

## Reliability and Normative Data for the Simple Rathus Assertiveness Schedule\*

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Assertiveness training, which has become increasingly popular over the last decade, is often evaluated using self report questionnaires. One such widely used measure is the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS). This measure has previously been shown to be psychometrically sound, however one criticism is that it requires a high reading age for comprehension. A low reading age version, the Simple RAS, has been developed and the present paper provides normative and further psychometric data on this measure. The results indicate that the Simple RAS not only has higher reliability than the RAS but item to total test score correlations are also substantially improved. On the basis of these findings it is concluded that the SRAS is psychometrically superior to the RAS and in addition it has local norms available.

The use of assertiveness training in the treatment of certain clients experiencing difficulties in their interpersonal relationships has shown a marked increase over the past decade. The evaluation of the effectiveness of such assertiveness training has often involved the use of self reporting measures including the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) (Rathus, 1973). This measure has high split half reliability (McCormick, 1982a; Rathus & Nevid, 1977) and high test-retest reliability (Rathus 1973). Concurrent validity has been established with psychiatric patients (Rathus & Nevid, 1977) and norms have been established for both North American (Nevid & Rathus, 1978) and New Zealand (McCormick, 1982a) university students. Despite its widespread use, the RAS has been criticized for the high reading age required in order to comprehend both the instructions and stimulus items (Andrasik, Heimberg, Edlung & Blackenberg, 1981; McCormick, 1982b, in press).

To meet the needs of a wider group a low reading age version of the RAS, the Simple

Rathus Assertiveness Schedule, (SRAS) (McCormick, in press) has recently been developed. This version was found to have a correlation of 0.94 with the original, together with a range of equivalent item inter-correlations from 0.43 to 0.96, indicating good concurrent validity. The amended instructions required a reading age which was down from over 15 years to 9.5 years and the stimulus item reading age had been lowered from 13 years to 9.0 years. (McCormick, 1982b, in press). It was found that in a group of imprisoned offenders only 2% could read the RAS while 91% could read the SRAS (McCormick, in press). The SRAS therefore appears to have considerable potential for use with such lower reading age groups, and a study was undertaken in order to provide further information on its reliability and develop norms for male and female university students, for male and female offenders, and for high school students.

### Method

For the reliability study the SRAS was administered to 195 volunteer subjects, of whom 100 were male and 95 were female. In order to provide some preliminary norms for the SRAS it was administered to 113 volunteer undergraduate students (52 male, 61 female) at Victoria University of Wellington, to 30 female offenders at Arohata Youth Institution, to 41 male offenders at Tongariro Corrective Training Centre, and to 34 students at a high school in Hamilton.

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## Results

Excellent reliability was found for the SRAS, with a corrected split half coefficient of 0.92 being obtained. Kuder-Richardson internal consistency was also found to be high at 0.87.

Item to total-test correlations ranged from 0.14 to 0.62 and the mean correlation was 0.46. Twenty-eight of these 30 correlations were significant at the .0001 level, one at the .01 level, and one was not significant. All but one of the items therefore made an appreciable contribution to subjects' total scores.

Percentiles developed for the SRAS are presented in Table 1. The range of scores for the female students (130-64) is very similar to that of the males (127-63) and the means were identical at 96. For the female offenders the range of scores (156-66) was greater than for the males (126-81) but the means 107 and 108 respectively were almost identical. The high school students' range was from 131-79 while its mean (101) lay between those of university students and the offenders. No sex differences were found ( $t < 1$ ,  $df = 194$ ).

Table 1: Percentile Ranks of SRAS scores for male and female university students and offenders and a combined high school sample.

Percentile	University Students		Offenders		High School Students
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Combined
95	127	130	126	156	131
90	119	122	119	144	130
85	115	115	118	137	124
80	111	112	112	131	121
75	106	108	111	130	120
70	103	105	110	129	118
65	100	102	106	121	115
60	98	98	104	117	110
55	96	95	103	115	108
50	93	94	102	97	106
45	90	92	102	95	104
40	88	89	101	93	100
35	86	87	101	92	95
30	84	86	100	90	93
25	78	84	98	88	92
20	76	78	96	83	89
15	73	75	92	73	85
10	70	70	84	67	84
5	63	64	81	66	79
Mean	96	96	108	107	101
N	52	61	41	30	34

## Discussion

McCormick (in press) has already shown that not only does the SRAS have excellent criterion validity, but it is also substantially easier to read than the RAS. The present study has demonstrated that it has in addition a higher split half reliability ( $r = .92$ ) than was found with RAS, with McCormick (1982a) and Rathus (1973) finding coefficients of .82 and .77 respectively. The item to total test correlations are also very high. In the present study the mean item to total test correlation for SRAS was .46, while Rathus (1973) reported a mean correlation .34 and Heimberg and Harrison (1979) reported .29 for the RAS. The SRAS was found to have only one item with an item to total test correlation which was not significant at the .01 level, while Rathus (1973) found five such items and Heimberg and Harrison reported eight non-significant items. On the basis of these results it would appear that both the reliability and homogeneity of the SRAS are greater than that of the RAS from which it was developed.

## References

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