposed to reading or hearing about it in the news or through assigned course materials.

Stillman (2005), however, does introduce a case displaying bureaucratic effectiveness demonstrated by a single individual. In the "Dr. Helene Gayle and the AIDS Epidemic" case presented by Stillman (2005) and written by Professor Norma M. Riccucci in 2002, readers are introduced to the *ecology of administration* concept providing public administration students and aspiring public servants and managers "a good example of how ecological factors can affect public administration and why an administrator can succeed brilliantly when she takes these external factors into account before and during initiating a public program" (Stillman, 2005, p. 85). Additionally, Riccucci invites readers to reflect on "how 'personality' or the leadership talents of a single manager can make a difference in what happens" (p. 85). Riccucci arrives at 11 lessons in her biographical analysis of Dr. Gayle's success in the fight against sexually transmitted diseases (STD) such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). The 11 lessons extracted from Riccucci are of immense value to this study as they exemplify the move towards values versus structures that this study is proposing. In particular this study, would like to bring special attention to, Lesson 3: Possessing and Demonstrating Interpersonal Skills and Lesson 11: Exercising Management and Leadership Skills. Lesson 3 emphasized having good interpersonal skills as imperative to Dr. Gayle's effectiveness. Among the interpersonal skills addressed were effective communication enhanced by proper injection of good sense of humor. Lesson 11 acknowledges flexibility, openness, dedication, commitment, and patience as important attributes of leadership and managerial performance (Stillman, 2005, p. 100). Additionally, Lesson 11

recognizes that effective managers require the ability to communicate clearly. Table 1.1 lists all 11 lessons along with a summary for each of them.

Table 1.1

Lessons Learned about Effective Managerial Leadership

Lesson Number	Lesson Title	Summary of Lesson
1	Developing Integrative, Targeted Strategies	Organizational issues or concerns addressed by leaders need continued assessment to create clear understanding of possible responses and strategies to remedy them.
2	Developing Broad Coalitions	Collaboration within and across agencies and sectors is a vital aspect of effective managerial performance.
3	Possessing and Demonstrating Interpersonal Skills	Good interpersonal skills, including humor, cut across many other factors attributable to successful managerial performance as they help build good working relationships and create trust.
4	Exercising Political Skills	High degrees of diplomacy and political astuteness are essential to effective performance in government.
5	Possessing and Exercising Technical Expertise	Technical expertise provides credibility, yet it should be accompanied by drive and dedication.
6	Setting a Vision	A *shared* vision, above a mere vision, is vital for effective performance in government.
7	Fostering Pragmatic Incrementalism	Short-term actionable steps which will provide a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction on the journey to accomplish long-term goals.
8	Committing to Values	Values must be placed above all other interests. *Value the values*.
9	Empowering Staff and Sharing Leadership	Shared leadership enhances workers' investment in their work, enhances work's significance, promotes self-determination, and increases worker's' motivation and satisfaction.
10	Taking Risks	Ideas and innovation can happen through responsible risk-taking driven by ethics, honest and legal responsibility.
11	Exercising Management and Leadership Skills	Effective managerial performance requires flexibility, openness, dedication, commitment, and patience. Government leaders must be able to plan, organization, communicate clearly, motivate staff, and set realistic goals.

Positive interactions with bureaucrats lead to positive feelings in those interacting with the bureaucracy. Additionally, there are hopeful sentiments that government is responsive, can be trusted, and is caring. Positive interactions, however, are not what citizens talk about. Citizens are more likely to talk about their negative interactions and experiences with bureaucrats. People remember negative experiences (Tugend, 2012) and in remembering them, they create negative perceptions. When interacting with bureaucracy, if citizens face negative interactions with bureaucrats, they vividly remember those experiences and in doing so create negative perceptions of bureaucrats, the bureaucracy, and hence, government. These negative perceptions are accentuated by the country's "own political emergence out of rebellion against authority" (Appleby, 1962, p. 1). Consequently, "[t]hese attitudes and preoccupations encourage us to mistake our individual notions for valid judgment of what is generally acceptable" (Appleby, 1962, p. 12). In doing so, the tendency is to hold a blanket perception that all government is bad and so are its employees and those left to make sense of government's inner workings.

This tendency is fueled by the abundance of scenarios in which bureaucrats simply fall short. The following scenario is one of a multitude of them where bureaucratic dysfunction is evidenced. For added emphasis (and frustration) the scenario is written as if it were you living that experience.

Scenario Two. You are minding your own business while you patiently wait to be called in to your appointment at a regional United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Office (USCIS). While waiting your turn, at the office, to have your passport stamped in lieu of your permanent resident card which has yet to arrive because the

process is experiencing a 120-day delay and you have plans to travel outside the country, you notice a person entering the office whose English-language proficiency seems limited. They approach the service window and then you overhear the Immigration Officer having trouble communicating the process of completing a form in order to receive any kind of service to the person. It seems the person is trying to simply find their way around the office and just wants to confirm they are at the right place. The Officer, adamantly, continues to tell that person to complete the form to proceed; at that point the Officer begins, effusively, pointing to a machine in the corner of the room. As if straight out of a movie script, the machine the Officer is pointing to has taped to the screen a note that reads "Out of Service." The Officer's viewpoint of the machine is blocked, nonetheless, the Officer continues to point towards its general direction and asking the person to complete the process on the machine. At this point you are in disbelief that this is unfolding before your eyes. Yet there you are. The person needing help continues to grow anxious at not understanding why the Officer would refuse to answer their question without them completing the form on the "out of service" machine. The Officer on the other hands seems to be growing impatient with the person and once again directs them to the same "out of service" machine. Unable to endure the failed interaction between the two, you stand up from your chair and make your way to the window to share with the Officer that the machine he has been pointing to has a sign taped to it that says, "Out of Service." The Officer gives you confused look, and again you share with the Officer the status of the machine. The Officer lets out an insincere "Oh!" Afterwards, they hand the person a piece of paper and asks them to complete the form. Since you saw the person was having difficulty understanding English you simply

motion to them with your hands to complete the form. The person completes the form and places it in the box for the Officer to review to then have your name called. The Officer finally calls the person's name at which point the person shared with them a document. Upon glancing at the document, the Officer lets them know they are in the wrong office and signals them to leave another office.

Scenario Two, like *Scenario One,* is a real-life scenario that needs highlighting in an effort to identify the blatant dysfunctions of bureaucracy as did Stillman, to enhance, first and foremost, the interactions between citizens and bureaucracy, and secondly, to assist in the constant endeavor to improve the effectiveness of bureaucracies. As the study of public administration shifts its focus toward management and performance, it is imperative that research begins turning toward the actual individuals inside the bureaucracy – the bureaucrats. The key to effectiveness is the organization's human capital and for bureaucracy that means relying on bureaucrats as the way forward. The skills people have directly contributed to a bureaucracy that is stable, functional, and effective which is necessary for a free society and democratic polity (Goodsell, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Scholars of public administration have been steadily persisting in their pursuit for a bureaucracy that is efficient, effective and responsive, however, we are still faced empirically (see Stillman, 2005 and Tompkins, 2005) and anecdotally (Scenarios One and Two), with inefficiencies, ineffectiveness and dysfunctions in modern bureaucracies that are so severe that people's lives are lost. To identify a new way forward "it takes a prepared scientist – someone who knows what the big questions are – to recognize when an answer to an unanswered question fortuitously presents itself. For serendipity to really

work in science, the lucky scientist must simultaneously recognize both the answer and the question" (Behn, 1995, p. 315). This study is built on a foundation constructed from an almost serendipitous yet purposeful convergence of public administration studies and communication studies. Students of public administration, as mentioned earlier, are presented with a structured set of lessons and courses that can create some apathy towards bureaucracy and government. Introductory courses present cases that highlight structural, procedural, and cultural failures within public organizations and though it may not evident to most, to those few who know what the big questions are, as Behn (1995) states, it is simply obvious that the public servants' ability to competently communicate with one another and with the public is a critical factor in the failures and successes of bureaucracy. Henceforth, the public administration student who recognizes when an answer to an unanswered question presents itself, will realize that the study of the theoretical foundations of communication is an avenue for improvement of the functioning of bureaucracy. Here then lies the problem because that same student will need to embark in additional coursework, and even an additional postgraduate degree to find the proper theoretical framework that best aligns with the answers being sought. The student will be pressed to find communication courses as part of their public administration curriculum. Not only will they not find communication courses in their program, but the public administration literature itself will only make mention of communication in passing at best. On the other hand, communication scholars, specifically those interested in communication traits, rely heavily on creating theories by studying undergraduate students, for-profit organizations, or politicians. Leaving the entire public sector unexplored.

Public administration scholars, Pandey and Garnett (2006) took notice of this and provided only two examples of scholars citing the crucial nature of communication in public organizations: 1) Barnard's (1938) first executive function which is to develop and maintain a system of communication and 2) Simon, Smithburgh, and Thompson's (1950) statement that "[b]lockages in the communication system constitute one of the most serious problems in public administration" (p. 229). As a response, they produced and published "the first large-scale empirical study to directly examine public sector communications performance" (Pandey & Garnett, 2006, p. 44). This study finds, as Pandey and Garnett (2006) did, that the focus on communication in public administration or public sector studies "is justified not only because of its relative neglect, but also because it holds vital keys to improving organization performance" (p. 44).

Seeing a lack of studies focused on communication in the public sector, and finding justification in Pandey and Garnett's (2006) belief that communication is important for an organization's effectiveness – based on Guy's (1992) argument that clear and effective communication channels are imperative for productive work environments – and seeing support in the recent works by Guy and Rubin (2015) and De Jong (2016) on how public organizations can become more effective, this study adopts a communication traits theoretical framework with specific attention to bureaucrats to augment the infant literature of communication in the public sector.

Objectives of the Research

To begin exploring how to improve bureaucrats' communication skills, and more importantly, the communication between citizens and bureaucrats, this study focuses on bureaucrats and their interactions with citizens and explores their current communication

skills levels possessed by bureaucrats. The bureaucrat-citizen interaction is acknowledged in the work of Lipsky (1980), and Kernaghan and Langford (1990). Lipsky (1980), and Kernaghan and Langford (1990), who begin addressing the behaviors and ethical conduct of public servants (how to conduct themselves in their relationships), a move-away from prescriptive strategies – evidenced in the works of classic organization theorists such as Taylor (1911), and Weber (1922) that dictate organizational processes to maximize efficiency (what to do) rather than effective service (how to do it).

The focus on bureaucrats is called for as they are the custodians of the services that all citizens are entitled to receive. Effectively, bureaucrats are responsible for serving 100% of the citizens in their jurisdictions. Improvement of public service delivery will only happen when those delivering the services are equipped with the necessary tools to interact effectively and competently with those they are serving.

In the bureaucrat-citizen interaction, communication is the one thing certain to happen. Messages are exchanged by the bureaucrat and the citizen and the quality of that exchange determines how efficiently and effectively the bureaucrat can serve the citizen, while also dictating how satisfied that citizen is with the services received.

The objective here then, is to explore the quality of bureaucrats' communication competencies through the lens of communication trait theory. In doing so, the study attempted to determine whether, in general, bureaucrats communication competence levels could be contributing to bureaucratic inefficiencies such as poor public service delivery, or if bureaucrats are already exhibiting communication trait levels that contribute to higher levels of communication competence which translate to more

efficient and effective public service delivery. The study surveyed public serving bureaucrats primarily from Summit County, Ohio. The bureaucrats answered a survey which helped this study explore their self-reported communication competence levels as measured by four communication traits scales. The communication traits selected to conduct this study have been heavily studied by communication scholars and results from the studies have found the traits to be associated with higher levels of communication competence and customer satisfaction. The scores obtained from each scale were split at the median to generate high and low levels of each communication trait. Following the median splits, a taxonomy of possible profiles was generated using the dichotomous (high/low) levels for each communication trait. The 16 possible profiles (2 x 2 x 2 x 2, two levels for four traits) were then plotted onto a radar chart to reflect the number of on-target trait levels demonstrated by each profile type. The radar chart allows those examining the profiles to easily identify which profiles have more on-target trait levels and which ones do not. The radar depicts, using the colors of an American stop light (red, yellow, and green), conveys which profiles are have, according to communication traits researchers, desirable (green), neutral (yellow), or undesirable (red) communication trait level combinations. Identifying bureaucrats' profiles, as well as the on-target category will enable bureaucrats to identify their communication strengths and challenges as presented by their communication predispositions and self-reported behaviors in the context of their jobs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*"Communication is vital to individuals, groups, and organizations in a democratic society." (*Infante, Rancer, and Avtgis, 2009, p. 3)

"[P]ublic servants […] deliver democracy."
(Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003, p. xi)

The literature, and anecdotes that form the backbone of study aim at highlighting two opposing realities of bureaucracy and bureaucrats best documented by Goodsell (1994, 2004, 2015) and Hummel (2008). After highlighting the two realities, this study makes the case for focusing on enhancing the communication skills of bureaucrats as the literature reviewed hints that doing so will bring about forward movement to the study of public administration and bureaucracy as it sees a move from administration to management (Yang, 2015) and from outputs to outcomes (Newcomer, 2015).

The study is a departure from mainstream scholarly research favoring the national government to produce generalizable conclusions as pointed out by Goodsell's (2015) most recent work, *The New Case for Bureaucracy*. Instead, the work intentionally focused on local government, specifically County and City governments in response to Goodsell's (2015) statement that "it is at the state and local levels that most US public administration operates" (p. xii).

Contrasting Characterization of Bureaucrats

The baseline of this study lays on the opposing categorizations of bureaucrats as proposed by Goodsell (2004) and Hummel (2008). This section will describe the fundamental differences of each categorizations beginning with Hummel's (2008) typology as it is one that parallels the public's negative sentiment and has secured a larger number of supporters. In his book, *The Bureaucratic Experience*, Hummel (2008) described bureaucrats as ineffective individuals with truncated personalities that added to the inefficiencies of the bureaucracy, creating a bureaucratic experience with inconsistencies and variations that reinforce its inflexibility. Hummel also characterized bureaucrats as headless and soulless individuals, though he noted that such characterizations comes with an understanding that such terms "reflect a tendency that bureaucratic life forces on bureaucrats, rather than the actual characteristics of specific individuals" (Hummel, 2008, p. 9). The reader must note that Hummel did not believe this is who bureaucrats should be, instead he created a typology of the bureaucrat's persona worst tendencies and characteristics, and maintained that these were a byproduct of the broken systems and policies that the bureaucrats are forced to implement and enforce daily rather than a testament of their personal character and qualities.

Bureaucrats, furthermore, are not encouraged to deviate from policies and procedures which keeps them from taking on any actions or decisions that might improve the bureaucratic processes and systems. The bureaucrat that Hummel typologized is one that falls prey to the mental burden of easy, bad work in the name of efficiency. In other words, the bureaucrat, through Hummel's lens, finds themselves stripped of an identity and purpose and as such they implement defense mechanisms of detaching from cases

(people) to survive their time inside the bureaucracy. In their effort to survive they find it is easier to do fast work instead of quality work. Fast work allows you to meet your quota, to be efficient. It is easier to say "no" to someone instead of explaining a process. Quality work on the other hand, takes time. Bureaucracy as described by Hummel (2008) has no room for bureaucrats to "take time" to *effectively*, not efficiently, serve the public.

Standing in direct opposition to Hummel's (2008) views on bureaucrats, however, is Goodsell. Goodsell (2004) recognizes that the American bureaucracy can have flaws, yet it manages to work, and work well at that. In Goodsell's (2004) viewpoint, bureaucrats are dedicated ordinary individuals who choose to work in the bureaucracy because their purpose is to serve. Purpose alone, however, is not sufficient to curve the public's negative view of public servants as evidenced in the study conducted by Foster and Snyder (1989) during the nation's efforts to rebuild public service where the public saw private-sector employees, whose purpose is seeking status and power, as more competent than public service employees.

Goodsell (1981) contended that "bureaucracy is neither entirely dispassionate nor primarily exploitive but is itself under stress with unexpected pro-client consequences" (p. 764). The stress derives from a "compression" model of bureaucratic behavior where bureaucrats operate with minimal discretionary latitude and under conditions that can results in personal stress (e.g., paperwork, escalating caseloads) as was seen by Goodsell (1981, p. 768). Average bureaucrats, as Goodsell (1994) discovered, are middle-aged and middle class; in his words, "pretty 'ordinary'" (p. 104). In local governments he estimated an excess of 10.5 million employed bureaucrats (Goodsell, 1994, p. 104). He also finds that bureaucrats are "employed in all occupations conceivable; [and are]

demographically representative of Americans on several counts" (Goodsell, 1994, 112). This latter finding becomes an assumption in how this study will be conducted (methodology), as Goodsell (1994) found evidence that bureaucrats tend to mimic the demographic characteristics of the population served, which is why this study will not focus on exploring those demographics.

As previously reviewed, Hummel observed that the headless and soulless bureaucrat was also not caring; Goodsell differs, stating that "contrary to the expectations of Hummel, [bureaucrats] *do* care about the same things we do, such as justice, freedom, and oppression" (1994, p. 115). In 1992, Goodsell likened public administrators to artists by arguing that their profession is as much about getting the job done as it is to draw pleasure from it. By drawing a parallel to artists, Goodsell (1992) acknowledges and gives bureaucrats soul, that same soul that Hummel (2005) proposed was sacrificed to the will of the managers. For Goodsell (1992), public administration is about identity and responsibility, performing one's duties with a sense of pride. Goodsell (1994) also explains how self-reflection and introspection is necessary to move forward and to continue to strive for fulfillment of our potential:

> Bureaucracy as a social organism is never perfect or complete, and as a participant in this enterprise we need always to recognize that its potential is never fulfilled—just as our own potential is not. A major portion of our attention and energies, therefore, must be aimed toward self-evaluation of activities and self-instigated change for the better. (Goodsell, 1994, p. 183)

Though the work of the bureaucracy, as stated by Goodsell (1994), is never perfect or complete, dedicating our energy and attention toward self-evaluation and self-instigated change can lead bureaucrats to a better place, and in doing so, the author proposes, will move bureaucracies forward and toward responsible and effective public

service. A conscious and self-aware public servant will be better equipped to fight the negative images of them that often take a strong-hold and become a strong self-perception in their mind which oftentimes can create "a psychology of failure that can become self-fulfilling" (Cohen & Eimicke, 2002, p. 17).

Bureaucrats: Our Way Forward

Everyday citizens can experience first-hand both ends of public service as seen by Goodsell (1992, 1994, 2004) and Hummel (2008). They can either experience excellent, responsible, and effective service from public employees, or experience the worst that bureaucracies have to offer – ultimate bureaucratic dysfunction – by way of ineffective, apathetic, soulless public employees.

Recall *Scenario Two* in the earlier chapter. That scenario like others highlighted by De Jong (2016), illustrate "how bureaucracy becomes 'dysfunctional' in a concrete situation, one characterized by red tape" (p. 69). The interactions described in *Scenario Two* were a Kafkaesque breach of common sense. The Kafkaesque bureaucratic process depicted in *Scenario Two* narrated an example of bureaucracy adhering to rule-based red tape, creating rules in an effort to increase external perceptions of its legitimacy or professionalization (Bozeman, 2000, p. 69), and "bureaucracy's total lack of respect for a person's individuality" (De Jong, 2016, p. 75).

This example of bureaucratic dysfunction stands opposite to Frederickson and Hart's (1997) belief that "public servants must genuinely care for their fellow citizens" (p. 548). For Frederickson and Hart (1997), "[t]he ideal of American democracy assumes that a special relationship should exist between public servants and citizens" (p. 548). Yet, how

are bureaucrats to genuinely care for their fellow citizens when they are constricted by the policies and processes of the bureaucracy?

Peter French (1983) contends that public servants owe the public: kindness, charity, and benevolence. He focuses on the issues of how public servants behave towards members of the public versus what they do. How are public servants to show kindness, charity, and benevolence when these are values that rigid, technical, and managerial bureaucracies do not embrace?

"Efficiency, effectiveness, consistency, competence, fairness, responsiveness, and accessibility have long been recognized as key administrative values which flow from a society's commitment to the liberal democratic model" (Kernaghan & Langford, 2006, p. 116). The liberal democratic model values posited by Kernaghan and Langford (2006) should be values held by bureaucracies of liberal democracies. Narrations of interactions with bureaucracy, as those shared by Stillman (2005), however, suggest citizens are less likely to encounter public servants that embody these liberal democratic values.

Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) proposed "that the primary role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to attempt to control or steer society" (p. 549). Public servants (bureaucrats), thus, have a duty "to act as guardians and guarantors of the regime values for the American public" (Frederickson & Hart, 1997, p. 205-206). The regime values, freedom, equality, justice and rule of law, as Box (2007) extrapolated from the work of multiple scholars such as Waldo, Frederickson and Hart, and Denhardt and Denhardt, stimulate "free expression of ideas, free associations of persons, representation… due process of law, and the privilege of assuming our soap box and speaking our minds" (Berkeley & Rouse, 2004, p. 101).

"This duty falls to public administrators because they provide continuity for the citizenry" (Box, p. 10). Bureaucrats, thus, ensure access to citizens' basic rights. Hence, it is only common sense to look to bureaucrats and their heedfulness for bureaucracies to flourish since "[m]uch of the responsibility for achieving change falls on our public administrators" (Cox III, Buck, and Morgan, 2011, p. 198).

Shifting from "What" to "How"

With the shift from scientific management to service and leadership in public administration, and the literature turning to bureaucrats as the custodians and intermediaries of the citizenry's basic rights, we must then begin to create strategies that will increase their competencies. We must now work to develop training models that can produce responsible, ethical, responsive, helpful public *servants* that modern bureaucracies need.

Public organizations need to be encouraged to start the dialogue of the *how* versus the *what*. The dialogue must focus on fair, courteous treatment of the public as to avoid and relinquish hostile, aggressive, unwelcoming environments. When French (1986) maintained that public servants owe the public kindness, charity, and benevolence, his focus was on the issue of *ho*w public servants behave toward members of the public rather than *what* they do. Efforts to move forward, must refocus on public-oriented values, on holistic and forward-thinking approaches that exalt natural, organic, creative models rather than the rigid, strategic, management models of earlier generations. This is a call to public administration scientists to bring forth more service-oriented strategies for bureaucrats to utilize for bureaucracies to become more responsive to the citizens' diverse and modern-day needs. Exploring desired behaviors through the lens of

"communication trait theory" can help develop a desired model for the how and provide best practices for public managers to adopt.

Making a call to shift from the "what" to the "how" exemplifies the two aspects of Weber's methodologies in his exploration of the ideal typical bureaucracy (Cox III, Buck, & Morgan, 2011). The two aspects of Weberian methodology were: 1) structures and procedures (what) and 2) values (how). Weber methodology facilitates the understanding of social interactions occurring in bureaucracy for it is "the interaction between structures and values that creates the actions, or social consequences, that we identify as behavior or practice" (Cox III, Buck, & Morgan, 2011, p. 182-183). Behaviors and practices, thus, are fully understood when there is knowledge of structures and values (Cox III et al., 2011, p. 183). This study, acknowledges the extensive work done by public administration scholars to propose and advance effective structures of democracy, as delivered by bureaucracy, and posits those theories and observations as the current "reality" of bureaucracy (what). This study looks to push the scholarship of public administration to a focus on values (how) by proposing the exploration of bureaucrats' communication competence levels to effect positive change in bureaucracy so that it can become a more democratic and effective organism.

Communication: The Missing Link in Public Administration

Recall the four cases highlighted in Chapter I and the somewhat obvious realization that while the cases highlighted structural, procedural, and cultural failures within public organizations, a public servant's ability to competently communicate with one another and with the public critically influence failures and successes of public service. Thus,

understanding the theoretical foundations of communication could produce an avenue for improving public service.

Communication Trait Theory "holds that people tend to exhibit certain communication styles and predicts that these traits make one communicate in a certain way" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 963). It is understanding how certain predispositions influence communication that this study finds as the missing link to effecting change in public administration, specifically in achieving the democratization and effectiveness of public service delivery. It is also a push aimed at influencing bureaucrats to uphold democratic values (how) rather than pushing for structural changes (what) in bureaucracy which have yielded minimal changes in almost 100 years.

The parting point for this study, hence, is realizing that communication theory is a missing link in public administration theory for communication is the very essence of good decision making. Good decision making is imperative to the administration and operation of democratic governments. The administration and operation of democratic governments lay on the bureaucracy. One can assume then that effective and sustainable communication promotes, and quite possibly affects, the effectiveness and sustainability of administrative and operational services of democratic governments. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that healthy modern bureaucracies have a positive symbiotic impact on democratic development (Pyakuryal, 2010), therefore working on making the bureaucracy healthier and more responsive by addressing the competencies of those making the bureaucracy work, is critical to promoting the growth and sustainability of democratic governments which characterize wealthy and healthy nations.

Communication and Public Administration

Contemporary communication theory literature states that in academia, the field of communication continues to generate influential theory and research (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2010). Communication in the public administration arena received much attention after the Challenger space shuttle disaster on January 28, 1986. Talk around "severe communication breakdowns" brought awareness to the implications of communication channels and organizational structure. Attention to communication became even more prevalent when a second shuttle disaster occurred on February 1, 2003 when the Columbia shuttle disintegrated upon entering the Earth's atmosphere. As meticulously studied, documented, and concluded by Tompkins (2004), the loss of life from both space shuttle disasters and ultimately the demise of the space program, sadly, was due to inefficient communication within NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and between different government organizations. While these two tragic events do not mark the exact moment in which the study of communication entered the public sector arena, it did bring consciousness to the issue of effective communication within public organizations (Tompkins, 2004).

In the case of NASA, the lack of efficient and effective communication brought forth, arguably, the decline of the space program in the United States (Tompkins, 2004). Tompkins argues that, in a general sense, the lack of competent communicators within public organizations brought an entire space program to the ground. This argument is a product of Tompkins observations of patterns that lead to a system breakdown. Just as Senge (1990) noted more than a decade earlier in his call for a

systems-thinking framework, it is necessary to look for interrelationships rather than things, to look for patterns of change rather than static 'snapshots.'

> All around us are examples of 'systemic breakdowns' – problems such as global warming, ozone depletion, the international drug trade, and the U.S. trade and budget deficits – problems that have no simple local cause. Similarly, organizations breakdown, because they are unable to pull their diverse functions and talents into a productive whole. (Senge, 1990, p. 441)

Repeating references of systemic breakdowns in public administration literature of introductory public administration courses and published cases of systemic breakdowns in public service and public organizations that all seem to have a common pattern, lack of competency in communication continue to serve as justification for a study that uses a systems-thinking framework, looking for patterns of change to move away from postmortem examinations of public service to preventive and responsive strategies for improving public service.

Communication research has linked the lack of certain communication traits related with communication competency to individuals having feelings of anger or dissatisfaction due to their own shortcomings as competent communicators, and in other instances as a result of the shortcomings of those who they are interacting with. A natural connection, thus, exists between communication competence and an individual's satisfactory experiences in life which can be expanded to those experiences of citizens interacting with the bureaucracy.

Understanding that communication styles and patterns are driven by nature and context will allow for a path to modify those styles and patterns. Just as the study of psychology has shed a light on natural inclinations that drive our thoughts, actions, motivations, behaviors, and habits, communication traits studies help understand how

natural, nurtured, contextual, and situational predispositions influence communication styles and behaviors therefore creating a blueprint to improving citizen-bureaucrat interactions. Understanding what communication traits are and how they are related to competent and productive communication will create a blueprint to improving citizen-bureaucrat interactions.

Communication Traits

Joy Paul Guilford (1959) was the first to derive the conceptualization of traits in the field of psychology. Personality traits, developed in the field of psychology, were defined as "a construction or abstraction to account for enduring behavior" (Mischel, 1968, p. 4-5). Personality traits deliver a measure of behavioral patterns. However, measurements of these patterns are mere hypothetical constructs. Meaning, unlike, distance or temperature which we can physically measure, traits are an invention to explain behavior. Hypothetical constructs, however, are what social scientists use to give meaning to experience and in doing so, enabling its measurement.

Infante, Rancer, and Avtgis (2010) defined communication traits as "an abstraction constructed to account for enduring consistencies and differences in message-sending and message-receiving behaviors among individuals" (p. 111). Communication traits are communication researchers' way of giving meaning and providing explanations about human communication that would not be available otherwise (Rancer & Avtgis, 2006). Consequently, the study of communication traits aid in the prediction and, therefore, modification of an individual's behaviors when communicating with others.

Communication scholars have identified several communication traits. Infante, Rancer, and Womack (2003) developed a taxonomy to help group these traits according

to their shared characteristics. They partitioned the taxonomy into four categories: *apprehension traits* (e.g. communication apprehension), *presentation traits* (e.g. communicator style), *adaptation traits* (e.g. cognitive flexibility), and *aggressive traits* (e.g. verbal aggressiveness). A list of the four communication traits classifications, the traits in each classification, the name of the instruments developed to measure each trait, and the definition of each trait are presented in Table 2.1 originally used by González Alcalá's (2003) to summarize the compilation done by Infante, Rancer, and Avtgis (2003, p. 111-141) to identify all the traits developed by communication traits scholars to date.

Table 2.1

A Taxonomy of Communication Traits

Classification	Trait	Measurement Instrument	Definition
Apprehension	Communication apprehension	Personal Report of Communication Apprehension – 24 (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982)	"An individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p.78).
Apprehension	Receiver apprehension	Receiver Apprehension Test (RAT) (Wheeless, 1975)	"[R]elated to fear of misinterpreting, inadequately processing, and/or not being able to adjust psychologically to messages sent by others" (Wheeless, 1975, p. 263).
Apprehension	Informational reception apprehension	Informational Reception Apprehension Test (IRAT) (Wheeless, Preiss, & Gayle, 1997)	"[A] pattern of anxiety and antipathy that filters informational reception, perception and processing, and/or adjustment (psychologically, verbally, physically) associated with complexity, abstractness, and flexibility" (Wheeless, Preiss, & Gayle, 1997, p. 166).

Table 2.1

A Taxonomy of Communication Traits (continued)

Classification	Trait	Measurement Instrument	Definition
Presentation	Communicator style	Communicator Style Measure (CSM) (Norton, 1978)	"[T]he way one verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood" (Norton, 1978, p. 99).
Presentation	Disclosiveness	General Disclosiveness Scale (Wheeless, 1978)	"Personality trait that reflects a person's predilection to disclose to other people in general" (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2010, p. 124).
Adaptation	Communicative adaptability	Communicative Adaptability Scale (CAS) (Duran, 1983)	"Communicative adaptability is conceptualized as the ability to perceive socio-interpersonal relationships and adapt one's behaviors and goals accordingly" (Duran, 1992, p. 255).
Adaptation	Noble self	Noble Self Scale (NS) (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980)	"A person who believes in expressing exactly what they think or feel. Noble selves do not value flexibility in adapting to different audiences" (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2010, p. 126).
Adaptation	Rhetorical reflector	Rhetorical Reflector Scale (RR) (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980)	"People who have the tendency to conceive their 'selves' not as fixed entities, but as social 'characters' who take on whatever role is necessary for the particular situation" (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2010, p. 126).

Table 2.1

A Taxonomy of Communication Traits (continued)

Classification	Trait	Measurement Instrument	Definition
Adaptation	Rhetorical Sensitivity	Rhetorical Sensitivity Scale (RS) (Hart, Carlson, & Eadie, 1980)	"A person who believes there is no single self but a complex network of selves. The rhetorical sensitive person is in between the noble self and the rhetorical reflector" (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2010, p. 127).
Adaptation	Communication competence	Communication Competency Assessment Instrument (CCAI) (Rubin, 1982); Self-Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988	"Communication competence is comprised of knowledge, skill, and motivation dimensions, and […] is an impression formed about the appropriateness of another's communicative behavior" (Rubin, 1985, 173).
Adaptation	Interaction Involvement	Interaction Involvement Scale (IIS) (Cegala, 1981)	"[T]he extent to which an individual participates with anther in conversation" (Cegala, Savage, Brunner, & Conrad, 1982, p. 229).
Adaptation	Cognitive flexibility	Communication Flexibility Scale (Martin & Rubin, 1995)	"[A] person's (a) awareness that in any given situation there are options and alternatives available, (b) willingness to be flexible and adapt to the situation, and (c) self-efficacy in being flexible" (Martin, Anderson, & Thweatt, 1998, p. 532).
Aggression	Assertiveness	Rathus Assertive-ness Schedule (Rathus, 1973); Lorr and More Assertiveness Inventory (Lorr & More, 1980)	"Assertiveness is a person's general tendency to be interpersonally dominant, ascendant, and forceful" (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2010, p. 132).

Table 2.1

A Taxonomy of Communication Traits (continued)

Classification	Trait	Measurement Instrument	Definition
Aggression	Argumentative-ness	Argumentativeness Scale (Infante & Rancer, 1982)	"[A] generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues, and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues" (Infante & Rancer, 1982, p. 72).
Aggression	Hostility	Hostility Inventory (Buss & Durke, 1957); Multidimensional anger Inventory (MAI) (Siegel, 1986)	"[A]n attitude, a dislike of a particular person, object, or issue, accompanied by a desire to see this target injured or even destroyed" (Berkowitz, 1998, p. 264).
Aggression	Verbal Aggressiveness	Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (Infante & Wigley, 1986)	"[T]he tendency to attack the self-concepts of individuals, instead of, or in addition to, their positions on topics of communication" (Infante & Wigley, 1986, p. 61).
Aggression	Taking Conflict Personally	Taking Conflict Personally (TCP) (Hample & Dallinger, 1995)	"[A] negative emotional reaction to participating in a conflict, within a Lewinian frame" (Hample & Dallinger, 1995, p. 297).
Aggression	Tolerance for Disagreement	Tolerance for Disagreement (TFD) (Teven, Richmond & McCroskey, 1998)	"[T]he amount of disagreement an individual can tolerate before he or she perceives the existence of conflict in a relationship" (Richmond, McCroskey & McCroskey, 2005, p. 178).

In studying communication traits, researchers have seen strong relationships between desired levels of certain communication traits and one's level of competency or perceived

expertise. The study of communication traits allows us to understand the innate and cultural predispositions that consciously, and unconsciously, drive our communication styles and behaviors. For example, knowing – really, thinking – that we are afraid of public speaking suggests that we may have predisposition to be apprehensive to communicating, or saying that we are likely to insult someone after our inability to change or persuade their beliefs tells us that we have a tendency to be verbally aggressive. Such behaviors may appear to others as incompetent since, as was the case for both examples, we are unable to communicate with others in a way that we can successfully transmit a message, or successfully persuade someone to change their mind. In contrast, eloquent public speakers, and individuals who can persuade individuals to change their position are seen as highly competent.

How may someone become more aware of a person's communication tendencies, and predispositions? Can a framework be developed by which to understand the communication skills and competency of individuals? Yes, communication traits research suggests a model may be built that allows for the measurement of an individual's levels of communication styles and predispositions; and based on those levels deduce an association with the types of feelings they will evoke in others regarding their communication competence.

Communication Competence

A school of thought in communication theory understands effective communication as the presence of ideal levels of certain communication traits. The literature that has adopted this school of thought has focused on the associations between communication competence and the levels of specific traits. Rudd and Lawson (2010) stressed that one

"requires understanding of, and appropriate exhibition of, a variety of traits [and that] examining these traits should provide valuable insight in helping to educate individuals for successful interactions in the globalized world" (p. 127). Parting from this point of view, several researchers have designed studies to further expand the understanding and determination of the proper or desirable levels of communication traits linked to competent communicators.

Verbal Aggressiveness, Argumentativeness, Taking Conflict Personally, and Communication Style traits are among the traits that communication researchers have studied to determine an individual's perceived communication competency. The levels of these traits possessed by individuals across disciplines have been extensively related with other communication traits like communication and receiver apprehension (Cole & McCroskey, J. C., 2003), cognitive and communication flexibility (Martin, Anderson, & Thweatt, 1998), and humor (Frymier, Wanzer, & Wojtaszczyk, 2008). The above four traits have also been associated with organizational outcomes such as organizational satisfaction (Gorden & Infante, 1987), organizational dissent (Kassing & Avtgis, 1999), employee conflict strategy (Martin, Anderson, & Sirimangkala, 1997), burnout syndrome (Avtgis & Rancer, 2008), productivity (1997), feelings of hurt and anger (Cupach & Carson (2001), and tolerance for disagreement (Richmond & McCroskey, 2010).

The origins, operationalization, and measurement development for each of the four traits that this study used to examine bureaucrats' communication styles and predispositions are presented next.

Verbal Aggressiveness and Argumentativeness

Verbal aggressiveness (Infante & Wigley, 1986) and argumentativeness (Infante & Rancer, 1982) are two of the traits most studied in the communication traits research. The two traits are also related to levels of cognitive flexibility, self-esteem, personality orientations, predisposition to verbally praise among other behaviors. Furthermore, the research suggests that most effective communicators show higher levels of trait argumentativeness, and lower levels of trait verbal aggressiveness.

Both argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness fall under the *aggressive traits'* category of Infante, Rancer, and Avtgis (2003) taxonomy of traits. Infante's earlier work (1987) presented a framework that explains the nature of aggressive communication. Infante (1987) proposed two sides to the aggressive communication traits coin: the constructive side and the destructive side. *Argumentativeness* is a constructive trait while *verbal aggressiveness* is a destructive trait. *Argumentativeness* is "a generally stable trait which predisposes individuals in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues, and to verbally attack the positions held by others on these issues" (Infante & Rancer, 1982, p. 72). Simply, argumentativeness is a person's motivation to argue where the locus of attack is a position a person holds rather than the person. On the other hand, *verbal aggressiveness*, is the "tendency to attack the self-concepts of individuals, instead of, or in addition to, their positions on topics of communication" (Infante, 1987, p. 164). The locus of attack in verbal aggressiveness is the person's self-concept which can relate to their group membership, personal failings, and relational failings (Kinney, 1994). The distinction of these two traits is paramount, as common thinking lumps argumentativeness with verbal aggressiveness. Those unaware of

communication studies and communication trait research confuse these two as they understand an attack, whether to a person's position on an issue, or a person's self-concept as verbally aggressive communication. Thus, it becomes clear that studying the presence of each trait in the communication situations of public servants is critical as it will provide the distinguishing characteristic between a public servant that can communicate competently and one that cannot.

Two scales, created by communication researchers measure, the tendency to exhibit each of these traits. Infante and Rancer (1982) developed the Argumentativeness (ARG) scale, which measures a person's general tendency to argue as a result of their predisposition to approach or avoid arguments. Infante and Wigley (1986) developed the Verbal Aggressiveness (VA) scale which measures the tendency to use verbal aggression when influencing others. The following chapter provides a discussion of the validity and reliability measures for each scale.

Communicator Style

Heavily influenced by theoretical work completed in the fields of interpersonal communication and psychology, Robert Norton, proposed that communicator style focuses on the relational component of a message by centering on *how* an individual communicates any given message rather than *what* an individual communicates in the message (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, Style, Communicator section, para. 1). *Communicator style* is the "away a personal verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood" (Norton, 1978, p. 99). As such, communicator style appears in the presentation category of the communication traits taxonomy.

Norton (1978) listed ten communicator styles: dramatic, dominant, contentious, animated, impression leaving, relaxed, attentive, open, friendly, and precise. People use varying combinations of these styles to form their communicator image (Avtgis & Chory, 2010, p. 295). "It is this image that mediates the degree of effective and appropriate expression in the workplace" (Avtgis & Chory, 2010, p. 295).

"When individuals communicate with relaxed, friendly and attentive behaviors, they are said to exhibit an 'affirming communicator style'" (Rancer, Lin, Durbin & Faulkner, 2010, p. 271). The a*ffirming communicator style*, a combination of high levels of the relaxed, friendly, and attentive styles, has been associated with productive and pro-social expression of voice (Norton, 1983; Infante & Gorden, 1989). An affirming communicator style is generally rated as a more desirable way for people to communicate with others (Myers & Rocca, 2000) as it can serve as a mediator to argumentativeness which may be perceived as threatening when not accompanied by mediating communicator variables (Gorden, Infante, & Graham, 1988). It is this reasoning that calls for the inclusion of this presentation trait in this study as the literature begins to suggest that effective communication by government bureaucrats is characterized by high levels of argumentativeness which will be more well-received if delivered with an affirming communicator style characterized by a friendly, attentive, and relaxed persona.

Taking Conflict Personally (TCP)

"Nearly every book that gives people advice on how to manage their personal or professional conflicts urges them not to take the conflicts personally" (Hample & Cionea, 2010, p. 372). *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom* (Ruiz, 1997), is an example of a book that presents readers with four agreements which offer a

code of conduct with the power to transform their lives. The second of these agreements is, "Don't Take Anything Personally." Ruiz suggests that the key to not taking anything personally is to understand that a person's behavior has nothing to do with us, and instead has everything to do with them. This portion of his code of conduct, introduces us to the concept of emotion, that which Hummel, as reviewed earlier, proposed bureaucrats surrender to the system (managers). This trait, which is part of the aggression category in the taxonomy of traits, defies the Hummel's (2008) observation that bureaucrats are devoid of emotion, and instead reintroduces emotion as part of who the bureaucrat is, and how they behave.

Hample and Dallinger (1995) developed the Taking Conflict Personally (TCP) scale. They defined the trait as "a negative emotional reaction to participating in conflict" (Hample & Dallinger, 1995, p. 297) and operationalized it as a multi-dimensional concept understood to be an index of affective climate. As conceptualized, "the TCP instrument measures predispositions to personalize conflict, to experience stress during it, to feel persecuted, to project the possibility of positive or negative relational consequences, and to enjoy or dislike conflict interactions" (Hample & Dallinger, 1995, p. 299). Hample and Dallinger (1995) believed "that this set of predispositions [hold] great promise in understanding people's orientation to, and behavior within, conflict discussions" (p. 299).

"When people take conflict personally, people ignore or distort messages, and become less and less capable of perceiving the other accurately" (Gibb, 1961 pp. 141-142). "Arousing defensiveness interferes with communication and thus makes it difficult-and sometimes impossible-for anyone to convey ideas clearly and to move

effectively toward the solution of therapeutic, educational, or managerial problems" (p. 148, as cited by Hample & Dallinger, 1995).

Exploring the Communicator Profiles of Bureaucrats

In this new era, self-awareness and self-regulation are skills needed for successful interpersonal interactions. Being aware of our predispositions and traits enable us to identify our strengths and better equips us with the ability to tackle our setbacks, which will in turn, allow us to become competent, resourceful, and useful individuals in both our personal and professional lives.

Comprehending and promoting the applicability of communication traits, specifically, in the study of public administration and bureaucracies, will provide a way through to the New Public Service. Learning about bureaucrats' communication predispositions may help improve citizen satisfaction and as a result restore confidence and trust in government. Individual communication profiles based on one's presentation, aggressive, argumentative, and competency styles and predispositions will let us understand first, whether the "popular perception" of bureaucrats' incompetency in the public sector is accurate, or whether it is simply a misjudgment of their interactions accompanied by bad timing.

If bureaucrats' levels of certain communication traits, which are linked to communication competency, are inadequate, then we are able to, first, equip the organization with the knowledge, and then, provide them with ways to improve the communication competency levels of their employees. If on the other hand, the bureaucrats have predispositions and traits that are best suited to help citizens, then we

must move to a framework of education for the citizen on how to best receive help from the bureaucracy.

As such, the objectives of this study are: 1) to explore current levels of argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, conflict personalization and affirming communicator style and, 2) to create a taxonomy of communicator profiles constructed from the combination of levels present from each of the four traits studied. These objectives will help create an understanding of the current levels of communication competency in American bureaucracy, and whether such levels reflect the dichotomous characterization of bureaucrats by Hummel and Goodsell previously discussed. Based on the number of traits used (four), and the dichotomous levels (high/low) of each that were produced by splitting the population at the median, this study expected and found evidence for sixteen different communicator profiles. The sixteen possible combinations produced from the high and low levels for each of the four traits, expressed in a mathematical formula as 2 x 2 x 2 x 2, are listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2.

Communicator Profile Combinations by Trait Levels

Profile	ARG Level	VA Level	DP Level	ACS Level
A	High	High	High	High
B	High	High	High	Low
C	High	High	Low	High
D	High	High	Low	Low
E	High	Low	High	High
F	High	Low	High	Low

Table 2.2.

Communicator Profile Combinations by Trait Levels (continued)

Profile	ARG Level	VA Level	DP Level	ACS Level
G	High	Low	Low	High
H	High	Low	Low	Low
I	Low	High	High	High
J	Low	High	High	Low
K	Low	High	Low	High
L	Low	High	Low	Low
M	Low	Low	High	High
N	Low	Low	High	Low
O	Low	Low	Low	High
P	Low	Low	Low	Low

Note. ARG = Argumentativeness; VA = Verbal Aggressiveness; DP = Direct Personalization Dimension; ACS = Affirming Communicator Style

Profile J (high VA, low ARG, high TCP, and low ACS) reflected Hummel's characterization of bureaucrats as *truncated*, ineffective individuals, while Profile G (low VA, high ARG, low TCP, and high ACS) reflected Goodsell's characterization of bureaucrats of *principled*, competent individuals. Furthermore, because the nature of this study was exploratory, the main research question asked was: what levels of each communication trait do bureaucrats possess?

The answer to the main research question was obtained by 1) determining whether the proposed tool could be used reliably in the public sector to measure communication styles and predispositions (RQ1); 2) learning which communicator profile categories

emerged in the sampled population (RQ2); and 3) whether the population sampled generally exhibits more or less on-target trait levels (RQ3).

Obtaining the general on-target trait levels of the studied bureaucrats, offers a glimpse into the actual communication competence of bureaucrats rather than the perceived competence; insight to understand the diverse levels of communication competence in bureaucrats; and a roadmap for enhancing communication competence regardless of current levels via peer training (from those exhibiting on-target profiles to those exhibiting neutral and off-target profiles) or professional communication training (Infante, 1995). Results from this study also bear an answer to why the ability to measure communication styles and predispositions reliably matters for public administration and communication traits research and practices.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to explore the communication styles and predispositions exhibited by bureaucrats working in local government offices to determine their communication predispositions and styles as characterized by four communication traits: Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, Taking Conflict Personally, and Affirmative Communicator Style. It is important to reiterate that communication traits are *hypothetical constructs* which give meaning to behaviors and can provide us with explanations about those behaviors. Thus, identifying bureaucrats' levels of each communication trait will help us better explain and predict communication behaviors such as arguing or taking conflict personally at work. Uncovering communication traits levels of participants will also allow us to develop a taxonomy of existing and generalizable communicator profiles of bureaucrats. The study's goal is to increase bureaucratic communication effectiveness by developing communicator profiles derived from the exploration of bureaucrat's communication styles and predispositions as measured by communication traits.

Research Design

To best address the exploration of bureaucrats' communication traits, this study relied on quantitative methods and analysis. The quantitative analysis focused on studying and describing the general communication trait levels in bureaucrats who

interact with the public by calculating scores for each communication trait studied. This study conducted median splits of the sample population responses to calculate the dichotomous levels (i.e. high, low) of each trait. After determining the existing levels of each trait of participating bureaucrats, the next step was to develop a taxonomy of communicator profiles based on the dichotomous levels of each trait and a radar chart based on the number of desirable (on-target) trait levels present in each profile type.

Participants

Given that most public administration operates at the state and local levels (Goodsell, 2015), the focus of this study was on local and state bureaucrats. The majority (n = 145, 91%) of the participants worked for a local (city or council) public organization while less than 10% of them reported working for a state public organization. A total of 164 individuals in 41 identified organizations completed the instrument. Table 4.10 (see Appendix A) lists the participating organizations. These organizations were targeted because they were organizations supported by tax dollars and because the heads of departments were accessible and agreeable to allowing their employees to participate in the study in exchange for an organizational evaluation report detailing the communication traits levels at the organizational level, as well as implications and suggestions for action based on the results.

This study operationalized a bureaucrat as a person who is employed full-time by a government office or agency and government offices or agencies as those organisms that exist to provide services to the public and are funded with taxpayer dollars. Additionally, because the study focused on bureaucrat's communication competence and how it may influence interactions and thus perceptions of the public about bureaucracy, the study

only included responses from participants who responded they interacted with the public as part of their job. The total number of participants fitting this criterion was 160. The jobs held by the participants were diverse. The study garnered participation from police officers, public school family liaisons, child and family partners, teachers, library coordinators, receptionists, and recreation directors among others. The study did not collect any other demographic information as research discussed earlier in the literature (Goodsell, 1994) found evidence that bureaucrats tend to mimic the demographic characteristics of the population they serve.

Based on Table S2405 of the 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates filtered by Summit County, Ohio, the target population of public administrators for the study is 8,604 (U.S. Census, 2018). An online sample size calculator (Qualtrics, 2020) determined that the ideal sample size, with a population size of 8,604, a 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error, is 368. A less conservative model called for 90% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error. To meet the criteria for this more liberal model, the ideal sample size was 263. Because heads of departments were asked to invite their staff members as well as other public service colleagues, the instrument was shared beyond the boundaries of Summit County, Ohio, increasing the population size by over 200,000 (U.S. Census, 2018) and slightly increasing the ideal sample size to 271.

Procedures

An Institutional Review Board Exemption 2 for "research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior" (The University of Akron, 2020, p. 3) was filed and obtained (see Appendix G). After obtaining the exemption,

organization, and department heads of local (city and county) and state government offices were contacted and invited to take part in the research study via email, and personal communication through social media outlets (i.e. LinkedIn and Facebook). Those contacted were asked to share the link to the online version of the survey via an email to their employees and other public service colleagues, inviting and authorizing their employee to participate in the study.

To increase number of surreys completed due to the unforeseen circumstances brought on by the coronavirus global pandemic discussed in Chapter 5, the researcher resorted to social media to contact heads of organizations to invite them to participate. Individuals who had committed to taking part in the study prior to the pandemic, were either faced with furloughing their employees or had been furloughed themselves. Other higher-ranking officials became unreachable as they managed the health, financial and social challenges related to the pandemic. Those who were reached, got an invitation to participate in the study and asked to complete the survey online.

Participants completed the survey anonymously. Prior to completing the survey, participants created a four-digit pin to access their personalized report which will be available after the analyses of the study conclude. To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, results shared in the following chapter are presented in the aggregate form. As a token of gratitude for their participation, organizations with more than 10 participants will have the option to receive a customized organization-wide report with a consultation to interpret the results. The customized organizational analyses will also be reported in the aggregate form to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of individual responses.

Heads of departments formalized their permission for employees or colleagues to participate in the study by signing a letter of support. Appendix I presents a signed sample of the letter of support sent to heads of organization.

Following a survey methodology, participants accessed a battery of instruments online. The battery was created from four instruments/scales each one intended to measure one of the communication traits studied. Table 3.1 below shows the list of instruments included on the survey, the number of items in each and the estimated amount of time it takes to complete the instrument. Appendices C through F present a copy of the instructions and items for each instrument.

Table 3.1

Survey Instruments, Item Numbers and Estimated Completion Times

Instrument Names	Number of Items	Estimated Completion Times
Argumentativeness Scale (ARG) – Short-Form Version	10	5-10 minutes
Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (VAS) – Short-Form Version	10	5-10 minutes
Taking Conflict Personally Scale (TCP) – Direct Personalization Dimension	7	3-7 minutes
Communicator Style Measure (CSM) – Affirming Style Dimension: Attentive, Friendly, and Relaxed	15	7-15 minutes

These instruments were presented as a single battery on a web application embedded on a website (www.thecommprofile.com). The web application was developed using Caspio, a low-code software as a service (SaS) cloud platform. Caspio works similar to a Microsoft Access Database, as such the first step in creating a web application is to design tables. Tables are the backbone of the web application which hold data once

inputted and where administrators can retrieve data to produce calculations or reports. In Caspio, Tables are designed on a work area consisting of four fields:

- Name – Name of the field (e.g., ARG1, ARG4)
- DataType – Field's data type (e.g., number, formula)
- Unique – A checkbox indicating the uniqueness of the value entered. A checked box means no two records can have the same value (e.g. four-digit pin created by users to access their results)
- Label – Used to specify the label for the field which will appear by default on DataPages (e.g. Under pressure I come across as a relaxed speaker)

Lastly, items are listed inside the Caspio Tables as variables (columns) and responses are recorded as cases (rows). A screenshot of the Table Design and the Datasheet from this study is presented in Figure 3.1 and 3.2 respectively in Appendix B.

Application users submit data into Tables using Forms or by importing data from external files (e.g. Access, Excel). Forms can be created to capture, update, or authenticate users. Forms are a type of DataPage which serve as the interface or screen for the web application. There are three types of web forms in Caspio:

- Submission Form – Records information submitted by users
- Update Form – Used to display or edit existing records
- Password Recovery DataPage – Allows users to reset their passwords

The study used a submission form and update form to design the user interface for the online survey. The submission form recorded the four-digit pin and the participant's acknowledgement that they had read the IRB approved informed consent to participate in a research project. The second form deployed was an Update Form (see Figure 3.3 in

Appendix B). The web application designed for this study used the Update Form to edit each case generated after users created and submitted their four-digit pin to record answers to all the items in the instrument. The Submissions Form redirected users automatically to the Update Form. Each Form was deployed on a separate webpage on the website. The first webpage users interacted with contained a brief written statement of the purpose of the study and links to review the informed consent, the submission form to create their pin and a checkbox to indicate their understanding of consent in order to gain entry to the survey. Upon submission of the form, users were directed to a second page where all survey items were listed. The items were divided into five sections for readability ease. A copy of the online survey may be found in Appendix J. When the participants completed the survey and submitted their responses, they were directed to a final page thanking them for their participation.

After completing the battery, the responses were automatically saved in the Table inside the Caspio application. Because the web application was accessible with any connected, web-enabled device, the participants had the flexibility to complete the online survey at a time and place that was most convenient to them. Participants accessed the online survey via the link sent in an email to them by the person who authorized participation of employees in the study or by their peers. Prior to sending the link to the organizations, the database was tested for functionality by completing a handful of submissions that were deleted prior to the start of the data collection.

The database recorded 256 responses from the beginning of data collection until the close of data collection. This means 256 participants created a four-digit pin but did not complete the battery of instruments. The data collection period lasted 27 days and all

communication was done electronically due to the Ohio Department of Health Director's Stay At Home Order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the State of Ohio announced by the Ohio Governor on March 22, 2020 (Governor of Ohio, 2020a), set in effect on March 23, 2020 (Governor of Ohio, 2020b) and extended through the entirety of this study with a "Stay Safe Ohio Order" issued on May 1, 2020 set to expire on May 29, 2020 (Governor of Ohio, 2020c).

Participants could submit their survey responses only after responses to all instrument items were provided. All except for two questions (work title and work department) required answers. Given the exploratory nature of the study and time constraints to conduct the study, it was essential for participants to provide responses to every item in each of the four instruments presented. Responses to all items ensured the necessary data to conduct scale reliability studies.

Development of the Communicator Profile – The Measures

The study acknowledges the large corpus of research conducted to prove the internal and construct validity and reliability of each of the scales. Hence, the purpose of this study is to simply explore the levels exhibited by public employees on each of the scales while assuming that the scales are reliable and valid. A summary of each scales reliability and validity is presented below. The summary is intended to legitimize the use of each of the scales without having to dedicate resources to establishing the validity of each measure. Instead the resources for this study are dedicated to adding to the wealth of research and the work dedicated to these scales by using them beyond university classrooms and business organizations and extending their use into the public sector with bureaucrats who interact with the public.

Verbal Aggressiveness was measured using the "Short-Form Version of the Infante and Wigley (1986) Verbal Aggressiveness Scale" (Rancer & Avtgis, 2014, p. 273). A copy of the scale and items is in Appendix D. Infante and Wigley's (1986) research produced an internal reliability of Cronbach's alpha .81. Additionally, work by Suzuki and Rancer (1994), as well as Infante, Rancer, and Wigley (2011) has supported the reliability and validity of the scale. González Alcalá's (2012) two-factor forced principal component factor analysis returned an alpha coefficient of .77 for the 10-item Verbal Aggressiveness factor and a .71 alpha coefficient for the 10-item Benevolence factor. The five items that correspond to the Verbal Aggressiveness factor of the Verbal Aggressiveness scale highly loaded (Eigenvalues between .57 and .67) in the forced two-factor principal component factor analysis conducted by González Alcalá (2012). Similarly, four of the five items in the Short-Form version that correspond to the Benevolence factor had high loadings (Eigenvalues between .50 and .67) in the same factor analysis conducted by González Alcalá (2012). The fifth item's Eigenvalue was just .01 points lower than the .40 acceptable loading value. Though the González Alcalá found partial support for the 10 items of the Short-Form version, Rancer and Avtgis (2014) cite cross-context support for the 10 items used in the Short-Form version from work done by Infante and Gorden (1989, 1991), Sabourin, Infante, and Rudd (1993) and Myers and Rocca (2000). Coefficient alpha for Short-Form Version of the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale in the present study was .76.

The steps to obtain a verbal aggressiveness score are listed below:

1. Add scores on items: 2, 4, 6, 7, 10
2. Add scores on items: 1, 3, 5, 8, 9

3. Subtract the sum obtained in step 2 from 30
4. Add step 1 total to the result obtained in step 3 to compute score

Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *almost never true* (1) to *almost always true* (5), respondents assessed how often each statement was true for them.

Argumentativeness was measured using the "Short-Form Version of the Infante and Rancer Argumentativeness Scale (1982)" (Rancer & Avtgis, 2014, p. 272). A copy of the scale and items can be found in Appendix C. Infante and Rancer's (1982) research revealed an internal consistency of .91 for the motivation to approach an argument factor (ARGap) and .86 for the motivation to avoid an argument factor (ARGav). Reliability, validity, and the two-factor model of the original argumentativeness scale have been consistently supported (Suzuki & Rancer, 1994; Infante, Rancer, & Wigley, 2011). The two-factor model explains that there are 10 items which measure a person's tendency to approach arguments (ARGap), and 10 items measuring a person's tendency to avoid arguments (ARGav). A general tendency to argue (ARGgt) score, thus, is determined by subtracting the sum of the ARGav items from the sum of the ARGap items: (ARGgt = ARGap – ARGav). González Alcalá's (2012) two-factor forced principal component factor analysis saw all five items in the ARGap factor used in the Short-Form of the Argumentativeness Scale had high to moderate loading values (.56 to .65). However, on the two-factor forced principal component factor analysis only three of the five items used in the ARGav factor of the Short-Form loaded with acceptable values (.44 to .67). Though the González Alcalá found partial support for the 10 items of the Short-Form version, Rancer and Avtgis (2014) cite cross-context support for the 10 items used in the Short-Form version from work done by Infante and Gorden (1989, 1991), Sabourin,

Infante, and Rudd (1993), and Myers and Rocca (2000). Coefficient alpha for the Short-Form Version of the Argumentativeness Scale in the present study was .82.

The steps to obtain an argumentativeness score are listed below:

1. Add scores on items: 2, 3, 5, 7, 9
2. Add scores on items: 1, 4, 6, 8, 10
3. Subtract the sum obtained in step 2 from the sum obtained in step 1.

Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *almost never true* (1) to *almost always true* (5), respondents assessed how often each statement was true for them.

Conflict personalization was measured using the *Direct Personalization* dimension of the *Taking Conflict Personally* scale originally conceptualized by Dallinger and Hample (1989) and revised and first published in 1995 (Hample & Dallinger, 1995). A copy of the scale and items can be found in Appendix E. When looking to explore how Taking Conflict Personally (TCP) relates to aggressiveness, Hample and Cionea (2010) found a Cronbach's alpha of .81 for the Direct Personalization dimension of the TCP scale. More recent research (Miller & Roloff, 2014; Aloia & Worley, 2018) has revealed higher alpha coefficients for the direct personalization subscale, .89 and .86, as researchers have focused the study of conflict personalization to the core TCP which is measured by three subscales (direct personalization, persecution feelings, and stress reactions) considered the conceptual center of the of personalizing conflict. Coefficient alpha for the Direct Personalization dimension in the present study was .87.

A direct personalization score was obtained by the addition of the scores for all items. Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly*

agree (5), respondents assessed how well each statement described their conflict personalization while at work.

Affirming communicator style was measured using the friendly, attentive, and relaxed dimensions of Norton's (1978) Communicator Style Measurement. Garko (1992), Infante and Gorden (1989), and Infante, Anderson, Martin, Herrington, and Kim (1993) used this same procedure to operationalize affirming communicatory style (Edge & Williams, 1994). A copy of the scale and items used can be found in Appendix F. Edge and Williams' (1994) produced subscale alpha reliabilities of .86 (relaxed), .80 (friendly), and 74 (attentive). More recently, Sollitto (2016) revealed the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each subscale: .71 (relaxed), .74 (friendly), and .65 (attentive). Coefficient alpha for these three dimensions were .71 (relaxed), .63 (friendly), and .76 (attentive). The coefficient alpha for the three dimensions together as the Affirming Communicator Style scale was .78.

Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5), respondents assessed how well each statement described their communicator style. The sum of the scores from all items divided by the number of items in each subscale is the formula by which to obtain a normative score for each subscale. A total scale score was obtained by adding the scores for each subscale.

As summarized above, this study used the shorter or abridged versions of each of scales to discourage respondent's fatigue. Using shorter versions of scales, which have demonstrated high reliability and validity, help "avoid the potential for error variance (generalized error in research associated with measurement) and subject fatigue" (Rancer & Avtgis, 2014, p. 51). Error variance, and subject fatigue, are particularly true in

studies in which researchers present respondents with the complete versions of the scales, and several other measures, questions, or items on a survey. "Long surveys tend to overwhelm respondents and reduce the chances of them completing the entire questionnaire" (Rancer & Avtgis, 2014, p. 51). For these reasons, and in recognition of bureaucrats' time value and availability, this study used the shorter versions of the scales. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that the shorter versions of the targeted dimensions have already been successfully employed by other communication researchers (Infante, Anderson, Martin, Herrington and Kim, 1993) to study each of the traits explored in this study, and in doing so, have set a precedent for their use.

Data Analysis

Median Splits

The process of dividing scores based on the median provides a dichotomous variable with two identical sized groups of participants, for example, those scoring "low" on the argumentativeness scale, and those scoring "high" on the argumentativeness scale (Allen, 2017). Median splits are advantageous as the technique "makes the task of statistical analysis easier and interpretation of any results more obvious and simpler" (Allen, 2017, p. 974). They permit the use of the entire dataset and because this study did not seek inferential relationships between the communication traits levels and any other variable, disadvantages of employing a median split such as assuming that no nonlinearity exists were not a conflict with the exploratory nature and outcomes of this study.

Communicator Profile Combinations

A total of 16 communicator profiles were generated from the combination of the dichotomous levels of the verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness, direct

personalization and affirming communicator style scales obtained by splitting the population results using the median distribution of scores for each trait. This method was used by Infante et al. (1993) when combining three out of the four traits used in this study. In the present study, when splitting the medians, frequencies were taken into consideration when assigning the "high" and "low" levels to ensure that the population was evenly split into each level category.

Reliability Estimates

Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alphas were calculated as a measure of internal consistency reliability estimates of the scores from the Short-Form Versions of the Verbal Aggressiveness and Argumentativeness, the Direct Personalization Dimension of the Taking Conflict Personally, and the Affirming, Relaxed and Attentive subscales of the Communicator Style Measurement scale. The scores for the following items on each scale were reversed to conduct the reliability analysis:

- Verbal aggressiveness: 1, 3, 5, 8, 9
- Argumentativeness: 1, 4, 6, 8, 10
- Direct personalization: 3, 6
- Communicator style (relaxed dimension): 1, 4

While other studies have used the reversed scores to calculate the total score for each trait, this study did not. The scoring methods followed were those outlined earlier.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter contains the results of the exploratory study conducted to inquire about the levels of four communication traits (Verbal Aggressiveness, Argumentativeness, Taking Conflict Personally, and Communicatory Style) present in bureaucrats. The chapter features descriptive characteristics of the sample studied, as well as levels of each communication trait, a taxonomy of the communicator profiles that appeared and the frequency with which they appeared in the population. Statistical analysis of reliability and central tendency are also included in this chapter.

Medians

Medians scores were calculated for each communication trait scale (argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, direct personalization, and affirming communicator style). SPSS was used to obtain the measures of central tendency and dispersion used by this study. Though the study only used the median score, the medians, standard deviations, skewness, minimum and maximum scores, as well as quartiles for each trait scales were calculated to inform future research. The mean is the average score observed in the sample population. The median score indicates the middle of the score distribution. The standard deviation indicates the range in which 68% (one standard deviation), 95% (two standard deviations), and 99% (three standard deviations) of the population scored. For example, 68% of the population sampled scored between 10.77

and 19.93. This range is obtained by subtracting and adding the standard deviation value to the mean value. A skewness score was also calculated to understand the distribution (e.g. normal, skewed) of the scores in each trait. Minimum and maximum scores are also presented to learn which was the lowest score and the highest score calculated for each trait. Quartiles were also calculated to show the score breakdown for the 25th, 50th and 75th percentile of the population. Quartiles can be used to divide the sample population into three groups: below average, average, and above average. Table 4.1 presents these measurements for each communication trait scale.

Table 4.1

Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion

Measures	VA	ARG	DP	ACS
Mean	15.35	0.16	20.34	11.53
Median	14.0	0.0	20.0	11.4
Standard Deviation	4.58	6.62	3.14	1.16
Skewness	1.477	.257	-.227	-.409
Minimum Score	10.0	-15.0	8.0	7.0
Maximum Score	37.0	17.0	29.0	13.8
25th Percentile	12.0	-5.0	18.0	10.8
50th Percentile	14.00	0.0	20.0	11.4
75th Percentile	18.0	5.0	22.0	12.4

Note. $N = 160$. ARG = Argumentativeness Scale (Short-Form Version); VA = Verbal Aggressiveness (Short-Form Version); DP = Direct Personalization Dimension of the Taking Conflict Personally Scale; ACS = Affirming Communicator Style Dimension of the Communicator Style Measure

The verbal aggressiveness scores shown on Table 4.1 indicates that the scores for this scale were positively skewed (μ = 14.0; *Skewness* = 1.477). Skewness scores higher than 1.0 indicate positive skewness in the data distribution. This means that most of the scores are clustered on the lower end of the scores (left side). Positive skewness is also characterized by a long tail on the right (positive) direction as seen in on the histogram shown in Figure 4.1.

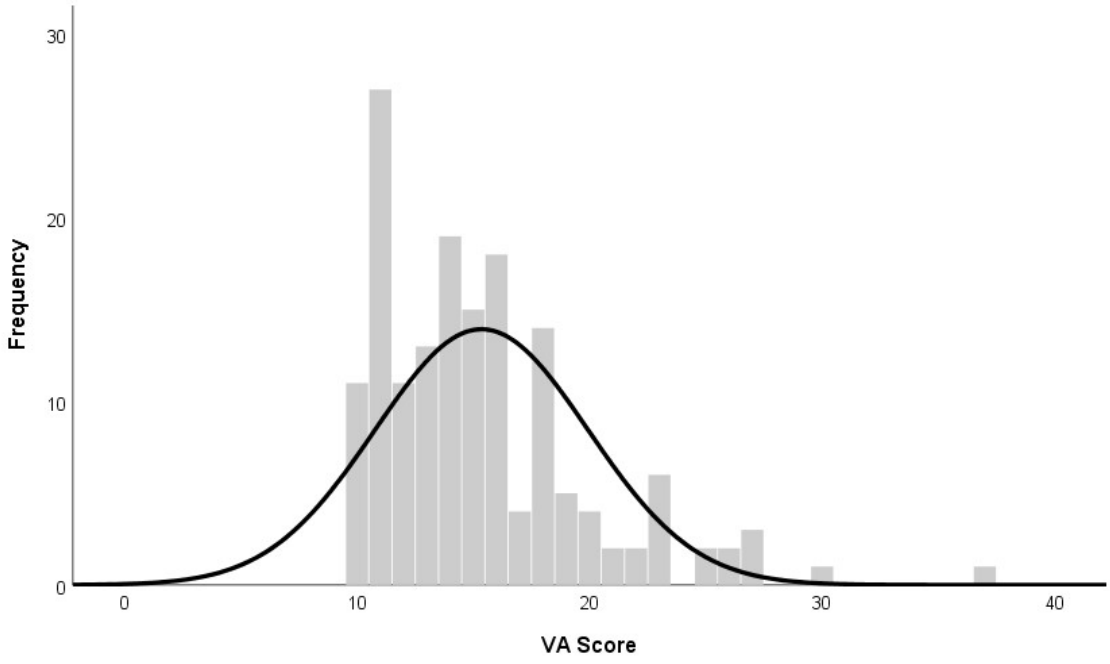

Figure 4.1 Verbal Aggressiveness Score Distribution with Normal Curve.

The argumentativeness scores were normally distributed. This means most observations are clustered around the central peak (mean score), and scores taper off symmetrically in both directions. This can be seen in Figure 4.2.

The direct personalization scores were normally distributed. This means most observations are clustered around the central peak (mean score), and scores taper off symmetrically in both directions. This can be seen in Figure 4.3.

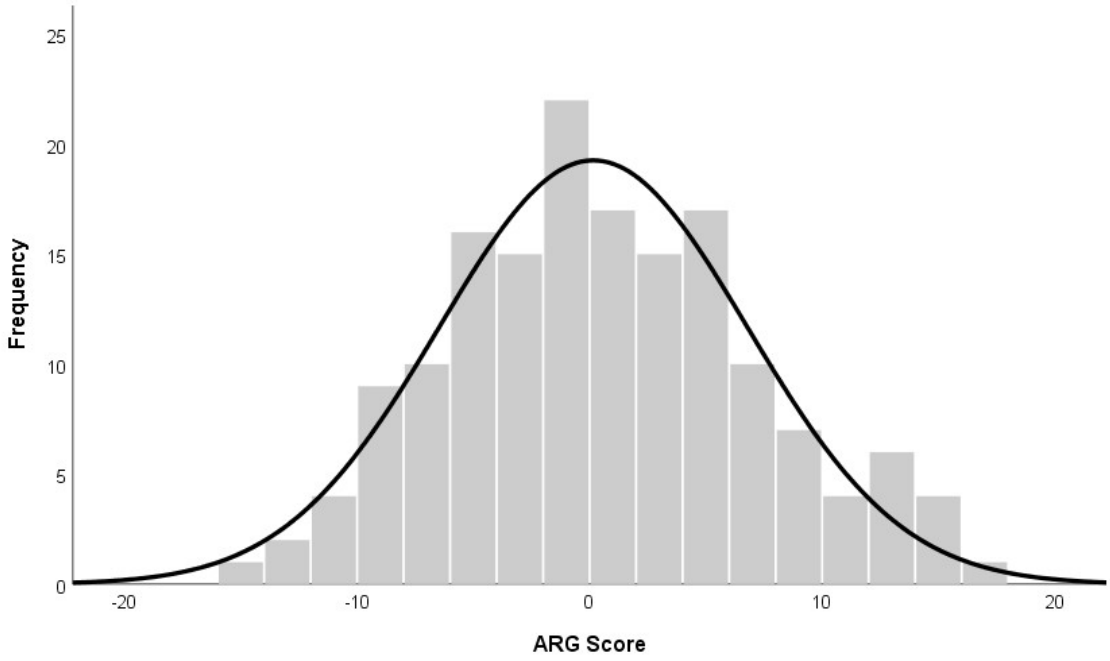

Figure 4.2 Argumentativeness Score Distribution with Normal Curve.

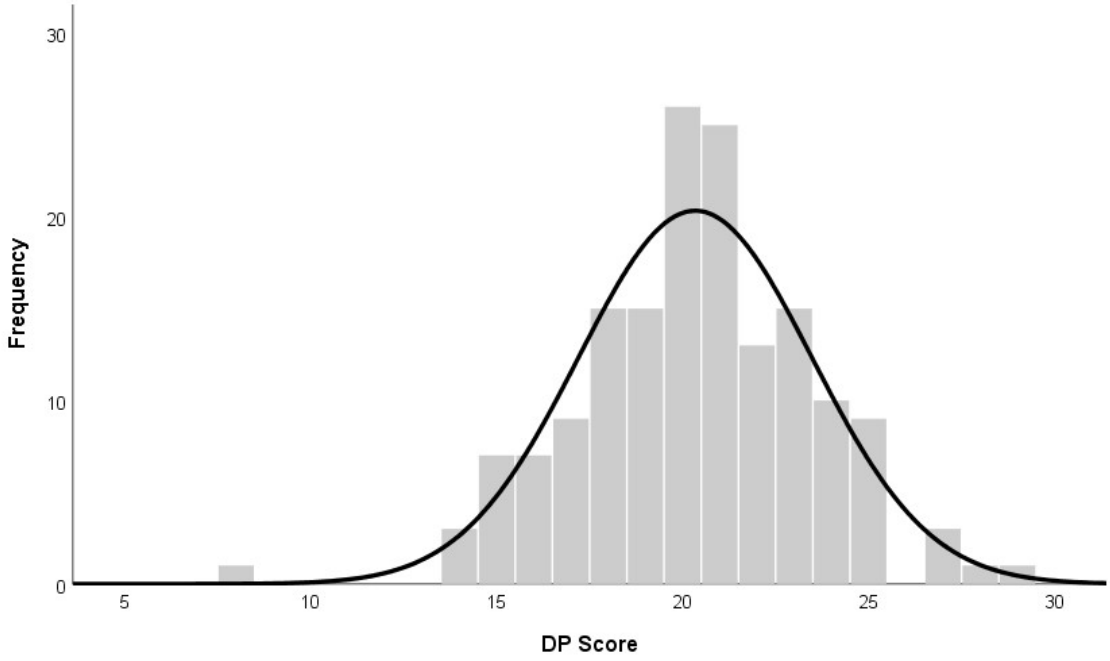

Figure 4.3 Direct Personalization Score Distribution with Normal Curve.

The affirming communicator style scores were normally distributed. This means most observations are clustered around the central peak (mean score), and scores taper off symmetrically in both directions. This can be seen in Figure 4.4.

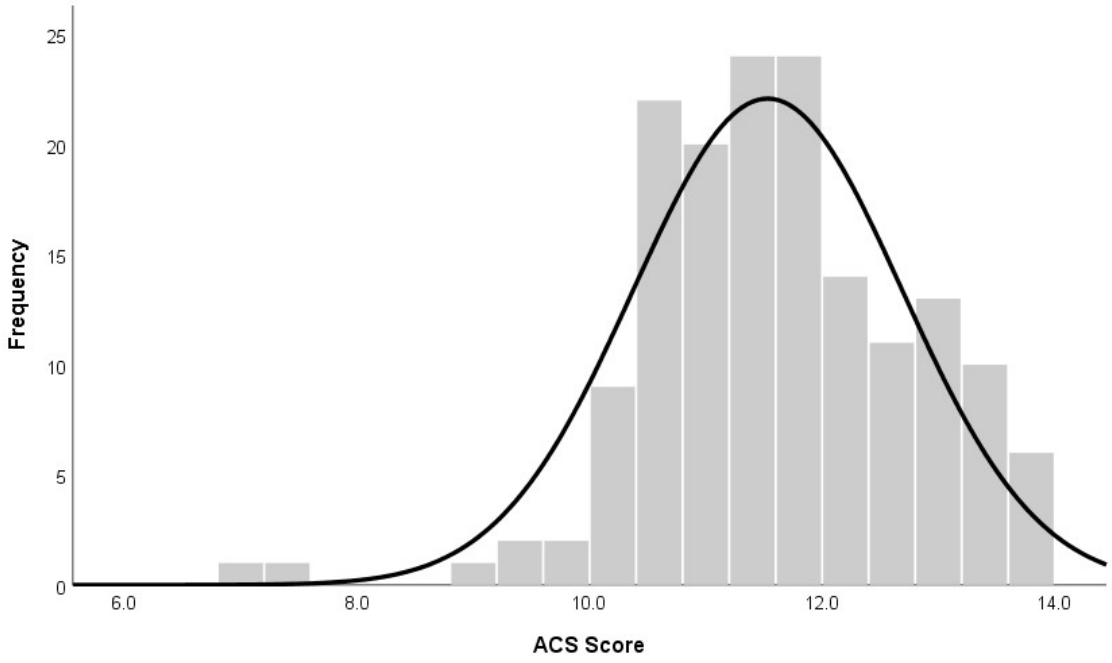

Figure 4.4 Affirming Communicator Style Score Distribution with Normal Curve.

Determining Dichotomous Trait Levels with Median Splits

To ensure an even, or close to even split between groups with high scores and low scores for each scale, frequencies and cumulative percent were used and taken into consideration when assigning levels. This study looked at the cumulative percent to find the direction in which the score calculation would ensure the groups had exactly or close to 50% of the population. Table 4.2 provides the frequencies and percent for each verbal aggressiveness scores that the sample population (n =160) produced. The highlighted row indicates the verbal aggressiveness median score. Table 4.3 provides the frequencies and percent for each argumentativeness scores that the sample population (n =160) produced. The highlighted row indicates the argumentativeness median score.

Table 4.2

Verbal Aggressiveness Frequency Table

Score	Frequency	Percent
10	11	6.9
11	27	16.9
12	11	6.9
13	13	8.1
14	19	11.9
15	15	9.4
16	18	11.3
17	4	2.5
18	14	8.8
19	5	3.1
20	4	2.5
21	2	1.3
22	2	1.3
23	6	3.8
25	2	1.3
26	2	1.3
27	3	1.9
30	1	0.6
37	1	0.6

Table 4.3

Argumentativeness Frequency Table

Score	Frequency	Percent
-15	1	0.6
-13	2	1.3
-12	1	0.6
-11	3	1.9
-10	2	1.3
-9	7	4.4
-8	4	2.5
-7	6	3.8
-6	5	3.1
-5	11	6.9
-4	7	4.4
-3	8	5
-2	10	6.3
-1	12	7.5
0	11	6.9
1	6	3.8
2	6	3.8
3	9	5.6
4	8	5

Table 4.3

Argumentativeness Frequency Table (continued)

Score	Frequency	Percent
5	9	5.6
6	7	4.4
7	3	1.9
8	4	2.5
9	3	1.9
10	2	1.3
11	2	1.3
12	3	1.9
13	3	1.9
14	1	0.6
15	3	1.9
17	1	0.6

Table 4.4 provides the frequencies and percent for each direct personalization scores that the sample population (n =160) produced. The highlighted row indicates the direct personalization median score. Table 4.5 provides the frequencies and percent for each affirming communicator style scores that the sample population (n =160) produced. The highlighted row indicates the affirming communicator style score. These frequency tables were used to determine the splitting point, based on the median, where 50%, or close to 50%, of the population settled in each group.

Table 4.4

Direct Personalization Frequency Table

Score	Frequency	Percent
8	1	0.6
14	3	1.9
15	7	4.4
16	7	4.4
17	9	5.6
18	15	9.4
19	15	9.4
20	26	16.3
21	25	15.6
22	13	8.1
23	15	9.4
24	10	6.3
25	9	5.6
27	3	1.9
28	1	0.6
29	1	0.6

Table 4.5

Affirming Communicator Style Frequency Table

Score	Frequency	Percent
7	1	0.6
7.4	1	0.6
9	1	0.6
9.2	1	0.6
9.4	1	0.6
9.8	2	1.3
10	5	3.1
10.2	4	2.5
10.4	10	6.3
10.6	12	7.5
10.8	5	3.1
11	15	9.4
11.2	13	8.1
11.4	11	6.9
11.6	10	6.3
11.8	14	8.8
12	8	5
12.2	6	3.8
12.4	4	2.5

Table 4.5

Affirming Communicator Style Frequency Table (continued)

Score	Frequency	Percent
12.6	7	4.4
12.8	7	4.4
13	6	3.8
13.2	4	2.5
13.4	6	3.8
13.6	2	1.3
13.8	4	2.5

Using the information from Tables 4.2 – 4.5, the following calculations were established to obtain the "high" and "low" groups for each trait:

- Verbal aggressiveness – Scores less than or equal to 14 were categorized as "low." This calculation generated a group containing 51% of the population.
- Argumentativeness – Scores greater than or equal to 0 were categorized as "high." This calculation generated a group containing 51% of the population.
- Direct personalization – Scores less than or equal to 20 were categorized as "low." This calculation generated a group containing 52% of the population.
- Affirming communicator style – Scores greater than 11.4 were categorized as "high." This calculation generated a group containing 49% of the population.

Once the high- and low-level scores and groups were determined, the next step was to use the levels and calculate the combinations for each expected communicator profile.

Development of Communicator Profiles

The 16 communicator profiles produced from the combination of high or low levels of verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness, direct personalization and affirming style were identified by splitting at the median the distribution of scores for participants' ratings on each scale, as outlined in the previous section. The calculations were inputted into the Caspio Table Design were the data was recorded. Using a formula field, and following Structured Query Language (SQL), a formula was written with the instructions for the field to return each type of profile. The formula combines the calculations in the previous section to determine high/low levels for each trait and based on that combination of levels, return a profile type (e.g. high ARG, high VA, high TCP, and high ACS return Profile A). The frequencies and percent were then generated for this new variable to explore which communicator profiles appeared in the sample. Table 4.6 presents the frequency of each communicator profile that emerged along with what percent of the population (n = 160) that frequency represents.

Table 4.6

Communicator Profiles Count and Percentages

Profile	Frequency	Percent
A	10	6.3
B	8	5.0
C	10	6.3
D	16	10.0
E	7	4.4
F	4	2.5

Table 4.6

Communicator Profiles Count and Percentages (continued)

Profile	Frequency	Percent
G	17	10.6
H	9	5.6
I	6	3.8
J	18	11.3
K	4	2.5
L	7	4.4
M	11	6.9
N	13	8.1
O	13	8.1
P	7	4.4

As highlighted in Table 4.6, Profile J (high VA, low ARG, high DP, low ACS) which earlier chapters proposed to match Hummel's characterization of truncated bureaucrats was the most frequently occurring profile (n = 18, 11.3%) in the sampled population. With one less occurrence (n = 17, 10.6%), Profile G (low VA, high ARG, low DP, high ACS), which the study proposed to match Goodsell's characterization of principled bureaucrats was the second most frequent profile. The two least frequent profiles were Profile F and Profile K, each with just four cases or 2.5% of the population studied. Profile F is a combination of high argumentativeness, low verbal aggressiveness, high direct personalization, and low affirming communicator style, while Profile K is just the opposite: low argumentativeness, high verbal aggressiveness, low direct personalization, and high affirming communicator style.

Median splits helped answer RQ2 (research question two) posed in chapter one: which communicator profiles emerged in the sample population? Sixteen communicator profiles emerged after splitting the population at the median. One hundred and sixty cases were distributed along the spectrum of profiles with a minimum of four cases in two profiles and a maximum of 18 cases in one profile averaging 10 cases per profile and seven cases observed most often (mode) per profile.

Categorization of Communicator Profiles by Number of On/Off-Target Trait Levels

An additional categorization was done to improve understanding of the profiles that appeared and what they could mean in practical terms. The terms "on-target" and "off-target" were introduced to reflect findings from the communication traits literature linking constructive communication trait levels with more positive perceptions of communication competence and other desirable social and organizational characteristics. First, participants' communication trait levels were categorized as on-target (1) or off-target (-1). The target trait level categorization was computed as follows:

- Verbal aggressiveness: high scores were classified as *off-target* while low scores were classified *on-target*
- Argumentativeness: high scores were classified as *on-target* while low scores were classified as *off-target*
- Direct personalization: high scores were classified as *off-target* while low scores were classified *on-target*
- Affirming communicator style: high scores were classified as *on-target* while low scores were classified as *off-target*

Profile J, the profile with the most occurring instances in the population, is a combination of four off-target trait levels; this means the levels associated with this profile have been found to negatively affect perceptions of communication competency. The second-most frequent profile, Profile G is a combination of four on-target trait levels and thus the ideal communicator profile as the on-target trait levels have been correlated to positive perceptions of communication competence and constructive communication behaviors. The two least frequent profiles, F and J, have two on-target levels and two off-target trait levels each.

The second step in the process was to compute a new variable by adding the new on-target (1) and off-target (-1) values for each trait. The new sum variable (Communicator Profile Sum Total) produced the following values: -4, -2, 0, 2, 4. Each value was interpreted as a new category and participants can be sorted based on the number of on/off-target trait levels. A radar chart was created to plot the 16 profiles according to the sum score of the on-target and off-target trait level scores (see Figure 5 on the following page). The color coding of the radar chart on Figure 4.5 allows the viewer to easily determine which profiles are considered to be on or off-target. Profiles G, which is considered in this study as the ideal or "target" profile, is located at the center of the radar (target) and is surrounded by the color green which indicates on-target profiles. Conversely, Profile J, considered the most destructive profile combination (off-target) is located along the red periphery of the radar closer to other off-target profiles characterized by three or more off-target trait levels.

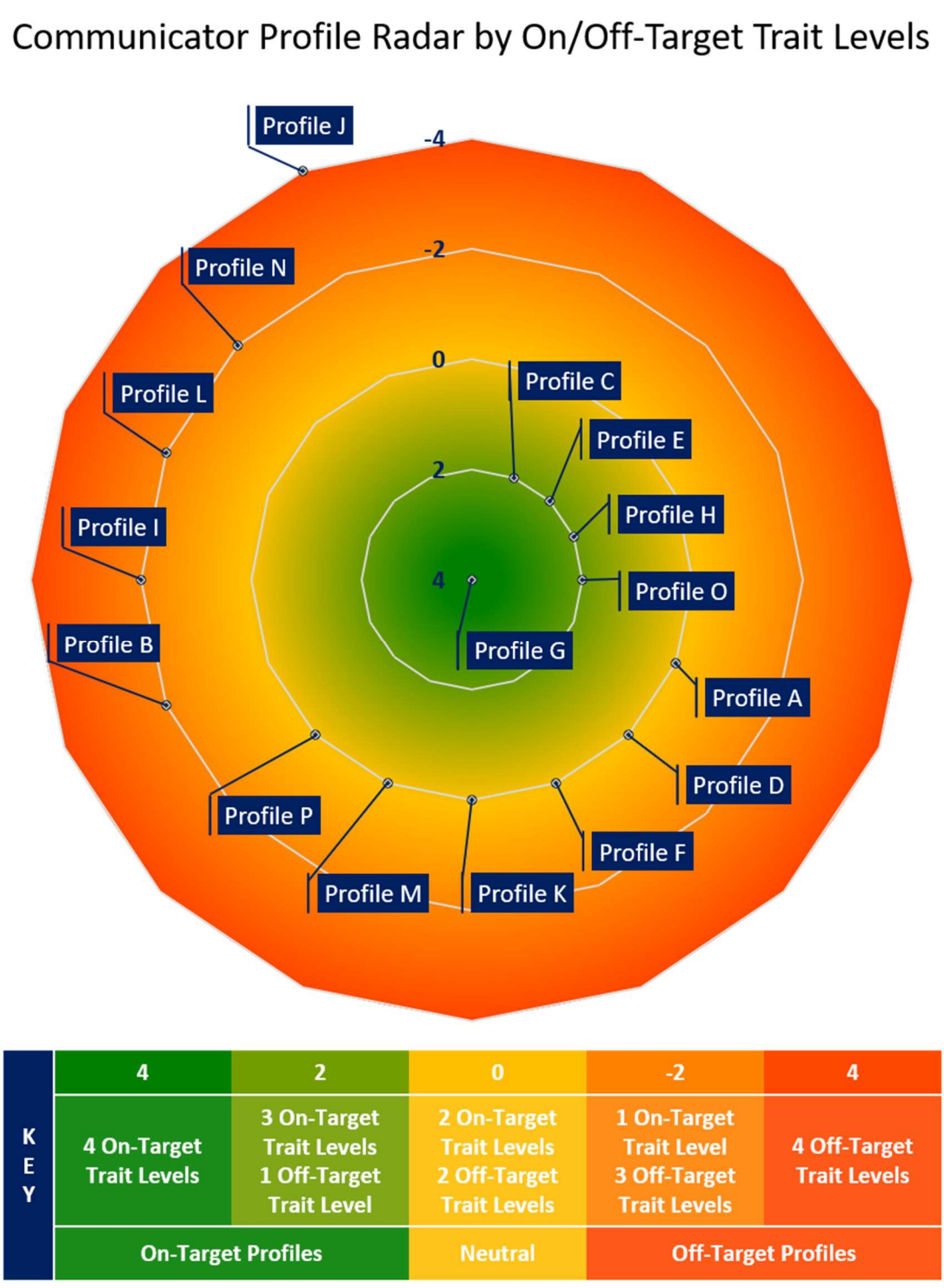

Figure 4.5 Communicator Profile Radar by On/Off-Target Trait Levels.

After obtaining the new scaled values based on the number of on/off-target trait levels for each trait, the final step in the process was to use the new values to further narrow the participants' communicator profiles to three practical "buckets" still based on the number of on and off-target trait levels. The bucket definitions are below:

- On-Target Profiles: Cases with a communicator profile sum total of 2 and 4. Individuals in this category have three or more on-target trait levels.
- Neutral Profiles: Cases with a communicator profile sum of 0. Individuals in this category have at two on-target trait levels and two off-target trait levels.
- Off-Target Profiles: Cases with a communicator profile sum of -2 and -4. Individuals in this category have three or more off-target trait levels.

Using these definitions, Table 4.7 presents the resulting frequency and percent of the population sampled (n = 160) in each bucket category. As seen in Table 4.7, just over a third of participants (35%) had an on-target communicator profile.

Table 4.7

Communicator Profile Buckets Based on Number of On/Off-Target Trait Levels

Bucket (Category)	Frequency	Percent
On-Target Profile	56	35.0
Neutral Profile	52	32.5
Off-Target Profile	52	32.5

The final clustering of the communicator profiles was done by overlapping the three target buckets from Table 4.7 onto the 16 communicator profiles that emerged. This final clustering of communicator profiles according to the level of on- and off-target trait

levels are presented in Table 4.8. As seen in this table, profiles C, E, G, H, O are the on-target profiles and accounted for 35% of the population; profiles A, D, F, K, M, P are the neutral profiles and represented 32.5% of participants; lastly, profiles B, I, J, K, N are the off-target profiles with 32.5% of the share of the sampled population.

Table 4.8

Communicator Profile Distribution Inside On/Off-Target Trait Level Buckets

Bucket (Category)	Profiles	Count	Percent
On-Target Profile	B	8	5.0
	I	6	3.8
	J	18	11.3
	L	7	4.4
	N	13	8.1
Neutral Profile	A	10	6.3
	D	16	10.0
	F	4	2.5
	K	4	2.5
	M	11	6.9
	P	7	4.4
Off-Target Profile	C	10	6.3
	E	7	4.4
	G	17	10.6
	H	9	5.6
	O	13	8.1

The categorization on Table 4.7 and distribution of profiles inside each category on Table 4.8 address research question three (RQ3). Over a third of the population sampled exhibited profiles characterized by on-target levels of each communication trait. However, the rest of the population (65%) did not exhibit on-target profiles and was split between neutral (32.5%) and off-target profiles (32.5%).

Reliability Testing

Reliability for the argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, direct personalization, and affirming communicator style were determined by calculating Cronbach's (1951) alpha coefficient for all the participants scores. An alpha coefficient greater than .70 is considered acceptable by social sciences standards. Table 4.9 lists the alpha coefficient obtained for each scale and subscales where applicable.

Table 4.9

Scale Reliability Results

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Argumentativeness Scale (ARG) – Short-Form Version	10	.82
ARG*ap* (ARG approach)	5	.82
ARG*av* (ARG avoid)	5	.65
Verbal Aggressiveness Scale (VAS) – Short-Form Version	10	.76
Taking Conflict Personally Scale (TCP) – Direct Personalization Dimension	7	.87
Communicator Style Measure (CSM) – Affirming Style Dimension: Attentive, Friendly, and Relaxed	15	.78
Attentive	5	.76

Table 4.10

Scale Reliability Results (continued)

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Friendly	5	.63
Relaxed	5	.71

The Cronbach's alpha reliability for the 10-item short-form version of the argumentativeness scale was .82. The items measuring an individual's tendency to approach arguments (ARGap) and avoid arguments (ARGav) returned alpha reliabilities of .82 and .65 respectively. Cronbach's alpha reliability for the 10-item short-version of the verbal aggressiveness scale was .76. Cronbach's alpha reliability for the direct personalization dimension of the Taking Conflict Personally scale composed of seven items was .87. Lastly, the 15-item affirming communicator style dimension of the Communicator Style Measure returned an alpha of .78. The affirming communicator style subscales returned the following alpha reliabilities: attentive, .76; friendly, .63; and relaxed, .71.

The reliability tests for all main scales (ARG, VA, DP, ACS) produced expected results and therefore provided support for each measurement's internal consistency and serves as evidence that the tool as proposed in this study may be used reliably in the public sector (RQ1). Reliability analysis of subscales did not return higher alpha; therefore, this study only considered the higher alphas produced for the full scales.

Reliability results conclude the analyses conducted by this study. The results presented in this chapter addressed the two objectives set forth in Chapter 2. Current

levels of argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, conflict personalization and affirming communicator style were explored (Objective 1) and were combined and categorized to create a taxonomy of bureaucrats' communicator profiles (Objective 2). The chapter ahead will provide a summary and discussion of these results, offer practical and theoretical implications and address limitations for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was the exploration and development of profiles of bureaucrats' communicator styles and predispositions. Specifically, the study had two overall objectives. The first objective was to explore bureaucrats' current levels of four communication traits: argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, conflict personalization, and affirming communicator style. The second objective was to create a taxonomy of communicator profiles constructed from the combination of levels from each trait studied. This chapter provides a summary and discussion of these results, offers practical and theoretical implications and addresses limitations for future research.

Discussion of Findings

The literature addressed in this study offered two polarized characterizations of bureaucrats. On one end Hummel (2008) characterized bureaucrats as headless, soulless individuals who fall prey to the mental burden of easy shoddy work, stripped of their identity and purpose and emotionally detached. On the other, Godsell (1994) characterized bureaucrats as dedicated, ordinary individuals with a strong purpose to serve, akin to artists (soulful) and performing duties with a sense of pride while drawing pleasure from it. The exploration of bureaucrats' levels of four communication traits

offered evidence to support both characterizations of bureaucrats as it relates to their communication competence.

Median splits were conducted using descriptive statistics to classify participants' responses for each trait as being high or low. Following this classification, communicator profiles were calculated using a combination of each trait's levels. Frequencies were studied to learn which communicator profiles were present in the sample population. Participant responses yielded cases in each communicator profile. The emergence of 16 communicator profiles fulfilled the first objective of this study of exploring the current communication trait levels in bureaucrats.

This initial exploration of communication trait levels returned Profile J as the most prevalent profile in the sample. Profile J was composed of low argumentativeness, high verbal aggressiveness, high direct personalization of conflict, and low affirming communicator style. The trait level combination of Profile J, according to the communication traits literature explored by this study is a very destructive combination and thus an undesirable combination (off-target). Individual with higher verbal aggressiveness attack others self-concepts rather than their ideas when discussing a controversial issue with others and they resort to insults or character attacks when trying to influence others who are stern or stubborn in their stance. Individuals with low argumentativeness levels are perceived with lower levels of communication image and less precise (Infante & Gorden, 1987). High personalizers tend to have higher levels of hurt from conflict and thus seek to avoid conflict, yet when engaged, they can be quite aggressive or alternatively their passive reactions might give way to accepting their

offender's negative characterizations of them (Hample 1999; Hample & Cionea, 2010). Lower levels of affirming communicator style are linked to lower levels of job satisfaction (DiClemente, Ditrinco, Gibbons, & Myers, 2013).

Conversely, those with Profile G, which was the second most prevalent profile, show high argumentativeness, low verbal aggressiveness, lower levels of direct personalization of conflict, and high affirming communicator styles. Individuals with higher levels of argumentativeness have been found to be more skilled and competent communicators; they have "greater social perspective-taking ability because arguing with others requires understanding their vantage points and engaging in less egocentric thinking and more mature reasoning" (Infante, Rancer, & Avtgis, 2009, p. 134), and are associated with enhanced credibility (Infante et al., 2009). Individuals with lower levels of verbal aggressiveness are more desirable as supervisors. Lower personalizers are more sophisticated interpersonal arguers. Individuals in supervisory positions who demonstrate higher levels of affirming communicator style are evoke greater levels of employee satisfaction and commitment (Infante & Gorden, 1991).

Profile J and Profile G, thus, sit at opposite ends of the classification list of the emergent communicator profiles and, as aforementioned provide evidence for the characterization of bureaucrats put forward by Goodsell and Hummel. Furthermore, Profile J (Hummel's characterization of the bureaucrat) was the most common Profile. This occurrence suggests that the general public's perception that bureaucrats are incompetent carries some merit as it relates to their communicator profiles. Nonetheless, the emergence of Profile G as the second most common profile also offers support for

those who side with Goodsell's assertions that bureaucrats are indeed service oriented people who take pride in their work. These two profiles serve as added evidence that a wide range of variety exists in the communication styles and predispositions of bureaucrats and that there is still work to be done to improve communication competence levels in bureaucracy to further enhance the bureaucratic experience and improve bureaucratic effectiveness.

A radar chart was created to plot the 16 communicator profiles based on the number of traits that were on-target. This chart presented in Figure 4.5 in the previous chapter is a pictorial depiction of the taxonomy of communicator profiles that emerged and the outcome of the second objective of this study (create a taxonomy of communicator profiles constructed from the combination of levels from each trait studied). In the chart, profiles were plotted over a color-coded area that makes it easy to find the number of on-target and off-target in each profile combination. A key at the bottom of the chart provides the viewer with three buckets. This study produced the buckets to convey practical organizational implications of the profiles. Social sciences tend to use categories such as below average, average, or above average in their findings (quartiles). Similarly, the off-target, neutral, and on-target classification of the buckets is meant to mimic the customary social scientific classification of variables into easily identifiable groups. This classification will also facilitate conversations at the organizational level for how to address communication deficiencies and proficiencies without needing to conduct additional analyses by the users.

Results from this classification indicated that a little over a third of the bureaucrats surveyed had on-target communicator profiles offers additional support for the tri-level classification for purposes of sharing findings in a practical way as organizational reports presented in this manner will results in engaging conversations about the overall state of communication competence within department or organizations, while the original classification as presented in Table 4.9 can offer the greatest insight once the general levels of communication competence at the organizational level are understood. Similarly, when reviewing individual level results, users will be best served by showing them the general category in which their profile falls prior to exploring more deeply each individual communication trait level of their profile.

This classification based on the number of on-target communication trait levels addresses the third research question (RQ3) asking whether the population sampled, generally, exhibited more or less on-target trait levels. As explained above, just over a third of the participants revealed a profile combination with three or more on-target trait levels. This means that bureaucrats, generally, tend to exhibit more on-target trait levels in their communicator profiles.

While this claim might seem somewhat counterintuitive given that Profile J, comprised of four off-target trait levels, was the most common profile in this study, the tri-level classification proves its importance in the state of future research as it pertains to answering more general questions about the overall levels of communication competence in bureaucracy and when seeking to make inferences as it will provide a dependent variable that can easily be studied by general logistic regression model, or ANOVA

models, as well as cluster analyses. With this in mind, this study also looked to determine whether the proposed tool (The CommProfile) could be used reliably in the public sector to measure communication styles and predispositions (RQ1). The reliability analyses which yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients above acceptable levels in the social sciences (greater than or equal to .78) concludes that The CommProfile can be used reliably to study communication styles and predispositions in the public sector.

An additional noteworthy discussion item is the number of responses collected. Because the study aimed at producing a descriptive analysis rather than an inferential analysis, the number of responses collected was sufficient. The determination that the number obtained was sufficient began taking shape when preliminary analysis of 30, 50 and 75 collected responses appeared to have reached saturation as medians for three (verbal aggressiveness, direct personalization and affirming communicator style) of the four traits studied were not being impacted any more as more cases were added, and the argumentativeness trait median which was being impacted, was only impacted by 0.5 points on a scale with a possible variance of 40 points.

Limitations

Single-handedly, the biggest limitation to this study was the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. The Governor of Ohio, which is where this study was taking place, issued a "Stay at Home" order to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus which had reached 351 (a 104 case increase from the previous day) confirmed cases with 83 hospitalizations and three deaths (Tobias, 2020). The "Stay at Home" order later resulted in more nonessential business closures including government offices. The world quite literally

stopped. As uncertainties grew, and so did the number of cases, government bureaucrats were facing new unprecedented challenges requiring swift, hard to make decisions including furloughing entire staff members to cut back on as many expenses as possible. Given the timing of the start of this study, these challenges presented an almost unsurmountable challenge to data collection. Heads of departments who had agreed to participate in the study prior to the start of the data collection period, were unreachable at the time the study's data collection began. Others who contacted, replied with the heartbreaking news that they were unable to participate because most of their staff had been furloughed and they could not bring themselves to ask those still employed to take on added tasks. Another government office replied with their inability to take part citing logistical issues to distributing the survey without offering more information on what those issues were. The plan to reach out to the heads of departments simply via email was not yielding sufficient responses. With two weeks left in the data collection timeline, the study had only received a little over 30 responses. Unable to follow-up with the requests in-person, reaching out via text and social media proved to be the next best plan. The personal invitations and requests for support generated additional support as those who were contacted began sharing the survey with their own professional network.

Though the personal requests for support helped garner over 160 responses, the personal request for support may have resulted in response bias since those contacted were more likely to be representative of the researcher's network and belief system than the population studied.

Another limitation faced was the length of the instrument coupled with the no-cost Caspio web platform and budget-friendly website. The table recorded 267 entries, however, only 164 entries were completed in its entirety. The discrepancy is likely due to participants being pulled away from the computer at some point before submitting their information, and not having the time to complete all the item, or because the lower-budget options were much slower to load than higher end options.

Implications for Practice

The underlying goal of this study was to answer the last research question posed in Chapter 1: why does the ability to measure bureaucrats' communication styles and predispositions reliably matter for public administration and communication traits research and practices? The best way to answer this is to emphasize that the literature reviewed by this study revealed theoretical deserts in both fields. In the public administration field, Stillman (2005) highlighted cases of bureaucratic dysfunctions that lead to the loss of life hinting to inefficient communication as one of the factors contributing to such dysfunctions. However, this study found that Pandey & Garnett (2006) were the first to introduce a communication framework to study public sector performance, yet, studies that followed their research, still did not turn their attention to how service is provided and delivered. Instead studies citing Pandey & Garnett focus on employee motivation and satisfaction, organizational goal ambiguity and decision-making, as well as management leadership and overall communication quality from and in government. These studies, however, still did not analyze bureaucratic performance in terms of service delivery giving special attention to bureaucrats themselves.

In communication theory, specifically, communication traits theory, the research desert faced is the lack of studies focusing solely on the public sector. Communication traits researchers have yet to focus entirely in the public sector and more specifically in bureaucracy. Communication traits research work reviewed by this study sometimes did include a small sample of public employees, less than 10, in the sample population studied. The small sample of public sector employees, however, was not the main focus of the research, instead it was a welcome addition to the types of organizations reached, again, without being the sole focus of the study.

This study, thus, asserts itself as an oasis for both fields and sets itself as a starting point and a resource for researchers who will focus on improving communication competence levels in bureaucracy and bureaucrats, who will look to improve bureaucratic performance as it relates to responsible public service delivery prescribed by Kernaghan and Langford (1990), who will work to improve the bureaucratic experience so that less bureaucrats continue to fall under Hummel's typology of a deficient bureaucrat, and who will propose ways to ameliorate the public's perception of bureaucrats effectiveness and overall competence.

The exploratory nature of this study offers future research flexibility in terms of the direction researchers will wish to embark on. Public administration researchers may want to begin implementing The CommProfile tool across organizations and providing training with it and in response to results obtained from it. The use of this tool can potentially become a benchmark for how to improve bureaucratic communication competence levels, as well as a best practice for public sector organizations as the study

did reveal that two thirds of the public sector population did not exhibit on-target or desirable communication trait levels. This finding is the most critical one, as it provides evidence that, unfortunately, bureaucrats are not equipped with the proper tools to be effective communicators, and as such bureaucratic performance suffer as do citizens who are communicated with poorly and inefficiently.

This study also urges communication researchers to begin turning their attention to the public sector as they continue to search for ways to link research and practice. This study specifically calls on the National Communication Association (NCA) and its members to create an interest group that focuses solely on communication in the public sector. To date, the NCA Interest Groups had divisions so specialized as to focus on all aspects of gaming in relation to contemporary communication and culture yet did not list any divisions dedicated to all aspects of government or public sector communication. Of course, such division will only gestate if more scholars continue using lessons learned from this study and others like Pandey and Garnett (2006) to generate more studies that continue to test communication theoretical frameworks in the public sector.

Future Research

As researchers decide to expand on lessons gained from this study, they should consider the following recommendations for future research:

1. A bigger sample size with greater organization and regional diversity.
    - The sample size from this study was, by common and accepted social sciences standards, small. Additionally, almost 55% of the population sample came from three local organizations. Nonetheless, these

organizations had a wide range of occupations, from executive directors, to receptionists, to innovation and entrepreneurship advocate, to police officer, to family liaisons. These organizations, however, are in a county that tends to vote Democratic, which may be an interacting factor with the types of profiles that appeared.

2. Test for structure validity:
    - An exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis will check for theoretical equivalence and confirm factor structure as proposed by the creators of each scales.
3. A subscription Caspio plan:
    - This study used the free plan offered by Caspio. This was limiting for the study as the free plan only allowed five DataPages to be deployed. As researchers or consultants begin to use this tool with public sector organizations, survey structure and ease of completion will be enhanced using more DataPages. The current plan used made for a very slow-loading platform which could explain why so many began the survey but never completed it. Separating each section with a different DataPage to navigate through, will aid user fatigue, and could allow for the user to save their progress and return at a later time to complete it. More DataPages will also be needed to provide results upon completion of the survey. Since the medians and formulas were determined and established by this study, the tool can produce

- individual personalized results upon completion of the survey. DataPages will be needed to configurate the different reports and descriptions to be provided along with the results and recommendations.

4. Inferential statistical analyses:
    - The analysis conducted in this study were merely descriptive. Future researchers should consider studies comparing differences between and within groups or profiles, as well as test for how culture might influence the types of profiles in each organization or type of work (e.g. ANOVA, Multiple Logistical Regression, Cluster Analysis). Basic mean difference tests will also shed light on what differences or similarities the bureaucrats share with the general population in terms of their communicator styles and predispositions levels.
    - Scholars should also explore, as Goodsell (1994) did, how or if the Profiles play a role on the outcome of the service received by the public.
5. More testing and modeling of communication theoretical frameworks in the public sector:
    - Scholars need to continue to use findings from studies like this and Pandey & Garnett's (2006) to generate more studies focused on testing communication theoretical frameworks in the public sector as well as

- generating theoretical communication models that will look to enhance communication competence in the public sector.

6. Explore communicator profiles using this tool and then provide training:
    - Researchers and/or organizational performance consultants may begin using this tool to assess the communication competence levels of public sector organization employees. However, both should follow the assessment of the communication competence levels with training. Rancer and Avtgis (2014) recommended implementing Infante's (1995) curriculum for understanding and controlling verbal aggression.

The development of the taxonomy of bureaucrats' communication styles and predispositions successfully demonstrated that four communication traits may be used and grouped together to produce a comprehensive communicator profile. This study is the first to combine Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, Taking Conflict Personally and Communicatory Style traits as a single scale to create and measure comprehensive communicator profiles. This study, however, was not the first to propose the combination of multiple traits to produce communicator profiles. Infante, Anderson, Martin, Herrington, and Kim (1993) combined argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and style to group supervisors by the number of constructive traits (on-target in this study) and compare their compliance gaining tactics. This study followed the median split methodology to group participant responses the same way Infante et al. (1993) did, but used four communication traits instead of three, and classified the traits that emerged from the combination of the communication trait levels into tiers (on-target, neutral, off-

target). Those wishing to expand on the findings from this study should consider naming each of the profiles with adjectives describing the styles and predisposition of the individuals based on their on-target and off-target communication trait levels to further facilitate understanding of the profile types and training to modify their profiles.

This tool will now be available to continue the study and evaluation of communication predispositions, styles and patterns in bureaucracy and the entire public sector. Communication or continuous improvement consultants may use The CommProfile to investigate and evaluate the overall and individual communication styles and predispositions in public sector organizations that might be looking to increased levels of communication competence as a way to improve service delivery and citizen satisfaction. As recommended above, those individuals looking to assist public organizations improve their overall communication competence levels will find Infante's (1995) curriculum is a good place for such efforts to begin and when engaged in such efforts they should note that the greatest amount of change regarding any trait modification training program occurs with individuals who exhibit moderate levels of the trait rather than high or low levels (Anderson, Schultz, and Courtney-Staley, 1987). This observation by Anderson et al. (1987), offers an additional suggestion for future researchers, which is to use quartiles to produce three levels of each communication trait (e.g. low, moderate/average, high) rather than using median splits to produce high and low levels of each trait. Using quartiles, however, will welcome a new challenge as grouping by quartiles will produce a higher number of possible profiles and make the explanation of the levels for each profile more cumbersome.

The CommProfile tool, as proposed in this study, will facilitate conversations around communication trait level improvements as the target Profile has been identified (Profile G), and each communicator profile has been assigned a category that can be translated to having above average communication trait levels (on-target profiles), average communication trait levels (neutral profiles), and below average communication trait levels (off-target profiles) with above average being the category to strive for due the number of on-target trait levels in each profile (three or more on-target levels). As discussions are facilitated to improve or modify communication traits levels, researchers or consultants must note the following associations between Profile G (high ARG, low VA, low DP, high ACS) on-target communication trait levels and desirable organizational and social characteristics and/or behaviors:

- Individuals with lower levels of verbal aggressiveness are more desirable supervisors
- Individuals with higher levels of argumentativeness tend to have greater social and perspective-taking abilities.
- Individuals with lower levels of direct personalization are perceived as sophisticated interpersonal arguers
- Individuals with higher levels of affirming communicator style have greater levels of commitment at work

Furthermore, because individuals are self-reporting on the instrument, opportunities for growth from the results will likely be welcomed by the individuals as their resulting communication trait levels are only a reflection of their own perceived behaviors rather

than observations made by others. As such, individuals may feel empowered to embark in their self-improvement journeys to enhance and moderate their communicator styles and predispositions which will increase their effectiveness in the workplace and beyond.

At the macro-level, organizations that seek to establish and implement research-based, best practices, can also benefit from a tool such as the one developed in this study. This tool can be promoted by such organizations as part of its continuous improvement annual or bi-annual plans. Assessing the communicator styles and predispositions at least once every two years will help paint a clearer picture of communication competence levels in the organizations which may help assess the effectiveness and quality of the organization's service delivery to the public as well as the effectiveness and quality of intra-organizational communication competence levels.

Lastly, the tool developed in this study, The CommProfile, which can be accessed at www.thecommprofile.com, is now a fully functioning instrument that can be made available to anyone wishing to use it to start reaping the benefits of research-based communication best-practices in public organizations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 4.10

Participating Organizations

Government Level	Organization Name
Local	Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority
Local	Akron Public Schools
Local	Akron Summit County Public Library
Local	Brimfield Township
Local	City of Akron
Local	City of Cuyahoga Falls Parks and Recreation
Local	City of Fairlawn Parks and Recreation
Local	City of Forest Park
Local	City of Independence
Local	City of Macedonia Parks and Recreation
Local	City of Mentor
Local	City of Middleburg Heights
Local	City of New Franklin

Table 4.10

Participating Organizations (continued)

Government Level	Organization Name
Local	City of Shaker Heights Recreation Department
Local	City of Stow Parks and Recreation
Local	Colerain Township Parks & Services
Local	Columbus Recreation and Parks Department
Local	Erie MetroParks
Local	Geauga Park District
Local	Great Parks of Hamilton County
Local	Hamilton County, Clerk of Courts
State	Kent State University
Local	Medina County
Local	Medina County Park District
Local	Miami County Park District
State	Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
State	Ohio Department of Taxation
State	Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services
State	Ohio Small Business Development Center
Local	Other
Local	Pickaway County Park District
Local	Piqua Central Intermediate School

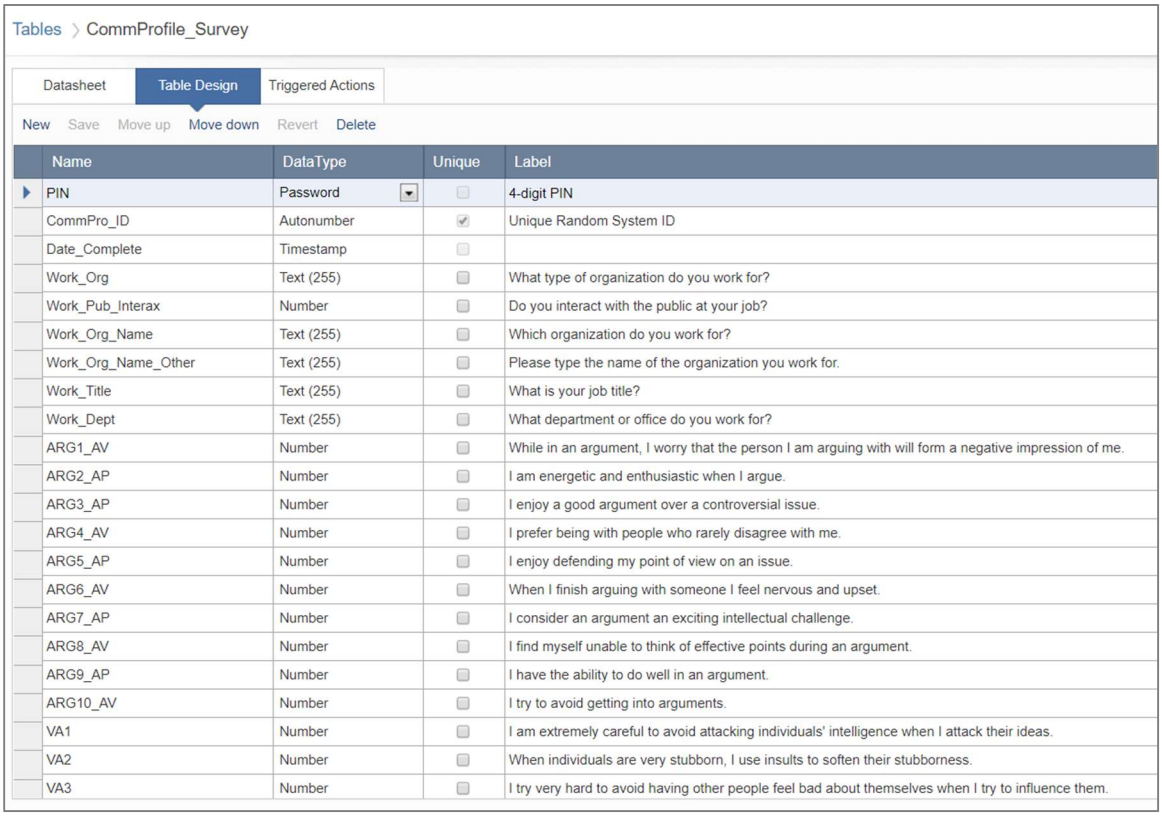
Table 4.10

Participating Organizations (continued)

Government Level	Organization Name
Local	Portage Park District
Local	School District of Manatee County
State	State Support Team 8
Local	Summit County Department of Job and Family Services
Local	Summit County Educational Service Center
Local	Summit County Executive Office
Local	Summit County Fiscal Office
Local	Summit County Public Health
Local	Summit Metro Parks
State	The University of Akron

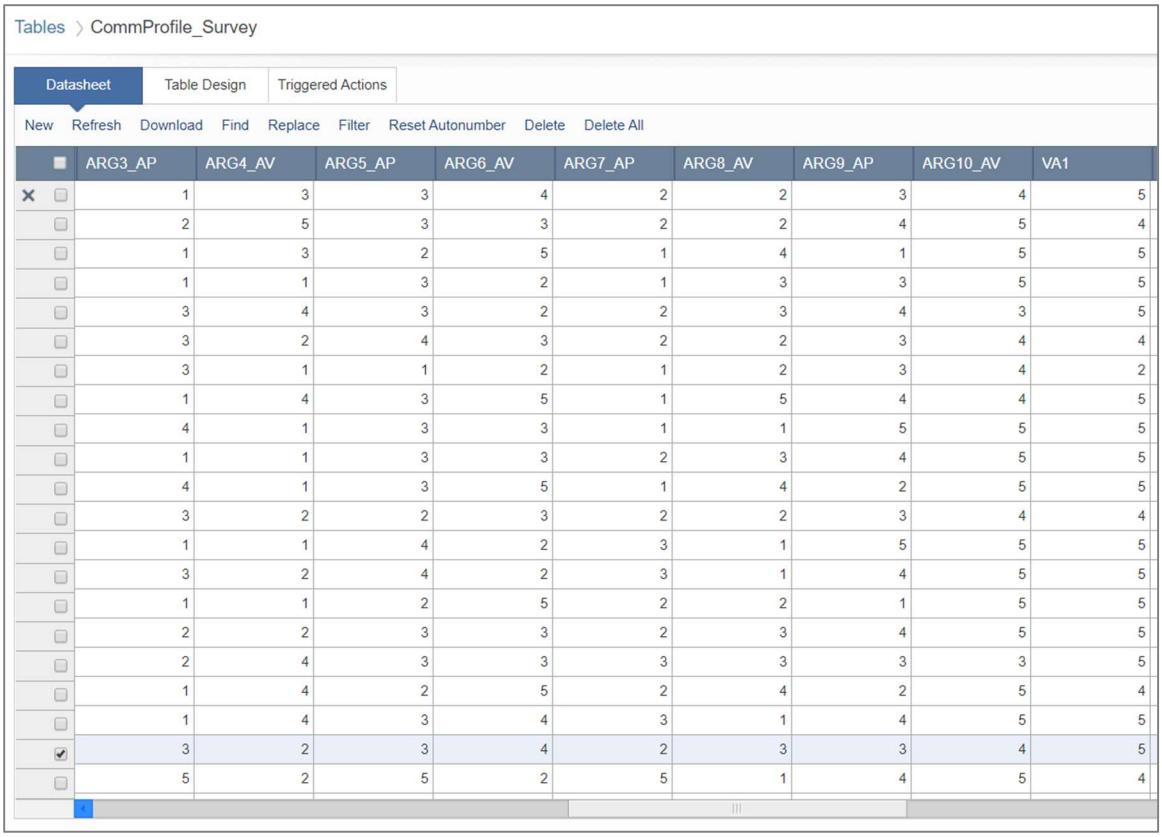
APPENDIX B

FIGURES



Name	DataType	Unique	Label
PIN	Password	☐	4-digit PIN
CommPro_ID	Autonumber	☑	Unique Random System ID
Date_Complete	Timestamp	☐	
Work_Org	Text (255)	☐	What type of organization do you work for?
Work_Pub_Interax	Number	☐	Do you interact with the public at your job?
Work_Org_Name	Text (255)	☐	Which organization do you work for?
Work_Org_Name_Other	Text (255)	☐	Please type the name of the organization you work for.
Work_Title	Text (255)	☐	What is your job title?
Work_Dept	Text (255)	☐	What department or office do you work for?
ARG1_AV	Number	☐	While in an argument, I worry that the person I am arguing with will form a negative impression of me.
ARG2_AP	Number	☐	I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue.
ARG3_AP	Number	☐	I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue.
ARG4_AV	Number	☐	I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me.
ARG5_AP	Number	☐	I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.
ARG6_AV	Number	☐	When I finish arguing with someone I feel nervous and upset.
ARG7_AP	Number	☐	I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge.
ARG8_AV	Number	☐	I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument.
ARG9_AP	Number	☐	I have the ability to do well in an argument.
ARG10_AV	Number	☐	I try to avoid getting into arguments.
VA1	Number	☐	I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.
VA2	Number	☐	When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften their stubborness.
VA3	Number	☐	I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.

Figure 3.1 Caspio Table Design Screenshot.



ARG3_AP	ARG4_AV	ARG5_AP	ARG6_AV	ARG7_AP	ARG8_AV	ARG9_AP	ARG10_AV	VA1
1	3	3	4	2	2	3	4	5
2	5	3	3	2	2	4	5	4
1	3	2	5	1	4	1	5	5
1	1	3	2	1	3	3	5	5
3	4	3	2	2	3	4	3	5
3	2	4	3	2	2	3	4	4
3	1	1	2	1	2	3	4	2
1	4	3	5	1	5	4	4	5
4	1	3	3	1	1	5	5	5
1	1	3	3	2	3	4	5	5
4	1	3	5	1	4	2	5	5
3	2	2	3	2	2	3	4	4
1	1	4	2	3	1	5	5	5
3	2	4	2	3	1	4	5	5
1	1	2	5	2	2	1	5	5
2	2	3	3	2	3	4	5	5
2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
1	4	2	5	2	4	2	5	4
1	4	3	4	3	1	4	5	5
3	2	3	4	2	3	3	4	5
5	2	5	2	5	1	4	5	4

Figure 3.2 Caspio Datasheet Screenshot.

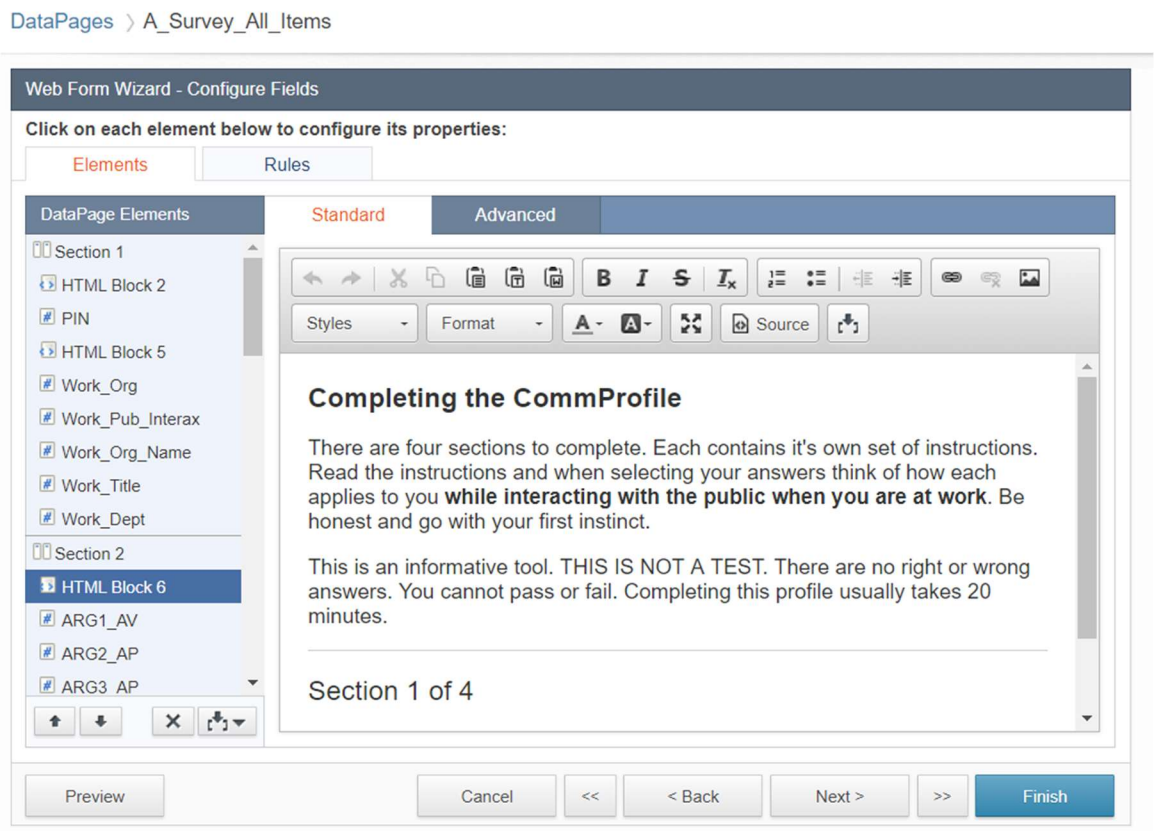


Figure 3.3 Caspio DataPage Configuration Screenshot.

APPENDIX C

ARGUMENTATIVENESS SCALE (SHORT-FORM VERSION)

Instructions: Read the following statements about arguing controversial issues. Indicate how often each statement is true for you while at work. Use the following ratings to respond to each statement:

1= Almost never true; 2= Rarely true; 3= Occasionally true; 4= Often true; 5= Almost always true

1. While in an argument, I worry that the person I am arguing with will form a negative impression of me.
2. I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue.
3. I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue.
4. I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me.
5. I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.
6. When I finish arguing with someone, I feel nervous and upset.
7. I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge.
8. I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument.
9. I have the ability to do well in an argument.
10. I try to avoid getting into arguments.

APPENDIX D

VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS SCALE (SHORT-FORM VERSION)

Instructions: The statements below are concerned with how we try to get people to comply with our wishes. Indicate how often each statement is true for you when you try to influence other persons while at work. Use the following scale:

1 = Almost never true; 2 = Rarely true; 3 = Occasionally true; 4 = Often true; 5 = Almost always true

1. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.
2. When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften their stubbornness.
3. I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.
4. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.
5. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.
6. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance, I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.
7. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off.
8. When I attack a person's ideas, I try not to damage their self-concepts.

9. When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.
10. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.

APPENDIX E

TAKING CONFLICT PERSONALLY SCALE (DIRECT PERSONALIZATION DIMENSION)

Instructions: Imagine yourself in a conflict situation with a citizen at work. The statements below offer scenarios for how you might react to that situation. Rate how much you agree with each reaction. Use the following scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

1. I usually take criticisms personally.
2. Conflict is a very personal thing for me.
3. When people criticize something I say, I don't take it personally.
4. It really hurts my feelings to be criticized.
5. When the rest of the group rejects one of my suggestions, I take it very personally.
6. It doesn't bother me to be criticized for my ideas.
7. I have a strong emotional reaction to being criticized.

APPENDIX F

COMMUNICATOR STYLE MEASURE (RELAXED, ATTENTIVE & FRIENDLY DIMENSIONS)

Instructions: The statements below address the way (style) you communicate with others. Read each statement and assess your agreement level for how well each describe your communication style at work. Use the following scale:

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

1. I am conscious of nervous mannerisms in my speech.
2. As a rule, I am very calm and collected when I talk.
3. Under pressure I come across as a relaxed speaker.
4. The rhythm or flow of my speech is affected by my nervousness.
5. I am a very relaxed communicator.
6. I can always repeat back to a person exactly what was said.
7. I always show that I am very empathetic with people.
8. I am an extremely attentive communicator.
9. I really like to listen very carefully to people.
10. I deliberately react in such a way that people know that I am listening to them.
11. I always prefer to be tactful

12. Most of the time I tend to be very encouraging to people.

13. Often, I express admiration to a person even if I do not strongly feel it.

14. I am an extremely friendly communicator.

15. I habitually acknowledge verbally other's contributions.

APPENDIX G

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL NOTICE

Office of Research Administration
Akron, OH 44325-2102

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Date: 3/31/2020

To: Cristina Gonzalez Alcala

From: Katie Watkins, ORA

IRB Number: 20200111

Title: Bureaucrats: The exploration and development of a profile of their communication predispositions and styles

Approval Date: 3/20/2020

Thank you for submitting your Request for Exemption to the IRB for review. Your protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and qualifies for exemption from the federal regulations under the category below:

- ☐ **Exemption 1 –** Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices.
- ☑ **Exemption 2 –** Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior.
- ☐ **Exemption 3 -** Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior not exempt under category 2, but subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office.
- ☐ **Exemption 4 –** Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens.
- ☐ **Exemption 5 –** Research and demonstration projects conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine public programs or benefits.
- ☐ **Exemption 6 –** Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make changes to the study's design or procedures that increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within the approved exemption category, please contact the IRB to discuss whether or not a new application must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. This office will hold your exemption application for a period of three years from the approval date. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit another Exemption Request. If the research is being conducted for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

☑ Approved consent form/s enclosed

APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Revised 2/7/202.

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Project

Title of study: Government Bureaucrats: The Exploration and Development of a Profile of their Communication Predispositions and Styles

Introduction: This research project hopes to acquire information on the generalizability and perception of communication competency as measured by communication traits in the American bureaucracy. The project is also being conducted in order for the researcher to fulfill the dissertation requirements set forth by the Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences at The University of Akron.

Today, you are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Cristina González Alcalá, a doctoral student in the Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies at The University of Akron, in Akron, OH, USA.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to further advance scholarship regarding the effectiveness of bureaucracies in democratic societies by exploring levels of communication competency among employees working in organizations considered part of the American Bureaucracy. Results obtained from this study will help create a taxonomy of communicator profiles of government bureaucrats. These results of this study will help scholars of public administration, public affairs, and communication better understand perceptions of employee competency in public organizations, opening the door to work that will promote the creation and maintenance of sustainable communication channels within public organization and between the public organizations and the public.

Procedures: If you agree to participate in this project, you will be asked to complete this online survey today. The estimated time for completing the survey ranges from 25 to 65 minutes at most. No follow-up studies will be conducted.

Risks and discomforts: There are no known risks or discomforts associated with the completion of these questionnaires.

Benefits: You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, your participation will help better understand the phenomenon being examined. You will have the option to receive an electronic report of your communicator profile which will include statements to help you better understand your communication style and predisposition as a government bureaucrat.

Right to refuse or withdraw: Participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or discontinue participation at any time. There will be no penalties or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Anonymous and confidential data collection: No identifying information will be collected, furthermore your anonymity will be protected by not asking you to sign and return this informed consent form. If you chose to receive your communicator profile results, the email you provide us with to send you your report will only be linked to your results via a random identification that only the researcher will be able to access for the sole purpose of communicating to you your personal results.

Any and all information collected will be kept in a secure, encrypted and password protected online cloud platform and only the researcher will have access to it. The researcher's dissertation committee members (5 university professors) will have access to the anonymous, non-identifiable data. Publications and or presentations of the research results will not have any individual identification of participants. Data will be used and published only in its aggregate form. Nobody will be able to link your responses to you.

Who to contact with questions: Should you have any questions about this study, please contact Cristina González Alcalá at (330) 968-5504 or Dr. Raymond Cox, (Retired) Professor of Public Administration and Urban Studies at (330) 972-7622. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board to ensure compliance with ethical guidelines by which this study is bound. To ask questions about your rights as a research participant, please the Office of Research Administration at (330) 972-7666 or irb@uakron.edu.

Acceptance: I have read and understood the information provided above and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. Starting the survey will serve as my consent. I have been given a copy of this consent for future reference.

Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences
Olin Hall, Room 201, Akron, OH 44325-7904
330-972-7616 • http://www.uakron.edu/paus/

APPROVED
IRB 3/20/2020
Date
The University of Akron

Exempt 2

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE LETTER OF SUPPORT SENT TO DEPARTMENT HEADS

April 15, 2020

Brian Gage, Executive Director
Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority

Dear Brian:

The purpose of this letter is to request your support and authorization to invite you and your staff to participate in my research study.

I am an Urban Studies and Public Affairs doctoral student at The University of Akron, and I am in the process of writing my dissertation and conducting the research study for it. The title of my dissertation is, "Bureaucrats: The Exploration and Development of a Profile of their Communication Styles and Predispositions."

With your permission, staff will be invited to participate in the study via an email containing instructions to access the web-based app where they will be able to complete the 42-item survey. Participants will be able to view the IRB approved Informed Consent explaining the purpose of the study and details regarding their participation. The estimated time of completion is between 10 and 30 minutes. Participants will be able to complete the survey in any web-enabled device.

In gratitude of your support, you will have the option to review the organization level results. The results will be reported only in the aggregate form along with results from other participating organizations. There will be no cost to you or your employees for participating in this study and for receiving the customized reports.

I ask that you please share the link to the online survey with your staff as soon as possible as the survey closes May 1st. If you have any questions about the study, feel free to contact me at cg39@zips.uakron.edu or 330-968-5504.

Your support and authorization are part of the requirements imposed by The University of Akron's Institutional Review Board to conduct the study. Your signature on the following page will serve as support and authorization to move forward with the research study and the process aforementioned. Please email the signed form at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Cristina González Alcalá, MPA, MA
The University of Akron

Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences, Olin Hall, Room 201, Akron, OH 44325-7904
330-972-7616 • http://www.uakron.edu/paus/

Please accept this signature in support of Cristina González Alcalá's research study titled "Bureaucrats: The Exploration and Development of a Profile of their Communication Styles and Predispositions." Our staff will be invited to participate.

Brian Gage

Full Name

Brian Gage
Brian Gage (Apr 23, 2020)

Signature

Apr 23, 2020

Date

Department of Public Administration and Urban Studies
Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences, Olin Hall, Room 201, Akron, OH 44325-7904
330-972-7616 • http://www.uakron.edu/paus/

APPENDIX J

COPY OF ONLINE SURVEY

Complete Your CommProfile

March 13, 2020

Tell us about yourself

This information will help us improve our tool in the future.

What type of organization do you work for? *

Select

Which organization do you work for?

Select

Do you interact with the public at your job? *

- No
- Yes

What department or office do you work for?

What is your job title?

Completing the CommProfile

There are four sections to complete. Each contains it's own set of instructions. Read the instructions and when selecting your answers think of how each applies to you **while interacting with the public when you are at work**. Be honest and go with your first instinct.

This is an informative tool. THIS IS NOT A TEST. There are no right or wrong answers. You cannot pass or fail. Completing this profile usually takes 20 minutes.

Section 1 of 4

The statements below are about arguing controversial issues. Use the dropdown menu below each statement to indicate how often each statement is true for you while at work.

While in an argument, I worry that the person I am arguing with will form a negative impression of me. *

Select

I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue. *

Select

I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue. *

Select

I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me. *

Select

I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue. *

Select

When I finish arguing with someone I feel nervous and upset. *

Select

I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge. *

Select

I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument. *

Select

I have the ability to do well in an argument. *

Select

I try to avoid getting into arguments. *

Select

Part 2 of 4

The statements below are concerned with how we try to get people to comply with our wishes. Indicate how often each statement is true for you personally when you try to influence other people while at work.

I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas. *

Select

When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften their stubbornness. *

Select

I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them. *

Select

If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character. *

Select

I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid. *

Select

When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance, I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them. *

Select

When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of really telling them off. *

Select

When I attack a person's ideas, I try not to damage their self-concepts. *

Select

When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them. *

Select

When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them. *

Select

Part 3 of 4

When completing this section, imagine yourself in a conflict situation with a citizen at work. The statements below offer scenarios for how you might react to that situation. Rate how much you agree with each reaction.

I usually take criticism personally. *

Select

Conflict is a very personal thing for me. *

Select

When people criticize something I say, I don't take it personally. *

Select

It really hurts my feelings to be criticized. *

Select

When the rest of the group rejects one of my suggestions, I take it very personally. *

Select

It doesn't bother me to be criticized for my ideas. *

Select

I have a strong emotional reaction to being criticized. *

Select

Part 4 of 4

You will now be presented with statements that address the way you communicate with others. Read the each statement and assess your agreement level for how well each describe your communication style at work.

I am conscious of nervous mannerisms in my speech. *

Select

As a rule, I am very calm and collected when I talk. *

Select

Under pressure I come across as a relaxed speaker. *

Select

The rhythm or flow of my speech is affected by my nervousness. *

Select

I am a very relaxed communicator. *

Select

I always prefer to be tactful. *

Select

Most of the time I tend to be very encouraging to people. *

Select

Often I express admiration to a person even if I do not strongly feel it. *

Select

I am an extremely friendly communicator. *

Select

I habitually acknowledge verbally other's contributions. *

Select

I can always repeat back to a person exactly what was said. *

Select

I always show that I am very empathetic with people. *

Select

I am an extremely attentive communicator. *

Select

I really like to listen very carefully to people. *

Select

I deliberately react in such a way that people know that I am listening to them. *

Select

SUBMIT