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Investigating the relationship between assertiveness and personality characteristics

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INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSERTIVENESS AND
PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

by

LAURA K. KIRST

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term 2011

Thesis Chair: Dr. Erin Q. Murdoch

ABSTRACT

Assertiveness is a learned fundamental interpersonal communication skill that helps individuals to meet the social demands of society. Although various personality factors associated with assertiveness have previously been studied, no recently published studies were identified in the review of assertiveness literature. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between assertiveness and the five factors of personality (extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness), self-esteem, social anxiety, and shyness to update past research findings. Participants completed the College Self-Expression Scale, the IPIP representation of the NEO PI-R, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale, and the Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale. It was hypothesized that assertiveness would correlate positively with extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and self-esteem. Assertiveness was further hypothesized to correlate negatively with neuroticism, social anxiety, and shyness. Results revealed direct relationships between assertiveness and self-esteem, extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, as well as inverse relationships to neuroticism, shyness, and fear of disapproval. No significant relationship was found between assertiveness and agreeableness. This study aimed to advance the understanding of the complex personality structure of low-assertive individuals.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to everyone struggling with confident self-expression.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my committee members, Dr. Murdoch, Dr. Storm and Professor Sublette for their guidance and support throughout the preparation of this thesis. A special thank you to my committee chair, Dr. Murdoch, for her encouragement, patience, and advice. You have been a wonderful mentor and role model throughout my education and research process. Without your direction, I could not have reached this milestone.

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INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness has received extensive attention in research literature and has become a desirable goal of therapy due to its link to healthy personality adjustment in Western cultures (Hamid, 1994). Although research literature to date proposes numerous definitions, assertiveness generally has been conceptualized as standing up for one's personal rights and communicating thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a sincere, straightforward, and appropriate manner without violating others' rights (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976). Alberti and Emmons (1970) added that assertive individuals are capable of acting in their own best interest without experiencing excessive anxiety or disregarding the rights of others. Conversely, non-assertiveness is said to be characterized by communicating one's viewpoints and feelings in such an over-apologetic, timid, and self-deprecating fashion, that it leads others to easily ignore or dismiss them (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976). Being assertive therefore represents a balance between being aggressive and being submissive, which in turn encourages self-respect, respect for others, and cooperation.

In an effort to provide a more clear definition of the complex concept of assertiveness, researchers have also identified affective and cognitive components. At the affective level, the expression of assertive responses can be inhibited by anxiety. Wolpe (1968) argued that shy individuals often experience inhibitory anxiety that prevents them from responding assertively. Cognitively, lack of assertiveness can be influenced by self-depreciation (Rich & Schroeder, 1976). Individuals with a low sense of worth may experience difficulty in standing up for themselves because they view others' thoughts, feelings, and rights as more important than their own. Vagos and Pereira (2010) stated that assertive and non-assertive responses are partially influenced by a cognitive filter that controls how an individual interprets social cues. These

cognitive interpretations of social situations are guided by core beliefs, which are developed from childhood experiences with attachment figures and influence how we view our self, others, and the relationships between them. Individuals with positive core beliefs about the self (e.g., “*I possess as many skills as most people*”), others (e.g., “*I may go against the will of others, without having them reject or mistreat me for it*”), and relationships (e.g., “*In my relationships with others I don't let them dominate me and also don't try to dominate them*”) may find it easier to assert themselves than individuals with negative core beliefs.

Galassi, DeLo, Galassi, and Bastien (1974) emphasized the multidimensional nature of assertiveness by defining it in terms of three response classes, which include positive assertiveness, negative assertiveness, and self-denial. Positive assertiveness is said to consist of the expression of positive feelings such as agreement, affection, and admiration. Negative assertiveness, on the other hand, is defined as the expression of negative feelings such as anger, annoyance, and disagreement. Self-denial includes excessive interpersonal anxiety, unnecessary apologizing, and exaggerated worry about the feelings of others. These separate response classes demonstrate that assertive behavior may be intended to achieve a variety of goals and that the content of an assertive response may be positive or negative. For the purpose of the current study, the construct of assertiveness is defined as follows: the ability to openly, confidently, and sincerely express positive or negative emotions, opinions, and needs in interpersonal contexts, while respecting the personal boundaries of others even when such expression may result in disapproval or the possibility of conflict.

Since its early introduction in the 1970s, assertiveness training continues to be a popular intervention technique offered at university counseling centers, psychology practices, and in

various other mental health environments across the US. The quantity of current self-help literature such as *Develop your assertiveness: change your behavior; be more confident; get what you want* (Bishop, 2010) further demonstrates modern-day recognition of assertiveness as a beneficial social skill. Assertive behavior is commonly associated with the ability to initiate and maintain rewarding interpersonal relationships in the business world and personal life. According to Lange and Jakubowski (1976), people high in assertiveness are more self-actualized than people low in assertiveness because assertive behavior leads to one's needs being respected and fulfilled. Galassi et al. (1974) suggested that assertive people are communicative, free-spirited, secure, self-assured, and able to influence and guide others.

Various studies employing diverse measures have supported the hypothesis of differences in personality characteristics between assertive and non-assertive individuals. For instance, Ramanaiah, Heerboth, and Jinkerson (1985) found that non-assertive students are more approval seeking, defensive, submissive, and self-projecting, as well as less expressive, adaptable, socially sensitive, and rational, than are assertive students. A study by Bouchard, Lalonde and Gagnon (1988) explored correlations between assertiveness and personality factors in undergraduate students, which revealed a significant positive correlation between overall assertiveness and extraversion. Furthermore, the study revealed that high scores on the positive assertion response class were related to high scores on the agreeableness and culture (artistically refined, polished, and imaginative) personality factors. Refusal behavior was found to be negatively correlated to agreeableness. Additionally, the results showed a positive relationship between negative assertion and conscientiousness. Surprisingly, no significant relationship was found between assertiveness and emotional stability (Bouchard et al., 1988).

A subsequent study by Ramaniah and Deniston (1993) investigated the differences in five major personality factors in assertive and nonassertive students. In this particular study, the NEO Personality Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1985) and the College Self-expression Scale (Galassi et al., 1974) were administered to psychology undergraduate students. It was found that assertive students scored significantly lower on the neuroticism scales and higher on the extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness scales than nonassertive students. Unlike in Bouchard et al.'s study, no significant relationship was found between assertiveness and agreeableness (Ramaniah & Deniston, 1993).

Based on extant findings, as well as forthcoming theoretical rationale, it was hypothesized for the current study that assertiveness would be directly related to extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, as well as inversely related to neuroticism. Extraverted individuals are said to be more talkative and comfortable around people than are introverted individuals. It was therefore expected that students who are generally more extraverted are also more expressive (e.g., initiating a conversation with an attractive member of the opposite sex) in social situations. Additionally, as assertiveness represents one of the six facets of the NEO-PI-R Extraversion domain, it seems plausible to expect a positive correlation between assertiveness and extraversion. Individuals high in openness to experience tend to have a wide range of interests and welcome new experiences. Consequently, it was expected that those high in this domain would generally behave in an assertive manner (e.g., disagreeing with others, freely volunteering one's viewpoints in class discussions) in order to broaden their horizons. Conscientious individuals are associated with being achievement driven and having high self-efficacy. Thus, it was expected that there would be a direct relationship between

conscientiousness and level of assertiveness (e.g., refusing a request in order to carry out plans). The domain of agreeableness is linked to being cooperative. It was therefore anticipated that agreeableness would correlate positively with assertiveness (e.g., expressing appreciation to others). Neurotic individuals have a tendency to experience feelings of depression and are vulnerable to stress. Individuals who fail to speak up for themselves may easily be ignored or disrespected by others, which may lead to depression and a higher susceptibility to stress. An inverse relationship between assertiveness and neuroticism was thus predicted (Galassi et al. 1974; Goldberg, 1999).

Apart from differences in the major personality domains, several studies have found variations between assertive and non-assertive individuals in other affective and cognitive-personality variables. Galassi et al.'s (1974) analysis of the construct validity of their College Self-Expression Scale indicated that non-assertive individuals tend to experience excessive interpersonal anxiety, feelings of inferiority, and engage in negative self-evaluation. A study by Lefevre and West (1981) found a significant positive correlation between assertiveness and level of self-esteem in undergraduate students. Rosenberg (1989) defines self-esteem as an individual's overall assessment of their worth, which can be negative or positive. Alberti and Emmons (1970) have noted that assertive individuals are likely to have greater success in social situations than non-assertive individuals and as a result feel more confident about themselves. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem may be inhibited in the expression of their opinions, rights, wishes and attitudes. Accordingly, it was hypothesized for the current study that level of assertiveness would correlate positively with self-esteem.

Lefevre and West (1981) also found an inverse relationship between assertiveness and fear of disapproval. Watson and Friend (1969) defined fear of negative evaluation as one cause of social anxiety, which involves apprehension about being negatively evaluated by others in any social context that calls for judgment. Individuals with high levels of fear of disapproval expect to be negatively evaluated by others and therefore tend to avoid evaluative situations. The fact that assertive students reported higher self-esteem and lower fear of disapproval than non-assertive students, lends further support to the view that non-assertive response patterns are influenced by interplay of certain covert cognitions and emotions.

The proposition that failure to assert oneself is connected to certain affective personality variables, such as social anxiety, was further supported by Orenstein, Orenstein, and Carr (1975). Their correlational study showed that assertiveness is inversely related to interpersonal anxiety. Individuals with high social anxiety may fail to assert themselves in social contexts due to their fear of doing or saying the wrong thing. Accordingly, it was hypothesized for the current study that students' level of assertiveness would correlate negatively with their levels of social anxiety or more specifically, fear of disapproval.

One other notable personality variable, whose direct relationship with assertiveness has been rarely studied but for which assertiveness training is frequently recommended, is shyness. Past research has mostly studied the techniques and effectiveness of assertiveness training for shy individuals as assertiveness was already assumed to be negatively correlated to shyness (e.g., Barrow & Hayashi, 1980; Garcia & Lubetkin, 1986). Cheek and Buss (1983) define shyness as an individual's reaction of inhibition and discomfort to being in the presence of acquaintances or strangers. According to Garcia and Lubetkin (1986), shyness can have distressing consequences

including the inability to get to know new people and speaking up for one's rights. Because shy people feel tense in the presence of others, it seems plausible to assume that they generally act less assertively than people who are low in shyness. Therefore, it was hypothesized in the current study, that assertiveness would be inversely related to shyness.

Although differences in personality characteristics of assertive and non-assertive individuals have been previously investigated by several studies, these studies were not conducted recently (e.g. Bouchard et al, 1988; Lefevre & West, 1981; Orenstein et al., 1975; Ramanaiah & Deniston, 1993). Consequently, one goal of the present study was to investigate the relationship between assertiveness, the five personality dimensions, self-esteem, and social anxiety, to determine whether previous results (e.g., Lefevre & West, 1981; Ramanaiah & Deniston, 1993) still hold true for present day American university students. A further goal of the present research was to examine the common assumption of an inverse relationship between assertiveness and shyness to determine if it can be empirically supported. Lastly, this study explored whether assertiveness is influenced by demographic factors such as gender and ethnicity. Discovering such correlations will ideally lead psychologists and other practitioners, as well as the general public, towards a better understanding of individuals with persistent trouble in social situations. Moreover, the findings of the current study may help to evaluate the question of whether assertiveness training techniques based on the model, which emerged more than 30 years ago are still effective with today's student population. The results of this study may allow for the development of new and enhanced diagnostic tools and treatment models used in therapy or workshops with non-assertive individuals.

METHOD

Participants

The sample consisted of 84 undergraduate students (65 females, 17 males, and 2 no gender reported) enrolled at the University of Central Florida. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 61 years old ($M = 23.07$, $SD = 6.39$). Of the 84 participants, 42 were White, 5 were Asian, 13 were African American, 14 were Latino, 8 indicated that they were of other ethnical background, and 2 did not report their ethnic identity. Students were recruited through SONA systems, an online research participation system for psychology students. Because there was no specific demographic of participants targeted, any undergraduate student who was 18 years of age or older was permitted to participate in the study. Participants were not monetarily compensated but received extra credit for their participation.

Design

The study employed a correlational design with online-administered questionnaires. Analyses were performed for the whole sample. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient determined the strength and direction of the relationship between scores on the assertiveness measure and the five personality dimensions, self-esteem, and social anxiety, as well as shyness measures. The coefficient of determination assessed the proportion of variance in assertiveness determined by the other personality variables. Independent samples t-tests and one-way analyses of variance tested for possible effects of demographic variables on assertiveness.

Measures

The College Self-Expression Scale. The College Self-expression Scale (CSES; Galassi et al., 1974) is a 50-item self-report measure that assesses three dimensions of assertiveness (positive, negative, and self-denial) in college students. Positive assertions include expressions of positive feelings such as approval, love, agreement, admiration, and affection. Negative assertiveness consists of expressing negative feelings including irritation, disagreement, justified anger, and discontent. Self-denial consists of exaggerated concern for the feelings of others, excessive apologizing, and undue interpersonal anxiety. Items measure respondents' level of assertiveness in a variety of interpersonal contexts and are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*almost always*) to 4 (*never or rarely*). Respondents indicate how they generally express themselves towards different individuals including members of the opposite sex, authority figures, family members, and strangers. The scale contains 21 positively phrased items and 29 negatively phrased items. Items are scored in the direction of assertiveness, thus high total scores indicate a generalized assertive response pattern and low total scores indicate a generalized non-assertive response pattern. Strong construct validity and concurrent validity for the scale have been reported. The test-retest reliability coefficients for the entire measure based on a 2-week interval with 2 samples ranged from 0.89 to 0.90 (Galassi et al., 1974).

The 50-item IPIP (International Personality Item Pool) representation of Costa and McCrae's (1992) revised NEO Personality Inventory (Goldberg, 1999). This 50-item self-report questionnaire was designed to assess constructs similar to the "Big Five" personality factors of the NEO PI-R, which include Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience,

Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. The questionnaire is rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The domain of Neuroticism indicates whether the respondent is prone to be emotionally stable or emotionally distressed. The domain of Extraversion measures the extent to which respondent are full of energy and thrill-seeking or sober and reserved. The domain of Openness to Experience illustrates whether the respondent is traditional and pragmatic or inquisitive and liberal. The domain of Agreeableness assesses whether the respondent is sympathetic and trusting or competitive and conceited. The domain of Conscientiousness determines whether the respondent tends to be more organized and meticulous or easy-going and careless (Costa & McCrae, 2008). Cronbach's alphas are acceptable for Neuroticism (.86), Extraversion (.86), Openness (.82), Agreeableness (.77), and Conscientiousness (.81) (Goldberg, 1999).

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1989) is a 10-item self-report measure that uses a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*) to assess one's self-esteem. Total scores range from 0 to 30, with 30 representing the maximum score possible. High scores indicate high self-esteem, whereas low scores indicate low self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha for various samples range between .77-.88 and test-retest correlations between .82-.88 (Rosenberg, 1989).

The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNES-B; Leary, 1983) is a 12-item self report measure that uses a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all characteristic of me*) to 5 (*extremely characteristic of me*) to assess people's fear of being evaluated unfavorably. The scale correlates highly ($r = .96$) with the original Fear

of Negative Evaluation Scale (Watson & Friend, 1969). Cronbach's alpha for various undergraduate samples ranged between .90-.91 and the 4-week test-retest reliability was 0.75 (Leary, 1983; Miller, 1995).

The Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale. The Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale (RCBS; Cheek, 1983) is a 13-item unifactorial self-report measure that uses a 5 point scale of 1 (*very uncharacteristic or untrue, strongly disagree*) to 5 (*very characteristic or true, strongly agree*) to assess shyness. Cronbach's alpha for the entire measure is .90 and the 45-day retest reliability was .88 (Cheek, 1983).

Procedure

Students logged onto the SONA systems research participation website, where they clicked on a link that directed them to [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com), the host website for the survey of this study. Participants were able to complete the survey from their homes as all instructions and questionnaires were presented online. Prior to filling out the questionnaires, participants were instructed to read and agree to an informed consent section, which explained the purpose and procedure of the study (Appendix B). Participants then completed the 5 self-report measures as well as a section about their demographic information (Appendix H). This section included questions about gender, age, racial/ethnic identity, sexual orientation, relationship status, academic major, political affiliation, educational level, academic major, cumulative GPA, mode of instruction, current household income, employment status, number of siblings, and student type (domestic or international). Upon completion of the questionnaires, participants read a

debriefing form (Appendix I). The collected data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software to assess personality correlates of assertiveness.

RESULTS

Pearson correlational analyses were performed on the data to determine the relationship between assertiveness and the five factors of personality (extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and agreeableness), self-esteem, social anxiety, and shyness. The following hypotheses were tested: 1) participants' level of assertiveness would be directly related to their scores on the extraversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeable dimensions of personality; 2) participants' level of assertiveness would be inversely related to their scores on the neuroticism dimension; 3) participants' level of assertiveness would be positively related to their self-esteem; 4) participants' level of assertiveness would relate negatively to their fear of disapproval; and 5) participants' level of assertiveness would be negatively related to their degree of shyness.

Results showed significant correlations between scores on the assertiveness measure and scores on the extraversion, $r(81) = .49$, $r^2 = .24$, $p < .001$, openness to experience, $r(81) = .28$, $r^2 = .08$, $p = .01$, conscientiousness, $r(81) = .28$, $r^2 = .08$, $p = .01$, and neuroticism, $r(81) = -.25$, $r^2 = .06$, $p = .02$ dimensions. These results were all consistent with the first two hypotheses except for the agreeableness dimension. Unlike hypothesized, there was no direct relationship between assertiveness and agreeableness, $r(81) = -.14$, $r^2 = .02$, $p = .22$. The third hypothesis was confirmed by a significant positive correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem, $r(81) = .42$, $r^2 = .18$, $p < .001$. Consistent with the fourth hypothesis, assertiveness related inversely to

fear of disapproval, $r(81) = -.29, r^2 = .08, p = .01$. The hypothesized negative correlation between assertiveness and shyness was supported as high scores on the assertiveness measure were related to low scores on the shyness measure, $r(81) = -.63, r^2 = .39, p < .001$.

Finally, analyses were run to assess possible demographic effects (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and employment status) on assertiveness. The results indicated no significant relationships between assertiveness and any of the demographic variables ($ps > .05$).

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to explore whether past findings of relationships between assertiveness and the five factors of personality, social anxiety, and self-esteem (Bouchard et al., 1988; Lefevre & West, 1981; Ramanaiah et al., 1993) can be replicated with current university students. As results indicate, the personality profiles of current students with respect to levels of assertiveness are comparable to that of students 18 years ago.

Findings of the past and present studies suggest that students with higher levels of assertiveness are significantly more extraverted, conscientious, and open to experience but less neurotic than students with lower levels of assertiveness. A high degree of assertiveness seems to go hand in hand with a high degree of extraversion as extroverts tend to seek out stimulation from the external environment and thus do not hesitate to assert their point of view. In contrast, people that are less extraverted tend to prefer less social stimulation and therefore may try to avoid over-stimulation caused by disagreements and conflict. The direct relationship between assertiveness and conscientiousness may be explained by the role assertive behavior plays in the achievement of goals. Behaving assertively might be one strategy these individuals employ to live up to the high standards they set for themselves and others. A possible rationale for why those who are more assertive are also more open to experience is that the more one experiences the more welcoming one becomes of unfamiliar experiences. Unlike a passive behavioral style, an assertive behavioral style allows one to mature by being in touch with one's feelings and needs. This maturity may in turn encourage one to seek out and appreciate new and different kinds of experiences. Given that assertiveness represents not only a communication skill, but also a way of constructively coping with stressful interpersonal situations, it makes sense that assertiveness

is inversely related to neuroticism. The ability to confront interpersonal conflicts directly and effectively may act as a mediator against neurotic tendencies such as experiencing frequent mood swings and fearing for the worst.

The results further clarified previous contradictory findings (Bouchard et al., 1988; Ramanaiah et al., 1993) between assertiveness and agreeableness. More precisely, results of the present study support Ramanaiah et al.'s (1993) findings that students' level of assertiveness is not significantly related to the personality dimension of agreeableness. The inconsistencies in the two studies' findings may have resulted from the fact that Lalonde et al.'s study (1988) assessed correlations between separate response classes of assertive behavior (expression of positive feelings, expression of negative feelings, refusal behavior) and agreeableness whereas Ramanaiah et al. (1993) assessed correlations between overall assertiveness and agreeableness, which is similar to the current study. Perhaps agreeableness is only related to certain subcategories of assertive/non-assertive behavioral patterns such as questioning peoples' statements or avoiding confrontations and not others.

Findings of Lefevre and West (1981), which suggested that low-assertive students have lower self-esteem and fear of disapproval than high-assertive students were consistent with findings of the present study. The neurotic personality trait common in persons who fail to assert themselves might lend further support to the validity of the finding that assertiveness is directly related to self-esteem and inversely related to social anxiety. Given that self-consciousness and anxiety comprise two of the five-factor models' facets of the neuroticism domain, it is not surprising that besides high neuroticism, low assertion is also associated with low self-esteem and high social anxiety. Due to their tendency to experience more negative emotions and to be

more susceptible to environmental stress, neurotic persons also experience more social anxiety, which may hinder them from eliciting assertive responses. The restricted ability to speak one's mind around others may lead to a lack of positive interpersonal relationships and in turn further contribute to an already negative attitude towards oneself.

The fact that the current study was able to find similar relationships between assertiveness and self-esteem and social anxiety, contributes to the generalizability of the theory that assertiveness is a multidimensional characteristic that encompasses affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. As a result, one implication for practitioners providing assertiveness training is to identify the affective and cognitive variables that may restrict or completely block a persons' ability to act assertively. Treatment plans may be optimized by initially focusing on modifying the affective and cognitive forces that may play a role in non-assertive behavior before attempting to improve behavioral components. For instance, somebody with very high levels of fear of disapproval and low levels of self-esteem may have to initially work on overcoming their anxiety and increasing their self-acceptance up to a certain level, before they can successfully apply the newly learned assertive skills in everyday interactions.

One variable that was incorporated into this study that had not been previously explored by Lefevre and West (1981) was shyness. Previous research that clearly relates assertiveness to shyness is sparse and thus called for validation of the common assumption that assertiveness is inversely related to shyness. Findings were able to empirically support the view that shyness is associated with failure to assert oneself in interpersonal contexts. Perhaps shy people try to compensate for their social inhibition and discomfort by pleasing others in the hopes of being viewed as likable and competent. A logical extension of this argument is that people high in

shyness may especially struggle with negative assertions and self-denial as they might tend to express exaggerated concern for the feelings of others, fail to communicate feelings of anger, and are not able to refuse unreasonable requests. An implication for future studies is to assess relationships between shyness and separate response classes to determine what types of assertive behavior patterns are specifically linked to shyness. Confirming the hypothesis that shy individuals may only struggle to assert themselves in some interpersonal situations and not others, may help to maximize the chances of achieving a positive behavioral outcome through assertiveness training with this type of population.

Study Limitations and Future Research

In retrospect, this study had several limitations including restricted information about the relationships between the studied variables and generalizability. The correlations between assertiveness and the personality variables that were found in this study do not allow direct inferences about cause and effect as other non-measured variables might play a role.

Additionally, the small convenience sample size ($n = 84$) restricts generalizability, as students from one university are not representative of the majority of the increasingly diverse US student population. Because the sample of the current study consisted of mostly young white females, considerations for future research would be to collect data of as many US university students as possible to include a wider range of ages and ethnicities. One other implication for future research is to explore other personality variables that may relate to assertiveness to extend our knowledge of the personality of individuals who experience trouble with self-assertion.

Researchers may also investigate what, if any, changes in assertiveness might have occurred with

regards to gender over the last two decades. Specifically, exploring the question whether modern-day female students have generally increased in assertive tendencies when compared to female students of the past could lead researchers towards a more comprehensive understanding of how assertiveness may have changed across student generations.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to advance the understanding of individuals who fail to assert themselves in social situations. More precisely, the consistency in the findings of personality characteristics associated with non-assertive behavior can aid practitioners in developing effective treatment plans and educate the general public in the recognition of non-assertive tendencies. Increased awareness on this subject will hopefully encourage individuals who are experiencing persistent difficulties in interpersonal contexts to seek professional help or attend workshops to enhance their assertiveness skills.

APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

IRB Approval Letter



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Erin Q Murdoch and Laura K Kirst

Date: May 27, 2011

Dear Researcher:

On 5/27/2011, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: UCF Initial Review Submission Form
Project Title: Investigating the relationship between personality traits and assertiveness in college students
Investigator: Erin Q Murdoch
IRB Number: SBE-11-07687
Funding Agency: None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Kendra Dimond Campbell, MA, JD, UCF IRB Interim Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 05/27/2011 10:45:59 AM EDT

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice Turchin".

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Form



Title of Project: Assertiveness and Personality Traits

Principal Investigator: Erin Q. Murdoch, Ph. D.

Other Investigators: Laura Kirst

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you. There is no penalty for not participating. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you are a college student. You will be asked to complete an online survey that consists of several questionnaires pertaining to your personality. After completing the questionnaires, you will also be asked to provide some demographic information such as your gender, academic major and relationship status. It is estimated that this survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. You may take as long as you need to respond to the questions as there is no time limit. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. You will not lose any benefits if you skip questions or tasks. Your participation is completely anonymous. Your name is not connected to any of the information you will provide.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Study contact for questions about the study or to report a problem: If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, contact Dr. Erin Murdoch at (321) 433-7934 or by email at emurdoch@mail.ucf.edu.

IRB contact about your rights in the study or to report a complaint: Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB.

For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

Please respond to the following questions before proceeding with the survey.

- I have read and understood the statements above.
- I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate in this study.

APPENDIX C: COLLEGE SELF-EXPRESSION SCALE

College Self-Expression Scale

The following inventory is designed to provide information about the way in which you express yourself. Please answer the questions by checking the appropriate box. Your answer should reflect how you generally express yourself in the situation.

1. Do you ignore it when someone pushes in front of you in line?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

2. When you decide that you no longer wish to date someone, do you have marked difficulty telling the person of your decision?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

3. Would you exchange a purchase you discover to be faulty?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

4. If you decide to change your major to a field which your parents will not approve, would you have difficulty telling them?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

5. Are you inclined to be over-apologetic?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

6. If you were studying and if your roommate were making too much noise, would you ask him to stop?

- Almost always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

7. Is it difficult for you to compliment and praise others?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

8. If you are angry at your parents, can you tell them?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

9. Do you insist that your roommate does his fair share of cleaning?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

10. If you find yourself becoming fond of someone you are dating, would you have difficulty expressing these feelings to that person?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

11. If a friend who has borrowed \$5.00 from you seems to have forgotten about it, would you remind this person?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

12. Are you overly careful to avoid hurting other people's feelings?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

13. If you have a close friend whom your parents dislike and constantly criticize, would you inform your parents that you disagree with them and tell them of your friend's assets?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

14. Do you find it difficult to ask a friend to do a favor for you?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

15. If food which is not to your satisfaction is served in a restaurant, would you complain about it to the waiter?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

16. If your roommate without your permission eats food that he/she knows you have been saving, can you express your displeasure to him/her?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

17. If a salesman has gone to considerable trouble to show you some merchandise which is not quite suitable, do you have difficulty in saying no?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

18. Do you keep your opinions to yourself?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

19. If friends visit when you want to study, do you ask them to return at a more convenient time?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

20. Are you able to express love and affection to people for whom you care?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

21. If you were in a small seminar and the professor made a statement that you considered untrue, would you question it?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

22. If a person of the opposite sex whom you have been wanting to meet smiles or directs attention to you at a party, would you take the initiative in beginning a conversation?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

23. If someone you respect expresses opinions with which you strongly disagree, would you venture to state your own point of view?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

24. Do you go out of your way to avoid trouble with other people?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

25. If a friend is wearing a new outfit which you like, do you tell that person so?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

26. If after leaving a store you realize that you have been "short-changed", do you go back and request the correct amount?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

27. If a friend makes what you consider to be an unreasonable request, are you able to refuse?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

28. If a close and respected relative were annoying you, would you hide your feelings rather than express your annoyance?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

29. If your parents want you to come home for a weekend but you have made important plans, would you tell them of your preference?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

30. Do you express anger or annoyance toward the opposite sex when it is justified?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

31. If a friend does an errand for you, do you tell that person how much you appreciate it?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

32. When a person is blatantly unfair, do you fail to say something about it to him/her?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

33. Do you avoid social contacts for fear of doing or saying the wrong thing?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

34. If a friend betrays your confidence, would you hesitate to express annoyance to that person?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

35. When a clerk in a store waits on someone who has come in after you, do you call his attention to the matter?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

36. If you are particularly happy about someone's good fortune, can you express this to that person?

- Almost
Always or always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

37. Would you be hesitant about asking a good friend to lend you a few dollars?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

38. If a person teases you to the point that it is no longer fun, do you have difficulty expressing your displeasure?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

39. If you arrive late for a meeting, would you rather stand than go to a front seat which could only be secured with a fair degree of conspicuousness?

- Almost Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

40. If your date calls on Saturday night 15 minutes before you are supposed to meet and says that he/she has to study for an important exam and cannot make it, would you express your annoyance?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

41. If someone keeps kicking the back of your chair in a movie, would you ask him to stop?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

42. If someone interrupts you in the middle of an important conversation, do you request that the person wait until you have finished?

- Almost
Always or Always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never or
Rarely

43. Do you freely volunteer information or opinions in class discussions?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

44. Are you reluctant to speak to an attractive acquaintance of the opposite sex?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

45. If you lived in an apartment and the landlord failed to make certain necessary repairs after promising to do so, would you insist on it?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

46. If your parents want you home by a certain time which you feel is much too early and unreasonable, do you discuss or negotiate this with them?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

47. Do you find it difficult to stand up for your rights?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

48. If a friend unjustifiably criticizes you, do you express your resentment there and then?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

49. Do you express your feelings to others?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

50. Do you avoid asking questions in class for fear of feeling self-conscious?

- Almost Always or Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never or Rarely

APPENDIX D: IPIP REPRESENTATION OF NEO PI-R

IPIP Representation of NEO PI-R

Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Indicate for each statement whether it is 1. Very Inaccurate, 2. Moderately Inaccurate, 3. Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate, 4. Moderately Accurate, or 5. Very Accurate as a description of you.

1. Feel comfortable around people.

Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

2. Have a sharp tongue.

Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

3. Am always prepared.

Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

4. Am not interested in abstract ideas.

Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

5. Often feel blue.

5. Often feel blue. Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very accurate

6. Have little to say.

Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

7. Have a good word for everyone.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

8. Waste my time.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

9. Believe in the importance of art.

- Very inaccurate Moderately inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

10. Rarely get irritated.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

11. Make friends easily.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

12. Cut others to pieces.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

13. Pay attention to details.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

14. Do not like art.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

15. Dislike myself.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

16. Keep in the background.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

17. Believe that others have good intentions.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

18. Find it difficult to get down to work.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

19. Have a vivid imagination.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

20. Seldom feel blue.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

21. Am skilled in handling social situations.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

22. Suspect hidden motives in others.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

23. Get chores done right away.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

24. Avoid philosophical discussions.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

25. Am often down in the dumps.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

26. Would describe my experiences as somewhat dull.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

27. Respect others.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

28. Do just enough work to get by.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

29. Do not enjoy going to art museums.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

30. Feel comfortable with myself.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

31. Am the life of the party.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

32. Get back at others.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

33. Carry out my plans.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

34. Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.

- Very Inaccurate Moderately Inaccurate Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate Moderately Accurate Very Accurate

35. Have frequent mood swings.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

36. Don't like to draw attention to myself.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

37. Accept people as they are.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

38. Don't see things through.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

39. Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

40. Panic easily.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

41. Know how to captivate people.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

42. Make people feel at ease.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

43. Make plans and stick to them.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

44. Carry the conversation to a higher level.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

45. Am very pleased with myself.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

46. Don't talk a lot.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

47. Insult people.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

48. Shirk my duties.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

49. Enjoy hearing new ideas.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

50. Am not easily bothered by things.

Very Inaccurate

Moderately Inaccurate

Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate

Moderately Accurate

Very Accurate

APPENDIX E: ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Select the option that best describes your level of agreement for each statement.

1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I certainly feel useless at times.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. At times I think I am no good at all.

- Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX F: BRIEF FEAR OF NEAGTIVE EVALUATION SCALE

Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale

Read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how characteristic it is of you according to the following scale:

1. I worry about what other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

2. I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

3. I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

4. I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

5. I am afraid others will not approve of me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

6. I am afraid that people will find fault with me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

7. Other people's opinions of me do not bother me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

8. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

9. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

10. If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

11. Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

12. I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things.

- Not at all characteristic of me Slightly characteristic of me Moderately characteristic of me Very characteristic of me Extremely characteristic of me

APPENDIX G: REVISED CHECK AND BUSS SHYNESS SCALE

Revised Cheek and Buss Shyness Scale

Please read each item carefully and decide to what extent it is characteristic of your feelings and behavior.

1. I feel tense when I'm with people I don't know well.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

2. I am socially somewhat awkward.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

3. I do not find it difficult to ask other people for information.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

4. I am often uncomfortable at parties and other social functions.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

5. When in a group of people, I have trouble thinking of the right things to talk about.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

6. It does not take me long to overcome my shyness in new situations.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

7. It is hard for me to act natural when I am meeting new people.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

8. I feel nervous when speaking to someone in authority.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

9. I have no doubts about my social competence.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

10. I have trouble looking someone right in the eye.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

11. I feel inhibited in social situations.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

12. I do not find it hard to talk to strangers.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

13. I am more shy with members of the opposite sex.

Very uncharacteristic or untrue Uncharacteristic Neutral Characteristic Very characteristic or true

APPENDIX H: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your racial/ethnic identity?

- White / Caucasian
- Asian
- Black / African American
- Hispanic / Latino
- Pacific Islander
- Other

4. What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Transsexual
- Prefer not to answer

5. What is your relationship status?

- 5. What is your relationship status?
Married
- Single
- Co-habiting
- Divorced/Seperated
- Widowed
- Relationship (0-6 months)
- Relationship (6 months +)

6. What is your political affiliation?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other

7. What is your education level?

- Some college credit, but less than 1 year
- 1 or more years of college, but no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

8. What is your UCF major? _____

9. What is your cumulative GPA? _____

10. Your classes are:

- Online
- On campus
- Both

11. What is your current household income in U.S. dollars?

- Under \$10,000
- \$10,000-\$19,999
- \$20,000-\$29,999
- \$30,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

12. How would you describe your current employment status?

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed
- Homemaker
- Retired
- Physically unable to work

13. How many siblings do you have? _____

14. Are you an international student?

- yes
- no

APPENDIX I: DEBRIEFING FORM

Debriefing Form



Thank you for your participation in this research project.

The main objective of the study in which you just participated was to learn more about the relationship between assertiveness and personality characteristics in college students. By administering online questionnaires asking about students' assertive behavior and personality characteristics, our goal is to identify factors associated with assertiveness based on findings from past research. The findings of this study may be useful to psychologists, other professionals, and students by facilitating recognition of non-assertive behavior and implementing effective therapeutic training techniques.

As mentioned before, all data collected during the study are anonymous and will be used only for the purpose of the study.

If you have any further questions regarding this experiment or your participation in it, please contact Dr. Erin Murdoch at (321) 433-7934 (emurdoch@mail.ucf.edu). Please contact Dr. Murdoch if you would like a copy of the results for this study.

Thank you again for participating in this project. Without you, our research would be impossible.

Information regarding your rights as a research volunteer may be obtained from:

Institutional Review Board
University of Central Florida
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, FL 32826-3246
or by telephone at (407) 823-2901

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