Communicative Competence Scale

Wiemann (1977) created the Communicative Competence Scale (CCS) to measure communicative competence, an ability "to choose among available communicative behaviors" to accomplish one's own "interpersonal goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line" of "fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation" (p. 198). Originally, 57 Likert-type items were created to assess five dimensions of interpersonal competence (General Competence, Empathy Affiliation/Support, Behavioral Flexibility, and Social Relaxation) and a dependent measure- (interaction Management). Some 239 college students used the scale to rate videotaped confederates enacting one of four role-play interaction management conditions (high, medium, low, rude). The 36 items that discriminated the best between conditions were used in the final instrument. Factor analysis resulted in two main factors-general and relaxation-indicating that the subjects did not differentiate among the dimensions as the model originally predicted.

Subjects use the CCS to assess another person's communicative competence by responding to 36 items using Likert scales that range from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The scale takes less than 5 minutes to complete. Some researchers have adapted the other-report format to self-report and partner-report. These formats are available from the author.

RELIABILITY

The CCS appears to be internally consistent. Wiemann (1977) reported a .96 coefficient alpha (and .74 magnitude of experimental effect) for the 36item revised instrument. McLaughlin and Cody (1982) used a 30-item version for college students to rate their partners after 30 minutes of conversation and reported an alpha of .91. Jones and Brunner (1984) had college students rate audio-taped interactions and reported an overall alpha of .94 to .95; subscale scores had alphas ranging from .68 to .82. Street, Mulac, and Wiemann (1988) had college students rate each other on communicative competence and reported an alpha of .84. The 36-item self-report format version is also reliable: Cupach and Spitz berg (1983) reported an alpha of .90, Hazleton and Cupach (1986) reported an alpha of .91, Cegala, Savage, Brunner, and Conrad (1982) reported an alpha of .85, and Query, Parry, and Flint (1992) reported an alpha of .86,

Profile by Rebecca R. Rubin.

VALIDITY

Two studies found evidence of construct validity. First, McLaughlin and Cody (1982) found that interactants in conversations in which there were multiple lapses of time rated each other lower on communicative competence. Second, Street et al. (1988) found that conversants' speech rate, vocal back channeling, duration of speech, and rate of interruption were related to their communicative competence scores; they also found that conversants rated their partners significantly more favorably than did observers.

Various studies have provided evidence of concurrent validity. Cupach and Spitzberg (1983) used the dispositional self-report format and found that the CCS was strongly correlated with two other dispositions: communication adaptability and trait self-rated competence. The CCS was also modestly related to situational, conversation-specific measures of feeling good and self-rated competence. Hazleton and Cupach (1986) found a moderate relationship between communicative competence and both ontological knowledge about interpersonal communication and interpersonal communication apprehension. Backlund (1978) found communicative competence was related to social insight and open-mindedness. Douglas (1991) reported inverse relationships between communication competence and uncertainty and apprehension during initial meetings, And Query et al. (1992) found that nontraditional students, those high in communication competence, had more social supports and were more satisfied with these supports.

In addition, Cegala et al. (1982) compared 326 college students' CCS and Interaction Involvement Scale

scores. All three dimensions of interaction involvement were positively correlated with the CCS, but only perceptiveness correlated significantly with all five dimensions for both men and women. Responsiveness was related to behavioral flexibility, affiliation/support, and social relaxation, and attentiveness was related to impression management.

COMMENTS

Although this scale has existed for a number of years and the original article has been cited numerous times, relatively few research studies have actually used the CCS. As reported by Perotti and De Wine (1987), problems with the factor structure and the Likert-type format may be reasons why. They suggested that the instrument be used as a composite measure of communicative competence rather than breaking the scale into subscales, and this appears to be good advice. Spitzberg (1988, 1989) viewed the instrument as well conceived, suitable for observant or conversant rating situations, and aimed at "normal" adolescent or adult populations, yet Backlund (1978) found little correlation between peer-perceived competence and expert-perceived competence when using the CCS. The scale has been used only with college student populations.

LOCATION

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333-363.

Communicative Competence Scale*

Instructions: Complete the following questionnaire/scale with the subject (S) in mind. Write in one of the sets of letters before each numbered question based upon whether you:

strongly agree (SA), agree (A), are undecided or neutral (?),
disagree (D), or strongly disagree (SD).
Always keep the subject in mind as you answer.

_____ 1.   S finds it easy to get along with others.
_____ 2.   S can adapt to changing situations.
_____ 3.   S treats people as individuals.
_____ 4.   S interrupts others too much.
_____ 5.   S is "rewarding" to talk to.
_____ 6.   S can deal with others effectively.
_____ 7.   S is a good listener.
_____ 8.   S's personal relations are cold and distant.
_____ 9.   S is easy to talk to.
_____ 10.   S won't argue with someone just to prove he/she is right.
_____ 11.   S's conversation behavior is not "smooth."
_____ 12.   S ignores other people's feelings.
_____ 13.   S generally knows how others feel.
_____ 14.   S lets others know he/she understands them.
_____ 15.   S understands other people.
_____ 16.   S is relaxed and comfortable when speaking.
_____ 17.   S listens to what people say to him/her.
_____ 18.   S likes to be close and personal with people.
_____ 19.   S generally knows what type of behavior is appropriate in any given situation.
_____ 20.   S usually does not make unusual demands on his/her friends.
_____ 21.   S is an effective conversationalist.
_____ 22.   S is supportive of others.
_____ 23.   S does not mind meeting strangers.
_____ 24.   S can easily put himself/herself in another person's shoes.
_____ 25.   S pays attention to the conversation.
_____ 26.   S is generally relaxed when conversing with a new acquaintance. 27. S is interested in what others have to say.
_____ 27.   S doesn't follow the conversation very well.
_____ 28.   S enjoys social gatherings where he/she can meet new people.
_____ 29.   S is a likeable person.
_____ 30.   S is flexible.
_____ 31.   S is not afraid to speak with people in authority.
_____ 32.   People can go to S with their problems.
_____ 33.   S generally says the right thing at the right time.
_____ 34.   S likes to use his/her voice and body expressively.
_____ 35.   S is sensitive to others' needs of the moment.

Note. Items 4, 8, 11, 12, and 28 are reverse-coded before summing the 36 items. For "Partner" version, "S" is replaced by "My partner" and by "my long-standing relationship partner" in the instructions. For the "Self-Report" version, "S" is replaced by "I" and statements are adjusted for

first-person singular.