



Development And Validity Of The Deenz Paranoid Personality Scale (DPPS-24)

Deen Mohd Dar

Indira Gandhi National Open University

ABSTRACT :

The Deenz Paranoid Personality Scale (DPPS-24) was developed to measure tendencies toward paranoid personality disorder by assessing subclinical traits in the general population. Subclinical traits refer to the presence of personality features that do not meet the threshold for formal diagnosis but still affect interpersonal relationships and psychological well-being. The DPPS-24 evaluates eight dimensions of paranoid personality traits: Skeptical, Suspicion, Secrecy, Malevolence, Hypervigilance, Resentful, Isolation, and Hostility. Each dimension provides a nuanced understanding of specific paranoid tendencies.

The development process involved rigorous item generation, expert reviews, and empirical testing. An initial pool of 40 items was refined to 24 through item analysis, ensuring balanced representation across dimensions. Reliability and validity were established using a diverse sample of 500 participants, including clinical and non-clinical populations. Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency was .91, and test-retest reliability over four weeks was .87. Construct, discriminant, and criterion validity further supported the scale's robustness. The DPPS-24 employs a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5), allowing for nuanced responses.

Normative data were collected from a representative sample, enabling percentile-based scoring categories. The DPPS-24 is a valuable tool for clinicians, researchers, and educators, offering insights into paranoid personality traits and their implications for mental health and interpersonal functioning.

Introduction :

Paranoid personality disorder (PPD) is a complex condition characterized by pervasive distrust, suspicion, and maladaptive interpersonal behaviors. While the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013), outlines the diagnostic criteria for PPD, many individuals exhibit subclinical traits that significantly impact their relationships and psychological well-being without meeting the threshold for a formal diagnosis. Subclinical traits, such as unwarranted suspicion or difficulty forgiving, often manifest in non-clinical populations and can lead to chronic interpersonal difficulties if unaddressed.

The Deenz Paranoid Personality Scale (DPPS-24) was developed to address the need for a reliable and valid tool to assess these subclinical traits. Rooted in empirical research and theoretical frameworks, the DPPS-24 evaluates eight core dimensions of paranoid personality traits: Skeptical, Suspicion, Secrecy, Malevolence, Hypervigilance, Resentful, Isolation, and Hostility. By capturing these dimensions, the scale provides a comprehensive profile of an individual's paranoid tendencies, aiding in early identification and intervention.

Objectives :

The primary objective of this study was to develop and validate a psychometrically sound scale for assessing subclinical paranoid personality traits. Specific goals included:

1. Developing a comprehensive item pool reflecting the eight dimensions of paranoid personality traits.
2. Establishing the scale's reliability and validity through empirical testing.
3. Creating normative data and scoring guidelines for use in diverse populations.

Dimensions of the Scale

The DPPS-24 assesses the following eight dimensions, each representing a core aspect of paranoid personality traits:

1. **Skeptical (Pervasive Distrust):** Doubts about the authenticity and trustworthiness of others, often stemming from past experiences. While caution is healthy, excessive skepticism can hinder relationships.
2. **Suspicion (Unwarranted Suspicion):** Mistrust of others' motives without strong evidence, leading to strained interpersonal relationships and heightened psychological distress.

3. **Secrecy (Reluctance to Confide):** A tendency to keep personal information hidden, even when there is no real threat, affecting trust and openness.
4. **Malevolence (Perception of Malevolence):** Belief that others intend to cause harm, often without substantial evidence, resulting in chronic mistrust and distress.
5. **Hypervigilance (Readiness to Detect Threats):** Persistent alertness to potential threats, even in the absence of clear danger, contributing to anxiety and exhaustion.
6. **Resentful (Difficulty Forgiving):** Harboring bitterness and anger, with difficulty letting go of past grievances, disrupting emotional well-being.
7. **Isolation (Spending Time Alone):** Withdrawal from social interactions due to mistrust or fear of others' intentions, leading to loneliness and alienation.
8. **Hostility (Easily Irritated):** A tendency to react with anger or annoyance to minor provocations, straining relationships and overall well-being.

Steps in the Construction of the Scale

Item Development

A comprehensive review of the literature on paranoid personality traits informed the initial pool of 40 items. Items were designed to reflect each of the eight dimensions, with input from clinical psychologists and experts in personality assessment. The items were reviewed for clarity, relevance, and cultural appropriateness.

First Draft

The first draft of the DPPS included 40 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Instructions emphasized the importance of honest and accurate responses to ensure meaningful results.

Item Analysis

Item analysis was conducted using data from a pilot study with 200 participants. Items with low item-total correlations ($r < .30$) or redundancy were removed, resulting in a refined set of 24 items. The final 24 items were evenly distributed across the eight dimensions, ensuring balanced representation.

Final Draft

The final version of the DPPS-24 included the following item distribution:

- Skeptical: 3 items
- Suspicion: 3 items
- Secrecy: 3 items
- Malevolence: 3 items
- Hypervigilance: 3 items
- Resentful: 3 items
- Isolation: 3 items
- Hostility: 3 items

Reliability

Internal Consistency

Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was .91, with subscale alphas ranging from .78 to .85.

Test-Retest Reliability

Over a four-week interval, the test-retest reliability coefficient was .87, demonstrating stability over time.

Validity

Construct Validity

Significant correlations were observed between DPPS-24 scores and established measures of paranoid traits, such as the Paranoia Scale ($r = .72$).

Discriminant Validity

The scale differentiated effectively between clinical and non-clinical populations ($p < .001$).

Criterion Validity

Scores on the DPPS-24 correlated positively with clinician-rated assessments of paranoid traits ($r = .68$).

Norms

Normative data were collected from a representative sample of 500 participants, including 250 individuals with subclinical paranoid traits and 250 controls. Scores were categorized as follows:

- **Above 85th Percentile:** High tendency toward paranoid traits
- **50th to 85th Percentile:** Moderate tendency
- **Below 50th Percentile:** Low tendency

Implications

The DPPS-24 provides a reliable and valid tool for assessing paranoid personality traits in clinical and non-clinical populations. Its applications include:

1. **Clinicians:** Supporting diagnosis and intervention planning.
2. **Researchers:** Investigating the prevalence and correlates of paranoid traits.
3. **Educators:** Enhancing understanding of personality traits and their impact on behavior.

Appendix

The DPPS-24 is available in both paper-and-pencil and computerized formats, the items can be accessed at drdeen.z. Detailed instructions for administration, scoring, and interpretation are provided to facilitate its use in diverse settings.

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