

Feb 13th, 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Developing a Measure of Psychological Aggression: Stage 2

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Abstract

Current psychological aggression measures are questionable in their ability to measure psychological aggression. The goal of this project is to create a valid and reliable measure of psychological aggression that avoids the pitfalls of current measures and can generalize to more than heterosexual interpersonal relationships. The results presented are obtained from the pilot stage of the study.

Introduction

Psychological aggression is considered to be aggressive behaviors that do not cause bodily harm. Understanding this type of aggression is pertinent because psychological aggression can lead to physical aggression (Murphy & Leary, 1989). Current measures are lacking due to unsound psychometric properties and fragmented definitions; thus, a sound psychological aggression measurement is needed to both identify and help curb future acts of psychological aggression as well as to advance research on psychological aggression. In addition, current measures are based on heterosexual interpersonal relationships. First steps included: 1) conducting a comprehensive literature review, 2) transcribing focus groups and interviews, and 3) content analyzing the transcriptions. Based on this content, the researchers wrote preliminary items to capture behaviors that constitute psychological aggression. The items were then pilot tested.

Methodology

Literature Review

- **Keywords:** Psychological aggression, Verbal aggression, Violence, Hostility, Emotional Abuse, Manipulation
 - 40 articles reviewed

Pilot Test

- **Demographics**
 - (See Tables 1.1 and 1.2)
- **Procedure**
 - Participants were recruited via SONA (ODU's Participants recruitment tool).
 - Due to the lengthy nature of the survey, the items were randomly split into two surveys: FOCUS I (Direct Verbal and Nonverbal Items) and FOCUS II (Indirect verbal and nonverbal items).
 - Each item had 5 target contexts: family member, friend, significant other, co-worker, and acquaintance.
 - 27 Participants took FOCUS I survey which consisted of 362.
 - FOCUS I included questions such as: "I have lied about not knowing how to perform a task to avoid helping a family member."
 - 22 Participants took FOCUS II survey which consisted of 241 items.
 - FOCUS II included questions such as: "When a co-worker makes me angry, I have responded by punching walls, throwing, or slamming objects."
- **Evaluation**
 - Researchers performed a descriptive analysis on the items and eliminated the ones with abnormal response patterns or abnormal distributions.
 - 602 Items were condensed to 384 Items.

Discussion

We found that people in the sample responded well to most of the items in that there was a variety in the choices selected. (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2). In contrast, items for which responses accumulated on a select few response choices were eliminated (See Figures 2.1 and 2.2). In addition, by including various target contexts (e.g., friend, family, etc.) for each item, this scale will be more comprehensive than current ones. The next step is to field test the scale on a larger, more representative sample to establish the factor structure of the new scale.

Selected Reference

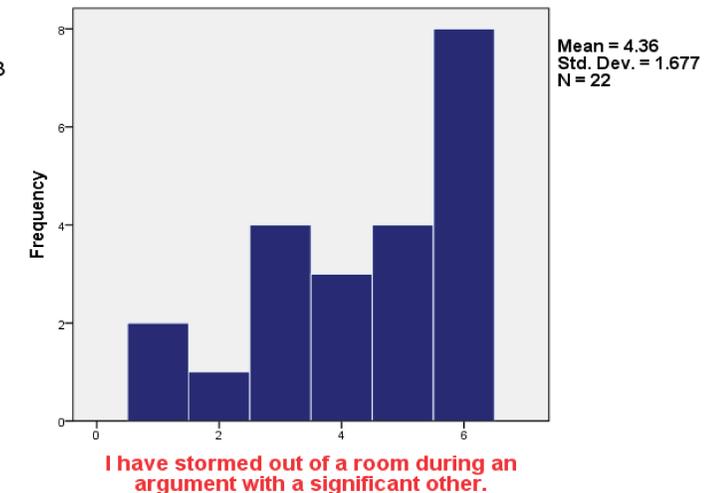
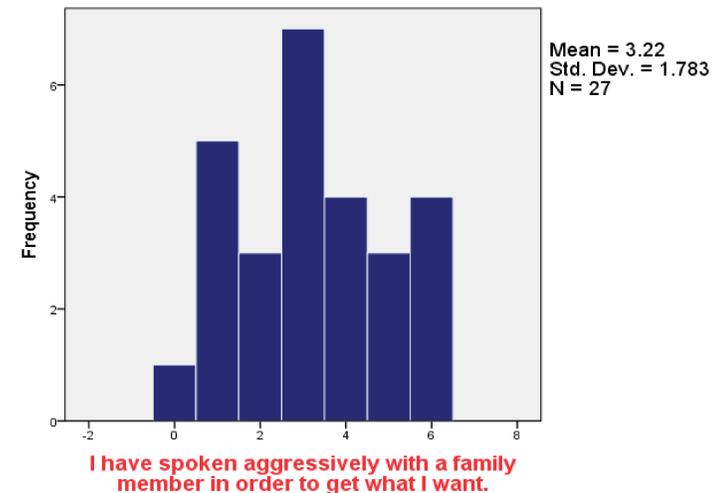
Murphy, C. & O'leary, K. (1989). Psychological aggression predicts physical aggression in early marriage. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 57(5), 579-582.

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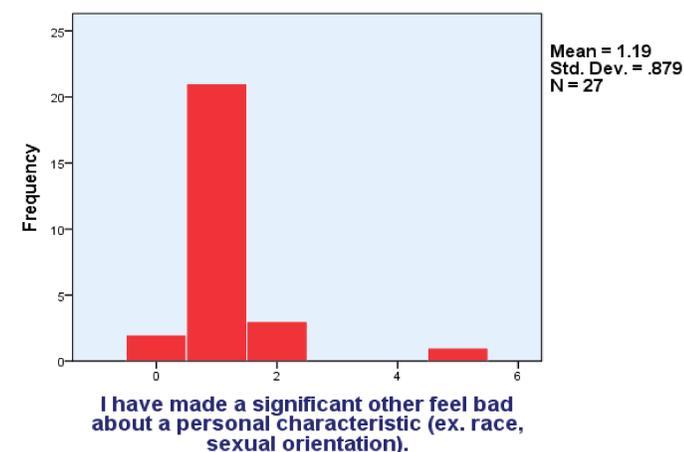
Tables/Figures

FOCUS I	FOCUS II
Age: M=25.37, SD=8.99, Min=18, Max=54	Age: M=19.27, SD=1.96, Min=18, Max=25
Gender: 8 Males, 19 Females (N=27)	Gender: 4 Males, 18 Females (N=22)
Sexual Orientation: 22 Heterosexual, 4 Bisexual, 1 Gay	Sexual Orientation: 21 Heterosexual, 1 Bisexual

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 Demographics for FOCUS I and FOCUS II surveys.



Figures 1.1 and 1.2 Few items with normal distribution that were retained.



Figures 2.1 and 2.2 Few items with abnormal distribution that were eliminated.