

5-2014

# Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict

Savannah V. Wheeler  
*East Tennessee State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors>

 Part of the [Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Wheeler, Savannah V., "Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict" (2014). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 197. <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors/197>

This Honors Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact [digilib@etsu.edu](mailto:digilib@etsu.edu).

Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of Honors

By

Savannah Wheeler  
The Honors College  
*COMMUNICATION STUDIES* Honors-in-Discipline  
East Tennessee State University

April 15, 2014

Savannah Wheeler, Author

Carrie Oliveira, Faculty Mentor

Dr. Amber Kinser, Faculty Reader

Dr. Rebecca Keeler, Faculty Reader

### **Abstract**

The objective of the current study was to examine the relationship between relational satisfaction and interpretations of nonverbal communication during a conflict. Specifically, the researcher hypothesized that participants who reported being dissatisfied with their closest relationship would be more likely to make negative interpretations of facial expressions during a conflict episode than would participants reporting high satisfaction with their closest relationship. Participants (N=86) were asked to consider their closest relational partner while responding to survey items assessing relational satisfaction and their perception of the emotion being communicated in descriptions of facial expressions. Results were inconclusive as they did not statistically support the hypothesis. Future study of the relationship between relational satisfaction and the perception of emotion is a worthwhile endeavor as more conclusive studies may offer insight on the role nonverbal communication plays and encourage healthy conflict management.

**KEY WORDS:** relationships; relational satisfaction; conflict, nonverbal communication.

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

As close relationships progress, occasional conflict and disharmony will inevitably arise. Conflict can be motivated by innumerable circumstances, one of the most common sources of conflict, though, is an individual's perception that his/her partner has, or will, fail to meet his/her needs or desires (Thomas, 1991). The failure to meet needs and desires can have a negative impact on relational satisfaction. When relational satisfaction suffers, interactions designed to remedy unmet needs may be highly emotionally charged, which can subsequently cause difficulty for partners to interpret each other's nonverbal behaviors. Nonverbal communication plays a vital role in all face-to-face interactions. Smith and colleagues (2005) suggest that facial expressions are vastly important because they offer insight on how a person is responding, emotionally, to the words or actions being displayed. This knowledge can motivate the sender to edit their behavior if they are receiving a negative response from their nonverbal cues. Additionally, research has gone so far to suggest that nonverbal behaviors give more insight on how a person feels than their verbal communication (Gottman & Porterfield, 1981). As much as nonverbal communication may facilitate meaning making, such behaviors can also inhibit healthy conflict management if they are perceived as expressions of negative emotion. The adverse impact of nonverbal communication on the quality of a conflict may be further influenced by partners' relational satisfaction. The goal of this study is to examine the extent to which relationship satisfaction influences the perception of nonverbal expressions during a conflict episode.

### **Purpose and Rationale**

Research discussing relational satisfaction is plentiful. Many of these studies consider marital couples or friendships exclusively, with few including all relationship types. Numerous

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

studies examine nonverbal communication and conflict; however, few discuss the association these variables have with relational satisfaction.

The present study is unique because it encompasses all three elements of nonverbal communication, relational satisfaction and conflict. For the purposes of this study, relational satisfaction is not limited to the study of one type of relationship (e.g., romantic relationships). All types of close relationships are considered in this research, which allows a better understanding of relational satisfaction, as a whole, without the limits of one type of relationship. Variability in relationship type has not been the case with most previous research.

Nonverbal communication, for the purposes of this study, is focused on facial expression which represent a small subset of nonverbal communication. Other studies typically consider hand gestures and body postures when studying nonverbal behaviors. We have chosen to focus on facial expressions because they tend to be the component of nonverbal communication that most obviously signals emotion. We discuss later in the literature review previous research that focuses on seven universal facial expressions, suggesting that emotion is readily observable in the face, thus providing a rationale for the focus on this narrow subset of nonverbal acts in the current investigation.

Although there seem to be some universal facial expressions, we do know that not all facial expressions are interpreted as they are intended to be, and the emotional state of the perceiver can influence a partner's facial communication. Conflict episodes between close relational partners can generate intense emotions which can undermine accurate decoding of the emotional content of facial expressions. Previous research however, does not emphasize the role of conflict-generated emotion on the interpretation of nonverbal communication, nor has it so far

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

examined the role of relational satisfaction on the interpretation of facial expressions during conflict.

The combination of these three components is important because it offers a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between relational satisfaction, nonverbal communication, and conflict. Obtaining this knowledge may help with healthier conflict management and offer insight on relational satisfaction. A decline in relational satisfaction can not only place strain on a relationship, but it can also bleed adverse consequences into an individual's psychological well-being (Levenson & Gottman, 1985). Thus, this research has significant potential to generate more positive outcomes not only for relationships but for individuals as well.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Relational Satisfaction*

Highly functional relationships are a continuous blend of give and take. As a relationship passes through time the relational satisfaction experienced by partners will typically vary from highly profitable to highly costly. Often, relationships can be viewed as transactions of costs and rewards. Costs are incurred when an individual behaves in a way their partner finds unfavorable or restricts their access to a desired resource. Costs can be as simple as leaving dirty clothes on the floor to being abusive. Conversely, rewards are gained through positive behaviors and contribute to the relationship being perceived as profitable.

Social exchange theories are a widely used framework for understanding relational satisfaction and commitment as they relate to the proportion of costs and rewards incurred by individuals in their social relationships (Thibault & Kelly, 1952). Commonly, relational costs are defined as the giving of a relational resource to a partner. Relational costs also arise when an

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

individual needs or desires a relational resource from a partner that the partner is either unwilling or unable to provide. For example, an individual may consider their partner costly because he/she does not support their desire to attend graduate school. In this case, the desired social resources may include social and instrumental support for the decision to attend graduate school. That the desired forms of support are not being offered in the relationship constitutes a relational cost and, if accompanied by other relational costs, may diminish relational satisfaction. Sabatelli (1988) suggests that individuals will likely seek and stay in relationships where rewards outweigh the costs, when rewards are threatened, this can lead to increased relational tension. Furthermore, the author makes the claim that when tension increases, this can impact multiple areas of the relationship, including the decision to stay in the relationship or move on to a more rewarding partner, thus introducing risk in the relationship.

Relational satisfaction experienced by partners is highly important because its influence extends beyond the context of the dissatisfying relationship into other facets of a person's life that are not directly related to the relationship with his or her partner. It is not uncommon for a person's mood to influence the manner in which s/he interacts with co-workers or other people not connected to the relationship. Moreover, Levinson and Gottman (1985) suggest that relational quality increases personal stress and may deteriorate a person's sense of personal well-being. A person who suffers from stress resulting from a dissatisfying relationship is likely to allow that stress to interfere in interactions with other people, thus causing the effect of unmet relational needs to ripple far beyond that relationship. As a result of high degrees of relational dissatisfaction, partners are often motivated to reduce or eliminate the costs that are most responsible for the deterioration of relational satisfaction. Conflict is the primary means by which partners communicate to one another that one or more relational needs are not being met.

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

Conflict, however, is also often considered a cost to the relationship, especially when it is poorly managed.

### *Conflict and Emotion*

Common attitudes associated with conflict are: it is scary, results in fighting and can be intimidating (Cupach, Canary, & Spitzberg, 2010). A likely reason conflict is often feared is because the outcome is contingent on the responses of both partners; this can elevate feelings of risk, vulnerability and competition (Hinde & Groebe, 1991). This mentality towards conflict suggests that conflict is a competition with one winner and one loser. Many anecdotal reports of conflict (e.g., “she wins every fight,” or “you always win,”) suggest that conflicts are generally considered competitive. The underlying belief about people who approach conflict competitively is that a conflict is a battle of sorts from which one person will emerge as the victor (i.e., the person who gets his or her needs met) and the other person is the loser (i.e., the person who had to sacrifice his or her needs to the partner or relationship). This phenomenon is described by Deutsch (1983) as “conitient” interdependence, instead of viewing conflict as an undertaking where both parties will have the same outcome; this mentality suggests that there will be one winner and one loser.

The way partners interact during a conflict is often perceived as an indicator of how much an individual values his or her partner. If feelings of competition surround a conflict episode, the person whose needs are typically sacrificed or unmet can not only end up perceiving the relationship as highly costly, but s/he may also end up feeling undervalued by his or her partner. Viewing conflict as a competition creates a high stakes environment for partners. High stakes interactions are introduced when feelings of risk and vulnerability result from the interaction. High stakes conflict episodes result from partners’ having to express their unmet

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

needs to their partners. Not only does vulnerability arise from admitting that a person has an unmet need, but also from admitting to a person that s/he is the person in a position to meet that need. Wheaton (1974) proposes that if a conflict is motivated by internal factors (i.e. need attainment) this can cause conflict to immediately take a negative turn because it pits partners against each other. Furthermore, for a person to say to a partner, "I have a need that I am asking you to meet", highlights the requesting party's dependence on his/her partner. Moreover, the party to whom the request was made is placed, even temporarily, in a position of power from which s/he can decide whether s/he is willing to meet his or her partner's needs and decide whether s/he wishes to leverage some other relational resource (including the relationship itself) in exchange for an increased willingness to meet the requested need. Ivanov & Werner (2009) suggest that in such cases where needs are being communicated and vulnerability is heightened, this can have a negative impact on the expression and interpretation of nonverbal cues. The belief is that because self-perceptions and the perceptions from others are at stake, this can cause inaccurate readings of nonverbal communication.

While we would expect vulnerability and competition to create an emotional charge in any relationship, it seems reasonable to expect that people who are dissatisfied with their relationships are more likely to experience strong emotions in a high-stakes conflict episode.

In a conflict episode during which one person's relational needs, his/her vulnerability, and his/her relational power are all at stake, emotions are likely to run high. The emotionally charged nature of such a high stakes episode can influence perceptions of emotional expressions during the episode.

### *Emotions and Perceptions*

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

During a conflict, where stakes and emotions continue to escalate, nonverbal behaviors can become more difficult to accurately interpret. For example, if, during a conflict one partner says to the other, "I really don't like you," and they say this while smiling and using a playful tone (Fincham, 2003), the intention of the partner may have been to decrease tension by utilizing humor.

Gottman, Markman, and Notarius (1977) have found that acts that are accompanied by a smile are considered more sincere and regarded more favorably than the same act when not accompanied by a smile. These findings were obtained in interactions between strangers in a no-stakes situation. Taken together with Fincham's (2003) findings, it seems that smiling or displays of positive emotion between people who are not in a heightened emotional state are likely to perceive a positive emotional display appropriately. However, in situations in which there is a strong negative emotional charge, misinterpretation of emotional displays seems likely. For example, if a person smiles or attempts to make some other positive emotional display, the partner may interpret the smile as sarcasm or a refusal to take the conflict seriously. It is likely that sarcasm or smiling may be misinterpreted but it may also be the case that attempts to resolve the conflict may be perceived negatively as well. Donsbach (2008) articulates that in situations of high degrees of relational uncertainty, partners' primary objective is to reduce ambiguity, often by way of information seeking. In a highly negatively charged interaction, however, information seeking that is essential to reducing relational uncertainty and resolving the conflict may be perceived as an aggressive attempt to interrogate the partner.

Though any number of communicative acts may be misinterpreted during a high-stakes conflict because of the influence of emotion on perception, the current investigation focuses on the interpretation of facial expressions. We have chosen to focus on facial expression for two

primary reasons. First, they are the primary means by which emotion is displayed to another person. Second, there are seven facial expressions that are considered universal (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2011). This means that across cultures, the same set of facial positions indicate the same seven emotions. The identification of universal facial expressions provides a methodological tool that allows us to compare perceptions of facial expressions to what we know the facial expressions are supposed to convey. This, in turn, permits us to identify when a person has erroneously perceived a facial expression.

### *Hypothesis*

Based on the research suggesting that unmet needs result in both relational dissatisfaction and increased conflict, and given that it is plausible that conflict in dissatisfied relationships is particularly high-stakes and thus negatively emotionally charged, the researchers pose the following hypothesis:

H1: Individuals who report higher degrees of relational dissatisfaction will be more likely to attach a negative meaning to facial expressions during a conflict episode than will people who report lower degrees of relational dissatisfaction.

### **Method**

#### *Participant Recruitment*

Individuals were recruited via the researchers' Facebook profile. IRB-approved social media advertisements were posted to the researchers' social media sites that provided a brief synopsis of the research, a request for volunteer participants, and a request for people who saw the advertisement to repost the survey link to their own social media site. All participants were people who voluntarily clicked on the link to the survey. This resulted in a convenient snowball

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

sample. Allowing participants to take the survey online provided the highest degree of privacy and anonymity for participants.

### *Instrumentation*

#### *Relational Satisfaction*

Relational satisfaction was measured using Hendrick's (1988) scale. The measure is a 7-item, Likert-type, scale with a 5-point response set ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). High scores indicated a higher degree of relational satisfaction. Chronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha = .84$ ) was acceptably high for use in statistical analysis. For the purposes of a chi-square analysis, this continuous variable was converted to a categorical variable with three levels. See Appendix A for further explanation of the measurement.

#### *Facial Expressions*

Facial expressions were measured by giving participants four conflict scenarios. In response to the conflict, a description was provided of a facial expression made by their partner. Participants were then asked to select the facial expression they believed best represented the scenario description. To categorize the results, their selections were classified as positive (joy), neutral (confusion, surprise) and negative (anger, disgust, contempt, sadness) (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2011).

#### *Procedure*

Data were collected using an online survey. The survey was hosted on an online survey hosting site and was posted on social media where participants were free to answer the prompts in the privacy of their own home. Once the survey was complete, the data was automatically recorded and securely stored on the survey host's server. Before the survey was available for completion, an informed consent document appeared and required an online signature. This was

to provide optimal data security and to ensure participants knew their data and anonymity would be respected. The study protocol received IRB approval.

The survey had three sections. The first section contained items that prompted participants to identify the person with whom they have the closest relationship. Participants were asked to report their partners' first and last initials to help them bear specified partners in mind as they completed the survey. The second section contained the relationship satisfaction measure. The third section consisted of the four conflict scenarios.

## **Results**

### *Participant Data.*

Data collection resulted in 97 responses to the survey. However, because some participants' responses to the survey were incomplete, their data were eliminated, thus, causing our remaining sample to include a total of 86 participants.

### *Tests of Hypothesis*

The researcher predicted that people who were dissatisfied with their current relationship would attach more negative emotions to a facial expression during conflict episodes than would satisfied participants. To test this hypothesis, a chi-square analysis was conducted to assess the strength of the association between relational satisfaction and emotion for each of the four, increasingly severe, conflict scenarios.

The first scenario they were given was a conflict on the distribution of housework. The chi-square analysis demonstrated no significant association between the variables for the low-stakes conflict situation ( $\chi^2(2) = 3.59, p = .46$ ). Table 2 below contains the contingency table for this analysis.

**Table 2: Housework Conflict**

<b>Relational Satisfaction</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Emotion Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
Dissatisfaction	2	0	0
Neither	8	0	1
Satisfied	70	2	1

The second conflict scenario involved partners picking a place to eat dinner. This situation is slightly more serious and conflict-inducing than the first one, however, not a high-stakes interaction. The strength of the association between relational satisfaction and perceived emotion for this scenario was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 1.30, p = .52$ ).

The contingency table for this analysis can be found in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Dinner Conflict**

<b>Relational Satisfaction</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Emotion Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
Dissatisfied	2	0	0
Neither	7	0	2
Satisfied	50	0	24

The third conflict scenario presented a conflict about where to vacation. The rationale behind this conflict is that money and time are involved making this a moderate stakes interaction. The strength of the association between relational satisfaction and perception of the emotion of a facial expression for this scenario was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2(2) = 0.92, p = .63$ ) Table 4 provides the contingency table for this analysis.

**Table 4: Vacation Conflict**

<b>Relational Satisfaction</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Emotion Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
Dissatisfied	1	0	1
Neither	4	0	5
Satisfied	23	0	51

The fourth and final conflict episode presented to participants was the highest stakes conflict. This conflict scenario is about breaking confidence between relational

partners. This interaction describes an individual who realizes that their partner has told a mutual friend a secret that violated trust in the relationship. The strength of the association between relational satisfaction and facial expression perception based on emotion was not statistically significant ( $\chi^2(2) = 0.25, p = .88$ ) Table 5 contains the contingency table for this analysis.

**Table 5: Breaking Confidence Conflict**

<b>Relational Satisfaction</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Emotion Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
Dissatisfied	2	0	0
Neither	8	0	1
Satisfied	65	0	8

Although there is no significant data to support the study's hypothesis, after close data analysis and consideration, numerous aspects could be enhanced in the provided study to better enable researchers to find the expected effects.

## **Discussion**

### *Limitations*

Perhaps the most limiting factor of the study is that participants were prompted to think of their closest relationship. Participants may have considered their "closest relationship" to mean the most satisfying. For example, if an individual took the survey and they were at odds with their romantic partner at the time, they may have chosen their best friend as their closest relational partner, considering "closest" to mean "most satisfying." This limitation caused there to be a disproportionately large number of participants who were satisfied in their relationship as compared to the other two satisfaction categories. Thus the study lacked variance and the ability to compare satisfied and dissatisfied relationships was limited. Originally, this was a factor that made this study unique, however, it was one of the largest limitations. To remedy this issue,

limiting the type of relationship to one option, for example, romantic partners, would help to ensure a larger amount of variance in the satisfaction variable.

Additionally, the participants were not asked how negatively they would rate different facial expressions. Participants were asked to identify the emotion demonstrated by each facial expression. The researcher's own evaluation of the positive or negative emotion of each expression served as a proxy for how negative the participant perceived the expression to be. Permitting participants to rate each expression on a scale from negative to positive would have provided a more direct measure of the emotion perception variable. This would have offered insight on how negatively different facial expressions are perceived and its relation to satisfaction.

An additional limitation related to the evaluation of facial expressions is that participants were presented with conflict scenarios that featured positive facial expressions. For example, positive facial expressions, such as smiling, may not always be perceived as favorable during a conflict. In low satisfaction relationships, positive facial expressions may be interpreted as sarcastic or aggressive, whereas negative facial expressions will nearly always be seen as negative regardless of relational satisfaction. Positive and neutral expressions would be more likely to capture differences in nonverbal perception between satisfied and dissatisfied partners.

### **Future Research**

The present study was motivated by the desire to better understand human interaction. Humans are designed to create bonds with each other, but in the course of that bonding, conflict is inevitable. Conflict is often viewed as frightening, intimidating or competitive. These negative views toward conflict can compromise healthy conflict management. The research was highly motivated to better understand perceptions of nonverbal behaviors during conflict and the

## RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

relationship these variables have with relational satisfaction. Gaining a better understanding of these variables could offer insight on healthy conflict management and support relational satisfaction. Relational satisfaction is crucial not only for relational health but also for personal wellbeing. Relational dissatisfaction could have negative impacts on personal stress and psychological health.

Future research that encompassed a more varied data sample would offer insight on how nonverbal perception during conflict is different between satisfied and dissatisfied relational partners. A more varied sample could be accomplished by limiting relationship type to one kind of relationship. Research with this focus may offer insight on interactions that promote or help resolve conflict. Learning how to better manage conflict could help interpersonal relationships become more satisfied. Better understanding conflict is important because relationships influence the rest of our lives. Some may recall the common line, “happy wife, happy life,” although exaggerated, this sentiment suggests the importance of satisfying relationships.

Additionally, future research would benefit by including prompts that give insight on conflict styles and the impact they have on nonverbal perception. Conflict styles would help us gain a better understanding of how individuals view disagreements. If a person identifies as having a competitive conflict style, it is likely they will react differently to stimuli than someone who identifies as avoidant. Including this element would help measure the relation between conflict styles and nonverbal perception. Understanding the association between these variables would offer vast insight to promote healthier relationships, thus healthier, happier lives.

Research that focuses on relational satisfaction and how it impacts overall life satisfaction would be fascinating. Gaining this understanding could help individuals understand the toll relational dissatisfaction can have on their lives and personal wellbeing.

## **Conclusion**

This study, geared towards finding the link between relational satisfaction and nonverbal interpretation during conflict, although inconclusive, is a good beginning for research that desires to better understand human interaction, in particular the role of nonverbal behaviors. Including variables such as conflict styles could offer more variance in the data. Conversely, limiting variables, such as relationship type, to just one may provide more varied results for future research.

Appendix A

**Table 1: Relational Satisfaction**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>SCORING</b>
My partner generally meets my needs very well.	Normal
In general, I am satisfied with my relationship.	Normal
I feel my relationship is good compared to most relationships.	Normal
I often wish I were not in this relationship.	Reverse
My relationship meets my original expectations.	Normal
I love my partner.	Normal
My relationship with my partner has a lot of problems.	Reverse

References

- Cupach, R. W., Canary, J. D., Spitzberg, H. B., (2010). *Competence in Interpersonal Conflict: Second edition*. U.S.
- Deutsch, M. (1983). Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice. *Political Psychology*, 4 (3), 431-453. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/379086>
- Donsbach, W. (Eds.). (2008). Uncertainty Reduction Theory. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*. Retrieved from, [www.communicationencyclopedia.com](http://www.communicationencyclopedia.com)
- Fincham, D. F. (2003). Marital Conflict: Correlate, Structure, Context. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12 (1), 23-27. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/20182825](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20182825)
- Gottman, J., Markman, H., Notarius, C., (1977). The Topography of Marital Conflict: A Sequential Analysis of Verbal and Nonverbal Behavior. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 39 (3), 461-477. Retrieved from, [www.jstor.org/stable/350902](http://www.jstor.org/stable/350902)
- Gottman, M. J., Porterfield, L. A., (1981). Communicative Competence in the Nonverbal Behavior of Married Couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 43 (4), 817-824. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/351339](http://www.jstor.org/stable/351339)
- Hendrick, S. S. (1988). A Generic Model of Relationship Satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 50 (1), 93-98. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/352430](http://www.jstor.org/stable/352430)
- Hinde, A. R., Groebel, J. (Eds.). (1991). *Cooperation and Prosocial Behaviour. Great Britain, Cambridge: University Press*. Print.
- Ivanov, M., Werner, D. P. (2009). Behavioral Communication: Individual Differences in Communication. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49, 19-23. Retrieved from <https://etsu.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/pdf/313252.pdf>
- Klinetob, A. N., Smith, A. D., (1996). Demand-Withdraw Communication in Marital Interaction: Tests of Interspousal Contingency and Gender Role Hypotheses. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 58 (4), 945-957. Retrieved from [www.jstor.org/stable/353982](http://www.jstor.org/stable/353982)
- Levenson, R., Gottman, J., (1985). Physiological and Affective Predictors of Change in Relationship Satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 49 (1), 85-94.
- Matsumoto, D., Hwang, S. Sung., (2011). Reading Facial Expressions of Emotion. *Psychological Science Agenda*. Retrieved from [www.apa.org/science](http://www.apa.org/science)

RUNNING HEAD: Relational Satisfaction and Perceptions of Nonverbal Communication during Conflict.

- Sabatelli, M. R. (1988). Exploring Relationship Satisfaction: A Social Exchange Perspective on the Interdependence between Theory, Research and Practice. *Family Relations*, 37 (2), 217-222. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/584323>
- Smith, L. M., Cottrell, W. G., Gosselin, F., Schyns, G. P., (2005). Transmitting and Decoding Facial Expressions. *Psychological Science*, 16 (3), 184-189. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40064199>
- Thibault, J. W., Kelley, H. H. (1952). *The Social Psychology of Groups*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Print.
- Thomas, W. K. (2006). Conflict and Conflict Management: Reflections and Update. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13 (3), 265-274. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>
- Wheaton, B. (1974). Interpersonal Conflict and Cohesiveness in Dyadic relationships. *Sociometry*, 37 (3), 328-348. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2786386>