



Construction And Standardization of An Intergroup Harmony Scale Among Young Adults

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Abstract: The present study aims to develop and standardise a tool to assess intergroup harmony among young adults. A 54-item Likert-type attitude scale was developed through an extensive review of the relevant literature and existing tools, as well as consultations with experts in psychology and sociology. The tool adopts a five-point response format ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The reliability of the scale was assessed in a pilot study with 150 students, and internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. A total of 54 items, of which 44 were retained for the final study. The internal consistency (reliability) of this scale is 0.940. The present research discussed the development of a scale to measure the intergroup harmony among young adults.

Keywords – Intergroup Harmony, Young Adults, Intergroup Relations

Introduction

Intergroup harmony is a crucial issue that requires attention in the context of the growing social, cultural, and religious diversity of modern societies in social psychology. The definition of intergroup harmony implies that people from different social groups have good relationships, show respect and cooperation, and collaborate without any prejudice, conflicts, discrimination, or intolerance. As far as young adults are concerned, they play a special role, as they are at an age when socialisation and identity development take place. To develop appropriate attitudes towards intercultural and interracial diversity in the future, it is very important for them to maintain intergroup harmony. However, despite the increasing heterogeneity of educational institutions and community organisations, no measurement tool has yet been developed to assess intergroup harmony among young adults. At the same time, there are many instruments for measuring other related constructs in intergroup relations, namely, prejudice, stereotyping, intergroup anxiety, and intergroup trust. Although they can provide much information, they do not allow for considering intergroup harmony comprehensively, as it encompasses not only reduced negative attitudes but also positive ones. In this regard, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the construction of a scale that would help to consider all dimensions of intergroup harmony and assess its level among young adults. It will contribute to further scientific research in the field. First, it will enable scientists to analyse the factors contributing to intergroup harmony and the consequences of having or lacking such harmony. Furthermore, it will facilitate the evaluation of interventions aimed at achieving better intergroup relations. Another advantage is the ability to compare results from various studies and contexts. In addition, the young adult age group is selected specifically for the current paper because it represents one of the most socially active and dynamically developing segments of the population. Young adults make up part of society and participate in the educational process, community life, civic activities, etc. Hence, a tool to measure intergroup harmony among this population segment will be very useful to researchers. Thus, the aim of the study is to construct and standardise an Intergroup Harmony Scale for young adults.

Objectives of the Study

- To construct and standardize the intergroup harmony scale among young adults
- To examine the internal consistency of the intergroup harmony scale
- To construct a valid and reliable measure of intergroup harmony

Construction of the Intergroup Harmony Scale

The present study developed the Intergroup Harmony Scale to assess individuals' attitudes and interactions toward members of other religious groups. The scale was constructed and standardised using Likert's method (1932). The scale construction process comprised three phases.

1. Planning phase
2. Construction Phase
3. Standardization Phase

1. Planning Phase: This phase involved the following steps;

a) Identification of the dimensions of intergroup harmony

Initially, an extensive review of the related literature and theoretical frameworks, along with discussions with subject-matter experts, was undertaken. Based on this review and consultation with experts, four dimensions of intergroup harmony, i.e., Peaceful coexistence, Intergroup participation, Intergroup respect, and Building empathy, were identified for the present study.

b) Operational definition of Intergroup Harmony

Intergroup harmony refers to a dynamic state of positive social relations among distinct social groups, characterized by reduced prejudice, minimal conflict, active cooperation, peaceful coexistence, mutual understanding, and respect among communities with diverse backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, or identities.

c) Methodology for scale construction

To construct the Intergroup Harmony scale, Likert's (1932) technique of summated ratings was employed, as it is widely used in the field of behavioural sciences. The most commonly used form of Likert's scale for research purposes is the five-point rating scale, which includes a continuum of response options ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In the present study, the response categories were Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree. For the scoring purposes, numerical weights of 1 to 5 were assigned to each category, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. Each statement requires the respondent to select the response category that most closely reflects their genuine feelings.

2. Construction Phase: This phase involved the following steps;

a) Preparation of the item pool for the scale

After an extensive review of available literature and theoretical frameworks on intergroup harmony, an item pool of statements covering four dimensions of intergroup harmony, i.e., Peaceful coexistence, Intergroup participation, Intergroup respect, and Building empathy, was prepared. The critical analysis of relevant literature, as well as extensive discussions with field experts, helped the investigator prepare the preliminary draft of the scale, which contains a pool of 68 statements covering the four dimensions of intergroup harmony mentioned above.

b) Editing of the items and Provisional draft of the scale

A pool of 54 statements was submitted to subject experts to identify and address any grammatical inaccuracies, repetition, or ambiguities. Five experts with extensive experience in psychology, sociology, and research were consulted to review the scale's preliminary draft. Each expert critically evaluated every statement and recommended whether it should be modified, deleted, or retained. Following this expert review, the investigator and supervisor conducted several sessions to revise the statements. As a result, a provisional draft containing 54 statements was developed.

c) Directions for the respondents

Instructions for respondents were printed on the front page. Respondents were asked to provide their name, gender, age, and educational qualifications. They were instructed to read each statement carefully and indicate their response by marking a tick (✓) in the appropriate box. Respondents were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and that they should respond based on their level of agreement with each statement. They were requested to answer honestly and to respond to all statements. Additionally, respondents were assured that their answers would remain confidential and would be used solely for research purposes.

d) Pilot study of the scale

To examine the clarity, relevance and effectiveness of the items, a pilot study was conducted with the prepared draft of the scale. The preliminary version of the Intergroup Harmony scale was administered to a sample of 150 students drawn from different colleges in Aligarh, namely, Tikaram Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Dharma Samaj College and the MBA Department of Aligarh Muslim University. The selection of diverse colleges ensured adequate representation of intergroup relations across distinct groups. The responses from the pilot study were subjected to item analysis to assess each item's quality and performance.

e) Item Analysis

Item analysis was carried out for each item to assess whether it fit well with the rest of the scale. To assess the internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was used. We reviewed items based on their item-total correlation values and reliability statistics. The results showed that items 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 25, 28, 29, 38, and 42 had lower item-total correlations with the overall scale, with values of 0.276, 0.290, 0.230, 0.216, 0.024, 0.128, 0.189, 0.282, 0.135, and 0.352, respectively. All other items had item-total correlations of 0.30 or higher, indicating they distinguished well among response options. The inter-item correlation matrix also showed that these 10 items had much lower correlations than the others. This suggests that these items did not fit as well with the main idea measured by the scale.

We also checked how Cronbach's alpha would change if we removed each of these ten items. Removing any of them raised the reliability coefficient to 0.940. This strong increase in reliability supported the decision to exclude these items from the final scale. Based on the results from item-total correlations, inter-item correlations, and Cronbach's alpha, we removed the ten items. The final version of the Intergroup Harmony Scale was more consistent and precise, making it suitable for the main study.

We used the following criteria to select items:

- Items with a correlation value of 0.30 or higher were considered acceptable and retained.
- Items with correlation values below 0.30 were considered unacceptable and were eliminated.

Based on the item analysis and reliability results, we removed 10 items, leaving a final set of 44. The remaining items showed good internal consistency and were suitable for measuring intergroup harmony among young adults.

Table 1: Item-Total Statistics

Question Numbers	Mean if Item Deleted	Variance If Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Remarks
Q1	216.65	534.871	.776	.938	Selected
Q2	216.35	544.661	.415	.940	Selected
Q3	216.60	537.516	.659	.939	Selected
Q4	216.80	541.011	.317	.940	Selected
Q5	216.90	540.726	.340	.940	Not Selected
Q6	217.70	522.221	.509	.939	Not Selected
Q7	217.00	533.684	.450	.939	Not Selected
Q8	217.20	518.905	.721	.937	Selected
Q9	216.80	527.221	.642	.938	Selected
Q10	217.35	530.134	.429	.939	Selected
Q11	216.85	536.134	.459	.939	Selected
Q12	216.60	536.147	.528	.939	Selected
Q13	217.90	529.042	.360	.940	Not Selected
Q14	218.10	537.568	.256	.941	Not Selected
Q15	217.90	530.937	.330	.941	Selected
Q16	217.10	528.305	.511	.939	Selected
Q17	216.95	528.155	.660	.938	Selected
Q18	217.15	527.082	.554	.939	Selected
Q19	217.10	528.516	.732	.938	Selected
Q20	216.85	526.976	.576	.938	Selected

Q21	216.85	524.871	.666	.938	Selected
Q22	216.90	533.147	.510	.939	Selected
Q23	216.60	533.516	.612	.939	Selected
Q24	216.55	534.261	.590	.939	Selected
Q25	217.45	555.945	.070	.943	Not Selected
Q26	216.75	537.882	.486	.939	Selected
Q27	217.20	529.642	.548	.939	Selected
Q28	218.55	549.734	.038	.943	Not Selected
Q29	218.45	544.892	.103	.943	Not Selected
Q30	218.25	535.987	.270	.941	Selected
Q31	217.15	523.924	.496	.939	Selected
Q32	216.40	539.516	.513	.939	Selected
Q33	216.65	532.555	.645	.938	Selected
Q34	216.95	530.155	.663	.938	Selected
Q35	216.85	530.555	.615	.938	Selected
Q36	216.70	536.642	.594	.939	Selected
Q37	216.65	534.871	.652	.939	Selected
Q38	216.95	533.313	.377	.940	Not Selected
Q39	216.75	534.092	.610	.93939	Selected
Q40	216.80	528.589	.722	.938	Selected
Q41	216.40	539.305	.638	.939	Selected
Q42	217.75	538.092	.296	.940	Not Selected
Q43	217.05	519.524	.768	.937	Selected
Q44	216.90	525.884	.766	.938	Selected
Q45	216.75	531.145	.707	.938	Selected
Q46	216.80	533.747	.515	.939	Selected
Q47	216.65	540.239	.400	.940	Selected
Q48	216.50	540.474	.454	.939	Selected
Q49	216.65	534.871	.571	.939	Selected
Q50	216.60	533.095	.626	.938	Selected
Q51	216.80	530.484	.605	.938	Selected
Q52	216.90	539.253	.283	.940	Selected
Q53	216.60	536.884	.505	.939	Selected
Q54	216.70	535.905	.543	.939	Selected

f) Final Form of the Tool

The finalised Intergroup Harmony Scale comprises 44 items designed to assess intergroup harmony among young adults from diverse social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. The scale captures multiple dimensions of harmony, such as attitudes toward outgroups, willingness to cooperate, mutual respect, empathy, and the absence of intergroup conflict. This instrument is suitable for research in intergroup relations and provides a standardised measure of intergroup harmony within this demographic. As a standardised tool, the Intergroup Harmony Scale provides a reliable, systematic method for measuring harmony in empirical research. It is particularly valuable in quantitative studies of youth populations, where intergroup dynamics significantly influence social cohesion and community integration.

g) Scoring procedure

Scoring was based on a five-point Likert-type scale. The points were denoted by 5 for Strongly Agree (SA), 4 for Agree (A), 3 for Neutral (N), 2 for Disagree (D) and 1 for Strongly Disagree (SD). The maximum score of the scale could be 220, and the minimum score of the scale could be 44.

3. Standardization Phase: This phase involved the following steps;

a) Determination of the reliability of the scale

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency in measurement, meaning the extent to which a measuring device yields consistent results when tested and retested. In the present study, the internal consistency of the intergroup harmony scale was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient value of 0.940. This value indicated a high level of reliability.

b) Establishing the validity of the scale

Further, the square root of the reliability coefficient, which represents the validity of the scale, was 0.969, indicating very high validity of the assessment tool. Hence, the Intergroup Harmony Scale is considered both reliable and valid for measuring an individual's level of harmony across distinct groups.

The criteria adopted for interpreting reliability coefficients were as follows:

Above 0.70 is considered- Acceptable

Above 0.80 is considered- Good

Above 0.90 is considered- Excellent

Based on these criteria, the scale's reliability and validity fall within the 'Excellent' category, confirming its suitability for research purposes.

c) Setting of the time limit for the scale

The average time taken by 80% of respondents to reach the last item was set as the test completion time. Thus, 15 minutes was set as the time limit for the test, including time to read the instructions.

Conclusion

The result of this study has been the creation of the standardized version of the Intergroup Harmony Scale, designed for use among young adults. In particular, scientific approaches have been used in the course of the process, which involved such steps as item generation, item piloting, and the use of advanced statistics for analysis purposes. A total of 54 items has been reduced to 44 statements during the analysis. Moreover, the resulting scale exhibited high levels of both reliability and validity, as measured by means of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, equalling 0.940. Exclusion of poor items, based on their item-total correlation, inter-item relationships, and reliability diagnostics has greatly increased the value of the developed measure. The resulting standardized scale is a significant scientific achievement related to the sphere of intergroup relations and the measurement of intergroup harmony among young adults. Moreover, it can be used in further research on relations between intergroup contact, trust, and harmony.

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