

The Self-Report Delinquency Scale

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Paper Submission Date: 25th March 2015

Paper Acceptance Date: 28th March 2015

Abstract

The Self-Report Delinquency Scale was designed to measure problem behaviour of higher secondary school students in terms of classroom misdemeanours, abuse of property and person, soft drug use, hard drug related offences, group misdemeanours and vehicle-related offences. The original scale is in English language and was developed in Sydney, Australia. In the present study, the scale was adapted in Hindi (translation of the items in Hindi and modification according to the Indian set up). Part A of the study deals with Hindi adaptation and Part B deals with the concurrent validity against original English version on a sample of 40 higher secondary school students. Agreement between both versions was found 0.84% and interpreted to be quite satisfactory.

Key words: self-report, delinquency

Concept of the Construction of the self-report delinquency scale

All children behave badly-this is a natural part of growing up and learning about the world. It is the behaviour that is the problem, not the child. What makes behaviour a problem can depend on a lot of things like the age of the child, poor school adjustment and achievement, physical, emotional and environmental disadvantage. Studies and surveys of children and parents' perceptions of problem behaviour show that a large number of children who are generally considered normal often show disturbed behaviours such as tantrums, destructiveness, hyperactivity, fearfulness, soft drug use, class room-misdemeanours, stealing offences, abuse of property and person to some degree at times during their growing years (Hellincks, Grietens & Verhulst, 1994) . This type of behaviour is transient or sporadic.

Problem behaviour: Problem behaviour is usually viewed as abnormal. Literally, 'ab' means 'away' while normal refers to the average or standard. Thus abnormal simply means something that deviates from the average (Harrington, 1995), the common usage assumes that what deviates from the average are negative and pathological.

Review of the Past Researches

There was complete dearth of the appropriate tools for measuring the problem behaviour of young children. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the various tools as Functional Assessment Tool (NASEOH, 1990), Problem Behaviour Checklist (Peshawaria, 1989), Maladaptive Behaviour Checklist (Naidu, 1990), Behaviour Disordered Checklist (Mishra, 1992), Behaviour Screening Checklist (Sharma, 2002) have been used to identify problem behaviour in people with intellectual, developmental and visual disabilities.

The existing problem behaviour tools in the Indian setting continue to

serve a useful purpose. However, the following observations on the existing assessment scales/checklist for use with school children in our country are very important.

- Most of these tools/checklists do not elicit complete and comprehensive information of the current level as well as problem behaviour.
- Some of the items in this tools/checklist were not behaviourally worded.
- Some of the scales fail to provide objective and clear instruction on administration of each item.
- For the problem behaviour tools mentioned earlier, information on the technical aspects, such as reliability, validity, field testing, standardization details, etc., are not available so far.

Objective of the Study

1. To construct the problem behaviour scale for higher secondary schools students.
2. To standardize the problem behaviour scale for higher secondary schools students.

Preparation of The Self-Report Delinquency Scale

After reviewing the above mentioned tools, the researcher adapted *The Self-Report Delinquency scale* (Carroll, Durkin, Houghton & Hattie, 1996) on the basis of the literature and after the consultation with the subject experts in the psychology and education. The scale comprised 52 items covering a wide range of delinquent acts in Australia as vehicle-related offences, classroom misdemeanours, abuse of property and person, soft drug use, hard drug related offences, group misdemeanours and stealing offences. All the items were written in observable and measurable terms. To check the suitability of the items

incorporated into the first draft of the tool being developed, 10 professional translators, 10 test expert, and 10 teachers teaching in special and inclusive schools were approached. They were requested to give their opinion pertaining to clarity of items, appropriateness of the language of the items, ambiguity of items if any and the pattern of response against each item in different tools. They were also consulted for the clear understanding of the instructions typed on each tool. The investigator noted the observations, criticisms, reactions, suggestions of these people. Based on the responses of these subgroups at the pre-try out stage, these tools were further put to the treatment of editing.

Soliciting the responses of the experts, teachers, bilingual psychologists, higher secondary schools students approached at the time of pre-tryout, the editing of the first draft was completed. On the basis of the scrutiny of the responses of experts and other individuals involved in pre-try out, 5 items were dropped from the scale which was found in appropriate. Content wise changes as sentence structure and sequence arrangement of words was also modified in the initial try out. The Hindi version of the scale was translated back into English to validate the actual meaning of each item. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the investigator and the professional translator. These items were then discussed with the supervisor at different intervals to determine the relevance of the items with regard to the specified areas. In this way the final items /statements of the questionnaire were prepared and given to 10 language experts and 10 eminent psychologist, 10 teacher educators, 5 faculty member of the NCERT, New Delhi, to ensure correctness and ease of comprehension by the respondents. After receiving suggestions from the experts, the questionnaire was refined in terms of the language ambiguity vagueness and subjectivity. The overlapping of items was also critically examined and some of them were rejected. In this way 47 items /statements consisted five sub-scales of the self-report delinquency scale were thoroughly screened, edited and prepared. After

preparation of the items /statements of the questionnaire, it was considered for try out purposes.

Try-out and revision of the Scale

Prior to administration of tools for collecting data for the present study, the researcher assessed the suitability of developing tools by conducting a pilot study. Two public schools were approached. After gaining permission from the principals of both schools, the self-report delinquency scale was given to the 20 children of each school aged 11 to 18 years. The responses on the adapted self-report delinquency were collected. On evaluating the responses, some items were found inappropriate because of the functional limitations for children with higher secondary schools; hence, these items were dropped in the final version. The comprehensibility of the Hindi self-report delinquency scale was improved by the deleting 4 items found to be vague to the participant. The conversational skill situations of the Hindi self-report delinquency scale was also trial at the two special schools. As 43 items were judged to be relevant to children in public schools, they were retained with slight modifications for comprehensibility

Administration of the Scale

The scale was administered to 40 higher secondary schools students in the age range of 12 to 18 years in their respective school premises by the investigator herself. Usual requirement for proper test administration like quite, comfortable, well-lit room with ample space for each respondent to work were ensured. For establishment of personal rapport, purpose of the scale was explained. The instructions were explained to the respondents and were asked to tick either of the six point response format.

Scoring

The responses of the subject were rated on a six scale ranging from Not at all, Not too well, Okay, Pretty well, Very well, Extremely well. The scoring is done by awarding, 1 score to Never, 2 to 1-3 Times, 3 to 4-6 Times, 4 to Once a month, 5 to More than once a month 6 to More than once a week for positive

item and vice versa for negative items. The scoring procedure has been clearly illustrated in the following table.

TABLE- 3.6
SCORING PROCEDURE OF THE SELF-REPORT DELINQUENCY SCALE

Serial Number	Number of Alternatives	Positive Statements	Negative Statements
1	Never	1	6
2	1-3 Times	2	5
3	4-6 Times	3	4
4	Once a month	4	3
5	More than Once a Month	5	2
6	More than once a week	6	1

In this test/scale every item has 6 alternatives responses as Never, 1-3 Times, 4-6 Times, Once a Month, More than Once a Month, More than once a week. The scoring is done on the basis of negative statements as for negative 1, 2, and 3,4,5,6.

Item Analysis

The procedure used to judge the quality of an item is called item analysis. The judgment for selecting an item is based upon the discrimination index, difficulty level and content validity of the items. To determine the difficulty level and discriminative index, the investigator arranges the subjects in descending order according to the magnitude of their scores. The top 27 were selected as the upper group and the bottom 27 were selected as the lower groups which were used for an item analysis. To find out the discrimination power of each item, test of significance was applied to both scores. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-values were calculated for each of the higher and lower groups.

Thus using the t-value, the significance for each item was tested at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance. The value of each item is shown in Table 3.7

given below:

Table 3.7 presents the t-ratios between high and low groups on the children's self-efficacy scale.

TABLE-1.1
DISCRIMINATIVE VALUE BETWEEN HIGH AND LOW CRITERION
GROUP THE SELF-REPORT DELINQUENCY SCALE

Item No.	Higher group		Lower group		t-ratio
	Mean M ₁	SD ₁	Mean M ₂	SD ₂	
1	3.56	0.81	3.10	0.46	5.11
2	4.22	0.55	3.97	0.78	2.77
3	4.03	0.76	3.31	1.00	6.00
4	3.77	1.40	3.13	0.31	6.40
5	3.73	0.55	3.07	0.57	9.42
6	4.41	0.50	3.88	1.10	7.57
7	4.01	1.80	2.97	1.3	4.95
8	4.18	0.40	3.61	0.98	5.70
9	2.63	0.42	2.50	0.67	1.85 *
10	4.08	0.92	3.88	0.74	1.81 *
11	3.15	0.63	2.46	0.40	11.5
12	2.90	0.35	2.46	0.89	4.88
13	3.77	0.39	3.57	0.23	6.66
14	2.52	0.68	2.35	0.22	2.83
15	3.73	1.46	3.09	1.08	3.76
16	4.29	1.06	3.60	0.87	3.83
17	4.04	0.36	3.62	0.69	6.00
18	4.14	0.45	3.33	0.73	10.1
19	3.66	0.66	3.17	0.45	7.00
20	4.34	0.33	4.00	1.29	2.61
21	2.35	0.62	1.87	0.51	6.81

22	3.34	0.65	2.56	0.84	7.80
23	4.12	0.48	3.68	0.87	4.88
24	4.13	1.51	2.76	0.65	8.56
25	3.16	0.92	2.53	0.67	5.72
26	4.77	1.44	4.12	1.11	3.82
27	3.93	0.90	3.07	0.36	9.50
28	4.10	0.82	3.01	0.65	10.9
29	4.93	0.25	3.46	1.45	10.5
30	3.40	0.81	2.70	0.30	5.00
31	4.52	1.40	3.18	0.72	8.93
32	3.69	1.10	3.00	1.01	4.71
33	4.10	0.84	3.37	0.60	7.30
34	4.19	0.39	4.08	0.21	3.66
35	2.36	0.40	2.21	0.32	5.00
36	4.70	1.58	3.07	1.02	9.00
37	4.14	1.51	3.03	1.01	6.5
38	3.33	0.92	2.09	0.51	13.7
39	4.02	0.76	3.59	0.53	4.3
40	3.21	0.56	2.91	0.48	4.2
41	4.94	1.43	2.83	0.91	13.8
42	2.90	1.03	1.62	0.61	11.6
43	4.02	0.50	3.87	0.46	2.51

* Indicates not significant at .05 level of significance.

Note: Table Value at .05 level of significance -1.96

The items with 't' ratio less than 1.96 at .05 level of significance were rejected on the ground that they had not discriminating power. In this way 9 were rejected from the preliminary draft.

FINAL FORM OF THE TEST

In the final form of the self-report delinquency scale, 41 items/statements were retained according to their level of significance. There is clear instruction for the respondents printed on the first page of the scale. The space for the alternative responses is also provided in the format against each item. It is appended in the appendix-

Reliability of The Self-Report Delinquency Scale

Reliability is one of the first and the foremost characteristics of a tool. The reliability of the scale was determined by both split half method and Test-Retest method.

(a) Split-half Reliability Co-efficient

To determine the split-half method, odd and even items were split and their correlation was computed by applying product-moment method. The reliability co-efficient of the whole test was computed with the help of Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula

$$rtt = \frac{2rhh}{1 + rhh}$$

where, rtt = reliability of the whole scale.

rhh = co-efficient of the correlation between the two halves of the scale.

The computed value of the split-half reliability of the whole scale came out to be 0.84 which is positive, high and significant.

Test-Retest Reliability Co-efficient:

After four week time interval the scale was re-administered to 40 students and their scores on the same SRDS's were recorded. Their scores at two instances of testing and retesting were used for computing the product moment

correlation coefficient (Pearson 'r') as the measure of test-retest reliability. The product moment correlation between the test-retest scores was calculated and found to be 0.85. The reliability co-efficient indicate a high degree of stability in the measurement made by this scale.

Validity of The Self-Report Delinquency Scale

A technique or test/scale is valid if it measures what it meant to measure or what it was intended to measure. The validity of the scale was established through face validity, content validity and criterion validity.

Face Validity

The face validity method was employed to validate the self-report delinquency scale. The face validity of this scale was established by discussing the statements of the scale with experienced teachers of Department of Education and Psychology. On the basis of their suggestions and agreement the face validity of the scale was established.

Content Validity

In order to establish the content validity of the Self-report Delinquency Scale (SRDS) the face validity was applied. The preliminary draft consisting about 52 items was given to the experts and where they were asked to give their opinion on whether items were related to the particular dimensions of the scale and the item measured what they were intended to measure.

On the basis of the experts' opinion, the items that were not relevant to particular dimension were rejected. In this way content validity of the SRDS has been established.

Criterion validity

Correlation of a test with a criterion as an external measure is referred to criterion validity. It was computed by using Questionnaire of The Problem Behaviour Assessment Scale by Remith George Carri (2002) on 50 students. The obtained validity coefficient of 0.84 was interpreted to be quite satisfactory.

Discussion of Findings

The aim of the present research was to construct and standardize the self-report delinquency scale for higher secondary schools students. For achieving this aim, the investigator constructed problem behaviour scale following different stages like pre-piloting and piloting. After item analysis the final form was given to the inventory. Reliability and validity were also tested. Reliability quotients were positive, high and significant. Validity was tested using three methods and they were found quite satisfactory.

Usefulness of the self-report delinquency scale

The period of adolescence presents emotional problems and stress and gives way to problem behaviour. The problems of the future, of establishing one's usefulness in the society, of finding a job, loom large. There are evidences that high schools students' experiences high levels of problem behaviour are less able to complete academic tasks. This behaviour ruins their life by limiting their academic and vocational opportunities and paving way to serious behaviour problems. Academic achievement and schools problems are significantly associated with violence, delinquency, class misdemeanours, group misdemeanours, substance use (Morgan & Wisely, 1996). With this in mind, the present research is relevant and important not only for school educators but also for researchers, policy planners and implementers. As, punishing, threatening, blaming and criticizing as a way of influencing students behaviour only works in the short term. What research shows is that effective teachers tend to rely instead more on practice strategies for preventing problem behaviour. They reinforce appropriate behaviour and teach academic, social and self-regulatory skills. The major responsibility for improving the problem behaviour among adolescents lies on the shoulders of the teachers, researcher, school authorities and parents. All these will have to join their hands as members of the inter-disciplinary team for serving in the best possible way. In view of these facts, the researcher found the scope to undertake the present study.

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