



LiFE*sports*
LEARNING IN FITNESS AND EDUCATION

Technical Report: *LiFEsports* Survey Tools

The *LiFEsports* Initiative
College of Social Work
The Ohio State University

LiFEsports Survey Tools
Belonging Scale

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I. Definition of Construct

Developing a sense of belonging among youth participants is central aim of many youth development programs (Anderson & Conroy, 2002). Programs are able to help foster a sense of belonging by making youth feel welcome, comfortable, and accepted as well as by developing relationships between program staff and youth participants (Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 1998; Burt et al., 1998; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1999). Further, the importance of developing a sense of belonging is grounded in theoretical justification such as social learning theory (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Sutherland & Cressey, 1978), social control theory (Hirschi, 1969), the social development model (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996; Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill, 1999).

II. Relevance for Practice

Belonging has been postulated to be a fundamental psychological need for human growth and development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Past research has suggested that youth benefit from their involvement when they are able to develop a connection with a program, are committed to a program's norms, and/or feel as if they are able to contribute to the program (Anderson-Butcher, 2000; Brown, 1988; Heath, 1999; Holland & Andre, 1987; Larson, 2000; Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997). When youth are able to participate and feel connected to a program, research suggests that the positive effects of participation may be further enhanced (Anderson & Conroy, 2002). As such, developing a sense of belonging in youth development programs may be an important mechanism for youth development.

III. Scale Description and Instructions

A. Items

1. I feel comfortable with people at LiFE*sports*.
2. I am part of LiFE*sports*.
3. I am committed to LiFE*sports*.
4. I am supported at LiFE*sports*.
5. I am acceptable at LiFE*sports*.
6. I feel safe at LiFE*sports*.

B. Response Options

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

C. Instructions for Respondents

Please read each statement and decide if the statement is “not at all true” for you, “a little true” for you, “somewhat true” for you, “pretty true” for you, or “really true” for you. Fill in the circle that best shows your answer.

D. Instructions for Scale Administrators

Once each student has a survey, explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their ability to control and manage their reactions and emotions. They should mark one answer per statement, selecting the choice that best reflects how they feel.

IV. Scoring Procedures

An average of the response scores from the six (6) items should be calculated and used as an indicator of belonging, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of belonging.

V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

The Belonging Scale was originally developed for use in youth development programs to assess youths' perception of their sense of belonging to a program. The original scale, a 10-item scale, was revised to better establish the scale's psychometric properties, and therefore enhance the scale's validity and reliability of measuring a sense of belonging among youth.

The factorial validity, internal consistency, and predictive validity of the Belonging Scales was tested using data from youth participants at United Way agencies such as Boys & Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, and local neighborhood settlement houses and community centers. Results from confirmatory factor analysis yielded a five-item measure which demonstrated "tight" cross validity in a cross-validation sample as well as factorial invariance between females and males. Further, internal consistency estimates for the 5-item scale exceeded 0.90 in both samples.

For further detail analysis of the psychometric properties for the scale, please refer to the published manuscript by Anderson-Butcher and Conroy, (2002) titled "Factorial and Criterion Validity of Scores of a Measure of Belonging in Youth Development Programs" which appears in the journal *Educational and Psychological Measurement*.

VI. Summary

The results of the psychometric testing indicate support for the Belonging Scale to measure a sense of belonging of youth participants for practice and research youth development initiatives.

VII. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the Belonging Scale for program evaluation or research purposes, please use the following citation:

Anderson-Butcher, D. & Conroy, D. (2002). Factorial and criterion validity of scores of a measure of belonging in youth development programs. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 62(5), 857-876.

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LiFEsports is a university-wide Initiative at The Ohio State University focused on promoting quality youth development experiences through sport, recreation, and play. For more information, please visit our website at www.osulifesports.org or contact us at LiFESports@buckeyes.ath.ohio-state.edu.