



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

# Personality and Individual Differences

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/paid](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/paid)



## Dispositional greed

Goedele Krekels\*, Mario Pandelaere

Ghent University, Department of Marketing, Tweeherkenstraat 2, 9000 Ghent, Belgium



### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 21 July 2014

Received in revised form 3 October 2014

Accepted 21 October 2014

#### Keywords:

Dispositional greed

Insatiability

Acquisitiveness

Personality trait

Big Five

### ABSTRACT

Extant research on greed has focused on situational determinants of greedy behavior, ignoring individual differences in greed. Defining greed as insatiability, the present paper introduces a six item Dispositional Greed Scale. Two studies demonstrate convergent and discriminant validity and test–retest reliability. Specifically, they demonstrate that greed is related to but different from materialism. It is also positively related to entitlement, egoism, social comparison, envy, competition and productivity orientation and negatively related to impression management and satisfaction with life. The Dispositional Greed Scale enables researchers to disentangle the impact of personality from that of the situation on greedy behavior.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

In spite of the intuition that people differ in how greedy they are, extant research on greed (Cozzolino, Sheldon, Schachtman, & Meyers, 2009; Kasser & Sheldon, 2000) has focused exclusively on the impact of specific situations greedy behavior (e.g., Mazar, Caruso, & Zhong, 2011; Stanley & Tran, 1998). Although this research has yielded important insights into when people may behave greedily, it fails to appreciate that behavior is often the outcome of the joint influence of situational triggers and personality (Wright & Mischel, 1987). In addition, the focus on a very limited set of situations that make many, if not most, people behave greedily implies that research on greed has ignored to consider how greed plays out in more mundane situations like taking a last cookie from a plate. Finally, investigating greed from a purely situational perspective eliminates the possibility of understanding what causes some people to act greedily in certain situations while others do not.

The lack of research on individual differences in greed may stem from the fact that until recently no relevant measure existed. Recently Veselka, Giammarco, and Vernon (2014) proposed a Vices And Virtues Scale (VAVS) measuring the seven sins, including greed. They define greed as “a tendency to manipulate and betray others for personal gain”. This definition deviates considerably both from a lay understanding of greed and from various definitions of greed proposed in the academic literature. Although definitions of greed proposed in philosophy, sociology, psychology and economics differ in some respects, they all center on insatiabil-

ity: no amount of a given commodity is ever sufficient. Insatiability also features in the Merriam-Webster (2013) definition of greed as “a selfish and excessive desire for more of something (as money) than is needed”. Although the greed subscale of the VAVS does include two insatiability items, it also includes items about power, membership in exclusive groups and not sharing one’s ideas. In addition, most other items focus on money and wealth. In this paper, we restrict the definition of greed to “an insatiable desire for more resources, monetary or other”. This definition not only focuses more exclusively on the insatiability aspect that is central in most existing definitions of greed but also extends the range of phenomena and situations the concept of greed applies to and allows the inclusion of mundane greedy behaviors, some of which do not involve other people or financial gain.

Our definition also eliminates several potential concerns for scale development. First, excluding the negative connotation of excessive desire and of deception should reduce the impact of socially desirable responding. Second, excluding the impact on others from the definition also eliminates the possibility of spurious relations with perspective-taking and related constructs. Third, we exclude the idea of wanting “more than needed” in our definition because this requires an external, normative perspective which could cause responses to the greed scale to be affected by individual differences in norm perceptions and ability to judge oneself from an external vantage point.

### 2. Study 1: Dispositional Greed Scale

Our first study develops a measure for individual differences in greed and relates it to other constructs. First and foremost, we

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [Goedele.Krekels@Ugent.be](mailto:Goedele.Krekels@Ugent.be) (G. Krekels), [Mario.Pandelaere@Ugent.be](mailto:Mario.Pandelaere@Ugent.be) (M. Pandelaere).

consider the relation with materialism. Belk (1985) considers greed an essential element of a materialistic lifestyle and, in subsequent studies, greed and materialism were often used interchangeably (e.g., Kasser & Sheldon, 2000). Still, not all greedy behavior qualifies as materialistic (e.g., taking a last cookie) nor that all materialistic behavior (e.g., conspicuous consumption) can be considered greedy. We thus propose that greed and materialism may be strongly related but not identical.

We also relate greed to egoism, which also features in many definitions of greed (Batson et al., 1999), and to feelings of entitlement, which may justify one's greedy behavior. Because it is not clear whether greed inherently implies a focus on other's resources, we measure social comparison orientation and envy, the unpleasant feeling that typically results from upward social comparison (Smith & Kim, 2007). Not only has greed been linked to envy (Engler, 1995), both also seem to embody the idea that a higher level of a given commodity may lead to greater well-being. We further examine if greedy people emotionally disregard the consequences of their actions for other people by relating greed to empathy. Finally, we also consider how greed relates to satisfaction with life.

### 2.1. Initial item pool

Drawing on philosophical, economic, political, and social psychological literature on greed and insatiability and on focus group

**Table 1**  
The Dispositional Greed Scale.

| Items                                                                 | Factor loadings |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| No matter how much I have of something,<br>I always want more         | .82             |
| One can never have enough                                             | .75             |
| Even when I am fulfilled, I often seek more                           | .73             |
| The pursuit of more and better is an important<br>goal in life for me | .71             |
| A simple basic life is sufficient for me (R)                          | .64             |
| I am easily satisfied with what I've got (R)                          | .43             |

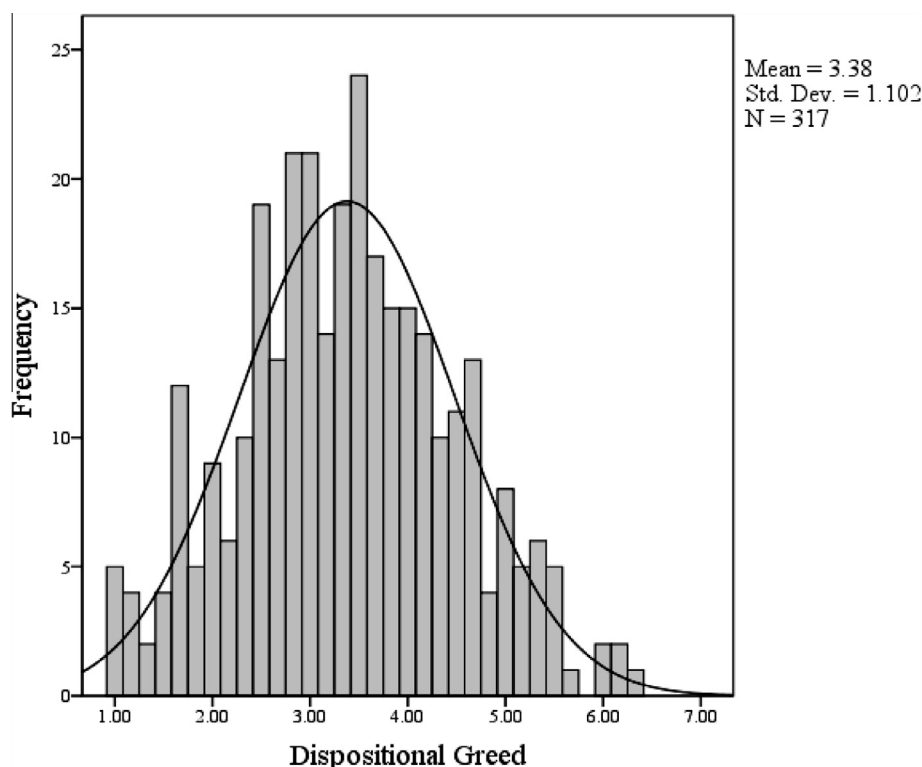
research to explore lay notions of greed we generated an initial pool of 25 items. These items were judged by laypeople for face and content validity, were checked by a professional copy editor to ensure wording clarity, avoid wording redundancy, and ensure the clear meaning of the items.

### 2.2. Participants and procedure

A total of 317 fully employed U.S. citizens (151 men,  $M_{\text{age}} = 44.8$ ,  $SD = 11.9$ ) responded to the 25 greed items, along with additional scales to examine nomological validity. These measures included two measures of materialism (Ger & Belk, 1996; Richins & Dawson, 1992), psychological entitlement (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004), egoism (Machiavellianism scale, Weigel, Hessing, & Elffers, 2008), the Empathy quotient 8 (Loewen, Lyle, & Nachshen, 2010), social comparison orientation (Gibbons & Buunk, 1999), and satisfaction with life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Furthermore, we measured social desirability (Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding, Paulhus, 1988). On all scales, participants indicated their agreement on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from “completely disagree” (1) to “completely agree” (7) (see Appendix A online).

### 2.3. Scale structure

An exploratory factor (principal axis) analysis shows sufficient sampling adequacy: KMO value is .884, and Bartlett's test of sphericity is highly significant at  $p < .001$ . We eliminated items for which the anti-image correlations were lower than .5, exhibited high inter-item correlations through item wording redundancy, or revealed high cross-loadings on different factors ( $>.35$ ) or low factor loadings ( $<.35$ ) from the factor solution. Furthermore, the content of each item was re-evaluated to check their wording clarity and redundancy, and to remove overly specific items; resulting in a final scale with six items (Table 1 and Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** Histogram of the Dispositional Greed Scale.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7252019>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7252019>

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