

**EDU001**

## **Communication Apprehension of South African Accounting Students: The Effect of Culture and Language**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Developing communication skills is an objective of many accounting education programs. Students' communication apprehension may hamper this. This study explores South African accounting students communication apprehension and the association thereof with culture and home and instruction language. Data were collected using the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) and Written Communication Apprehension (WCA) self-report questionnaires. South Africa provides an example of the salience of race, given past racial segregation. Culture is, however, more complex than physical appearance. Significant differences were identified in communication apprehension between students from previously disadvantaged African communities attending poorly resourced schools, and African and White students attending well resourced, westernized schools. Further, this study suggests that students who receive instruction in the business language in which they are to function as graduates exhibit less communication apprehension in that language, regardless of their home language. While this study considers South African

students, the results may be of interest in other multicultural or multilingual environments, particularly where socio-economic differences pervade. The adoption of pedagogy to remedy the communication apprehension of a student may aggravate the apprehension of another. To limit such unintended consequence, instructors need to look beyond appearance, in anticipating a student's predisposition to communication apprehension.

*Key words: Communication apprehension, cultural diversity, language of instruction*

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