

The Perceived Social Competence Scale II

At the heart of The LiFEsports Initiative is the aim of producing research that can be translated into real-world practice and distilling. In order to help disseminate the Initiative's innovative research, LiFEsports has developed a series of Research Briefs summarizing their findings. The current summary, published in *Research on Social Work Practice* (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Lower, Riley, Gibson, & Ruch, 2014), explains the processes used for validating the modified Perceived Social Competence Scale. Additionally, practical implications for researchers, program administrators, and youth development workouts are highlighted.

Study Aims

Youth development interventions and prevention strategies often aim to promote social competence among youth participants. Viewed as a key protective factor, social competence has been linked with resiliency in children and youth and the demonstration of social competence has been identified as an essential aspect of healthy normal development. By definition, social competence is the degree to which youth engage in prosocial behaviors that allow them to successfully create and maintain positive social interactions with others. However, accessible user-friendly, cost-effective measurements tools are limited. Past research focused on the development and validation of one user-friendly tool that measures this construct, the four-item Perceived Social Competence Scale (PSCS; Anderson-Butcher, Iachini, & Amorose, 2008). However, since the tool's original inception, more recent research has demonstrated that the original version of the PSCS has not necessarily functioning as expected. As such, the objective of this study was to examine the psychometric properties of the revised five-item PSCS-II.



Methods

Data were collected from two samples of youth who participated in a sport-based positive youth development summer program in 2012 and 2013. The participants in Sample 1 (2012) included 420 youth who responded to all items on the PSCS-II and completed other related constructs on 2 separate occasions (i.e., pretest and posttest). These youth ranged in age from 9 to 15 years ($M = 11.62$, $SD = 1.43$) and included 60.2% males and 39.8% females. The majority of youth self-identified as African American/Black (77.6%). Sample 2 (2013) was comprised of 451 youth who completed the PSCS-II on 3 separate occasions (i.e., pretest, midpoint, and posttest). These youth ranged in age from 8 to 15 years old ($M = 11.48$, $SD = 1.56$) and included 58.4% males and 41.5% females. The majority of youth self-identified as African American/Black (84.7%). The original PSCS consisted of four items designed to measure social competence of youth. Through the examination of theory and research in social competence and youth development, the authors developed an additional four items. Youth were asked to indicate "how true" each statement was on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = Not at all true to 5 = Really true). To explore the predicative validity of the revised PSCS-II, youth perceptions of social skills were measured using the 46-item Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) on a 4-point Likert-scale (1 = not true to 4 = very true).



Results

To test the overall factor structure and gender invariance of the PSCS-II, separate CFAs for males and females were conducted. For both male and female participants, the same five-item version of the scale was found to fit, with each item positively and significantly loaded on the social competence factor. Having settled on moving forward with a five-item version of the measure, the next step was to specifically test for gender invariance on the scale scores which provided further evidence the five-item PSCS-II functions similarly for males and females. The next set of analyses revealed that the factor loadings remained constant across time for the three measurements in Sample 2. Finally, to establish predictive validity, Sample 1 was used to examine correlations between the PSCS-II and SSIS. Correlations between both scales did, in fact, support the predictive validity of the proposed social competence tool.

Discussion

Assessing youths' social competence and related outcomes is central to youth development programs and interventions. As such, the purpose of this study was the revisit and enhance the psychometric properties of the original PSCS. Results from the current study support a revised five-item scale, called the PSCS-II, which demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties. As a result of this study, youth workers now have access to an improved practical and ready-to-use measurement tool to assess youth perceptions of social competence.



Perceived Social Competence Scale II

Scale Items

- Item 1: I help other people
- Item 2: I ask others if I can be of help.
- Item 3: I show concern for others.
- Item 4: I show care for others.
- Item 5: I give support to others.

Response Options

- 1 = Not at all true
- 2 = A little true
- 3 = Somewhat true
- 4 = Pretty true
- 4 = Really true

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A., Lower, L., Riley, A., Gibson, A., & Ruch, D. (2014). The case for the perceived social competence scale II. *Research on Social Work Practice*.

Anderson-Butcher, D., Iachini, A., & Amorose, A. (2008). Initial reliability and validity of the perceived social competence scale. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18(1), 47-54.

The LiFEsports Initiative is a collaborative endeavor sponsored by the Department of Athletics and College of Social Work at the Ohio State University. For more information, please visit our website at: www.osulifesports.org or contact us at LiFEsports@buckeyes.ath.ohio-state.edu.