Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale-Revised

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Introduction

- Fear of negative evaluation refers to apprehension and distress arising from concerns about being negatively evaluated by others.

- The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (BFNE; Leary, 1983) accurately depicts fears of negative evaluation using 8 straight-forwardly worded and 4 reverse-worded five point Likert-scale items.

- Rodebaugh et al. (2004) and Weeks et al. (in press) recommended using only the straightforwardly worded items when scoring the BFNE.

- This study had two over-arching purposes:

  - To evaluate the abovementioned recommendation through replication of the two-factor BFNE solution.
  - Assuming successful replication, to determine the best course for scoring of the BFNE factors (or subscales).

- There are three possible courses of action:
  1) the four reverse-worded items could be left as-is but not scored;
  2) they could be discarded;
  3) they could be reworded to be straightforward.

Method

- A matched sample was selected from 201 undergraduate students from the University of Houston and 184 undergraduate students from the University of Regina:

  - Houston sample:
    - 64 men aged 18 to 38 ($M = 21.14$; $SD = 3.41$)
    - 37 women aged 18 to 36 ($M = 20.88$; $SD = 2.46$)
  - Regina sample:
    - 44 men aged 19 to 34 ($M = 22.11$; $SD = 2.83$)
    - 140 women aged 18 to 37 ($M = 21.10$; $SD = 2.66$)

- The Houston questionnaire battery included the original BFNE (i.e., with the reverse-worded items intact) while the Regina questionnaire battery included the BFNE-R (i.e., with the reverse-worded items reworded to be straightforward).

- The original and revised items are shown in Table 1.

- CFAs were conducted to assess the degree to which both the Regina and the Houston data fit the single- and two-factor BFNE models.

- ANOVAs comparing participant's item-responses to determine the utility of the reverse-worded/revised item content were also performed.

Results

- Both one- and two-factor models provided a good fit to the data.

- The two-factor solution for the BFNE-R was, statistically, marginally better than the unitary solution $\chi^2 (1, 201) = 15.06$; $p < .01$ but does not support prior unitary theories.

- Correlation between the two latent factors of the BFNE-R was extremely high ($r = .95$), and the revised items actually load equally or better on the unitary model (Table 2).

- Houston participants endorsed the reverse-worded items significantly more than the straight-forwardly worded items $F(1, 200) = 12.535$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .059$).

- Regina participants endorsed the revised items significantly more than the unchanged items $F(1, 183) = 179.977$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .496$).

Discussion

- Psychometric changes stemming from revisions to the reverse-worded items of the BFNE do not definitively resolve questions regarding their utility.

- At this time, even though parsimony, along with the minimal reduction in scale α, might support removal of the 4 items entirely, such a decision may be premature because CFA indices support both 8- and 12-item versions of a BFNE using the revised items (BFNE-R).

- The BFNE-R provides an alternative to removing, or not scoring, these items, allowing researchers to err on the side of caution, rather than risk a reduction in sensitivity.

- Overall, we suggest use of the BFNE-R rather than a shortened form.

Table 1. Original BFNE reverse-worded questions and their revised counterparts

Item Number	Item
1	I worry about what other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.
2 (Original)	I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me.
2 (Revised)	It bothers me when people form an unfavorable impression of me.
3	I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.
4 (Original)	I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone.
4 (Revised)	I worry about what kind of impression I make on people.
5	I am afraid that others will not approve of me.
7 (Original)	Other people's opinions of me do not bother me.
7 (Revised)	I am concerned about other people's opinions of me.
8	When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.
9	I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.
10 (Original)	If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me.
10 (Revised)	If I know someone is judging me, it tends to bother me.
11	Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.
12	I often worry that I will say or do wrong things.

Table 2. Regina sample one- and two-factor model factor loadings and residuals.

Item	One-Factor Factor Loading	Item Residual	R^2 Value for Factor Loading	Factor*	Two Factor Factor Loading	Item Residual	R^2 Value for Factor Loading
1	0.78	0.63	0.61	1	0.78	0.62	0.61
3	0.78	0.62	0.61	1	0.80	0.61	0.63
5	0.81	0.59	0.66	1	0.82	0.57	0.68
6	0.82	0.57	0.68	1	0.82	0.57	0.68
8	0.81	0.58	0.67	1	0.82	0.57	0.68
9	0.77	0.58	0.66	1	0.81	0.58	0.66
11	0.71	0.64	0.59	1	0.76	0.65	0.58
12	0.71	0.71	0.50	1	0.71	0.70	0.51
2	0.82	0.71	0.50	2	0.68	0.68	0.54
4	0.84	0.57	0.68	2	0.54	0.54	0.71
7	0.72	0.55	0.70	2	0.50	0.50	0.75
10	0.72	0.70	0.51	2	0.73	0.68	0.54

Note: *Factor 1 = Straightforwardly-worded items, Factor 2 = Revised items

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