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Interpersonal Solidarity in Relationships: A Cultural Analysis of Lawyers vs. Sports Agents

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INTERPERSONAL SOLIDARITY IN RELATIONSHIPS:
A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF LAWYERS VS. SPORTS AGENTS
(TITLE)

By

ANDREA L. CAIRNS

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THESIS

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Interpersonal Solidarity in Relationships:
A Cultural Analysis of Lawyers vs. Sports Agents

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ABSTRACT

The cultural affects on relationship solidarity and satisfaction in relationships between lawyers and their clients, and sports agents and their professional athlete clients was examined. The results were gathered through a process of correlation tests and frequency report tables. All four groups of subjects were asked to complete a twenty questions survey which contained variables such as interpersonal solidarity, relational satisfaction, and communicative patterns of interaction. The results indicated that the two types of relationships are adversely co-dependent with respect to self-disclosure and it's relationship to interpersonal solidarity within a client-agent relationship.

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INTRODUCTION

There are several characteristics of the legal profession that enables it to be considered by researchers as an "elite" and "unique" culture. Those characteristics include but are not limited to the language of the culture, the communicative acts, and the client-lawyer relationship that exists within the culture.

The past responsibilities of sports agents have been that of contract negotiators. The relationship between sports agent and their clients has recently evolved into what is now a more interpersonally connected relationship. To accommodate for this change, it is imperative that sports agent maintain interpersonal skills adequate to persevere the client-agent relationship.

In the following chapters, these characteristics will be further discussed and implications will be made as to how these characteristics contribute to the communication within the legal culture and the profession of sports management.

Lustig and Koester (1999), define culture as "... a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, and norms, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people" (p.42). Under this definition, both sports agents and lawyers could be seen to exist within their own culture. Mary Jane Collier and Milt Thomas, for example, maintain that culture may stand for any number of groups of people for example, a specific gender, ethnic race, profession or any other symbol system that is prominent to individuals. The terms "Subculture" and "Coculture" are often used to represent a smaller group of people within a culture. For example, in the case of the legal profession, there are many cocultures such as gender, race, and specific field. This also is true for sports agents, this culture consists of cocultures such as gender, race, and which sport(s).that they represent.

According to Lustig and Koester (1999), "the term cross-cultural is typically used to refer to the study of a particular idea or concept within many cultures" (p.61). In other words, to better be able to study a communicative pattern within both sports agents and lawyers, it is best to use a cross-cultural approach. In doing so, each profession is recognized as being its own autonomous culture sharing a common characteristic. The purpose of doing such a cross-cultural analysis is to better

distinguish between variances and be able to attribute those variances to cultural differences.

The term "intercultural communication" according to Lustig and Koester (1999) refers to interaction among people from different cultures. This type of communication occurs during the agent or lawyer and client relationship. The professional (lawyer or agent), being a member of the culture, and the client being an outsider to the culture have to devise a meeting ground on which to communicate. This requires more effort from the professional than from the client. Each profession discussed in this study carries with it distinct cultural values, attitudes, beliefs, and artifacts that may or may not be shared with the client. In addition, the clients bring with them culturally influenced opinions or stereotypes of the professional with which they are interacting.

There are many things that influence a person's cultural perspective. As stated by Lustig and Koester (1999), "culture really exists in people's minds, but the consequences of culture--the shared interpretations--can be seen in people's communication behaviors" (p.144). We learn about different cultural patterns through our shared interactions. By learning these patterns we also learn how we expect members of a specific culture to behave. Deal and Kennedy, (1982) agree that there is

a specific culture in which those inside the culture have patterns by which to behave. They conclude, " Every business - in fact - every organization - has a culture" (p.4).

Lustig and Koester (1999) point out many positive reasons for having interactions only within one's own culture: 1) The culture becomes predictable therefore reducing the risk of the unknown 2) The cultural patterns become noticeable and therefore people within the culture have automatic responses saving time and energy.

Lustig and Koester (1999) explain three ways in which members of a culture socially categorize other individuals. First, due to the fact that people are constantly being bombarded by thousands of different perceptual stimuli, they feel the need to simplify. To do this, they find it necessary to select, organize, and reduce the information into less complex forms. Second, humans assume that other humans with whom they interact are much like themselves. For example, we like to think that others act, believe, and feel the same way that we do in all situations. To illustrate this, people sometimes recall similar situations that may have occurred to them in order to evaluate someone else's motives. Third, humans attempt to further simplify this process of organizing categorical characteristics as belonging to a certain set or type of people.

This method develops out of the humans' need to cognitively simplify the operation of processing information about others. Therefore, simplifying this process results in a method in which prior experiences are used as a basis of comparison for all members of a specific culture. This process is otherwise known as "stereotyping" (Lustig and Koester, 1999).

According to Lustig and Koester (1999), "All cultures teach their members the 'preferred' ways to respond to the words, which are often labeled as 'natural' or 'appropriate'" (p.73). This belief that the "practices of one's own culture are superior to those of other cultures is called ethnocentrism" (p.146). In relation to the legal profession, which is known as an elitist society, through their training they learn to be ethnocentric. For example, Hausian, Condit, and Lucaites (1996) state:

In the lexicon of contemporary liberal-democratic legal practice, to "think like a lawyer" is to have mastered the fundamental, rational principles of "the law," a mastery that confers a technical, professional understanding of legal practices unavailable to ordinary, untrained people (p.323).

In the words of Glenn A. Shubert, "the law has evolved as a form of judicial policy-making that depends on having a

'legitimized elitism' in which judges operate in closer proximity to the 'music of the heavenly spheres' than to the people of their 'raucous marketplaces' (Hasian, Condit, and Lucaites, 1996; Shubert 1994). Throughout the research on the legal profession, a phrase is repeated again and again as to emphasize its rhetorical importance. To gain access, respect and the success that the profession has to offer, one must first "think like a lawyer" (Binder, 1997; Delia, 1990; Hasian, Jr., Condit, and Lucaites, 1999; Hopf and Kess, 1987; Remland, 1993; Spurr & Sueyoshi, 1993). The term "think like a lawyer" refers to not only possessing the logical and analytical reasoning skills but also to share in the culturally based attitudes, values, and beliefs. Being a member of such an elite culture does not come with reproach, as stated earlier, out of an effort to save time and energy, humans tend to base perceptions on previous experiences; therefore, stereotypes arise. Both the careers of a sports agent and a lawyer have seen their fair shares of stereotyping. This is usually aided by the use of media. For example, the recent movie, "Jerry Maguire" left moviegoers with a definite perception of the culture of sports agents. As have the varied courtroom drama shows on prime time television. Network prime-time television communicates via stories. It is through these stories that humans' perceptions of

the world evolve (Signorielli, 1987). According to Gitlin (1977), "...through consistent depictions of people and institutions in its stories, television prime-time programming carries the potential to transform reality" (p.308). It is through this perceived reality that such stereotypes of both lawyers and sports agents derive.

This theory supports the research that has been done on media cultivation. According to Pfau (1995), cultivation is best described by the following:

The "cultivation" process involves the modification or reinforcement of viewers' perceptions of their environment over time, an effect that is the most pronounced among heavier viewers, who are more likely to accept television's portrayal of the world as reality (p.309).

The number of attorneys depicted during network prime-time programming has increased sharply in recent years (Jarvis, 1991). Early cultural influence research revealed that lawyers were perceived as being smart, rational, and fair, perceptions which were consistent with the defending of their clients (Jeffries-Fox & Signorielli, 1978). The legal community was concerned during this period that the public was getting the wrong perception of lawyers and that the media was demeaning their jobs as public defenders (Pfau et.al., 1995). This is what

sparked the controversy over television perceptions of lawyers. As we entered the nineties, the networks started to air shows such as L.A. Law, which, according to Jarvis (1991), exposed lawyers for their true selves. He explains:

What makes the triumph of "Law" so remarkable is that it breaks so many of television's own laws...[S]tar attorneys were invariably portrayed as white knights serving a noble calling. L.A. Law doesn't just kick dirt on that image. It comprises the most unflinching indictment of a prestigious profession ever handed down by a network. [Creators] have delivered a devastating behind-the-bar portrait of what makes the legal world go around...(p.85).

Almost every night of the week, some kind of courtroom program can be found. For example, on Monday evening Ally McBeal can be found making light of a career with a law firm while on Tuesday night, Law and Order utilizes their keen investigative skills to fulfill justice. On cable television many courtroom programs can be found at any time, such as Night Court, Matlock, Perry Mason, L.A. Law, and Equal Justice. The networks have also noticed a demand for daytime courtroom television shows. Everyday during the week, Judge Mills Lane, Judge Koch, or Judge Judy can be found on network TV; Judge Wapner can even be found

on "Animal Court" on the cable television channel, Animal Planet.

An increased interest in trial coverage was noticed by cable TV gurus, which lead to the development of Court TV. Court TV is a 24-hour television channel that shows live and taped courtroom trials. In between the trials, several accredited attorneys offer commentary. All of this adds to the increased knowledge of the public about legal matters. However, having this knowledge of not only how the legal system works but also how attorneys conduct themselves, leads to an impression or perception whether positive or negative about the legal profession. This knowledge which is used to base an opinion on may or may not be accurate. This is the downside to public knowledge of the legal profession via media. Media are capable of editing the information that is given to the general public. Therefore, the perceptions made by the knowledge supplied have the possibility of deriving from false or manipulated information.

Having a preset perception of a professional, whether it be a sports agent or an attorney, creates the possibility of the existence of cultural stereotypes. This in fact, would become a communicative barrier in the agent or lawyer/client relationship.

When the communication discipline attempts to explain how human relationships are formed, and how they are maintained, one of the most important elements to maintaining a balanced relationship is to have a high degree of trust. Goodall (1983), states that "trust is manifested in the exchange between two persons" (p.147). Trust is one of the most important aspects of the professional relationship. As a relationship becomes closer over a period of time, trust becomes an unspoken way of being (Carr, 1979; Goodall, 1983). When trust is broken in the professional relationship, it warrants the worst kind of punishment, termination of the relationship. Patton and Giffin (1977), describe trust as "influencing and being influenced by various elements in the communication process" (p. 431). For example, our trust of someone is influenced by his or her credibility, as we perceive it to be. In classical rhetoric form, this is known as 'ethos'. Therefore, in the agent-client relationship, research shows that the client's trust of the agent increases, as does the perceived credibility of the agent. One can conclude that the trust due to the perceived credibility of the lawyer in the lawyer-client relationship follows similar patterns.

Much research has been done on the manner in which one person's perception of another influences the level of personal

trust. Patton and Giffin (1977) have identified several characteristics that influence a fluctuation in personal trust:

1. Credibility-quantity of pertinent information, degree of ability or skill, or validity of judgment.
2. Reliability-dependability, predictability, consistency, or good will toward others.
3. Dynamism-active rather than passive behavior, open rather than reserved behavior. (p. 432)

Implications of this research support the idea that there are certain characteristics which one may possess that will empower him/her to be perceived as a trusting human being. In both fields that are being studied, the ability to be perceived as a trustworthy person is imperative to both sports agents and lawyers. Sometimes, the task of having a trusting image takes years to refine and unfortunately lost in minutes. As stated earlier, an important aspect of perceived trust is credibility, since this is earned through experience, it often takes time to reach this desired trusted state of relational closeness.

Interpersonal solidarity is related to self-disclosure in a number of ways. Self-disclosure is the offering of personal experience, thoughts, and ideas to another person (Bell and

Healy, 1992; Carr, 1979; Goodall 1983). There are fairly dependable data that suggest that when self-disclosure is high, interpersonal involvement is increased. This is the point at which interpersonal solidarity takes place. Therefore, the degree of involvement is directly correlated with the level of interpersonal involvement (Carr, 1979; Patton and Giffin, 1977). In relation to self disclosure Patton and Giffin (1974) state:

For someone to be important to you, you must know something about him/her that matters to you and that makes a great difference to you. If you don't know much about a person it is not likely that your acquaintance will amount to much of a relationship (p.345).

There are many levels as well as types of disclosure. The most common level of disclosure is by identifying biographical information such as age, family background, hobbies and interests. Another level of disclosure involves personal ideas, values and attitudes. The final level, which is both the most threatening level of disclosure as well as the most satisfying level is sharing personal feelings. The final level is the most important because it is at this level that you truly get to know someone (Carr, 1979). However, for the purpose of this study, disclosure is a unique characteristic of the relationship.

In the lawyer-client relationship, the disclosure takes place by means of the client. However, during the agent-athlete relationship, a majority of the disclosure takes place by the agent. This creates a paradox to the communication model of disclosure that is illustrated through recent research. Most relationships that are not reciprocal in disclosure are unbalanced relationships. It is this characteristic that gives the types of relationships in this study their uniqueness in the field of communication.

Let us take a look at each relationship individually in relation to their power structure. The lawyer-client relationship is structured in a way as to give the lawyer the majority of the power; therefore, it is the responsibility of the client to self-disclose enough information to keep the relationship in a state of constant interpersonal solidarity, which translates into relational closeness. The relationship between the agent and the athlete is much like the lawyer-client relationship. The agent knows that at any time the athlete could decide to terminate the relationship; therefore, the agent must do whatever is necessary to create the sense of interpersonal solidarity and prove to the athlete that he/she is trustworthy and interested solely in the benefit of the athlete.

Sports Management

Recent articles published in the field of sports management have indicated a relationship between interpersonal solidarity, or relational closeness, and relational satisfaction of the agent-client relationship. This theory seeks to expand upon the realm of interpersonal relationships within the organizational structure. Weylman (1997) states, " Your objectives as an agent in today's marketplace should be to continuously inform and educate your prospects and clients to do business with you because of a continual sense of relationship" (p.18). Rogen New Zealand managing director, Michael Carr, concluded that as business becomes more relationships-oriented, relationship skills are becoming more important in business (Tapsell, 1997).

The past reputation of sports agents was that of contract negotiators; however, that responsibility has since been expanded and transformed. Due to the overly competitive field of sports management, a sports agent must be involved in a constant state of self-promotion because if agents don't promote themselves creatively and continuously, they will be waiting for the clients who never come (Norris, 1998). This type of competitive working environment is not right for everyone, since self promotion is such a large part of the scheme the sports

agent must be personable and outgoing. It is all right to be up front and somewhat obvious, as long as agents are not offensive or annoying (Lee & Jablin, 1995). As booking agent Steve Levine states, " The fact is, you only sign a client when somebody loses a client and that is a tough business to be in" (Mariani, 1997). According to Sylvia Kelley, an instructor at the University of Texas at El Paso, the key to gaining more clients is your personality. Kelley has found that self disclosure allows people to more readily confide in you when you share a little bit of yourself and let them know who you are. She is confident that a glimpse into your private life and your hobbies and interests is a bonding technique which is priceless when building relationships in any client/agent dyads. (Norris, 1998).

Although self-disclosure is one technique which may be applied to maintaining good business relationships, entertaining graciously is another valuable resource (Norris, 1998). Norris (1998), indicates that a successful agent should strive to maintain a home that has an inviting elegance and bring clients in on a regular basis with the intentions of having them respecting you and referring you to their friends.

Relational maintenance takes on many forms. Today's sports agent serve their talented clients as contract negotiators,

career advisors, and friends (Mariani, 1997). Therefore, the relationship between agent and client must encompass all of these roles. One of the most important aspects of maintaining a good relationship is the issue of loyalty. According to Pantello (1998), " U.S. corporations lose half of their customers within five years, half their employees within four" (p.72). Pantello (1998) suggests that the prime reason for this high turnover rate is a lack of loyalty. Just as Smith Barney suggests, " We build our business one customer at a time." The building of customer loyalty is a top priority for every agency and requires prospective planning by agency management (Pantello, 1998).

Along with proving your credibility to a client, the sports agent must also display good will toward an athlete. John Mayotte, a sports agent with ProServe, a leading sports management firm outside of Washington D.C. says, "it's a question of convincing the client that you care" (Mariani, 1997). He wishes his clients luck by fax, email, or phone before important events. Whenever possible, he's there at courtside and spends about thirty percent of his time traveling and watching clients play - and also scouting new clients (Mariani, 1997).

The sports agent must form a friendship with the client to be utilized in times of despair. When players have slumps, Mayotte returns his focus to the personal relationship. He tells

of a client who hadn't won a match in four weeks. "My job then," Mayotte says, "was to keep him encouraged and motivated in a very difficult time in his career." (Mariani, 1997). When free agent Bob Rosenstiel was having a conflict with an ex girlfriend, the first person that he called was his agent John Romano who immediately resolved the issue. These are just a few examples of what goes into creating and maintaining a trusting business relationship.

There was no documentation found which offers any scientific studies on the client-sports agent relationship therefore, this basis was used to form the current study.

The present study will explore what goes into creating a good relationship between sports agents and their professional athlete clients and lawyers and their clients. The focus of the study is to be on interpersonal solidarity such as both client and agent loyalty, degree of friendships, and consistency of merit upon the agent's and lawyer's part. By combining all of these aspects, we shall better learn the process of "keeping a client happy" in all areas of business.

The Legal Culture

President Carter's Executive Order of March 1978, which required "clear and simple English" as a means to improve Government Regulations marked the beginning of a growing

movement to make legal language more understandable to the general public. Citibank was the first institution to simplify their public documents. They transformed their loan applications from legal phraseology to "common language". Several states followed this trend by making it mandatory that institutions alter their documents to appear more readable to the public. For example, New York passed the Sullivan Law, more commonly known as the Understandable Language Law, which insists that consumer credit documents under \$50,000 must be clear and readable.

(Charrow & Crandall, 1990(a); Charrow & Crandall, 1990(b)). Reed Hundt (1997), Chairman of the FCC, supports a movement toward simplifying the legal language as he asks, "how can we find our way to free markets through all this lawyerly fog?" (p.39).

Charrow and Crandell (1990) research what constitutes legal language? They assert that "before we can effectively simplify legal documents or federal regulations, we need to know what is causing the difficulty in the first place" (p.4). According to David Mellinkoff (1963), author of The Language of Law, "much legal language is ambiguous, wordy, and either overly precise or overly vague. Although the public sees this as an enigma, the real problem arises when the lawyers themselves do not recognize the obscureness of the language" (p.38). Charrow and Crandell (1990), note that "most members of the legal profession do not

consider legal language a problem. Most lawyers assume that they are understood--that legal language is basically clear. In fact, the legal system largely proceeds on that assumption" (p.6).

Lawyers lay the blame for not understanding the language on the public themselves. Many believe that the adversity of it is as result of "conceptual difficulty", or that it is the ideas that create the confusion, not necessarily the wording (Charrow and Crandell, 1990(a); Crandell and Charrow, 1990(b)). This is clearly a theory held by many professionals who are on the "inside" of the culture. To illustrate this theory, Hoppe and Kess (1987), state:

Though we would wish to suggest patterned discourse protocols as a principal in some areas of law and medicine, we do not believe that such goals will be fulfilled by a language style that is colloquial or unnaturally simple. Indeed, the formality, if not ritual, of such settings required that the language form be precise and accurate at the same time that it is intelligible. Solutions to such discourse problems are not to be found in the naive expectations of adherents of the plain language movement. The problem, we submit, is one of design, not of simplicity" (p. 5).

The legal language, which is unique only to the legal profession, serves many purposes due to its cultural function. According to Charrow and Crandell (1990), "[Legal Language] separates lawyers from the herd, because acquisition of legal language takes considerable time and study, and those who master it can use it to exclude all others" (p.8). Legal language is not only used as an excluding tool but it is also used to unify people in a culture. Since law is nothing more than words, legal language is the mode used to convey the thoughts and practices of those legal words. Therefore, it is used as a unifying function, in that all that is needed to identify a lawyer is the ability to use the language appropriately (Charrow and Crandell, 1990; Crandell and Charrow, 1990). Mellinkoff (1963) also recognizes the legal language to possess a unifying feature when he depicts a specialized vocabulary that lawyers use to speak with one another as a principal characteristic to the existence of a legal culture.

The development of the legal language has been a major source of inquiry within recent years. Although it has not been studied extensively, the legal language requires a lengthy acquisition process. As one researcher stated, "Something happens when human being enters law school. At some point during their three years, students pick up the notion that in order to

be a lawyer, one must learn to speak and write like a lawyer... By the end of three years, students barely can get through a letter or a conversation without dropping a few 'notwithstanding's,' 'heretofore's,' and 'arguendo's'" (Goldfarb, 1978 as cited in Charrow and Crandell, 1990). The idea of speaking, writing, and acting "like a lawyer" is one of the most prevalent characteristics of the existing legal culture.

If this were a utopian society that lawyers existed in there would not be a problem with having such a verbose language because they could all communicate with each other. The problem arises when someone within the culture must speak with someone outside of the culture and be understood by him or her. Not only does this create a tension between the lawyer and the client but it also creates a feeling of intimidation by the client and possible misunderstandings, which lead to feelings of distrust. For this very reason, the study of interpersonal communication within the agent-client setting is a valid study to better learn how to mend ties of miscommunication and distrust.

The discipline, which studies human communication, does not differ greatly from that which studies the human mind. In both

scenarios, the first step is to study that which makes up the individual. As the cliché states, "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree" the same theory applies to studying communicative patterns of behavior. The first step in doing so is to look at the make-up of the individual both individually and culturally. A researcher must ask the questions, "Where do the communication patterns come from? Is the way that a person communicates a cultural reflection of their surrounding or is it simply individualistic? Throughout this study, the hypotheses remain:

H1: The more communicative patterns that exist across a culture, the more similar communication there will be within that culture.

H2: The less self-disclosure and trust that exists within the relationship between an agent and their client, the less satisfied the client will be.

H3: The more self-disclosure and trust that is exhibited by an agent, the more interpersonal solidarity that will exist in the relationship.

METHOD

Subjects

A total of 79 subjects participated in this study. The subjects were broken down into four groups. The first group was made up of Lawyers n=22. The second group involved current or former clients of lawyers n=29. The third group consisted of sports agents n=17. The fourth and final group was comprised of professional athletes who were clients of sports agents n=11.

The Lawyers who participated in this study were geographically diverse. Participants included those practicing law in every region of the United States: California, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, Washington state and Washington D.C., to name a few. Out of the 22 lawyers who participated, 6 were female lawyers. 15 of the 22 lawyers practiced law within a law firm and 7 subjects were employed under private practice.

The clients participating in this study currently, or have in the past, employ the services of a lawyer. Of the 29 clients surveyed, 18 clients hired the lawyer for the purposes of family law i.e. divorce.

The Sports Agents who participated in this study were also geographically diverse in similar regions of the United States, as were the lawyers. Of the 17 who participated, there were no

female subjects. 12 of the 17 subjects are employed by sports marketing agencies as opposed to the 5 subjects who are independent agents.

The professional athletes who participated in this study are from a variety of sports. The divisions of the professional athletes are as follows: 3 professional baseball players, 2 professional football players, and 6 professional hockey players. Out of the 6 professional hockey players that participated in my study, 2 were from the NHL (National Hockey League), 3 were from the IHL (International Hockey League), and 1 was from the WCHL (West Central Hockey League).

Procedure

A Likert-type instrument was used to measure various variables depending upon the group of subjects. The Lawyers and the Sports Agents received a scale that measured perceptions of organizational culture. The clients and athletes completed a survey on interpersonal solidarity and relational satisfaction. The justification for two different surveys lies in the fact that each will have different perspectives of the organizational culture and the communication within. Therefore, separate surveys will garner cultural and relational viewpoints both from within the culture and outside of the culture.

The surveys were mostly sent via email and facsimile; however, there were several that were completed in a face to face interaction. The procedure for locating subjects for the study was quite tedious. The World Wide Web and America Online was utilized to find subjects with accurate qualifications. The first step in this procedure was to complete a search for individuals who fit the profile of the desired subject. For example, for purposes of the study, only sports agents, lawyers, and clients of lawyers were sought after. After finding the names of the desired subjects, the next step is to verify that they do indeed have the sought after qualifications. The next step was to send the prospective subject a "private message" which they received instantaneously. The message stated my name, purpose, and inquiry into their possibility of completing a survey. Of possible 267 subjects solicited, 68 responded by agreeing to complete a survey. The next and final step was to email the copy of the survey to the subject and they promptly returned it.

Although seemingly an efficient way to acquire subjects, there are many drawbacks to using the Internet as a researching tool to gain subjects. One obstacle was the reluctance of people to accept an e-mail message from someone whom they did not personally know. The possibility of a computer virus being

transmitted is rather high through e-mail messages. Another barrier in the surveying process was convincing the prospective subjects that the survey was not an attempt to sell a product or perpetrate any kind of deceitful action.

Measurement

Questions on these Likert-type instruments were the compilation of several pre-existing surveys. The measurement instrument that was given to the athletes and the clients was a combination of two separate surveys. The first scale that questions are drawn from is the Interpersonal Solidarity Scale, which was developed in 1978 by L.R. Wheelless. This scale measures the interpersonal relationships of agents and athletes and attorneys and their clients from the athletes and clients' perception in terms of closeness.

The second scale used was the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, which was developed in 1977 by C. W. Downs and M. Hazen. This scale measures the satisfaction of the athlete-agent and lawyer-client relationship as perceived by the athlete and the client.

Selecting questions from the previous two scales developed the scale used for this study. Thirteen Likert - type questions were selected from the Interpersonal Solidarity scale and seven questions from the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire,

five of which were Likert-type and two were multiple choice in nature. Combining the two scales allowed for two separate topics to be covered by one survey. The subjects were asked to complete the survey and were told that all information would remain confidential. To help the subjects better understand the surveys; the wording was changed slightly from group to group. An example of the two surveys can be seen in Figures 1 and 2.

The instrument provided for the agents and the lawyers, the Organizational Culture survey (Glaser, Zamanou, & Hacker, 1989), was created with the specific purpose of establishing themes and patterns around which beliefs are developed (Ruben, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994). Like the previous surveys, it too was formatted for the specific subject group. The word that was alternated was "profession" for "culture"; each survey gave a brief explanation of how to interpret the wording as can be seen in Figures 3 and 4.

Reliability and Validity

Downs and Hazen (1977) found the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire to be reliable with a reliability score of .94. This questionnaire has also been proven to be valid, through their study, Downs and Hazen found factors in the questionnaire to be highly correlated with, in this case, job satisfaction. The Interpersonal Solidarity Scale has also proven to be

Figure 1

Instructions: Enter the number that represents the extent to which the following statements apply to you.

To a very little extent	To a little extent	To some extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

* When used, the word "profession" refers to professionals in the occupation of sports marketing*

1. () People in this profession are direct and honest with each other.
2. () People in this profession accept criticism without becoming defensive.
3. () People in this profession resolve disagreements cooperatively.
4. () People in this profession are capable of functioning as a team.
5. () People in this profession are cooperative and considerate.
6. () People in this profession constructively confront problems.
7. () People in this profession are good listeners.
8. () People in this profession are genuinely concerned with each other.
9. () People in this profession are good communicators.
10. () There is an atmosphere of trust in this profession.

If you work for a sports marketing agency, please continue with questions 11-15. If you work independently, you have finished the survey, thank you very much for your cooperation.

11. () All members of this agency have a productive working relationship
12. () This agency motivates me to put my best foot forward.
13. () This agency treats people in a consistent and fair manner.
14. () Being a part of this agency feels like being a part of a family.
15. () I have a say in decisions that affect my work.
16. () When changes are made the reasons why are made clear.
17. () This agency values the ideas of workers at every level.
18. () My opinions count in this agency.
19. () Meetings are open to all people in the agency.
20. () I do not plan to leave this agency because of dissatisfaction.

* When finished please Fax to (618)372-8979 or email to

. All survey's must be returned by July 27, 1999.

Thank you very much for your cooperation

Figure 2

Instructions: Please mark these scales to indicate how you relate to your lawyer. Record the number of your response in the space provided beside each statement.

(7) strongly agree (6) agree (5) moderately agree (4) undecided (3) moderately disagree (2) disagree (1) strongly disagree

1. () My lawyer has a great deal of influence over my behavior.
2. () I trust my lawyer completely.
3. () I willingly disclose a great deal of positive and negative things about myself, honestly, and fully (in depth) to my lawyer.
4. () My lawyer willingly discloses a great deal of positive and negative things about him/herself, honestly and fully (in depth) to me.
5. () I distrust my lawyer.
6. () I like my lawyer much more than most people I know.
7. () I seldom interact/communicate with my lawyer.
8. () I dislike my lawyer.
9. () I interact/communicate with my lawyer much more than with most people I know.
10. () We are not very close at all.
11. () My lawyer does alot of helpful things for me.
12. () I feel very close to my lawyer.

Instructions for questions 14-16: Please make a mark in the space provided preceding the appropriate answer.

14. How satisfied are you with your lawyer?

() Very satisfied	() Dissatisfied
() Satisfied	() Very dissatisfied
() Somewhat satisfied	() Indifferent
() Somewhat dissatisfied	
15. Toward the end of the relationship with your lawyer what happened to the level of satisfaction as compared to the beginning?

() Gone up	() Stayed the same	() Gone down
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16. If you could change the salary that your lawyer receives according to the quality of their work, it would:

() Go up	() Stay the same	() Go down
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Instructions for questions 17-20: Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following by recording the number of your response in the space provided before each statement.

(7) Very dissatisfied (6) Dissatisfied (5) Somewhat dissatisfied (4) Indifferent

(3) Somewhat satisfied (2) Satisfied (1) Very satisfied

17. () Feedback that my lawyer provides me about my success.
18. () The amount that my lawyer listens and pays attention to me.
19. () The extent to which my lawyer offers guidance to solve problems

Figure 3

Instructions: Enter the number that represents the extent to which the following statements apply to you.

To a very little extent	To a little extent	To some extent	To a great extent	To a very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

* When used, the word “culture” refers to the legal profession*

1. () People in this culture are direct and honest with each other.
2. () People in this culture accept criticism without becoming defensive.
3. () People in this culture resolve disagreements cooperatively.
4. () People in this culture are capable of functioning as a team.
5. () People in this culture are cooperative and considerate.
6. () People in this culture constructively confront problems.
7. () People in this culture are good listeners.
8. () People in this culture are genuinely concerned with each other.
9. () People in this culture are good communicators.
10. () There is an atmosphere of trust in this culture.

If you are a partner in a law firm, please continue with questions 11-15. If you are in private practice, you have finished the survey, thank you very much for your cooperation.

11. () All members of this firm have a productive working relationship
12. () This firm motivates me to put my best foot forward.
13. () This firm treats people in a consistent and fair manner.
14. () Being a part of this firm feels like being a part of a family.
15. () I have a say in decisions that affect my work.
16. () When changes are made the reasons why are made clear.
17. () This firm values the ideas of workers at every level.
18. () My opinions count in this firm.
19. () Meetings are open to all people in the firm.
20. () I do not plan to leave this firm because of dissatisfaction.

* When finished please Fax to (618)372-8979 or email to . All surveys must be returned by July 27, 1999. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Figure 4

Instructions: Please mark these scales to indicate how you relate to your agent. Record the number of your response in the space provided beside each statement.

(7) strongly agree (6) agree (5) moderately agree (4) undecided (3) moderately disagree (2) disagree (1) strongly disagree

- ___ 1. My agent has a great deal of influence over my behavior.
 ___ 2. I trust my agent completely.
 ___ 3. I willingly disclose a great deal of positive and negative things about myself, honestly, and fully (in depth) to my agent.
 ___ 4. My agent willingly discloses a great deal of positive and negative things about him/herself, honestly and fully (in depth) to me.
 ___ 5. I distrust my agent.
 ___ 6. I like my agent much more than most people I know.
 ___ 7. I seldom interact/communicate with my agent.
 ___ 8. I dislike my agent.
 ___ 9. I interact/communicate with my agent much more than with most people I know.
 ___ 10. We are not very close at all.
 ___ 11. My agent does alot of helpful things for me.
 ___ 12. I feel very close to my agent.
 ___ 13. We share a social relationship outside of the constructs of business.

Instructions for questions 14-16: Please make a mark in the space provided preceding the appropriate answer.

14. How satisfied are you with your agent?

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| ___ 1. Very satisfied | ___ 5. Somewhat dissatisfied |
| ___ 2. Satisfied | ___ 6. Dissatisfied |
| ___ 3. Somewhat satisfied | ___ 7. Very dissatisfied |
| ___ 4. Indifferent | |

15. In the past 6 months, what has happened to your level of satisfaction?

- ___ 1. Gone up ___ 2. Stayed the same ___ 3. Gone down

16. If you could change the salary that your agent receives according to the quality of their work, it would:

- ___ 1. Go up ___ 2. Stay the same ___ 3. Go down

Instructions for questions 17-20: Please indicate how satisfied you are with the following by recording the a number of your response in the space provided before each statement.

(7) Very dissatisfied (6) Dissatisfied (5) Somewhat dissatisfied (4) Indifferent
 (3) Somewhat satisfied (2) Satisfied (1) Very satisfied

- ___ 17. Feedback that my agent provides me about my success.
 ___ 18. The amount that my agent listens and pays attention to me.
 ___ 19. The extent to which my agent offers guidance to solve problems.
 ___ 20. The amount of enthusiasm and optimism that my agent shows toward my career.

reliable in past studies. Wheelless reported split-half reliability's of .96 (Wheelless, 1978) and .94 (Wheelless, Wheelless, & Baus, 1984). Wheelless (1978), through the use of this scale, found that his prediction was correct: A strong relationship existed between self disclosure, individualized trust, and interpersonal solidarity which is indicative that the scale is valid for that specific purpose of measuring interpersonal solidarity. However, since the scale that was used on the current study is a collocating of statements from both of the afore mentioned scales, the validity and reliability for either scale would not apply to the current scale. Therefore, validity and reliability of the scale used for the current study must be tested.

According to Cronbach's Alpha, the inter-item reliability for these twenty items on the athlete and client survey is .38123, which is considerably low. One justification for this may be that the reliability may not be accurate because this single survey is testing two separate topics: solidarity and satisfaction. Before calculating the results, question number 7,8, and 10 had to be reverse coded for purposes of analysis. These questions were those that were presumed to be non-solidarity (e.g. I seldom interact/communicate with my agent/ I dislike my agent/ We are not very close at all).

The findings of the study by Glaser et.al., (1987) revealed Cronbach alpha's for the subscale ranging from .63 to .91 which indicated that the survey was indeed reliable. The current study produced a Cronbach alpha of .86, which is acceptable to prove reliability.

RESULTS

The two variables tested in the agent-client survey were interpersonal solidarity and relational satisfaction. As the hypothesis states, there was a significant positive correlation between interpersonal solidarity and relational satisfaction. All three of the hypotheses were found to be affirmative. Research question number one, which asks the origin of the patterns in which lawyers and agents communicate with their clients was answered by studying the frequency of the answers within the culture. Since a majority of members of each culture have similar perceptions of the communicative acts within the culture, we learn that patterns do exist from which members of a culture tend to mirror one another. To test the significance of each variable in accordance with the other variable, correlation tests were performed. Each question was correlated with a related question to find the best pairings in terms of correlation. The results of the test show that the hypothesis, the more interpersonal solidarity that exists between a professional and his/her client, the more relational satisfaction is perceived by the client, was supported by the data collected. Although the levels of correlation varied, the relationship between interpersonal solidarity and relational satisfaction was significant and positive.

By means of a Pearson Correlation test, we can begin to see patterns of cognitive behavior by athletes and clients. When comparing if their agent/lawyer has done a lot of helpful things for them, with the amount that the agent/lawyer listens and pays attention to them, the clients responded to a positive correlation of $[r=.642045]$ while the athletes responded $[r=.834025]$. On the issue of trust, a correlation between trusting their agent/lawyer, and the amount of enthusiasm and optimism the clients responded $[r= -.477731]$ while the athletes responded $[r=.643212]$. When studying a correlation between the level of satisfaction with the level of salary, the clients replied $[r= -.656531]$ while the athlete indicated $[r=.718750]$. To find a correlation between trust and self-disclosure, the following questions were asked, "Do you trust your agent/lawyer completely?" and "Does your agent/lawyer willingly disclose information about their personal life?" The following responses were gathered; clients $[r= -.477731]$ athletes $[r=.78346]$. The most significant correlations were tallied and put into figure 5 for the athletes and figure 6 for the clients.

In terms of frequency of answers, the following results apply. 31% of clients strongly disagreed and 55% of athletes strongly agreed when asked about the amount that their lawyers/agent listened to them. 44% of clients were very

dissatisfied with the amount of enthusiasm that their lawyers displayed while 45% of athletes were satisfied with the enthusiasm of their agent. When asked about the level of the lawyer/agent's salary, 45% of clients said that it should go down while 72% of athletes said that it should stay the same. On the issue of relational satisfaction, 45% of clients responded that their relationship with their lawyer has gone down since their first interaction. 37% of Athletes responded that the relationship has stayed the same over time. 59% of clients stated that they disliked their lawyer as opposed to 45% of

Figure 5

Correlations of Athlete

Influence over athletes behavior and closeness of the agent	-.71
Trust in the agent & The athletes feelings of closeness to the agent-----	.83
Influence that agent has over athletes behavior & Trust in agent-----	.89
The ability to reciprocally willingly disclose information about themselves, both athlete and agent -----	.73
Distrust in the agent and level of satisfaction in last months -----	.64

Liking the agent & frequent interaction-----	.83
Feelings of closeness & frequent interaction-----	.61
Disliking the agent and no feelings of closeness-----	.87
Closeness and trusting the agent -----	.83
Sharing a social relationship & agent doing helpful things for them -----	.81
Satisfaction and amount of salary -----	.72
Level of satisfaction in last 6 months & amount of enthusiasm by agent -----	.65
Level of satisfaction & salary -----	.72
Feedback from agent, amount they listen and pay Attention-----	.85
Agent offering guidance on problems & Feedback from Agent --	.57
Amount of enthusiasm by agent & feedback from Agent -----	.75

Note. The values represent the correlation between the two variable mentioned.

.4 or above is considered to be significant.

Figure 6

Agent Correlations

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>CORRELATION</u>
Direct/honest and cooperative/considerate-----	.59
Direct/honest and consistent and fair-----	.47
Accept criticism non defensively and respect and trust-----	.66
Accept criticism non defensively and good communicators-----	.76
Cooperate and considerate and resolve conflict cooperatively.	.72
Capable of functioning as a team & confront problems constructively-----	.67
Accept criticism non-defensively and cooperative and considerate -----	.44
Resolve disagreements and constructively confront problems-	.67

Note. The values represent the correlation between the two variable mentioned.

.4 or above is considered to be significant.

athletes who strongly disagreed that they disliked their agent. 55% of clients responded that they disagreed when asked if they had feelings of closeness between themselves and their lawyer. While 45% of athletes moderately agreed on feelings of closeness with their agent. When tested on the variable of self-disclosure, 35% of clients responded that their lawyers did not partake in self-disclosure while 36% of athletes agreed that the agent did partake in self-disclosure. The final question asked was if they trusted their lawyer completely, the answers are as follows: clients - 28% disagreed; athletes - 36% moderately agreed.

This study also examined the perceptions of lawyers and agents on their occupational culture and the following results apply. There was a negative correlation of $[r = -.601657]$ as reported by the lawyers when comparing the acceptance of criticism without becoming defensive and if meetings are open to all employees of a firm. When asked the same question, the agents responded with a negative correlation of $[r = -.554414]$. In a correlation test between direct and honest communication within the culture and all members of a firm having working productive relationships, the agents had a positive correlation of $[r = .478220]$ and the lawyers had $[r = .806898]$. A negative correlation occurred between the acceptance of criticism without

becoming defensive and good communication skills, the lawyers replied [$r = -.756479$] and the lawyers [$r = .146810$]. A positive correlation between having motivation within a firm/agency and that agency giving the lawyer/agent a voice in work decisions that affect them, the lawyers responded [$r = .344124$] while the agents said [$r = -.504091$]. A compilation of the significant correlations is illustrated in Figure 7.

Frequency Reports revealed the percentage of subjects in relation to the levels on the Likert scale. 50% of lawyers answered to some extent when asked if people in the legal culture were direct and honest with their communication as opposed to 35% of agents. When asked if the members of their culture had productive and working relationships, 40% of lawyers and 41% of agents said that to a great extent they do have productive working relationships within their occupational culture. When asked if they felt motivated within their agency/firm, 53% of lawyers said to some extent and 33% of agents said to a very great extent. In relation to how much of a voice they have in their own work decisions, 73% of lawyers surveyed responded that to some extent they had a voice, 41% of agents said to a very great extent they had a say in work decisions.

Figure 7*Agent Correlations*

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>CORRELATION</u>
Direct/honest and cooperative/considerate-----	.59
Direct/honest and consistent and fair-----	.47
Accept criticism non defensively and respect and trust-----	.66
Accept criticism non defensively and good communicators-----	.76
Cooperate and considerate and resolve conflict cooperatively.	.72
Capable of functioning as a team & confront problems constructively-----	.67
Accept criticism non-defensively and cooperative and considerate ----- (neg)	.44
Resolve diasagreements and constructively confront problems-	.67

Note. The values represent the correlation between the two variable mentioned.

.4 or above is considered to be significant.

Implications can be made as to how these results affect the course of interaction between lawyers and their clients and agents and their professional athlete clients and how changes can be made to better the communication between the professional and their clients.

DISCUSSION

Now that we know that there is a definite relationship between interpersonal solidarity and relationship satisfaction, we are better able to understand the make-up of the relationship and project into the future how to mend relationships that dissolve due to poor relational maintenance tactics.

The correlation between the amount that the lawyer listens to their client and the amount of enthusiasm that the lawyer displays suggests that the more the lawyer listens to the client, the more enthused the client perceives the lawyer to be. Within the structure of human interaction, there are several qualities that a listener can have to create a good relationship base with their conversational partner. One of these qualities includes offering constructive feedback. For instance, if someone doesn't perceive that you are paying attention to him or her, they will also assume that you are disinterested and/or unenthused with them in general. Therefore, when lawyers or agents are involved in a conversation with a client, one of the most important and useful tools that they can possess is listening skills to be able to pay attention to them and create a sense of unity between themselves and their clients.

A negative correlation between the satisfaction of the lawyer and the level of salary that they receive indicates that

when the level of salary is increased, the expectation level rises as well. For example, when the salary of a lawyer rises or is initially higher than average, the clients expectations also rise and therefore, create a higher bar for the lawyer, one that is usually unattainable. Therefore, one can imply that the higher the salary, the least chance of high approval ratings.

The athletes reported a positive correlation between trusting their agent and having feelings of closeness with them. As stated in the literature, a domino affect takes place in terms of relationship and satisfaction. The more solidarity that is provided in the relationship via self-disclosure, loyalty, or trust, the relational closeness that occurs. Implications from this response are apparent, professionals who are involved in client relations should put importance on having good interpersonal skills which will enable them to create a continual sense of 'interpersonal' relationship not 'business' relationship.

Many themes arose from the study on the clients and athletes. Not only is a sense of trust important to them, but also an overall enthusiasm. Without the enthusiasm, several aspects of optimal communication are impossible. For example, lack of confidentiality leads to a lack of trust, which leads to

a lack of optimism which lead to dissolution of the relationship.

Through the study, it is apparent that the ability to accept criticism without becoming defensive is important to both lawyers and agents. Both of these cultures are submerged in competitive environments. Although this is the basis for maintaining relational satisfaction, it is also a reason that many agents and lawyers go over and beyond the call of duty for their clients, which oftentimes makes the relationship an oddity in the business world.

Through the research and surveys, we know that self-disclosure is the key to creating and maintaining relationships. However, it can also be the key to termination of those very same relationships. Therefore, the implication can be made that these agents in this survey rely upon self-disclosure to form every level of the relationship from the initiation stage to the termination stage. The difference between the two relationships studied is in the amount of self-disclosure within the relationship.

When an agent and an athlete interact, the agent does a large portion of the talking and therefore, more self disclosure than the athlete. However, in the lawyer/client relationship, it is the client who does more of the talking and self-disclosing

than the lawyer. Therefore, as indicated by the study, this needs to be balanced out to create a sense of equality in the conversational interactions that take place. The lack of co-dependence in both relationships is what separates it from the interpersonal relationships that are typically studied.

As speech communication research indicates, in interpersonal relationships, at the level of optimal communication, there is reciprocity of self-disclosure. However, in these types of relationships in which this study consists, the lack of reciprocity is the defining matter of the relationships itself.

After learning of these findings and implications toward the business world and in particular in the area of law and sports management, it is observable that amount and type of self-disclosure in these types of relationships is crucial to the success of the relationship. Although there are some limitation to the study such as a lack of availability to more professional athletes and more qualitative data, the findings are significant to the field.

In future research on this topic, which is much needed, one should consider focusing on the conversational aspect and the amount of type of self-disclosure. If possible, transcribing conversational talk would be the kind of qualitative data that

would lend itself to examination of these kind of common communicative patterns.

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