ASSESSMENT OF CONSTRUCT VALIDITY OF THE LEADERSHIP SKILLS INVENTORY BY COMPARISON OF STUDENT LEADERS AND NONLEADERS

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An Abstract
Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Crystal L. Methvin
August 1992

Abstract

The identification of concepts and skills necessary for the development of student leadership potential is an area of growing interest. The Leadership Skills Inventory (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985) is one of the few instruments designed specifically for this purpose. In this study the construct validity of the LSI was assessed by comparison of the scores of 90 high school juniors who were identified as leaders or nonleaders. A significant difference (p<.05) between leaders and nonleaders was found on only the Written Communications subscale, and females scored significantly higher on the Values Clarification subscale than males, which is consistent with previous research. The inability of the LSI to discriminate between leaders and nonleaders calls into question the construct validity of the instrument and indicates that further research is needed.

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Master of Arts

by Crystal L. Methvin August 1992

To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Crystal L. Methvin entitled "Assessment of the Construct Validity of the Leadership Skills Inventory by Comparison of Student Leaders and Nonleaders." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts with a major in School Psychology.

Major Professor

Second Committee Member

Third Committee Member

Accepted for the Graduate and Research Council:

Dean of the Graduate School

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express appreciation to Dr. Susan Kupisch, Professor of Psychology, Austin Peay State University, for her aid and time given during the entire study.

Appreciation is extended to R. Dale McCarver, Cheryl Richardson, and the students who participated in the study at Cheatham County Central High School. Their valuable assistance made this study possible.

Additionally, the author wishes to thank her parents and friends for their support and encouragement during her studies at Austin Peay. Without their patience, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem and Review of the Literature

Leadership is an area that has stimulated much research in the fields of psychology and business. Many theories have been proposed to explain leadership ability, and assessment instruments have been developed in an effort to identify more effective leaders. The importance of identifying student leaders and providing appropriate training has been expressed by researchers and educators (Karnes & D'Ilio, 1988b), but little research been done in this area.

Several theories have been developed in an attempt to identify leaders from followers. One such theory is the trait theory which focuses on the personality characteristics possessed by leaders. Bass (1981) reviewed the relevant data and concluded that several personality traits are associated with leadership ability, and the degree to which an individual possesses these characteristics can be used to describe the different strata of leaders and followers. Some of the traits that have been linked to leadership include self-confidence, persistence, initiative, resourcefulness, originality, responsibility, and good interpersonal skills.

Another theory of leadership is based on behavioral theory, which focuses on the behaviors that are exhibited by an effective leader. Many studies were conducted to isolate particular behaviors and their relationship to leadership ability (Feidler, 1987). The effective leader behaviors could be grouped into two major categories: interaction–oriented behaviors, those behaviors related to the well–being and esteem of the group members, and task–oriented behaviors, those behaviors related to the structuring and organizing of the task.

A third group of leadership theories follows from the cognitive theories, which attempt to explain leadership ability by analysis of the perceptions and thought processes of an effective leader. The possession of certain cognitive resources appear to be related to leadership (Bass, 1981). Some of the areas that

have been studied and linked to leadership include problem-solving ability, perceptions of follower behavior, and decision-making ability.

Drawing upon these various theories of adult leadership, Karnes and Chauvin (1985) concluded that certain concepts and skills were related to effective leadership and devised an instrument to assess these areas. The Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI) is a self-report inventory, designed for use in grades 4-12, which measures nine areas of leadership skills: Fundamentals of Leadership, the possession of basic leadership knowledge such as defining terms and identification of leadership styles; Written Communication, the possession of skills necessary for outlining, researching reports, and preparing speeches; Speech Communication, possession of skills necessary for delivering speeches, offering constructive criticism, and formulating views on issues; Values Clarification, the possession of skills necessary for identification of values. knowledge of free choice, and affirmation of choices made; Decision Making, the possession of skills necessary for gathering facts, analyzing consequences, and reaching logical conclusions; Group Dynamics, the possession of skills necessary to become a group facilitator, effect compromise, and achieve consensus; Problem Solving, the possession of skills necessary for identification of the problem and the development of problem-solving strategies; Personal Development, the possession of traits such as self-confidence and sensitivity; and Planning, the possession of skills necessary for setting goals, formulating evaluation strategies, and developing timelines.

When the LSI was published in 1985, the manual provided limited data on the construction of the test. Reliability data indicated that the inventory is internally consistent. Split-half reliability coefficients were .81 to .92, Spearman-Brown reliability coefficients were .80 to .93, and Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 reliability coefficients were .78 to .90. However, test-retest reliability data indicated that some of the scales lack stability, particularly Fundamentals of

Leadership, Personal Development, and Planning Skills. The only validity data done at that time involved the use of a panel of adult professionals and youths who participated in youth organizations.

Since then more validity research has been done. Karnes and D'Ilio (1988a) assessed the concurrent validity of the LSI by comparing gifted students' ratings of them selves with teachers' ratings of the students. Provided that the teachers had previously used the LSI at least once and had at least five years of experience teaching gifted students, the means of the two groups were not significantly different. The authors concluded that the instrument is best used as a self-report inventory unless the above conditions are met. Karnes and D'Ilio (1988b) also assessed the criterion-related validity of the LSI by comparing the scores of student leaders to community leaders. They found that the adult leaders scored above the mean on all nine of the subscales and students who had just completed a week-long leadership training program which specifically addressed the skills and concepts on the LSI scored significantly higher than the adults on 7 of the 9 subscales. The authors concluded that the skills and concepts possessed by the students were "similar to those posessed by acknowledged community leaders" (Karnes & D'Ilio, 1988b, p. 267) and that the study supports the criterion-related validity of the LSI. The results of both of these validity studies (Karnes & D'Ilio, 1988a, 1988b) should be interpreted with caution. The methods employed, particularly the statistical procedures used, were not appropriate for the inferences the authors made.

In 1990, Karnes and D'Ilio compared the LSI to the High School Personality Questionnaire (HSPQ) in an effort to ascertain the relationship between the two measures. The HSPQ (Cattell, Cattell, & Johns, 1984) is a self-report personality inventory for children, aged 12 to 18, which measures 14 primary personality characteristics: Warmth, Intelligence, Emotional Stability, Excitability, Dominance, Enthusiasm, Conformity, Boldness, Sensitivity, Withdrawal, Apprehension,

Self-sufficiency, Self-discipline, and Tension. The authors contend that each scale measures a unique personality dimension. In this study, Karnes and D'Ilio found significant positive correlations between several of the HSPQ factors and the LSI subscales. Factor C (Emotional Stability) and Factor H (Boldness) were positively correlated with all of the LSI subscales, and Factor G (Conformity) was correlated with all of the subscales except Problem Solving. With the secondorder factors, Control was correlated with all of the subscales, and Leadership Potential was correlated with all of the subscales except Decision-making and Problem Solving. Several significant negative correlations were also found. Factor O (Apprehension) and the second-order factor of Accident Proneness were negatively correlated with all of the LSI subscales except Problem Solving. The second-order factor of Anxiety was negatively correlated with all of the subscales. The significant correlations (positive and negative) ranged from .174 to .419. They also found a significant difference between males and females on the Values Clarification subscale of the LSI, with females scoring significantly higher than males in that area.

The purpose of this study is to compare the performance of leaders and nonleaders on the LSI. To date no research of this nature has been done. If the LSI is actually measuring the skills that differentiate leaders from nonleaders, then scores of leaders should be significantly higher than the scores of nonleaders on each of the nine dimensions.

Subjects

The subjects were 136 juniors attending a public high school in a rural county of middle Tennessee. A random sample was selected by using classes of English, a required subject for all students. Juniors were chosen as the subjects of the study because at this point leaders are more likely to have been chosen based on leadership skills rather than popularity. Participation in the study was voluntary. Written consent was obtained from the principal of the school and the students who participated (see Appendix A).

Prior to administration of the LSI, the subjects were asked to complete data sheets reporting leadership positions held (see Appendix B). For the purpose of this study, leadership positions are defined as elected, appointed, or voluntarily assumed positions in the school, workplace, or community (e.g., president of the science club, crew leader at a fast food restaurant, or coordinator of a food drive). The subjects were ranked according to the number of leadership positions held. The top 45 of the ranked subjects were designated as the "leader" group, and the bottom 45 were designated as the "nonleader" group. The remaining subjects were discarded for statistical analysis.

<u>Instruments</u>

The LSI (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985) consists of 125 questions in the nine areas of leadership skills: Fundamentals of Leadership, Written Communication, Speech Communication, Values Clarification, Decision Making, Group Dynamics, Problem Solving, Personal Development, and Planning. The respondent describes the level at which he/she possesses the knowledge or skill on a scale from 0 to 3, with 0 being "Almost Never" and 3 being "Almost Always" (see Appendix C). Administration time is approximately 45 minutes. The numerical responses are totaled to obtain a raw score for each of the nine areas. The raw

scores are transformed into T scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.

Procedure

The LSI was administered by the researcher in 7 groups, ranging in number from 14 to 34. The booklets were distributed, and the instructions on the front of the inventory were read orally to the subjects. The only identifying information the subjects were asked to complete was his or her gender. The subjects worked indpendently to complete the inventory. Administration was completed in two days.

The data sheets and booklets were numbered to facilitate identification for the purpose of analysis. Any inventory without a data sheet was discarded for statistical comparison.

CHAPTER 3 Results

The data were first analyzed using a t-test for independent samples on each of the nine subscales of the LSI to determine if any of the scores attained by the Leader group were significantly higher than the scores attained by the Nonleader group. The results are presented in Table 1. which shows the means, standard deviations, and the tratios for the subscale scores for the Leader and Nonleader groups. The only significant finding was that Leaders scored significantly higher on the Written Communication Skills subscale of the LSI (p<.05).

Means, Standard Deviations, and t Ratios for Subscale Scores on the Leadership
Skills Inventory for Leaders and Nonleaders

Subscale		Leaders (n=45)		Nonleaders (n=45)	
	М	SD	М	SD	
Fundamentals of Leadership	55.13	9.59	55.69	9.40	28
Written Communication Skills	55.31	7.26	52.00	7.88	2.07
Speech Communication Skills	53.67	9.23	51.22	7.98	1.34
Values Clarification	54.22	8.81	53.89	6.31	.21
Decision Making Skills	53.42	8.75	53.09	7.58	.19
Group Dynamic Skills	54.31	8.39	51.44	8.08	1.65
Problem Solving Skills	52.89	8.81	52.93	8.79	02
Personal Development Skills	52.09	8.47	53.27	8.49	78
Planning Skills	54.60	9.33	53.56	8.26	.56

p<.05

The data were next examined for the presence of gender differences. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and the t ratios for the subscale scores for males and females. The only significant finding was that females scored significantly higher on the Values Clarification subscale of the LSI (p<.05). This is consistent with the results found by Karnes and D'Ilio (1990). Further analysis was done to determined if any interaction existed between group membership and gender on the Values Clarification subscale, but no significant interaction was found, F(1,86)=.065, p>.05.

TABLE 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and t Ratios for Subscale Scores on the Leadership

Skills Inventory for Males and Females

Subscale	Male (n=39		Females (n=51)	t*	
	М	SD	M SD		
Fundamentals of Leadership	54.95	9.61	55.77 9.40	.40	
Written Communication Skills	53.62	8.04	53.69 7.53	.04	
Speech Communication Skills	53.26	8.77	51.82 8.62	78	
Values Clarification	51.46	9.92	56.04 4.40	2.69*	
Decision Making Skills	53.31	9.28	53.22 7.24	05	
Group Dynamic Skills	52.46	8.71	53.20 8.08	.41	
Problem Solving Skills	51.80	8.80	53.77 8.70	1.06	
Personal Development Skills	50.97	8.93	53.98 5.24	1.87	
Planning Skills	53.90	9.30	54.98 8.34	1.10	

[°]p<.05

An analysis of the leadership positions reported by the Leader group was also performed. The number of leadership positions held ranged from 1 to 8. The mean of the sample was 3 positions held. The types of leadership positions reported were broken down into two categories: Method of Acquisition and Setting. The results are presented in Table 3. The type of position most frequently reported was elected and school-related.

TABLE 3

Distribution of Leadership Positions by Method of Acquisition and Setting

Category	f	%
Method of Acquisition		
Elected	57	49
Appointed	34	29
Voluntarily Assumed	26	22
Setting School	79	68
Work	14	12
Community	24	20

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

The LSI was designed as a "diagnostic/prescriptive instrument measuring concepts and skills of leadership" (Karnes & D'llio, 1988b, p. 263) which can be used "to improve . . . potential for leadership roles" (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985, p. 4). Some underlying assumptions include that the skills on the LSI are possessed by leaders, and possession of these skills will increase an individual's leadership potential. In order to prove that these assumptions are correct, research should show that the scores attained by leaders are significantly different from the scores attained by nonleaders.

While this study found that the skills on the LSI are possessed by leaders, it did not find that these skills are unique to leaders. The leader group scored above the mean on all of the subscales, which indicates "an above average level of skill development" (Karnes & Chauvin, 1985, p. 9) in these areas, but the lack of a significant difference between the Leader and Nonleader groups on eight of the nine subscales indicates that the LSI lacks discriminatory power.

Possession of the skills on the LSI appears to be necessary, but not sufficent, for the development of leadership. The items have adequate face validity, but this research does not support its construct validity. More research is also needed on the content validity of the LSI so that the items included may be refined. The LSI would be more benefical to individuals seeking to improve their leadership potential if its content included items proven to discriminate between leaders and nonleaders. Then, it could identify those with "true" leadership potential and provide a basis for further skill and concept development.

Defining leadership is a difficult task, and many different definitions exist. The manual for the LSI does not state the definition of leadership the authors used while developing the instrument so that the definition used in this research could be consistent. Therefore, the lack of a significant difference between the Leader and Nonleader groups in this study may have been a result of different

definitions of leadership. Another possible explanation is that the definition employed in this research may have been too broad and encompassed many individuals that exhibited only a minimal degree of leadership.

The majority of the research on leadership centers on the characteristics or skills possessed by adults, and the use of this research as a basis for the development of the LSI may have limited its usefulness with students. Perhaps the skills and concepts that make an individual a leader in the school setting are not necessarily those that make an individual a successful leader in the adult community. A longitudinal study of student leaders assessed with the LSI would provide more data on the validity of the instrument.

More research is needed on the LSI before it can be regarded as an adequate measure of student leadership. The development and addition of items proven to discriminate leaders from nonleaders would make the instrument more effective and more appropriate for its purposes. Studies focusing on age and gender may provide information on the gender difference found in this study and in previous research (Karnes & D'Ilio, 1990). Assessment of the relationship between the possession of the skills and concepts on the LSI and academic achievement could help identify the variables that are related to student leadership ability.

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Leadership Project Department of Psychology Austin Peay State University

Informed Consent Statement

The purpose of this investigation is to assess the leadership potential of high school students. The information collected will be kept confidential. No one other than the investigator will have access to the responses. Participation in the study is voluntary, and the subjects may choose to terminate participation at any time without penalty. The subjects will be informed of the procedures, and the scope of the project will be explained to them upon completion of the research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

I agree to allow the investigation to be conducted under the supervision of a faculty member of the Department of Psychology at Austin Peay State University. I have been informed of the procedures and the scope of the investigation and understand that the subjects will be likewise informed.

Subjects will be allowed to sign their own consent forms due to their age and the voluntary nature of the study.

TOMMY PARDUE

Name (Please Print)

Signature

PRINCIPAL, CHEATHAM CO. HIGH SCHOOL

Title

Date

Leadership Project Department of Psychology Austin Peay State University

Informed Consent Statement

The purpose of this investigation is to assess the leadership potential of high school students. Your responses are confidential. At no time will you be identified nor will anyone other than the investigator have access to your responses. Any data collected will be used only for the purpose of analysis. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to terminate your participation at any time without penalty.

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Th	he scope of the project will be explained fully upon completion of the research.
Th	nank you for your cooperation.
of a facult have beer ollowed a offered to am free have all da	agree to participate in the present study being conducted under the supervision ty member of the Department of Psychology at Austin Peay State University. It in informed, either orally or in writing or both, about the procedures to be and about any discomforts or risks that may be involved. The investigator has answer any further inquiries I have regarding the procedures. I understand that to terminate my participation at any time without penalty or prejudice and to data obtained from me withdrawn from the study and destroyed. I have also do fany benefits that may result from my participation.
Na	ame (Please Print)
Sig	anature

Date

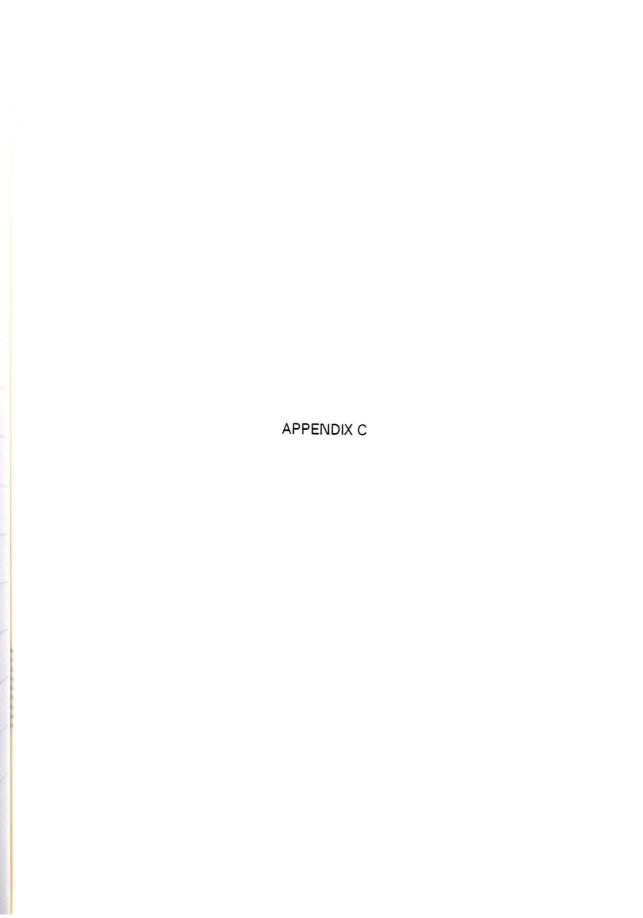


Number	

Leadership Project Depatment of Psychology Austin Peay State University

Data Sheet

Please list below any leadership positions that you during your high school career. For the purpose of this residefined as elected, appointed, or voluntarily assumed position community (e.g., president of the science club, crew leader coordinator of a food drive).	earch, leadership positions are



LEADERSHIP SKILLS INVENTORY

INDIVIDUAL FORM

NameSchool_	Grade	_Age_	Pre-Assessment Post-Assessment Sex
This inventory is made up of statem of leadership. This instrument is an nelp you learn about your abilities wrong answers. For each statement not skip an item. Read each state esponse which best describes your	in leadership sk mark the respon	ills. Ther	Its purpose is to e are no right or
Check ALMOST ALWAYS if you usu	ually possess thi	s knowled	ge or skill.
Check ON MANY OCCASIONS if you			
Check ONCE IN A WHILE if you oo			
heck ALMOST NEVER if you rarely			

Fundamentals of Leadership

			-cuuci	anip		
		Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Almost Never 0	Item Value
1.	I understand the meaning of the term "leader".					
2.	I understand the meaning of the term "leadership".					
3.	I can tell the difference between the meaning of the terms "leader" and "leader- ship".					
4.	I am able to identify the various styles of leadership.					
5.	I can describe my own style of leadership.					
6.	I can identify leadership styles of various leaders.					
7.	I can identify various titles of leadership positions.					
٥.	I understand the requirements and responsibilities of various leadership positions.					
9.	I can identify the good and bad aspects of being a leader.			Total Po	 ints	

Written Communication Skills

		Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Almost Never 0	Item Value
1.	I know how to get and use written information.					
2.	I can write my ideas so that others can read and understand them.					
3.	I can compare and contrast ideas in my writing.					
	I can distinguish fact from opinion in writing.					
	I can summarize written information.					
	I can write an outline.					
	I can write to persuade others to my point of view.					
•	I can write a business letter.					
	I can write a social letter.					
0.	I can prepare an agenda for a meeting.					
l.	I can write a speech.					
2.	I can evaluate my writing and the writing of others.					
				Total Po	Ints	

Speech Communication Skills

		Almost Always	On Many Occasions	Once in a While	Almost Never	Item Value
1.	I can speak in a clear and concise manner.				, , , , , ,	varac
2.	I can tell others how I feel.					
3.	I can participate in group discussions.					
4.	I can summarize the ideas of the group and express them.					
5.	I can tell both sides of an argument without allowing my own feelings to show.					
6.	I can state and defend my viewpoint.					
7.	I can offer constructive criticism in a kind manner.					
8.	I know the various types of speeches and when each should be used.					
9.	I can deliver a prepared speech to a group.					
10.	I can deliver an extempora- neous speech to a group.					
11.	I can moderate and direct panel discussions.					
12.	I listen to others in order to be an effective communicator.					
13.	I can use body language effectively as I speak.					
14.	I am honest and sincere when speaking.					
				Total Po	11112	

Values Clarification

	to stand my own faction	Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Almost Never 0	Item Value
 2. 	I understand my own feelings. I care about others and treat others fairly.					
3.	I try to undersand the feelings of others.					
4.	I am sensitive to the needs of others.					
5.	I am sincere in my interest in other people.					
6.	I try to deal honestly with others.					
7.	I do what I say I will.					
8.	I have strong beliefs and can defend them when necessary.					
۶.	I am willing to admit my mistakes.					
10.	I have a set of personal standards.					
11.	I have free choice in establishing my values.					
12.	I know the things in my life that are important to me.					
13.	I can state my choices publicly.					
14.	I can keep my own standards even when others disagree with me.					
15.	I can accept other people's ideas and values, even when they are different from mine.					
16.	I respect the rights of others.					
17.	I am loyal to my superiors and friends.					
	- Michael			Total Po	ints	

Decision Making Skills

		Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Almost Never	Item Value
1.	I understand decision making skills.					
2.	I can gather facts for decision making.					
3.	I can accept advice from others.					
4.	I can analyze facts before					
	making a decision.					
5.	I am aware of how my decisions will affect others.					
6.	I know how to reach logical conclusions.					
7.	I can reach decisions on my own.					
8.	I can make a decision quickly and accurately based on facts.					
9.	I can accept the fact that my decisions may not always					
	be popular in my group.					
10.	I can support group decisions even though I do not always agree with them.					
				Total Poi	nts	

Group Dynamic Skills

		Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Never	Item Value
١.	I can lead a group discussion.				0	
2.	I enjoy group activities.					
3.	I know what "brainstorming" $_{\rm is}$ and can lead a group in this exercise.					
.	I can use parliamentary procedure in leading a group.					-
5.	I use "we" instead of "I" when conducting group sessions on matters that involve the group.					
, ,	I can lead a group so that people feel safe expressing their opinions.					
7.	I usually allow others to express their opinions before I express mine.					
S.	I try to understand the point of view of others.					
۶.	I keep in mind the best interests of the group.					
10.	I can resolve conflicts within a group.					
11.	I recognize and value dif- ferences in individuals.			-		
12.	I can distinguish between influence and manipulation.					
13.	I do not take personally disagreement with my ideas.					
14.	I can maintain trust within a group.					
15.	I can keep a group on task.					
16.	I can incorporate the suggestions of others.					
17.	I can work effectively for compromise.					
18.	I can help the group agree upon a plan of action.					
19.	l can give credit and praise to others for work well done.			Total P		

Problem Solving Skills

	Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Almost Never 0	Item Value
I know and use the elements of problem solving.					
I know what to do as a leader in problem solving situations.					
can identify problems.					
can develop different ways to solve problems.					
I can select the best way to solve a problem.					
can judge how effective my strategy is.					
			Total Poi	nts	

Personal Skills

	Almost On Many Once in Almost Item 3 Occasions a While Never Vali	m
j. I am self-confident.	1 0	ue
 I feel comfortable in most situations. 		
 I can identify my strengths and weaknesses. 		
., I can acknowledge my mistakes.		
 I can accept constructive criticism. 		
6. I plan self-improvement.		
. I am persistent.		
 I try to avoid being overly sensitive. 		
9. Iam on time.		
15. I am reliable.		
H. I am enthusiastic.		
12. I am ambitious and desire success.		
13. I am a hard worker.		
14. I can deal with abstract concepts.		
5. I am patient with myself and others.		
6. I make friends easily.		
I try to be thoughtful about the feelings of others.		
I make an effort to remember names and faces.		
I can get along with others.		
I know how to dress for different occasions.		
I am neat in my work and appearance.		
	Total Points	

Planning Skills

	I have aggrigational Live	Almost Always 3	On Many Occasions 2	Once in a While	Almost Never 0	Item Value
1.	I have organizational skills.					
2.	I set reachable goals for myself.					
3.	I set reachable goals for groups.					
4.	I can take the lead in group planning.					
5.	I accept suggestions from other people.					
6.	I can direct the efforts of the group.					
7.	I seek advice when necessary.					
8.	I can set objectives to help accomplish my goals.					
9.	I can tell the outcomes of certain actions.					
10.	I can tell what is needed to accomplish goals.					
11.	I can develop and keep to a timeline.					
12.	I can meet deadlines.					
13.	I can set up ways to measure if my goals are completed.					
14.	I am not overwhelmed by details.					
15.	I am flexible and can accept change.					
16.	I can delegate authority.					
	I review my plans and revise them from time to time.			Total Po	 ints	

T CCOPE	FL	wcs	200							
T SCORE	, ,	WCS	SCS	VC	DMS	GDS	PSS	PERS	PS	T SCORE
×										75
*										-
										-
70										
-			42							70 -
	27		41							
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Disseminators Of Knowledge

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