Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures

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Reiss Extramarital Sexual Permissiveness Scale

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Exhibit

Intentions Towards Infidelity Scale

Please indicate how likely or unlikely you would be to do the following things. Use the scale below to answer the following questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all Likely</th>
<th>−3</th>
<th>−2</th>
<th>−1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>+1</th>
<th>+2</th>
<th>Extremely Likely</th>
<th>+3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
1. How likely are you to be unfaithful to a partner if you knew you wouldn’t get caught?  
2. How likely would you be to lie to a partner about being unfaithful to them?  
3. How likely would you be to tell a partner if you were unfaithful to them? [R]  
4. How likely do you think you would be to get away with being unfaithful to a partner?  
5. How likely would you be to hide your relationship from an attractive person you just met?  
6. How likely do you think you are to be unfaithful to future partners?  
7. How likely do you think you are to be unfaithful to your present or future husband or wife?  

Reiss Extramarital Sexual Permissiveness Scale

IRA L. REISS,¹ University of Minnesota

This scale was designed to measure whether people would accept extramarital coitus for themselves under any of four culturally relevant situations.

Description

The four questions combine two important aspects of an extramarital relationship: One aspect focuses on whether the extramarital relation is pleasure-centered or love-centered, and the other aspect focuses on whether one’s mate accepts or rejects their partner having that sort of extramarital relationship. Together these aspects produce a way of classifying four types of extramarital relationships and measuring the degree of extramarital sexual permissiveness. One can then check responses by gender and other demographic variables.

The scale can be answered by those in a marital relationship or by those not married. The unmarried people can answer in terms of how they think they would respond if they were married. I suggest that all respondents be asked to answer the same four questions in two formats—one assuming the marriage they are in is unhappy and the other assuming that the marriage is happy. The differences in these responses would be a measure of the importance of marital happiness.

In research I carried out on four national samples, I found that three factors had a direct impact on what is accepted or rejected in extramarital attitudes: educational level, attitude toward premarital sexuality, and level of marital happiness (Reiss, 2006; Reiss, Anderson, & Sponaugle, 1980). I would suggest that any research into extramarital sexual permissiveness probe these three powerful predictors of extramarital sexual permissiveness as well as other predictors that can be tested (Buunk & Bakker, 1995; Hansen, 1987; Reiss & Miller, 1979; Weis & Jurich, 1985; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981).

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Response Mode and Timing

There are four response categories to each of the four questions: (a) Definitely, (b) Probably, (c) Unlikely, (d) Never. Assuming that you would ask these four questions twice—once asking the respondent to assume that he/she is in a happy marriage and once assuming that he/she is in an unhappy marriage condition—it would take a respondent about 5 or 6 minutes to answer all the questions.

Scoring

Respondents do seem to like having four answer categories but, for scaling purposes, I suggest dichotomizing the answers by counting “Definitely” or “Probably” as an affirmative response and counting “Unlikely” or “Never” as a rejecting response and giving one point for each question that the respondent affirms. I would, of course, do this scoring separately for the unhappy marriage condition and the happy marriage condition. So the top score in each of the two scales would be 4 and the lowest score would be 0. I would add that one could gain a rough measure of the equalitarianism of the respondents by asking them if they would have any problem if their mates gave the same answers as they did. Further, if you were studying married couples, it would be worthwhile to compare the scale scores of the two people in the marriage.

Reliability

Reliability can be established by noting that the scales have always met the general Guttman criteria concerning the coefficient of reproducibility and the coefficient of scalability.

Validity

My colleagues and I analyzed four different nationally representative samples from four different years to test for the best predictors of extramarital sexual permissiveness (Reiss et al., 1980). The national samples were carried out by the National Opinion Research Center. Our results were tested and supported by these different samples.

Construct validity was also established by finding the expected differences between men and women and between religiously devout and nondevout groups of people (Banfield & McCabe, 2001; Sponaugle, 1993). In addition, other researchers reported finding the pleasure/love and mate accepts/rejects aspects of my scale important in their work on measuring extramarital acceptance (Banfield & McCabe, 2001; Glass & Wright, 1992; Saunders & Edwards, 1984; Treas & Giesen, 2000).

Other Information

I give permission to use this scale in any research study. I would ask to be kept informed of such use and of any results of these studies. A researcher could use this same scale and just change “marriage” to a “committed relationship” and study cohabitation and other intimate dyadic arrangements. The researcher would then be measuring Extradyadic Sexual Permissiveness, and the results could be compared to those for studies of Extramarital Sexual Permissiveness.

References


Exhibit

Reiss Extramarital Sexual Permissiveness Scale

Answer in terms of your personal values concerning what you would accept in your marriage under the conditions stated. If you are not currently married, answer in terms of a possible future marriage.

1. Would you accept extramarital sexual intercourse in which physical pleasure is your focus even though your mate would not accept your having such a relationship?
a) Definitely  b) Probably  c) Unlikely  d) Never

2. Would you accept extramarital sexual intercourse in which physical pleasure is your focus if your mate would accept your having this type of relationship?
   a) Definitely  b) Probably  c) Unlikely  d) Never

3. Would you accept extramarital sexual intercourse in which love is emphasized even though your mate would not accept your having such a relationship?
   a) Definitely  b) Probably  c) Unlikely  d) Never

4. Would you accept extramarital sexual intercourse in which love is emphasized if your mate would accept your having this type of relationship?
   a) Definitely  b) Probably  c) Unlikely  d) Never

Note. Ask the single people to assume they are in a happy marriage when answering these four questions and then give them these same four questions again and ask them to assume they are in an unhappy marriage. Also ask married people to answer these questions twice—one for being in a happy marriage and once for being in an unhappy marriage. At the end, for married people, you should ask if in their own marriage they feel they are closer to a happy marriage or closer to an unhappy marriage.

Parenting Outcome Expectancy Scale

COLLEEN DIORIO, Emory University

The purpose of the Parenting Outcome Expectancy Scale (POES) is to measure the parent’s expectations about the outcomes associated with talking with his/her adolescent about sex-related topics.

Description

The development of the POES was based on the concept of outcome expectancy (OE), a central construct of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997). Bandura defines an outcome expectation as a judgment of the likely consequences that result from performance of a behavior. He proposes that people who hold more positive views about behavioral performances are more likely to perform the behavior. In the present situation, a parent who believes that talking with his/her children about sexuality issues has positive outcomes would likely initiate such discussions. Bandura further describes three types of OE—self-evaluative, social, and physical. Self-evaluative OE relates to personal reactions; social OE relates to the reactions of others; and physical OE addresses sensory effects related to a behavior. The POES includes items measuring only self-evaluative and social OE because there are no direct physical OEs that can be associated with discussions about sexuality.

For the development of the POES, outcome expectancy was defined as the parent’s expectations about the outcomes associated with talking with his/her adolescent about sex-related topics. The original 15 POES items were written following a review of the literature and focus group discussions with parents of adolescents (DiIorio et al., 2001). Content and measurement specialists reviewed the wording of each item and the consistency of the idea presented in each item with the concept of OE as defined by Bandura (1997). Based on their reviews, all 15 items were retained for the final version with some minor changes in wording.

The results of the initial reliability and validity testing using the 15-item version suggested that the POES could be improved by adding one item to measure cognitive self-evaluative OE and seven items to measure social OE. The addition of these eight items increased the total number of POES items to 23.

Response Mode and Timing

Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (5) Strongly Agree. Each item begins with the stem “If I talk with [my child] about sex topics.” In an interview situation or when using computer-assisted...