Communication Apprehension with Family Connectedness and Conflict Style

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Instruments Used

- PRCA-24 (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension)
- FACES III (Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale)
- Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

Research Design

- Sample:
  - Students were selected from a random sample of freshman-level speech communication class sections.
  - Students were asked to voluntarily complete each of the 3 instruments.

Research Hypotheses

- Communication apprehension would be higher among those respondents who rated lower on family connectedness.
- Communication apprehension would be higher among those respondents who use less confrontive conflict management styles.

Research Findings

- Significant correlations:
  - Perceived family cohesion with all types of communication apprehension.
  - Ideal family adaptability with public speaking communication apprehension.
  - Certain conflict styles are used in conjunction with or instead of other conflict styles.

Research Design

- Method
  - Participants were classified by gender and college classification.
  - Correlations were run to determine any significant differences between gender and/or classification.
Gender Differences

- There was a significant difference in the way that males and females perceived their current family cohesion... or
- Females in this study were more likely to perceive their families as emotionally connected than males were.

Family Cohesion

- Participants reported more communication apprehension in all aspects when they perceived their current family closeness as low... or
- Students have more communication apprehension when they think they’re not emotionally connected with their family.

Family Adaptability

- There was a significant positive correlation between ideal family adaptability and communication apprehension... or
- The more a participant wanted his/her family to be more flexible with rules and expectations, the more communication apprehension he/she experienced.
• Participants who use an avoidance conflict management style are less likely to use a competitive or collaborative conflict style.
• Participants who use an accommodation conflict management style are less likely to use a competitive or compromising conflict style, but are more likely to avoidance with accommodation to deal with conflict.

Hypotheses Proven/Disproven?
• Hypothesis 1: ☺
  Communication apprehension was higher for those who had less family connectedness.
• Hypothesis 2: ☹
  There were no significant results to prove or disprove a correlation between conflict styles and communication apprehension.

Sources of Error
• Researcher Error (entering data incorrectly, wrong statistical measures, etc.)
• Respondent Error (did not understand questions on instruments)
• Social Desirability Responses by Participants
• Other Unknown Sources of Error

Implications
• If instructors can identify students who exhibit and/or report high communication apprehension, psychological and/or family counseling could have a significant positive impact on their communication apprehension.