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**The Antithesis of Collaboration: An Application of Expectancy  
Violations Theory on the Approval Process of My Master's Thesis**

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BARRY UNIVERSITY

THE ANTITHESIS OF COLLABORATION: AN APPLICATION OF EXPECTANCY  
VIOLATIONS THEORY ON THE APPROVAL PROCESS OF MY MASTER'S  
THESIS

BY

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A THESIS

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## Abstract

In this thesis, a qualitative study applying Burgoon's (1993) expectancy violations theory (EVT) model and theory's concepts and propositions will be applied to an interpretive account of its approval process experienced by the researcher. This interpretive approach, with a general interpretive orientation, will examine human interaction as a "collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Berg, 2007, p. 304). This thesis will utilize Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory to interpret the verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors exhibited by the gatekeeper of a setting where a potential research study was to take place. This thesis will also demonstrate how indicators of these behavior violations may be understood in an EVT framework, to the extent that they impinge on communicator reward valence, constitute expectancy violations, or are the result of violations (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006). The study's method, findings, analysis, and discussion directly address the thesis's research questions, for it: (a) provides data, findings and analysis to identify verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors exhibited by the gatekeeper during the approval process of the master's thesis; and (b) interprets the appraisal of the gatekeeper's overall communicator reward valence using Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory's propositions and concepts.

The thesis's interpretive approach is coupled with confidentiality and anonymity in an effort to maintain social responsibility to the qualitative research methods and the thesis's subjects (Berg, 2007). Confidentiality is demonstrated by removing any gender references, names, or titles of subjects from the research records and anonymity is demonstrated by leaving the subjects nameless throughout the thesis (Berg, 2007).



## Definition of Terms Used

**Appraisal Process** – Interpretation and evaluation of violation behavior, or when a “heightened arousal initiates cognitive appraisals related to (a) the meaning of the violation and (b) the evaluation of the positive or negative value of the violation (violation valence)” (White, 2008, p. 191)

**Arousal** – “when a communicator’s enacted behavior is sufficiently discrepant from expected behavior to be recognized (i.e., it surpasses some limen value that is at the outer bounds of the range of expected behavior) . . . directing some attention away from the ostensible topic at hand and toward the violator and violation” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 35)

**Behavior Violation Valence** – “the evaluation we make of the violation . . . the positivity or negativity of the meaning we assign to the violation” (White, 2008, p. 191)

**Communication Characteristics** – “salient features of individual actors, such as demographics, personality, physical appearance, and communication style, and so on, that lead one communicator to anticipate how another will communicate” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 32)

**Communication Expectancies** – expectancies that “derive from three classes of factors: communicator characteristics, relationship factors, and context characteristics” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 32)

**Communicator Reward Valence** – one’s “characteristics that influence the extent to which we find interacting with them rewarding” (White, 2008, p. 192).

**Communicator Reward Valence Quotient** – “all prior knowledge or observable information about a communicator, plus that individual’s behavior during the interaction” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 34)

**Context Characteristics** – “environmental constraints and definitions of the situation, such as privacy, formality, or task orientation, that prescribe or proscribe certain interaction behaviors” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 32)

**Expectancies** – “in the communication sense denotes an enduring pattern of anticipated behavior” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 31)

**Gatekeeper** – “formal or informal watchdogs who protect the setting, people, or institutions sought as the target of research . . . such individuals often hold pivotal positions in the hierarchy of the group or organization one seeks to study . . . [and may be] in positions to stymie the researcher’s ability to gain access” (Berg, 2007, p. 185)

**Predictive Expectancies** – what one anticipates will occur in an interaction (Burgoon, 1993)

**Prescriptive Expectancies** – what one desires or prefers to occur in an interaction (Burgoon, 1993)

**Relationship Factors** – “any characteristics that describe the relationship between communicators, such as degree of familiarity, liking, attraction, similarity, or status equality between them” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 32)

# The Antithesis of Collaboration: An Application of Expectancy Violations Theory on the Approval Process of My Master's Thesis

## Chapter I.

### Reflexive Rationale

This thesis presents evidence of a researcher's experience with a non-collaborative gatekeeper of a setting where a potential research study for a master's thesis was to take place. The thesis is of particular importance to scholarly research for it demonstrates how a non-collaborative gatekeeper affected the direction of the researcher's initial thesis proposal in a particular setting and ultimately affected how well the study came to fruition. Additionally, this thesis is of importance to scholarly research by providing a theoretical framework that researchers (in a similar situation) may use to interpret behavior violations of a non-collaborative gatekeeper. Moreover, this thesis provides a theoretical framework that may help these researchers understand how the behavior violations affect future communication outcomes and patterns.

This original contribution utilizes a reflexively covert participant observation and data collection strategy. Developed by the researcher for the purpose of this thesis, reflexively covert refers to the use of unsuspected and private data collected from a gatekeeper during the preliminary stages of scholarly research and the reflexive account given after data collection. Utilizing a reflexively covert strategy, the following were covertly collected and used as the data for the current study: (a) the communicative interaction between the researcher and gatekeeper, and written and computer-mediated responses to inquiries or proposed documents relating to the approval process of the original protocol (verbal behavior indicators); and (b) the empirical observations of the

gatekeeper and staff acting upon the gatekeeper's direct orders (nonverbal behavior indicators) (Zhou & Zhang, 2006).

Due to this unique study, two separate analyses of empirical literature were conducted. The first round of analysis of empirical literature for the Conceptual Areas of Inquiry was conducted on EVT. Then, the researcher conducted a content analysis of the project's data (see Methodology). During content analysis, the researcher conducted a second round of analysis of empirical literature for the Conceptual Areas of Inquiry. In this round, the empirical literature analyzed was on the general themes of behavior found in the project's data, which consisted of: (a) dominance; (b) deception; and (c) feedback. During the content analysis process, these three behaviors were established as the analytic categories. Next, grounded categories were established, consisting of: (a) dominance; (b) deception; (c) positive feedback; and (d) negative feedback. Using an objective criterion for selection that was extracted from the relevant literature, these grounded categories were operationalized in the Behavior Violation Questions document (see Appendix A), which comprises criteria in "several inferential levels" that serve as "coding rules" of the behavior violations (Berg, 2007, p. 326).

In this thesis, the researcher will demonstrate how indicators of these behavior violations may be understood through Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory's framework, to the extent that they impinge on communicator reward valence, constitute expectancy violations, and/or are the result of violations (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006). The researcher will also interpret how the behavior violations impinge on the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence after the thesis' approval process. Thus, the thesis's research questions are as follows:

RQ1. What verbal and nonverbal behaviors, exhibited by the gatekeeper, violate the researcher's expectations during the approval process of the master's thesis?

RQ2. What was the overall appraisal of the gatekeeper's new communicator reward valence after the approval process of the master's thesis? What were the future interaction outcomes and patterns between the gatekeeper and the researcher after the approval process of the master's thesis?

Currently, there are gaps in empirical knowledge about the behaviors and influences of non-collaborative gatekeepers during a scholar's research process. The interpretations of evidence found in this thesis offer an investigation of the verbal and nonverbal communication of this specific faction of people in a research process. The findings and analysis in this thesis suggest additional knowledge and understanding of this field of study.

## Chapter II.

### Conceptual Areas of Inquiry

Expectancies exert significant influence on people's interaction patterns, on their impressions of one another, and on the outcomes of their interactions. Violations of expectations in turn may arouse and distract their recipients, shifting greater attention to the violator and the meanings of the violation itself. People who can assume that they are well-regarded by their interaction partner can more safely engage in violations, often with felicitous effects, than can those who are poorly regarded.

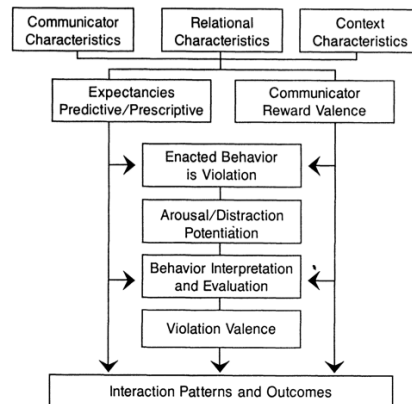
-Burgoon (1993, p. 41)

#### Expectancy Violations Theory (EVT)

Since the onset of Judee K. Burgoon's empirical work in 1976, the social science community has supported the premise of expectancy violations theory (EVT): "that communication expectations are influenced by communicator characteristics, and more specifically, the valences attached to those characteristics" (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 154). This post-positivistic theoretical perspective "seeks to explain and predict how communicators assess behavior that deviates from expectation and how they respond communicatively to such violations" (White, 2008, p. 190). EVT suggests that the individuals engaged in interpersonal communication are "simultaneously attending to their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, including self-presentational, self-regulatory, and impression management concerns, as well as trying to accurately perceive the characteristics of the person to establish conversational fluency, expectations, and social norms" (Mendes, Blascovich, Hunter, Lickel, & Jost, 2007, p. 698). The purpose of the theory is to "provide a framework that allows researchers to posit hypotheses and to test specific predictions across different interaction contexts" (White, p. 190). Through Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory's concepts and propositions, this thesis will interpret how behavior violations impinge on communicator reward valence.

## EVT Theoretical Model

Burgoon's (1993) "Expectancy Violations Theory" theoretical model is depicted below in Figure 1, which identifies the theory's key concepts and propositions: (a) communication expectancies (communication characteristics, relational characteristics, and context characteristics); (b) predictive and prescriptive expectancies; (c) arousal; (d) the appraisal process; (e) communicator reward valence; (f) violation valence; and (g) communication outcomes and patterns. Communication expectancies, the catalyst in the EVT theoretical model, "may include cognitive, affective, and conative components and are primarily a function of (1) social norms and (2) known idiosyncrasies of the other" (Burgoon & Hale, 1988, p. 60).




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*Figure 1. Expectancy violations theory (Burgoon, 1993, p. 34).*

### Expectancies

Individuals inherently have expectancies, or "an enduring pattern of anticipated behavior" of one another (Burgoon, 1993, p. 31). In dyadic interactions, individuals have communication expectancies of their fellow interactant, which derive from individual "communicator, relationship, and context characteristics" (Burgoon, 1993, p. 32).

Features, such as physical appearance and communication style, and characteristics, such as degree of familiarity and environmental constraints, all influence an individual's communication expectancies about their communication partner and "dictate the expectancies in a given encounter" (Burgoon, 1993, p. 32).

Based on the various components of communication expectancies in EVT, interactants also form prescriptive expectancies or (i.e., what one prefers to occur in an interaction), and predictive expectancies (i.e., what one anticipates will occur in an interaction) (Burgoon, 1993). According to Houser (2006), prescriptive expectancies are "needed, wanted, or desired" and differ from the "cultural stereotypes" that characterize predictive expectancies (p. 333). "By incorporating both types of predictions, the theory provides an opening for considering how violations of expectations are interpreted" (White, 2008, p. 191). Violations of an individual's threshold of expected communication behavior occur when the violative behavior "surpasses some limen value that is at the outer bounds of the range" of the anticipated or preferred behavior (Burgoon, 1993, p. 35; Burgoon & Jones, 1976). In contrast, "any discrepancies *within* [emphasis added] the socially tolerated range of variability will be perceptually assimilated as part of the expected behavior pattern," or the communication expectancies (Burgoon & Hale, 1988, p. 60). Discrepancies outside this tolerated range of expected communication behavior prompt attention to the violative behavior, thus causing an arousal in the dyadic interaction.

### Arousal

During a communication expectancy violation "deviant behavior is posited to prompt



an orienting response, diverting attention from the ostensive conversational purpose and focusing it on the origin of the arousal – the communicator and the communicator’s behavior” (Burgoon, Newton, Walther, & Baesler, 1989, p. 98). Deviant behavior may cause arousal in response to deviant characteristics and behaviors, which make people more alert and attentive toward the details of the deviant’s violative behavior (Langer, 1978; Langer & Imber, 1980). Burgoon (1993) described the notable features of arousal change as: (a) attentional relocation; (b) heightened attention to the characteristics of the communicator; (c) the relational implicative; and (d) the meaning of the violation act. In accordance with EVT, during the arousal process, the “communicator and message/behavior characteristics” become “more salient, causing the violatee to engage in a two-stage interpretation and evaluation process that results in the violation act being defined as either a positive or negative violation of expectations,” known as the appraisal process (Burgoon & Hale, 1988, p. 62).

### Appraisal Process

The dual appraisal process of the theory occurs when the violatee attempts to make sense of the violation (the interpretation stage) and evaluates it based in part on the interpretation assigned to it and in part on who has committed it (the evaluation stage) (Burgoon, 1993; Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Burgoon, Stern, & Dillman, 1995). Personal preferences and cultural influences determine how communication behaviors are interpreted and evaluated (Burgoon, 1993). According to Burgoon, Stern, et al. (1995), during the appraisal process, violatees assign symbolic meaning to violations. During this process, violatees also determine what the behavior means and make an affective, emotional judgment as to whether the behavior was desirable or not. In American culture,

Burgoon (1993) explained, most people exhibit “moderately high pleasantness and involvement in initial encounters” (p. 37). However, extroverts prefer higher levels of involvement and introverts prefer lower levels of involvement. The consequence of such appealing or unappealing behaviors is an attachment of either a positive or negative valence to the behavior. Burgoon, Stern et al. (1995) explained behaviors or “actions conveying approval may be considered appealing; actions conveying superiority and disdain are unlikely to evoke such positive evaluations” (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995, p. 96). “Attachment of evaluations to communicative acts should be universal,” where an assignment of a positive or negative violation valence (value) to the violative behavior concludes the appraisal process (Burgoon, 1993, p. 37). However, in situations where one’s behavior is confusing and abstruse, the violatee must consider the violator’s communicator reward valence to determine the valence of the violative behavior.

#### Communicator Reward Valence

During the appraisal process, the violatee’s social and cultural norms and communication expectancies determine the valence of a violative behavior (Wilson & Sabee, 2003). In regard to more ambiguous violation behaviors, the violator’s communicator reward valence “is a key factor in determining the valence of the violation” (White, 2008, p. 192). A communicator reward valence may be assigned as either a high or low reward, where a high reward is positive and a low reward is negative (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Burgoon and Hale argue that one’s reward valence is comprised of communication features, relationship characteristics, and interactional behaviors that “cause the communicator to be perceived, on balance, as someone with whom it is desirable to interact” (p. 62). When these aspects of communicator reward valence are

factored together, it feeds into the communicator reward valence quotient, or “all prior knowledge or observable information about a communicator, plus that individual’s behavior during the interaction” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 34).

In Burgoon and Hoobler’s (2002) study, features such as physical attractiveness, possession of appealing personal attributes, socioeconomic status, status equality, and giving positive or negative feedback were all relevant components of communicator reward valence. In contrast to those who are not perceived to possess these characteristics, individuals who are perceived to embody such attributes are typically viewed as more rewarding, thus, these individuals are perceived as more desirable to interact with in conversation and receive a high (positive) communicator reward valence (White, 2008). Consequently, individuals who are perceived to possess attributes that are typically viewed as unrewarding or deviating, such behaviors “that create distance, indicate dislike, lack expressiveness . . . reveal tension and anxiety,” solicit a lower or negative communicator reward valence (Burgoon et al., 1989, p. 100).

Communicators with a high communication reward valence are “granted a wider-latitude in deviating from social norms before their behavior is regarded as unexpected” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 39). In order for their acts to qualify as violations, these communicators must “engage in more extreme behaviors” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 39). However, “it is quite possible for a high-valence communicator to commit negative violations and low-valence communicators to commit positive ones” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 39). For example:

An abrupt departure, without the usual leave-taking ritual and no available situational information to explain it, is a violation. If a person who is highly

regarded commits such an act, it may be perplexing to the perceiver but is likely to be excused as based on some urgent need; in some circumstances, it might even reinforce the image of the communicator as some kind of VIP. It is unlikely to be interpreted as an intentional slight (unless the perceiver suffers from low-self-esteem). However, the same act committed by a disliked other may now be interpreted as an affront, as rude, or as indicative of the communicator's social incompetence. Thus, when alternative readings are possible, the "who" committing the act becomes a very essential bit of context information that narrows the range of interpretations considered plausible. (Burgoon, 1993 p. 37-38)

Burgoon (1993) suggested that normally negatively perceived violation behavior might be evaluated neutrally or positively from violator's with a high (positive) communicator reward valence. Consequently, normally negatively perceived violation behavior might uphold a negative valence if the violation behavior was committed by a poorly regarded communicator (Burgoon, 1993). Thus, EVT "suggests that assessments of these positive or negative attributes" of communicator reward valence "moderate our evaluations of violations, particularly when the meaning of the violation is open to interpretation" by the violatee (White, 2008, p. 192). Violations that are open to interpretation carry valences as well, also known as the behavior violation valence.

#### Behavior Violation Valence

In violatee response toward behavior violations, one main component of EVT is the valence attached to this violation (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). Increased arousal on negatively valenced behavior creates increased tension, decreased attentiveness, and an

awkward communication performance from the violatee; the reverse obtains in response to intense, positively valenced behavior (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002).

“When individuals violate our behavioral expectations of them, we view their violation as either positive or negative depending on the social norms we have developed” (Houser, 2005, p. 217). White (2008) argued, “some interaction behaviors carry clear social meaning, so their valence, in a given context or relationship, is relatively clear” (p. 191). For example, an obscene gesture or remark is a behavior that usually carries a negative violation valence, and an unexpected, warm embrace between romantic partners is a behavior that usually carries a positive violation valence (White). Thus, the assignment of violation valence depends on whether the violation behavior aligns (positive) or is inconsistent (negative) with one’s expected behavior, the “expectations initially possessed through lifelong communication experiences” (Houser, 2005, p. 217). The results of the appraisal process affect the future interaction outcomes and patterns between the violator and violatee.

#### Interaction Outcomes and Patterns

Using EVT to predict, evaluate, and assign valence to an expected or violated behavior enables predictions about communicative interaction and patterns (Burgoon, 1993). According to Burgoon (1993), “positive violations, in which the enacted behavior is more positively valenced than the expected, are theorized to produce more positive interaction patterns and outcomes than conformity to expectancies; negative violations, in which the enacted behavior is more negatively valenced than the expected behavior, are theorized to be detrimental, relative to expectancy confirmation” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 40).

“Valencing of the violation on a positive to negative continuum” in EVT influences communication outcomes, hypothesizing that positive violations “produce favorable communication outcomes” and negative violations “produce unfavorable ones” (Burgoon et al., 1989, p. 98). For the violatee, EVT predicts that a positively valenced behavior from a high reward violator will produce future positive reactions and elicit more approach behavior versus a negatively valenced behavior from a low reward violator, which will produce future negative reactions (Andersen, Guerrero, Buller, & Jorgensen, 1998; Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). Concerning the violator, “more favorable communication outcomes are presumed to accrue to positively regarded others than to negatively regarded ones” (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995, p. 95).

With respect to communication patterns, EVT postulates that negative violations produce more unfavorable communication patterns and positive violations produce more favorable ones (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). “EVT predicts that a violation that has a positive valence will typically lead to better interaction outcomes than a non-violation. A violation that has a negative valence will typically lead to worse interaction outcomes than simply meeting expectations” (White, 2008, p. 192). Both communication outcomes and patterns are moderated by a violator’s communication reward valence. The communicator reward valence proposition is considered when a “violation act is one that is likely to be ambiguous in its meaning or to carry multiple interpretations that are not uniformly positive or negative” (Burgoon, 1993, p. 41). In this thesis, the gatekeeper’s behavior violations that triggered the application of Burgoon’s (1993) EVT model and theory’s concepts and propositions are: (a) dominance; (b) deception; (c) positive feedback; and (d) negative feedback.

## Overview of the Behavior Violations

Close to 40 years of empirical communication, sociology, and psychology research has applied variations of EVT to studies and experiments involving verbal and nonverbal human behavior, propelling deeper understanding of expectancy violations in personal space expectations (Burgoon, 1978; Burgoon & Jones, 1976), physical attractiveness (Afifi & Burgoon, 2000; Burgoon & Walther, 1990), involvement changes in demeanor (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993; Le Poire & Burgoon, 1996), conversational distance (Burgoon et al., 1989; Burgoon & Walther, 1990), pleasantness (Burgoon, Le Poire, & Rosenthal, 1995); posture (Burgoon & Walther), immediacy behaviors (Andersen et al., 1998; Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Houser, 2005; Houser, 2006), hurtful events in romantic relationships (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006), affectionate behavior in platonic relationships (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999), sexual resistance in close, cross-sex relationships (Bevan, 2003), and compliance-resistance strategies (Hullett & Tamborini, 2001).

In this unique contribution, the researcher conducted a second round of analysis of empirical literature for the Conceptual Areas of Inquiry during the study's content analysis (see Methodology). Below, the empirical literature analyzed was on the general themes of behavior found in the project's data, which consisted of: (a) dominance; (b) deception; and (c) feedback. The review of literature on these general themes of behavior was conducted on research utilizing and not utilizing the application of EVT.

### Dominance

According to Dunbar and Abra (2010), "dominance is a multifaceted construct that can be demonstrated interactively in many ways and should be measured using a

variety of verbal and nonverbal methods” (p. 679). From a psycho-social approach, Diekman (2007) and Dunbar and Burgoon (2005) suggested that the demonstration of dominance is when individual influence is achieved through asserting one’s own needs above those of others. Diekman hypothesized that highly dominant behavior would negatively violate communal expectations. Dominant behaviors may “help attain certain goals but might jeopardize social relationships” (Diekman, p. 551). With regard to EVT, the jeopardization of social relationships at the cost of attaining certain goals is an example of a potentially negative effect of dominance behavior on future dyadic interaction outcomes and patterns (Dunbar & Abra, 2010). Additionally, through displays of resource and interaction control, making demands, and disagreeing, ignoring, and/or expressing uncertainty with a conversational partner, dominance is a strategic, non-collaborative behavior (Dunbar & Abra, 2010).

The demonstration of command of space, command of precedence, and possession of valued commodities are resource control behaviors in human dominance (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006). In the command of space behavior, “territorial markers (i.e., tangible objects that signify a ‘space is taken’)” are present, where the individual may “have easy access to others, and may have other’s access regulated by Gatekeepers-people such as receptionists who can prevent intrusions” (Burgoon & Dunbar, p. 289). Burgoon and Dunbar explained that command of precedence is conveyed by performing the rituals that symbolize one’s social position, such as being given the first turn to speak. High-ranking persons, who have the first right of refusal on acquiring socially valued goods and services, practice this ritual (Burgoon & Dunbar). The appropriation of valued intangibles, such as another’s time, is indicative of the possession of valued commodities



behavior, which is demonstrated by high-ranking persons who accrue both rank and influence (Burgoon & Dunbar).

Similar to the “prerogative to control resources, powerful people are able to control interactions with others (e.g., by summoning others to their home turf, calling for and adjourning meetings, and challenging the direction of a conversation),” (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006, p. 290). In this interaction control behavior, the initiation principle is of interest to this thesis, because a high-ranking individual demonstrated dominance by “starting or stopping conversation and setting interaction rhythms” (Burgoon & Dunbar, p. 291). These interaction control behaviors are “all interaction-based extensions of the ‘going first’ principle” (Burgoon & Dunbar, p. 291). The conversational partner’s submissive or accepting moves during resource and interaction control behavior serve as evidence of dominance behavior. If the conversational partner gives in to the strategies, dominance behavior has occurred (Vogel, Murphy, Werner-Wilson, Cutrona, & Seeman, 2007).

Additionally, Burgoon and Dunbar (2006) argue that EVT is particularly relevant to nonverbal behavior and their violations, where interpretations of ambiguous nonverbal behaviors may include connotations of dominance, resulting in perceived power and actual influence. In concurrence with dominance behaviors, deceptive behaviors may be inferred from statements that mislead, fabrications that include misdirection and bluffs, omissions, concealment of information, and usually, outright lying (Burgoon & Nunamaker, 2010).

## Deception

Deception in the form of lying or dishonesty occurs when a communicator seeks, knowingly and intentionally, to mislead others (Serota, Levine, & Boster, 2010). In dyadic communication, liars “must convince their partner about something that the liar believes to be false, which is not the case for partners” (Hancock, Curry, Goorha, & Woodworth, 2008, p. 6). People have beliefs about liars’ behaviors and attribute deception to those who act in these stereotypically deceptive ways (Bond, Kahler, & Paolicelli, 1985; Zuckerman, Koestner, & Driver, 1981). Deceptive behavior may be inferred from any verbal or nonverbal behavior that violates normative expectations (Aune, Ching, & Levine, 1996; Bond et al., 1992).

In Aune et al. (1996) study, EVT propositions were used to detect awareness of deception in message sources that were engaged in stereotypical deceptive or truthful behavior. The study’s respondents found attributes of deception in negatively-valenced communicators with low levels of social attractiveness, which was operationalized as a component of communicator reward valence (Aune et al., 1996). Deception judgment in Bond et al.’s (1992) study was received from respondents who tried to determine when subjects were being deceptive and when they were telling the truth. (p. 970). “Fishy-looking” or “weird nonverbal behavior” cues that inferred deception consisted of eye closure, staring, and arm and shoulder raising (p. 970). The individual respondent’s results produced an assignment of a valence to the violator’s communicator reward value and behavior violation. Their results were consistent with EVT’s propositions, thus, the “subjects were perceived as more dishonest when they were posing the weird behaviors than when they were not” (Bond et al., 1992, p. 971).

Propositions of EVT were also used to examine sequencing effects on communicator's deceptive and truthful responses in Burgoon and Qin's (2006) study. In the study, deceivers were expected to modify their verbal and nonverbal behavior, or their communicator reward valence, to increase credibility and avoid deception when responding to signs of suspicion (Burgoon & Qin, 2006). In comparison to the truth tellers, deceivers had briefer and repetitive, but more complex, responses that were lacking in affect laden language (Burgoon & Qin, 2006). In Burgoon, Blair, and Strom's (2008) work, the researchers suggested that suspicion-provoking behaviors influence judgments of truthful and deceptive behavior. In their study, an examination of the expectancy violations bias was evaluated. The scholars stated that evidence of the bias would "imply that despite senders' efforts to manage their performance, they still inadvertently give off signs of deceit that are detected by deceivers" (Burgoon et al., 2008, p. 578). Their subjects were presented with full video, audio, or text examples of violators exhibiting deceptive and truthful behavior and then asked to rate the valence of the violators' behavior, image management, and truthfulness (Burgoon et al., 2008). Results indicated that deceptive behavior in text and audio were negatively valenced, "which implies that deceptive performers can give themselves away by their departures from normative standards for content, language, and voice" (Burgoon et al., 2008, p. 591). The authors also described that negative violations "alert receivers to anomalies that are in fact sound indicators that something is amiss" (Burgoon et al., 2008, p. 592). When deceptive behavior was displayed in the video format, communication was a positive confirmation for it was "judged to be the most normal and positively valenced of any of the combinations" (Burgoon et al., 2008, p. 591).

During the operationalization of deception in this thesis, electronic mail (e-mail) is analyzed using Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory. According to Burgoon, Chen, and Twitchell (2010), e-mail, in addition to real-time/same-time communication, electronic bulletins and message boards are a form of computer-mediated communication (CMC). In CMC, a high-interactivity form of communication is known as synchronicity, which "refers to the timing of message exchange within a given time frame" (Burgoon et al., 2010, p. 347). E-mail is identified as an asynchronous, low-interactivity form of communication in CMC, characterized by time lapses that separate conversation segments (Burgoon et al.). Bond et al. (1992) argued that the detection of deception in asynchronous communication might be based on one's norm for response latency. Responses appear deceptive if their latency, or expectancy, deviates from the norm in either direction (Bond et al., 1992). Synchronous communication, which is not indicative of deception, is referred to real-time/same-time communication, including instant messaging, text chat, and video chat (Burgoon, Burgoon, Broneck, Alvaro, & Nunamaker, 2002). The authors considered synchronous communication as a high interactivity form of communication with higher degrees of involvement, or a participants' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in the interaction, than the asynchronous form (Burgoon et al., 2002).

With respect to deception, Burgoon, Buller, and Woodall (1996) also argued that the larger ranges in response latency might indicate asynchrony, which is inconsistent with the smooth turn-taking and fluid speech associated with higher levels of involvement in synchronous communication. Deceivers have greater control of response opportunities and forethought; thus, in asynchronous communication, members

communicate at different times (Zhou and Zhang, 2006). This “low-interactivity associated with asynchronous communication might engender less trust and weaker relationships that paradoxically cause potential targets of deception to become more suspicious and thus to increase their accuracy in detecting deception” (Burgoon et al., 2010, p. 348). Burgoon et al. (2010) also argued that the deception perceived in asynchronous communication negatively affected the trust-related aspects of credibility between dyadic interactants (i.e., conversational engagement and mutual trust was weakened and detachment, disinterest, distrust, lack of confidence in information and people was probable). With respect to changes in communicative relationships, the type and presentation of a positive or negative message between dyads can also influence how the recipient understands messages (Murthy & Schafer, 2011).

There is preliminary evidence to suggest that an application of EVT on the response latency of computer-mediated communication (CMC), specifically e-mail, proposes judgments of credibility and detects deceptive behavior. E-mail is a type of asynchronous communication, which possesses a low-interactivity when compared to the high-interactivity in synchronous communication, such as a same-time chat (Bond et al., 1992; Burgoon et al., 2010; Jensen, Meservy, Burgoon, & Nunamaker, 2009; Zhou & Zhang, 2006). Depending on the violator’s communicator reward valence, the “low-interactivity associated with asynchronous communication might engender less trust and weaker relationships that paradoxically cause potential targets of deception to become more suspicious and thus to increase their accuracy in detecting deception” (Burgoon et al., 2010, p. 348). From an EVT perspective, Sheldon, Thomas-Hunt, and Proell (2006) examined time delay in a distributive collaboration work environment, or an environment

where individuals from different parts of the same organization, located in different locations, collaborate to integrate their diverse pools of knowledge towards the same efforts and goals (p. 1385). These scholars found that the status of a communicator determines how negatively people react to behaviors that violate their expectancies, such as delays in asynchronous communication. In the study, low-status individuals tend to be punished quite severely for expectancy violations and having a high status significantly improves the negative effects on the evaluations that individuals receive and therefore the amount of influence they are allowed to exert (Sheldon et al., 2006). Similarly, in Kalman and Rafaeli's (2011) study, propositions of EVT were applied to low e-mail response-latency, an expectancy violation. Their findings suggested that in violators with a high communication reward valence, low e-mail response-latency generated a negative valence on the behavior.

### Feedback

Psychology literature, according to Festinger (1954), Aspinwall and Taylor (1993), and Kluger and DeNisi (1996) suggested that qualitative aspects of a message, such as providing relative performance feedback and framing the feedback in a positive or negative manner, can have a significant impact on the performance of an individual. Hattie and Timperley (2007) conceptualized feedback as "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (p. 81).

Lee, Lee, Lee, and Park (2005) identified two types of feedback: positive and negative. Ashford and Tsui (1991) and Murthy and Schafer (2011) argued that positively framed feedback, which describes what a person does so well so that such behavior can

be repeated and vice-versa, is valuable information that improves task performance. When feedback is communicated in an autonomy-supporting way rather than a controlling way, the effects of the positive are perceived as more beneficial (Ryan, 1982). Consequently, Baron (1988) argued that destructive, negative feedback contains general, unsympathetic statements, threats, and attributions of participants' poor performance to internal factors. Deci, Koestner, and Ryan (1999) argued that negative feedback could increase the likelihood of discouragement and lower one's interest in pursuing an activity, whereas positive feedback had the opposite effect of increasing one's persistence and interest in an activity. Feedback "communicated in an autonomy supporting way" allows for the recipient of the message to be more highly self-motivated, improving their metaperception, or an individual's perception of another's perception of him or her (Langer & Wurf, 1999; Mouratidis, Lens, & Vansteenkiste, 2010, p. 634).

Concerning the operationalization of positive and negative feedback, one's metaperception is of interest to this thesis. According to Langer and Wurf (1999):

When an individual is given clear, channel-consistent feedback (e.g., positive verbal/positive nonverbal feedback), he or she is able to understand the feedback. In this situation, an individual can use the feedback as a basis for metaperception formation. In contrast, when an individual is given unclear, channel-consistent feedback (e.g., positive verbal/negative nonverbal feedback), he or she is unable to understand the feedback. The individual cannot use the feedback as a basis for metaperception formation; instead, he or she will return to self-perception to form a metaperception (p. 47)

Langer and Wurf's (1999) participants were able to distinguish between positive and negative verbal feedback due to the effect on metaperception. The author's participants reported a positive metaperception after positive verbal feedback and, conversely, a report of negative metaperception was perceived after negative verbal feedback. Carnelley, Israel, and Brennan (2007) and Collins, Ford, Guichard, and Allard (2006) argued that after receiving negative feedback, a highly anxious person felt worse about themselves and altered their self-views. With respect to metaperception and self-esteem, Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten (2006) suggested that after receiving positive feedback, one's self-esteem and well-being is enhanced, and conversely, negative feedback decreased one's self-esteem and well-being.

Research on positive and negative feedback from an EVT perspective have been overlooked. Valkenburg et al.'s (2006) research utilized veiled theories of self-esteem, which proposed that violatees would avoid agents who provided negative feedback. This proposition may provide support for EVT's perspective on future interaction outcomes and patterns of a violater with a low-reward communication valence. For example, EVT proposes that a violatee will attach a low-reward communication valence on a violator who is undesirable to interact with (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). With respect to communication patterns, "EVT predicts that a violation that has a positive valence will typically lead to better interaction outcomes than a non-violation. A violation that has a negative valence will typically lead to worse interaction outcomes than simply meeting expectations" (White, 2008, p. 192). Thus, Valkenburg's et al.'s (2006) proposition may provide support for EVT's proposition that a violatee would avoid a violater with a low-



reward communication valence, or one who may have provided negative feedback and is deemed undesirable to interact with.

Burgoon and Qin (2006) discuss the framing of feedback in relation to a deceiver's communicator reward valence. If negative feedback "occurs while a speaker is being truthful and continues when the speaker responds with deceit, the fact that it is not contingent on what the speaker is saying may lead the speaker to discount it, whereas if a speaker is deceptive from the start, then negative feedback from an interlocutor is likely to be seen as suspicious and to prompt greater efforts to increase credulity. In this regard, interpersonal deception should shed light on other domains of interactive discourse and how people generally respond to the apparent feedback of others" (Burgoon & Qin, 2006, p. 93). With the exception of Burgoon and Qin's (2006) study, empirical literature examining feedback from EVT's perspective is lacking.

#### Other Areas of Inquiry

This thesis's findings (see Findings and Analysis) are supported with the empirical research presented and fit into the existing work; however, little is also known about a violatee's overall appraisal process, such as the violator's communicator reward valence prior to an interaction and the future dyadic interaction outcomes and patterns, and the appraisal of feedback behavior from an EVT perspective. Other unanswered issues in the present empirical research, that are of importance to this thesis, focus on the perspective of a sole researcher in a qualitative study that utilized a reflexive, covert participant observation and data collection strategy. In an attempt to uncover the views of a sole researcher in a qualitative study utilizing the above mentioned strategies, this current thesis is a qualitative study utilizing an interpretive approach with a general

interpretive orientation, where application of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory are utilized to interpret the verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors experienced during the approval process of a master's thesis (Berg, 2007).

### Chapter III.

#### Research Questions

RQ1. What verbal and nonverbal behaviors, exhibited by the gatekeeper, violate the researcher's expectations during the approval process of the master's thesis?

RQ2. What was the overall appraisal of the gatekeeper's new communicator reward valence after the approval process of the master's thesis? What were the future interaction outcomes and patterns between the gatekeeper and the researcher after the approval process of the master's thesis?

## Chapter IV.

### Methodology

#### Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is to apply Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory to interpret the verbal and nonverbal expectancy violations behaviors exhibited by a gatekeeper during the approval process of a researcher's master's thesis. The study will summarize the researcher's appraisal process of each behavior violation interaction with the gatekeeper. The researcher selected an institution for secondary education as the setting, which will now be referred to as the location throughout the thesis. The research protocol began as a formal, qualitative communication study that would adhere to Barry University's Department of Communication and Institutional Review Board's (IRB) guidelines and protocols. Throughout the protocol approval process, the research focus and methods changed several times.

In the early stages of the process, the scope of the study was a historical comparison of the location's public relations and communication tactics used to garner media coverage and its annual fundraising outcome. This scope would utilize human subjects in the form of interviews and oral histories of the location's administration and Office of Development. Throughout the thesis, the location's gatekeeper will now be referred to as the gatekeeper or the administrator. The various employees in the administration and Office of Development will be referred to as staff. In the final modification of the approval process, the gatekeeper forced the researcher to eliminate the use of the location's human subjects in the protocol. In order to utilize the location as the setting, the researcher complied. In turn, the researcher was given permission to

investigate the location's historical data, only. The historical data, in the form of primary and secondary documents, such as press releases, published news reports and media coverage, yearbooks, and scrapbooks, will now be referred to as approved data throughout this thesis.

After this last modification, the gatekeeper continued to manipulate and control the researcher's access, eventually compromising the majority of physical approved data needed for the study by having it destroyed and discarded (see Findings and Analysis). The experience was an unsettling process, rife with verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors exhibited by the gatekeeper. After the gatekeeper's latest demands and destruction of valuable approved data, the researcher concluded that the quality of the study was deteriorating. After meeting with advisors from the Department of Communication over concerns with the gatekeeper's actions and subsequent effect on the study, the researcher received approval to eliminate the protocol and modify the formal thesis to a qualitative study with an interpretive approach.

In this thesis, a qualitative study of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory's concepts and propositions will be applied to an interpretive account of the master thesis' approval process experienced by the researcher (Berg, 2007). This thesis will utilize the model and theory to interpret the verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors exhibited by gatekeeper during the approval process. This thesis will also demonstrate how indicators of these behavior violations may be understood in many contexts of an EVT frame, such as identifying the gatekeeper's behavior violations and the effect on the researcher's expectancies. The gatekeeper's behavior violations will be identified and analyzed to the extent that they impinge on communicator reward valence, constitute

expectancy violations, or are the result of violations (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006). The method and research goals directly address the thesis's research questions, for they provide data, findings and analysis to identify verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors exhibited by the gatekeeper during the approval process of the master's thesis. Additionally, by utilizing propositions and concepts of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, the method and research goals interpret the overall appraisal of the gatekeeper's new communicator reward valence and identify the future interaction outcomes and patterns between the gatekeeper and researcher after the approval process of the master's thesis.

This focus of this thesis is unique, for the logistics, protocol, subject, and setting were unexpectedly being utilized and the data were unknowingly already being compiled. Effectively, the methodology became an atypical process. The researcher's experience during the approval process of the master's thesis subsequently provided the setting, subject, and data of the current study. The researcher's participant observation and data collection strategies were essentially reflexively covert (see Further Implications).

The thesis's interpretive approach is coupled with confidentiality and anonymity in an effort to maintain social responsibility to the qualitative research methods and the thesis's subjects (Berg, 2007). Confidentiality is demonstrated by removing any gender references, names, or titles of the subjects from the research records and anonymity is demonstrated by leaving the subjects nameless throughout the thesis (Berg, 2007).

#### Logistics and Protocol

The logistics and costs of this thesis research were uncomplicated and absorbed by the researcher. The acquisition and management of resources included logbooks to

record observational data, a computer to access electronic data, and photocopies of such data (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

The protocol of the current thesis is uncomplicated and supported with resources from the initial protocol. In the initial protocol, entry and scheduled visits to the scene were without difficulty, for the site was readily accessed and, with permission, the approved data were plentiful and easily accessed. During the approval process of the initial protocol, there were many empirical observations of the gatekeeper and staff, as well as interactions between the researcher and the gatekeeper. The empirical observations of the gatekeeper and staff and the communicative interactions between the researcher and the gatekeeper about the project's goals were not to be analyzed in the initial thesis proposals. These details were not to be analyzed in the initial thesis proposals because the focus of the initial proposal was a historical comparison of the location's public relations and communication tactics used to garner media coverage and its annual fundraising outcome. However, these empirical observations and communicative interactions became the focus of this thesis after the gatekeeper's unaccommodating tactics compromised the approved data and overall quality of the initial study. Utilizing a reflexively covert strategy, the following were covertly collected and used as the data for the current study: (a) the communicative interaction between the researcher and gatekeeper, and written and computer-mediated responses to inquiries or proposed documents relating to the approval process of the original protocol (verbal behavior indicators); and (b) the empirical observations of the gatekeeper and staff acting upon the gatekeeper's direct orders (nonverbal behavior indicators) (Zhou & Zhang, 2006).

### Subjects

The gatekeeper and location's staff served as the subjects in this thesis. Additionally, the gatekeeper's verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors were analyzed in this thesis.

### Setting

The field and research setting of the current study is the location. The location is an institution of secondary education.

### Data Collection

As stated above in the Scope of the Study, data were unknowingly being compiled during the initial protocol's approval process. During this process, the sizable amount of observational interactions between the gatekeeper and staff (nonverbal behavior) and e-mails, written, and communicative interactions between the researcher and the gatekeeper (verbal behavior) serves as the researcher's participant observation and data.

### Content Analysis

Identifying the verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors exhibited by the gatekeeper during the approval process of the researcher's master's thesis is of interest in this study. Additionally, interpreting the appraisal of the gatekeeper's overall communicator reward valence, as well as the future interaction patterns and outcomes between the gatekeeper and researcher after the approval process of the researcher's master's thesis, are also of interest. Content analysis, which is useful to interpretive studies, was utilized to conduct a "careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation" of this experience "in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings" in the body of work (Berg, 2007, p. 303-304). In the analysis, a general



interpretive orientation, in which “human interaction can be seen as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning,” was exercised (Berg, 2007, p. 304).

In the interpretive approach, “interviews and observational data are transcribed into written text for data” (Berg, 2007, p. 304). Subsequently, the data were interpreted by organizing it in order to “uncover patterns of human activity, action, and meaning” (Berg, 2007, p. 305). Additionally, because the data are gathered from an account of the researcher’s experience, this is an interpretation based on the researcher’s thoughts and emotions during and after the experiences.

The first step in the content analysis of this thesis was to collect, identify, and, if needed, transcribe data, and then reflexively consider those as an interpretation of a situation (Berg, 2007). The second step in content analysis was for the researcher to note the analytic choice to interpret the following components of data, or the “human activity, action, and meaning,” consisting of the: (a) verbal behavior indicators from the gatekeeper in the form communicative interaction between the researcher and gatekeeper, and written and computer-mediated responses to inquiries or proposed documents relating to the approval process of the original protocol; and (b) nonverbal behavior indicators in the form of empirical observations of the gatekeeper and staff acting upon the gatekeeper’s direct orders (Berg, 2007, p. 305). In these notes, the depicted patterns and themes (if any) were recorded from the data.

Step three in the process was to begin the analytic categorization process on the data from step two. Using an interpretive approach, the researcher sorted the array of similar themes and patterns of phenomena presented in the data into the following general themes of behavior: (a) dominance; (b) deception; and (c) feedback (Lindlof &

Taylor). Next, the researcher conducted an analysis of empirical literature for the Conceptual Areas of Inquiry on the general themes of behavior found in the project's data. After sorting through the themes and utilizing the analysis of empirical literature on the behaviors, the same three general themes of behavior were interpreted as the study's three analytic categories: (a) dominance; (b) deception; and (c) feedback.

Step four of the content analysis process was the establishment of grounded categories. During this step, (a) data are read again and category labels for sorting are noted; (b) some already identified analytic categories are re-identified; and (c) themes that have a relationship with the thesis's research questions are linked to the questions (Berg, 2007). Definitively, the grounded categories were identified as: (a) dominance; (b) deception; (c) positive feedback; and (d) negative feedback. These categories were presented as multi-faceted behaviors that may be interpreted in many ways depending on context and perceiver (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005).

In step five of content analysis, "objective criteria for selection" are identified through questions extracted from relevant literature. The questions are used to operationalize the grounded categories (Berg, 2007, p. 326). Found on Appendix A, operationalization of the grounded categories comprise the questions in the Behavior Violation Questions document, which contains "several inferential levels" that serve as "explicit coding rules" of the grounded categories (Berg, 2007, p. 326). In step six of content analysis, "once the criteria for selection" for the grounded categories "have been accomplished, the next stage is to sort the data accordingly" (Berg, 2007, p. 327). After interpreting the expectancy violation behavior(s) evidenced in the data, the researcher identifies its grounded categories in the Behavior Violation Questions (see Appendix A).

The violation itself may contain more than one expectancy violation behavior, thus, violations may be categorized into more than one expectancy violation behavior category. The textual data of the expectancy violation behavior are sorted under the grounded categories by copying the text data containing the violation, labeling each with the date of the behavior, and casting each into a desktop computer folder labeled with the appropriate grounded categories (Berg, 2007).

After sorting all of the textual data into the grounded categories, step seven of content analysis is conducted by taking a “surface look” at the data by “counting the number of items of data chunks that have been cast into each category” (Berg, 2007, p. 327). According to Berg (2007), having a large amount of “chunks of data” from many cases in a particular category suggests where the researcher will identify any patterns (see Discussion) (p. 327). Patterns are interpreted as many “chunks of data” that contain similar phrases or concepts (Berg, 2007, p. 327). Consequently, the researcher will then indicate “an idea of how strong the pattern is by describing its magnitude, or the proportion of the sample that made similar comments or statements” (Berg, 2007, p. 327). The final goal of content analysis, in reference to the potential patterns, is to infer the magnitude of such patterns, only (Berg, 2007).

## Chapter V.

### Findings and Analysis

The Findings and Analysis will be a first-person narrative of the researcher's personal experience with the gatekeeper during the approval process of a master's thesis. According to Berg (2007), in qualitative research, the findings are the research data and the analysis is the researcher's interpretation of the data. Presented in sequential order, the verbal and nonverbal data findings will be presented and interwoven with their analysis, or interpretation, with an occasional weaving of ethnographic and empirical observations (Berg, 2007). According to Berg (1983), Bing (1987), and Dabney (1993), this will demonstrate and document various patterns.

In the Findings, the experience before the verbal or nonverbal expectancy violation behavior (the data) will be presented in a narrative style. If data are evidenced as either a handwritten note or e-mail communication, then a reference to an appendix containing this evidence will be made. The Analysis will utilize an application of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory's concepts and propositions to interpret the verbal and nonverbal expectancy violation behaviors in the following order: prescriptive expectancies, predictive expectancies, evidence of data, appraisal, identification of expectancy violation behavior(s) as conceptualized and operationalized in the Behavior Violation Questions (see Appendix A), communicator reward valence (in the case of ambiguous expectancy violation behaviors), and the behavior violation valence(s) (Burgoon, 1993). The researcher's overall appraisal of the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence and future interaction outcomes and patterns with the administrator will be presented in the Discussion (Burgoon, 1993). The Discussion will demonstrate

how indicators of these behavior violations may be understood in many contexts of an EVT frame, such as identifying the gatekeeper's behavior violations and its affect on the researcher's expectancies. The gatekeeper's behavior violations will be identified and analyzed to the extent that they impinge on communicator reward valence, constitute expectancy violations, or are the result of violations (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006).

### Findings 1

Prior to the approval process of my master's thesis, I was a member of the location's staff under the direction of the gatekeeper. In accordance with EVT, my communication expectancies of the gatekeeper were influenced by the administrator's communication characteristics, the context characteristics of our work environment, and the relationship factors between us (Burgoon, 1993). The administrator influenced and advised my work, which was to write and pitch news stories on the location's students and accomplishments while assisting the staff with their fundraising and recruitment goals. In terms of relationship factors, the gatekeeper was a lofty, influential, and informative individual with whom I formed a trusting relationship. My interpretation was that we were both supportive of each other's goals and work efforts, while remaining cognizant of each other's behaviors and emotional interests. In terms of communication characteristics, the gatekeeper's communication style was direct and oftentimes resolute; the administrator was rarely equivocal about the goals and expectations of the location's staff and faculty. However, towards me, the administrator was usually open to ideas and suggestions, and seemed to welcome new tactics and ideas about the location's public relations. Nevertheless, the administrator always had final control about everything (e.g., press releases, promotional materials, photographs) that was released to the public or the

media. In terms of context characteristics, the gatekeeper often reminded us that the location was under the critical eye of its religiously affiliated higher administration. This higher administration maintained records of the location's low recruitment and an unstable donor population, which led to daily threats about budget cuts, including potential job loss for faculty and staff. The most significant threat made by the higher administration was closure of the location unless recruitment and donation levels increased.

The gatekeeper understood that location closure would negatively affect all employee lives, the student's educational experience, and, ultimately, the administrator's reputation. The gatekeeper was a results-driven individual who worked towards accomplishing the aggressive goal of 'succeeding against the odds' and maintaining the location's future. Due to the higher administration's threats, the gatekeeper was markedly concerned with the location's reputation. Consequently, the gatekeeper delivered bloated statements about the accomplishments of the location during public speeches and potential student recruitment events. The gatekeeper was noticeably cautious to maintain a laudable and resilient reputation for the location to the public, for the location's reputation ultimately determined the administrator's own reputation.

The dynamics of the location's media tactics to garner fundraising, along with the location's rich history, piqued my interest as a potential thesis topic. After brainstorming about the idea with the staff, I scheduled a meeting with the gatekeeper. During the meeting, I expressed my interest in learning whether there was a correlation between the trends of the location's media tactics and their fundraising results. At the same meeting, I

requested access to the location's past media materials and budget records of donor giving (known as financial records to the gatekeeper).

The gatekeeper orally agreed with the topic and gave permission to use the location, materials, and budget records of donor giving in my research. The gatekeeper expressed reservations about my project if the research reflected negatively on the location's reputation. The gatekeeper never expressed any reservation about my access to the budget records of donor giving. The gatekeeper also mentioned how the research may assist Barry University with their donor practices and public relations endeavors, implying that the location's tactics were more advantageous. I assured the gatekeeper that my focus was on the public relations and media trend's potential to influence fundraising support. I also assured the gatekeeper that my focus would be void of the details warranting the discouraging threats from the location's higher administration.

At the conclusion of the meeting, where I received verbal consent from the gatekeeper to go forth with my protocol, I began to compile information and identify supplementary materials for the project. I also began to schedule interviews, for I received permission to interview potential subjects and take steps to acquire data (protected and unprotected) needed for my research.

I utilized the Narrative and Agenda Setting theories of Communication and Mass Communication in the original protocol submitted to Barry University's IRB. I wanted to explore how the location survives in dramatically changing economic environments while maintaining media coverage, and whether there were any links or patterns in donor giving post-media coverage. The study also served to potentially discover what tactics and styles of media coverage influenced education fundraising.

An addendum for the gatekeeper's and staff's consent was also produced, for I wanted to conduct interviews, and oral histories, to add richer content to my findings. In the addendum, I asked for permission to conduct research on the location's grounds to access approved data. I also proposed that my attempt to discover information on how the location has continued to effectively advertise and promote their school throughout the many years of its establishment.

After review by Dr. Chojnacki, this protocol was submitted to Barry University's IRB. I was asked by the Board to attend an upcoming IRB meeting where my protocol was to be reviewed. During the meeting, the academic representative asked questions about my research topic and data collection methods. The academic representative stated that the topic was fruitful and the outcome of my research should produce an interesting perspective. I received an official notice from the IRB outlining that my protocol was reviewed and accepted as exempt pending receipt of minor changes made to my submission documents and a copy of the questions I would ask during the interviews and oral histories.

After I submitted what I thought was to be my final protocol edits to Barry University's IRB, I received a letter from the Chair of the IRB stating that the specific changes requested by the IRB have been made to my protocol, so I received final approval for the study as exempt from further review. Upon receiving my approved Consent Cover Letter with the IRB stamp and approved Addendum I, I submitted these forms to the gatekeeper for an endorsed authorization.

Shortly afterward, the gatekeeper returned the Consent Cover Letter and Addendum I forms to me unendorsed (see Appendix B). In a handwritten note on the



Informed Consent Letter and Addendum 1, the gatekeeper indicated that both forms were “unapprovable” and that my study was one that the gatekeeper had not endorsed nor planned to endorse (see Appendix B). The gatekeeper’s reason was that the study would “involve research into budget figures that would place a great burden on the administration requiring access to confidential data that is not readily available” (see Appendix B). Also stated was that my IRB-approved protocol had “serious non-sequiturs in the proposed correlational [sic] study” (see Appendix B). I was dumbfounded by the gatekeeper’s remarks, for I had received the administrator’s verbal approval about the direction of my research during our initial meeting. Additionally, the gatekeeper’s approval also included my access to the location’s past media materials and access to the budget records of donor giving for my project. The gatekeeper orally agreed to the general idea of my project, yet neglected to convey any concerns over my access to the budget records of donor giving. Using propositions and concepts of Burgoon’s (1993) EVT model and theory, below is Analysis 1 of the gatekeeper’s behavior violation(s) exhibited on Appendix B:

#### Analysis 1

*Prescriptive expectancies:* In this interaction, I desire the gatekeeper to endorse the Informed Consent Form and Addendum 1.

*Predictive expectancies:* In this interaction, I anticipate that the gatekeeper will endorse the Informed Consent Form and Addendum 1. I never anticipated that the administrator would reject endorsing the forms or have an issue with the data collection methods described in the Informed Consent Form.

*Evidence of data:* See Appendix B

*Appraisal:*

*Interpretation:* After an expectancy violation, Burgoon (1993) described the arousal as a form of “attentional relocation, heightening attention to the characteristics of the communicator, the relational implicature, and the meaning of the violation act,” directing attention to the violator and the violation (p. 35). In accordance with EVT, after the violation behavior(s) exhibited on Appendix B, I attempted to make sense of the action by thinking more cerebrally about the gatekeeper (Burgoon, 1993). In trying to make sense of this violation, I interpreted the behavior of the gatekeeper, who is essentially the leader of the location, as a way of exercising protection of the location’s financial records. I interpreted that the gatekeeper did not want me/my research to access/uncover any financial details pertaining to the location, possibly because the institution was already in economic flux due to unstable donor giving. The gatekeeper’s behavior was confusing, because during the meeting when I pitched my thesis topic, the gatekeeper verbally agreed to provide access to the budget records of donor giving. In addition, I also found the gatekeeper’s behavior to be deceitful. Finally, I believed this behavior was a way for the gatekeeper to show superiority, for it was stated that accessing financial records that “are not readily available” would “place a great burden” on the staff the gatekeeper managed (see Appendix B). I interpreted this statement as an informal way of stating that the work of the location’s staff, including the gatekeeper, were to be undisturbed by my investigative research efforts.

*Evaluation:* In accordance with EVT, my affective judgment of these behavior violations is that they are unappealing and undesired (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). However, because a trusted individual delivered the confusing and ambiguous behavior violations, I

would consider the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence in order to assign a valence(s) to the behavior violations in accordance with EVT.

*Identification of expectancy violation behavior(s) (see Appendix A):* I interpreted the expectancy violation behaviors as dominance, deception, and negative feedback. I interpreted the behavior as dominance because the gatekeeper's restriction of access to financial records was a form of resource control/power in the form of command of precedence (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2006; Jensen, Bessarabova, Adame, Burgoon, & Slowik, 2011). Also, the gatekeeper exhibited dominance behavior in the form of non-collaboration. The administrator, who is in a position of influence and power over the location's staff, stated that my access of the location's financial records would burden the workload of the location's staff. Staff that provided direct administrative support to the gatekeeper would have comprised the individuals that would have compiled the budget records of donor giving. Thus, my interpretation of the administrator's response was that the gatekeeper's needs are above mine, for the administrator did not want the location's staff to provide additional support for anyone other than the gatekeeper or anything other than the location's needs (Diekmann, 2007; Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005). Additionally, during my meeting with the gatekeeper (prior to the development of the Informed Consent Form and Addendum 1), I was approved of access to the budget records of donor giving, then subsequently stripped access by the gatekeeper as evidenced by the violation behavior enacted on Appendix B (Bond et al., 1992; Hancock et al., 2008; Serota et al., 2010). I interpreted this behavior as deception in the form of dishonesty, for I believed the gatekeeper knowingly mislead me. The only expressed reservation the gatekeeper had about my research was that it not negatively portray the location's reputation. I

agreed with the gatekeeper's reservations and assured to keep my research void of any negative references to the location's reputation, yet I was still denied access to the budget records of donor giving. Lastly, deception was also interpreted in the form of a violation of normative behavior, for the gatekeeper's behavior of rejecting of my forms was unexpected (Aune et al., 1996; Bond et al., 1992; Burgoon et al., 2008; Burgoon & Qin, 2006; Jensen et al., 2009; Zhou & Zhang, 2006). Finally, I detected negative feedback in this behavior, for I was discouraged to continue my original thesis goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

*Communicator reward valence (if expectancy violation behavior(s) are ambiguous):*

EVT "suggests that assessments" of communicator reward valence "moderate our evaluations of violations, particularly when the meaning of the violation is open to interpretation" by the violatee (White, 2008, p. 192). In this particular situation, the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence quotient, or "all prior knowledge or observable information that a communicator, plus that individual's behavior during the interaction," was as influential for the sake of my thesis, as the administrator was someone with whom I desired future interaction (Burgoon, 1993, p. 34; White, 2008). Thus, the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence would be considered as high or positive. Though the behaviors exhibited on Appendix B clearly violated my expectations of the gatekeeper, Burgoon (1993) explained that communicators with a high communication reward valence are "granted a wider-latitude in deviating from social norms before their behavior is regarded as unexpected" (p. 39).

*Behavior violation valence(s):* In accordance with EVT, the violations created increased

tension between the gatekeeper and myself, thus the behavior violation valence assigned to dominance, deception, and negative feedback is negative (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002).

### Findings 2

After I received the gatekeeper's unendorsed forms and the note described in Findings 1, I shared the feedback with a staff member with whom I worked closely and was well aware of my future thesis endeavors. After I disclosed this information, the staff member, who had worked under the gatekeeper's direction for the past five years, informed me that they were resigning. Unbeknownst to me, the staff member, decided to compile several decades of the location's financial records of donor giving for my future research endeavors before their resignation. These financial records were a vital component for my original protocol, for my hopes were to record any annual trends in the location's fundraising donations in correlation with the amount of annual media coverage received. Because my Informed Consent Form and Addendum 1 did not receive the gatekeeper's approval, the staff member secured the financial data on a CD and withheld it until I, hopefully, would receive permission to begin collecting research data. I was appreciative of the staff member's support, but extremely disheartened by the gatekeeper's actions. Clearly, the staff member's actions proved that the gatekeeper's un-endorsement of the forms and non-collaborative stance was unnecessary and deceitful, for the financial data I needed was readily available and compiled with little to no burden by members of the staff.

While discussing my experiences with a second member of the staff who worked in the Accounting Department of the location, I learned that the gatekeeper's methods of operation when handling the location's collective financial information were guarded.

This second member of the staff also informed me that the gatekeeper rarely waived on decision-making stances concerning the location's financial records, thus I was advised to change the focus of my research in order to utilize the location as my setting.

Subsequently, the staff member who compiled the CD containing the financial records of donor giving destroyed the disc because the gatekeeper did not approve it.

After my conversation with these staff members, I decided my project's goal was unattainable without further cooperation from the gatekeeper. I promptly sent the gatekeeper a meeting request to discuss the unendorsed forms and the possibility of continuing my with thesis' goals. About an hour after the request was sent, the gatekeeper replied and rejected my offer to meet unless there was a "radical change in the nature of the study" (See Appendix C).

Once again, I was disheartened by the non-collaborative stance of the gatekeeper. Using propositions and concepts of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, below is Analysis 2 of the gatekeeper's behavior violation(s) exhibited on Appendix C:

### Analysis 2

*Prescriptive expectancies:* In this interaction, I desire the gatekeeper to agree to meet with me and discuss the unendorsed Informed Consent Form and Addendum 1.

*Predictive expectancies:* In this interaction, I anticipated that the gatekeeper would agree to meet with me and discuss the Informed Consent Form and Addendum 1. I never anticipated that he would reject the opportunity to meet altogether, unless I made a "radical change in the nature of the study" (See Appendix C).

*Evidence of data:* See Appendix C

*Appraisal:*

*Interpretation:* In accordance with EVT, after the violation behavior exhibited on Appendix C was enacted, I attempted to make sense of the action and interpret the behavior of the gatekeeper as uncooperativeness and another example of a strategic tactic to protect the location's financial records (Burgoon, 1993). Also, the gatekeeper stated that if I submit a new protocol with a "radical change," then a decision regarding if a new meeting is in order would be made. I interpreted this behavior as another example of superiority.

*Evaluation:* In accordance with EVT, my affective judgment of this behavior violation is that it is unappealing and undesired (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). The act of the behavior violation was not confusing or ambiguous; it was a clear rejection of a meeting request. Thus, I did not need to consider the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence in order to assign a valence to the behavior violation in accordance with EVT.

*Identification of expectancy violation behavior(s)* (see Appendix A): I interpreted the expectancy violation behavior as dominance. I interpreted the behavior as dominance, because the gatekeeper rejecting my meeting request unless I satisfied the administrator's request to make a "radical change" in the new protocol was a form of resource control/power in the form of possession of valued commodities (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2006; Jensen et al., 2011). The gatekeeper gave me an ultimatum, which controlled both our opportunities to meet about my project. In resource control in the form of possession of valued commodities, the gatekeeper controlled the opportunity to meet, thus, controlled my time to meet with the administrator (Dunbar & Burgoon, 2006; Jensen et al., 2011). Also, the gatekeeper's behavior was interpreted as dominance in the form of

interaction control, where dominance is exhibited by changing the direction of a conversation, and initiating/adjourning meetings (Jensen et al., 2011). Additionally, I interpreted the behavior as deception because the gatekeeper's rejection of my meeting request was a violation of normative behavior, for it was unexpected, difficult to explain, and not indicative of our usual trusting and supportive relationship (Aune et al., 1996; Bond et al., 1992; Burgoon et al., 2008; Burgoon & Qin, 2006; Jensen et al., 2009; Zhou & Zhang, 2006). Finally, I detected negative feedback in this behavior, for I was once again discouraged from continuing on with my original thesis goals because I was specifically asked to change my thesis' direction (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

*Communicator reward valance (if expectancy violation behavior(s) are ambiguous):* N/A

*Behavior violation valence(s):* In accordance with EVT, the violations were inconsistent with the gatekeeper's expected behavior. The violations caused an increase in tension between the gatekeeper and myself, thus the behavior violation valence assigned to dominance is negative (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002).

### Findings 3

I re-examined my fundamental beliefs and rights as a social-scientific researcher after the gatekeeper rejected my meeting request. I understood that my research protocol needed modification if I wanted to utilize the location as my research setting. I was crestfallen about my current endeavors, yet optimistic about a new project.

I believed the location's history was still an intriguing focus for my research. I believe the location proved itself as a dynamic setting enriched by historical events and diverse students and alumnae. Though the threats of faculty budget cuts and the decision to permanently close the location at the end of the year (unless there was an uptick to



maintain mandated recruitment standards and fundraising donations) were ever-present by the higher administration, the location's students and staff continued to support and celebrate their school. With the continued downfall of the United States' economy in early 2010, a dismal pattern arose during the location's fiscal year. The gatekeeper's staff revealed to me that many of the families who already struggled to pay their children's tuition had to either forfeit the student's education at the location or ask for additional financial assistance, which exhausted the location's financial aid funds. The situation was so dire that during faculty meetings, the gatekeeper's staff asked each teacher to accept responsibility for recruiting and enrolling two students each for the upcoming school year, or risk being terminated. Subsequently, a few teachers resigned.

During this time, the devastating January 2010 Haiti earthquake brought in many refugee children to the area to settle in with extended families or family-friends, and many of the children enrolled in the location. The hasty admission of the Haitian refugee students boosted enrollment numbers at the location and placed an additional financial burden on the financially struggling institution. As a result, the gatekeeper pressured the Office of Development staff to put extra effort in garnering media attention to attract donations and funding for the Haitian students. Due to the Haitian earthquake, the higher administration temporarily withdrew their decision to close the location at the end of the fiscal year because it now served as a community necessity and provided a support system for many new families.

As a member of the staff, I was constantly reminded about and hyperaware of the location's limited financial resources. I was aware that the goal of my job responsibilities was to promote the location in order to attract new students and donations. I truly

enjoyed my work and getting to know the students and staff of such a small, yet spirited, institution. Throughout the development of my thesis' focus, I reflected on the diverse ethnic backgrounds and unique story each student shared with me during my time of newsgathering for the Office of Development. I appreciated the location and believed in its mission, which I seamlessly delivered in every pitch I made and press release I wrote, for it truly stood for community and oneness. I absorbed in this experience so much that I wanted to learn more about the location and its rich history, which includes helping students who have experienced everything from racism and personal turmoil to a broken family and natural disaster receive a solid education for the past several decades. The lack of support I received from the gatekeeper in the first and second endorsement requests of the protocol left me perplexed because I immensely valued the location. I thought of myself as somewhat of a dejected advocate of a seemingly destitute, yet resilient, institution.

Determined to utilize the location as my research setting, I modified my protocol by concentrating entirely on the location's public relations and communication tactics. I eliminated the involvement of human subjects and the need to review any of the location's financial information. After revising my protocol's addenda, I sent the forms to the IRB and received official approval of my modifications.

When I returned to work with my newly IRB-approved addenda, I instantly wanted to share the addenda with the gatekeeper to express my interest in moving forward with a new, approvable research project. I called the gatekeeper on the administrator's personal office line; however, the receptionist answered the call and informed me that the gatekeeper was unable to speak with me. The receptionist told me

that utilizing e-mail would be my best option to correspond with the gatekeeper. However, I was determined to meet in a personal setting. I wanted to explain the new focus of my research with the gatekeeper in person, as I did in the initial meeting, before I submitted any addenda for endorsement. After many attempts throughout the day to approach the gatekeeper in the administrator's office, I realized my efforts were useless. The gatekeeper made it very clear to me in our last interaction (see Appendix C) that I do not have the authority to request a face-to-face meeting with the administrator. Thus, the next morning, I sent the newly-IRB approved addenda to the gatekeeper via e-mail, requesting an approval of the new protocol modifications (see Appendix D). Once again, I received a stunted, confusing response, in which the gatekeeper claimed to have never endorsed my original protocol. The gatekeeper's non-collaborative stance and effort to divert my attention back to the conviction that the original protocol was never approved violated my expectations. Using propositions and concepts of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, below is Analysis 3 of the gatekeeper's behavior violation(s) exhibited on Appendix D:

### Analysis 3

*Prescriptive expectancies:* In this interaction, I desire the gatekeeper to approve my new protocol.

*Predictive expectancies:* In this interaction, I anticipate that the gatekeeper would approve my new protocol.

*Evidence of data:* See Appendix D

*Appraisal:*

*Interpretation:* In accordance with EVT, after an expectancy violation, the

“communicator and message/behavior characteristics” become “more salient” (Burgoon & Hale, 1988, p.62). After the violation behavior exhibited on Appendix D, I attempted to make sense of these behaviors by focusing on the gatekeeper and questioning why I would receive such a deceitful statement in response. We had an initial meeting about my research goals at which my project was approved. Additionally, the gatekeeper was aware of the steps I needed to take with the IRB to approve my research goals. I questioned why the gatekeeper was cognizant of this, yet, continued to allow me to submit the original protocol to the IRB. I questioned why the gatekeeper allowed me to submit the Informed Consent Forms and Addendum 1 to the IRB without adequate warning that a revision needed to be made. During this interpretation, my confidence in any future collaboration with the gatekeeper began to suffer and I felt unsure about my efforts. I wondered if securing the location as a setting would be unachievable because the gatekeeper continued to reject my meeting requests. The gatekeeper also reminded me that my protocol is un-approvable. In trying to make sense of this violation, I interpreted the behavior of the gatekeeper, as dishonest and non-collaborative, leaving me hesitant in trying to pursue my future research endeavors with the administrator (Burgoon, 1993).

*Evaluation:* In accordance with EVT, my affective judgments of these behavior violations are that they are unappealing and undesired (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). The behavior was confusing and ambiguous. However, because a trusting individual delivered the behavior violations, I would consider the gatekeeper’s communicator reward valence in order to assign a valence(s) to the behavior violations in accordance with EVT.

*Identification of expectancy violation behavior(s) (see Appendix A):* I interpreted the expectancy violation behaviors as dominance, deception, and negative feedback. I interpreted the behavior as dominance, for the non-collaborative message asserted the gatekeeper's needs over my needs (Diekmann, 2007; Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005). I also interpreted this behavior as deception in the form of dishonesty. The gatekeeper's response was that there was never an official approved of my initial protocol, which was a lie. In our initial meeting, approval was granted and I subsequently took the next steps of approval with the IRB. Between the time after our meeting and prior to my first attempt to receive endorsement on the original protocol, I was never once approached or asked by the gatekeeper to modify the research's protocol. The gatekeeper knew of my obligation to submit paperwork to Barry's IRB, yet kept me uninformed of this changed decision that would interrupt research goals. I interpreted this behavior as deception in the form of dishonesty because the gatekeeper knowingly and intentionally misled me (Bond et al., 1992; Hancock et al., 2008; Serota et al., 2010). Additionally, deception was interpreted in the form of inconsistent message response latency. Specifically, when communication with the gatekeeper went from high/synchronous interactivity communication (such as face-to-face meetings) to low/asynchronous interactivity communication (such as communication limited to e-mail only) during questioning, the result was weakened conversational engagement, trust for one another, and favorability (Burgoon et al., 2010; Bond et al., 1992; Jensen et al., 2009; Zhou & Zhang, 2006). Additionally, detachment, disinterest, distrust, and lack of confidence in my task performance were occurring (Burgoon et al., 2010; Bond et al., 1992; Jensen et al., 2009; Zhou & Zhang, 2006). Finally, I felt hesitant in my future relationship with the

gatekeeper during any potential future research endeavors. Thus, I interpreted this behavior as negative feedback in the form of a negative/diffident effect on my metaperception, which resulted in the lowering of my self-esteem and sense of well-being (Hepper & Carnelley, 2010; Langer & Wurf, 1999; Valkenburg et al., 2006).

*Communicator reward valence (if expectancy violation behavior(s) are ambiguous):* As explained in Analysis 1, EVT “suggests that assessments ” of communicator reward valence “moderate our evaluations of violations, particularly when the meaning of the violation is open to interpretation” by the violatee (White, 2008, p. 192). In this particular situation, the gatekeeper’s communicator reward valence quotient, or “all prior knowledge or observable information that a communicator, plus that individual’s behavior during the interaction,” would still be regarded as influential for the sake of my thesis, as the administrator was someone with whom I desired future interaction (Burgoon, 1993, p. 34; White, 2008). Thus, the gatekeeper’s communicator reward valence would still be considered as high or positive. Though the gatekeeper’s behavior clearly violated my expectations, Burgoon (1993) explains that communicators with a high communication reward valence are “granted a wider-latitude in deviating from social norms before their behavior is regarded as unexpected” (p. 39).

*Behavior violation valence(s):* In accordance with EVT, the violations caused an increase in tension between the gatekeeper and myself, thus the behavior violation valence assigned to dominance, deception, and negative feedback is negative (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002).

#### Findings 4

Four days after submitting my newly-IRB approved protocol to the gatekeeper, I received an e-mail response containing affirmative approval for my protocol. Because the past three interactions with the gatekeeper produced non-collaborative responses, I had modified my communication expectancies of the administrator to justify the recent behavior. Thus, the gatekeeper's approval of my protocol provoked an expectancy violation. The approval was laden with concern in the "exhaustive task" I had prescribed myself (see Appendix E). Lastly, the gatekeeper suggested I find a method to organize the boxes of information in the staff's closet, which contained several decades of approved data and a vast amount of supplies and materials that were irrelevant to my research. Using propositions and concepts of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, below is Analysis 4 of the gatekeeper's behavior violation(s) exhibited on Appendix E:

#### Analysis 4

*Prescriptive expectancies:* In this interaction, I desire the gatekeeper to approve my new research protocol.

*Predictive expectancies:* In this interaction, I anticipated that the gatekeeper would find a reason to once again reject my new research protocol and demand new methods in order to use the location as my setting.

*Evidence of data:* See Appendix E

*Appraisal:*

*Interpretation:* In accordance with EVT, after the violation behavior exhibited on Appendix E, I attempted to make sense of the salient behaviors by focusing on the gatekeeper and questioning why I would receive an affirmative response (Burgoon &

Hale, 1988). However, the approval also contained a concern in the “exhaustive task” I had prescribed myself (see Appendix E). I interpreted this behavior as an unexpected conversation blip. Lastly, the gatekeeper suggested I find a method to organize the boxes of information in the staff’s closet. I interpreted the request to organize the boxes of information as I collect approved data as an unusual petition on the gatekeeper’s behalf. Fulfilling the gatekeeper’s request to organize the boxes of data would cause me to work well past my work end date; I believed it would use up my time during an already critical stage in my research. In trying to make sense of this violation, I interpreted the behavior of the gatekeeper as encouraging, yet unexpected (Burgoon, 1993).

*Evaluation:* In accordance with EVT, my affective judgment of the gatekeeper’s encouraging behavior is that it was appealing and desired (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). However, also in accordance with EVT, the accompanying unexpected behaviors were unappealing and undesired. The behavior was confusing and ambiguous. Because an important individual delivered the behavior violations, I would consider the gatekeeper’s communicator reward valence in order to assign a valence(s) to the behavior violations in accordance with EVT.

*Identification of expectancy violation behavior(s) (see Appendix A):* I interpreted these expectancy violation behaviors as positive feedback, dominance, and deception. I interpreted a portion of the behavior as positive feedback, for the gatekeeper’s approval of my new protocol encouraged me to persist with my research and reignited my interest in the location (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, the gatekeeper’s concern with the “exhaustive task” I was about to experience was interpreted as dominance in the form of interaction control. The unexpected conversation blip changed the direction of the



conversation and violated my expectations. I went from a feeling of encouragement back to a feeling of confusion (Jensen et al., 2011). Lastly, the gatekeeper's suggestion to organize the boxes of information in the staff's close violated my expectations. I interpreted this behavior as deception in the form of a violation of normative behavior, for the gatekeeper's request was difficult to explain (Aune et al., 1996; Bond et al., 1992; Burgoon et al., 2008; Jensen et al., 2009; Burgoon & Qin, 2006; Zhou & Zhang, 2006).

*Communicator reward valence (if expectancy violation behavior(s) are ambiguous):* In this particular interaction, the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence quotient, or "all prior knowledge or observable information that a communicator, plus that individual's behavior during the interaction," would be regarded as unrewarding (Burgoon et al., 1989, p. 98). The fluctuation of behaviors experienced in the past few interactions created distance and anxiety between us. Though I needed future interactions with the gatekeeper, I no longer desired them as much (Burgoon, 1993, p. 34; White, 2008). I interpreted more extreme behaviors from the gatekeeper in our previous interactions and the complicated behavior violations exhibited on Appendix E. Burgoon (1993) explained that communicators with a high communication reward valence must "engage in more extreme behaviors before their acts qualify as violations" (p. 39). The result of this behavior changed the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence from high and positive to interpreted as low or negative.

*Behavior violation valence(s):* In accordance with EVT, a violation valence assignment depends on whether the violation behavior aligns (positive) or is inconsistent (negative) with one's expected behavior/expectations (Houser, 2005). Because I expected the gatekeeper to reject my protocol once again, my communication expectancies were

unaligned with the positive feedback I received in the form of an approval (see Appendix E). Thus, EVT calls for the gatekeeper's positive feedback behavior to be assigned a negative violation valence. I considered both the gatekeeper's newly-charged low/negative communicator reward valence and the interpretation that "some interaction behaviors carry clear social meaning, so their valence, in a given context or relationship, is relatively clear" (White, 2008, p. 191). Subsequently, I have assigned a positive valence to the positive feedback behavior. In accordance with EVT, the violations caused an increase in tension between the gatekeeper and myself, thus the behavior violation valence assigned to dominance and deception were negative (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002).

#### Findings 5

I immediately began my data collection at the location after receiving the gatekeeper's approval of my new protocol. When I arrived at work that morning, I compiled the approved data that I had set aside early on in the protocol's approval stage. I decided to begin the next workday examining the potential approved data in the staff closets.

When I arrived at the location on my next scheduled work day, I discovered that the gatekeeper had hired a retired faculty member to clean out the staff closets and files. I walked in on the professor haphazardly shredding approved data, such as press articles, hand-written letters, and various documents, while simultaneously discarding yearbooks and other historical artifacts. These discarded materials were the approved data I needed for my new research proposal, so I asked the retired faculty member why the approved data were being expunged. I was informed that the gatekeeper had recruited the retired

faculty member the day I sent the administrator an approval request for my new research protocol. From my conversation with the retired faculty member, I learned that the gatekeeper last directed him to begin discarding approved data immediately by disposing of any public relations, development, advancement, or communication materials the retired faculty member deemed unnecessary, duplicated, and outdated. Before I fully realized what was going on before me, I spotted two scrapbooks that were created during the inception of the location. Furious about what information may have been lost, I forcibly salvaged the valuable scrapbooks and stored them in a locked drawer in my office.

When I went to the administrator's quarters to ask the gatekeeper about the retired faculty member's actions, I was once again given a deceitful response. The gatekeeper stated that the discarding of approved data was to prepare the staff for the location's upcoming fall semester. The gatekeeper explained that the retired faculty member was doing me a service by eliminating unnecessary data and preserving necessary data for my research. I re-explained to the gatekeeper that the most recent changes in my protocol relied on the information and materials I knew I had at my disposal, and now such information had been compromised. The gatekeeper then explained how the discarding of approved data's purpose was to refine the admission data, and should not negatively affect the data for the development or media sector of the staff's department. I disagreed with the gatekeeper, for I witnessed the retired professor haphazardly discarding approved data that I had permission to utilize. The gatekeeper's statements were deceitful and upset me, as I explained to the administrator that I witnessed the retired faculty member discarding files that were related to the location's development and

public relations sector. At the end of our conversation, the gatekeeper made it clear that the order to discard approved data was still in effect. The gatekeeper then proceeded to end the conversation. I instinctively retreated to my work computer to back up all of the files containing approved data, such as notes, press releases, and news articles. The files were limited, and I realized that only media materials from 2006 and beyond were stored on my work computer.

During this time, a member of the staff, who had left several months earlier, called to inform me about the recent resignation of the staff member who worked in the Accounting Department of the location. According to my source, the gatekeeper entered the accounting staff member's office while the employee was on vacation and sifted through and disposed of some of the location's vital financial documents. The accounting staff member discovered the disheveled remnants accounting upon returning to the office. Furious at the gatekeeper's lack of trust and respect, the accounting staff member resigned from the location. Using propositions and concepts of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, below is Analysis 5 of the gatekeeper's behavior violation(s) exhibited during our discussion about the discarding of approved data:

#### Analysis 5

*Prescriptive expectancies:* In this interaction, I desire the gatekeeper to stop the discarding of approved data from the staff closets.

*Predictive expectancies:* In this interaction, I anticipated that the gatekeeper would stop the discarding of approved data from the staff closets.

*Evidence of data:* See Findings 5

*Appraisal:*

*Interpretation:* In accordance with EVT, after the violation behavior exhibited by the gatekeeper described in Findings 5, I attempted to make sense of the salient behaviors by questioning why the administrator would place a direct order to discard approved data the same day of approving my most recent research protocol (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). My communication expectations of the gatekeeper were somewhat positively affected by the positive expectancy violation behavior exhibited on Appendix E. However, these behaviors described in Findings 5, in the form of the direct order, misleading statements, and abrupt ending of our meeting, were clearly expectancy violations. In trying to make sense of this violation, I interpreted the behavior of the gatekeeper, as controlling, dishonest, and discouraging (Burgoon (1993).

*Evaluation:* In accordance with EVT, my affective judgments of the gatekeeper's behaviors were that they were unappealing and undesired (Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). Because the behaviors were unambiguous and clear expectancy violations, it is unnecessary for me to consider the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence when assigning a valence(s) to the behavior violations in accordance with EVT.

*Identification of expectancy violation behavior(s) (see Appendix A):* I interpreted these expectancy violation behaviors as dominance, deception, and negative feedback. I interpreted deception in the gatekeeper's behavior when I realized that the administrator ordered the discarding of approved data the same day I received approval of my new research protocol. I also detected deception in the gatekeeper's behavior when the administrator was explaining to me that the purpose of the order to discard approved data was to refine the admission data and should not negatively affect the data for the

development or media sector of the staff's department. Because I witnessed the opposite, I interpreted deceit from this behavior. In regard to dominant behavior, I interpreted the gatekeeper abruptly ending our conversation as dominance in the form of interaction control (Jensen et al., 2011). The gatekeeper's unexpected ending of our conversation changed the direction of our interaction. Lastly, I detected negative feedback in the gatekeeper's behavior. Due to this negative feedback behavior, I was discouraged from continuing on with my original thesis goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

*Communicator reward valance (if expectancy violation behavior(s) are ambiguous):* N/A

*Behavior violation valence(s):* In accordance with EVT, the violations caused an increase in tension between the gatekeeper and myself. Thus, the behavior violation valence assigned to dominance, deception, and negative feedback is negative (Burgoon & Hoobler, 2002).

## Chapter VI.

### Discussion

The Discussion will be a first-person narrative. In this narrative, the researcher will present the reiteration and elaboration of key points after the findings and analysis process of the thesis (Berg, 2007).

In accordance with content analysis, after the findings were completed, my analysis was examined for any patterns in the interpreted behavior violations exhibited by the gatekeeper. In summary, I experienced the following magnitude of behavior violation patterns during the approval process my master's thesis: (a) one (1) expectancy violation in the form of positive feedback; (b) four (4) expectancy violations in the form of negative feedback; (c) five (5) expectancy violations in the form of dominance; and (d) six (6) expectancy violations in the form of deception. After the analysis, I found that the topic of patterns of specific behavior violations after dyadic interactions is overlooked in empirical literature. However, the empirical literature does confirm the interpreted high magnitude of dominance and deception behavior violations in study's examining behavior violations by utilizing Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory (see Conceptual Areas of Inquiry). The analysis of the communicative interactions during my master's thesis approval process supported previous empirical literature. The analysis of this thesis interpreted a high magnitude of dominance and deception behavior violations during an application of EVT to a communicative interaction. An application of EVT that produced interpreted positive and negative feedback behavior violations is also overlooked in empirical literature.

However, in regard to the thesis's research, applying Burgoon's (1993) EVT model

and theory to my experience produced an interpreted magnitude of the following behavior violations: (a) dominance; (b) deception; (c) positive feedback; and (d) negative feedback (Burgoon & Dunbar, 2006). These behavior violations impinged on the gatekeeper's overall communicator reward valence and the future interaction outcomes and patterns between the gatekeeper and me. In regard to Burgoon's (1993) communicator reward valence concept in the EVT model and theory, the gatekeeper's communicator reward valence quotient, or "all prior knowledge or observable information that a communicator, plus that individual's behavior" during an interaction, had been negatively affected (p. 34). Burgoon and Hoobler (2002) identified features such as giving positive feedback or possession of appealing personal attributes as relevant components of communicator reward valence. I viewed the gatekeeper as one who possessed unappealing personal attributes and delivered negative feedback. Thus, I viewed the gatekeeper as an unrewarding and undesirable communicative partner. Subsequently, I assigned the gatekeeper an overall low or negative communicator reward valence (White, 2008).

The developments described in Findings 5 and Analysis 5 are in accordance with the future interaction outcomes and patterns proposition of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory. EVT predicts that when a violatee receives positively valenced behaviors from a high communicator reward violator, it will produce future positive reactions and elicit more approach behavior (Andersen et al., 1998; Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). EVT also predicts that when a violatee receives negatively valenced behaviors from a low communicator reward violator, future negative reactions are produced (Andersen et al., 1998; Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995). In my experience, the gatekeeper, a low reward



communicator, delivered negatively valenced behaviors. I was unsure of how to piece together a formal research endeavor with limited resources and an untrustworthy, duplicitous administrator as a gatekeeper. I was unable to fathom reconstructing or revamping another research proposal to cater to the gatekeeper, knowing that doing so would further diminish the quality of my research goals. The aspirations, skills, resources, and faith I had cultivated for my research were in jeopardy. As a result of my numerous negative encounters with the gatekeeper, I decided that I could no longer move forward with unfavorable situation that my experiences had culminated to, thus, ending my research relationship with the location completely. In accordance with the future interaction outcomes and patterns proposition in Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, the overall negative behavior violations from a low reward communicator (compiled from the overall details described in Findings and Analysis) detrimentally affected my confidence in any future collaboration with the location and produced unfavorable communication outcomes (Andersen et al., 1998; Burgoon et al., 1989; Burgoon, Stern, et al., 1995).

In regard to the gatekeeper's side note suggestion on Appendix B, which stated that my IRB-approved protocol had 'serious non-sequiturs in the proposed correlational (sp) study,' I interpreted 'serious' as an "intensifying" word (Matsumoto, Hwang, Skinner, & Frank, 2011, p. 6). Research suggested that the word *serious* is examined in a technique called statement analysis (Matsumoto, Hwang, Skinner, & Frank, 2011, p. 6). This technique allows investigators, such as research scholars or law enforcement, to "readily detect truthfulness or deception in an individual's words" by examining several aspects of those words (Matsumoto et al., 2011, p. 6). This empirical research may support my

interpretation that the gatekeeper was creating roadblocks on my research through deceitful language and behavior. My personal insight on this form of feedback is that the administrator's comments are deceitful, irresponsible, and manipulative. In my interpretation, it is unnecessary for the gatekeeper to determine what relevant information is needed to make a correlation in investigative research. I believe the researcher is responsible to investigate patterns, behaviors, and interpretations of ideas or relationships to strengthen/support and question/invalidate past scholarly findings and possibly develop new information. Thus, I interpreted the side note suggestion from the gatekeeper on Appendix B as another form of dominance in the form of an attempt to influence my research protocol and data. This unfortunate circumstance provides researchers insight on a dominating gatekeeper's ability to compromise, jeopardize or weaken the quality, dignity, and substance of future scholarly research.

An example of truth-teller and deceiver interaction was exhibited on Appendix C (Zhou & Zang, 2006). According to Zhou and Zhang, "the truth teller in a dyad, who values group cohesion, may opt to ask the deceiver questions for explanation rather than challenging or criticizing the deceiver directly when conflict occurs" (p. 149). In the e-mail exhibited on Appendix C, I sent the gatekeeper an e-mail request to discuss the deceptive feedback and the possibility of accessing the location's budget records of donor giving. I did not have a knee-jerk reaction and complain to the gatekeeper about the administrator's deceiving feedback and unwillingness to endorse my protocol. Thus, Zhou and Zhang's findings exemplified my behavior, which was of collaboration and teamwork, throughout the communication interactions during the master's thesis' approval process.

In the gatekeeper's e-mail exhibited on Appendix E, the unexpected approval of my new protocol suggested "deceivers are expected to respond to signs of suspicion by modifying their verbal and nonverbal behavior so as to increase credibility and evade detection" (Burgoon & Qin, 2006, p. 78). The administrator's decision to approve my protocol may have been a tactic to increase credibility, and possibly evade the detection of the order to discard approved data. Thus, Burgoon and Qin's findings exemplified the gatekeeper's unexpected behavior.

### Future Implications

In this thesis, the use of covert data collection methods on a gatekeeper during the preliminary stages of scholarly research are presented as noteworthy concepts and should be further explored in future expectancy violation research. Tunnell (1998) described how researchers utilize a covert research role as a position in studies where the protection of identity becomes privy in information normally accessible by certain occupants. Tunnell also described the covert research role as a protection strategy to safeguard the researcher from the potential harm of certain subjects, such as deviants, hustlers, thieves, and drug peddlers (p. 208). The gaining of entry into powerful and elite groups is of interest in covert research and is exemplified in a small pool of empirical research (Berg, 2007). Berg (2007) stated that covert research in these micro-societies "reveals the faults and frailties of these undergroups" that are difficult to access (p. 77). Thus, "covert strategies of research may be the only means by which to investigate the powerful and elite. Such research, then, may well be morally and ethically justified" (Berg, 2007, p. 77).

The issue of covert participant observation methods and covert data collection methods lies with the potential to violate the rights of the subjects (Berg, 2007).

Esterberg (2002) stated that covert research is almost never ethical, however, this form of deception may be necessary at times. In order to avoid the violation of subject rights and maintain ethical standards, researchers are encouraged to counterbalance their social responsibilities (Berg, 2007). “These include responsibilities to themselves, their discipline or profession, to the pursuit of knowledge, the society, and their subjects” (Berg, 2007, p. 77).

Future researchers should consider the studying of covert research on uncooperative gatekeepers from an EVT standpoint based on the researcher’s experiences exemplified in this thesis. The potential findings of such a study may shed light on the gatekeeper’s potential tactics and roadblocks during the stages of scholarly research and how one may interpret behaviors and future interaction outcomes and patterns. It is necessary for future researcher(s) to provide the most unscripted, truthful account of the uncooperative gatekeepers should this investigation occur. The candidness is necessary to reveal how uncooperative gatekeepers may serve as the main turning point in research goals and focus. Researcher(s), who are facing the dilemma of changing their original research focus, may learn the warning signs of control and the future implications of allowing an uncooperative gatekeeper to influence one’s work from this potential research.

Future researchers should also consider the studying of organizational trust from an EVT standpoint. The potential findings of such a study could refine the data evidencing the location’s staff’s negative sentiments on the gatekeeper and provide

further insight on the reasoning behind their resignations. In regard to the effects of violated expectancies on people's organizational trust, Zimmer (1972) argued that individuals were inclined to overgeneralize institutional trustworthiness judgments from highly salient events involving institutions and their leaders. An example of such an event would be employee evaluation periods, where their leaders evaluate the employee's work performance and potential for job promotion or a raise in salary. Zimmer (1972) argued that the employee's judgments from such events were violated expectations that affected trust in their institution and leaders.

## Chapter VII.

### Reflexive Statement

I found my original proposal's protocol substantial for a research project. In terms of a qualitative study, my ability to gain entry to the research locale was without difficulty as a trusted member of the staff within the location. In addition, my relationships with the location's guides and informants, such as the staff, made the pitches for my initial proposal study a manageable process, for I already created valuable bonds with the study's potential subjects. My work experience also gave me unprecedented access to observational data collection opportunities for my project. According to Berg (2007), "good ethnography requires that the researcher avoids simply accepting everything at face value but, instead, considers the material as raw data that may require corroboration or verification" (p. 178). As an employee, I had much raw material and data to examine. My position in the location also allowed the opportunity to pursue supplementary substantiation of data, if needed.

The events following my original protocol's rejection endangered many of the advantages I believed I had working in my favor. I can attempt to rationalize the behavior of the gatekeeper, but the administrator's conduct was unstable. There were days when the gatekeeper would agree with my goals and supported my efforts to learn more about the location. On the contrary, there were days when the administrator would block any opportunities I had to progress with my work. I interpreted that the gatekeeper's efforts to protect the location's budget records of donor giving from public record was more important to the administrator than my research goals. Eventually, it became apparent that the gatekeeper distrusted my motives with the research.

The gatekeeper's backlash over the original protocol was exhibited in behavior violations. My interpretation is that the gatekeeper became aware that the location's public relations' campaigns and strategies to elicit financial giving, and the amounts of said financial donations, were about to be exposed to a major university with a much larger endowment. I assured the gatekeeper that I would utilize confidentiality and anonymity in my thesis. However, I believe the gatekeeper was wary of disclosing the location's financial information to any entity other than the accounting staff and higher administration. Also, because the location faced competition for consistent media coverage and donations from neighboring private institutions, I believe the insecure financial situation of the location, combined with this competitiveness, made the gatekeeper renege on the verbal approval of my thesis topic.

The gatekeeper continued to passive-aggressively manipulate my data collection efforts after approving my protocol. During this time, my optimistic attitude about the research was diminishing rapidly. Berg (2007) and Matza (1969) stated that one must enter research settings appreciating the situations rather than intending to correct them, allowing the researcher to understand their settings rather than becoming critics or advocates of the events they witness. I believe I had this outlook in the early stages of my work. However, it was extremely difficult to live up to this credo, for the research resources that were initially agreed upon were being stripped away without my knowledge. The gatekeeper's behavior continued to violate my expectations and negatively affect my research goals. The overall environment of the research setting was becoming destructive.

While interacting with others can often be filled with the occasional unpredictable flow of conversation, if a source meets a receiver's expectations (or if a receiver meets a source's expectations), the interaction is likely to be routinized and conventional (Mendes et al., 2007). However, as evidenced in my interpersonal interaction with the gatekeeper during the approval process of my master's thesis, our conversational behavior was unexpected, and usually left me baffled. Consequently, EVT demonstrates that positive and negative valences of behavior violations affect future communication interactions between interactants in dyadic communication. In my experience, the gatekeeper's overall behavior negatively violated my expectations. The results were negatively valenced behavior violations in the form of dominance, deception and negative feedback. Additionally, the gatekeeper was ascribed a low communicator reward valence. After the experiences described in this account, my desire to continue my research at the location ceased.

My experience described in this reflexive account demonstrated how the gatekeeper's behavior negatively violated my expectations during the approval process of my master's thesis. With the exception of the slight positive valence assigned to the approval exhibited on Appendix E, I experienced frequent negative expectancy violations from behaviors such as (a) dominance; (b) deception; and (c) negative feedback. In support of Burgoon's (1993) EVT model and theory, the negative expectancy violations had a detrimental consequence on my relationship with the gatekeeper. As a result, I decided I could no longer move forward with my research endeavors at the location and ended my relationship with the location's staff and gatekeeper.



## Appendix A

### Behavior Violation Questions

1. Did I interpret the violation behavior exhibited as
  - **NON-COLLABORATION**, or asserting one's needs above the others when influence is achieved?
  - **RESOURCE CONTROL/POWER**, or command of space (having other's access regulated by gatekeeper or gatekeepers-people such as receptionists), precedence (having the first right of refusal on acquiring socially valued services), and possession of valued commodities (time)?
  - **INTERACTION CONTROL/POWER**, such as changing the direction of a conversation, initiating/adjourning meetings?

If yes, then the violation behavior construct is operationalized as **DOMINANCE**.

2. Did I interpret the violation behavior exhibited as
  - **DISHONESTY**, a lie, such as when a communicator seeks knowingly and intentionally to mislead others; innocent explanations for unexpected behavior seem less credible?
  - **INCONSISTENT MESSAGE-RESPONSE LATENCY**, going from high/synchronous interactivity communication to low/asynchronous interactivity communication during questioning, where conversational engagement, trust for one another, and favorability were weakened and detachment, disinterest, distrust, lack of confidence in information and people, and poor task performance were probable?
  - a **VIOLATION OF NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR**, such as unexpected, anomalous, deviant, and/or difficult to explain behavior that causes arousal and further propels deception in dyadic communication?

If yes, then the violation behavior construct is operationalized as **DECEPTION**.

3. Did I interpret the violation behavior exhibited as
  - A **POSITIVE/CONFIDENT** effect on my metaperception, or my perception of the gatekeeper's perception of myself and my work, thus enhancing my self-esteem and well-being?
  - **VALUABLE INFORMATION** that describes my successes in work performance and encourages that said behavior be repeated?
  - **ENCOURAGEMENT** to continue my effort towards an activity/work/goal, thus self-reporting a higher interest in the activity?

If yes, then the violation behavior construct is operationalized as **POSITIVE FEEDBACK**.

## Appendix A (continued)

4. Did I interpret the violation behavior exhibited as
- A **NEGATIVE/DIFFIDENT** effect on my metaperception, or my perception of the gatekeeper's perception of my work, thus lowering my self-esteem and well-being and myself?
  - **VALUABLE INFORMATION** that describes my setbacks in work performance and encourages that said behavior should not be repeated?
  - **DISCOURAGEMENT** to continue my effort towards an activity/work/goal, thus, self-reporting a lower interest in the activity?

If yes, then the violation behavior construct is operationalized as **NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**.

Appendix B

Approved by Barry University IRB:



Signature:

*Dr. C. [Redacted], M.D., Ph.D.*

Barry University  
Informed Consent Form

*Sorry but  
this is NOT  
a study I have  
or plan to  
endorse*



Dear Research Participant:

Your part in this research is to provide historical and  
*Comparison of [Redacted] and*  
*Communication Tactics Used to Garner Media Coverage and its Annual Fundraising Outcome.*  
The research is being conducted by Homma N. Rafi, a student in the Communication department  
at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of communication.  
The aims of the research are to explore how the institution continues to survive in a dramatically  
changing environmental dynamic while maintaining media coverage to support a viable student  
and donor population.

In accordance with these aims, the following procedures will be used: Data will be  
gathered in an exhaustive search of all press coverage since the inception of the school through  
[Redacted] and past press releases up until a deadline date.

If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to do the following: two 30  
minute oral histories [Redacted] and present public relations efforts, and how these efforts  
have coincided with [Redacted] fundraising donations. You have the right to be identified by  
name or be assigned a number (code). You do not have to answer any questions that you do not  
wish to answer. The interviews will be audio-taped. You may have the recording paused and  
answer the question and resume the recording at your discretion. A transcript of the audio-tape  
containing the interviews will be made by the researcher for her use. The right to review and edit  
the transcript prior to its use will belong solely to the researcher. Your consent to be a research  
participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to  
completely stop participation at any time during the study, there will be no adverse effects. If  
you choose not to participate, it will not affect your relationship with work nor will there be any  
penalty or loss of benefits to which you are already entitled.

Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation in this study may help our  
understanding of the connection between effective public relations and donor relations. In  
addition, you will be given a final copy of the research study. Since this study will explore how  
the institution continues to survive in a dramatically changing environmental dynamic while  
maintaining media coverage to support a viable student and donor population, it may provide  
you with insight on how effective communication tactics could help schools stationed in  
dynamic communities understand how to maintain survivability and eventually thrive in similar  
economic markets.

The risks [Redacted] involvement in this study are minimal and include the release of creative tactics  
and methods [Redacted] uses to garner press coverage and solicit fundraising. Hence, others could  
utilize these methods and tactics, providing possible competition for resources. In addition, the  
revelation of your personal identity may be connected with the study. The following procedures  
will be used to minimize these risks: your identity will remain confidential.

Appendix B (continued)

Institutional Review Board  
Protocol Form  
February, 00 5

**Barry University  
Addendum 1**

*NOT approved  
Not approvable*

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Permission for the use of school grounds and research concerning the school is granted for the study entitled [Redacted] *Public Relations and Communication Tactics Used to Garner Media Coverage and its Outcome and Raising Outcome*. The research is being conducted by Homma N. Rafi, a student in the Communication department at Barry University, and is seeking information that will be useful in the field of communication. The aims of the research are to explore how the institution continues to survive in a dramatically changing environmental dynamic while maintaining media coverage to support a viable student and donor population.

By signing Addendum 1, you are giving Homma N. Rafi, the sole researcher, permission to conduct the research on [Redacted] grounds and research concerning the school, encompassing the use of [Redacted] and secondary documents, and oral histories with you and the [Redacted] and release of all pertinent information germane to the subject being investigated will belong solely to the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Redacted]

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

## Appendix B (continued)

Dear Tomma,  
we need to talk about  
this. The financial aspect  
would involve research into  
budget figures that would  
place a great burden on  
the administration requiring  
access to confidential data  
that is not readily available.

P.S. Besides from a research  
perspective there are serious  
non-sequiturs in the proposed correlational study.

## Appendix C

**RE: Meeting re: Thesis Consent Forms**

[REDACTED]

To: Rafi, Homma (Student)

Dear Homma,

Unless there is a radical change in the nature of the study there is no need to meet. If you have a different proposal I will look at it and then decide if a meeting is in order.

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Rafi, Homma (Student) [mailto:Homma.Rafi@mymail.barry.edu]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Meeting re: Thesis Consent Forms

[REDACTED]

Do you have availability to meet tomorrow re: my thesis? I would like to discuss the consent forms with you. Please let me know when you may have availability and I will be there.

Thank you,

Homma  
[Homma.Rafi@mymail.barry.edu](mailto:Homma.Rafi@mymail.barry.edu)

## Appendix D

**RE: Thesis Permission Form (Addendum 1)**

**To:** Rafi, Homma (Student)

Perhaps once I see a project draft that I can endorse.....In the meanwhile, in that I never agreed on the original project, I will not be signing an addendum.

---

**Thesis Permission Form (Addendum 1)**

Rafi, Homma (Student)

**Se**

**To:**

**Att**

**Ad**

Hi,

I've edited the focus of my thesis project. Please look at the attached document and let me know if you approve of the addendum form.

Thank you,


Homma

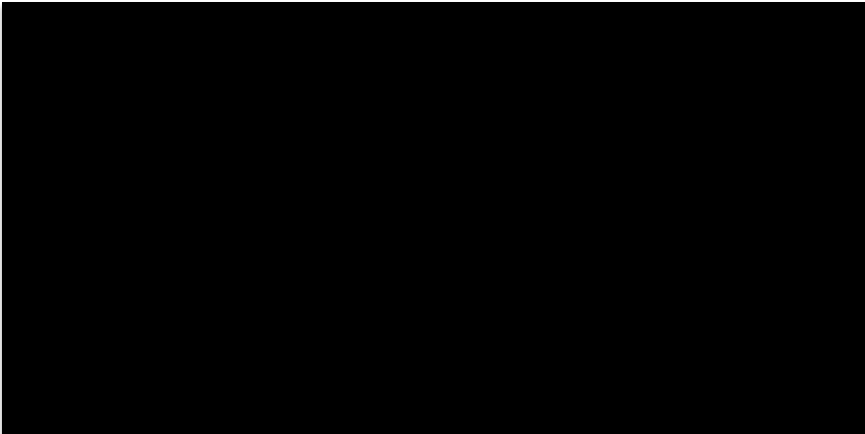
## Appendix E

**Approval RE: Thesis Permission Form (Addendum 1)**

**To:** Rafi, Homma (Student)

Dear Homma,

Sounds like an exhaustive task – were I your mentor I'd probably insist on some containment parameters, but I'm not. I have no objection to the project as stated and will be able to sign the addendum -- I'll leave a printed copy in you box. If in the process you find a way of ordering some of the foxes of information in the various closets, it would be a great service 





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