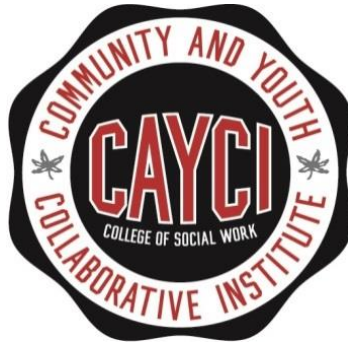


Community and Youth Collaborative Institute  
School Experience Surveys

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**Technical Report: Externalizing Behaviors**  
Middle/High School Student Version

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**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

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## Externalizing Behaviors

Middle/High School Students

### I. Definition of Construct

The *Externalizing Behaviors* scale measures the extent to which students report behaviors that are directed outward, either toward the external environment, such as poor attention or impulsivity.

### II. Relevance for Practice

In the literature, externalizing behaviors have been shown to significantly influence the student- teacher relationship poorly (Sanchez-Fowler et al., 2008). Furthermore, students who have display externalized behaviors at school frequently show indicators of low self-esteem, lower school achievement, and maladaptive achievement strategies (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Ansary & Luthar, 2009).

### III. Scale Description and Instructions

#### A. Items

*Within the current school year...*

1. Have you ever gotten in trouble in class?
2. Has your school called home because you were in trouble for your behavior?
3. Have you ever been in a fight?
4. Have you ever skipped schoolwork assignments?
5. Have you ever been bullied at school?

#### B. Response Options

Response options for each item include the following:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Seldom
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Often
- 5 = Very Often

#### C. Instructions for Respondents

These questions ask you about your experiences at school. Please mark how strongly you feel about each sentence.

#### D. Instructions for Scale Administrators

For complete instructions on how to administer the survey, reference the “Student Survey Directions” that are printed on the survey itself. Once each student has a survey, explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their experiences at school. They should mark one answer per statement, selecting the choice that best reflects how they feel.

As students finish, look thoroughly through the surveys to make sure that they didn’t miss any items or questions. Please remember that students do NOT have to answer every question, but do encourage them to complete as much of the survey as possible. Remind students that their answers will help the school know how to best support them.

#### IV. Scoring Procedures

An average of the response scores from the first 5 items should be calculated and used as an indicator of School support for pro-social activities, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of support. The final item (Have you ever been bullied at school?) measures an important phenomenon, but is not itself an indicator of externalizing behavior so should be excluded from mean score calculations.

#### VI. Psychometric Properties of the Scale (Middle/High School)

##### A. Description of Sample

Participants used to test the psychometric properties of the scale included 11,766 middle and high school students from around the state of Utah, as well as Central Ohio. This included 6,079 students in 6th-8th grade and 4,271 students in 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. The mean age of the students was 14.04 (SD = 2.03). Both males (51.0%) and females (49.0%) were represented. The students identified themselves as White/Non-Hispanic (81.9%), Latino/Latina (5.3%), Mixed/Multi-Racial (3.0%), African American (3.2%), Asian (1.8%), or American Indian/ Alaskan Native, and 43.1% indicated they received a free or reduced lunch. Data on these students were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. Data were collected using the on-line instrument.

##### B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	$\alpha$
Full Sample ( $N = 11766$ )	4.09	.73	1-5	.73
Gender				
Males ( $n = 5868$ )	3.98	.76	1-5	.74
Females ( $n = 5650$ )	4.22	.66	1-5	.71
Race/Ethnicity				
White/Non-Hispanic ( $n = 9381$ )	4.22	.68	1-5	.73
Non-White ( $n = 2385$ )	4.06	.74	1-5	.73
School Type				
Middle School ( $n = 6,079$ )	4.12	.71	1-5	.73
High School ( $n = 4,271$ )	4.10	.76	1-5	.75

*Note. Group specific data omits students who did not indicate their status.*

##### C. Relationship between Academic Motivation scores and other Student Perception Constructs

At this time we have not explored this construct in relationship to other measures of validity.

##### D. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 9.2 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 5 items loaded on a single latent Externalizing Behavior factor. The factor variance was freely estimated, as was the uniqueness for each item. No covariances between uniquenesses were modeled. The data were input using the asymptotic covariance matrix.

The overall fit of the model to the data was reasonably good based on commonly recommended cut off values for evaluating model fit (see Hu & Bentler, 1999),  $S-B^2 = 196.96$ ,  $df = 5$ ,  $p = .00$ ;  $RMSEA = .067$  (90% CI = .061-.074),  $SRMR = .23$ ;  $CFI = .98$ . The table below presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .41. The modification indices did not suggest any major areas of local strain.

Item	<i>Loading</i>	<i>Uniqueness</i>
Have you ever gotten in trouble in class*?	.77	.66
Has your school called home because you were in trouble for your behavior?	.71	.67
Have you ever been in a fight?	.69	.61
Have you ever skipped schoolwork assignments?	.61	.48
Have you ever bullied someone at school?	.33	.16

## VII. Past and Future Scale Development

An initial version of the scale included the following additional items: (1) “Is it hard for you to control your behavior”, (2) “Have you ever been suspended from school”, (3) “Have you ever bullied someone?”, (4) “Have you ever lied about something important?” Results from preliminary analyses indicated that these items did not fit well with the other scale items. Also, despite small factor loadings for the bullying item in the final version, it is conceptually important that schools assess externalizing behaviors by incorporating an item that assesses how youth perceived bullying at school. Future scale development work may consider potentially modifying the items and/or response format to increase the variability in the scores and to increase the strength of the factor loadings. Future tests will be need to be conducted on older grade levels.

## VIII. Summary

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate lower alpha coefficients in the initial support for the reliability and validity of the Externalizing behaviors scale with middle/high students. Future research should look to enhance reliability and validity of the measure. The use of this measure could provide valuable information about students who are exhibiting externalizing behaviors at school. As research has shown, students who have display externalized behaviors at school frequently show indicators of low self-esteem, lower school achievement, and maladaptive achievement strategies (Aunola, Stattin & Nurmi, 2000; Ansary & Luthar, 2009). It is important for educators to be aware of this link to enable additional supports for this population.

## X. References

- Anderson-Butcher, D., & Amorose, A. J. (2012). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.
- Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A.J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2012). The development of the Perceived School Experiences Scale. *Research on Social Work Practice, 2*(2), 186-194.
- Fortier, M. S., Vallerand, R. J., & Guay, F. (1995). Academic motivation and school performance: Toward a structural model. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 20*(3), 257-274.
- Green, J., Liem, G. A. D., Martin, A. J., Colmar, S., Marsh, H. W., & McInerney, D. (2012). Academic motivation, self-concept, engagement, and performance in high school: Key processes from a longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Adolescence, 35*(5), 1111-1122.
- Ansary, N.S. & Luthar, S.S. (2009). Distress and academic achievement among adolescents of affluence: A study of externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors and school performance. *Development and Psychopathology, 21*, 319-341.

## XI. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the school support for externalizing behaviors scale for program evaluation or research purposes, we recommend using the following citation:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A.J., Iachini, A., Ball, A., Paluta, L., & Bates, S. (2016). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys: Externalizing Behaviors Scale in Middle School and High School. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys, then the following citation would be appropriate to cover all scales:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., Ball, A., & Paluta, L. (2016). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.