

DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDISATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS SCALE (CSS)

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ABSTRACT

The ability to communicate is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals. It is the ability to communicate well that distinguishes one individual from another. The fact is that apart from the basic necessities, one needs to be equipped with habits for good communication skills, as this is what will make them a happy and successful social being. In order to develop these habits, one needs to first acknowledge the fact that they need to improve communication skills from time to time. They need to take stock of the way they interact and the direction in which their work and personal relations are going. The only constant in life is change, and the more one accepts one's strengths and works towards dealing with their shortcomings, especially in the area of communication skills, the better will be their interactions and the more their social popularity. As there is no tool available to measure the communication skills the investigators decided to construct and validate a scale namely communication skills scale (CSS)

KEYWORDS

Communication, Skills

INTRODUCTION:

The ability to communicate is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals. It is the ability to communicate well that distinguishes one individual from another. The fact is that apart from the basic necessities, one needs to be equipped with habits for good communication skills, as this is what will make them a happy and successful social being. In order to develop these habits, one needs to first acknowledge the fact that they need to improve communication skills from time to time. They need to take stock of the way they interact and the direction in which their work and personal relations are going. The only constant in life is change, and the more one accepts one's strengths and works towards dealing with their shortcomings, especially in the area of communication skills, the better will be their interactions and the more their social popularity. To improve communication skills the following ways can be utilised experts, who conduct workshops and seminars based on communication skills of men and women. In fact, a large number of companies are bringing in trainers to regularly conduct sessions on the subject, in order to help their work force maintain better interpersonal work relations.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

Communication skills are skills that facilitate people to communicate effectively with one another. Effectual communication engages the choice of the best communications channel, the technical know-how to use the channel, the presentation of information to the target audience, and the skill to understand responses received from others. Self development, interpersonal skills, mutual understanding, mutual cooperation and trust is also important to set a complete channel of most effective and winning communication skills.

Importance of communication skills can never be ignored or neglected. These skills are the key to executing good management skills. Good management skills, can create an ambience of open communication, concise messages, probe for clarifications, recognize nonverbal signals, and mutual understanding. Good communication involves a set of complex skills.

The modern world today, calls for high scale effective communication skills in order to win the heavy competition in all spheres of life. For effective communication, a sender transmits the message in a clear and organized form to maintain and promote the need and interest of the receivers. Receivers or listeners show interest only if the person communicating is loaded with confidence, gestures and softness. Apart from management professionals, good communication skills are also required at all stages of life.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCALE:

As there is no suitable scale available to study students' communication skill, the Investigators decided to construct and validate a scale to measure the students' communication skill. As the first steps the investigators collected variety of information from various sources like website search, Journals, Books, experts in colleges and in universities. It is of 'Likert type scale' having as many as 40 statements. They were both Positive (15) and Negative (25) worded. The statements were categorized with the expert's opinion. Each statement is set against a five - point scale of 'Strongly Agree' 'Agree', 'Undecided' 'Disagree', 'Strongly Disagree' and arbitrary weights of 5,4,3,2, and 1 are given in that order for the positive statement and the scoring is reversed for the negative statements. The scores in this scale range from 40 to 200.

PILOT STUDY:

This scale of 40 statements intended for the pilot study was administered to the sample of as many as 100 students studying in secondary schools. Then their responses have been scored carefully and arranged in the descending order from the highest scorer to the lowest scorer. Then they were subjected to item analysis.

ITEM ANALYSIS:

The next step in the standardization of an communication skills scale after pilot study is to find out the 't' value of each statement, which forms the basis for item selection in order to build up the final scale. The Likert type scale calls for a graded response to each statement on a five-point scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. The individual score for all the 100 students were found out and they were ranked from the highest to the lowest score. Then 25% of the subjects (High) with the highest total scores and 25% of the subjects (low) with the lowest total scores were sorted out for the purpose of item

selection. The high and the low groups, thus selected, formed the criterion groups and each group was made up of 25 students (Edward.L.Allen., 1957). It may be recalled that each statement is followed by five different responses of 'SA', 'A', 'UD', 'DA', and 'SDA' in the communication skills scale. As already indicated weights are given for the response category in respect of each statement. Then each statement was taken individually and the number of students who responded 'SA', 'A', 'UD', 'DA', 'SDA' was found out in both the high and low groups separately. Thus for all the 40 statements, the number of students coming under each category was found out separately for both the high and the low group. The value of 't' is a measure of the extent to which a given statement differentiates between the high and low group. If the 't' value is equal to or greater than 1.75 it indicates that the average response of the high and low groups to a statement differs significantly, provided there are 25 or more subjects in the high group and also in the low group (Edward.L.Allen., 1957).

TABLE – 1

RANK ORDER OF ITEMS IN COMMUNICATION SKILLS SCALE BASED ON 't' VALUES

STATEMENT NUMBER	NATURE OF STATEMENT	't' VALUE	ITEM SELECTED
1	Positive	1.83	Selected
2	Positive	1.22	Not Selected
3	Negative	5.01	Selected
4	Positive	1.80	Selected
5	Negative	4.78	Selected
6	Negative	2.76	Selected
7	Positive	2.32	Selected
8	Positive	2.45	Selected
9	Negative	3.64	Selected
10	Positive	3.37	Selected
11	Positive	1.88	Selected
12	Negative	1.86	Selected
13	Positive	0.53	Not Selected
14	Negative	3.57	Selected
15	Negative	2.48	Selected
16	Positive	1.11	Not Selected
17	Positive	0.30	Not Selected
18	Negative	3.97	Selected
19	Negative	4.21	Selected
20	Negative	2.86	Selected

21	Positive	0.20	Not Selected
22	Positive	0.58	Not Selected
23	Negative	4.64	Selected
24	Negative	4.65	Selected
25	Positive	3.03	Selected
26	Positive	0.46	Not Selected
27	Negative	5.22	Selected
28	Positive	1.01	Not Selected
29	Negative	2.73	Selected
30	Negative	2.55	Selected
31	Negative	3.07	Selected
32	Negative	2.62	Selected
33	Negative	2.41	Selected
34	Negative	1.29	Not Selected
35	Negative	2.89	Selected
36	Negative	0.39	Not Selected
37	Negative	3.02	Selected
38	Negative	2.15	Selected
39	Negative	2.76	Selected
40	Negative	2.44	Selected

In the present study there are 25 subjects each in the high and low groups, the total number of subjects involved in the pilot study being 100. As many as 30 statements having the highest 't' values have been chosen in order to form the final scale (Table-1).

SCORING PROCEDURE:

The scale has as many as 7 positive statements and 23 negative statements the scoring procedure is given in the table furnished below:

Nature of the Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive statements	5	4	3	2	1
Negative statements	1	2	3	4	5

The score ranges from 30 to 150. The maximum score that one can get in this is 150. The level of the scale was given below.

Level	Range of scores
Low Level of Communication Skills	up to 60
Average Level of Communication Skills	Above 60 up to 120
High Level of Communication Skills	Above 120

VALIDITY:

Communication skill has construct validity as items were selected having the 't' values equal to or more than 1.75 (Edwards, 1975). Its intrinsic validity was found to be 0.84 which clearly states that the scale is valid.

RELIABILITY:

The reliability of this scale by using test – retest method was found to be 0.71 and hence the scale is reliable.

CONCLUSION:

Thus the investigators constructed and validated a communication skill scale (CSS) and contributed it to the field of education.

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