

You Make My Heart Beat Faster: A Quantitative Study of the Relationship Between Instructor Immediacy, Classroom Community, and Public Speaking Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

A large percentage of the population has a severe anxiety when it comes to public speaking. However, the current research shows that there are ways both instructor factors and classroom factors can be altered to make an individual less anxious about public speaking scenarios. This study seeks to understand the effects of classroom community and instructor nonverbal immediacy on public speaking anxiety. The researcher surveyed 191 participants using Likert-scale type questions. These scales included the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), (McCroskey, 1970), Rovai (2002) Classroom Community Scale (CCS), and the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale – Observer Report (NIS-O) (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003). Results revealed that as instructor nonverbal immediacy increases, classroom community increases; as classroom community increases, public speaking anxiety decreases. Further studies are needed to expand on the effects of external environmental factors on public speaking anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Glossophobia, or public speaking anxiety, is one of the most prevalent world fears, affecting approximately 75% of the population. Statistically, more people claim a fear of public speaking than a fear of death (Glossophobia, 2001). Therefore, it is important to understand how public speaking anxiety affects many of the world's future leaders, today's college students. It is clear that public speaking anxiety can negatively affect students' academics and interpersonal relationships due to a tendency to withdraw from communication situations (Edwards & Walker, 2007). This greatly limits future employment possibilities, where public speaking is necessary in meetings, seminars, and other situations. Therefore, it is valuable to gain a deeper understanding of public speaking anxiety in order to understand what helps/hinders peoples' ability to speak comfortably in public situations.

Although there has been a large amount of research devoted to public speaking anxiety, much of it simply looks at the manifestations of it or the meanings behind it. The current study, however, intends to look at the effects of outside influences on the level of anxiety. Many people suffering from forms of communication apprehension, such as public speaking anxiety, cite a fear of negative evaluation from others (Kant, 2000). The perceptions of the audience affects the level of anxiety so profoundly that it is important to look at what kind of relationship the speakers have with the audience as a whole. This can be done through looking at the audience of the specific situation, such as a classroom within the university setting. The current study will be examining this setting due to the high quantity of public speaking done in this situation. It is also an ideal place to do study public speaking anxiety because a deeper understanding of public speaking anxiety on the university level can have effects that carry through the rest of the students' lives.

The role of the instructor is also important in setting the tone of any classroom and the development of classroom community. As found by Chesebro and McCroskey (2001), Ellis (1995), and Frymier (1993), instructor immediacy, both verbal and nonverbal, is seen as having a soothing and mitigating effect on student classroom communication anxiety. Therefore, it's critical to formulate an understanding of the interplay between classroom community and public speaking anxiety through an understanding of instructor immediacy, or behaviors that "enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another" (Andersen, 1979, p. 103). The current study will focus specifically on nonverbal immediacy, because Zhang (2005) found that classroom communication apprehension is affected by nonverbal immediacy, but not by verbal immediacy.

Public speaking is widespread through the population and critical in the evaluation of others in the business context (Schroeder, 2002). For that reason, it is important to better understand all aspects of public speaking anxiety. This study will begin an avenue of research focused on the affects of the context or outside environment on public

speaking anxiety. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the effects, if any, of classroom community and instructor nonverbal immediacy on students' public speaking anxiety.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although research in the field of instructional communication has focused on public speaking anxiety, classroom community, immediacy, and many other components of this sector, need for further research is constantly emerging. On a very broad level, previous research has highlighted the truly dynamic and multi-faceted nature of an instructional setting. In order to continue to advance our knowledge in this field, this study will seek to understand the correlation between teacher nonverbal immediacy, sense of classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. First, the field of instructional communication research will be examined to understand where the current study fits into the broad spectrum of this research. Next, the past studies in relation to public speaking anxiety will be examined, starting with studies on stage fright and moving to communication apprehension and specifically public speaking anxiety studies. This study will examine classroom community specifically in terms of its effects in the classroom. Finally, this study will look at instructor nonverbal immediacy, why this is sufficient to judge overall immediacy, and why this is important to classroom community and overall public speaking anxiety.

Instructional Communication

When the field of communication studies began, it was the brainchild of educators. For example, the first professional association in the relatively young field of communication studies was founded in 1909 by college instructors of speech courses. In 1914, the first communication journal, the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, was published with a primary focus on teaching (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002). As early as the 1930s, research was being done on stage fright, which is closely related to public speaking anxiety, and communication apprehension, both which are primary foci of instructional communication today. Despite the field's birth through education, instructional communication didn't emerge as a separate field until at least the 1970s, when research expanded beyond the speech classroom to include all disciplines (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002). Finally, in 1972, the Instructional Communication Division was established by the International Communication Association (ICA). Since then, many instructional communication scholars have come to consider instructional communication as the third necessary tier in the foundation for effective teaching and training, along with competence in the subject matter to be taught and competence in pedagogy (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002).

Various broad focus areas in instructional communication have emerged. The first of these areas is that of student factors. The largest area of interest among this focus is that of communication apprehension (CA), or "the individual's level of fear associated with either real or perceived interaction with others" (Zhang, 2005, p. 50). As stated by McCroskey, Richmond, and McCroskey (2002), "it is not an exaggeration to conclude from this research that CA may be the most serious learning disability a student can have, both in terms of its severity and its prevalence in approximately 20% of the student body at all levels" (p. 22). Therefore, a large amount of instructional communication that focuses on student factors has been done on ways to reduce CA. Instructional factors are another main focus of instructional communication. Much research is focused on a large variety of instructor communication behaviors, such as instructor nonverbal immediacy (Zhang, 2005; Bourhis, Allen, & Bauman, 2006). There are also focuses on intercultural communication, among other smaller sectors. Nonverbal immediacy cues will be focused on for the purpose of the current study. However, it is important to note the breadth of instructor communication behaviors that can be further studied in relation to other factors, such as public speaking anxiety.

Throughout the evolution of the field of instructional communication, various issues have arisen. One of the primary obstacles the field had to face was establishing the distinction between scholarship in instructional communication as opposed to scholarship in speech education, which is now often referred to as communication education. In 1977, Scott and Wheelless offered the definition for communication education as scholarship directed toward "finding ways to facilitate the acquisition of communication skills among students" in order to begin to draw this distinction (p. 495). Since then, instructional communication has been defined as scholarship directed toward "discovering the ways in which communication variables impact the learning process" (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2002, p. 17). In other words, instructional communication is concerned with how communication affects the teaching-learning process that takes place in classrooms across all disciplines and is grounded in communication theory. The current study, therefore, fits into the field instructional communication study, yet will be looking at communication education factors.

Communication Apprehension: Public Speaking Anxiety

As previously noted, communication apprehension (CA) is the “individual’s level of fear associated with either real or perceived interaction with others” (Zhang, 2005, p. 50). This anxiety is experienced by 20% of individuals overall and has been shown to have many adverse effects in an individual’s life (Schroeder, 2002). McCroskey, Richmond, and Stewart (1986) report that “scores of studies have found that college students with high levels of CA are seen as less attractive, less intelligent, and less capable. Instructors often inaccurately perceive students with CA as less competent and less intelligent than their peers who have less difficulty communicating” (p. 65). These negative assumptions associated with CA students lend themselves to a self-fulfilling prophecy, resulting in a higher level of difficulty in the learning process. There are also adverse behavioral and cognitive effects of CA (Bourhis, Allen, & Bauman, 2006). Behaviorally, CA results in a desire to avoid communication entirely or to reduce the duration of communication situations. Cognitively, Bourhis and Allen (1992) noted an overall correlation between CA and academic performance, which demonstrates a significant negative association between overall level of CA and cognitive performance. Negative correlations were also noted between CA and GPA. Therefore, as CA rises, GPA has been shown to decrease, and the opposite is true as well. However, the classroom is not the only place that these negative results are felt. As cited by Schroeder (2002), “a variety of skills taught in the basic speech course are essential for entry level jobs, yet alumni report that formal presentation posed one of the most difficult situations in the work force” (p. 381-382). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is great value in studying ways to reduce CA for both academic and professional reasons.

Public speaking anxiety is a subcategory of communication apprehension, which was first looked at in Clevenger’s 1959 study of stage fright. Since then, most of the public speaking anxiety research has focused on the physiological and psychological manifestations of public speaking anxiety. These manifestations can be seen by a wide variety of reactions, including increased blood pressure, heart rate, numbness, and shortness of breath, associated with discomfort and stress, heart palpitations, sweating, stomach distress, and nausea (Behnke & Beatty, 1981; Behnke & Carlile, 1971; Clark, 1968; Clements & Turpin, 1996; McCullough, Russell, Behnke, Sawyer, & Witt, 2006; Norton, Norton, Asmundson, Thompson, & Larsen, 1999). Research has also examined the possible reasons for these reactions. As cited by Winters, Horvath, Moss, Yarhouse, Sawyer, and Behnke’s (2007), fear of negative evaluation and sensitivity to punishment are both widely accepted reasons for these anxious reactions to public speaking. Bourhis, Allen, and Bauman (2006) also suggest that the stress of protecting one’s grade and trying to not appear to the teacher or other students as ‘stupid’ would lead to these reactions. These anxious thoughts reflect a fear of the possibility of failure or negative labeling that may result from a mediocre performance when in a public speaking situation.

Researchers agree that communication anxiety is a category of communication that warrants further research. Bourhis, Allen, and Bauman (2006) conclude that “given the significant and demonstrable impact of this issue across the curriculum, culture, and over the course of a life span, CA represents one of the few communication issues that the discipline can and should take responsibility for in terms of research and application” (p. 224). However, very little, if any, research has been done in terms of outside influences on CA and public speaking anxiety. Therefore, this study intends to start a new avenue of public speaking anxiety research focused on the environment, starting with classroom community and instructor nonverbal immediacy.

Classroom Community

Classroom community, although a relatively new focus of instructional communication, has proved an interesting aspect of the overall instructional experience. Defined by Rovai (2002), classroom community is “feelings of connectedness among community members and commonality of learning expectations and goals” (p. 322). More succinctly, this can be described as how close students feel to one another and how comfortable they are around each other.

This sense of community has already been proven to contribute to various effects on the overall classroom experience of the students. These effects include increased commitment to group goals, cooperation among members, satisfaction with group efforts, and motivation to learn (Bruffee, 1993; Dede, 1996; Rovai, 2002). A sense of community has also been related to increased engagement in school activities, decreased likelihood of reporting thoughts of dropping out of school, increased likelihood of reporting feeling bad when arriving to class unprepared, and decreased reports of feeling “burned out” at school (Royal & Rossi, 1996). Whereas many of these claims are linked to satisfaction with the learning process, Rovai (2002) found a significant positive relationship between an overall sense of community and cognitive learning. With overall satisfaction and cognitive learning both significantly correlated with sense of community, it is possible that it would significantly affect other aspects of the learning environment. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the affect of classroom community on other aspects of the instructional process, such as public speaking anxiety.

Instructor Factors

Within the scope of instructional communication, instructor communication factors have emerged as a strong focus within the field. This focal point focuses on instructor communication behaviors, including the following: “use of power strategies, use of affinity-seeking strategies, use of nonverbal immediacy cues, use of assertiveness cues, use of responsiveness cues, use of humor, use of verbal aggression, communicating clearly, use of argument or encouraging disagreement, use of self-disclosures, and engaging in teacher misbehaviors” (McCroskey, Richmond, McCroskey, 2006, p. 22). For the purpose of this study, nonverbal immediacy cues will be focused on in terms of their connection with both classroom community and public speaking anxiety. These nonverbal cues include use of gestures, touch, voice inflection, eye contact, body position, facial expression, and distance during their interactions both in the classroom and one on one (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003).

The research done on immediacy was born from efforts of students and faculty at West Virginia University who were attempting to intertwine research from the fields of communication and education which was “specifically directed toward identifying teacher behaviors associated with effective classroom instruction” (McCroskey & Richmond, 1992, p. 103). While researching nonverbal communication and digging into educational literature, Janis F. Andersen proposed the idea of “nonverbal immediacy” as an outgrowth of interpersonal work by Mehrabian (1971) to explain the common thread she noticed among literature. Andersen defined immediacy as behaviors that enhance closeness to another (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). The results from Andersen’s (1979) studies clearly supported her hypotheses that immediacy was a highly influential factor in educational settings. In fact, the studies revealed that “approximately 20% of the variance in student affect toward the subject matter and 46% of the variance in affect toward the teacher were predictable from teachers’ scores on immediacy” (McCroskey & Richmond, 1992, p. 104). While there has been difficulty in quantitatively studying the correlation between immediacy and cognitive learning, overall effective teachers have been found to be nonverbally immediate (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). Moreover, in terms of nonverbal immediacy, more immediacy is almost always better when it does not cross the line into inappropriate intimate behavior, which is one step further than immediacy (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). Therefore, this study will look at levels of nonverbal immediacy in relation to classroom community and public speaking anxiety.

HYPOTHESES/RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Education is an important part of our society and therefore it is important that communication research continues to focus on instructional communication and ways to enhance the learning process. Public speaking is a skill that is taught in virtually all colleges and universities, yet alumni report that formal presentation poses one of the most difficult situations in the work force (Hanna, 1978). Therefore, it is important to look at how outside influences can affect this anxiety. In response to Edwards and Walker’s (2007) study which concluded that:

Students are more comfortable speaking in a class, such as public speaking, when they are in constant contact with their peers and instructors. This report highlights the need for further research and practice in creating learning communities and learning community type environments in the public speaking course. (p. 68) this study seeks to further the research in learning communities (or classroom community) by comparing it with variables, such as public speaking anxiety. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posed:

H1: Classroom community will be negatively correlated with public speaking anxiety.

Instructor nonverbal immediacy is also seen as an influencing factor in the classroom. According to McCroskey & Richmond (1991), increased instructor immediacy results in increased student affect for the teacher, increased affect for the subject, increased cognitive learning, increased student motivation, and reduced student resistance to teachers’ influence attempts. Knowing this, the following hypotheses are drawn:

H2: Instructor nonverbal immediacy will be negatively correlated with public speaking anxiety.

H3: Instructor nonverbal immediacy will be positively correlated with perceived classroom community.

Drawing from the demographic questions, the following research questions are also posed to gain a better overall understanding of instructor nonverbal immediacy, classroom community, and public speaking anxiety.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant correlation between time of CST 110 course and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant correlation between version of UW-L CST 110 course taken and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant correlation between class standing at the time of enrollment in CST 110 and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?

- RQ4: Is there a statistically significant correlation between sex of CST 110 instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?
- RQ5: Is there a statistically significant correlation between approximate age of CST 110 instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?
- RQ6: Is there a statistically significant correlation between CST 110 class size and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?
- RQ7: Is there a statistically significant correlation between typical attire of CST 110 instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety?

METHOD

The present study was conducted using the social scientific paradigm of communication research, which focuses mainly on the effects of variables on a specific outcome. The present study looks at the effects classroom community, instructor nonverbal immediacy, and public speaking anxiety have on one another. Various demographic information was also compared to each of these to determine if they had a significant impact on the outcome. The current study is seeking to explain the levels of classroom community, instructor nonverbal immediacy, and public speaking anxiety. When using this method, surveying is often used in order to allow the researcher to remain objective and to observe a situation without influencing the situation.

According to Creswell (2003), “a survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (p. 153). Using these quantitative descriptions, the researcher was able to determine if correlations and trends existed between different variables and then interpret and define these findings. Surveys allowed the researcher to obtain an accurate report on the feelings of a large sample of participants. While taking surveys, participants often become more willing to share personal information than any other method, therefore reliability is increased (Watt & Van den Berg, 1995).

Participants

One hundred ninety one current students at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse took the survey. All of the participants were required to have completed CST 110 prior to taking the survey and have completed the course at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Of the participants, approximately 44% identified as female, while 56% identified as male.

Participants answered questions regarding their personal experiences with the course of CST 110. 86% of students had taken CST 110 during their freshman year, 10% during their sophomore year, 4% during their junior year, and none of the participants had taken the course during their senior year. The majority, or 52%, of the participants had taken the course during the morning, which was either self-determined or any class start time prior to noon. The participants perceived having an average of 24 students in their class. The University slightly altered the curriculum of the course as well as the course name starting fall semester 2009 from Public Oral Communication to Communicating Effectively. Exactly half of the participants had taken each course.

The participants also answered questions about their former CST 110 instructor. Approximately 50% of the instructors were male and 50% female and participants estimated their mean age to be 48 years, with a minimum age of 28 years and a maximum age of 75 years. 30% of the participants viewed their instructor as typically dressing ‘casual’, while 49% identified their instructor’s typical attire as ‘business casual’ and 21% defined their instructor’s attire as ‘professional’.

Measurement

Participants completed a survey that consisted of four main sections. The first section consisted of the demographic information. The second section was McCroskey’s (1970) Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), which is the most reliable measure for public speaking anxiety. This was followed by Rovai’s (2002) Classroom Community Scale (CCS), which measures students’ sense of classroom community. The final section was the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale – Observer Report (NIS-O), which is the most up-to-date measure of nonverbal immediacy as an other-or observer- report (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003).

Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety. The PRPSA relies on students’ self-reports of their feelings toward public speaking situations (McCroskey, 1970). It is the most reliable known scale to measure specifically public speaking anxiety. The scale consists of 33 items, which uses a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items focus on various phases of the public speaking process. For example, “While preparing for giving a speech in CST 110, I felt tense and nervous.” Items concerning physical reactions to public speaking were also included, such as “My hands trembled when I gave a speech in CST 110.”

Classroom Community Scale. The CCS relies on student self-reports to measure sense of community (Rovai, 2002). The scale consists of 20 items, which uses a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items include relational type statements, such as “I felt that students in this course cared about each other” and “I felt that this course was like a family”, and learning based questions, such as “I felt that I was given ample opportunities to learn” and “I felt that this course did not promote a desire to learn”.

Nonverbal Immediacy Scale – Observer Report. The NIS-O measure focuses on the perceptions of, in this case, the students of the instructor in terms of immediacy. The measurement consists of 26 items, which uses a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from never to very often. The items ask the participants to reflect on the instructor’s use of gestures, tone, voice inflection, eye contact, body position, facial expression, and distance during their interactions both in the classroom and one on one.

Procedures

Data was collected from participants in various courses at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. I received permission from teachers in the communication department, various departments within the college of business, and the physical education department to ask their students to complete my survey. The surveys were completed during class time and participants were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and that they may choose to withdraw from taking the survey at any point. In a couple courses, the instructor offered extra credit points to students who completed the survey.

Data Analysis

The overall goal of this research was to determine the effects of classroom community and instructor nonverbal immediacy on public speaking anxiety. The statistical software program used to analyze the data collected was SPSS 17.0. Hypothesis one, two, and three and research questions five and six were analyzed through a Pearson’s correlation. A correlation shows how variables are related. Specifically, a Pearson’s correlation coefficient is a measure of linear association. A positive value for the correlation coefficient implies a positive association and a negative value for the correlation coefficient implies a negative or inverse association. Research questions one, three, and seven were analyzed using a one way ANOVA test, which is used to test the equality of three or more means at one time by using variances. Research question four was analyzed using a paired sample t-test, which is used to compare two means to look for significant difference (Reinard, 2001).

RESULTS

After collecting and analyzing data, results were generated in response to both the hypotheses and research questions, which were posed following an extensive literature review. The reliability of each scale was high in this case. Typically, any reliability score of .6 or higher is considered ‘reliable’. The PRPSA scale in this study produced a reliability coefficient of .694, the CCI produced an extremely high reliability score of .914, and the reliability coefficient for each subscale of the NIS-O was .856 and .857.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis stated that classroom community would be negatively correlated with public speaking anxiety. Results of the Pearson’s correlation test supported this hypothesis by revealed a significant negative relationship between classroom community and public speaking anxiety ($r = -.362, p < .01$).

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis stated that instructor nonverbal immediacy would be negatively correlated with public speaking anxiety. However, a Pearson’s correlation test did not reveal a significant relationship between instructor nonverbal immediacy and public speaking anxiety ($r = -.114, p > .05$).

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis stated that instructor nonverbal immediacy would be positively correlated with perceived classroom community. A Pearson’s correlation test supported this hypothesis and revealed a highly significant correlation between instructor nonverbal immediacy and classroom community ($r = .531, p < .01$).

Research Question One

The first research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant difference between time of public speaking course and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public

speaking anxiety. An ANOVA test revealed no significant difference for any of these relationships, as shown in Table One.

Table 1. ANOVA results looking at differences in time of course

Variable	F-Value	Significance
Nonverbal Immediacy	.640	$p > .05$
Classroom Community	1.647	$p > .05$
Public Speaking Anxiety	.290	$p > .05$

Research Question Two

The second research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant difference between the term the course was taken and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. This was tested because, at UW-L, the CST110 course switched curriculum and titles starting the fall semester of 2009. The course switched from Public Oral Communication to Communicating Effectively. However, an ANOVA test revealed no significant difference for any of these relationships, as shown in Table Two.

Table 2. ANOVA results looking at differences in term of course

Variable	F-Value	Significance
Nonverbal Immediacy	2.088	$p > .05$
Classroom Community	1.196	$p > .05$
Public Speaking Anxiety	.542	$p > .05$

Research Question Three

The third research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant difference between class standing at the time of enrollment in the public speaking course and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. An ANOVA test revealed no significant differences for any of these relationships, as shown in Table Three.

Table 3. ANOVA results looking at differences in class standing during course

Variable	F-Value	Significance
Nonverbal Immediacy	1.145	$p > .05$
Classroom Community	.494	$p > .05$
Public Speaking Anxiety	1.675	$p > .05$

Research Question Four

The fourth research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant difference between sex of public speaking instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. A t-test reveals that there is no significance to the relationship between sex of instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy ($t = .819, p > .05$), perceived classroom community ($t = .519, p > .05$), nor public speaking anxiety ($t = .335, p > .05$).

Research Question Five

The fifth research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant correlation between approximate age of public speaking instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. A Pearson's correlation test revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between instructor nonverbal immediacy and instructor age ($r = -.254, p < .05$). A statistically significant relationship was also revealed between perceived classroom community and instructor age ($r = -.209, p <$

.05). However, there was not a statistically significant correlation revealed between instructor age and public speaking anxiety ($r = .022$, $p > .05$).

Research Question Six

The sixth research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant correlation between public speaking class size and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. A Pearson's correlation test revealed that there was not a statistically significant correlation between the number of students in the course and perceived classroom community ($r = -.072$, $p > .05$), public speaking anxiety ($r = -.039$, $p > .05$), nor instructor nonverbal immediacy ($r = -.057$, $p > .05$).

Research Question Seven

The seventh research question seeks to understand if there is a statistically significant difference between typical attire of the public speaking instructor and perceived instructor nonverbal immediacy, perceived classroom community, and public speaking anxiety. An ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between instructor attire and instructor nonverbal immediacy ($F = 8.341$, $p < .05$) as well as between instructor attire and perceived classroom community ($F = 3.285$, $p < .05$). However, there is no statistically significant difference between instructor attire and public speaking anxiety ($F = .080$, $p > .05$). A post hoc test, which focused on nonverbal immediacy and perceived classroom community, reveals a more detailed break down of the relationship between the variables, as shown on Table Four.

Table 4. Post hoc test results examining differences in attire

Dependent Variable	(I) Attire	(J) Attire	Significance
Nonverbal Immediacy	Casual	Business Casual	$p > .05$
		Professional	$p > .01$
	Business Casual	Casual	$p > .05$
		Professional	$p > .01$
	Professional	Casual	$p > .01$
		Business Casual	$p > .01$
Classroom Community	Casual	Business Casual	$p > .05$
		Professional	$p > .05$
	Business Casual	Casual	$p > .05$
		Professional	$p > .05$
	Professional	Casual	$p > .05$
		Business Casual	$p > .01$

DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study are to compare public speaking anxiety with classroom community and instructor nonverbal immediacy and to examine the effects of various classroom factors on each of these. The overall results of the study suggest that as instructor nonverbal immediacy increases, community increases (Hypothesis Three); as community increases, anxiety decreases (Hypothesis One). Therefore, using the transitive property of inequalities, which states that if $a > b$ and $b > c$ then $a > c$, increasing instructor nonverbal immediacy would also decrease public speaking anxiety. Knowing this, it can be determined that increasing either instructor nonverbal immediacy or classroom community would likely decrease public speaking anxiety. These findings extend the current knowledge on public speaking anxiety to begin to understand the effects of some external factors on levels of anxiety.

As hypothesized, the findings indicate a negative correlation between classroom community and public speaking anxiety. This finding supports Witt and Behnke's (2006) study, which stated that communicators are less comfortable in unfamiliar or unpredictable contexts. This finding extended the tenets of Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT), which states that, "when strangers meet, their primary concern is one of uncertainty reduction or increasing predictability about the behavior of both themselves and others in the interaction" (Berger & Calabrese, 1975, p. 327). Berger and Calabrese (1975) also posed eight axioms to this theory, which explain various factors that are known to have a significant relationship to uncertainty. The first axiom directly relates to this finding, which states that as the amount of verbal communication increases, uncertainty decreases. Classroom community is often, at least in part, caused by increased amounts of interactions and communication, therefore reducing uncertainty. By

adhering to the URT, therefore, it is logical that people would be more comfortable in public speaking situations with higher levels of perceived classroom community.

Edwards and Walker (2007) also supported these findings by demonstrating that students who participate in learning communities have lower post-test scores of communication apprehension. The current study furthers this by showing that instructor nonverbal immediacy is an important factor, which must be considered when an instructor seeks to create strong sense of classroom community. The strong correlation between instructor nonverbal immediacy supports the findings of Zhang's (2005) study. This study was primarily intercultural and sought to investigate classroom communication apprehension differences in relation to perceived teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy between Chinese and US college classrooms. However, one of the three main findings of this study was that as US student perceptions of instructor nonverbal immediacy increase, classroom communication apprehension decreases, despite there being no relation with instructor verbal immediacy. Although this statement is specifically regarding classroom communication apprehension, the results can assist us in drawing conclusions about public speaking anxiety because both public speaking anxiety and classroom communication apprehension fall under the broader heading of communication apprehension.

These findings further our understanding of the role of an instructor in any class where there is public speaking. Through understanding the importance of community in public speaking anxiety, we can expand the instructor's role to one of creating a strong classroom community. Increasing the instructor's own personal nonverbal immediacy actions is one way they can accomplish this. As found by Hsu's (2009) study, speakers make attributions about audience nonverbal feedback, which, in turn, affects their anxiety. However, if a student feels as though the instructors' nonverbal behavior suggests that he or she is doing well, the student, through attribution, will feel as though he or she is a good public speaker. This attribution can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy of confidence, decrease of public speaking anxiety, and increased overall ability.

As found by research question seven, attire is another way the instructor can influence the strength of the classroom community. This finding suggests that dressing casually or business casually will lead to perceptions of more classroom community than if the instructor dresses professionally. This could also be associated with Berger and Calabrese's (1975) Uncertainty Reduction Theory. The sixth axiom states that similarities between persons reduce uncertainty, while dissimilarities produce increases in uncertainty (Berger and Calabrese, 1975). Students may view themselves as having significantly more similarities with a instructor who dresses similar to them. This could also explain why instructors who were closer in age to their students were ranked as more nonverbally immediate. The students who had a younger instructor also perceived a stronger classroom community. Students would see themselves as more similar to a instructor who dresses similar to them and is of similar age, therefore reducing their uncertainty and making them more comfortable in the situation.

Although this research can be used to make general statements regarding public speaking anxiety and public speaking classrooms, it also says a lot about the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Communication Studies Department, where the study was conducted. Looking at the mean results from each of the surveys used and comparing it to the 'normal' mean included with both the Nonverbal Immediacy Scale – Observer Report (NIS-O) and the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) (Richmond, McCroskey, & Johnson, 2003; McCroskey, 1970), one is able to draw conclusions about UW-L, where the study was conducted. The NIS-O report lists the average mean to be 94.2 with a standard deviation of 15.6. The current study found a significantly higher mean of 103.0 with a smaller standard deviation of 14.1, which indicates that most people find UW-L instructors to be exceptionally nonverbally immediate. This is a positive finding for the UW-L Communication Studies (CST) Department, as the benefits of high amounts of nonverbally immediacy are well-documented (Andersen, 1979; McCroskey & Richmond, 1992; McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006).

The findings indicate that this high degree of instructor nonverbal immediacy would positively affect the feelings of classroom community, the benefits of which are also well documented (Bruffee, 1993; Dede, 1996; Rovai, 2002). Although the Rovai's (2002) Classroom Community Index does not report a typical mean, UW-L's mean of 71.8 on a scale of 20-80, where higher scores suggest a stronger sense of classroom community, is in the top 25% of the range of possible scores. This shows that the instructors of CST 110 at UW-L are in the top 75th percentile in terms of creating a strong sense of classroom community, which speaks highly to the ability of UW-L instructors.

Finally, McCroskey's (1970) Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety can help to understand if the efforts of UW-L instructors are enough to result in lower than average levels of public speaking anxiety. The average mean for the PRPSA is 114.6 and the 98-131 ranges suggest moderate levels of anxiety. The current study found a mean of 99.6, which is below the average and almost in the category of low anxiety, which is considered anything 98 and lower. These results show that the efforts put forth by instructors teaching CST 110 at UW-L are practical since they significantly diminish students' levels of public speaking anxiety. One can accurately make the statement that

students who have completed CST 110 at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse will have lower levels of public speaking anxiety than the general public, therefore better preparing them for their future endeavors.

Limitations

Although done to the best of the researcher's ability, the research did have several limitations. These limitations include the one semester time constraint and the number of subjects who participated in the study. Due to the time constraint, it was difficult to find more than the 191 participants to survey. The participants that were found, as well, may have not answered truthfully throughout the survey, due to the long length of the survey. The participants also are solely from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and may not be representative of the whole college in terms of area of study and age. Therefore, the population surveyed may not be sufficient to generalize the results to a larger population.

Finally, the researcher's inexperience doing communication may limit the reliability of the findings. Further research would have to be conducted to more definitively draw conclusions.

Future Research

This research lends itself to many other avenues of research. The most exciting possibilities stem from public speaking anxiety. Since public speaking anxiety, prior to this study, had been looked at only as an individual phenomena, without looking at external factors, comparing correlations of public speaking anxiety with external factors is a facet of communication research, which could be expanded greatly. These external factors generally fall into two main categories; instructor factors and classroom factors.

There are many instructor factors that could be studied in relation to public speaking anxiety. These include power strategies, affinity seeking strategies, assertiveness cues, responsiveness cues, verbal immediacy, use of humor, use of verbal aggression, use of argument/encouraging disagreement, use of self-disclosures, and engaging in teacher misbehaviors,

There is also an endless list of classroom factors, which could be looked at in comparison with public speaking anxiety. For example, one could look at the difference in public speaking anxiety between freshman communication majors and senior communication majors. One could also determine if there is a difference in public speaking anxiety among various majors. It would also be valuable to understand the difference in public speaking anxiety depending on the type of assignment. For example, if there is a difference in public speaking anxiety between long or short speeches, speeches with visual aids or without, speeches about academic topics versus personal topics, individual speeches compared to group speeches, or impromptu speeches versus previously prepared speeches.

Public speaking anxiety is an area of instructional communication research that has many future research possibilities with many practical application possibilities. Therefore, communication scholars should continue to look at public speaking anxiety and the effects various external factors have on it.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to understand the effects of instructor nonverbal immediacy and classroom community on public speaking anxiety. The results of this study revealed that, although there was no direct correlation between instructor nonverbal immediacy and public speaking anxiety, instructor nonverbal immediacy significantly affected classroom community. Classroom community, in turn, significantly affected public speaking anxiety. Of the demographics tested, both age and typical attire were strongly connected to both instructor nonverbal immediacy and classroom community. These findings hold many implications of how a public speaking classroom should be instructed in order to reduce public speaking anxiety. It also tells us a lot about the quality of instruction of the CST 110 course at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. These results were very positive, showing that people who have completed CST 110, the basic speech course, at UW-L have significantly less public speaking anxiety than the general public. An explanation for these results is that many of the people who fear public speaking have cited a fear of negative evaluation from others (Kant, 2000). Berger and Calabrese's (1970) Uncertainty Reduction Theory was used as a lens to examine this closer and to understand how instructor nonverbal immediacy and classroom community may reduce uncertainty for individuals and make them feel more at ease. It is important for studies, such as this one, to seek to understand how to reduce public speaking anxiety, because the benefits of public speaking skills are well documented (i.e. Bourhis, Allen, & Bauman, 2006).

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