The Relationship Between Expressed Anxiety and Assertiveness

Douglas J. Pawlarczyk
Eastern Illinois University

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPRESSED ANXIETY
AND ASSERTIVENESS
(TITLE)

BY

DOUGLAS J. PAWLARCZYK

THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1980
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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DEPARTMENT HEAD
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPRESSED ANXIETY AND ASSERTIVENESS

BY

DOUGLAS JOSEPH PAWLARCZYK
B.S., University of Illinois, Champaign, 1978

ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at the Graduate School of Eastern Illinois University
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS
1980
Abstract

The present study examines the relation between expressed anxiety and assertiveness. This relation was examined by administering the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) - State and Trait Scales, the Fear Survey Schedule-III (FSS-III), the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS), the College Self-Expression Scale (CSES) and eight role-plays designed to elicit assertive responses to twenty-four students (15 females and 9 males) enrolled in a class in personality assessment at Eastern Illinois University.

The eight role-plays were rated by four graduate students in psychology. Four of the role-plays were designed to elicit positive assertion. For these role-plays the raters rated the occurrence or nonoccurrence of praise and appreciation in addition to overall assertiveness. The other four role-plays were designed to elicit negative content. For these role-plays the raters rated the occurrence or nonoccurrence of compliance and a request for new behavior in addition to overall assertiveness. In the analysis positive content ratings (consisting of the occurrence of praise or appreciation) and negative content ratings (consisting of the occurrence of compliance or a request for new behavior) were examined in addition to ratings of overall assertiveness.

Results consisted of an examination of the correlations between the various self-report measures, the 17 social fear items on the FSS-III and the ratings of role-play responses.
Significant correlations were obtained between the two self-report measures of assertion, the RAS and the CSES, thus demonstrating convergent validity. The STAI-State Scale was significantly related to each of the assertion measures. The FSS-III items were correlated with the STAI-Trait Scale, though neither of these measures were related to the assertion inventories. The STAI-State Scale was correlated with both the FSS-III items and the STAI-Trait Scale. Overall assertiveness ratings correlated with both the CSES and the RAS, further demonstrating convergent validity. Ratings of positive content were also found to correlate with the RAS. Positive and negative content ratings correlated with ratings of overall assertiveness, but did not correlate with each other, demonstrating that the raters had adequately discriminated between positive and negative assertion. The specific content ratings proved somewhat difficult to interpret in relation to the other measures and to each other.

Thus, the results of this study support the contention that assertion is inversely related to state anxiety due to its situationally specific nature. The contention that assertion is inversely related to trait anxiety would appear to be improbable given the results of this investigation. Further research is necessary in order to determine the specific content to be rated in behavioral role-plays eliciting assertive responses.
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Many thanks are in order here. First and foremost, I would like to thank my chairperson, Dr. William Roberts, for his constant guidance throughout this project and for his help with the statistical analyses. I would also like to thank the other members of my thesis committee, Dr. William Kirk, for his initial editing of this paper, and Dr. Paul Panek, for "rounding out" the committee.

Many special thanks are extended to my "research team", consisting of six of the finest students at Eastern Illinois University: Daniel Viens, Randall Soland, Randall Haack, Mark Frazier, Dale Ford and Lynn Adams.

This thesis is dedicated to Mom, Dad, Socrates, Winky and Polish faces in the night.
Chapter I

Introduction

Though behavioral clinicians have been advocating assertiveness training for over a decade (Wolpe, 1958; Wolpe & Lazarus, 1966) only recently has much effort been expanded in the investigation of the measurement and subsequent defining of the term "assertion" (e.g. Rathus, 1973; Galassi, De Lo, Galassi & Bastien, 1974).

Development of valid measures of assertive behavior has been difficult. This is partly due to the fact that (a) assertive behavior involves both verbal and nonverbal responses, (b) a number of different response modes have been assessed (behavioral, physiological and self-report) producing a number of instruments often confusing the researcher as to just what is being measured and (c) it is not clear how these instruments relate to global or specific assertive behaviors, nor whether such terms as "global assertion" with their inherent trait connotations are appropriate.

The word "assert" is derived from the Latin word "asserere" meaning "to join to oneself". Salter (1949) was the first to recommend training in assertion. Salter's goal was to teach the inhibited individual how to express his feelings directly; the individual should "loosen up" and allow feelings to take precedent over convention. Many of Salter's ideas have been incorporated in present-day assertive training. However, Salter has been criticized for not giving
enough attention to the possible negative repercussions of uninhibited expression of feeling. For example, Wolpe's (Wolpe & Lazarus, 1966) view of assertion training emphasizes the individual's learning how to express his feelings in ways that minimize unpleasant repercussions. Wolpe, like other present-day trainers stresses socially acceptable, "responsible" assertion.

Lange and Jacubowski, in their book Responsible Assertive Behavior (1976, p. 9), similarly advocate "responsible" assertion which they believe involves mutuality, asking for fair play, and using one's greater assertive power to help others become more able to stand up for themselves. They write, "... assertion involves standing up for personal rights and thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways which do not violate another person's rights. The basic message in assertion is: This is what I think. This is what I feel. This is how I see the situation. This message expresses "who the person is" and is said without dominating, humiliating or degrading the other person" (p. 7).
Chapter II
Review of the Literature

Salter (1949) is credited for first suggesting specific training in assertiveness, although he did not use the term "assertive training". In his book, *Conditioned Reflex Therapy* (Salter, 1949), he suggested that most people are too well socialized. Their primary motivation is to be pleasant, maintain the status quo and accommodate to the needs of others. Their feelings and emotions are concealed. Salter believed that this emotional inhibition produces conflict within the individual and makes it impossible to achieve real emotional satisfaction with others. Salter considered this inhibition to be a primary component of neurosis, having the status of a trait.

Wolpe (1958, 1973) argues that assertive responses are incompatible with anxiety and are therefore effective in overcoming neurotic fear through the mechanism of reciprocal inhibition. As a logical outgrowth of this view, he suggests that assertive training is particularly appropriate in the treatment of neurotic patients manifesting unadaptive anxiety responses in interpersonal contexts. In their discussion of anxiety in interpersonal relationships, Wolpe and Lazarus (1966) wrote, "...a basic assumption involved in the foregoing is that people have certain rights which they are fully entitled to exercise, and that proper human adjustment includes exercising them. While self-control and tactful restraint are necessary and desirable for civilized interaction,
this can be taken too far. Those parents who, bound by con-
vention and conformity, transmit stoic and escetic habits of
self-control to their children in the name of breeding, man-
ners, good taste and refinement create what Salter (1949)
has termed "inhibitory personalities" " (p. 38).

Many have seen Wolpe's contention as implying an inverse
relationship between assertiveness and trait anxiety (e.g.
Morgan, 1974; Orenstein, Orenstein & Carr, 1975; Hollands-
worth, 1976).

Others, however, consider assertion to be situation
specific (e.g. Green, Burkhart & Harrison, 1979; Eisler, Her-
sen, Miller & Blanchard, 1975). This contention would imply
an inverse relation between assertiveness and state anxiety.
Thus, it would appear that an empirical investigation of the
relation of assertiveness to state and trait anxiety would be
desirable in order to confirm or refute the various theries
which have been postulated.

A number of studies appear in the literature examining
the relation between assertion and fear. Goldstein, Server,
and Piaget (1970) reported two illustrative case studies in
which anger expressiveness induced through assertiveness
training resulted in the clinically assessed reduction of
social fear.

Weinman, Gelbart, Wallace, and Post (1972) administered
the Fear Survey Schedule-II (FSS-II) (Geer, 1965) to a sample
of hospitalized patients diagnosed as schizophrenic. All
three treatment conditions - socioenvironmental, desensitiza-
tion and relaxation therapy - resulted in a significant de-
crease in reported fear. Bates and Zimmerman (1971), during
the initial stages of constructing their Constriction Scale,
administered both the Constriction Scale and the FSS-II to
their subject sample. The correlation coefficient between
the two measures for males in their sample was significant
at the .05 level. These findings, however, may be confound-
ed, as in the case of Weinman et al. (1972) by the inclusion
of fear items on the FSS-II unrelated to interpersonal be-
havior.

Rathus (1973) seems to have provided some indirect evi-
dence confirming Wolpe's contention that assertive behavior
reciprocally inhibits fear. He administered both the 100-
item Temple Fear Survey Inventory (TFSI) (Braun &
Reynolds, 1969) and the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) (Rathus,
1973) to groups of female students receiving either asser-
tive training, a placebo treatment or no treatment. He
found that in each case the mean changes toward less fear
were greater for the group receiving assertive training,
though no significant differences in post-test Full Scale
TFSI Scores, Fear of Social Criticism Factor Scores or Fear
of Social Incompetence Factor Scores were found.

In a more direct examination of the degree to which
social fears and assertiveness are related, Morgan (1974)
administered his Social Fear Scale (SFS), which consisted
of 10 items interspersed within the Wolpe-Lang Fear Survey
Schedule - III (Wolpe & Lang, 1964) and the Rathus Asser-
tiveness Schedule to two hundred and sixty-one students.
Even though the correlation reached statistical significance in his study ($r = -0.239$), it accounted for less than six percent of the variance. Thus, social fears as measured by the SFS were not regarded as highly related to self-reported assertive behavior.

In a replication of Morgan's (1974) study, Hollandsworth (1976) administered the RAS, SFS, FSS-III, another measure of assertiveness - the Adult Self-Expression Scale (ASES) (Gay, Hollandsworth & Galassi, 1975) and an Expanded Social Fear Scale (ESFS) which consisted of the ten items in the SFS plus eight items selected intuitively from the FSS-III to a sample of subjects resembling the sample used by Morgan (1974). The coefficients for the RAS and ASES correlated with the complete FSS-III were generally similar to those obtained by Bates and Zimmerman (1971) for the Constriction Scale with FSS-II. The weakness of these coefficients was due to the fact, as noted above, that only approximately 25% of the items for both the FSS-II and III can be considered to deal directly with social fears. Isolating social fear items in the form of the SFS did result in stronger coefficients for males and the sample as a whole; the RAS with SFS correlation was significantly greater for this sample of subjects than it was for Morgan's sample. When additional social fear items from FSS-III were added, the expanded measure of expressed social fear yielded even stronger coefficients when correlated with both measures of assertiveness. Hollandsworth concluded that if assertiveness is viewed in terms of both
classical and operant paradigms (e.g., Wolpe, 1973), then expressed social fear would be considered to be an important but not necessarily dominating factor in predicting assertive behavior.

Percell, Berwick, and Biegel (1974) administered the Lawrence (1969) Interpersonal Behavior Test, a questionnaire measure of assertiveness, and the Taylor (1953) Manifest Anxiety Scale to 50 male and 50 female psychiatric outpatients. Correlations between the measures were .04 for men and -.88 for women, confirming a significant inverse relationship for the women only. A methodological consideration which may have contributed to these puzzling findings was the heterogeneity of the sample, which was chosen without regard to psychiatric diagnosis.

Gay, Hollandsworth, and Galassi (1975) compared high and low assertive college students on several measures. Their low assertive college students scored significantly higher on the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale. Orenstein, Orenstein, and Carr (1975) in a related study examining the relation between anxiety and assertiveness found assertiveness, as measured by the RAS, to be related inversely and highly significantly with measures of neuroticism, trait anxiety and interpersonal anxiety for both males and females.

Across methods and instruments, the type and specificity of the assertive situations presented to test takers vary. However, the literature suggests that self-report and role-play measures of assertion often seem to be measuring some
pertinent dimensions of assertiveness. Thus, assertive behavior might best be described as a multidimensional construct, of which anxiety may be a component. To properly examine the relation between anxiety and assertion one must examine the relation between methods as well as within. Thus, far the literature has only reported an examination of this relation within methods (self-report). The present study attempts to expand on the findings of previous studies by examining the relation between anxiety and assertion through an investigation of the relation between behavioral role-plays designed to elicit assertive responses and self-report measures of assertion, anxiety and fear.

Concerning role-play assessments of behavior, little is known about the "external" validity of such assessments. Few investigations of the in vivo generalizability of role-play assessments have been reported. One type that has been reported (e.g. Hersen, Eisler & Miller, 1974) involves looking for parallel assertion training outcome results on different role-play and in vivo measures. Three such studies (McFall & Twentyman, 1973; McFall & Marston, 1970; Swenson, Brady & Edwards, 1978) have obtained support for their role-play measures.

In a preliminary study, Eisler, Miller, and Hersen (1973) attempted to delineate specific behaviors related to judgments of assertive expression. The authors extended the use of McFall and Marston's (1970) role-play techniques by developing 14 standard interpersonal situations requiring negative
(hostile) assertive responses. Eisler, Miller, Hersen, and Blanchard (1975) added additional situations that typically elicit positive (commendatory) responses to the aforementioned series of role-plays. Their study also examined more systematically the effects of social context on interpersonal behavior in assertive situations. Sex, familiarity (whether or not the subject had recurrent interactions with an interpersonal partner), and positive (commendatory) vs. negative expression were found to be significant situational determinants of assertive responses for male psychiatric patients during role-plays with research assistants.

In a study by Green, Burkhart, and Harrison (1979) students were administered the RAS, the College Self-Expression Scale (CSES) (Galassi, De Lo, Galassi & Bastién, 1974) and the Personality Research Form (PRF-E) (Jackson, 1974) and participated in a behavioral role-play task and an in vivo measure of assertiveness (e.g. a telephone call in which a preprogrammed series of seven progressively more unreasonable requests were made by a confederate ostensibly soliciting help in preparing for a test in a shared course). Two types of variables were rated in the behavioral role-plays: Components of responses (producing a verbal and a nonverbal scale) and overall assertiveness (producing a general assertiveness scale). The variables that were rated had been selected from those suggested by McFall and Twentyman (1973) and Eisler, Miller, and Hersen (1973). Eleven of the 22 PRF-E scales had at least one significant correlation with the assertiveness
measures. In general, although a number of the PRF-E scales were related to the self-report assertiveness measures, very few of the PRF-E scales were related to the behavioral measures. The largest correlations among these variables were within method. Across methods, the paper-and-pencil measures, the RAS and the CSES, were correlated moderately with two of the scales from the role-play task, the general assertiveness and the verbal content scales. The in vivo telephone measure was unrelated to all the other assertiveness measures. Each of the methods used to measure assertiveness appeared to tap somewhat different personality dimensions.

The present study examines the relation between assertiveness and anxiety by examining the correlations among eight behavioral role-plays designed to elicit assertive responses, two self-report measures of assertion, the CSES and the RAS, 17 items on the FSS-III dealing with social fears and the State and Trait Scales of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger, Goruch & Lushene, 1968). Thus, this study allows for a systematic investigation of Wolpe's contention that assertiveness is inversely related to trait anxiety.
Subjects.

Subjects consisted of twenty-four student volunteers (15 females and 9 males) enrolled in a class in personality assessment at Eastern Illinois University. All students in the class participated in the study. One student's data could not be included in the analysis because she failed to complete the self-report measures. The sample consisted of both undergraduate ($n = 20$) and graduate ($n = 4$) students.

Role-played assertive situations.

Eight role-played situations that required assertive responding in simulated real-life encounters were used to assess assertiveness. Scenes that would elicit both positive and negative assertive expressions to familiar and unfamiliar individuals of both sexes were constructed by the author. This rationale was used since sex, familiarity and positive vs. negative expression have been found to be important situational determinants of assertive behavior (e.g. Eisler, Hersen, Miller & Blanchard, 1975).

Four of the eight scenes required the subject to express "positive" feelings such as praise or appreciation towards an interpersonal partner, while the remaining four required the subject to express "negative" feelings such as displeasure or disappointment toward the role-played partner. In half the scenes the interpersonal partner was male, while in the other half the partner was female. One
half of the scenes required the subject to respond to a person whom he was presumed to have had a good deal of interactive experience e.g., a favorite professor or well-known classmate (familiar). In the other four scenes the subject was required to interact with a person with whom it was presumed he had little interactive experience e.g., a librarian or not well-known classmate (unfamiliar).

All three situational variables thus contained two levels (i.e. positive and negative, male and female, familiar and unfamiliar) that were nested. The following are the eight scenes as narrated to subjects:

1. Male-Positive-Familiar. Narrator: "You worked hard on a difficult paper for a professor you know well and like. Two days after you handed the paper in, your professor returns it to you." He says: "You did an excellent job on this paper, and for that you received an A+.

2. Male-Positive-Unfamiliar. Narrator: "After a class discussion, in which you defended a number of arguments, though they were contrary to the professor's opinions, a student in the class who you do not know walks up to you." He says: "Wow, you really hold your own in class discussions. You must do a lot of reading."

3. Male-Negative-Familiar. Narrator: "You have a difficult test the next morning and have not yet begun to study your class notes. Another student whom you study with has also not looked them over, and his notes are usually poor. This student comes up to you in the library." He
says: "Can I borrow your notes so I can study tonight for the test? I know you probably have already gone over them."

4. Male-Negative-Unfamiliar. Narrator: "It is Friday afternoon. You are late for an important appointment and are waiting in line to cash a check at the union, when another student cuts in front of you, behind his friend." He says: "I hope you don't mind, but I'm in a big hurry."

5. Female-Positive-Familiar. Narrator: "A girl you know well usually dresses in a tattered pair of blue jeans and an old t-shirt when she comes to class. However, today she is dressed in a nice pair of slacks and an expensive blouse. You think she looks great. After class she walks up to you in the hall." She says: "So, what do you think of the improvement?"

6. Female-Positive-Unfamiliar. Narrator: "You are working on a difficult report and have reached a dead-end. You go to the reference desk at the library and ask the librarian if she knows of any reference books which might help you. She directs you to an excellent source, which allows you to complete the report on time. The next week you see her in the library." She says: "Was that reference book of any help to you last week?"

7. Female-Negative-Familiar. Narrator: "You have been planning a bike trip to the lake for the past week with some friends. You plan to leave early the next morning. That afternoon on campus, you see a girl you know well
that is in several of your classes." She says: "Can I borrow your bike tomorrow morning? I need to visit a girlfriend on the other side of town, and you don't usually use your bike in the mornings anyway."

8. Female-Negative-Unfamiliar. Narrator: "You are at the library xeroxing an article from a book. You have just enough money to finish copying the article, which you need for a class tomorrow. You are about to finish copying the last page, when a girl, who you do not know, walks up to you." She says: "Gee, I'm a little short on change to copy this article. Can I borrow a nickle from you?"

Materials.

Several self-report measures were obtained from all subjects. These included the College Self-Expression Scale (CSES), the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS), the Fear Survey Schedule - III (FSS-III) and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), both State and Trait Scales. The CSES, RAS and STAI were chosen because they have demonstrated good reliability and validity (see appendices A, B and C). The FSS-III was chosen because it includes the most frequent neurotic anxiety stimuli that have been encountered by Wolpe in patients during fifteen years of practicing behavior therapy. The schedule thus appeared to be conceptually consistent with the notion of trait anxiety. The 17 items on the survey dealing with social fears were used in the analysis.

The CSES (Galassi et al., 1974) consists of 50 items
designed to measure positive assertiveness, negative assertiveness and self-denial. Subjects respond by indicating on a 5-point scale how often they express themselves in the manner described by the item. A single measure of assertiveness is obtained.

The RAS (Rathus, 1973) consists of 30 items describing characteristics of negative and positive assertion. Subjects rate on a 5-point scale indicating the accuracy of the item in describing themselves. The RAS results in a single score.

The FSS-III (Wolpe & Lang, 1964) consists of 72 items referring to things or experiences that may cause fear or other unpleasant feelings. Items are divided into six classes: (1) animal, (2) social or interpersonal, (3) tissue damage, illness and death, and their associations, (4) noises, (5) other classical phobias and (6) miscellaneous. Subjects rate how much they are presently disturbed by an item on a 5-point scale (ranging from "not at all" to "very much"). The FSS-III results in a single score.

The STAI (Spielberger et al., 1968) - State and Trait Scales each consist of 20 statements which people have used to describe themselves. On the State Scale, subjects are to indicate how they feel at the moment by responding to each STAI item by rating themselves on a 4-point scale. On the Trait Scale, subjects are to indicate how they generally feel, again by responding on a 4-point scale. The STAI is thus comprised of separate self-report scales for
measuring two distinct anxiety concepts: state or transitory anxiety and trait or neurotic anxiety. Each STAI scale results in a single score, varying from a minimum score of 20 to a maximum score of 80. The higher the score, the more likely the individual is experiencing trait or state anxiety.

Procedure.

Twenty subjects were simultaneously administered the CSES, RAS, FSS-III and the STAI-Trait Scale in random order. The four other subjects used in the analysis completed these measures at various times prior to the presentation of role-plays. After completion of the self-report measures the eight role-play scenes were presented in random order to each subject in a furnished room containing a videotape system. Subjects were then administered the STAI-State Scale. All measures for each subject were obtained within one week of the initial 20-subject testing session. During the role-plays, all instructions were given by the experimenter. A female research assistant was used to role play all scenes involving a female interpersonal partner, and a male research assistant role played all interactions involving a male interpersonal partner.

Each subject was escorted into the videotaping room and seated across from the male and female interpersonal partners, both of whom had been trained to deliver a predetermined prompt to the subject following narration of a scene by the experimenter involving an interaction with
a male or a female. Following the subject's reply, the interpersonal partner made no further response until narration of the next scene requiring him or her to deliver a new prompt. Instructions were given to the subjects by the experimenter as follows:

"The purpose of today's procedure is to find out how you react to some everyday situations that might occur on campus. The idea is for you to respond just as if you were in that situation at the library or in the hall. I will describe various situations that you might find yourself in with a professor, a classmate or some other person such as a librarian. When each situation is described to you, try and imagine that you are really there. In order to make these situations seem more real life, Miss Jones will play the part of a woman who is in the scene. Mr. Smith will play the part of a man who is in the scene. For example, after I have described a situation, Miss Jones will say something to you. After she speaks, I want you to say what you would say if she had said this to you in the situation that was described. This is important. Some of the scenes will be such that you might feel irritated or annoyed if you were actually in that situation."

At this point the experimenter narrated a practice scene that required expression of "negative" feelings:

"You have just bought a new record and think it sounds great. You play it for a friend." She says: "That group sounds terrible."
Once it appeared that the subject understood the instructions and gave an appropriate response, e.g., listened to the narration and the prompt and responded spontaneously and realistically, the experimenter gave additional instructions for the positive scenes: "In other scenes you might feel appreciative or friendly toward the other person."

The experimenter then narrated the following practice scene:

"You have just purchased a new bike which took you a year to save up for. A friend sees you riding it on the street." He says: "Boy, that sure is a nice bike you bought with all the money you saved."

The experimenter then said, "Remember, try to express your true feelings, whatever they might be. Also, be sure to express yourself as fully as possible and to respond to whoever is talking to you." (motioning to each of the interpersonal partners). Responses to the practice scenes were not included in the analysis.

**Videotape ratings.**

All ratings of the subjects' responses were made independently by four raters who observed replays of the videotaped situations. All raters were graduate students in psychology at Eastern Illinois University and were trained by the experimenter for one week in rating the social interactive behaviors examined in the study. Additionally, all raters familiarized themselves as to the distinction between assertiveness, nonassertiveness and aggression as outlined by Lange and Jacobowski (1976) prior to the study. Ratings
of interactive behavior from videotape have been shown to be highly reliable and equivalent to rating the same behaviors from live observation (Eisler, Hersen & Agras, 1973).

Components of social interactive behavior were chosen from those rated by Eisler, Hersen, Miller, and Blanchard (1975). They were broadly categorized in terms of (a) positive content, (b) negative content and (c) overall assertiveness. They were defined as follows:

**Positive content.** (a) Praise: This consisted of verbal content in which the subject expressed approval, admiration or was complimentary toward the partner's behavior (e.g. if a subject told a fellow student she looked very good, terrific, etc. in a new outfit). Praise was scored on a dichotomous occurrence or nonoccurrence basis. (b) Appreciation: This was verbal content indicating that the subject expressed gratitude or thankfulness for the partner's behavior (e.g. if the subject thanked a fellow student or a professor for his compliment). Appreciation was scored on an occurrence or nonoccurrence basis.

**Negative content.** (a) Compliance: This was verbal content indicating that the subject did not resist the partner's position (e.g. if he or she agreed to loan a bike or allowed a person to cut in front of them in a line). Compliance was scored on an occurrence or nonoccurrence basis. (b) Request for new behavior: Responses scored in this category required more than mere noncompliance. The sub-
ject had to show evidence that he wanted the partner to change his or her behavior (e.g. ask the person who cut in front of him or her to step to the end of the line). Request for new behavior was scored on an occurrence or nonoccurrence basis.

**Overall assertiveness.** After the previous behaviors were rated, raters were asked to rate the subjects' behavior on overall assertiveness, using a 5-point scale, with 1 indicating "very unassertive" and 5 indicating "very assertive". Aggressive responses were considered "inappropriate assertion" and were given a rating of 1. Thus, the 1 to 5 continuum was also conceptualized by the raters as ranging from "inappropriate assertion" to "appropriate assertion".

Content ratings did not cross, that is, each situation was rated for either the negative or positive content it was designed to elicit, but not for both. All situations were rated and analyzed in terms of overall assertiveness. Also, in the analyses, positive assertion and negative assertion ratings (formed by collapsing across the two subcategories in each content area) were examined as well as the specific content ratings of praise, appreciation, compliance and request for new behavior.
Chapter IV

Results

Table 1 presents a summary of the correlations between self-report measures and behavioral ratings.

Among the self-report measures, the highest correlation was obtained between the CSES and the RAS ($r = .74$, $p = .001$). Both measures were also found to be negatively correlated with state anxiety as measured by the STAI ($r = -.41$ and $-.40$ for the CSES and RAS, respectively, $p < .03$). Though trait anxiety as measured by the STAI and social fear as measured by the FSS-III were not significantly related to the assertion measures, trait anxiety was found to be significantly related to state anxiety ($r = .41$, $p < .03$) as was social fear ($r = .40$, $p < .03$). Trait anxiety and social fear were also significantly related to each other ($r = .59$, $p = .001$).

Overall assertion ratings from the role-plays correlated with ratings of positive assertion ($r = .67$, $p = .001$), and ratings of negative assertion ($r = .88$, $p = .001$), though ratings of positive and negative assertion were not significantly related. Ratings of overall assertion were also correlated with the CSES ($r = .48$, $p < .01$) and the RAS ($r = .40$, $p < .03$). Ratings of positive assertion also were related to the RAS ($r = .50$, $p < .01$).

Additional correlations determined the relation of the specific content of responses (praise, appreciation, compliance and a request for new behavior - the occurrence of
which was determined by the raters) to each other and to the eight variables in table 1. Overall assertiveness ratings were positively related to praise ($r = .41, p < .03$) and negatively related to compliance ($r = -.42, p = .02$). Ratings of positive assertion were found to be significantly related to praise ($r = .50, p < .01$) and a request for new behavior ($r = .50, p < .01$). Ratings of negative assertion were negatively correlated with compliance ($r = -.67, p = .001$). Within specific content measures, praise and appreciation were negatively correlated ($r = -.38, p < .05$) and compliance and a request for new behavior were positively correlated ($r = .37, p < .05$). Of all specific content ratings, only a request for new behavior was related to one of the self-report measures. This content measure was negatively related to state anxiety as measured by the STAI ($r = -.35, p < .05$).

Interobserver reliabilities for each of the ratings made for subjects varied considerably, ranging from $r = .04$ to .96 (see table 2). Hence, the median coefficient of .78 is presented as an estimate of the reliability of the four observers for all observations. As presented in table 1, the interobserver reliability for the overall assertion rating was .70, for positive assertion ratings .60 and for negative assertion ratings .80.

Internal consistency was examined for each of the self-report measures. Alphas ranged from .82 on the STAI - Trait Scale to .91 on the STAI - State Scale. The 17 items
dealing with social fears on Wolpe's FSS-III produced an alpha of .87.
### Table 1

Correlations Between Self-Report Measures and Behavioral Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall assertion rating&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.70&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Positive assertion rating&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.67&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Negative assertion rating&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.88&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. College Self-Expression Scale</td>
<td>.48&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.47&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rathus Assertiveness Schedule</td>
<td>.40&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.50&lt;sup&gt;**&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.74&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-State Scale</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.41&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.40&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-Trait Scale</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.41&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fear Survey Schedule-III Social Fear Items</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.40&lt;sup&gt;*&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.59&lt;sup&gt;***&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \( n = 24 \)

a General assertiveness ratings summed over appropriate situations.

b Entries on the median diagonal are reliability coefficients; median intra-class correlations for the behavior ratings and coefficient alpha reliabilities for the self-report inventories.

* \( p < .05 \)
** \( p < .01 \)
*** \( p < .001 \)
Table 2
Interobserver Reliabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating #</th>
<th>$R_1^a$</th>
<th>$R_4^b$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$a$ $R_1 = $ Spearman-Brown estimate of reliability for a single observer

$b$ $R_4 = $ intra-class correlation for the four observers

c reliability could not be estimated because of zero variances in the ratings
Chapter V
Discussion

An examination of the correlations obtained in this study would lead one to refute the hypothesis presented by Wolpe (1958, 1973) and Wolpe and Lazarus (1966) that assertiveness is inversely related to trait anxiety. Among the self-report measures, assertiveness as measured by the CSES and the RAS was correlated inversely with state anxiety as measured by the STAI. Further, the STAI-Trait Scale and the 17 social fear items on the FSS-III, self-report inventories which may be regarded as measuring trait anxiety, were related significantly to each other but not to either of the assertion measures. Thus, it would appear that assertion is inversely related to state anxiety, a relationship which is generally consistent with the hypothesis of the situational specificity of assertive behaviors postulated by Green, Burkhart, and Harrison (1979) and Eisler, Hersen, Miller, and Blanchard (1975).

In addition to the discriminant validity demonstrated by the relation of assertiveness to state and trait anxiety and the 17 social fear items on the FSS-III, convergent validity is indicated not only for the construct of trait anxiety (as indicated by the high correlation between the FSS-III social fear items and the STAI-Trait Scale) but also for the construct of assertiveness. The two measures of assertiveness, the CSES and the RAS, were found to be significantly related ($r = .74$). Previous correlations between
these measures appearing in the literature have not exceed-
ed the correlation of .68 obtained by Green, Burkhart, and
Harrison (1979).

There was also a significant correlation between the
State and Trait Scales of the STAI. Though these two
scales measure distinct anxiety concepts, a significant
correlation ($r = .41$) was obtained between them. Spiel-
berger et al. (1970) reported that larger correlations are
obtained between the scales under conditions which pose
some threat to self-esteem or under circumstances in which
personal adequacy is evaluated than when measures are ob-
tained in situations characterized by physical dangers.
Thus, the procedure in the present study, most notably in-
structions given to students prior to the role-plays, may
have inflated the correlation between the two scales. How-
ever, it is also possible that a small amount of common
variance exists between the two scales. These explanations
might also account for the correlation observed between the
STAI-State Scale and the FSS-III social fear items.

It would appear that the positive and negative compo-
nents involved in assertive behavior (e.g. Lange & Jacubow-
ski, 1976) were discriminated by the raters, as ratings of
overall assertiveness were correlated with ratings of pos-
itive assertion and negative assertion, though these rat-
ings were not significantly related to each other. Ratings
of overall assertion correlated with both the CSES and the
RAS, thus providing additional concurrent validity for
these measures. The RAS was also related to ratings of positive assertion. Thus the criticism of Jacubowski and Lacks (1975) that items in the RAS seem to focus on aggressive behavior would appear to be unfounded from the results obtained in the present study.

Though the STAI-State Scale was not significantly related to ratings of overall assertion, there was a slight trend in a direction consistent with the aforementioned pattern ($r = -.22, p < .16$). Further, a specific content rating, a request for new behavior, was inversely related to the STAI-State Scale. Thus, it may be postulated that there is also an inverse relation between state anxiety and assertion as determined through behavioral role-plays.

Other correlations involving the specific content ratings are more difficult to interpret. It would appear the raters associated the appearance of praise and the absence of compliance with higher ratings of overall assertion. Ratings of positive assertion were also related to praise and a request for new behavior. This relation is understandable in that a number of students who requested new behavior in the situations designed to elicit negative content readily praised the interpersonal partner in the scenes designed to elicit positive content. Within the specific content ratings, praise and appreciation were negatively correlated. Generally, this indicates that subjects tended to use one of these responses, but not the other in situations designed to elicit positive content. Also, within
specific content ratings, compliance and a request for new behavior were positively correlated. This may be explained by a number of responses in which the subject initially complied with the interpersonal partner's request but then also requested new behavior (e.g. "Yes, you can borrow my bike, but next time ask me a few days ahead of time.")

Thus, the results of this study tend to support the contention that assertion is inversely related to state anxiety due to its situationally specific nature. This inverse relation tends to occur whether assertion is measured behaviorally by assessing role-play responses or whether the relation is examined within methods through the use of self-reports. Wolpe's (1958, 1973) and Wolpe and Lazarus's (1966) contention that assertion is inversely related to trait anxiety thus appears improbable given the results of this investigation. Further research is needed in order to determine the specific content to be rated in behavioral role-plays eliciting assertive responses.
References


Braun, P. R., & Reynolds, D. J. A factor analysis of a 100-item fear survey inventory. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 1969, 7*, 399-402.


Appendix A

Reliability and Validity of the CSES

Galassi, De Lo, Galassi, and Bastien (1974) found the test-retest reliability for two samples of students to be .89 and .90 when the CSES was re-administered over a two week period. Construct validity was established in their study by correlating the CSES with the 24 scales of the Adjective Check List (ACL) (Gough & Heilbrun, 1965). The CSES correlates positively and significantly with the following ACL Scales: Number checked, Defensiveness, Favorable, Self-Confidence, Achievement, Dominance, Intraception, Heterosexuality, Exhibition, Autonomy and Change. Gough and Heilbrun's (1965) definitions of these scales suggest characteristics which typify assertiveness. Concurrent validity was established by the authors of the scale by correlating the CSES scores of 121 student teachers with ratings of their assertiveness made by immediate supervisors. Each student was rated on a 5-point CSES Behavioral Rating Form for Observers. The correlation between supervisor and self-ratings on assertiveness was significant, though somewhat low.

In a study by Galassi and Galassi (1974) the CSES and the eight aggression-hostility scales of the Buss-Durkee Inventory (Buss, 1961) were shown to have a small amount of shared variances when administered to 100 female and 71 male college students.
Appendix B

Reliability and Validity of the RAS

Rathus (1973) established the test-retest reliability of the RAS by administering the instrument to 68 undergraduate college men and women ranging in age from 17 to 27, and then retesting them after 8 weeks had passed. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient yielded an $r$ of .7782 ($p < .01$) between respondents' pre- and post-test scores, indicating moderate to high stability of test scores over a two-month period. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was also run between total odd and total even item scores for 67 people from a non-college population. An $r$ of .7723 ($p < .01$) was obtained, suggesting that the qualities measured by the instrument possess moderate to high homogeneity.

Concurrent validity for the RAS has been established with three different measures: (1) judgements of external raters of the assertiveness of respondents defined on the Rathus scale on semantic differential scales which have been found to define a general assertiveness (Rathus, 1973), (2) therapists' ratings of psychiatric patients' assertiveness to the same semantic differential scales (Rathus & Nevid, 1977) and (3) independent ratings of the audiotaped responses of college females to five assertion situations (Rathus, 1973).

Hann and Flowers (1978) demonstrated that scores of external raters, unaware of their subjects' self-evaluations,
correlated significantly with their subjects' assertion scores as measured by the RAS.
Appendix C
Reliability and Validity of the
STAI-State and Trait Scales

Spielberger et al. (1970) reports test-retest correlations for the STAI-Trait Scale for college undergraduates ranging from .73 to .86 while those for the State Scale were generally low, ranging from .16 to .54, with a median $r$ of .32. The low $r$'s for the State Scale were anticipated because a valid measure of state anxiety should reflect the influence of unique situational factors existing at the time of testing. Internal consistency was also examined using a modification of formula $K$-$R$ 20. Alpha reliabilities for the Trait Scale were .90 and .89 for male and female undergraduates, respectively. For the State Scale, alpha reliabilities were .89 for both male and female undergraduates.

Evidence of the concurrent validity of the STAI-Trait Scale was also provided by the authors. Correlations between the Trait Scale and the Taylor (1953) Manifest Anxiety Scale and the IPAT Anxiety Scale (Cattell & Scheier, 1963) were moderately high for male and female college students.

Evidence bearing on the construct validity of the State Scale was also provided. A sample of 977 undergraduate college students were first administered the State Scale with the standard instructions. They were then asked to respond according to how they believed they would feel "just prior to the final examination in an important course." The
mean score on the STAI-State Scale was considerably higher in the "exam" condition than in the normal condition for both males and females.