Chapter XLII
Personal Report of Communication Apprehension

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BACKGROUND

The personal report of communication apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982) measures communication apprehension. Communication apprehension (CA) first appeared in James McCroskey’s 1970 research note in Communication Monographs. Communication apprehension is defined as the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated (oral) communication encounters. McCroskey was interested in a person’s trait or dispositional anxieties across all or most communication situations. Recent investigations have expanded CA to include state-like communication apprehension, or anxiety associated with particular communication contexts and events.

The 24-item, Likert-type PRCA instrument is the most popular and valid measure of trait-like CA. It assesses a person’s CA in four separate communication contexts: public, small group, meeting, and interpersonal. Each of these contexts is represented by six items. In filling out the form, an individual indicates the level of anxiety he or she feels about participating in various oral communication situations in one of these four contexts.

An individual’s CA score on the PRCA-24 is determined by summing responses across all four contexts (24-items). In addition, four generalized-context scores can be calculated (6-items each). Thus, an overall CA score and a separate score for each communication context may be computed.

A “high” range is between 80-120, and a “low” range is between 24-50. A “high” score means that you report more anxiety related to oral communication than most people do. A “low” score means that you report less anxiety related to oral communication than most people do.

The instrument is self-report and takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.

RELIABILITY

Research supports that the PRCA-24 is internally consistent and reliable. Alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .93-.95 have been reported (McCroskey, Beatty, Kearney, & Plax, 1985). Alpha coefficients are only slightly lower for the four communication contexts (McCroskey & Beatty, 1984). Moreover, test-retest coefficients greater than .80 have been reported (Rubin, Graham,