

# The Role of Cognitive "Performance Orientation" in Communication Anxiety

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*This study examined cognitive patterns involved in communication anxiety, particularly in public speaking situations. The cognitive patterns were represented by Motley's (1990) theoretical-clinical conceptualization of either a "performance" or a "communication" orientation to public presentations. The mediating role of public self-consciousness in these anxious cognitive patterns was also examined.*

*Results indicated that Motley's measurement of performance orientation (i.e. the presentation has to be perfect and will be closely scrutinized for delivery by the audience) was not associated with communication apprehension, public speaking anxiety, nor with public self-consciousness. Although other scales performed as expected, the Performance/Communication Orientation scale proved to be multi-factored and internally unreliable.*

**KEY CONCEPTS** Performance orientation, public speaking anxiety, trait CA, public self consciousness, cognitive patterns

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**T**he difference between talking "with" someone and talking "to" someone is intuitively apparent to most communication experts. In the first instance the receiver is viewed as a participative, interactive part of the communication encounter. When you talk "at" someone however, the receiver seems to be a passive listener, evaluating what is said and how it is delivered.

Some people appear to perceive all communication presentations as a performance, or talking "to" an audience. This performance is expected to be scrutinized and evaluated in detail, with any minor mistakes being apparent as flaws which will subsequently lower receivers' overall evaluation of the source. People who hold these cognitive orientations emphasize the public nature of presentations in which the source is set apart from receivers.

Other people perceive oral presentations as opportunities to communicate with the receivers, to interact and facilitate understanding of the message. The communicators' top priority in this cognitive pattern is the overall understanding of ideas. These disparate cognitive patterns appear to be differentially associated with communication anxiety. This research examines the extent to which such cognitive orientations are implicated in trait communication apprehension and the role played by public self-consciousness in these cognitive patterns.

## Theoretical Rationale: The Role of Cognition and Emotion

In recent years communication scholars have focused attention on cognitive patterns in communication in general (cf. Knapp & Miller, 1985), and more specifically those which seem to heighten communication anxiety. Several studies have shown that highly anxious individuals have more negative expectations of the speech and more negative and self-focused thoughts during their presentations than do their low-anxious counterparts (e.g. Ayres, 1988; Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1990; Daly, Vangelisti, & Lawrence, 1989; Greene & Sparks, 1983). Beatty and Friedland (1990) found that speakers with high trait apprehension interpreted and labeled situational factors such as novelty, conspicuousness, and status differently than did non-anxious speakers.

Although the direction of the causal pattern is not clear from these studies, it appears that cognitions and emotional responses are probably reciprocally related. Hence, when negative thoughts arise they lead to more nervousness, and when anxious emotions arise, negative thoughts typically follow. This pattern is therefore implicated in disfunctional communication and feelings.

One communication scholar has posed a more specific framework for performance-related cognitive patterns. Based on a Schachter and Singer model (1962), Motley (1990) proposed that cognitive sets which focus upon *performance* predispose communicators to respond with anxiety, tension, and a sense of isolation during presentations. Other cognitive patterns are more communicative and interactive in nature. They lead to heightened enjoyment, satisfaction, and perceptions of mutual participation in communication endeavors. In its most basic form, Motley's theory represents these perceptual sets on a single continuum:

At one end, public speaking is viewed as a situation demanding special delivery techniques to make a positive, aesthetic impression on an audience. At the other end, public speaking is viewed as a situation demanding one's everyday communication style during an effort to cause, in the audience, cognitive changes regarding the speech topic. (Motley, 1990, p. 88).

Thus, based on these cognitive patterns toward public presentations, Motley suggests that individuals tend to perceive public speaking with either a performance orientation or a communication orientation.

While working with speech anxious adults in a clinical setting, Motley found that highly anxious clients tended to view public speaking as an exhibition of skills. These individuals thought of speaking in the way a concert musician or an Olympic figure skater might. The performance was expected to be evaluated hypercritically by the audience with attention to delivery of a very polished, flawless demonstration of skill.

A quite different cognitive pattern was noted among communication oriented individuals. With these speakers the overriding concern is that their message is fully understood by the audience. These individuals are less concerned with their delivery and more concerned with achieving understanding of the content of their message. They view a public presentation much like the process of a good conversation.

Motley used this model of cognitive orientations to explain and subsequently remediate high levels of physiological arousal and anxiety experienced by his speech anxious clients. He claimed that he had, "never encountered a high PSA subject who did not have a strong performance orientation to public speaking . . ." (1990, p. 89). The cause-effect relationship and reasoning behind the model was based on the premises of Schachter and Singer

(1962) and Behnke and Beatty (1981). To more fully explicate Motley's conceptualization, we will briefly discuss the assertions of these earlier models.

### **Integration of Previous Emotion Models**

According to Schachter and Singer, "an emotional state may be considered a function of state physiological arousal and of a cognition appropriate to the state of arousal" (1962, p. 380). Thus, when people experience a state of high physiological activation, they also experience pressure to understand and label feelings congruently. Consequently, people draw on situational cues as interpreted from previous experiences. In their study using injections to induce arousal in neutral settings, Schachter and Singer received reports of "as if" emotions, and a sort of "deja vu" affect, rather than genuine emotional responses unless researchers guided the experience by providing subjects with appropriate cognitions. They concluded that the combination of arousal and cognitive labeling produced the emotional response.

Behnke and Beatty adapted this theory to explain speech-related anxiety, arguing that, "physiological arousal neither causes nor results from cognitive evaluation. Rather, these two agents co-act additively to account for emotional experience," (1981, p. 159). Thus, the personality trait of apprehension serves as a cognitive set, composed of past experiences and predicted outcomes, to guide interpretation of arousal as anxiety rather than excitement.

Motley incorporates both of these models and predicts a slightly more complex cognitive process. Rather than assume that individuals recognize their predispositions to the communicative event, Motley suggests that people label their physiological arousal through techniques similar to those employed in rational emotive therapy. Accordingly, a line of cognitive justification may be illustrated by the following: "What am I afraid of? I must be afraid of the speech. Why? There must be negative consequences. Like what? Like making a fool of myself if . . ." (1990, p. 87).

Hence, the arousal is not only interpreted as fear, but is justified through an apparently rational set of cognitions. The performance-oriented speaker focuses primarily on potential for negative evaluation resulting from a technically less-than-perfect performance. They appear to be highly self-conscious of how others view them. Therefore, any minor mistakes such as disfluencies, slips of the tongue, etc. are considered glaring errors, and rehearsed, polished nonverbal communication is considered essential to the performance.

The fear of negative evaluation and its relationship to anxiety is not a new idea (cf. Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield, 1986; Daly & Buss, 1984; Greene & Sparks, 1983). The key difference between these researchers' conceptualizations of evaluation's effects on anxiety and that of Motley is the stable versus transitory nature of the threat. Motley conceptualizes these performance/communication orientations as trait-like. They are consistent and ongoing cognitive patterns, whereas the other researchers operationalized evaluation within the situation. (Note the similarity of Motley's trait of evaluation threat with arguments for evaluation apprehension posed by Porter, 1979). This does not mean that speakers will NOT be influenced by situational anxiety elicitors, but rather that the situational anxiety will flow through the established cognitive patterns. (See also Beatty, Balfantz, & Kuwabara, 1989.)

### **Public Self-Consciousness**

While these cognitive frameworks are useful for explaining relationships among arousal, reactions to public speaking, and felt anxiety, they don't explain why some individuals are

more performance-oriented while some are more communication-oriented. Other personality variables appear to be involved. Public self-consciousness may help account for the cognitive orientation one develops toward public communication.

Self-consciousness refers to a consistent tendency to direct attention inward; or excessive self attention (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). Public (versus private) self-consciousness refers to one's perception of being a "social object." Publicly self-conscious persons have heightened perceptions of being evaluated by others, viewed by them, and have a high awareness of the way others regard them.

Several studies of chronic public self-consciousness show positive relationships with shyness, social reticence, dyadic anxiety, audience anxiety, fear of negative evaluations, and embarrassment (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Theoretically one may predict that heightened public self-consciousness would result in increased anxiety in all situations. But Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss point out that before a person becomes apprehensive, he/she must not only be self aware, but make *negative* predictions concerning outcomes (1975). Some individuals may be aware of potential for public scrutiny, but label it positively and hence anticipate positive outcomes. Therefore while many anxious people are publicly self-conscious, others who are publicly self-conscious may hold positive expectancies and do not experience anxiety.

It is expected that because of their excessive worry about performance aspects and the perfection expectations, performance-oriented individuals will also report more public self-consciousness than communication-oriented individuals. But due to the integral anxiety component, the relationship between performance orientation and CA should be stronger than the relationship between public self-consciousness and performance orientation.

### **Empirical Rationale and Hypotheses**

One of the primary reasons for conducting this study is the continued clarification of cognitive patterns associated with communication anxiety. The field of communication is recognizing the need for works integrating emotions and cognitions (see for example *The Communication of Emotion*, Buck, 1984, *Communication, Social Cognition, and Affect*, Donohew, Sypher, and Higgins, 1987, or *Communication, Cognition, and Anxiety*, Booth-Butterfield, 1990). Nevertheless, while progress has been made, thorough integration and causal understanding of the elements, anxiety and cognition, has not been achieved.

A second goal of this study is the empirical testing of a theoretical-clinical perspective. Motley notes that his report should be considered essentially a case study summary by a therapist, rather than a stringent empirical test of the performance orientation conceptualization (p. 88). In fact, his empirical testing of the performance orientation was based on only 27 undergraduates in a small group communication course. Thus, additional empirical testing is necessary prior to concluding that these cognitive frameworks are clearly identifiable and meaningful.

Finally, extant explanations suggest that a cognitive performance orientation might apply to dyadic and group communication as well as to public speaking, and that public self consciousness may underlie the process. To this point however, the only testing has been conducted with public speaking measures. Thus, it is appropriate to examine the cognitive patterns in wider applications. We make three specific hypotheses.

- H1: There is a positive relationship between trait communication apprehension and cognitive performance orientation.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between cognitive performance orientation and public self-consciousness.

H3: There is a positive relationship between trait communication apprehension and public self-consciousness.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants and Procedures***

Participants were students enrolled in sections of basic communication courses at an Eastern university ( $N = 203$ ). Participants voluntarily completed self-report measures of trait communication apprehension, performance/communication orientation, and self-consciousness during regular class sessions.

### ***Measurement***

Trait communication apprehension was operationalized through responses to the PRCA-24 (McCroskey, 1982). This 24-item scale assesses individuals' level of fear or anxiety across a variety of contexts including public speaking, dyadic, small group, and meetings. The mean for this study was 69 with a standard deviation of 18.3, and obtained alpha reliability of .95, and a corrected Spearman Brown of .96.<sup>1</sup>

Self-consciousness was operationalized via Fenigstein, Scheier, and Buss' measure of private and public self-consciousness (1975). This scale is composed of 23 items measuring private self-consciousness, public self-consciousness, and social anxiety. Public self-consciousness was the construct of interest in this study ( $M = 27.4$ ;  $SD = 4.9$ ). The alpha reliability for the Public Self-Consciousness scale was .78 and the corrected Spearman Brown was .81.

Cognitive public speaking orientation (performance versus communication) was operationalized with Motley's (1990) Performance/Communication Orientation Measure (P/CO). This scale consists of statements representing either concern for the style and delivery of a speech, or concern for the message and understanding. Sample items include "Losing your place, slips of the tongue, and similar mistakes can ruin a speech," "In giving a speech, what you say is more important than how you say it," "In most ways, giving a speech is more like being in a play than like conversing casually with a friend," "During a speech the audience mentally keeps score of the speaker's mistakes," and "When giving a speech, what you say is more important than how you say it."

This construct is conceptualized on a continuum from more communication- to more performance-oriented thinking. The scale employs a 5-point Likert-type format such that higher scores indicate a more performance-oriented response pattern. The overall mean was 44.4, with a standard deviation of 5.8. The item mean for this study was 3.0, which is quite similar to Motley's item mean of 2.8.<sup>2</sup> However, because the obtained alpha reliability for this study was less than .60, and it is a largely untried measure, additional analyses of the psychometric properties of the scale itself were warranted.

## **Results**

### ***Measurement Model***

The correlation matrix of the 15 Performance/Communication Orientation items was analyzed with a series of confirmatory factor models. Using a sequential strategy, we tested several models then compared various indices of fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Fink & Monge, 1985). The measures of fit we tested and compared were an overall chi-square, the

chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio, normed fit estimates, adjusted Gamma, the Steiger-Lind adjusted RMS Index, and the percentage of residuals greater than .10.

The overall chi-square is a measure of the "badness of fit" between a proposed model and the correlation matrix. Large values indicate a poor fit. However, given a fairly large sample size, it can be practically impossible to reduce the chi-square value to non-significance. The ratio of chi-square to degrees-of-freedom is a statistical rule of thumb proposed by several researchers. The smaller this value, the better the model fits the matrix. The normed fit index is a statistical comparison between models. It assesses the overall improvement in one model compared to another model, compared to the null model. One model is held to be better than another if the normed fit is larger.

Adjusted Gamma can be thought of as a "coefficient of determination" analogous to the  $R^2$  value in a regression model (Steiger, 1989). This statistic also compensates for model complexity allowing for direct comparisons between models that have different number of factors and paths. The larger this value, the better the model fit. The Steiger-Lind adjusted RMS index is the root mean square standardized residual, adjusted for model complexity (Steiger, 1989). The smaller this value, the better the model fit.

Finally, we looked at the number of deviations greater than .10. This has been proposed as another "rule of thumb" for assessing model fit (Levine & McCroskey, 1990). This line of reasoning holds that a model is better if it has fewer "large" deviations.

In all we investigated four models. The Null model was a chaos model which fitted one latent factor for each measured item with no error terms. A One factor model was composed of one latent factor which drove all items and also included an error estimate for each item. A Two factor model was made up of two latent factors which represented the two orientations described by Motley, Performance and Communication. Only items presumed to load on a given factor were fit and error terms for each item were also included. Finally, we attempted to identify the Best model which was simply a search for the best fitting statistical model given the input correlation matrix.

We were searching for a model that fit the following criteria. First, the chi-square should be statistically non-significant if possible. This is often difficult to obtain and may not be the best indicator of model fit, but it is an appropriate criterion to test. Second, the model should show an adjusted Gamma of .95 or greater and an adjusted root mean square standardized residual of .05 or less. Next, comparison to other models should show statistically significant differences in favor of the "best" model. Finally, the number of estimates that deviated greater than .10 should be between 5 and 10% of the total number of estimates.

Table 1 displays the results for the various fit indices for each model. Table 2 shows the comparative statistics between the various models. The evidence from Table 1 led us to conclude that neither a One factor model, nor the Two factor model provided an excellent fit to the data. As the reader can confirm, none of these models met all, or even most, of the

**TABLE 1 Fit Indices for CFA Models on Performance Orientation Scale**

<i>Model</i>	<i>%Res</i>	$X^2$	<i>df</i>	$X^2/df$	$R^*$	$\text{Gamma}^*$
Null	39	378.3	105	3.6	.13	.79
One	26	246.2	90	2.7	.10	.85
Two	19	209.3	89	2.4	.09	.88
Best	17	74.8	44	1.7	.06	.95

*Notes.* N = 203. %Res = percentage of standardized residuals greater than .10;  $R^*$  = Steiger-Lind adjusted root mean square standardized residual,  $\text{Gamma}^*$  = adjusted Gamma.

**TABLE 2 Comparison Statistics for CFA Models**

<i>Comparison</i>	<i>X<sup>2</sup> dif</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>normed fit</i>
One vs Null	132.1	15		.349
Two vs Null	169.0	16		.446
Best vs Null	303.5	61		.802
Two vs One	36.9	1		.098
Best vs One	171.4	46		.453
Best vs Two	134.5	45		.356

Notes. N = 203. *p* for all comparisons is less than .00000001.

criteria we proposed. All models were statistically significant, had unacceptably large residuals, and in general showed a less than desirable fit.

The Best model, however, did provide a much better fit than the Null, One factor, or Two factor model. The Best model was a two factor (uncorrelated) solution with a reduced number of items. Items which exhibited low loadings were eliminated from the measure. The first factor (Performance Orientation) was reduced by two items ("During a speech the audience mentally "keeps score" of the speaker's mistakes," and "A good way to get ready for a speech is to practice in front of a mirror.") leaving a total of eight items. The second factor (Communication Orientation) was also reduced by two items ("The way one talks in everyday conversation is basically the way he/she should talk during a speech," and "Except for talking longer, talking to more people, and preparing content, giving a speech is the same as conversing.") leaving a total of three items.

Perusal of the evidence in these two tables demonstrates the superiority of the Best model to all others. It produced the lowest chi-square value of any model, although even it was statistically significant. The chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio was less than 2 which some researchers employ as an important criterion (Buss & Perry, 1992). The RMS index was .06 and the Gamma value was .95. Finally, all statistical comparisons to other models clearly favored the Best model (see Table 2).

However, despite the good fit shown by the Best model, there still were problems. First, the number of deviations greater than .10 did not reach our preset criterion. The percentage was somewhat high at 17%. Second, item loads, while statistically significant, were small. The loadings are displayed in Table 3. As the reader can see, the range is from .34 to .62. Eight of the twelve loadings are less than .50 and only one is larger than .60. Third, the alpha

**TABLE 3 Factor Loadings for the Best CFA Model**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor1(SE)</i>	<i>Factor2(SE)</i>
1	.339 (.087)	
2	.342 (.087)	
4	.341 (.087)	
5	.440 (.087)	
7	.366 (.087)	
8	.569 (.087)	
9	.461 (.086)	
10	.359 (.087)	
11		.496 (.092)
14		.619 (.102)
15		.596 (.100)

Notes. N = 203. (SE) = standard error of loading. Items 3, 6, 12, and 13 were eliminated for this analysis.

reliability of both factors is low. The obtained alpha on the eight Performance Orientation items that composed factor 1 is .57. Alpha for the three Communication Orientation items for factor 2 is .59.

In summary, a reduced, two factor model provided a good fit to the correlation matrix. However, the psychometric qualities of that good fit point to significant problems in the current version of this scale. It would be advisable to conduct additional studies on the factor structure of this scale. It will probably be necessary to create additional items. Until more work is done on the scale, it would be advisable to postpone using the current version.

### Correlation to Other Scales

Our hypotheses suggested that significant relationships should be obtained between Performance/Communication Orientation and other conceptually related scales. Given the psychometric evidence from this scale, it is clear that there is a measurement problem. We report our findings as tentative because it is likely that a scale with higher reliability and validity could produce different results.

Table 4 displays the simple, unadjusted correlations between the total Performance/Communication Orientation scale, its reduced Performance Orientation sub-factor and reduced Communication Orientation sub-factor, and the total PRCA score, the four PRCA sub-scale scores, and public self-consciousness scores.

Scanning down the first three columns of correlations, the reader can easily observe that all correlations between the P/CO scores and the other scores are all non-significant and extremely close to zero. Thus, these data provide no support for the first two hypotheses.

Hypothesis three was supported in that trait CA was positively related to public self-consciousness,  $r = .16$ ,  $p < .01$ . The strongest contribution came from the dyadic context where the relationship was  $r = .20$ .

The size of this sample has very good power. Power was greater than .8 for a correlation greater than .17 (alpha = .05, one-tailed). Some researchers would accept this evidence as "confirming the null" given the large sample and the small correlation.

It is also important to note the pattern of correlations between the PRCA and its various subscales and the public self-consciousness scores. These correlations are moderate to large and in expected directions. This provides evidence that the problems with the P/CO scale are probably not caused by an unusual sample of respondents.

**TABLE 4 Scale Correlations**

	PERF	PO	CO	PUBL	PRCA	GRP	MEET	DYAD
PO	.82							
CO	.47	.01						
PUBL	.03	-.03	.07					
PRCA	.01	.01	.01	.16				
GRP	-.02	.01	-.05	.11	.89			
MEET	-.01	.01	.01	.13	.91	.79		
DYAD	-.01	-.01	.03	.20	.81	.63	.66	
SPEAK	.04	.03	.07	.12	.82	.63	.67	.53

Notes. N = 203. Correlations greater than .12 are significant at .05, one-tailed; correlations greater than .16 are significant at .01, one-tailed. PERF = total Performance Orientation score, PO = performance subscale score, CO = communication subscale score, PUBL = public self consciousness, PRCA = total score on PRCA, GRP = group subscale, MEET = meeting subscale, DYAD = interpersonal subscale, and SPEAK = public speaking subscale. Power estimates indicate that power is  $> .80$  with correlations  $> .17$  at alpha = .05, one-tailed and with correlations  $> .22$  at alpha = .01, one-tailed.

## Discussion

This study was proposed as an empirical examination intended to verify specific cognitive patterns associated with communication anxiety and public self consciousness. However, while Motley's conceptualization of performance orientation as a factor in heightened speech anxiety may be valuable in a clinical setting, there is no evidence from this study that its current measurement is reliably associated with measures of anxiety or self-consciousness.

### Measuring Communication vs. Performance Orientation

Why didn't the performance orientation scale perform consistently with previous work? The best answer is probably in careful scrutiny of the methods used in the initial study (Motley, 1990). The items of the Performance/Communication Orientation scale were interspersed with the 33 items of the PRPSA, a highly reliable speech anxiety measure (McCroskey, 1970). It is likely that respondents were reacting to the performance orientation items as part of an anxiety scale and answered congruently with that framework. This would also explain the substantial correlations reported between the anxiety and cognitive orientation scales, a finding which did not replicate when the scales were administered separately.

Additionally, Motley's correlation was obtained from a sample of 27 undergraduates in a communication class. This small sample's results may have been quite unstable.

It should be recognized that Motley did not intend to provide a thorough, empirical report of the *measurement* of cognitive performance orientations. His statement was focused upon describing the thought patterns he had found to be present in high speech anxious individuals, and conceptualizing those patterns in potentially quantifiable form. The 1990 article repeatedly qualified any findings reported as exploratory and descriptive (e.g. page 94, 97). Using more empirical tests and standards however, the measure he proposed for the cognitive performance orientation does not hold up, and in its current form should not be used in quantitative research on this construct.

Confirmatory factor analysis was able to fit the two dimensions, performance and communication orientations, into a reasonably good model when four items were removed from the scale. Thus, a reduced scale was employed in analyses here. Unfortunately, even this psychometrically-improved version exhibited neither high internal reliability, nor the predicted relationships with conceptually similar constructs.

So where does that leave us regarding cognitive thought patterns and anxiety? Recent work by Ayres (1992) confirms that high CA's have negative and disrupted information processing both when expecting to give a speech and after the speech has been completed. In a similar vein Berger and Bell (1989) found that high anxious students had more difficulty in developing social plans to approach or initiate contact with someone, than did their low anxious counterparts. Indeed it is not uncommon to hear anxious people say they worry about not having the right "opening line" or that something they say will "come out wrong." These findings speak to a general cognitive disruption and focus, but not to the specific beliefs people have about communication.

The performance versus cognitive orientation may reflect knowledge bases or distorted beliefs and cognitions. Hence they may be more closely tied with reticent patterns (e.g. Phillips, 1986) than with the emotional responses of fear and anxiety. Indeed, Sarason and Sarason (1986) discuss anxiety as composed of several dimensions, including both worry (cognitive) and emotionality (fear and tension.) McCroskey and Leary have repeatedly stated that emotions and thought patterns are not synonymous and should be distinguished in

research and therapy on communication anxiety and avoidance (Leary, 1983; 1990; McCroskey, 1984; 1986).

Thus, this research suggests that cognitive orientations may reflect a general set of attitudes or beliefs about communicative encounters. The dimensions of performance orientation and communication orientation are empirically distinguishable. Nevertheless, these attitudes do not appear to be associated with anxiety.

### ***Public Self-Consciousness, Cognitions, and Anxiety***

The absence of involvement of public self-consciousness in the cognitive performance orientation pattern is also important for researchers examining underlying components of anxiety and cognitive responses. The awareness that one is open to scrutiny and monitoring is not associated with perceiving all communication as an exhibition. Thus, one can be self-conscious without believing that he/she must provide a flawless delivery of messages. One can be aware of scrutiny without thinking that all communication is "speech-like." Conversely, people could believe that in presentations they should just be themselves and converse naturally, but still be aware of themselves as public objects.

Changing the way people *think* about communicating, refocusing them on communicative aspects rather than performance aspects could improve their attitudes and feelings about interactions. This is the basis of several cognitive therapies. According to Behnke and Beatty's model, changing cognitive patterns should alter the labels which are applied to physiological arousal. More constructive labels should lead to reduced fear and apprehension.

Public self-consciousness and trait CA were related, although not strongly. The cognizance that other people are observing and judging you could also be perceived as conspicuousness. Beatty et al. (1989) found that higher trait CA individuals tended to feel more conspicuous, regardless of the actual physical context. Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1992) contend that the anxiety provoked by conspicuousness stems from fear of negative evaluation. People who know they are conspicuous, but aren't concerned or believe they will receive positive reactions (e.g. flashy dressers or individuals with attention-getting hairdos) are not anxious. But if people are high CA they routinely anticipate negative outcomes from others' observation of their communication. Hence public self-consciousness is a more salient aspect of their cognitive patterns.

### ***Recommendations and Conclusions***

This research has extended our knowledge of communication anxiety and its cognitive implications in several specific ways. First, using a large sample and stringent empirical standards, our analyses found the Performance/Communication Orientation scale lacking. We suggest that the measurement of cognitive orientations needs additional study and validation prior to future use.

Second, communication anxiety and public self consciousness were predictably related. The more anxious a person tends to be, the more aware he or she is of public attention and the potential for evaluation. Classroom teachers may want to help students to focus on message/meaning aspects in communication rather than over-emphasizing delivery which entails more overt, public aspects. Certainly this advice is consistent with messages many public speaking texts offer, but as researchers discover more about the process, we are beginning to understand *why* this approach helps anxious students.

Finally, although the concept of performance orientation is intriguing, we find no empirical support for the link between anxiety and performance versus communication

orientations. Thus contrary to predictions, high anxious individuals are just as likely to worry about the inadequacy of their messages as the inadequacy of their delivery. And both aspects still need attention.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The means, standard deviations, and reliabilities for the four CA contexts are as follows. Group mean = 16.6, SD 5.6, alpha = .90. Meeting mean = 17.1, SD 5.4, alpha = .91. Dyad mean = 15.7, SD 5.0, alpha = .89. Public speaking mean = 19.7, SD 5.3, alpha = .86.

<sup>2</sup>One performance oriented item was inadvertently omitted from the scale during data collection. However it is unlikely that this would have major impact on outcomes. The slightly higher overall mean for the Performance Orientation scale in this study is consistent with slightly higher than average means for the other measures in this sample.

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