

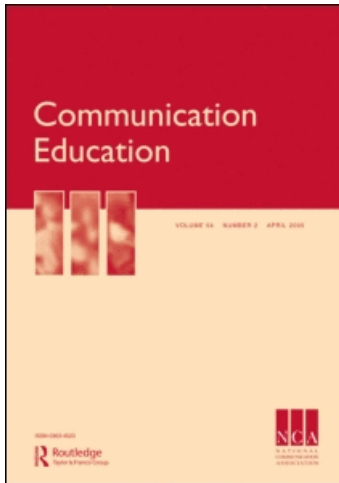
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Student Use of Relational and Influence Messages in Response to Perceived Instructor Power Use in American and Chinese College Classrooms

Alan K. Goodboy, San Bolkan, Scott A. Myers & Xing Zhao

The purpose of this study was to examine a theoretical model explaining the influence of instructor power (i.e., coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, referent) on students' relational and social influence communication behaviors (i.e., student affinity-seeking strategies, student behavior alteration techniques) across two cultures. Participants were 445 undergraduate students from the U.S. (n = 265) and China (n = 180). Results of structural equation modeling revealed that perceived instructor referent and expert power had indirect effects (mediated by student communication satisfaction), and perceived instructor reward power had a direct effect, on both student affinity-seeking strategies and student behavioral alteration techniques in the U.S. In China, perceived instructor referent and legitimate power had indirect effects (mediated by student communication satisfaction) on both student affinity-seeking and student behavioral alteration techniques, whereas perceived instructor expert and legitimate power had direct effects on student behavioral alteration techniques.

Keywords: Instructor Power; Student Affinity-Seeking; Student Behavioral Alteration Techniques; Student Communication Satisfaction

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Instructors and students frequently engage in a negotiation of power in the college classroom. Indeed, the dyadic task of negotiating power between both parties has important implications for classroom functioning. Not only does this task of negotiating power affect how instructors and students choose to communicate and respond to each other (Cambra, 1977; Mottet, Beebe, & Fleuriet, 2006), but these mutual social influence attempts often are relationally driven (Docan-Morgan & Manusov, 2009; Frymier & Houser, 2000). To examine these social influence attempts, instructional communication scholars have given considerable attention to the study of power in the classroom (for a review, see Chory & Goodboy, 2010).

To date, the majority of power studies have examined how students' perceptions of their instructors' use of power is associated with their learning outcomes (Richmond, 1990; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Roach, 1999) or their perceptions of classroom instruction (Schrodt, Witt, & Turman, 2007; Schrodt et al., 2008; Teven & Herring, 2005). Unfortunately, scant research has explored how students communicatively react to their instructors' use of power, and virtually no research has examined how students communicate for relational and social influence purposes due to their perceptions of their instructors' use of power. As Schrodt et al. (2008) posited, "clearly, teachers and students negotiate power and exercise social influence together as they cocreate meaning and communicate in ways that facilitate learning, yet the mechanisms through which such processes occur remain largely uninvestigated" (p. 181). To corroborate Schrodt et al.'s position, the purpose of this study was to examine two mechanisms—students' use of affinity-seeking strategies and behavioral alteration techniques—that operate as a function of their instructors' perceived use of coercive, reward, referent, legitimate, and expert power.

Theoretical Rationale

This study uses relational power and instructional influence theory (Mottet, Frymier, & Beebe, 2006) to guide the testing of a model that explains how an instructor's use of power influences students' relational and social influence responses with that instructor. Mottet et al. proposed three propositions to "explain and predict how teachers and students influence each other through relational power" (p. 271). These propositions purport that (a) the instructor–student relationship is similar to interpersonal relationships and involves influence; (b) instructors and students influence each other by conceding power to one another in that prosocial power use yields long-term influence and antisocial power use yields short term influence; and (c) the relational quality of the instructor–student relationship is increased when instructors and students use appropriate communication behaviors but is diminished when instructors and students use inappropriate communication behaviors.

Consistent with this model, then, perceived instructor use of the prosocial power bases (i.e., reward, expert, and referent) should increase the relational quality of the instructor–student relationship, whereas perceived instructor use of the antisocial power bases (i.e., coercive, legitimate) should diminish the relational quality of the instructor–student relationship. However, because prior research has revealed that

cultural differences exist in the perceived use of instructor affinity-seeking strategies in the Chinese classroom (Myers & Zhong, 2004), this study also investigates the proposed relationships among perceived instructor power, student use of affinity-seeking strategies, and student use of behavioral alteration techniques (BATs) in the Chinese classroom.

Exploring the use of instructional communication variables traditionally utilized in the American classroom and in the Chinese classroom has garnered the attention of several researchers. These variables include instructor use of BATs (Lu, 1997; Liu, Sellnow, & Venette, 2006; Sellnow, Liu, & Venette, 2006), instructor immediacy (Myers, Zhong, & Guan, 1998; Zhang, 2005; Zhang & Oetzel, 2006; Zhang & Zhang, 2006), instructor humor (Zhang, 2005), instructor clarity (Zhang & Huang, 2008; Zhang & Zhang, 2005), and instructor misbehaviors (Zhang, 2007). Because McCroskey and McCroskey (2006) noted that most instructional communication research is conducted by U.S. researchers who examine college classrooms in their own culture, and because they suggested that researchers examine other cultures to determine if “effective instructional communication is a culturally determined matter” (p. 44), or if effective instruction is “truly pan-culturally effective” (p. 44), this study tests a proposed model in both the U.S. and China. To understand this model, it is necessary to consider previous research.

Review of Literature

Instructor Power

As McCroskey and Richmond (1983) noted, the types of power that instructors exert in the college classroom have a significant impact on the quality of instructor–student communication. Based on French and Raven’s (1959, 1968) typology of relational power, McCroskey and Richmond identified five power bases instructors use in the college classroom. These power bases are coercive power (i.e., the ability to punish students), reward power (i.e., the ability to grant rewards to or remove punishments from students), legitimate power (i.e., the power an instructor possesses due to authority), expert power (i.e., the possession of knowledge and competence in a subject area), and referent power (i.e., the ability to be deemed likable). Of these five power bases, Richmond and McCroskey (1984) contended that instructors should avoid the use of the coercive and legitimate (i.e., antisocial) power bases in the classroom and utilize the expert, referent, and to a lesser extent, reward (i.e., prosocial) power bases.

Subsequent research supports their contention. Perceived instructor use of coercive power and legitimate power is correlated inversely with student reports of cognitive and affective learning (Richmond, 1990; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Roach 1999; Schrodt, Witt, & Turman, 2007), whereas coercive power is correlated inversely with evaluations and ratings of instruction (Schrodt et al., 2007; Schrodt et al., 2008) and legitimate power is correlated inversely with learner empowerment (Schrodt et al., 2008). Conversely, perceived instructor use of reward, expert, and referent power is

related positively with student reports of cognitive learning, affective learning, and instructor evaluations (Richmond, 1990; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Schrodt et al., 2007). Instructors who use prosocial power bases also are perceived by students as confirming (Turman & Schrodt, 2006) and credible (Teven & Herring, 2005).

Collectively, this body of research has established that instructor use of antisocial power bases impedes student learning outcomes and creates negative instructor impressions; whereas, instructor use of prosocial power bases fosters student learning and creates favorable instructor impressions. However, research has yet to ascertain whether instructors' use of power affects the social influence attempts and relational communication behavior enacted by students. One important and under researched student relational communication behavior is student affinity seeking.

Student Affinity Seeking

Affinity seeking, which refers to the use of various strategies to secure liking from others (Daly & Kreiser, 1992), is considered to be an active social communicative process through which individuals attempt to get others to like and feel positive toward them (Bell & Daly, 1984). To date, the research conducted on affinity seeking in the classroom has focused primarily on the frequency with which instructors use affinity-seeking strategies (Frymier, 1994; Gorham, Kelley, & McCroskey, 1989; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986) or the relationship between this use and classroom outcomes. These outcomes include perceived student cognitive and affective learning (Dolin, 1995; Frymier, 1994; Houser, 2006; Richmond, 1990; Roach & Byrne, 2001; Roach, Cornett-DeVito, & DeVito, 2005), state motivation (Dolin, 1995; Frymier, 1994; Frymier & Thompson, 1992; Houser, 2006; Myers & Zhong, 2004; Richmond), satisfaction (Prisbell, 1994b; Roach, 1991), and willingness to engage in out-of-class communication with instructors (Myers, Martin, & Knapp, 2005) as well as perceived instructor credibility (Frymier & Thompson; Prisbell, 1994a) and establishment of a supportive classroom climate (Myers, 1995).

However, less attention has been paid to how students use affinity-seeking strategies with their instructors. In an examination of student and instructor perceptions of student-employed strategies, Wanzer (1998) discovered that students report using 26 affinity-seeking strategies with their instructors and instructors report that students use 27 affinity-seeking strategies¹ with them. Combining these two sets of strategies, Wanzer determined that 23 of the 27 strategies fit into the strategies identified by Bell and Daly (1984) and four of the strategies were unique to student-instructor interaction. Wanzer (1998) revealed that U.S. students used nonverbal immediacy, elicit disclosure, conversational rule keeping, requirements, and self inclusion the most frequently. A second important and under researched student social influence behavior is student use of BATs.

Student Behavioral Alteration Techniques

Much of the programmatic research on power in the classroom has examined instructor BATs, which are strategies used to gain student compliance (see Kearney,

Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1984, 1985; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; Kearney, Plax, Sorensen, & Smith, 1988; McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney, 1985; Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney, & Plax, 1987). Not only do instructors utilize BATs in the classroom, but also students use a set of unique compliance-gaining techniques with their instructors. Golish (1999) discovered that students use 19 compliance-gaining strategies,² or BATs, to make an instructional request with a graduate teaching assistant.

In a follow-up study, Golish and Olson (2000) reported that the students' use of the guilt, flattery, public persuasion, evidence of preparation/logic, performance, utilitarian justice, punishing the teacher, reference to higher authority, and verbal force/demand BATs were correlated positively with an instructor's use of either coercive, reward, or referent power. More recently, in a study examining student use of BATs with instructors, Kennedy-Lightsey and Myers (2009) discovered that verbally aggressive students perceived the use of the complaining, guilt, play on teachers' ability to relate, public persuasion, general excuses, and verbal force/demand BATs as appropriate, whereas they considered the use of the complaining, pleading, guilt, play on teachers' ability to relate, and public persuasion BATs as effective. These students also were more likely to use antisocial student BATs than prosocial BATs.

Mediating Variable: (Student) Communication Satisfaction

Because relational power and instructional influence theory posits (i.e., proposition 3) that the relational quality between instructors and students is enhanced when instructors use appropriate power bases, but is diminished when instructors use inappropriate power bases, relational quality should be assessed as a mediating variable between instructor power use and subsequent student communication behavior (i.e., student affinity seeking, student BATs). To operationalize the relational quality of the instructor–student relationship, student communication satisfaction was chosen. Based on Hecht's (1978) notion that communication satisfaction is an affective response resulting from the accomplishment of communicative goals and expectations, student communication satisfaction refers to contextual satisfaction resulting from the fulfillment of student concerns through conversations with an instructor (Goodboy, Martin, & Bolkan, 2009). Students who report satisfying communication encounters in the classroom perceive their instructors to be clear, confirming, and similar to themselves (Goodboy et al., 2009; Goodboy & Myers, 2007); they also report greater learner empowerment and an increase in affective learning, as well as communicating more for relational reasons, both inside and outside of the classroom (Goodboy et al.; Prisbell, 1985). Moreover, instructors who make students feel good and safe while reducing uncertainty in their classrooms increase student communication satisfaction (Prisbell).

Because students who have satisfying communication experiences with instructors tend to form quality relationships with their instructors, we believe that student communication satisfaction will mediate the relationship between instructor use of

power and student communication behavior. And because Chinese students, much like American students, value personal and relational communication (Zhang & Zhang, 2006), we suspect that student communication satisfaction will mediate the relationships between instructor use of power (i.e., coercive, reward, expert, legitimate, referent) and student communication behavior (i.e., student affinity seeking, student BATs) in both the American classroom and in the Chinese classroom. However, we also suspect that instructor use of power will have direct effects on student communication behavior in both cultures.

Method

Participants

Participants were 445 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory or upper level college courses at midsized universities in the United States ($n = 265$) and in mainland China ($n = 180$). Participants were 93 men and 166 women (6 students did not report their sex) whose ages ranged from 18 to 45 years ($M = 19.62$, $SD = 1.99$) in the U.S. and 46 men and 103 women (31 students did not report their sex) from 18 to 25 years ($M = 19.27$, $SD = .96$) in China. Participants reported on 127 male instructors and 121 female instructors (the sex of 17 instructors was not reported) in the U.S. and 68 male instructors and 101 female instructors (the sex of 11 instructors was not reported) in China.

Procedures and Instrumentation

Participants completed a questionnaire comprising the Teacher Power Use Scale (TPUS; Schrodt et al., 2007), the Student Communication Satisfaction Scale (SCSS; Goodboy et al., 2009), the Student Affinity-Seeking Typology (Wanzer, 1998), and the Student Behavioral Alteration Techniques Typology (Golish, 1999), along with demographic items. Following the procedures utilized by Myers and Zhong (2004), the scale items on the questionnaires collected in China were translated from English into Mandarin Chinese and then translated back for validity purposes. No problems were encountered with the translation process. Participants completed these measures in reference to the instructor and course they attended immediately prior to the data collection (Plax et al., 1986). These questionnaires were distributed in class and collected at a later date. Data were collected during the last 2 weeks of the semester to ensure that participants could report on their instructor's communication and their own communication behavior occurring through the entire span of the semester.

The TPUS (Schrodt et al., 2007) is 30 items and asks participants to report on instructor behaviors representative of five power bases: coercive, reward, referent, legitimate, and expert. Sample items for each subscale include: "When students do not perform at an acceptable level, my teacher embarrasses them in front of the class" (coercive power); "My teacher rewards the class for complying with his/her requests" (reward power); "My teacher demonstrates commitment to the class by being authentic and genuine when interacting with students" (referent power); My teacher

demonstrates that he/she considers the position of a professor to be superior to that of a student” (legitimate power); and “My teacher’s lectures are clearly organized and well delivered” (expert power). Responses were solicited using a 7-point Likert-type response format ranging from (1) *never* to (7) *always*. Items for each subscale were randomized to control for acquiescence response bias. Schrodt et al. reported reliability coefficients ranging from .77 to .91 for the subscales. In this study, obtained Cronbach alphas for each subscale ranged from .64 to .90 for the U.S. sample (coercive: $M = 12.67$, $SD = 5.89$, $\alpha = .79$; reward: $M = 20.95$, $SD = 7.74$, $\alpha = .84$; referent: $M = 25.40$, $SD = 9.08$, $\alpha = .79$; legitimate: $M = 18.47$, $SD = 5.99$, $\alpha = .64$; expert: $M = 31.68$, $SD = 8.19$, $\alpha = .90$) and from .63 to .86 for the Chinese sample (coercive: $M = 13.08$, $SD = 5.51$, $\alpha = .77$; reward: $M = 22.18$, $SD = 7.78$, $\alpha = .86$; referent: $M = 24.23$, $SD = 6.80$, $\alpha = .79$; legitimate: $M = 16.81$, $SD = 5.50$, $\alpha = .63$; expert: $M = 28.42$, $SD = 6.92$, $\alpha = .82$)

The SCSS (Goodboy et al., 2009) consists of eight items and measures the degree to which participants are satisfied with their communication with an instructor. Sample items include “My teacher makes an effort to satisfy the concerns I have” and “My conversations with my teacher are worthwhile.” This scale uses a 7-point Likert-type response format ranging from (1) *strongly disagree* to (7) *strongly agree* with a *not applicable* (N/A) response option. Goodboy et al. reported reliability coefficients of .96 and .98. In this study, the obtained Cronbach alpha for the summed scale was .93 ($M = 40.25$, $SD = 11.59$) for the U.S. sample and .86 for the Chinese sample ($M = 39.21$, $SD = 8.39$).

The *Student Affinity-Seeking Typology* (Wanzer, 1998) is 27 items and asks participants to indicate how frequently they use each of the affinity-seeking strategies to increase liking from their instructor. Sample items include “I get my instructor to like me by: ‘helping and assisting the instructor in whatever he/she is doing’ (altruism) and ‘helping the instructor feel good about himself/herself through complimenting’” (self-concept confirmation). Responses were solicited using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (0) *never* to (4) *very often*. No previous reliability coefficients have been reported for this measure. In this study, the obtained Cronbach alpha for the summed scale was .91 ($M = 46.12$, $SD = 16.64$) for the U.S. sample and .94 for the Chinese sample ($M = 44.13$, $SD = 16.85$).

The *Student Behavioral Alteration Technique Typology* (Golish, 1999) is 19 items and asks participants to indicate how likely they use BATs to gain compliance from their instructor. Sample items include “To be honest, I was sick and didn’t have enough time to study. I didn’t have enough time to complete the assignment. I wish I had an excuse but I didn’t get it finished” (honesty-sincerity) and “I have really worked hard all semester. This final grade doesn’t represent how well I have been doing in the class. I put a lot of time and effort into the assignment” (performance). Following the procedure used by Kennedy-Lightsey and Myers (2009), responses were solicited using a 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from (0) *not very likely* to (4) *very likely*, although they did not report a reliability coefficient for this measure. In this study, the obtained Cronbach alpha for the summed scale was .91

($M = 19.57$, $SD = 12.20$) for the U.S. sample and .91 for the Chinese sample ($M = 25.40$, $SD = 12.43$).

Data Analysis

Because research on power in the classroom should examine “moderating and mediating variables that draw theoretical boundaries and offer explanations, respectively, and should be investigated via analysis of variance, linear equation modeling, path analysis, and other appropriate statistical means” (Chory & Goodboy, 2010, p. 195), two path analyses were employed to calculate mediated and direct effects in the U.S. and China. A path model with composite variables can be sensibly regarded as akin to one with latent variables (McDonald, 1996). As such, path analyses were conducted for each culture (separately) using LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 2007). The models were estimated with maximum likelihood estimation (ML) using LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 2007). Model fit was assessed using the model chi square, the NC, the CFI, the SRMR, and the RMSEA (Kline, 2005). Values of the NC between 2 and 5, values of the CFI above .90, and values of the SRMR less than .10 indicate reasonably good fit (Kline). For the RMSEA, “values less than .05 are indicative of good fit, between .05 and under .08 of reasonable fit, between .08 and .10 of mediocre fit and $> .10$ of poor fit” (Diamantopoulos & Siguaaw, 2007, p. 85).

Results

Intercorrelations between all variables in each culture are presented in Table 1. These data were analyzed by examining how the five bases of instructor power influence communication satisfaction, and, subsequently, both student use of affinity-seeking strategies and BATs. The tested model assumed that communication satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between the five power bases and both student affinity-seeking strategies and student BATs.

For the American sample, the data did not fit the initial model ($\chi^2 = 35.00$, $df = 10$, $p < .01$; $NC = 3.50$; $CFI = .97$; $SRMR = .08$; $RMSEA = .11$). The standardized residuals and the modification indices indicated the desirability of an additional path between reward power and student affinity seeking. After adding this path, a second path analysis was conducted. Results indicated that the data fit the proposed model reasonably well ($\chi^2 = 25.34$, $df = 9$, $p < .01$; $NC = 2.82$; $CFI = .98$; $SRMR = .07$; $RMSEA = .09$). Although this result is acceptable as defined by the standards reported above, the standardized residuals and fit indices indicated fit could be improved by adding a path between reward power and student BATs. Results of a chi square difference test indicated that the data fit the new model better ($\chi^2 = 7.74$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$; $\chi^2 = 17.60$, $df = 8$, $p = .02$; $NC = 2.20$; $CFI = .99$; $SRMR = .05$; $RMSEA = .07$). After these modifications, indirect effects were discovered for referent power and expert power on student affinity-seeking and student behavioral alteration techniques (mediated by communication satisfaction), whereas reward power had a direct effect on both student communication variables. Details regarding the final U.S. model are

Table 1 Correlations Between Variables in U.S. and China

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>U.S. (N = 265)</i>							
1. Coercive Power	—						
2. Reward Power	-.01	—					
3. Referent Power	-.32†	.59†	—				
4. Legitimate Power	.64†	.11	-.07	—			
5. Expert Power	-.29†	.40†	.69†	-.02	—		
6. Communication Satisfaction	-.41†	.47†	.74†	-.16*	.68†	—	
7. Student Affinity Seeking	.10	.39†	.32†	.18**	.19**	.32†	—
8. Student BATs	.25†	.13*	-.10	.17**	-.13**	-.14*	.35†
<i>China (N = 179)</i>							
1. Coercive Power	—						
2. Reward Power	-.06	—					
3. Referent Power	-.30†	.62†	—				
4. Legitimate Power	.65†	-.10	-.26†	—			
5. Expert Power	-.30†	.45†	.70†	-.20**	—		
6. Communication Satisfaction	-.25†	.32†	.54†	-.33†	.43†	—	
7. Student Affinity Seeking	.09	.29†	.24**	.10	.05	.24**	—
8. Student BATs	.25†	.13	-.04	.27†	-.20**	.02	.51†

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; † $p < .001$; two-tailed.

reported in Figure 1 and Table 2. The proportion of variance explained by U.S. instructor power use for each of the dependent variables is as follows: communication satisfaction ($R^2 = .65$), student affinity seeking ($R^2 = .15$), and student BATs ($R^2 = .06$).

For the Chinese sample, the data did not fit the initial model ($\chi^2 = 34.05$, $df = 10$, $p < .01$; $NC = 3.41$; $CFI = .94$; $SRMR = .10$; $RMSEA = .13$). Inspection of the standardized residuals and the modification indices indicated the desirability of an additional path from legitimate power to student BATs. After adding this path, an additional path analysis was conducted. Results indicated that the data did not fit the proposed model ($\chi^2 = 26.75$, $df = 9$, $p < .01$; $NC = 2.92$; $CFI = .96$; $SRMR = .08$; $RMSEA = .12$). The standardized residuals and modification indices were reexamined and a path was added between expert power and student BATs. The results indicated that the data fit the model reasonably ($\chi^2 = 19.21$, $df = 8$, $p = .01$; $NC = 2.40$; $CFI = .97$; $SRMR = .07$; $RMSEA = .10$). Although the RMSEA was borderline problematic, its actual value was .098, which is within the range of tolerance for an acceptable (mediocre) fit. Moreover, despite the value of the RMSEA, the values of the other fit statistics were such that the final model was deemed to be a reasonable fit of the data. Overall, indirect effects were discovered for referent power and legitimate power on student affinity-seeking strategies and student BATs (mediated by communication satisfaction). However, legitimate and expert power had direct effects on student BATs. Details regarding the final Chinese model are reported in Figure 2 and Table 3. The proportion of variance explained by Chinese instructor power use for each of the dependent variables is as follows: communication satisfaction ($R^2 = .33$), student affinity seeking ($R^2 = .06$), and student BATs ($R^2 = .09$).

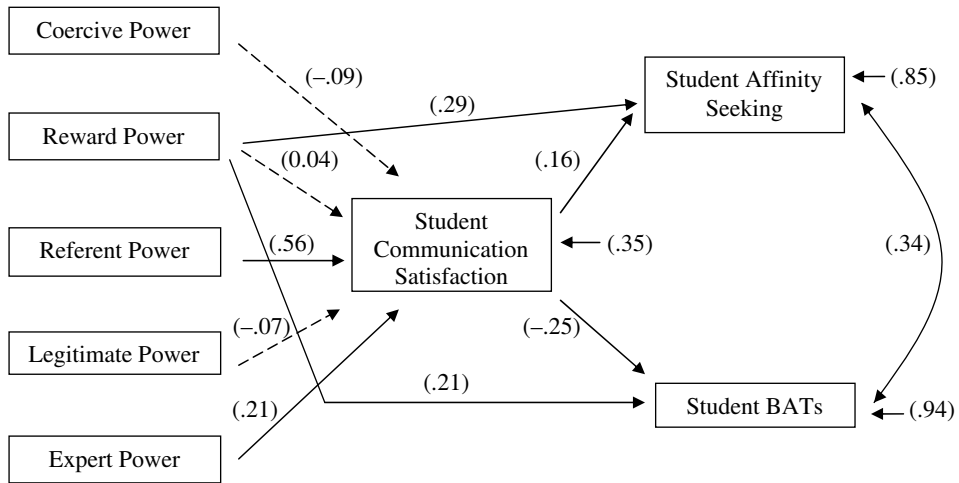


Figure 1. U.S. Model. Dotted lines indicate nonsignificant paths. Numbers presented reflect standardized values.

Discussion

Using relational power and instructor influence theory as a framework (Mottet et al., 2006), the purpose of this study was to test a theoretical model of instructor power in the classroom in the United States and China, specifying that instructors' use of power would increase or decrease students' perceptions of communication satisfaction, which in turn, would influence students' use of affinity-seeking strategies and BATs with their instructor. Three general conclusions can be drawn from the findings. The first conclusion is that although negative relationships were obtained between perceived instructors' use of antisocial power use (i.e., coercive, legitimate) and student communication satisfaction, and positive relationships were obtained for prosocial power use (i.e., reward, expert, referent) and student communication satisfaction, perceived instructor use of the referent power base had a strong and unique path to student communication satisfaction for both the American and the Chinese samples. It appears, then, that both American and Chinese instructors who are concerned with creating satisfying communication encounters with their students should attempt to identify with students by being genuine, promoting similarity, and appearing approachable and relatable (Schrodt et al., 2007). Referent power is based on students' desire to please their instructor and to be liked, stemming from perceived similarity (Kearney et al., 1985; McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). Because students feel more comfortable with their instructors when they perceive similar backgrounds and attitudes (Goodboy & Myers, 2007), instructors should consider using instructional behaviors that not only enhance their referent power, but also serve as a way to increase student communication satisfaction. Unlike the other bases of power which focus more on short term rewards or punishments (i.e., reward, coercive, legitimate), promoting referent power in the classroom appears to build an interpersonal relationship that students appreciate, which the other power bases may fail to do.

Table 2 Maximum Likelihood Parameter Estimates (U.S.)

Parameter	Unstandardized	SE	Standardized
<i>Total effects</i>			
Coercive Power → Comm Sat	-.18	.12	-.09
Reward Power → Comm Sat	.05	.08	.04
Referent Power → Comm Sat	.79**	.10	.56
Legitimate Power → Comm Sat	-.14	.10	-.07
Expert Power → Comm Sat	.30**	.08	.21
Coercive Power → SAS	-.04	.03	-.01
Reward Power → SAS	.64**	.15	.30
Referent Power → SAS	.18*	.08	.09
Legitimate Power → SAS	-.03	.03	-.01
Expert Power → SAS	.07*	.03	.03
Coercive Power → SBATS	.05	.03	.02
Reward Power → SBATS	.32**	.12	.20
Referent Power → SBATS	-.21**	.07	-.14
Legitimate Power → SBATS	.04	.03	.02
Expert Power → SBATS	-.08**	.03	-.05
Comm Sat → SAS	.23**	.10	.16
Comm Sat → SBATS	-.27**	.08	-.25
<i>Indirect effects</i>			
Coercive Power → SAS	-.04	.03	-.01
Reward Power → SAS	.01	.02	.01
Referent Power → SAS	.18*	.08	.09
Legitimate Power → SAS	-.03	.03	-.01
Expert Power → SAS	.07*	.03	.03
Coercive Power → SBATS	.05	.03	.02
Reward Power → SBATS	-.01	.02	-.01
Referent Power → SBATS	-.21**	.07	-.14
Legitimate Power → SBATS	.04	.03	.02
Expert Power → SBATS	-.08**	.03	-.05
<i>Correlations among independent variables</i>			
Coercive Power ↔ Reward Power	-.30	2.96	-.01
Coercive Power ↔ Referent Power	-17.72**	3.45	-.37
Coercive Power ↔ Legitimate Power	21.68**	2.74	.63
Coercive Power ↔ Expert Power	-13.29**	3.37	-.28
Reward Power ↔ Referent Power	35.80**	4.87	.57
Reward Power ↔ Legitimate Power	3.42	3.33	.08
Reward Power ↔ Expert Power	24.29**	4.54	.39
Referent Power ↔ Legitimate Power	-5.51	3.33	-.11
Referent Power ↔ Expert Power	50.58**	5.76	.74
Expert Power ↔ Legitimate Power	-.49	3.32	-.01

SAS: Student affinity seeking.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

That is, if students perceive that their instructors understand them and possess similar attributes, they may be motivated to engage in satisfying conversations with their instructors. Not surprisingly, then, this power base, which empowers students to learn (Schrodt et al., 2007) and motivates students to study (Richmond, 1990), also fosters better instructor–student communication. Therefore, instructors who are concerned with creating satisfying communication encounters should be especially cognizant of

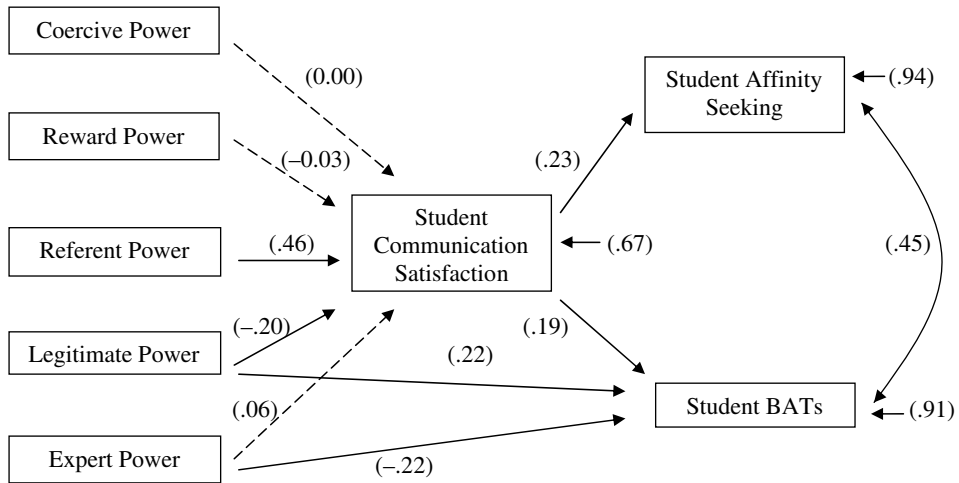


Figure 2. Chinese Model. Dotted lines indicate nonsignificant paths. Numbers presented reflect standardized values.

communicating referent power. One way to do so is to use confirming messages (Turman & Schrodt, 2006), which communicate to students they are recognized and acknowledged as valuable and significant individuals (Ellis, 2000).

The second conclusion is that student communication satisfaction, as a mediating variable, had significant effects on student use of affinity-seeking strategies and student BATs in both the American and the Chinese classrooms. Generally, American students who reported being satisfied with their instructors' classroom communication used affinity-seeking strategies more frequently and BATs less frequently. However, Chinese students who reported being satisfied with their instructors' classroom communication used affinity-seeking strategies more frequently and BATs more frequently. A closer inspection of the most frequently used student BATs may explain this cultural difference.³ Unlike Chinese students, American students reported using BATs that involved a desired grade change as a compliance outcome. For instance, American students most commonly used the performance BAT (i.e., "I have really worked hard all semester. This final grade doesn't represent how well I have been doing in the class. I put a lot of time and effort into this assignment") and the evidence of preparation/logic BAT (i.e., "Looking at my essay again, I think I clearly lay out my argument by using evidence from the test and lecture. I followed the criteria you gave us for how to receive a good grade on this paper"). Conversely, Chinese students most frequently used the flattery BAT (i.e., "This assignment has been very helpful, but it might be improved upon by . . . You have taught this material to us well, but there are a couple things you could do differently") and the honesty-sincerity BAT (i.e., "To be totally honest, I was sick and didn't have enough time to study. I didn't have enough time to complete the assignment. I wish I had an excuse but I didn't get it finished"). Unlike American students who appear to be more concerned with grades, Chinese

Table 3 Maximum Likelihood Parameter Estimates (China)

Parameter	Unstandardized	SE	Standardized
<i>Total effects</i>			
Coercive Power → Comm Sat	.01	.14	.00
Reward Power → Comm Sat	-.03	.10	-.03
Referent Power → Comm Sat	.56**	.14	.46
Legitimate Power → Comm Sat	-.29*	.14	-.20
Expert Power → Comm Sat	.07	.12	.06
Coercive Power → SAS	.00	.07	.00
Reward Power → SAS	-.01	.05	-.01
Referent Power → SAS	.26**	.11	.11
Legitimate Power → SAS	-.14	.08	-.05
Expert Power → SAS	.03	.06	.01
Coercive Power → SBATS	.00	.04	.00
Reward Power → SBATS	-.01	.03	.00
Referent Power → SBATS	.16*	.08	.09
Legitimate Power → SBATS	.40**	.16	.18
Expert Power → SBATS	-.37**	.14	-.21
Comm Sat → SAS	.47**	.16	.23
Comm Sat → SBATS	.28*	.13	.19
<i>Indirect effects</i>			
Coercive Power → SAS	.00	.07	.00
Reward Power → SAS	-.01	.05	-.01
Referent Power → SAS	.26**	.11	.11
Legitimate Power → SAS	-.14	.08	-.05
Expert Power → SAS	.03	.06	.01
Coercive Power → SBATS	.00	.04	.00
Reward Power → SBATS	-.01	.03	.00
Referent Power → SBATS	.16*	.08	.09
Legitimate Power → SBATS	-.08	.05	-.04
Expert Power → SBATS	.02	.03	.01
<i>Correlations among independent variables</i>			
Coercive Power ↔ Reward Power	-2.50	3.64	-.06
Coercive Power ↔ Referent Power	-11.65**	3.37	-.30
Coercive Power ↔ Legitimate Power	21.66**	3.21	.68
Coercive Power ↔ Expert Power	-11.79**	3.40	-.30
Reward Power ↔ Referent Power	32.83**	5.09	.63
Reward Power ↔ Legitimate Power	-5.22	3.57	-.12
Reward Power ↔ Expert Power	23.00**	4.74	.44
Referent Power ↔ Legitimate Power	-11.18**	3.28	-.30
Referent Power ↔ Expert Power	32.32**	4.69	.70
Expert Power ↔ Legitimate Power	-7.47*	3.23	-.20

SAS: Student affinity seeking.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

students appear to be more focused on improving the learning experience and maintaining the instructor–student relationship.

These findings are not surprising when considering the extant research on the Chinese college classroom. The Chinese classroom is largely influenced by the Confucian values of interpersonal harmony and relational hierarchy (Zhang, Lin, Nonaka, & Beom, 2005), yet is marked by a high power distance between instructors

and students (Abubaker, 2008). The instructor–student relationship is characterized by student respect (Huang & Brown, 2009; Myers et al., 1998) where Chinese instructors are viewed as mentors and master figures inside and outside of the classroom (Warden, Chen, & Caskey, 2005) who take a transactional approach (versus interactional) to instruction (Wang & Farmer, 2008). Although Chinese students do appreciate an interactive teaching style (Ngwainmbi, 2004), Huang and Brown reported that Chinese students also feel uncomfortable with behaviors such as challenging the instructor and engaging in humor. Thus, Chinese students may not violate the aforementioned classroom expectations when they use BATs that are relationally driven or those BATs used to improve the learning experience. This motivation in use differs from American students who may avoid using BATs when they are satisfied with their instructor and have nothing to ask for (e.g., grades, favors).

The third conclusion is that among American students, direct effects were observed for perceived instructor reward power on students' use of both affinity-seeking strategies and BATs; whereas, among Chinese students, direct effects were observed for perceived instructor legitimate and expert power on students' use of BATs. For American students, this finding makes sense given that students generally like instructors who provide them with rewards (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983) and students may use BATs more frequently with rewarding instructors because they like being rewarded. For Chinese students, this finding makes sense given that Chinese students value useful learning experiences that not only require less interaction, but also focus on knowledge, comprehension, and application (Wang & Farmer, 2008). Chinese instructors who overuse legitimate power, then, may de-motivate their students by not attending to students' learning expectations; in return, students may use BATs more frequently as a way to fulfill these expectations. Myers et al. (1998) found that Chinese students do appreciate instructors' use of affinity-seeking strategies, which serve as a means of state motivation. Likewise, perceived Chinese instructors use of expert power decreased student BATs use. Because Chinese students expect their instructors to be experts and roles models (Warden et al., 2005), student BATs use may be less frequent when their learning expectations are fulfilled (Wang & Farmer). To avoid student compliance-gaining attempts, Chinese instructors would be well advised to communicate expert power and avoid legitimate power.

As in any study, this study had several limitations. The first limitation involves the low reliability coefficient obtained for the legitimate power subscale in Schrodt et al.'s (2007) TPUS. Considering that the reliability of this subscale was low in both the American and the Chinese samples, coupled with the finding that the TPUS has produced low reliability estimates in other research (i.e., Horan & Myers, 2009), instructional communication scholars may consider revising the subscale items of this measure. Although these items may be measuring multiple examples of behaviors that reflect assigned power/authoritarian behaviors, they may be used inconsistently among instructors' (i.e., some instructors may use one behavior measured by one item but not another behavior measured by a different item). Researchers should use confirmatory factor analysis to continue to validate this factor structure (Levine,

2005). Of course, this measurement problem could be unique to this study (although all items were randomized instead of listing the items for each subscale in order, one after another). The second limitation involves potential problems that may have arisen in the translation process (i.e., from English to Mandarin Chinese) of the survey items. Although the translations were grammatically correct, it is possible that identical wording in both languages can communicate different semantic meanings. A third limitation is that only the student perspective was solicited. Future researchers should examine power from the instructor perspective, which would allow the study of the mechanisms through which power in the classroom functions to be broadened.

Despite these limitations, the results of the current study demonstrate some support for relational power and instructor influence theory in both the American and the Chinese classrooms. Both American and Chinese instructors should remain aware of the types of power they use in the college classroom, which can influence student perceptions of communication satisfaction and subsequent student communication behavior. The careful and deliberate use of instructor power in college classroom is warranted, as student reactions to prosocial and antisocial use have the potential to change classroom functioning and alter the classroom climate.

Notes

- [1] These strategies include *altruism* (i.e., attempting to help the instructor by assisting in the classroom), *assuming control* (i.e., presenting oneself as a leader in the classroom), *assuming equality* (i.e., presenting oneself as equal), *comfortable self* (i.e., communicating a relaxed and comfortable demeanor), *conceding control* (i.e., allowing the instructor to take an active role by surrendering dominance), *conversational rule-keeping* (i.e., communicating politeness and friendliness by adhering to cultural rules of socializing), *dynamism* (i.e., using extroverted and enthusiastic behaviors), *elicit other's disclosure* (i.e., encouraging the instructor to communicate by asking questions), *facilitating enjoyment* (i.e., attempting to make time spent together enjoyable), *inclusion of others* (i.e., including the instructor in social activities and groups that a student is a part of), *influence perceptions of closeness* (i.e., communicating to make the instructor feel closer in the relationship than in actuality), *listening* (i.e., paying active attention to what the instructor says), *nonverbal immediacy* (i.e., using behaviors that reduce psychological distance such as eye contact and smiling), *openness* (i.e., using direct student self-disclosure), *personal autonomy* (i.e., presenting oneself as an independent and free thinker), *physical attractiveness* (i.e., trying to look and dress as attractive as possible in front of the instructor), *presenting interesting self* (i.e., appearing as interesting as possible to the instructor), *self-concept confirmation* (i.e., helping the instructor feel good about himself/herself), *self-inclusion* (i.e., setting up frequent encounters with the instructor), *sensitivity* (i.e., communicating care and concern), *similarity* (i.e., communicating similar backgrounds and interests between with the instructor), *supportiveness* (i.e., communicating support to the instructor), *trustworthiness* (i.e., attempting to appear as a trustworthy and reliable student), *requirements* (i.e., completing work on time, attending class, and being prepared), *achievement* (i.e., being successful in the class by earning good grades or completing extra work), *gifts* (i.e., giving presents to the instructor), and *flirting* (i.e., engaging in flirtatious behavior with the instructor).
- [2] These strategies include *honesty-sincerity* (i.e., telling the truth), *blame* (i.e., blaming the instructor or course), *complaining* (i.e., incessantly complaining), *begging* (i.e., pleading for

compliance), *guilt* (i.e., evoking guilt), *flattery* (i.e., communicating sycophancy), *play on GTA's ability to relate* (i.e., promoting dyadic similarity), *group persuasion* (i.e., involving multiple students or an entire class), *public persuasion* (i.e., making a request in front of others), *private persuasion* (i.e., making a request via e-mail or during office hours), *evidence of preparation/logic* (i.e., using preparation and reasoning), *earned credibility/past performance* (i.e., demonstrating past competence), *stress/overload* (i.e., explaining the current workload), *utilitarian justice* (i.e., arguing that change will benefit the whole class), *emotional displays* (i.e., using nonverbal leakage cues), *general excuses* (i.e., using any sensible excuse), *punish teacher* (i.e., threatening), *reference to higher authority* (i.e., communicating with a superior), and *verbal force/demand* (i.e., demanding compliance).

- [3] Chinese students valued the flattery ($M = 1.87$, $SD = 1.24$) and honesty/sincerity ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.28$) BATs, which communicate respect and preserve the instructor/student relationship. On the contrary, American students valued performance ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 1.17$) and evidence of preparation/logic ($M = 1.69$, $SD = 1.23$) BATs, which communicate that the instructor was in the wrong followed by a grade increase demand.

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