I. General Information

A. Title: Skills Confidence Inventory (SCI).

B. Authors: Nancy E. Betz, Fred H. Borgen, and Lenore W. Harmon.

C. Publisher: Consulting Psychologists Press, 3803 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303. Phone: 1-800-624-1765.

D. Forms; groups to which applicable: The Skills Confidence Inventory (Betz, Borgen, & Harmon, 1996) is designed to be administered in conjunction with the Strong Interest Inventory (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994). The instrument is written at the 8th grade reading level. Although it can be administered to older adolescents (15 years of age and older), recommended use of the SCI is with college students and adults who have some amount of work experience.

E. General type: The SCI measures clients’ self-efficacy expectations with regard to activities and tasks associated with Holland’s six General Occupational Themes. The instrument, which was developed as a supplement to the Strong Interest Inventory, typically is used in career counseling, and provides a measure of self-efficacy in vocational domains.

F. Date of publication: The SCI was published in 1996.

G. Practical features: A paper-and-pencil form of the SCI can be purchased in combination with the Strong Interest Inventory (SII). Item booklets and answer sheets are provided for mail-in scoring. Another option available to test takers is the Entrepreneur Report, which includes the SII, SCI, and MBTI. A third option is to complete the assessment using the computer. The computer-based version of the SCI runs on Microsoft Windows and can be obtained through Consulting Psychologists Press (http://www.cpp-db.com).

H. Cost: Prepaid SII and SCI combined item booklets and answer sheets, designed for mail-in scoring, cost $90.00 for a package of 10. The Skills Confidence Inventory Applications and Technical Guide is available for $36.00. Computerized administrations of the combined SII and SCI cost $9.20 each for orders of less than 100, with the price decreasing for orders of 100 or more administrations. The computerized administrations must be run on the CPP Computer Software System, which has an initial cost of $295.00 and an annual license renewal fee of $110.00.
I. Time required to administer: The combined form of the SII and SCI takes 40 to 50 minutes to administer.

II. Purpose and Nature of the Instrument

A. Stated purpose: The 60-item SCI measures a respondent's self-perceived ability to successfully complete a variety of tasks, activities, and coursework (Betz et al., 1996). The instrument provides career professionals with a tool for measuring clients' self-efficacy expectations in a manner that parallels the way interest information is organized on the SII (Subich, 1998).

B. Description of test, items, and scores: The SCI is comprised of six 10-item General Confidence Theme scales that correspond with the Strong Interest Inventory's General Occupational Themes. Scores are not standardized; instead, they represent the mean response for the 10 items on a particular scale. Scores on each scale range from 1 to 5, with scores of 3.5 or higher representing areas of high skill confidence. Results are reported on a single-page profile that compares the respondent's perceived capabilities with expressed interests in each of the six General Occupational Themes.

C. Use in counseling: Counselors using the SCI can help clients examine their interests and perceived abilities simultaneously to enhance educational and career exploration. The combined use of the SII and SCI provides information that neither inventory provides alone. The integrated profile categorizes each theme area by priority for exploration. High confidence and interest in a theme signal a need for further exploration. When confidence is higher than interest or vice-versa, the counselor can help the client explore reasons for the discrepancy. It is important to recognize that confidence in a particular area does not reflect actual ability or the potential to develop ability (Betz et al., 1996).

III. Practical Evaluation

A. Usefulness of manual: The 64-page SCI Applications and Technical Guide includes an explanation of the inventory's theoretical basis, psychometric properties of the instrument, directions for administration and use, and instructions for interpreting test results. To facilitate test interpretation, case studies and reproducible masters with practical suggestions based on clients' profiles are provided.

B. Adequacy of directions for administering the instrument: A suggested approach for administering the SII and SCI is provided in the manual. The instructions, which are clearly written and easy to follow, include sample scripts that can be adapted for individual or group administration. Betz et al. (1996) suggested that users be familiar with the procedures for administering the SII that are discussed in the Strong Interest Inventory Applications and Technical Guide (14armon et al., 1994).

C. Qualifications of examiners: Counselors who administer the SCI need to be qualified at the B level, which means that the administrator has earned an advanced degree from
an accredited college or university and has satisfactorily completed a course in psychological testing and measurement at an accredited institution.

D. Scoring provisions: Options for scoring include mailing prepaid SII/SCI forms to Consulting Psychologists Press scoring nonprepaid forms on-site with the CPP Software System; and administering, scoring, and printing a combined profile of both inventories on-site using the CPP Software System.

**IV. Technical Considerations**

A. Normative sample: The normative sample for the SCI was comprised of 1147 adults who participated in data collection for the 1994 edition of the Strong and 706 college students enrolled during the fall term of 1993 at Ohio State University and Iowa State University (Betz et al., 1996). Of the 1853 individuals sampled, 1007 were women and 846 were men. A breakdown of participants by race is not provided in the manual; however, of the individuals who participated in the renorming of the SII (from which the SCI sample was drawn), 5.5% identified themselves as members of a racial minority group (Betz et al., 1998). Thus, the SCI sample was composed primarily of Caucasians.

B. Reliability: Internal consistency of the 10-item scales was reported to range from .84 for the enterprising scale to .88 for the realistic scale. Three week test-retest reliability coefficients for college students ranged from .83 for the realistic scale to .87 for the social scale (Betz et al., 1996).

C. Validity: Evidence of the concurrent validity of the General Confidence Themes was based on findings that employed adults reported significantly higher confidence levels than did college students (Betz et al., 1996). Also, scores on the GCT scales were shown to distinguish members of each GCT occupational group from members of other occupations and from the general population. Donnay and Borgen (1999) provided evidence that the SCI accurately classified tenured and satisfied workers according to occupational group membership, suggesting, that the instrument can be used to help predict occupational choice.

Betz et al. (1996) provided evidence of construct validity by reporting statistically significant correlations between interest and skills confidence levels within the same GOTs and low correlations between interests and perceived abilities within different GOTs. Significant confidence-interest correlations were noted within all theme areas, ranging from .44 (enterprising) to .63 (artistic). Additional evidence of construct validity was provided by Betz et al. (1998), who found that skills confidence scores differentiated occupational groups in ways consistent with predictions.

**V. Evaluation**

A. Comments of reviewers: Due to the SCI's relatively recent publication, few reviews have been published to date. Subich (1998) indicated that unique information is provided to the client and career counselor when levels of self-efficacy as measured by the SCI are considered along with vocational interests. Donnay and Borgen (1999) suggested that the SCI, as a measure of vocational self-efficacy, is a distinct measure
from traditional vocational interest inventories and is a potentially useful construct for career assessment.

B. General Evaluation: The Strong Interest Inventory has been described as a model for other interest inventories based on its psychometric properties (Whiston, 2000). The optional addition of the Skills Confidence Inventory provides a useful measure of perceived ability that supplements the career professional's efforts to assist clients in making decisions about academic majors, occupations, and changes in career direction. Concerns about the combined instrument (SII and SCI) relate to the samples selected for norming purposes. For the most part, individuals in the samples were Caucasian volunteers with high levels of education. Consequently, the norming group may not adequately represent the broad spectrum of individuals in a given occupation. However, scores for each scale of the SCI are not standardized and should be interpreted in an ipsative, rather than normative, manner. Consequently, the makeup of the normative group does not affect score interpretation in the same manner in which it affects interpretation of norm-referenced scores. Research on career self-efficacy has supported its role as an important predictor of academic performance and career decision-making intentions (Betz et al., 1998). The SCI provides a way to coordinate a measure of career self-efficacy with measures of vocational interest. The combined SII/SCI is a robust career-assessment instrument that provides a valuable way to assess interests and confidence simultaneously, thus paving the way for further exploration of career options.

REFERENCES


