

Glossary

Construct: An unobserved characteristic on which people vary and which scales are intended to measure.

Intimate partner violence (IPV): Actual or threatened physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or stalking abuse by a current or former spouse (including common-law spouses), dating partner, or boyfriend or girlfriend. Intimate partners can be of the same or opposite sex. Intimate partners may or may not be cohabiting.

Reliability: The extent to which a scale's items consistently measure the same construct and are responded to similarly over time by the same individual.

Internal consistency reliability: Internal consistency reliability is typically measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which assesses the degree to which responses to items of a scale are correlated. Scores can range from 0 to 1.0, with higher scores reflecting greater homogeneity among the items. A general guideline to evaluating the adequacy of alpha coefficients is that scores greater than or equal to .80 reflect "exemplary" internal consistency reliability, scores ranging from .70 to .79 indicate "extensive" internal consistency reliability, scores ranging from .60 to .69 indicate "moderate" internal consistency reliability, and scores less than .60 reflect minimal reliability (Robinson et al. 1991).

Test-retest reliability: The extent to which an individual's responses on a scale provided at one point in time correlate with his or her responses on the same scale at another point in time.

Sensitivity: The proportion of all "true" cases in a target population that are correctly identified by a particular scale.

Validity: The extent to which a scale measures what it is supposed to measure.

Construct validity: The extent to which a scale's items measure the hypothesized underlying construct. There are two aspects of construct validity: convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Convergent validity: The extent to which responses on a scale are correlated to responses on another scale that assess a similar underlying construct.

Discriminant validity: The absence of a significant association between two scales that are hypothesized to assess different constructs.

Criterion-related validity: The extent to which responses on a scale correspond to, are related to, or predict the relevant behavior, which is termed the criterion.

Factorial validity: Shown with factor analysis when the items of interest load on the same factor and do not load with items that are designed to measure a different construct.

Content validity: The extent to which a scale's items reflect the content domain for the construct they are intended to measure.

Sources: Duncan 1995; Ghiselli et al. 1981; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control 2002; Rathus and Feindler 2004; Robinson et al. 1991; and Teutsch and Churchill 2000.

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