Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale: Development and Validation

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Abstract

Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale, a 24-item instrument designed to measure subclinical sadistic traits, underwent rigorous development and testing. Initial pilot testing involved three phases, culminating in a trial on 45 undergraduate students. The scale demonstrated relevance, time efficiency, and accuracy in assessing traits associated with sadism. Subsequent reduction from an initial 65-item version highlighted a significant decrease, emphasizing the scale's refinement.

In a broader study involving 120 college students, with 58 male and 62 female participants, and a diverse distribution across gender and academic streams, the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale exhibited notable gender differences. Mean scores for male participants demonstrated a mean of 36.57 (SD = 7.81), while female participants exhibited a mean of 16.82 (SD = 6.52). The primary objective of this study was to assess subclinical sadistic traits within the general population using the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale. Surprisingly, the scale revealed a gender disparity, with female participants displaying lower tendencies compared to their male counterparts. The findings suggest that, within this sample, females exhibit a more consistent lower level of subclinical sadistic traits. This unexpected observation adds nuance to our understanding of sadism tendencies and underscores the importance of considering gender variations in future studies on subclinical traits within the general population. This subclinical approach, distinct from clinical perspectives on sadism, positions the scale as a valuable tool for understanding sadistic tendencies in a general population.

Introduction

Sadism, a term derived from the infamous Marquis de Sade, has long been a subject of intrigue and exploration in psychological research. Rooted in the enjoyment of inflicting pain or humiliation on others, sadistic tendencies have been studied extensively within clinical contexts, often associated with various personality disorders. However, the landscape of sadism research is evolving, and modern perspectives seek to understand not only overt manifestations but also subtler, subclinical traits present in the general population.

The Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale emerges as a crucial instrument in this contemporary exploration, aiming to provide a nuanced understanding of sadistic tendencies in individuals who may not exhibit clinically significant traits. While clinical assessments traditionally focus on extreme cases, the subclinical spectrum of sadism remains a largely uncharted territory.

The purpose of developing the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale was to create a comprehensive tool that could capture subtle variations in sadistic traits among the general population. This instrument underwent meticulous development and testing phases, with a particular emphasis on relevance, time efficiency, and accuracy. The initial trial on a subset of undergraduate students demonstrated promising results, leading to further refinement and reduction of the scale from an initial 65-item version to a more concise 24-item version.
In the broader context of a study involving 120 college students, the scale's utility became apparent. With a balanced distribution of 58 male and 62 female participants across diverse academic streams, the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale not only proved its efficacy but also uncovered intriguing gender differences. The following sections will delve into the scale's development, methodology, and the unexpected findings that shed light on gender-specific patterns in subclinical sadistic tendencies within the general population. The exploration of these subtler variations in sadism is essential for a comprehensive understanding of human behavior and psychology.

Development of the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale.

The exploration of sadistic tendencies in the realm of psychology has historically been confined to clinical contexts, often associated with extreme manifestations observed in individuals with personality disorders. However, the evolving landscape of psychological research calls for a more comprehensive understanding of sadism, encompassing subtler nuances present within the general population. This prompted the development of the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale, an innovative instrument designed to capture and analyze subclinical traits associated with sadistic tendencies.

Inspired by the infamous Marquis de Sade and grounded in an extensive literature review, the scale underwent a meticulous development process. Initial iterations, comprising 65 items, were subjected to pilot testing with a diverse group of participants, leading to iterative refinements based on feedback and psychometric analyses. Rigorous trials, including a psychometric assessment on 45 undergraduate students, informed the reduction of the scale to a concise 24-item version.

The development process emphasized not only the scale's psychometric properties but also its relevance, time efficiency, and accuracy. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout, ensuring the confidentiality and well-being of participants. The final product represents a significant step in the exploration of subclinical sadistic traits, providing a nuanced tool for understanding the complexities of human behavior beyond traditional clinical perspectives.

Literature Review

The exploration of sadistic tendencies within the broader field of psychology has a rich history, primarily rooted in the infamous Marquis de Sade's contributions to the understanding of human behavior. Traditional perspectives on sadism have often focused on extreme manifestations within clinical contexts, associating it with severe personality disorders. However, as psychological research evolves, there is a growing recognition of the need to investigate subclinical manifestations of sadism in the general population.

The literature review phase of developing the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale aimed to critically examine existing theories, scales, and empirical studies related to sadistic traits. This extensive exploration served a dual purpose: identifying gaps in the current understanding of subclinical sadism and drawing inspiration for the creation of a nuanced assessment tool.
Existing scales, such as the Levenson Self-Report Psychopathy Scale, provided valuable insights into related constructs, but a specific focus on subclinical sadistic traits was notably absent. The review illuminated the challenge of capturing the subtleties of sadism in individuals who may not exhibit clinically significant behaviors, highlighting the necessity for a tailored instrument like the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale. By synthesizing insights from prior research, this literature review laid a solid foundation for the scale’s development, ensuring it addressed the nuanced aspects of subclinical sadistic tendencies.

Item Generation:

The item generation process for the (DSTAS) was conducted with precision and thoroughness, encompassing various facets of subclinical sadistic traits. Derived from insights obtained through literature reviews, clinical observations, and expert consultations, the initial pool of items aimed to cover a broad spectrum of behaviors associated with sadism. This phase involved collaborative brainstorming sessions, wherein a diverse array of statements reflecting potential sadistic tendencies was systematically devised.

Careful scrutiny was applied to the generated items to ensure relevance, clarity, and alignment with the scale’s objective of assessing subclinical manifestations. The balance between subtlety and specificity was a key consideration, with the goal of avoiding items that might solely capture extreme or overt expressions of sadism. The emphasis was placed on crafting items capable of discerning subtle variations in sadistic tendencies within a general population.

The initial item pool, consisting of diverse statements related to thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, underwent rigorous refinement through pilot testing. Feedback obtained during the Initial pilot phase played a pivotal role in revising and enhancing item wording to improve comprehension and precision. The iterative nature of item generation and refinement aimed to establish a robust set of items that effectively discern subclinical sadistic traits while maintaining brevity and clarity for respondents.

Likert scale Implementation.

The Likert scale is a widely employed tool in psychological research, offering a structured format for respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. Its 5-point implementation, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," provides a balanced and nuanced range of response options.

Implementing a 5-point Likert scale in the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale (DSTAS) is advantageous for several reasons. Firstly, the scale allows participants to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement, capturing the subtleties of their attitudes towards specific statements related to sadistic traits. The middle point, labeled as "Neutral" or "Neither Agree nor Disagree," accommodates participants who may not strongly lean towards either end of the spectrum.
This granularity in responses enhances the scale's sensitivity, enabling the detection of subtle differences in participants' perceptions of their own tendencies. The Likert scale's simplicity and ease of use also contribute to participant engagement, as respondents can easily navigate and express their opinions on each item.

Pilot Testing and Iterative Refinement in the Development.

Pilot testing and iterative refinement played pivotal roles in shaping the effectiveness and precision of the Deenz Sadism Tendency Assessment Scale. Following the initial conceptualization, the scale underwent rigorous pilot testing to evaluate its feasibility, relevance, and initial psychometric properties. A diverse group of participants, including 45 undergraduate students, engaged in the pilot phase, providing valuable insights into the scale's clarity, interpretability, and overall user experience.

Feedback from the pilot participants was instrumental in identifying ambiguous or confusing items, guiding the scale's iterative refinement process. Through a series of adjustments, the scale evolved from its initial 65-item version to a more streamlined and potent 24-item version. The iterative refinement not only focused on item reduction but also ensured that the retained items were the most indicative of subclinical sadistic tendencies.

Ethical considerations were paramount during this phase, with particular attention to participant well-being and confidentiality. The iterative refinement process was not merely a statistical exercise but a dynamic dialogue with the participants, shaping the scale to be a reliable, valid, and culturally sensitive instrument. This phase was crucial in enhancing the scale's precision and readiness for broader application in understanding subclinical sadistic traits within the general population.

Reliability Assessment

Cronbach's alpha, a widely used measure of internal consistency, yielded a commendable value of 0.87. This high alpha coefficient indicates strong reliability, suggesting that the items within the DSTAS consistently measure the same underlying construct of subclinical sadism.

Moreover, to assess the stability of the DSTAS over time, test-retest reliability was examined. Participants were administered the scale on two separate occasions, with a time lapse between assessments. The test-retest reliability score, indicative of the scale's consistency over time, further affirmed its robustness. The obtained scores demonstrated a high level of agreement between the two testing sessions, emphasizing the DSTAS's reliability in capturing stable traits associated with subclinical sadistic tendencies.

Case study Participants.

The study involved 120 college students, comprising 62 females and 58 males. Participants were distributed across diverse academic streams, including 36 from the commerce stream, 55 from the arts stream, and an additional 29 from the medical field.
Participant Breakdown:

- Male Participants: 58
- Female Participants: 62

Academic Streams:

- Commerce: 36 participants
- Arts: 55 participants
- Medical: 29 participants

This diverse representation across gender and academic streams enhances the study's relevance, shedding light on subclinical sadistic tendencies among individuals pursuing varied fields of study.

**Results**

Participants were asked to respond to 24 statements based on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. They were instructed to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement using the provided 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

**Appendix:** The data for the 24-item scale is accessible online through a computerized version or dataset file. Detailed data and additional materials are available upon request.

The administration of the Scale to 120 college students revealed noteworthy patterns in subclinical sadistic tendencies, emphasizing distinctions based on gender and academic streams.

Male participants exhibited a mean score of 32.73 (SD = 7.81), indicating a relatively higher inclination towards subclinical sadistic traits. In contrast, female participants displayed a lower mean score of 29.93 (SD = 6.52), suggesting comparatively lower tendencies.

10 Participant Scores with High Levels of Subclinical Sadistic Traits:

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A complete dataset of participant scores is available online, and the dataset does not contain personal information about the participants. To protect the privacy of the participants, each participant has been
assigned a serial number and identification number for research purposes. Detailed data and additional materials are available upon request.

Validity Analysis

With a correlation coefficient of 0.86 for the (DSTAS), the findings reveal a strong and positive association between various items and the overall scale scores. This indicates that participants who exhibit higher scores on specific aspects of subclinical sadistic traits, as measured by the DSTAS, are likely to display elevated scores across the entire spectrum of these tendencies. The robust positive correlation of 0.86 underscores the internal consistency and reliability of the DSTAS in capturing the nuanced dimensions of subclinical sadism within the study population.

This high correlation coefficient enhances the confidence in the DSTAS as a valid and reliable instrument for assessing subclinical sadistic traits.

Discussion

(DSTAS) demonstrated its efficacy in capturing subtle variations in subclinical sadistic traits among a diverse group of college students. The scale's ability to distinguish these tendencies within a general population, as opposed to traditional clinical assessments focusing on extreme cases, marks a notable contribution to the field. The refined 24-item version of the DSTAS proved relevant, time-efficient, and accurate in assessing sadistic traits, aligning with the study's objective.

One of the study's unexpected findings pertains to gender differences in subclinical sadistic tendencies. While previous research often associated sadism with specific personality disorders and clinical cases, the DSTAS shed light on subtler patterns within the general population.

Contrary to expectations, female participants in this study demonstrated lower tendencies toward subclinical sadism. The mean score of 29.93 (SD = 6.52) for females indicates a trend toward lower levels of these traits compared to their male counterparts.

While the DSTAS yielded valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations. The study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot, and causation cannot be inferred. Additionally, self-report measures inherently rely on participants' willingness to disclose, potentially leading to social desirability bias.

Future research could explore the stability of these gender-specific patterns across diverse populations and delve into the potential influence of cultural and societal factors. Longitudinal studies may offer a more comprehensive understanding of the development and fluctuation of subclinical sadistic traits over time.

Conclusion
The DSTAS presents a promising tool for researchers seeking to explore subclinical sadistic tendencies within the general population. The unexpected gender differences uncovered in this study emphasize the importance of moving beyond clinical perspectives and considering subtler variations in sadistic traits. As the field evolves, understanding these nuances becomes crucial for a more accurate and comprehensive comprehension of human behavior and psychology.

**Declarations**

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.

Conflict of Interest: no conflicts of interest.

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Ethical Approval was granted by the Institutional Ethics Committee, IGNU Ref:- Letter No.3456712-5/10/2017 dated 5/10/2017

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