

DESIRE FOR CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION-RELATED PERSONALITY VARIABLES¹

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Summary.—In a sample of 95 university students, scores on a measure of desire for control correlated .37 with willingness to communicate, supporting the notion of control as a motive for communication and also correlated .43 with self-perceived communication competence but not with communication apprehension.

Communication provides a means to control other persons (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Thus, a person's willingness to initiate talk, as captured by McCroskey's willingness to communicate construct (1992), should correlate positively with how much control is desired. A lower desire for control is associated with high trait anxiety (Burger, 1992), so communication apprehension was expected to correlate negatively with desire for control. Perceived communication competence should correlate positively with desire for control because perceived competence has been related negatively to communication apprehension and positively to willingness to communicate (MacIntyre, *et al.*, 1998).

Burger and Cooper's Desirability of Control Scale (1979) of 20 items ($\alpha = .69$, $M = 99.4$, $SD = 11.3$), McCroskey's (1992) Willingness to Communicate scale (12 items, $\alpha = .85$, $M = 59.4$, $SD = 10.5$), a Communication Apprehension scale (McCroskey, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1987; 12 items, $\alpha = .88$, $M = 33.7$, $SD = 11.6$), and a Self-perceived Competence scale (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988; 12 items, $\alpha = .90$, $M = 60.1$, $SD = 10.7$) were administered to a sample of 95 university students (39 men, 55 women, ages 19–46 years, $M = 22.6$). All responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale.

Scores² on Desire for Control correlated significantly with both Willingness to Communicate ($r = .37$, $p < .001$) and Self-perceived Competence ($r = .43$, $p < .001$) but not Communication Apprehension ($r = -.05$). The nonsignificant correlation with Communication Apprehension is difficult to explain but might reflect a difference between trait anxiety and communication apprehension, the influence of a mediating variable such as opportunity for

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²Data on file in Document APD2004-010. Remit \$9.00 for photocopy to the Archive for Psychological Data, P.O. Box 7922, Missoula, MT 59807-7922.

control, or measurement issues. The correlation involving Willingness to Communicate supports the notion of control as a motive for communication. That with rated Self-perceived Competence may indicate that high scorers on Desire for Control become more competent communicators through their attempts to exert control. Alternatively, high scorers might overestimate their competence based on a bias to perceive themselves as skilled communicators. These processes require further investigation.

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