Chapter LVI
Situational Communication Apprehension Measure

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BACKGROUND

The situational communication apprehension measure (SCAM) was developed by McCroskey and Richmond (1982, 1985) to measure state communication apprehension in any context. This self-report instrument utilizes a 20-item questionnaire to assess how one person felt during a recent interaction with another. Richmond (1978) has also investigated a person’s dispositional (trait) anxieties and fears associated with specific situations (state).

The SCAM, a Likert-type measure of state anxiety, asks survey takers to think about the last time they interacted with someone who held a supervisory role over them. Based on that interaction, respondents rate 20 statements—10 describing positive and 10 expressing negative feelings—on an accuracy scale of 1-7. A mark of “7” indicates the statement describing the situation is extremely accurate; a “1” notes the most inaccurate assessment of the interaction.

An individual’s score on the SCAM is determined by summing all the positive statements and then summing all the negative statements. The two sums are then added and subtracted from 80. The score should range between 20 and 140. A score below the lower limit or above the upper limit indicates the respondent has made an error.

Because scores on the SCAM are highly dependent on, and variable by, the particular situation, norms for score ranges, means, and standard deviations are hard to define. However, researchers generally accept a score between 39 to 65 as low, 66 to 91 as moderate, and 92 and above as high levels of apprehension.

RELIABILITY

Research supports that SCAM has a measure of high reliability. The alpha reliability of the SCAM ranges from .85 to .90.

VALIDITY

The validity of SCAM’s construct and criterion has been supported. Because SCAM is a self-report instrument that gauges a person’s apprehension during a recent communication event, validity of the measure increases the less time elapses