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	OFFPRINT	סוג:
	<u>Apel, Zev</u>	מחבר:
[Analyzing the structure of assertiveness : A facet analysis based on the Gambrell and Richey assertion inventory {offprint		כותר:
	<u>Full-text</u>	טקסט מלא:
In: Levy, S., & Elizur, D.(Eds.) : Facet theory; Towards cumulative social science. Ljubljana : University of Ljubljana, 2003. pp. 381-391		הערה:
	אפל, זאב (תדפיסים)	מרצה:
[Facet theory Towards cumulative social science {offprint		כותר נוסף:
	<u>Lewy, Shlomit</u>	מחבר נוסף:
	<u>Elizur, Dov</u>	
	<u>Shalom, H</u>	
	ייעוץ למשפחה - תשע"ד	קורס:

Levy, S., & Elizur, D. (Eds.). (2003). Facet theory: Towards cumulative social science.
 Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana.

ANALYZING THE STRUCTURE OF ASSERTIVENESS:
 A FACET ANALYSIS BASED ON THE GAMBRILL AND RICHEY PP.381-
 ASSERTION INVENTORY 391.

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ABSTRACT

Assertiveness has been defined in many ways. Most of the definitions may be classified according to areas of action that reveal the existence of assertive behavior, such as:

- Expressing private emotions (Salter, 1977; Wolpe, 1978)
- Expressing needs, opinions and desires (Galassi & Galassi, 1977)
- Expression of personal opinion by an individual in protecting his/her rights (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976; Albery & Emmons, 1978)
- Directness, honesty (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976; Albery & Emmons, 1978)
- Ability to respond negatively, to hold a discussion with others, to express a desire and ask for what one wants; expression of positive and/or negative emotions (Goldfried & Linehan, 1977).

To measure assertiveness, many studies have used the Gambrill and Richey (1975) questionnaire, consisting of 40 statements that express assertive behavior, and asking respondents to rank them on a five point Likert scale according to the following three aspects:

1. The level of discomfort with the situation described in the statements.
2. The probability that the respondent would behave similarly to the way described.
3. In which of the situations described they need to improve their level of assertiveness.

The Gambrill and Richey (1975) questionnaire is based on viewing assertiveness as a unitary concept. It provides an overall assessment of the respondents into assertive and non-assertive. However, it seems to us that assertiveness, like other personality traits, is a complex construct with various basic component facets. These facets should first be carefully defined. In this study we attempt to develop a facet definition of assertiveness and test it on a sample of 122 Israeli respondents.

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to show through facet theory how a population of married couples from the national-religious sector perceives the concept "assertiveness" and to examine the differences between the genders in terms of assertive behavior.

The words assertive and assert come from the Latin verb "asserere," meaning to declare, as in "asserere in libertatem" – to declare the liberation of someone, to free someone, and in the other direction, "asserere in servitudem" – the master's declaration that someone is his slave. The change that has occurred in the meaning of "assert" and "assertive" over the past fifty years can be seen by comparing their definitions in the Oxford dictionary. While the 1946 edition gives as the definition of assert "vindicate a claim to (rights), insist upon one's rights," by 2000 the semantic space is expanded by the definition of assertive as "expressing opinions or desires strongly and with confidence, so that people take notice (opp. submissive)."

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Scholars in the social sciences have defined assertiveness in various ways, most of them quite similar. These definitions may be classified by areas of action that manifest the presence of assertive behavior. Following are some of these definitions:

- i. Private expression of emotions (Salter, 1977; Wolfe, 1982);
- ii. Expression of needs, opinions and desires (Galassi & Galassi, 1977);
- iii. Expression of opinion by an individual in protecting his/her rights (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976; Albery & Emmons, 1978);
- iv. Candor, honesty (Lange & Jakubowski, 1976; Albery & Emmons, 1978);
- v.
 1. Ability to respond negatively
 2. Hold a discussion with others
 3. Express a desire and ask for what one wants
 4. Express positive and/or negative emotions

Scholars report that despite the broad use of the term assertiveness, the concept is still nebulous (Goldfried & Linehan, 1977; Shapira & Rabin, 2002).

Various tools have been developed to measure assertiveness, such as those of Lawrence (1970), Rathus (1973), and Galassi et al. (1974). However, factor analysis of data from assertiveness measures has failed to yield the one major factor that would suggest a general trait (Lawrence, 1970). Researchers have found multiple factors more consistent with state theory.

Like many other studies, we measured assertiveness using a questionnaire developed by Gambrill and Richey (1975). This questionnaire contains 40 items that express assertive behavior, and asks the respondent to grade them in the three following aspects:

1. The respondent's level of discomfort with the various situations described in the items
2. The probability that the respondent would behave similarly to the way described in the items
3. The situations described in the questionnaire in which they need to improve their level of assertiveness.

The composers of this questionnaire employed a variety of sources in developing a list of potential items. Factor analysis of the collected data generated 11 factors that accounted for 61% of the variance; each factor accounting for 7% to 3.9%. The factors were: initiating interactions; confronting others; giving negative feedback; responding to criticism; turning down requests; handling service situations; resisting pressure to one's consciousness; engaging in "happy talk;" complimenting others; admitting personal deficiencies; handling a bothersome situation.

In this questionnaire we did not find a distinction based on the definitions listed above, namely, different types of assertiveness, such as giving a negative answer, expressing an opinion, or expressing a wish. In the handbook accompanying the questionnaire the authors set an overall score for assertiveness and divide the respondents dichotomously into assertive and non-assertive. It seems to us that for research purposes the division into high and low assertiveness is inadequate and that assertiveness, like all personality traits, should be considered as a complex construct with various component facets..

2. Measurement

For the purpose here we analyze the subject in the

The original questionnaire considered assertive behavior described (1) to very much denotes a low level

The research participants themselves as relatives many children. All the couples, both worked full-time (percent of the sample had a monthly income character of a "wo

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2. Measurement of Assertiveness

For the purpose of this study we used Gambrill and Richey's Assertion Inventory, and here we analyze the respondents' answers to the first aspect – the degree of discomfort felt by the subject in the various situations described in the items of the questionnaire.

The original questionnaire comprises 40 items describing inter-personal behaviors that are considered assertive, and the respondents are asked to indicate their level of discomfort with the behavior described in each item, on a five point Likert scale ranging from no discomfort (1) to very much discomfort (5). Thus a score of 1 denotes a high level of assertiveness and 5 denotes a low level of assertiveness.

The research population consisted of 61 married couples - 102 respondents – who defined themselves as religious (not ultra-Orthodox). This was a fairly young population without many children. All their children were still of pre-school or elementary school age. In 80% of the couples, both partners had higher education, 19% with a Master's degree; 62% of the men worked full-time (or more), and 53% of the women worked more than 20 hours a week. Ten percent of the families reported that they earned less than NIS 4,000 per month, while 63% had a monthly income of over NIS 8,000. Thus, this was a middle class population with the character of a "working intelligentsia."

Since our study examined a specific population which does not necessarily represent the population at large, we wanted to elicit the subjects' definition of the concept "assertiveness," as it emerged from their responses. We therefore followed the approach of "grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which advocates starting on the basis of the empirical level, analyzing the empirical data, and out of this analysis suggesting theoretical concepts.

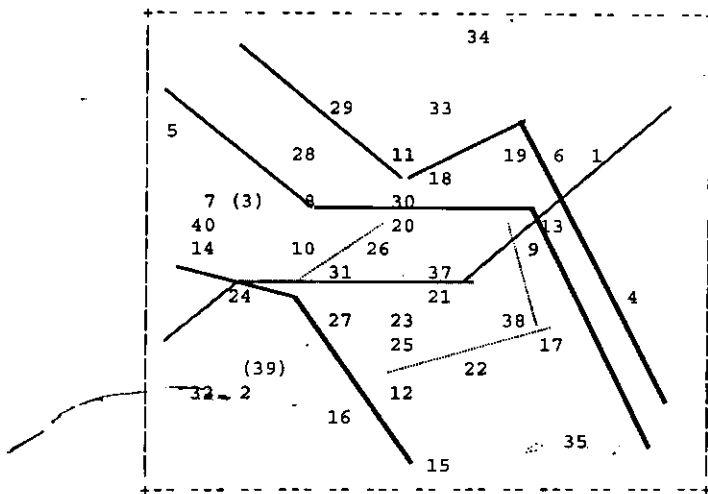
Smallest Space Analysis (SSA; Guttman 1968), was found appropriate to analyze the data, together with the monotonicity correlation coefficients. Item 36 – "Resist pressure to 'turn on' when you are not interested" - was omitted from the processing, since it was found to be in negative correlation with 20 other items. Out of the remaining 39 items, only 19 out of the 741 correlation coefficients were found to be negative, all of them close to 0. This finding confirms the existence of a shared cultural world.

As stated, a smallest space analysis (SSA) was conducted on these 39 items. The coefficient of alienation in analysis of three dimensions was found to be quite low: 0.22626. This is certainly a satisfactory result bearing in mind the numerous variables and the small number of respondents. Nevertheless, the following analysis should be seen purely as a hypothesis which needs to be tested in the light of theories or by further research.

The following graph presents a two-dimensional picture of the correlations between variables.

Figure 1 Assertiveness questionnaire – smallest space analysis

2 dimensions (out of 3), 39 variables, coefficient of alienation - 0.22626

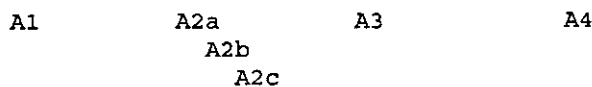


The numbers in the graph are the serial numbers of the items in the questionnaire.
 The blue lines separate the different elements of facet A.
 The green lines separate the elements of facet B.
 The numbers in brackets denote items whose place is at a different element of facet B.

Our analysis of the graph – based on the various definitions of assertiveness – led us to distinguish two facets: A and B.

3. Facet A – Area of Expression

Facet A comprises four elements, arranged in a continuum from left to right, as follows:



The facet can be divided into four elements, from bottom left to top right. The second element is divided from top to bottom into three sub-divisions. This division of the second element is marked in the figure by dotted blue lines.

Following are the numbers of the items listed by elements, and the definition of the elements:

- A1 24: Tell someone that you like them
- 39: Receive a compliment
- 32: Tell someone good news about yourself
- 2: Compliment a friend
- 16: Compliment a person you are romantically involved with or interested in

We will call this

- A2a. 5: Apc
- 7: Adr
- 3: Ask
- 40: Con
- 14: Ask
- 10: Adr

We will call this

- A2b. 20: You
- agai
- 26: Disc
- 31: Acc
- 37: Disc
- 21: Adn
- 27: Ret
- 23: Ask
- 38: Req
- 25: Req

We will call this

- A2c. 9: Ask
- 17: Req
- 22: App
- 12: Ask
- 35: Qui
- 15: Initi

We will call this

- A3. 28: Expr
- 8: Tell
- 30: Tell
- 18: Tell
- some
- 19: Ask
- 13: Stop

We will call this

- A4. 34: Resi
- 29: Resi
- 33: Resi
- 11: Turn
- 6: Turn
- 1: Turn
- 4: Resi

We will call this

We will call this element **expressing affection and compliments.**

- A2a. 5: Apologize when you are at fault
 7: Admit fear and request consideration
 3: Ask a favor of someone
 40: Continue to converse with someone who disagrees with you
 14: Ask for constructive criticism
 10: Admit ignorance in some area

We will call this element **admitting weakness and making requests.**

- A2b. 20: Your initial request for a meeting is turned down and you ask the person again at a later time
 26: Discuss openly with a person his/her criticism of your behavior
 31: Accept a date
 37: Discuss openly with a person his/her criticism of your work
 21: Admit confusion about a point under discussion and ask for clarification
 27: Return defective items, e.g., in a store
 23: Ask whether you have offended someone
 38: Request the return of borrowed items
 25: Request service due to you if not received, e.g., in a restaurant

We will call this element **pertinent discussion and clarification.**

- A2c. 9: Ask for a promotion or a raise
 17: Request a meeting or a date with a person
 22: Apply for a job
 12: Ask personal questions
 35: Quit a job
 15: Initiate a conversation with a stranger

We will call this element **initiating approach to employer or stranger.**

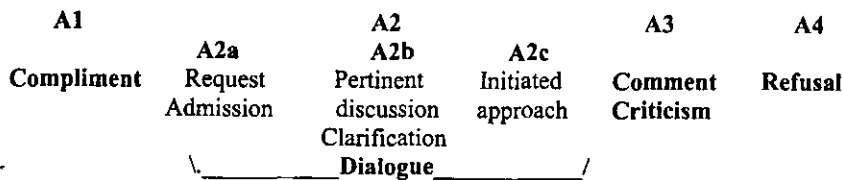
- A3. 28: Express an opinion that differs from that of the person you are talking to
 8: Tell a person close to you that his/her words or actions bother you
 30: Tell a person that he/she has been unfair to you
 18: Tell a friend or someone you work with when he/she says or does something that bothers you
 19: Ask a person who is harassing you verbally to stop
 13: Stop someone who is talking too much

We will call this element **commenting and criticizing .**

- A4. 34: Resist an unfair demand from someone who is not significant to you
 29: Resist sexual overtures when you are not interested
 33: Resist pressure to eat
 11: Turn down a request to borrow money
 6: Turn down a request for a meeting with someone of the opposite sex
 1: Turn down a request from a friend to borrow your car
 4: Resist sales pressure

We will call this element **refusal and rejection.**

In conclusion, a sequence of different areas of expression emerges, as follows:



Thus, it appears that the subjects distinguish between areas in which they experience varying levels of discomfort in demonstrating assertiveness. The order of the sequence is as follows:

From compliment to censure
 From positive (saying yes) to negative (saying no)
 From affection to rejection

Elements A2a - A2c are sub-elements of the main element A2, whose meaning is conducting dialogue, negotiations, discussion, clarification. At the center of the entire graph are the items of factor A2, which - more than the other items - hold significant correlations with most of the items in the questionnaire (a kind of general factor similar to the g-factor in intelligence tests based on factor analysis). It seems that the respondents (unintentionally) see the ability to hold a discussion and clarify matters without feeling uncomfortable as a major factor expressing assertiveness when it is accompanied by the ability to compliment (to say "yes") on the one hand, and to criticize and refuse (to say "no") on the other hand, and all this without feeling discomfort.

4. Analysis by Gender

The approaches that advocate equal rights, particularly with regard to women's status in society, stress the importance of assertiveness in women's behavior as an influential factor in guarding their rights and status (Linehan & Egan, 1979). They also emphasize the need for development of skills to express women's emotions in general and their anger in particular. Therefore we decided in this analysis to compare the findings relating to men and women.

The following table presents the means of the general score (39 items) of the entire research population and of the two genders separately, thus presenting an analysis of variance regarding the difference between the two genders.

Table 1: Analysis of Variance between Genders

		Total population	Men	Women
	Mean score	2.26	2.24	2.29
	Standard deviation	0.51	0.61	0.39
	No. of respondents*	88	44	44
ANOVA	F			.211
	Df			1 / 86
	P			.648

* Some of the subjects did not respond to all of the items

As stated, a score of 3 means "discomfort," in

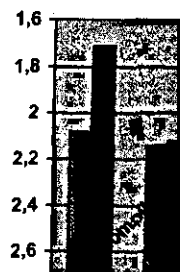
- These findings indicate:
1. The two genders are significantly different.
 2. Men feel a significant difference.
 3. The standard deviation is significantly larger among women.

However, the analysis by the means of the two genders following it shows a score of 1 (low) direction of the assertiveness.

Table 2: Degree

Men - Mean Std
Women - Mean Std
Difference (men minus women)
ANOVA - F
ANOVA - DF
ANOVA - Significance

Figure 2



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A4

Refusal

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Women
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As stated, a score of 1 means "no discomfort," indicating considerable assertiveness; a score of 3 means "a fair amount of discomfort," and a score of 5 means "extreme discomfort," indicating very little assertiveness.

These findings indicate that:

1. The two genders report "a little discomfort" in acting assertively (mean scores close to 2).
2. Men feel a little less discomfort than women, but the difference is not statistically significant.
3. The standard deviation among the women is much smaller than among the men. This means that the degree of discomfort is scattered much more widely among men than among women.

However, the general mean - like every mean - blurs the more subtle differences, while analysis by the various elements yields subtle differences and tendencies. Table 2 shows the means of the two genders in the elements found in the SSA. The table and the figure following it show the means of the genders in assertiveness elements. We will recall that a score of 1 (low) denotes high assertiveness (=no discomfort). Therefore, we reversed the direction of the figure, so that a higher point in the graph would indicate a higher level of assertiveness.

Table 2: Degree of discomfort in acting assertively, by gender and assertiveness elements.

	Assertiveness factors - Discomfort in acting assertively					
	Compliment	Request	Discussion	Approach	Comment	Refusal
Men - Mean	2.08	2.14	2.19	2.54	2.37	2.19
Std	.758	.769	.709	0.81	0.79	0.72
Women - Mean	1.71	2.12	2.29	2.59	2.64	2.35
Std	.547	.545	.561	0.73	0.66	0.58
Difference (men minus women)	0.37	0.02	-0.10	-0.05	-0.27	-0.16
ANOVA - F	8.10	0.02	0.58	0.11	3.76	1.53
ANOVA-DF	1/68	1/71	1/68	1/71	1/76	1/68
ANOVA - Significance	0.006	0.893	0.448	0.744	0.056	0.220

Figure 2

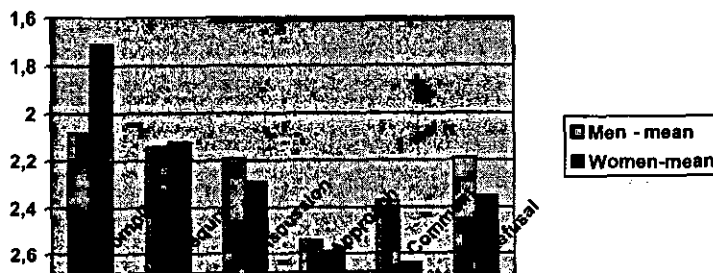


Table 3: 1

Examination of the table and the graph lead to the following conclusions:

Both men and women feel the greatest discomfort with regard to the elements "initiating approach" (means 2.54 and 2.59 respectively) and "commenting" (2.37, 2.64), for example, initiating a meeting with a stranger or with authority in order to ask for a raise in salary, apply for a job or quit a job; or telling someone (perhaps someone close) that their behavior bothers the speaker.

They feel the least discomfort with regard to the elements "complimenting" (2.08, 1.71) and "making requests or admitting weakness" (2.14, 2.12), namely giving or receiving a compliment, asking for something or for a favor, or admitting a mistake and asking for forgiveness.

It is interesting to note that for both genders refusing – saying no – is associated with less discomfort (2.19, 2.35) than initiating an approach or telling someone that he/she bothers them.

A significant trend emerges with regard to the difference between men and women (which was first offset in the calculation of the general mean):

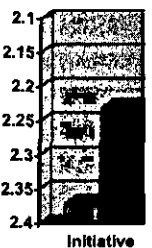
1. Women are more comfortable than men giving compliments and making requests.
2. Men are more comfortable than women passing remarks and refusing.
3. As the activity moves from "soft" to "hard," the difference between women and men gradually changes, moving from greater discomfort among men to greater discomfort among women.

Thus, it appears that in terms of discomfort with acting assertively, there is diverse gender labeling related to the type of activity.

5. Facet B – Nature of the Expression

In order to identify another facet, we compared the items located at the top of the graph with those located at the bottom. In particular, we compared the contents of the three areas at level 2 of facet A. We hypothesized that the items at the top express **response**, while those below express **initiative**. Therefore, we divided the 39 items dichotomously into expressions of response to others' behavior and expressions of initiative by the subject. In the SSA graph, this division was marked by a green line.

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the means of the genders on the assertiveness factors in facet B. As stated previously, a score of 1 (low) denotes high assertiveness (= absence of discomfort). Therefore, we reversed the direction in the graph, so that a higher point in the graph represents greater assertiveness.



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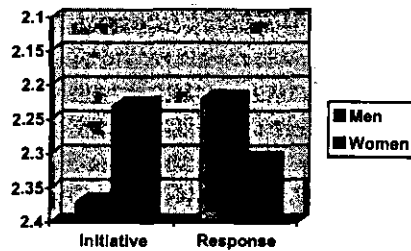
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Table 3: Degree of Discomfort in Acting Assertively, by Gender and Areas of Expression (Facet B)

	B - Nature of the Expression	
	Initiative	Response
Men - Mean	2.37	2.22
Std	0.42	0.46
Women-Mean	2.23	2.31
Std	0.64	0.66
Difference (men minus women)	0.14	- 0.09
ANOVA F	1.70	0.54
ANOVA DF	1/89	1/88
Significance P	0.195	0.466

Figure 3



The figure and the table show that:

Contrary to our expectations, women are more assertive than men when it comes to expressions of initiative, while men are more assertive than women when the expression is in the nature of a response. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

The explanation for this lies in the interaction between the two facets:

In the nature of things, "refusal" and "comment" are responses to expressions coming from others – and as we saw, men feel less discomfort with these expressions. On the other hand, compliments are usually expressed at the initiative of the speaker – and as we saw, women feel less discomfort with such expressions.

Note: As stated, this interpretation of the findings should be taken with a suitable degree of caution due to the limited number of subjects and the singular nature of the population, and needs to be tested vis-à-vis the various theories and other research

5. Mapping sentence.

As an outcome of the above analysis, the following mapping sentence may define the universe of the 39 test - items, expressing situations of assertive behaviour.

Mapping sentence Level of discomfort expressing assertive behavior

Respondent (x) , expressing towards another person

Facet A

Type of expression

- (A1 - affection, compliment)
- (A2a - admission, request)
- (A2b - pertinent discussion, clarification) , coming as
- (A2c - initiated approach)
- (A3 - comment, criticism)
- (A4 - refusal, rejection)

Facet B

Nature of expression

- (B1 - a response) (very low)
- (B2 - his own initiative) → assesses the level of his discomfort being (. .)
- (. .)
- (very high)

This mapping sentence may be tested in forthcoming studies.

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