Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

Terri D. Fisher, Clive M. Davis, William L. Yarber, Sandra L. Davis

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Publication details

Donald L. Mosher
Published online on: 12 Aug 2010

How to cite :- Donald L. Mosher. 12 Aug 2010, Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory from: Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures Routledge
Accessed on: 12 Jul 2023

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Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory

DONALD L. MOSHER,† University of Connecticut

The Mosher Guilt Inventories measure three aspects of the personality disposition of guilt: Sex-Guilt, Hostility-Guilt, and Morality-Conscience. Multitrait-multimethod matrices have provided evidence for the discriminant validity of the three guilt subscales (Mosher, 1966, 1968). Sex guilt is psychologically magnified (Tomkins, 1979) in scenes involving awareness of sexual arousal, the discrete affects of interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy, and the discrete affect of shame, which appears in consciousness as guilt due to its associations with moral cognitions about sexual conduct. Hostility guilt is psychologically magnified in scenes involving the discrete affects of anger-rage and guilty affect and cognition about the immorality of aggressive behavior or cognitions. Conscience is psychologically magnified in scenes involving moral temptations and/or guilty affect about the self. The inventory is measuring three aspects of guilt conceived as a script, which is defined by Tomkins as a set of rules for the interpretation, prediction, production, control, and evaluation of a co-assembled set of scenes that has been further amplified by affect. The Mosher Guilt Inventories, as measures of these guilty scripts, have a considerable body of evidence supporting their construct validity.

Description

The Mosher Guilt Inventories (1961, 1966, 1968) were developed from responses given to sentence completion stems in 1960. The weights used in scoring the sentence completion were assigned to items from the scoring manual to construct true-false and forced-choice inventories for men and women, because the scoring manual had been developed to score each sex separately. O’Grady and Janda (1979) demonstrated there was no need to use weights because a 1 or 0 scoring procedure for guilty and nonguilty responses was correlated .99 with the weighted system. To compare the sexes, it was necessary either to transform the raw scores to standard scores, or to give the same

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1 Address correspondence to Donald L. Mosher, 648 Ternberry Forest Drive, The Villages, FL 32162; e-mail: dlmosher@aol.com
inventory to both sexes, which seemed to create no problems. During the past 30+ years, the range of guilt scores has been truncated as the means have dropped, particularly for sex guilt (Mosher & O’Grady, 1979). The 39 items in the female form of the forced-choice sex guilt inventory, in comparison to 28 for men, have continued to be a successful predictor of a broad range of sexually related behavior, cognitions, and affects in spite of containing items drawing 100% nonguilty choices.

Given the unusually strong evidence of construct validity for the inventories, I was reluctant to generate a new set of items that might be conceptually better but would limit generalization from past research. Instead, I submitted the nonoverlapping items contained in both male and female versions of the true-false (233 items) and the forced-choice (151 items) inventory to a sample of 187 male and 221 female University of Connecticut undergraduates for an updated item analysis. As suspected, many guilty-true items and guilty-forced-choice alternatives were uniformly rejected in that sample. The resulting Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory continues to measure Sex-Guilt, Hostility-Guilt, and Morality-Conscience, but it is now in a limited-comparison format that was selected to increase the range of response and to eliminate complaints about the forced-choice format.

The Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory consists of 114 items, arranged in pairs of responses to the same sentence completion stem, in 7-point Likert-type format to measure (a) Sex-Guilt—50 items, (b) Hostility-Guilt—42 items, and (c) Guilty-Conscience—22 items. Items were selected from an item analysis of the 151 forced-choice items in the original inventories. For the selected items, the correlations of the items with the subscale totals ranged from .32 to .62 with a median of .46. In addition, to ensure discriminant validity between the subscales, 90% of the items had a correlation with its own subscale that was significantly different from the correlation of the item with the other subscale totals. Several Morality-Conscience items were too highly correlated with Sex-Guilt, and thus were eliminated. This subscale was renamed Guilty-Conscience to reflect more adequately the retained items.

The inventory is suited for adult populations.

Response Mode and Timing

Subjects respond to items by rating their response on a 7-point subscale in which 0 means not at all true of (for) me, and 6 means extremely true of (for) me. Items are arranged in sets of two different completions to a single stem—the limited-comparison format—to permit subjects to compare the intensity of trueness for them because people generally find one alternative is more or less true for them. The inventory can be completed in approximately 20 minutes. Subscales can be omitted or given separately. Answers are usually recorded on machine-scoreable answer sheets.

Scoring

Scores are summed for each subscale by reversing the nonguilty alternatives (nonitalicized item numbers in the following keys). The items for Sex-Guilt are 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 26, 31, 32, 35, 36, 41, 42, 51, 52, 53, 54, 61, 62, 63, 64, 67, 78, 71, 72, 75, 76, 81, 82, 83, 84, 87, 88, 93, 94, 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 108, 111, and 112. The items for Hostility-Guilt are 3, 4, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 45, 55, 56, 69, 70, 77, 78, 79, 80, 85, 86, 91, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 109, 110, 113, and 114. The items for Guilty-Conscience are 1, 2, 9, 10, 27, 28, 47, 48, 49, 50, 57, 58, 59, 60, 65, 66, 73, 74, 76, 89, 90, 105, and 106. Higher scores indicate more scripted guilt.

Reliability

Because the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory was constructed for inclusion in an earlier volume of the Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures in the new format had not yet been assessed. In past research, split-half or alpha coefficients have averaged around .90 (Mosher, 1966, 1968; Mosher & Vonderheide, 1985).

Validity

Mosher (1979) reviewed approximately 100 studies appearing by 1977 that consistently supported the construct validity of the Mosher Guilt Inventories. Subsequent research continued to add the construct validity of the inventory as a valid measure of guilt as a personality disposition (Green & Mosher, 1985; Kelley, 1985; Mosher & Vonderheide, 1985).

References

Exhibit

Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory

Instructions: This inventory consists of 114 items arranged in pairs of responses written by college students in response to sentence completion stems such as “When I have sexual dreams. . . .” You are to respond to each item as honestly as you can by rating your response on a 7-point scale from 0, which means not at all true of (for) me to 6, which means extremely true of (for) me. Ratings of 1 to 5 represent ratings of agreement-disagreement that are intermediate between the extreme anchors of not at all true and extremely true for you. The items are arranged in pairs of two to permit you to compare the intensity of a trueness for you. This limited comparison is often useful since people frequently agree with only one item in a pair. In some instances, it may be the case that both items or neither item is true for you, but you will usually be able to distinguish between items in a pair by using different ratings from the 7-point range for each item.

Rate each of the 114 items from 0 to 6 as you keep in mind the value of comparing items within pairs. Record your answer on the machine scoreable answer sheet by filling in the blank opposite the item number with your rating from 0 to 6. Please do not omit any items; 0s must be filled in to be read by the computer.

I punish myself . . .
1. very infrequently.
2. when I do wrong and don’t get caught.

When anger builds inside me . . .
3. I let people know how I feel.
4. I’m angry myself.

“Dirty” jokes in mixed company . . .
5. do not bother me.
6. re something that make me very uncomfortable.

Masturbation . . .
7. is wrong and will ruin you.
8. helps one feel eased and relaxed.

I detest myself for . . .
9. nothing, I love life.
10. for my sins and failures.

Sex relations before marriage . . .
11. should be permitted.
12. are wrong and immoral.

Sex relations before marriage . . .
13. ruin many a happy couple
14. are good in my opinion.

Unusual sexual practices . . .
15. might be interesting.
16. don’t interest me.

When I have sexual dreams . . .
17. I sometimes wake up feeling excited.
18. I try to forget them.

After an outburst of anger . . .
19. I am sorry and say so.
20. I usually feel quite a bit better.

When I was younger, fighting . . .
21. didn’t bother me.
22. never appealed to me.

Arguments leave me feeling . . .
23. depressed and disgusted.
24. elated at winning.

“Dirty” jokes in mixed company . . .
25. are in bad taste.
26. can be funny depending on the company.

I detest myself for . . .
27. nothing at present.
28. being so self-centered.

When someone swears at me . . .
29. I swear back.
30. it usually bothers me even if I don’t show it.

Petting . . .
31. I am sorry to say is becoming an accepted practice.
32. is an expression of affection which is satisfying.

When I was younger, fighting . . .
33. disgusted me.
34. was always a thrill.

Unusual sex practices . . .
35. are not so unusual.
36. don’t interest me.

After a childhood fight, I felt . . .
37. good if I won, bad otherwise.
38. hurt and alarmed.

After an argument . . .
39. I am sorry for my actions.
40. I feel mean.

Sex . . .
41. is good and enjoyable.
42. should be saved for wedlock. and childbearing.

After an outburst of anger . . .
43. I usually feel quite a bit better.
44. I feel ridiculous and sorry that I showed my emotions.

After an argument . . .
45. I wish that I hadn’t argued.
46. I feel proud in victory, understanding in defeat.

I detest myself for . . .
47. nothing, I love life.
48. not being more nearly perfect.

A guilty conscience . . .
49. is worse than a sickness to me.
50. does not bother me too much.

“Dirty jokes” in mixed company . . .
51. are coarse to say the least.
52. are lots of fun.

When I have sexual desires . . .
53. I enjoy it like all healthy human beings.
54. I fight them for I must have complete control of my body. 

After an argument . . .

55. I am disgusted that I allowed myself to become involved.

65. I regret . . .

56. I usually feel better.

66. all of my sins.

Obscene literature . . .

57. helps people become sexual partners.

67. in my opinion, should not be practiced.

58. should be freely published.

68. are practiced too much to be wrong.

One should not . . .

59. lose his temper.

69. my tensions are relieved.

60. say “one should not.”

70. I am jittery and all keyed up.

Unusual sexual practices . . .

61. are unwise and lead to trouble.

71. is immature and ridiculous.

62. are all in how you look at it.

72. was indulged in.

Sex relations before marriage . . .

63. are OK as long as they’re heterosexual

73. by denying myself a privilege.

64. Usually aren’t pleasurable because you have preconceived feelings about their being wrong.

I punish myself . . .

65. for very few things.

66. getting caught, but nothing else.

Unusual sex practices . . .

67. are dangerous to one’s health and mental condition.

74. by denying myself a privilege.

75. are the business of those who carry them out and no one else’s.

I detest myself for . . .

76. are the business of those who carry them out and no one else’s.

Arguments leave me feeling . . .

77. depressed and disgusted.

80. I feel happy if I won and still stick to my own views if I lose.

78. proud, they certainly are worthwhile.

When I have sexual desires . . .

79. I am disgusted that I let myself become involved.

81. I attempt to repress them.

After an argument . . .

82. they are quite strong.

80. is not a good practice until after marriage.

83. is justified with love.

After a childhood fight I felt . . .

84. is justified with love.

85. as if I had done wrong.

86. like I was a hero.

Sex relations before marriage . . .

87. help people adjust.

88. should not be recommended.

If I robbed a bank . . .

89. I should get caught.

90. I would live like a king.

After an argument . . .

91. I am sorry and see no reason to stay mad.

92. I feel proud in victory and under-standing in defeat.

Masturbation . . .

93. is wrong and a sin.

94. is a normal outlet for sexual desire.

After an argument . . .

95. I am sorry for my actions.

96. if I have won, I feel great.

When anger builds inside me . . .

97. I always express it.

98. I usually take it out on myself.

After a fight, I felt . . .

99. relieved.

100. it should have been avoided for nothing was accomplished.

Masturbation . . .

101. is all right.

102. is a form of self destruction.

Unusual sex practices . . .

103. are awful and unthinkable.

104. are all right if both partners agree.

I detest myself for . . .

105. thoughts I sometimes have.

106. nothing, and only rarely dislike myself.

If I had sexual relations, I would feel . . .

107. all right, I think.

108. I was being used not loved.

Arguments leave me feeling . . .

109. exhausted.

110. satisfied usually.

Masturbation . . .

111. is all right.

112. should not be practiced.

After an argument . . .

113. it is best to apologize to clear the air.

114. I usually feel good if I won.