

PSYCHOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF A MEASURE OF RECIPROCITY

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Purpose: The Theory of Human Relatedness has identified four elements or competencies that determine an individual's degree of relatedness with others: sense of belonging, reciprocity, mutuality, and synchrony. Previous work developed a measure of sense of belonging. The purpose of the current series of studies was to develop and test psychometrically a self-report instrument designed to measure the relatedness element of reciprocity, or equitable exchange, in adults.

Method: Congruent with the previously developed Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI), the Interpersonal Reciprocity Scales (IRS) consists of two separately scored scales, IRS-P (psychological state) and IRS-A (antecedents). Three stages of instrument development are described. First, the content validity of items generated through literature review, clinical experience, and focus group reports of relatedness experiences was assessed by a panel of experts, resulting in an initial item pool for each subscale. The items were piloted with a sample of over 90 adults, resulting in a 78-item measure with very good internal consistency. Second, construct validity and reliability were examined with a longitudinal sample of older adults, resulting in a valid and reliable 50-item measure for that subject group. Third, construct validity, internal consistency, and retest reliability of the 78-item IRS were tested with over 285 college students, and indicated modifications in the instrument were made. The third study compared performance of the IRS with the SOBI to assess shared variance of the two instruments as a first step in evaluating their joint use in future studies. The relationship between reciprocity and dependence relative to health status was examined in studies 2 and 3.

Findings: Two versions of the IRS were supported: V1 is a 50-item measure for use with adults over age 65; V2 is a 51-item measure for use with adults under age 65. Multicollinearity was not found to be a problem between the IRS and SOBI. The presence of a change in the strength and direction of association between reciprocity and dependence relative to health status was supported.

Discussion: Two versions of the IRS for general use demonstrate initial validity and reliability, and are presented for use. In both cases, the subscales should be used separately rather than summatively. The IRS and SOBI can be used together to measure independent but complementary elements of relatedness. The change in strength and direction of association between reciprocity and dependence relative to health status may indicate a nonlinear relationship, and bears further study.