

Violence Measuring Instruments for US Hispanic Children & Adolescents

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Background

Youth violence is a public health problem across all racial/ethnic groups, including US Hispanic children. Self-report data analyses demonstrate race/ethnicity's limited effect on the general proportion of non-fatal youth violence. Nonetheless, other characteristics which may vary by race and ethnicity (e.g., behavioral norms, language comprehension, cultural effects on violence risk factors) may affect the way children understand, interpret and respond to questions on different violence-related instruments.

Ethnicity & Measuring Violence

Differences in the way respondents react to, consider, view, and interpret the data collection instrument can potentially contribute in determining the validity and reliability of the scores obtained by any given instrument. Children are also differentially associated to the context they belong to (e.g., family's SES, community violence).

Their positive or negative *differential associations* (i.e., the varied direct and indirect interactions they have with others) may influence their future deviance or violence-related behaviors. These differential associations allow for children to be exposed to various *definitions* on what violence entails, the *differential reinforcements* that will encourage or discourage pursuing violence, and the *models* whose behaviors they will imitate. Akers' Social Learning Theory addresses these main constructs (i.e., differential associations, definitions, differential reinforcements, modeling), and supports the importance of knowing if scores obtained truthfully represent what the respondent meant and the instrument intended to measure (i.e., scores' validity).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to do a systematic assessment of available measures of violent behaviors, that have been tested among Hispanic children and adolescents in the United States (US). Specifically, this study aims to answer the following research objectives:

- Identify currently available instruments to measure violence, aggression and bullying that have been tested among US Hispanic children and adolescents.
- Identify current barriers and opportunities to enhance violence-related assessment tools to be utilized among US Hispanic children and youth.

Methods

Design	Systematic, cross-sectional assessment of peer-reviewed, published instruments
Inclusion Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included US Hispanics/Latinos in their validation test samples Assessed ≥ 1 of the following perpetrator-focused constructs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> aggressiveness aggressive behavior violence school violence bullying Self-reported or third-person data Age-groups (or grades 5th-12th): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> late middle childhood (ages 9-11) early adolescence (ages 12-14) middle adolescence (ages 15-17)
Exclusion Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violence-related victimization Other forms of violence (e.g., attitudes towards violence; exposure/witnessing violence; child abuse or maltreatment; domestic or intimate partner violence; conduct problems; sexual abuse; any clinically defined conduct; behavioral or emotional conditions) Created solely for a specific study Tested only among institutionalized samples or children with developmental disabilities or mental health conditions Validated outside of the US (i.e., 50 States & DC)

Table 1. Violence-related instruments identified and selected for this study, by database^a

Database source	No. of instruments		
	Identified	Qualified	Not prev. selected
Step 1: Initial identification and selection of instruments			
"PsycINFO 1806 to October Week 4 2009" ^a	11	8	8
Step 2: Additional identification and selection of instruments			
UMDNJ's "Searchable Inventory of Instruments Assessing Violent Behavior and Related Constructs in Children and Adolescents" ^b	68	4	2 ⁱⁱⁱ
CDC's "Measuring Violence Related Attitudes, Behaviors, and Influences among Youths: A Compendium of Assessment Tools" ^c	15	1	0 ⁱⁱⁱ
Total number of instruments selected for Steps 1 & 2			
			10
Step 3: Review of instrument's psychometric properties			
Buros Mental Measurements Yearbook, online database	10		4

^a Includes all instruments available at these databases as of October 30, 2009. ^b Some of the identified studies included more than one instrument. ^c Includes only those instruments identified that fully met the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study, and had not already been selected in a previous step of this process.

Table 2. US Hispanic-validated childhood violence, aggression and bullying instruments and measures¹

Instrument	Construct	Lang.	Type	Testing and Psychometrics Reported				Identified via...	MMY Review	Hispanic Refs.
				Sample	Scale Develop.	Validity	Reliability			
Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2)	Adolescent IPV	English	Questionnaire	14-18 y/o, Females, Mexican American	Use pre-existing CTS2	Discriminant; Criterion	Internal Consistency	Step 1: PsycInfo	No	Cervantes, Duenas, Valdez, & Kaplan, 2006
Past Feelings and Acts of Violence Scale	Violence									
Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC) & Revision (BASC-2)	Aggressive Behaviors	English	Teacher-rating; Parent-rating; Self-report questionnaire; Other	6-12 y/o; M/F; US national (Hispanic, White, Black)	EFA; CFA	Content; Divergent; Convergent; Construct; Concurrent	Inter-Rater; Internal Consistency	Step 1: PsycInfo	Yes: National sample, normed for general U.S. pop., 2002-04	Valencia Serrano, 1996
Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)	Aggressive Behaviors, Bullying, Violence	English, Latino Spanish, Others	Parent-rating	3 rd -4 th grade; M/F; Aggressive children; SW Texas, USA; (Hispanic, White, Black)	EFA; Translation/ back-translation processes	Content; Construct; Criterion; Test-retest	Inter-Rater; Internal Consistency	Step 1: PsycInfo; Step 2: UMDNJ Inventory	Yes: National sample, normed for general U.S. population, 1989	Achenbach, 2009; Valencia Serrano, 1996
School Behavior Checklist	Aggressive Behaviors	English	Teacher-rating	3 rd -4 th grade; M/F; Aggressive children; SW Texas, USA; (Hispanic, White, Black)	MTMM; Liserat Confirmatory Analyses	Criterion; Construct; Content	Inter-Rater; Test-Retest	Step 1: PsycInfo	No	Valencia Serrano, 1996
Child Behavior Checklist - Teacher report Form	Aggressive Behaviors, Bullying, Violence									
Children's Action Tendency Scale (CATS)	Aggressive behavior in conflict situations	English	Questionnaire	6-15 y/o; M/F; Hispanic, Anglo	N/A	Content; Construct	Test-retest reliability; Split half reliability	Step 1: PsycInfo; Step 2: UMDNJ	No	Briggs, Tovar, & Corcoran, 1996; Deluty, 1979
Rorschach Aggressive Content	Aggressive imagery (aggression)	Images	Imagery	8-12 y/o; M/F; Harlem, NYC; 33.3% Hispanic	N/A	N/A	Inter-Rater	Step 1: PsycInfo	Yes: Not aggression; Not Hispanics	Crain & Smoke, 1981
Aggression Scale	Aggression	English	Questionnaire	3 rd -8 th graders; M/F; 68% Hispanic	EFA	Construct	Internal consistency	Step 2: CDC Compendium & UMDNJ	No	Orpinas & Frankowski, 2001
Children's Inventory of Anger (ChIA)	Aggression	English	Self-Report Questionnaire	6-11 y/o; M/F	Factor analyses	Content; Concurrent; Discriminant; Construct	Internal consistency; Test-retest	Step 2: UMDNJ	Yes: National sample repres. of general U.S. pop.; mid-1970s	Flanagan & Allen, 2005

¹ Only those instruments that underwent psychometric testing for the scores of U.S.-based Hispanic-only children samples were included as part of this assessment. EFA: Exploratory Factor Analyses CFA: Confirmatory Factor Analyses MTMM: Multi-Trait Multi-Method Analyses

Discussion

This study focused solely on the preliminary identification of youth violence assessment measures that have been validated among US Hispanic children. The significance of validating instruments according to the specific populations they are intended to be used with – in this case, different ethnicities – pertains to the diverse structural effects, behavioral norms and disparities in risk factors that are associated to differences in race and ethnicity. English language proficiency and culture-related factors (e.g., *familismo*) should also be considered, as these may affect the construct validity of any given measure across populations.

Key Findings

- Most identified instruments were in English.
- Most studies did not specify if they: a) included US Hispanics in validation samples, and/or b) assessed the psychometric properties of the instrument specifically for US Hispanics.
- Some of the Spanish-language instruments have been validated with very specific populations (e.g., Mexican Americans), and may not be feasible for all Hispanic subgroups.
- Some violence-related measures are part of larger, more comprehensive instruments.
- None were created specifically for U.S. Hispanic children.
- None were initially developed in the Spanish language.

Implications & Limitations

More in-depth analyses of the psychometric properties of the US Hispanic-validated youth violence assessment instruments identified in this study should be conducted. Given the drastic demographic changes experienced by the US general population during the past decades (i.e., racial/ethnic composition), it is recommended that those youth violence instrument that were normed for the US general population during the 1990s, 1980s and prior to that time be re-assessed. Finally, given the frequent and fluent migration of Puerto Ricans between Puerto Rico (PR) and the mainland US, violence-related instruments validated in the PR could serve as a foundation for the development of youth violence assessment instruments specific for US Hispanic children. An evaluation of the psychometric tests and properties reported for such studies are recommended.

Limitations

- PsycInfo is selectively indexed and not necessarily exhaustive of the total universe of instruments available.
- Direct comparisons of the psychometric properties of these instruments were not attempted or feasible to conduct due to the variety of violence-related constructs assessed by each specific instrument.
- Did not assess the conceptual definitions of each violence construct to determine the consistency or lack thereof in the conceptualization.
- Did not consider validated instruments available to measure youth violence among PR's children (US territory; American citizenship; frequent internal migration PR-mainland US).

For additional information and citation of this work, please contact the author at mcristalmc@gmail.com or mmercad1@health.usf.edu. Thank you.