



# Comprehensive assessment of children's psychological needs: Development of the child Reiss Motivation Profile for ages four to eleven<sup>☆</sup>



Carl F. Weems<sup>a,\*</sup>, Steven Reiss<sup>b</sup>, Keith L. Dunson<sup>c</sup>, Rebecca A. Graham<sup>d</sup>, Justin D. Russell<sup>a</sup>, Donice M. Banks<sup>d</sup>, Erin L. Neill<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA

<sup>b</sup> IDS Publishing, OH, USA

<sup>c</sup> Searsport High School, ME, USA

<sup>d</sup> University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA, USA

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 15 September 2014

Received in revised form 27 January 2015

Accepted 28 March 2015

### Keywords:

Motivation

Children

Reliability

Validity

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to test assumptions of Reiss's theory about the assessment of intrinsic motivations in children. We constructed a rating scale that can be used with parents or teachers to assess the strength of 10 psychological needs among children aged 4–11 and evaluated the psychometric properties. Sample 1 included parents ( $N = 365$ ) of children aged 4–11 years. Sample 2 consisted of 55 adolescent–primary caregiver dyads of youth aged 12–17 years. Caregivers in this sample completed the parent report version and the adolescents completed a previously validated school version of the Reiss Motivation Profile® (RMP) to assess concurrent validity. Sample 3 was composed of teachers who completed the child RMP about the children ( $N = 333$ ) in their classes. Results provide initial evidence for the factorial validity, test–retest reliability, scale reliabilities, construct validity, and concurrent validity of the child assessment tool.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

Student motivation is a significant determinant of learning and school success (Gilman & Anderman, 2006a). Within the study of human motivation, the importance of recognizing that some activities and pursuits are intrinsically rewarding has been growing for some time (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Reiss, 2004). The relevance of identifying intrinsic motivation in academic activities has also been recognized (Gilman & Anderman, 2006a,b; Gottfried, 1983). One line of research has examined the effects of external reward on intrinsic

motivation and has suggested that indeed, things like tangible rewards might be detrimental to intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 1999). An important line of research has focused on the identification of the range of activities that individuals find intrinsically rewarding, individual differences in the intensity of these motives, and their role in career guidance, and school counseling (Boyle, Start, & Hall, 1989; Froiland, 2011; Froiland & Oros, 2013; Reiss & Havercamp, 1998).

A number of perspectives suggest that certain motives are common to everyone and deeply rooted in human nature. As McDougall (2008/1908) suggested, “Every man is so constituted to seek, to strive for, and to desire certain goals which are common to ... all men, but also ... [to] their nearer relatives in the animal world, such goals as food, shelter from danger, the company of our fellows, intimacy with the opposite sex, triumph over our opponents, and leadership among our companions” (pp. 406–407). James (1918/1890) and McDougall (2008/1908) referred to universal motives as human “instincts,” but Murray (1938, 1943) and McClelland (1961), called them “psychological needs.” From about 1890 to about 1960 psychologists proposed numerous lists of psychological needs. By the 1970s, however, needs theory had become less popular. Critics noted that none of the many lists of needs had been scientifically validated. Further, Murray's (1938) Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was for decades the most widely used assessment of psychological needs, but Zubin, Eron, and Schumer's (1965) extensive review of scholarly studies questioned its

<sup>☆</sup> Contributions: Carl Weems drafted this report, conducted or supervised all analyses, supervised data collection for samples 1 and 2, and provided comments and revision on the initial draft of the child Reiss Motivation Profile® measure. Steven Reiss helped draft the report, developed the motivation theory, drafted the Child RMP measure items and scaling, and provided guidance on hypotheses, data collection, and data interpretation. Keith Dunson helped draft the report, collected all the data on the teacher reports in sample 3, and provided comments on aspects of Study 3. Rebecca Graham, Justin Russell, Donice Banks, and Erin Neill helped draft the report, collected the data for samples 1 and 2, created and checked data files for analyses in Studies 1 and 3, and helped draft data analyses for the report. Disclosures: Carl Weems received a grant from IDS Publishing Co. to collect the data in samples 1 and 2 and drafted this report. Steven Reiss is the founder and CEO of IDS Publishing, the publisher of the RMP.

\* Corresponding author at: Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011, USA.

E-mail address: [cweems@iastate.edu](mailto:cweems@iastate.edu) (C.F. Weems).

scientific reliability and validity. They concluded that the practice of inferring a person's needs based on interpretation of TAT stories is without adequate scientific foundation.

Reiss and Havercamp (1998) sought to identify human needs psychometrically. They constructed a questionnaire consisting of 326 items that addressed every need they and their colleagues could think of, and then asked adults from diverse stations in life to rate the extent to which he or she embraced each possible need. The data were submitted to exploratory factor analysis; the results were used to revise the questionnaire; and a new sample of adults from diverse stations in life completed the revised scale. The process of administering the questionnaire, factor analysis, and revision of test items was repeated three times and followed with a confirmatory factor analysis (Reiss, 2008; Reiss & Havercamp, 1998). In total 7700 people participated in these studies. As of this writing, however, more than 85,000 people, aged 12 through 80, from many cultures and five continents have completed the Reiss Motivation Profile® (RMP), which now consists of 128 items and assesses 16 psychological needs.

The reliability and validity of the RMP have been reported or summarized in 17 peer-reviewed articles and six books. The RMP has been validated against real-world behavior such as religious preferences (Reiss, 2004), media preferences (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004), sports participation (Reiss, Wiltz, & Sherman, 2001) and club membership (Havercamp & Reiss, 2003). Further, Reiss (2008) has suggested that the 16 needs provide a conceptual platform for connecting motives with numerous personality traits and values.

Reiss (2000, 2008) has suggested that all psychologically important human motives may be expressions of one or more of the 16 psychological needs they derived in their factor analytic studies. This claim is based on the manner in which the 16 needs were derived. In the 15 years since the RMP research was first published, no one has suggested a psychological need clearly omitted from the RMP's list. Arguably, Reiss's (2008) taxonomy of 16 basic desires is among the most extensively validated published lists of human needs. It is the only list that meets all of these criteria: empirically derived; factorial validity; and validated against real-world choices, behaviors, and related measures. In contrast, the alternative lists of human needs were based on the study of primitive societies, observations of animals, or scientifically questionable probes of the unconscious mind. Reiss and Havercamp (1998) were the only researchers to construct a thorough list of human needs by asking people what it is that intrinsically motivates them.

In the 1990s Reiss and his graduate students at Ohio State University attempted to construct a child version of the RMP with large (>300) samples of parents and teachers rating elementary school children. The results were never reported because the studies had failed to produce psychometrically sound scales of children's needs. Whereas the adult RMP was based on self-report, the experimental child scales were based on ratings made by teachers and/or parents. Based on knowledge of psychological needs from studies with the Reiss Motivation Profile® and the unsuccessful, and experience with prior, failed research efforts to construct a child version of the RMP, Carl Weems and Steven Reiss wrote a new, 80-item rating scale intended to measure 10 psychological needs of children. Here is how the needs on the new Child RMP were thought to align with those on the established adult tool.

- (1) Competence/Achievement. The RMP has a scale that assesses motivation to influence one's environment. It includes motivation to lead, achievement motivation, and assertiveness. The corresponding scale we wrote for children assesses achievement motivation. An example of an item on this scale is, "Takes greater pride in his/her work than most children do".
- (2) Social Contact/Belonging. The RMP has a scale that assesses motivation to socialize with peers. It includes motivation for fun, but not motivation to spend time with family or parents.

The corresponding scale we wrote for children assesses friendliness. An example of an item on this scale is, "Known as an unusually friendly child".

- (3) Character/Citizenship. The RMP has a scale measuring need for honor, which includes the need for character and moral self-discipline. It also has a scale for idealism, which is motivation to help others, including altruism and need for fairness and justice. For the child version we wrote a single scale, called need for Citizenship, intended to measure motivation for outstanding character. Developmentally, idealism and honor because the need for the betterment of society is only emerging while the desire to behave ethically may be relatively more developed. An example of an item on this scale is, "Known as an unusually honest child."
- (4) Competition. The RMP has a scale assessing valuation of revenge. It includes confrontation, aggression, the fighting spirit, and competition. For the child version we wrote a scale to assess motivation to combativeness. An example of an item on this scale is, "Enjoys competition more than does the average child".
- (5) Order. This is motivation for structure. It includes need for organization, cleanliness, and attention to detail. It is included on both the adult and child versions of the RMP. An example of an item on this scale is, "Becomes upset when things are out of place".
- (6) Physical Activity. Both the child and adult RMPs have a scale assessing the strength of the need for physical activity. An example of an item on this scale is, "Loves physical exertion".
- (7) Acceptance/Self-Esteem. Both the child and adult RMPs have a scale assessing sensitivity to failure and criticism. This scale is called need for Acceptance on the adult RMP and Self-esteem on the child version to assess the need for self-esteem. An example of an item on this scale is, "Very sensitive to disapproval."
- (8) Popularity/Status. The RMP has a scale assessing the need for social standing. It includes attention-seeking and valuation of wealth and popularity. For the child version we wrote a scale intended to assess valuation of popularity. An example of an item on this scale is, "More impressed with the 'in crowd' than is the average child."
- (9) Anxiety/Tranquility. Both the child and adult RMPs have a scale assessing sensitivity to anxiety and pain. An example of an item on this scale is, "More than the average child, avoids danger".
- (10) Curiosity/Understanding. Both the child and adult RMPs have a scale assessing intellectual curiosity. An example of an item on this scale is, "Has a reputation for being intellectually curious".

The RMP scales with no corresponding scale on the child version were needs for family, independence, romance, and saving.

The purpose of this paper is to provide data testing assumptions of Reiss's theory (2004, 2008) about the assessment of intrinsic motivations in children aged 4 to 11 years. Three samples are used to test the construct validity of the child RMP. Cronbach and Meehl (1955) have suggested that for constructs and their measures to be valid (i.e., construct validity), they must be incorporated into a theoretical structure, termed the "nomological net" (see also Weems & Stickle, 2005). This report provides initial data on the nomological net for the child RMP by presenting a series of findings on the reliability, convergent associations, divergent associations, and discriminant validity of the scales as well as the existence of differing profiles and the factor loadings of the items on their respective scales. Drawing broadly from the extant research and the theory of fundamental motivations (Reiss, 2004, 2008, 2009), it was predicted that both parents and teachers would be able to reliably report on youth motivations and that the sub-scales would be associated with theoretically related constructs (specifically anxiety sensitivity and aggression). It was further predicted that the parent completed version (child RMP) would be correlated with the self-reported adolescent version (RSMP) in youth aged

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/364549>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/364549>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)