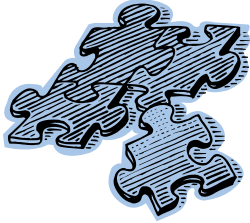


## Small Group Member Communication and Personality Traits



Chapter 3



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## Definition and Differentiation of Traits

Communication Trait

Personality Trait



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## Communication Trait

An individual's consistencies and differences in message-sending and message-receiving behaviors



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## Personality Trait



An individual's psychological makeup comprising attitudes, values, beliefs, experiences, and behaviors

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## Communication Traits

Communication Apprehension, Communicator Style, Argumentativeness, & Verbal Aggressiveness



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## Communication Apprehension



"An individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78)



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## Levels of Communication Apprehension



### High

A person is almost always apprehensive about communicating with other people

### Moderate

A person between high and low who tends to be more flexible in dealing with communication apprehension on a daily basis

### Low

A person low in communication apprehension hardly ever feels apprehensive about communicating with other people

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## Forms of Communication Apprehension



### Trait Apprehension

Refers to a relatively enduring level of apprehension across a variety of situations

### Context-based Apprehension

Is a form of apprehension tied to a specific context (i.e., small group, meetings, interpersonal, public speaking)

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## Forms of Communication Apprehension



### Audience-based Apprehension

Linked with communicating with a specific audience

### Situational Apprehension

Experienced when communicating with a given person in a particular situation

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## Communicator Style



The way an individual uses verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors to indicate how literally others should take a message



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## Ten Attributes of Communicator Style



### Friendly

Recognizes others; is considered to be kind and caring

### Impression leaving

Has a memorable style and is expressive

### Relaxed

Is anxiety-free and appears to be calm and at ease

### Contentious

Likes to argue and can get somewhat quarrelsome

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## Ten Attributes of Communicator Style



### Attentive

Is alert and a good listener concerned with understanding others

### Precise

Is accurate and uses well-defined arguments and specific proof or evidence

### Animated

Uses eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body movement, and posture to exaggerate content

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## Ten Attributes of Communicator Style



### Dramatic

Uses stylistic devices (e.g., exaggerations, rhythm, stories) to underscore content

### Open

Is extroverted, unreserved, and straightforward; directly communicates thoughts or emotions

### Dominant

"Takes charge" by talking louder, longer, and more frequently than others

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## Summary of Communicator Style



Although it can be argued that some attributes might appear to be preferable over other attributes, it should be noted there is no preferred cluster of communicator style attributes per se.

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## Argumentativeness



An individual's ability to defend his position on a controversial issue while simultaneously attempting to refute another person's position on the same issue.



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## Argumentativeness



### Highly Argumentative Individuals

- Are more likely to initiate an argument
- Less likely to back away from an argument
- Are motivated to argue
- Hold positive beliefs about arguing
- Perceive an argument as enjoyable
- Are more involved in interactions
- Are perceived as credible

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## Verbal Aggressiveness



The tendency for an individual to attack the self-concept of another individual for the purpose of inflicting psychological harm




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## Verbal Aggressiveness



### Highly Verbally Aggressive Individuals

- Use these types of messages frequently.
- Believe the use of messages is justified
- Are perceived as less likable and less agreeable

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## Personality Traits

Machiavellianism, Self-monitoring, & Self-esteem



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## Machiavellianism

Refers to an individual's ability to manipulate a situation in order to influence and control it for his own purposes



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## Machiavellianism

### High Machiavellians

- Manipulate and persuade other individuals
- Are persuaded less by others
- View interactions as social competitions
- Are often ideologically neutral
- Have little emotional involvement in their interpersonal relationships
- Shift commitment when it is to their advantage



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## Self-monitoring



Is the extent to which a person pays attention to the social requirements of a situation and, striving for appropriateness and effectiveness, adapts her verbal and nonverbal behaviors



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## Self-monitoring



### High Self-monitors

- Pay close attention to how others react to them
- Control how they present themselves in social interactions

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## Self-esteem



Describes a person's overall self-worth



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## Self-esteem



### People with high self-esteem

- Feel good about and praise themselves
- Feel more comfortable and confident with whom they interact

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## Communication and Personality Traits in the Small Group



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## Traits in the Small Group



### Highly apprehensive group members

- Avoid expressing disagreement
- Are more likely to make irrelevant comments
- Attend fewer group meetings
- Report less group cohesiveness
- Are less likely to be selected as the group leader
- Are rated lower in social and task attractiveness

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### Traits in the Small Group



#### Highly argumentative group members

- Rated more influential
- Likely to be nominated as the group leader
- More satisfied with their group experiences
- Report greater cohesiveness with their groups

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### Traits in the Small Group



#### Highly argumentative group members

- Rate themselves higher on several personality traits such as:
  - Being a reliable worker
  - Exhibiting leadership
  - Being able to engage in brainstorming
  - Enjoying small group work
  - Not being shy
  - Not avoiding conflict.

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### Traits in the Small Group



#### Highly verbally aggressive group members

- Report less satisfaction with their groups
- Report less consensus their groups
- Report less cohesiveness with their groups

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## Traits in the Small Group



### High Machiavellian group members

- Participate frequently in group interaction and are more likely to disagree than low Machiavellians

### High self-monitoring group members

- Are more active, talkative, and likely to emerge as leaders than low self-monitors
- Conform more than low self-monitors in group situations

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## Traits in the Small Group



### Group members with low self-esteem

- Are more susceptible to group member influence
- Will comply or agree with other members instead of disagreeing or presenting a dissenting voice
- Less likely to assume a leadership role
- Rate the group experience less favorably than members with high self-esteem

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## A Final Note



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## A Final Note



Developing an understanding of communication and personality traits influences the impressions members make about each other; outcomes such as cohesion, consensus, and satisfaction; and the compatibility of group members

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