

Applied Psychology and Interpersonal Communication

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Introduction

Does an individual's knowledge of applied Psychology influence his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally?

Communication is a transactional process in which man invents and assigns meaning to achieve objectives (Popescu). Communication occurs when signals carry information-bearing messages between a sender or speaker, and a receiver or listener (Krauss). Although all species communicate, human communication is notable for its precision and flexibility – characteristics unique of human ability to use language (Krauss).

The term Psychology refers to the academic and applied discipline involving the study of mental functions and behaviors (American Psychological Association).

Research in Psychology seeks to understand and explain thought, emotion, and behavior.

Effective interpersonal communication requires competence of both the speaker and the listener. What factors may influence an individual's ability to effectively communicate? Does an individual's knowledge of applied Psychology influence his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally?

Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that a correlation may exist between an individual's knowledge of applied Psychology and his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally. To test this hypothesis, a short survey was administered to a cross-section of the local population. The survey consisted of multiple-choice contextual questions that measured the respondents' interpersonal communication competence. The assessment results were

organized by two categories – those with formal knowledge of applied Psychology and those with little to no knowledge of applied Psychology – to reveal possible correlations between an individual’s knowledge of applied Psychology and his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally. For the purpose of this assessment, individuals with formal knowledge of applied Psychology are those who indicated that they have taken at least one college course in Psychology or those who indicated that they are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology.

The outcome of this research study satisfies the learning objective as stated in the proposed course of study statement submitted earlier in the semester – to examine the possible relationship between an individual’s knowledge of applied Psychology and his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally.

Survey Description

Using the preexisting assessment “Building Effective Interpersonal Communication Skills: Self-Assessment Exercise” prepared by Robin Jacobs and published by the Career Development Center of Portland Community College (Portland Community College Career Development Center), a survey was developed to assess the interpersonal communication competence levels of individuals with formal knowledge of applied Psychology and individuals with little to no knowledge of applied Psychology. The survey was published online at http://a1surveys.com/online-survey.php?surveyID=LIOILM_7426928c&u=interpersonalcommunicationhabits and consisted of 23 multiple-choice contextual questions to measure the respondents’ interpersonal communication competence, followed by three demographic questions

(Interpersonal Communication Habits). Each multiple-choice contextual question consisted of three possible answers: two distractors and one best possible answer. The survey was made available to students, faculty, staff, friends, family members, and the general public via E-mail and various social networking sites. 188 respondents initiated the survey and 146 respondents completed the survey, yielding an approximate 78 percent response rate. This response rate may have been influenced by a reported technical malfunction incurred by respondents attempting to complete the survey via mobile browser.

Demographics

For the purpose of this assessment, the demographics will provide information regarding members of the general population residing primarily in the greater Buffalo and Western New York region.

Age and Gender

The United States Census Bureau reports that 70.4 percent of people living in the Buffalo, New York census tract are over the age of 21 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). After analyzing the survey results, it was found that of the 146 participants surveyed, 67.1 percent were between the ages of 19 and 33, and 32.9 percent were between the ages of 34 and 65.

The United States Census Bureau also reports that 47.9 percent of people living in the Buffalo, New York census tract are male and 52.1 percent are female (United States

Census Bureau, 2010). These findings correlate with the survey analysis results in that the majority of survey respondents were female.

Language

The United States Census Bureau reports that 85.2 percent of people living in the Buffalo, New York census tract speak English (United States Census, Bureau, 2012). In addition, the Census reports that 6.7 percent of people in the Buffalo, New York census tract speak Spanish. Among Spanish speakers, only 1.7 percent report that they do not speak English well (United States Census Bureau, 2012). The survey conducted did not ask participants to report their main or native language. No participants indicated that they required assistance completing the survey because of a language barrier.

Education: Knowledge of Applied Psychology

According to the United States Census Bureau, 28.7 percent of people living in the Buffalo, New York census tract 25 years of age and over have a high school diploma or GED. 20.7 percent of people in the Buffalo, New York census tract 25 years of age and over have attended college but have not earned a degree. 32.3 percent of people in the Buffalo, New York census tract 25 years of age and over have a college degree (United States Census Bureau, 2012). After analyzing the survey results, it was found that of the 146 participants surveyed, 62.3 percent identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology. 37.7 percent of survey respondents

identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.

Survey Results

Participants were asked 23 multiple-choice contextual questions to measure interpersonal communication competence followed by three demographic questions (see Appendix A). Each multiple-choice contextual question consisted of three possible answers: two distractors and one best possible answer. The participants' responses to the survey questions were as follows:

- 1) Of the 146 participants surveyed, 63.7 percent indicated that during a conversation, they prefer to balance out their talking with their conversational partner, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 24.7 percent indicated that they prefer to let their conversational partner do most of the talking during a conversation, and approximately 11.6 percent indicated that they prefer to do most of the talking during a conversation.
- 2) Approximately 58.2 percent of participants indicated that when first meeting someone, they tend to go ahead and introduce themselves with a smile and a handshake, which was the best possible answer. 36.3 percent indicated that they tend to wait for the other person to make an introduction first, and approximately 5.5 percent indicated that they tend to offer a friendly hug when first meeting someone.
- 3) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 48.6 percent indicated that when a discussion starts, they prefer "warming up" new conversations with small talk,

- which was the best possible answer. Approximately 28.8 percent indicated that they prefer to wait for someone else to start the discussion, and 22.6 percent indicated that they generally avoid small talk and prefer getting right into more important matters.
- 4) Approximately 39.7 percent of participants indicated that during a conversation, they tend to make an effort to remember the names of other people and to use them often, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 33.6 percent indicated that during a conversation, they tend to be forgetful with names and therefore don't play close attention to them. Approximately 26.7 percent indicated that during a conversation, they tend to memorize the names of important people, but not everyone.
 - 5) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 83.6 percent indicated that when communicating with others, they frequently use courtesy words and phrases like "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "sorry," which was the best possible answer. Approximately 15.1 percent indicated that when communicating with others, they occasionally use courtesy words and phrases like "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "sorry." Approximately 1.4 percent of participants indicated that when communicating with others, they rarely use courtesy words and phrases like "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "sorry."
 - 6) Approximately 61 percent of participants indicated that when communicating with others, they tend to smile intermittently as they see fit, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 35 percent indicated that they tend to almost

- always smile when communicating with others, and approximately 4.1 percent indicated that they tend to keep a serious demeanor when communicating with others.
- 7) Of the 146 participants surveyed, 50 percent indicated that when communicating with others, they sometimes maintain eye contact but not always. Approximately 46.6 percent indicated that they almost always maintain eye contact when communicating with others, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 3.4 percent indicated that they hardly ever maintain eye contact when communicating with others.
 - 8) Approximately 84.3 percent of participants indicated that when communicating with others, they nod their heads intermittently as they see fit, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 8.2 percent indicated that when communicating with others, they tend to hold their heads relatively still at all times, and approximately 7.5 percent indicated that when communicating with others, they tend to nod their heads rather continuously.
 - 9) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 76.7 percent indicated that during a conversation, they typically stand about 2-3 feet away from the other person, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 13.7 percent indicated that they typically stand about a foot away from the other person during a conversation, and approximately 9.6 percent indicated that they typically stand about 5-6 feet away from the other person during a conversation.
 - 10) Approximately 81.5 percent of participants indicated that during a conversation, they tend to sit while talking to a person who is sitting, which was the best

- possible answer. Approximately 12.3 percent indicated that during a conversation, they tend to stand while talking to a person who is sitting.
- Approximately 6.2 percent indicated that during a conversation, they tend to lean down while talking to a person who is sitting.
- 11) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 81.5 percent indicated that to end a conversation, they usually wrap it up with a closing statement, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 12.3 percent indicated that to end a conversation, they tend to get antsy and impatient, hoping the other person will get the hint. Approximately 6.2 percent indicated that to end a conversation, they usually just end up leaving.
- 12) Approximately 93.8 percent of participants indicated that if they notice a coworker has put on weight, they avoid the topic and say nothing about it, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 4.11 percent indicated that if they notice a coworker has put on weight, they mention that the coworker's appearance has changed. Approximately 2.5 percent indicated that if they notice a coworker has put on weight, they exercise honesty and tell the person he or she looks heavier.
- 13) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 54.1 percent of participants indicated that while listening to someone talk, they often lean forward and face their bodies towards the person talking, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 32.2 percent of participants indicated that while listening to someone talk, they often keep their arms crossed over their chests.
- Approximately 13.7 percent of participants indicated that while listening to

- someone talk, they often lean back and slant their bodies slightly away from the person talking.
- 14) Approximately 41.8 percent of participants indicated that if they cross their legs during a conversation, they tend to cross their legs towards the person that they're talking with, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 34.3 percent indicated that they tend to bob their feet to release energy, and approximately 24 percent indicated that they tend to cross their legs away from the person that they're talking with.
- 15) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 61 percent indicated that while listening to someone talk, they tend to actively listen and ask questions, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 25.3 percent indicated that while listening to someone talk, they tend to get distracted by things going on around them, and 13.7 percent indicated that they tend to zone out while watching the person speak.
- 16) Approximately 88.4 percent of participants surveyed indicated that when someone talks about an unfortunate or sad experience, they try to relate to the person's feelings and show sensitivity to his or her misfortune, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 9.6 percent indicated that they try to avoid furthering the conversation by changing the subject. Approximately 2.1 percent indicated that they try to avoid furthering the conversation by acting like it never happened.
- 17) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 74 percent indicated that when discussing a topic, they usually focus on the positive aspects of the topic and try

- to keep an optimistic frame of mind, which was the best possible answer.
- Approximately 19.9 percent indicated that when discussing a topic, they usually focus on the negative aspects of the topic and try to keep a realistic frame of mind, and approximately 6.2 percent indicated that when discussing a topic, they usually end up complaining.
- 18) Approximately 43.8 percent of participants indicated that when they have a negative opinion or comment, they usually lead into it by first making a positive comment, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 42.5 percent indicated that when they have a negative opinion or comment, they usually just say it, rather than trying to “beat around the bush.” 13.7 percent indicated that when they have a negative opinion or comment, they usually avoid talking about it.
- 19) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 56.2 percent indicated that when receiving unfavorable feedback, they tend to take it in stride and note where they need to improve, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 39 percent indicated that when receiving unfavorable feedback, they tend to become slightly angry and try to defend themselves. Approximately 4.8 percent indicated that when receiving unfavorable feedback, they tend to deny it by either making excuses or pleading ignorance.
- 20) Approximately 82.2 percent of participants indicated that when they give a person negative feedback, they try to focus on the person’s observable behavior and offer suggestions when possible, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 16.4 percent indicated that when they give a person negative

- feedback, they try to save both parties time and aggravation by simply telling the person what to do right. Approximately 1.4 percent indicated that when they give a person negative feedback, they try to focus on what they dislike about the person, assuming that the rest will follow.
- 21) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 93.2 percent indicated that when they give a person negative feedback, they try to talk with the person alone and in a private place to spare any possible embarrassment, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 6.2 percent indicated that when they give a person negative feedback, they try to do it around other people so that everyone can benefit. Less than 1 percent of participants indicated that when they give a person negative feedback, they try to do it in front of a figure of authority so that he or she can become aware of the circumstances.
- 22) Approximately 74 percent of participants indicated that when they disagree with someone, they try to first listen, ask questions as needed, and then disagree in a nonjudgmental way, which was the best possible answer. 13.7 percent indicated that when they disagree with someone, they try to stay frank and to the point by simply stating that he or she is wrong. Approximately 12.3 percent indicated that when they disagree with someone, they try to say little or nothing about it as to not stir things up.
- 23) Of the 146 participants surveyed, approximately 82.2 percent indicated that when conversing in a group, they tend to smile and crack jokes from time to time, which was the best possible answer. Approximately 15.1 percent indicated that when conversing in a group, they tend to keep a straight face and remain rather

- serious. Approximately 2.7 percent indicated that when conversing in a group, they tend bore, sulk, or appear otherwise discontented.
- 24) Approximately 37.7 percent of participants identified as male, and approximately 62.3 percent of participants identified as female.
- 25) At the time of the survey, approximately 63.7 percent of participants indicated that they were 25-33 years old, approximately 19.9 percent of participants indicated that they were 34-44 years old, approximately 7.5 percent of participants indicated that they were 54-65 years old, approximately 5.5 percent of participants indicated that they were 45-54 years old, and approximately 3.4 percent of participants indicated that they were 19-24 years old.
- 26) At the time of the survey, 62.3 percent of participants identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology, or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology. 37.7 percent of survey respondents identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology. Of those participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, approximately 56.9 percent indicated that they took at least one college course in Psychology and 5.5 percent indicated that they are practicing professionals or students majoring in the discipline of Psychology.

Analysis of Data

Survey data analysis indicates that for all 23 multiple-choice contextual questions measuring interpersonal communication competence, the percentage of participants who selected the best possible answers and who also identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology was higher than the percentage of participants who selected the best possible answer and who identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.

Survey data analysis also indicates that of the 146 participants surveyed, one participant selected the best possible answer for all 23 multiple-choice contextual questions, and four participants selected the best possible answer for 22 of the 23 multiple-choice contextual questions. The five participants who answered at least 22 of the 23 multiple-choice contextual questions with the best possible answers all identified themselves as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology. In contrast, only one participant failed to answer any of the 23 multiple-choice contextual questions with the best possible answer. This participant identified himself as an individual who has no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.

Survey data analysis indicates that of the 146 participants surveyed, participants who identified themselves as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology selected an average of 17 out of 23 best possible answers to multiple-choice contextual questions that measure interpersonal communication competence. Participants

who identified themselves as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology scored lower on average, having selected an average of 13 out of 23 best possible answers to multiple-choice contextual questions that measure interpersonal communication competence.

Research suggests that females are often considered experts in types of communication that build, maintain, and strengthen relationships, and that females are more sensitive to the interpersonal meanings in the messages they exchange with their conversational partners than their male counterparts (Buggraf Torppa). Survey data analysis aligns with this research in that participants who identified as female and who also identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology selected an average of 19 out of 23 best possible answers to multiple-choice contextual questions measuring interpersonal communication competence. This average is higher than that of participants of both genders who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in this discipline of Psychology.

Other research suggests that adults spend 70 percent of their time engaged in some sort of communication (Adler). Of this, an average of 45 percent is spent listening, compared to 30 percent speaking, 15 percent reading, and 9 percent writing (Adler). Engaging in high levels of communication during adulthood is likely to impact interpersonal communication competence. Survey data analysis aligns with this research in that participants who were within the age ranges of 45-54 years and 54-65 years at the time of the survey and who also identified as individuals who have taken at least one

college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology selected an average of 18 out of 23 best possible answers to multiple-choice contextual questions measuring interpersonal communication competence. This average is higher than that of participants of all ages who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in this discipline of Psychology. But because only 13 percent of survey participants were within the age ranges of 45-54 years and 54-65 years at the time of the survey, the survey results may not accurately reflect differences in age.

- 1) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question one, approximately 69.9 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 30.1 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 2) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question two, approximately 69 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 31 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 3) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question three, approximately 61.4 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are

- practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 38.6 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 4) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question four, approximately 71.4 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 28.6 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
 - 5) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question five, approximately 64.2 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 35.8 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
 - 6) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question six, approximately 58.4 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 41.6 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
 - 7) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question seven, approximately 63.6 percent were participants who identified as individuals who

- have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 36.4 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 8) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question eight, approximately 63.9 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 36.1 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 9) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question nine, approximately 56.8 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 43.2 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 10) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 10, approximately 64.7 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 36.3 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.

- 11) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 11, approximately 65.2 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 34.8 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 12) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 12, approximately 57 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 43 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 13) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 13, approximately 59.7 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 40.1 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 14) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 14, approximately 77 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately

- 23 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 15) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 15, approximately 62.9 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 37.1 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 16) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 16, approximately 59.7 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 40.3 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 17) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 17, approximately 58.5 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 41.5 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 18) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 18, approximately 69.6 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are

- practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 30.4 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 19) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 19, approximately 67.5 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 32.5 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 20) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 20, approximately 64.7 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 35.3 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 21) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 21, approximately 57.5 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 42.5 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.
- 22) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 22, approximately 70.4 percent were participants who identified as individuals who

have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 29.6 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.

- 23) Of the participants who selected the best possible answer for question 23, approximately 59.7 percent were participants who identified as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or as individuals who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology, while approximately 40.3 percent identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology.

Summary

The Interpersonal Communication Habits survey was administered to 146 participants, and assessed the interpersonal communication competence levels of individuals with formal knowledge of applied Psychology and individuals with little to no knowledge of applied Psychology. The survey focused on those participants who identified themselves as individuals who have taken at least one college course in Psychology or who are practicing and/or majoring in the discipline of Psychology and participants who identified as individuals who have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology. Survey results were organized by group and evaluated for possible correlations between an individual's knowledge of applied Psychology and his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally. Current research related to gender and age differences in interpersonal communication was also reviewed and used to analyze

the survey findings. Such findings provided important information that guided final recommendations.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that a mild correlation exists between an individual's knowledge of applied Psychology and his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally. Based on the survey results, individuals with formal knowledge of applied Psychology possess higher levels of interpersonal communication competence and therefore are more effective in their abilities to communicate interpersonally.

Because of the small research sample size, the limited variety of participant age ranges, and the approximate 78 percent response rate, general conclusions cannot be made regarding the strength of the correlation between an individual's knowledge of applied Psychology and his or her ability to effectively communicate interpersonally. It is recommended that the study be replicated using an increased sample size with a greater variety of participant age ranges to yield more generalized results. It is also recommended that the survey be revised to include less ambiguous words and phrases, and to be launched in a mobile browser friendly format to yield a higher response rate.

Recommendations










From the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Replicate the study using larger sample size.
2. Replicate the study using participants from a greater variety of age ranges.
3. Revise the survey to include less ambiguous words and phrases.

4. Revise the survey to be mobile browser friendly.

Appendix A




Interpersonal Communication Habits Raw Survey Results

| Results for: Interpersonal Communication Habits | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Page: 1/27 | | | |
| Instructions | | | |
| Thank you for agreeing to participate in this brief questionnaire. | | | |
| You will be asked to complete 23 multiple choice questions about your interpersonal communication behaviors, followed by three demographic questions. This survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. | | | |
| Try to answer each question honestly and instinctively by choosing the response that best describes you. There are no right or wrong answers. | | | |
| *1) 1. During a conversation: | | | |
| | | Response (%) | Responses |
| I like to do most of the talking. |  | 11.64 | 17 |
| I like to let the other person do most of the talking. |  | 24.66 | 36 |
| I like to balance out my talking with the other person. |  | 63.70 | 93 |
| | | | Answered Question 146 |
| | | | Skipped Question 42 |
| Page: 2/27 | | | |
| *2) 2. When I first meet someone: | | | |
| | | Response (%) | Responses |
| I tend to wait for the other person to make an introduction first. |  | 36.30 | 53 |
| I tend to go ahead and introduce myself with a smile and a handshake. |  | 58.22 | 85 |
| I tend to offer a friendly hug. |  | 5.48 | 8 |
| | | | Answered Question 146 |
| | | | Skipped Question 42 |
| Page: 3/27 | | | |
| *3) 3. When a discussion starts: | | | |
| | | Response (%) | Responses |
| I prefer "warming up" new conversations with a little bit of small talk. |  | 48.63 | 71 |
| I prefer getting right into more important matters and generally avoid small talk. |  | 22.60 | 33 |
| I prefer to wait for someone else to start the discussion. |  | 28.77 | 42 |

Answered Question 146
Skipped Question 42




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*4) 4. During a conversation:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I tend to make an effort to remember the names of other people, and to use them often. |  | 39.73 | 58 |
| I tend to be rather forgetful with names, and therefore don't pay close attention. |  | 33.56 | 49 |
| I tend to memorize the names of important people, but not everyone. |  | 26.71 | 39 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*5) 5. When communicating with others:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I frequently use courtesy words and phrases like "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "sorry." |  | 83.56 | 122 |
| I occasionally use courtesy words and phrases like "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "sorry." |  | 15.07 | 22 |
| I rarely use courtesy words and phrases like "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "sorry." |  | 1.37 | 2 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |



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*6) 6. When communicating with others:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I tend to keep a serious demeanor, and therefore don't do a lot of smiling. |  | 4.11 | 6 |
| I tend to almost always have a smile on my face. |  | 34.93 | 51 |
| I tend to smile intermittently, as I see fit. |  | 60.96 | 89 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*7) 7. When communicating with others:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|---|--------------|-----------|
| I almost always maintain eye contact. |  | 46.58 | 68 |
| I sometimes maintain eye contact, but not always. |  | 50.00 | 73 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------|-----|
| I hardly ever maintain eye contact. |  | 3.42 | 5 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |



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*8) 8. When communicating with others:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|--|-------------------|-----------|
| I tend to hold my head relatively still at all times. |  | 8.22 | 12 |
| I nod my head here and there, as I see fit. |  | 84.25 | 123 |
| I tend to nod my head rather continuously. |  | 7.53 | 11 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*9) 9. During a conversation:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I typically stand about a foot away from the other person. |  | 13.70 | 20 |
| I typically stand about 2-3 feet away from the other person. |  | 76.71 | 112 |
| I typically stand about 5-6 feet away from the other person. |  | 9.59 | 14 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |



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*10) 10. During a conversation:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|--|-------------------|-----------|
| I tend to stand while talking to a person who is sitting. |  | 12.33 | 18 |
| I tend to sit while talking to a person who is sitting. |  | 81.51 | 119 |
| I tend to lean down while talking to a person who is sitting. |  | 6.16 | 9 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*11) 11. To end a conversation:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|---|--------------|-----------|
| I usually just end up leaving. |  | 6.16 | 9 |
| I tend to get antsy and impatient, hoping the other person will get the hint. |  | 12.33 | 18 |

| | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|-----|
| I usually wrap it up with a closing statement. |  | 81.51 | 119 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*12) 12. If I notice a coworker has put on weight:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|--|-------------------|-----------|
| I avoid the topic, and say nothing about it. |  | 93.84 | 137 |
| I mention that the coworker's appearance has changed. |  | 4.11 | 6 |
| I exercise honesty, and tell the person he or she looks heavier. |  | 2.05 | 3 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*13) 13. While listening to someone talk:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I often keep my arms crossed comfortably over my chest. |  | 32.19 | 47 |
| I often lean back and slant my body slightly away from the person. |  | 13.70 | 20 |
| I often lean forward and face my body towards the person. |  | 54.11 | 79 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |



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*14) 14. If/when I cross my leg during a conversation:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I tend to cross my leg towards the person I'm talking with. |  | 41.78 | 61 |
| I tend to cross my leg away from the person I'm talking with. |  | 23.97 | 35 |
| I tend to bob my foot to release excess energy. |  | 34.25 | 50 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*15) 15. While listening to someone talk:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|--------------|-----------|
| I tend to get distracted by things going on around me. |  | 25.34 | 37 |
| I tend to actively listen and ask questions. |  | 60.96 | 89 |

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|-----|
| I tend to zone out while watching the person speak. |  | 13.70 | 20 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*16) 16. When someone talks about an unfortunate or sad experience:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|--|-------------------|-----------|
| I try to avoid furthering the conversation, and therefore act like it never happened. |  | 2.05 | 3 |
| I try to avoid furthering the conversation, and therefore change the subject. |  | 9.59 | 14 |
| I try to relate to the person's feelings and show sensitivity to his or her misfortune. |  | 88.36 | 129 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*17) 17. When I discuss a topic:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I usually focus on the positive aspects of the topic, and try to keep a positive frame of mind. |  | 73.97 | 108 |
| I usually focus on the negative aspects of the topic, and try to keep a realistic frame of mind. |  | 19.86 | 29 |
| I usually end up complaining about the topic. |  | 6.16 | 9 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*18) 18. When I have a negative opinion or comment:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I usually just say it, rather than trying to "beat around the bush." |  | 42.47 | 62 |
| I usually lead into it by first making a positive comment. |  | 43.84 | 64 |
| I usually avoid talking about it. |  | 13.70 | 20 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*19) 19. When I receive unfavorable feedback:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------|-----------|
| I tend to take it in stride, and note | | 56.16 | 82 |

| | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|-----|
| where I need to improve. |  | | |
| I tend to become a little angry, and try to defend myself. |  | 39.04 | 57 |
| I tend to deny it, by either making excuses or pleading ignorance. |  | 4.79 | 7 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*20) 20. When I give a person negative feedback:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|--|-------------------|-----------|
| I try to focus on the person's observable behavior, and offer suggestions when possible. |  | 82.19 | 120 |
| I try to focus on what I dislike about the person, knowing that the rest will follow. |  | 1.37 | 2 |
| I try to save us both time and aggravation, and simply tell the person what to do right. |  | 16.44 | 24 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |




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*21) 21. When I give a person negative feedback:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|--|-------------------|-----------|
| I try to do it around other people, so that everyone can benefit. |  | 6.16 | 9 |
| I try to do it in front of a figure of authority, so that he or she can become aware of the circumstances. |  | 0.68 | 1 |
| I try to talk with the person alone and in a private place, to spare any possible embarrassment. |  | 93.15 | 136 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*22) 22. When I disagree with someone:

| | | Response (%) | Responses |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| I try to first listen, ask questions as needed, and then disagree in a non-judgmental way. |  | 73.97 | 108 |
| I try to stay frank and to the point, by simply stating that he or she is wrong. |  | 13.70 | 20 |
| I try to say little or nothing about it, as to not stir things up. |  | 12.33 | 18 |
| | | Answered Question | 146 |
| | | Skipped Question | 42 |

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*23) 23. When I'm conversing in a group:

| | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|--------------|-----------|
| I tend to bore, sulk, or appear otherwise discontented. | 2.74 | 4 |
| I tend to smile and crack jokes from time to time. | 82.19 | 120 |
| I tend to keep a straight face and remain rather serious. | 15.07 | 22 |
| Answered Question | | 146 |
| Skipped Question | | 42 |

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The remaining questions are for demographic purposes only.

*24) 24. I identify as:

| | Response (%) | Responses |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Male | 37.67 | 55 |
| Female | 62.33 | 91 |
| Answered Question | | 146 |
| Skipped Question | | 42 |

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*25) 25. I fall into the following age group:

| | Response (%) | Responses |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 18 years or younger | 0.00 | 0 |
| 19-24 years | 3.42 | 5 |
| 25-33 years | 63.70 | 93 |
| 34-44 years | 19.86 | 29 |
| 45-54 years | 5.48 | 8 |
| 54-65 years | 7.53 | 11 |
| 66 years or older | 0.00 | 0 |
| Answered Question | | 146 |
| Skipped Question | | 42 |

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*26) 26. My knowledge of applied Psychology is as follows:

| | Response (%) | Responses |
|---|--------------|-----------|
| I am a practicing professional or student majoring in the discipline (undergraduate or graduate). | 5.48 | 8 |
| I took a college course or two in Psychology, but that's about the extent of my formal knowledge. | 56.85 | 83 |
| I have no formal education or knowledge of applied Psychology. | 37.67 | 55 |
| Answered Question | | 146 |
| Skipped Question | | 42 |

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