

The Normative Beliefs about Aggression Scale [NOBAGS]

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The 20 item scale is designed to measure a child's, adolescent's, or young adult's perception of how acceptable it is to behave aggressively both under varying conditions of provocation (12 '*Retaliation Beliefs*' questions) and when no conditions are specified (8 '*General Beliefs*' questions). The items are appropriate for children from nursery school through adulthood with a change in the nouns "boy" and "girl" to "young man" and "young woman" for college age subjects or to "man" and "woman" for older adults. These wording changes are important, because the measure is intended to assess the subject's beliefs about the behavior of the subject him or herself even though the questions are worded about another person (a projective test). The scale may be administered individually with very young children, in group settings with the items being read and monitors checking on the children's responses for early primary school children, or in group or individual sessions or as mail surveys with little supervision for older children and adults.

The items on the scale were derived through a process of pilot testing and revision and now have been used on subjects from age 6 to 48 in a variety of countries and ethnic groups.

The items on the current scale are a subset of 35 items used on a previous of the scale called AGGAPS for Aggression Approval Scale. Those versions also used a different response scale, NEVER, SOMETIMES, OFTEN, ALWAYS which has been replaced with the current more valid response scales.

In this memo two AGE appropriate versions are shown – one for children or adolescents, and another for adults. They only differ in the pronouns used to describe others, e.g. 'boy' or 'man' or 'young man'; 'girl' or 'woman' or 'young woman'.

Within each AGE version, there are two "forms" (**Form A and Form B**) that differ only in whether the response options are worded "IT IS WRONG" or "IT IS OK." For obtaining mean scores for a group, one should use both forms equally within a group. That will guarantee that the average response scores for a group are not biased by differing possible connotations of 'OK' and 'WRONG.'

Key References:

Huesmann, L. R., & Guerra, N. G. (1997). Children's normative beliefs about aggression and aggressive behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(2), 408-419.

Huesmann, L.R., Guerra, N.G., Miller, L. & Zelli, A. (1992). The role of social norms in the development of aggression. In H. Zumkley & A. Fraczek (Eds.) *Socialization and Aggression*, NY: Springer.

Huesmann, L.R., Guerra, N.G., Zelli, A. & Miller, L. (1992). Differing cognitions relating to TV viewing and aggression among boys and girls. In K. Bjorkqvist & P. Niemela (Eds.), *Of Mice and Women*. New York: Academic Press.

Guerra, N.G., Huesmann, L.R. & Hanish, L. (1995). The role of normative beliefs in children's social behavior. In N. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Review of Personality and Social Psychology: Vol. 15. Social Development*, (pp. 140-158). London: Sage.

(See "Selected publications using the scale at end of this memo)