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The Utilization of the Q-Sort Methodology to Develop a Measure of Women's Response to Intimate Partner Violence

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THE UTILIZATION OF THE Q-SORT METHODOLOGY TO DEVELOP A MEASURE OF WOMEN'S RESPONSE TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

by

Tiffany Lenell Young

Under the Direction of Sarah L. Cook

ABSTRACT

Q- sort methodology was used to detect underlying structures in 45 statements that reflect women's attempts to make themselves feel better after incidents of abuse. Eight dichotomous categories were created as plausible descriptors of the 45 statements within the measure. Graduate and advance undergraduate students used the categories to sort the 45 statements. The individual sorts were input with PQMethod software. The Centroid method was used for data analysis. Three of the eight proposed categories were supported: perspective (i.e. the woman's thought and perceptions regarding the abusive relationship), health behavior, and social relationship. Data analysis displayed that the 45 "feel better" items are able to be grouped into meaningful categories.

Index: Q-sort, Centroid method, feel better, Q-sort methodology

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by

Tiffany Lenell Young

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2006

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INTRODUCTION

For more than three decades, researchers have made great efforts and strides to conquer one of the world's most problematic issues: intimate partner violence (IPV). Intimate partner violence is a serious social problem that continues to challenge public policy and social systems. In an effort to better understand IPV, a growing number of researchers are investigating the ways in which women respond to violence. Goodman, Dutton, Weinfurt, and Cook (2003) developed The Intimate Partner Violence Strategies Index (IPVSI) to assess women's strategic responses to stop IPV. The purpose of this research is to expand Goodman et al.'s efforts by using Q- sort methodology to categorize another set of women's responses to IPV, specifically, what women do to help themselves feel better after an episode of violence.

LITERTURE REVIEW

The Center for Disease and Control estimates that 5.3 million U.S. women experience intimate partner victimization each year (Tjagen & Thoennes, 2000). Of the women who experience IPV, 40% are physically injured (Tjagen & Thoennes, 2000). In 2001, IPV comprised 20% of all nonfatal crimes committed in the U.S. (Rennison, 2003). Women who are victims of intimate partner violence have higher instances of health problems (Campbell, Jones, Dienemann, Kub, Schollenberger, O'Campo, Gielen, & Wynne, 2002) and experience higher rates of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. They are also likely to engage in risky health behaviors such as substance abuse and more likely to attempt suicide (Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000). Statistics clearly indicate that IPV is a multifaceted social problem that affects all aspects of a woman's life.

Battered women's syndrome

Currently, researchers are vigorously working to better understand the dynamics of intimate partner victimization, while simultaneously attempting to discover strategies to alleviate the problem. A subset of violence against women research focuses primarily on the behaviors that women engage in to decrease violence in the relationship. Previously, women who were victims of IPV were viewed as passive (Bowker, 1987). Society, as well as many researchers, believed that women simply allowed the abuse to continue. Lenore Walker's (2000) study of 403 battered women in the Rocky Mountain area identified a set of behaviors branded as "Battered Women's Syndrome" which implied the passive behavior was "learned helplessness". It should not be misinterpreted that the women was though of as being helpless. Within the Battered

Woman Syndrome context, learned helplessness indicates the woman has lost the ability to recognize that her responses to her partner's violence can produce specific outcomes (Walker, 2000). According to Walker (2000), "learned helplessness" arises from women viewing their attempts to change the batterer's behavior as useless.

Later, a study by Gondolf and Fisher (1988) emerged, which contradicted Walker's findings. Gondolf and Fisher combined their survey of 6,612 women in Texas with Bowker's (1987) mail survey of 1,000 women. Gondolf and Fisher's theory suggested that women were not passive, but active in attempting to decrease the victimization as it increased in severity and frequency. Survey data supported their theory. Women were actively engaged in trying to decrease abuse. In addition, they were more likely to choose from a variety of help seeking strategies as the violence escalated.

Peterson, Maier, & Seligman (1993) asserted that behaviors that seemed passive may not be indicative of learned helplessness, but an attempt of the victim to mitigate the abuse. For example, the women may choose to not challenge a partner's authority and submit to demands in hopes that violence will decrease. In this sense, women have not developed true learned helplessness because they believe they are able to control a partner's behavior by modifying there own. In essence, doing nothing is a strategic action.

In an article explaining the utilization of Transtheorectical Model of behavior for understanding women's strategic response to violence; Brown (1997) notes that even though women who experience abuse at the hands of their partners are victims they are infrequently passive. Brown (1997) also clarifies that refusing to terminate the abuse relationship does not indicate women are inactive. According to Brown (1997), women are able to make critically important changes to alter the abuse without having to leave the relationship.

Lempert (1996) conducted a study specifically exploring women's strategic responses. Lempert (1996) investigated 32 abused women's utilization of public and private strategic response to minimize batters' abuse. By examining the women's relationships she identified three major processes they used. The first process was to make the violence invisible. This usually occurred in the beginning of a relationship when women tried to conceal the abuse. Next, women developed strategies to contain the violence. Women would typically try to figure out why the violence was happening and developed strategies to keep the abuse from occurring. The final process was to make the invisible visible. This process encompassed women talking about abuse they experienced with others. While there was no time period or concrete order for these processes to occur, majority of the women reported undergoing these processes. Periodically, they felt that the continuing abuse was undermining their sense of self. Nevertheless, they continued to create new strategies to reduce the violence and generate a sense of agency within the relationship: a stark contrast to the "learn helpless" model.

Measuring women's responses

Research by Gondolf and Risher, (1988) Peterson et al.(1993), and Lempert (1996) has re-conceptualized how researchers, policymakers, and the public understand women's responses to abusive relationships. Before the development of the Intimate Partner Violence Strategies Index (IPVSI), researchers were unable to measure the effects of these strategies and their relation to other outcomes because no measurement instrument existed. Goodman, Dutton, Weinfurt, and Cook (2003) developed this 39 item measure assessing the strategies a woman employs to try to stop abuse in her relationship.

To create the IPVSI, researchers used their clinical and forensic experience along with information from focus groups with advocates and battered women. The researchers generated of

list of 39 items that represented the strategies women used to decrease IPV. This index was then administered to 406 participating women. To give structure to the items, researchers rationally sorted the responses into seven categories: placating, resistance, safety, planning, legal, formal, and informal. To test inter-rater reliability, graduate students were asked to assemble the strategies into the one of the seven categories. The raters had an agreement of 85%. The remaining 15% of strategies that displayed discrepancies were placed in the categories upon the discussion of the raters and the researchers.

Goodman et al. noted that imposing the categories on the strategies was complicated: "Organizing [strategies] according to their purpose was problematic in that such an organizing framework united strategies that seemed so widely divergent in terms of the means involved" (Goodman et al., 2003). After much deliberation, the researchers formulated a categorization that combined purpose, means, and level of involvement of others. The researchers asserted that the categories had some face validity because of its similarity to Bowker (1987), Gondolf and Fisher's (1988) typologies. More recently, Goodkind and Sullivan (2004) independently developed a similar categorization of safety planning strategies.

Goodman et al., did not include in their study another 45 items they originally developed to assess how women tried to make themselves feel better after incidents of abuse. This study examines those 45 original items.

For example, the IPVSI asked about strategies women used to deal with the violent relationship, such as "called the police" or "used a weapon" to stop violence. The IPVI part II asked about the strategies women used to help themselves feel better after the violent experience, such as "praying" or "crying". This study will attempt classify the "feel better" items into meaningful categories using the Q-methodology.

The application of Q-methodology

In contrast to Goodman's et al. method of rationally organizing items, this study employed the Q-methodology. The Q-methodology employs the Q-sorting technique, which is a forced rank order procedure in which items or statements are clustered in dichotomized categories in an order from a person's point of view (Brown, 1993). Q-methodology was developed within the field of psychology, but disciplines ranging from political science to English also use Q-methodology for research purposes.

Q-methodology is a subjective process. It allows those who are sorting items to tell the story of the category. The story is told though the ideas, beliefs, and opinions of the sorter. Q-sorting relies on the sorter's innate response to statements/items and the placement of the statements/items along a continuum depending upon the person's view or opinion of those statements/items. Thus, no sort is right or wrong. The responses depends on a person's point of view, thus there is no criterion to follow in sorting the statement/ items (Brown, 1980). The sorters represent the field from which the statements/items originate. Because the sorters have similar perspectives about the items and categories, cohesiveness is created between the sorts which reduces the amount of skewed statements within a sorted category

A pertinent feature of the Q-sort technique is forced distribution. Forced distribution is a distribution that requires arranging pieces of information along a predetermined continuum. Along the continuum, sorters compare items and determine which are more or less characteristic of a given category. Due to forced distribution, the sorter is more thoughtful and careful in the placement of items. Forced distribution avoids extreme placements of statements because only a specific number of items are allowed to be placed in a column. For example, a sort's continuum may range from dislike (-4) to like (+4). With each number on the continuum, a particular

amount items are required to be placed. For example, -4 and +4 may require the placement of one item, -3 and +3 may require two items, and -2 and +2 may required three items, etc. The end product should have the items most indicative of the category at the extreme ends of the continuum (-4, +4, -3, and +3) and the uncharacteristic items ranking in the middle of the sort (-2, +2 and beyond). Unlike other data examining conventions, forced distribution ensures that all items are proportionately weighed along the continuum because the sorter reconsiders previous placed statement/items numerous times before placing others. The data produced from forced distribution results in equivalent means and standard deviation between the sorters. As a result, errors and biases are substantially reduced and there is less likely to be differences in the sorting arrangements of comparing categories between sorters.

An advantage of the Q-method is its contextual and dynamic influence in the interpretation of the data. It allows alternate interpretations of the data that may differ from the investigator's primary hypothesis. The meaning of any item or statement in the Q-sort depends on how it relates to the situation from which it originates. Sorters may bypass the category's literal meaning and look at alternate implications. Because the process is dynamic the sorter is subjective while sorting. The dynamic principle is related to the contextual principle because it refers to how the sorter's characteristics and thoughts influence his or her sorting. It allows the sorter to display his or her coping responses to a particular situation in a group of items ranked in numerical order of importance. The dynamic principle implies that the Q-sort is a mirror image of the sorter's beliefs within a specific context. For example, a sorter may be confronted with the placement of the statement, "Thought you could end or stay out of the relationship" in the perspectives category. The sorter may believe that "ending or staying out the relationship" is a positive action and place it in the optimistic end or they may consider "ending or staying out of

the relationship” as neglecting the relationship and place it in the pessimistic end. Thus, the sorter’s personal and vicarious experiences will play a pivotal role in the placement of the items.

METHOD

The current methodology stems from a larger project called the Women's Life Experience Project (WLEP). WLEP explores the nature and scope of the even*ts* women experience throughout their lives of in a sample of incarcerated and low-income healthcare seeking women.

Measure

A survey consisting of a battery of psychological measures was administrated to the participants. Participants who reported experiencing physical, sexual, or psychological intimate partner violence were asked how they responded to these experiences using the Intimate Partner Violent Strategies Index (IPVSI) created by Goodman, Dutton, Weinhurt, & Cook (2003). The IPVSI is comprised of two parts. For the purpose of this study, only part II is relevant. Part II of the IPVSI consists of 45 items assessing methods women used to emotionally cope with abuse. Coding is binary (0=no, 1=yes), and for positive responses, participants rated the activity's helpfulness on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Examples of items include, "spent time with others," "become more independent," and "imagine yourself fighting back." We also asked women to tell us three things that worked best to help them feel better.

Q-sort Design

The initial step in preparing the Q-sort was to create dichotomous categories indicative of the 45 items (see tables 1 and 2). Using a rational procedure of clustering similar statements together, eight categories emerged and their definitions were developed (rationalizations,

Table 1

Feel Better Statements

Q-study No.	Statements
1	Spent time with family, friends, kids
2	Tried to see good side of him
3	Made new friends
4	Tried to figure out why he was violent
5	Thought that things would get better
6	Became more independent or learned to do more for yourself
7	Prayed
8	Became sexually involved with someone else to feel comforted or protected
9	Thought you could end or stay out of relationship
10	Tried to figure out how to leave or stay out of relationship
11	Exercised more to relieve stress or tension
12	Imagined he was dead
13	Decided not to have any more sexual relationships
14	Imagined yourself fighting back
15	Took it out on other people when you felt angry, upset
16	Thought that changing yourself could solve the problem
17	Distracted yourself from thinking about the violence and abuse
18	Thought that he would stop being violent if he stopped using alcohol or drugs
19	Thought that his abuse was the result of growing up in a violent home
20	Thought about trying to kill yourself
21	Thought about trying to kill him
22	Thought that others were worse off than you

23	Yelled and screamed to let off steam
24	Cried to let your feelings out
25	Tried to tell yourself that things weren't so bad
26	Thought that your children were not being affected by his violence or abuse towards you
27	Told yourself that you were not abused
28	Used alcohol to relax or calm yourself
29	Used street drugs to relax or calm yourself
30	Used food to comfort yourself
31	Imagined yourself in a better time or place
32	Did nice things for yourself
33	Cleaned the house
34	Spent time alone
35	Talked to a counselor
36	Talked to a religious leader
37	Listened to music or watched TV
38	Did something creative
39	Focused on the future
40	Stopped drinking or taking drugs
41	Read something for pleasure
42	Tried to rest or relax
43	Smoked cigarettes
44	Tried to stay busy
45	Thought about the good things in your life

Table 2

Q-sort Dichotomous Categories

Categories	Definition	Dichotomy
Rationalizations	Cognitive attempts to justify the partner's abusive	Partner vs. Self Centered
Perspective	The participant's thoughts and perceptions regarding the abusive relationship	Pessimistic vs. Optimistic
Health Behaviors	Behaviors of the participant that affect her physical well-being	Negative vs. Positive
Help Seeking	The participant's active efforts to solicit help	Formal vs. Informal Sources
Self Soothing	Behaviors of the participant that result in self-pleasure or fulfillment	Negative vs. Positive
Distraction	The participant's efforts to divert her attention from the abusive relationship	Cognitive vs. Behavioral
Social Relationships	The participant's active attempts to alter intimate relationships with persons other than the abusive partner	Seeking vs. Rejecting
Relationship status	The participant's efforts to modify the existing condition of the abusive relationship	Terminate vs. Sustain

perspectives, health behaviors, help seeking, self soothing, distractions, social relationships, and relationship status). Once the categories were determined, faculty and graduate students were consulted to validate the operational definitions of the categories. After the formulation of the categories, a q-sort table was created using simple mathematical calculations. With 45 statements there were nine combinations into which the statements were forced along a category's continuum; 2 4 5 7 9 7 5 4 2 (see Appendix B). The distribution follows the stipulations of q-sort: the middle of the distribution should contain the vast amount of items due to the numerous amounts of uncharacteristic statements of that particular category. The small number of items at the extreme ends of the continuum suggests significantly indicative statements of a particular category.

Q-sort Procedure

Three graduate students and one advanced undergraduate student volunteered to be sorters. The eight "feel better" categories were split between four graduate students. Two graduate students receive rationalizations, perspective, health behavior, and help seeking categories. The remaining two sorters received self-soothing, distraction, social relationships, and relationship status categories. The categories were shared between two sorters in this manner to test the reliability of the categories.

For each category, the sorters were asked to rank the statement along the continuum from their own point of views. The sorters were instructed to carefully read the cards to familiarize themselves with all 45 statements. Using score sheet A, they had to split the items into three piles: a pile for statements that were relevant to one end of the continuum (e.g. partner centered), a pile of cards that were relevant to the other end of the continuum (e.g. participant centered), and a pile of cards for items that they felt were not relevant to the category (e.g. rationalizations).

Once the cards were placed into the three piles, the sorters were instructed to count and record the total number of cards in each pile into the corresponding blocks.

Next, the sorters were instructed to take the cards from the first end of the continuum (e.g. partner centered) and read them again. They selected the two statements they believed were most indicative of that end point and using score sheet B, record the item numbers in the first two boxes on the left of the score sheet, below the “-4”. Next, from the remaining cards in the deck, they selected the four statements they felt were relative to that same end point (e.g. partner centered) and recorded the item numbers in the four boxes below the “-3”. They continued to follow this procedure for the remaining cards from the pile.

The sorters took the cards from the other end point of the continuum (e.g. participant centered) and read them again. Just like before, they selected the two statements they believed were most indicative of that end point and recorded the item numbers in the first two boxes on the right of score sheet B, below the “4”. Next, from the remaining cards in the deck, they selected the four statements they felt were relative of that same end point (e.g. participant centered) and recorded the item number in the four boxes below the “3”. The sorter followed this procedure for all the remaining cards from the pile. The sorter took the cards from the “not relevant” pile and read them again. They arranged the cards in the remaining open boxes of score sheet B. Lastly, the sorter checked their placement of the cards and made changes as necessary and continued sorting the remaining categories using the same instructions (see Appendixes A1 for the complete instruction packet)

Plan of Analysis

PQMethod software was used to analyze the “feel better” items. PQMethod is a freeware statistical program that was produced to fulfill the analysis requirements of Q-methodology. The

program allows the items to be entered as they are collected; an array of statements interpreted as numbers. PQMethod's final output is an assortment of tables on factor loadings, statement factor scores, discriminating statements for each of the factors, and consensus statements across factors (PQMethod, 2002). John Atkinson, a senior multimedia developer at Kent State University developed the program. He created the program under the supervision of a Q-methodology pioneer, Steven R. Brown.

The Centriod Method was used to determine inter-correlations between the q-sorts. The Centroid Method identified meaningful underlying variables by discovering patterns or structures within the data set (Brown, 1993). Therefore, the Centroid method adequately served the purpose of this study. The Centroid method yielded six factors that resulted from the clustering of correlated statements within the Q-sorts. The factors were rotated using Varimax. Rotating the factors condensed the items into an assortment of highly related items indicative to one of the eight factors. Rotation made the interpretation of the factors simple because each factor became representative of a small amount of highly inter-correlated statements..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the 6 factors rotated, the PQ Method data analysis program identified 4 distinctive factors (categories) using the Eigen values greater than 1. However, factor 4 is only comprised of only 1 statement that rank within the interior and one ranked at the extreme end. These inconsistent placements render the category as insufficient. Therefore, factor 6 is not considered for interpretation. Factors were interpreted using the rank number of statements that where considered significant at $p < .01$. The Q-sort factor values and Z-scores also aided in the interpretation process (refer to table 3). The interpretation of these results focused on specific statements that were defined as distinguishing statements. A distinguishing statement is when a statement's score on two factors is higher than the difference score. A difference score is "The magnitude of the difference between a statement's score on any two factors that is required for it to be statistically significant" (Exel, p.9, 2005). Between the individual Q-sorts, all means were 0.00 and all standard deviations were 2.078 due to forced distribution.

Each category was interpreted as follows. Illustrative statements of a particular factor are assigned its original statement number and their ranking number along the category's continuum that was used in the Centroid analysis. Attached to each rank number is a negative or positive value, which differentiates between either of the extreme ends of the category. For example, statement 45 "thought about the good things in your life" it is placed in the extreme end (-4) of a category and reads as such:

45. (-4) Thought about the good things in your life.

Table 3

Distinguishing Factors Rank and Z-score Values

Statements		1		2		3		4	
	No.	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Factor 1 (Perspective)									
Tried to see good side …	2	4	1.96*	-1	-0.31	0	0.00	-2	-0.76
Thought things would get…	5	4	1.63*	0	-0.71	-1	-0.49	-3	-0.80
Told yourself that you…	27	3	1.40	2	-0.81	-2	-0.80	-2	-0.67
Thought that others…	22	2	1.24	0	-0.02	-2	-0.80	-3	-1.51
Tried to figure out where…	4	2	1.00	-1	-0.49	0	0.00	-1	-0.61
Became more independent…	6	-1	-0.66	1	0.79	1	0.46	2	1.15
Used drugs to…	29	-2	0.69*	-4	-2.10	1	0.52	2	0.89
Thought you could end…	9	-3	-1.33	0	-0.01	0	0.00	-1	-0.59
Imagined yourself fight…	14	-3	-1.52	0	0.01	0	0.24	-1	-0.46
Tried to figure out how…	10	-3	-1.56*	1	0.65	0	0.00	0	-0.21
Thought about trying to…	21	-4	-2.06*	-2	0.93	2	0.84	0	-0.28
Factor 2 (Health Behaviors)									
Exercised more to reli…	11	0	-0.22	4	1.82*	0	0.03	1	0.67
Tried to rest or relax…	42	0	-0.35	3	1.45	1	0.52	1	0.62
Took it out on other people	15	-1	-0.46	-2	-1.38*	4	2.09	1	0.76
Used food to comfort…	30	-1	-0.35	-3	-1.55*	1	0.52	2	1.02
Used alcohol to relax…	28	-1	-0.44	-3	-1.73*	2	0.77	2	0.89
Smoked cigarettes	43	-1	-0.35	-4	-1.92*	0	0.24	-1	-0.58
Used street drugs to r…	29	-2	-0.69	-4	-2.10*	1	0.52	2	0.89
Factor 3 (Social Relationships)									
Took it out on other…	15	-1	-0.46	-2	-1.38	4	2.09*	1	0.76
Spent time alone	34	0	-0.16	1	0.45	4	1.85*	0	0.00
Thought about trying to…	21	-4	-2.06	-2	-0.93	2	0.84	0	-0.28
Spent time with family…	1	0	0.22	2	0.95	-3	-1.81*	4	2.03
Made new friends…	3	-1	-0.50	1	0.18	-4	-2.09*	2	1.15
Factor 4 (Deleted)									
Tried to stay busy…	44	1	0.43	0	0.08	-1	-0.77	4	1.78
Thought about trying to…	20	-3	-1.59	-3	-1.50	3	1.29	0	-0.44*
Talked to a counselor…	35	0	0.22	1	0.78	-3	-1.57	-1	-0.50
Talked to a religious…	36	1	0.38	1	0.45	-3	-1.57	-1	-0.50
Focused on the future…	39	3	1.26	0	0.14	-1	-0.52	-3	-1.76*

($P < .05$; Asterisk (*) Indicates Significance at $P < .01$)

Note: This is a table that displays the each statement's rankings and Z-scores on each of the four factors.

Category 1: Perspective

This category emphasized the participant's feelings, more specifically thoughts and perceptions regarding the abusive relationship. The dichotomous end points were pessimistic (-4) versus optimistic (4). Statements two and five are clear statements that define the participant's positive perspective. The participant tries to devoid her partner of negative attributes and focuses on the positive ones and her belief that the situation will get better in the future. Understanding the position of statement ten is problematic. To the IPV community, a women strategizing to leave her partner is one of the most important steps to ending the abuse, thus one would expect statement 10 to be ranked along the optimistic end of the continuum. However, juxtaposing statement four with statement 10 allows for two simple interpretations. First, if the participant is thinking about leaving the relationship she has realized that things are not going to get better. Thinking of leaving is the opposite of believing things would get better, thus its position is on the pessimistic side of the continuum.

Statement four is an optimistic statement. The operational definition of perspective is as follows: *the participant's thoughts and perceptions regarding the abusive relationship*. However while rating this statement, the sorters may have thought of how the participant would feel towards the idea of leaving her partner. While the participant knows leaving may be for the better, the thought is that you do not leave someone with whom you are romantically and emotionally involved. Therefore, the participant may perceive leaving as pessimistic because she is not hopeful in regards to the relationship continuing.

Used street drugs to relax or calm yourself should be excluded from the remaining statements. Statement 29 does not convey how the participant feels toward the relationship. It is a response. Even though statement 29 was marked significant, its Z score was much lower than

the other four significant statements and the its placement is within the interior of the Q-sort, these characteristics illustrate that the statement is not truly characteristic of the category.

2. (4) Tried to see the good side of him

5. (4) Thought that things would get better

29. (-2) Used street drugs to relax or calm yourself

10. (-3) Tried to figure out how to leave or stay out of the relationship

21. (-4) Thought about trying to kill him

Category 2: Health Behaviors

This category includes behaviors of the participants that may be aversive or beneficial to her physical well-being. Statement 11 is indicative of the positive position of the dichotomous categories. Statements 30, 28, 43, and 29 all rank high on the negative end of health behaviors. While statement 15 is significant, its rank score is within the interior of the Q-sort and its Z score (see table 2) is abnormally lower than the other 5 statements.

11. (4) Exercised more to relax

15. (-2) Took it out on other people

30. (-3) Used food to comfort yourself

28. (-3) Used alcohol to relax

43. (-4) Smoked cigarettes

29. (-4) Used street drugs to relax or calm yourself

Category 3: Social Relationships

This category was defined as the participant attempts to alter intimate relationship with persons other than her abusive partner. All of the statements within the category are related to seeking or denying social relationship. Statement 15 may not seem as explicit as the other

statement. However, berating people would make them distant from the participant: the participant is isolating herself. There is an even split among the dichotomy. Statements 15 and 34 are related to the rejecting end point. Statements 1 and 3 are characteristic of the seeking end point because the she is surrounding herself with a source of support.

15. (4) Took it out on other people when felt angry, upset

34. (4) Spent time alone

1. (-3) Spent time with family

3. (-4) Made new friend

While only three of the original eight factors were found to be significant, the Q-sort methodology is still a viable method in determining the structure and underlying variables within a data set. The foundation of my assertion lies within the factors of the Q-sorts. Although many statements did not meet the $p < .01$ cutoff, many of them were indicative to the categories due to their placement at the extreme end of the continuum. Also, the analysis indicated that there were no consensus statements; meaning that there were not any statements that did not distinguish between any factors. In other words, all of the non-significant statements fell into at least one of the categories. This finding does seem to support the over arching theme of feel better strategies. However, there could have been an issue with the definitions of the categories. The categories may not have been defined extensively enough, thereby restraining the sorter's choices. Another problem could be that maybe other categories exist that were not created. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that there are underlying variables with the feel better measure that can be made explicit with the modifications of the Q-sort methodology used in this study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has implication for the utilization of the Q-sort as viable method in the construction of an instrument that systematically and collectively measures women's responses to abuse. Having a systematic and structured approach to measuring women response will allow researchers to better understand the dynamics of women's response. Understanding the dynamics of women's response is pertinent to the intervention communities. Because once we understand the reasoning and helpfulness of a response, we may be able use the information to help other women successful mitigate the abuse and eventually leave the abusive relationship.

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Appendix A

Instructions to Feel Better Q-sort

These instructions will guide you through the Q-sort step by step. Please read the directions thoroughly before you start.

1. In addition to this instruction sheet, this packet include a set of cards (45) and two score sheets labeled A and B. All 45 cards in the deck contain statements about things the participants did to make themselves feel better after experiencing intimate partner violence. Using score sheets A and B, I am asking you to rank-order these "feel better" statements into categories with continuums that are characteristic of the statements from your own point of view. The cards are numbered from 1 to 45. These numbers are only relevant for tracking your responses.

2. You have been assigned the following four categories and continuums:

1. Rationalizations- Cognitive attempts to justify the partner's abusive

Partner Centered — Participant Centered

2. Perspective- The participant's thoughts and perceptions regarding the abusive relationship

Pessimistic — Optimistic

3. Health behavior- Behaviors of the participant that affect her physical well-being

Negative — Positive

4. Help seeking- The participant's active efforts to solicit help

Formal Sources Informal Sources

The following directions apply to all four categories. Each category has a set of corresponding scoring sheets labeled A and B.

3. Take the deck card and both score sheets and place them in front of you. Be sure to record your name in the designated areas of score sheets A and B.

4. Carefully read the cards to familiarize yourself with all 45 statements. Using score sheet A, split the items into three piles: a pile for statements that are relevant to one end of the continuum (e.g. partner centered), a pile of cards that are relevant to the other end of the continuum (e.g. participant centered), and a pile of cards for items that you feel are not relevant to the category (e.g. rationalizations). Once the cards are placed into the three piles, count and record the total number of cards in each pile into the corresponding blocks. Also, please check whether the totals you entered in the three blocks equate to 45.

5. Take the cards from the first end of the continuum (e.g. partner centered) and read them again. Select the two statements you believe are most indicative of that end point and using score sheet B, record the item numbers in the first two boxes on the left of the score sheet, below the "1" (it does not matter which item goes on top or bottom). Next, from the remaining cards in the deck, select the four statements you feel are indicative of that same end point (e.g. partner centered) and record the item numbers in the four boxes below the "2". Continue to follow this procedure for the remaining cards from the pile.

6. Now take the cards from the other end point of the continuum (e.g. participant centered) and read them again. Just like before, select the two statements you believe are most indicative of that end point and record the item numbers in the first two boxes on the right of score sheet B, below the “9” (it does not matter which item goes on top or bottom). Next, from the remaining cards in the deck, select the four statements you feel are indicative of that same end point (e.g. participant centered) and record the item number in the four boxes below the “8”. Follow this procedure for all the remaining cards from the pile.

7. Take the cards from the “not relevant” pile and read them again. Arrange the cards in the remaining open boxes of score sheet B.

8. Lastly, when you have placed all the item numbers on the score sheet, please go over your distribution once more. If you like, you may shift your cards.

9. Now that you have finished your first category, repeat the previous steps for the remaining three categories. Once you have finished sorting all four categories, check to ensure that both score sheets A and B are complete for each category (a total of 4 sets of score sheets).

Appendix B

Sample Score Sheet A: Primary Sort

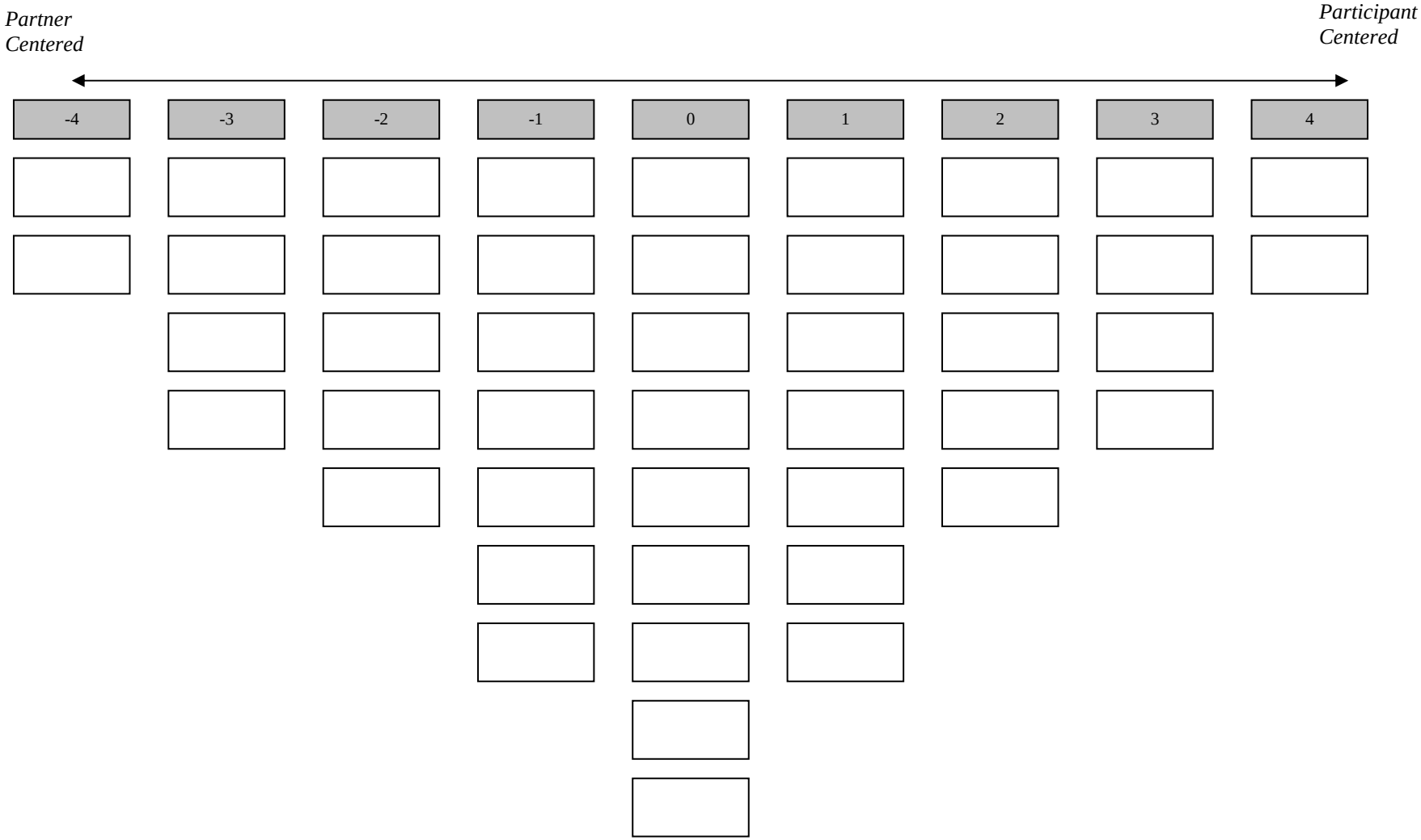
Name: _____

1. Rationalizations- Cognitive attempts to justify the partner's abusive

Partner Centered Total: ____

Not Relevant Total: ____

Participant Centered Total: ____

Appendix C

Score Sheet B: Q- sort *1. Rationalizations- Cognitive attempts to justify the partner's abusive*