

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE RATHUS ASSERTIVENESS SCHEDULE  
AND THE PERSONAL REPORT OF COMMUNICATION  
APPREHENSION-24: REPLICATION AND EXTENSION

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*Summary.*—Prior work indicates items for the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule and the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension share one common factor, apprehension about interpersonal encounters. Employing a revised measure of apprehension, factor analysis of responses of 160 male and 144 female undergraduates to these two scales yielded five factors: apprehension about communicating in groups and meetings, apprehension in interpersonal contexts, apprehension in public speaking contexts, preventing others from taking advantage, and contentiousness. Only one common factor, apprehension in interpersonal contexts, was shared by items from both scales.

Assertiveness refers to the ability to make requests, actively disagree; express personal rights and feelings; initiate, maintain, or disengage from conversations; and to stand up for self (3, 6, 17, 19). Attempts to increase assertiveness have typically focused on shaping both verbal and nonverbal communication (1, 2), or altering maladaptive anxiety responses in interpersonal conversations (14, 21). As such, "Assertiveness is defined in terms of communication, and the measurement of assertiveness relies on communication behaviors" (15, p. 491). Conceptually similar, apprehension about communication refers to a trait anxiety or fear about potential or actual communication encounters (10). Research indicates that highly apprehensive persons show avoidance rather than approaching behaviors in communication (9, 10, 11). Reducing apprehension typically includes training skills in competent communication (16) or shaping anxiety responses (4, 8).

The relationship between assertiveness and apprehension about communication was initially investigated by Pearson (15) who factor-analyzed responses to the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (18) and the original Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (7). Her results indicated a six-factor solution with one factor comprised of personal report items referring to apprehension about public speaking, four factors comprised of Rathus items, and one factor comprised of items from both tests which referred to apprehension about interpersonal communication. This overlap of apprehension about interpersonal communication appears to have implications for both increasing assertiveness and decreasing apprehension.

Since the original personal report measure was dominated by items on public speaking, McCroskey (11) redesigned the measure to include equal numbers of items to assess apprehension in four contexts: public speaking,

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public meetings, group discussions, and dyadic encounters. The revised measure should reflect a more balanced link between interpersonal assertiveness and apprehension about interpersonal communication. The present study was designed to replicate and extend the Pearson (15) study by factor analyzing items on the Rathus scale and the revised personal report.

#### METHOD

Subjects were 304 undergraduates (160 men, 144 women) enrolled in introductory courses on speech communication. The subjects represented diverse majors with less than one percent being majors in speech communication. To avoid sensitization to apprehension about communication or assertiveness, the two scales were administered at the beginning of the academic term.

The Rathus scale measures assertive behaviors across a variety of business and social contexts. This instrument includes 30 items, 16 reversed to avoid response bias, and employs a six-point Likert-type response format. In the Rathus scale both high reliability and concurrent and predictive validity (13, 15, 17) have been reported. McCroskey's new scale assesses apprehension across four communication contexts. This Likert-type instrument includes 24 items, 12 reversed to avoid response bias, with 6 items assessing apprehension across each of the four contexts. Based on samples of over 10,000 subjects, the revised scale has shown both high reliability and validity (12).

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were submitted to a principal component factor analysis employing an oblique rotation. Oblique rotation was performed because McCroskey's scale has shown a tendency not to fit into orthogonal space. Following Rummel's (20, pp. 386-411) suggestion for such cases, oblique rotation was employed and yielded five interpretable factors (Eigenvalues ranged from 14.20 to 1.68), which accounted for 44% of the total variance. The minimum criterion for inclusion of an item on each factor was that the difference between the primary and secondary loadings was .20 or greater (5, p. 156). The resulting interfactor correlations were: Factor 1  $\times$  2,  $r = .57$ ; 1  $\times$  3,  $r = .50$ ; 1  $\times$  4,  $r = .34$ ; 1  $\times$  5,  $r = .36$ ; 2  $\times$  3,  $r = .37$ ; 2  $\times$  4,  $r = .42$ ; 2  $\times$  5,  $r = .33$ ; 3  $\times$  4,  $r = .36$ ; 3  $\times$  5,  $r = .22$ ; 4  $\times$  5,  $r = .25$ .

The five factors, items, and primary item loadings are described below.

*Factor 1. Group Discussion/Public Meeting, Apprehensive*, included 10 items from McCroskey's revised scale designed to measure apprehension about communicating in either groups or meetings. This factor is characterized by the items: I dislike participating in group discussions (.60); Generally, I am comfortable while participating in a group discussion (.68); I am tense and nervous while participating in group discussions (.68); I like to get involved in group discussions (.54); I am calm and relaxed while participating in group discussions (.72); Generally, I am nervous when I have to participate in a meeting (.71); Usually I am calm and relaxed while participating in meetings (.83); I am afraid to express myself at meetings (.53); Communicating at meetings usually makes me uncomfortable (.60); I am very relaxed when

answering questions at a meeting (.53). Secondary loadings for these items ranged from .08 to .21.

*Factor 2. Interpersonal or Dyadic Communication, Apprehensive* refers to fears about initiating contact with new acquaintances or strangers and participating actively in conversations. Factor 2 is comprised of seven items obtained from both instruments. Items from McCroskey's 24-item scale were: While participating in a conversation with a new acquaintance, I feel very nervous (.76); I have no fear of speaking up in conversations (.56); While conversing with a new acquaintance, I feel very relaxed (.72); I'm afraid to speak up in conversations (.46). Items included from Rathus' scale were: I have hesitated to make or accept dates because of my "shyness" (.51); I enjoy starting conversations with new acquaintances and strangers (.57); I would rather apply for a job or for admission to a college by writing letters than by going through with personal interviews (.42). Secondary loadings for these items ranged from .06 to .25.

*Factor 3. Public Speaking, Apprehensive* included four items from McCroskey's revised scale designed to assess fears about presenting formal speeches or what is typically referred to as "stage fright." Factor 3 is characterized by the following items: I have no fear of giving a speech (.73); Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving a speech (.43); I feel relaxed while giving a speech (.79); I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence (.71). Secondary loadings for these items ranged from .04 to .09.

*Factor 4. Preventing Others from Taking Advantage* refers to standing up for self and expressing self-worth. Factor 4 included six items from the Rathus scale: I am careful to avoid hurting other people's feelings, even when I feel that I have been injured (.49); If a salesman has gone to considerable trouble to show me merchandise which is not quite suitable, I have a difficult time saying "No" (.55); To be honest, people often take advantage of me (.55); I often have a hard time saying "No" (.60); I tend to bottle up my emotions rather than make a scene (.47); When I am given a compliment, I sometimes just don't know what to say (.32). Secondary loadings for these items ranged from .05 to .27.

*Factor 5. Contentious* illustrated a willingness to insist, complain, or argue a position. This factor was comprised of eight Rathus items: When the food served at a restaurant is not done to my satisfaction, I complain about it to the waiter or waitress (.42); When I am asked to do something I insist upon knowing why (.35); There are times when I look for a good, vigorous argument (.42); When I have done something important or worthwhile, I manage to let others know about it (.36); I complain about poor service in a restaurant and elsewhere (.54); If a couple near me in a theatre or at a lecture were conversing rather loudly, I would ask them to be quiet or take their con-

versation elsewhere (.40); Anyone attempting to push ahead of me in a line is in for a good battle (.42); I am quick to express an opinion (.48). Secondary loadings for these items ranged from .09 to .24.

These results both confirm and extend Pearson's findings. Similar to Pearson's results, factor analysis produced only one factor common to the two scales. This factor consisted of items related to dyadic communication. All other factors consisted of items from either one scale or the other. Furthermore, these results support Pearson's conclusions concerning approaches to reducing apprehension about communicating and increasing assertiveness.

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