

Teacher Perceptions of Behavior Screening Assessments

Faith G. Miller¹, Sabina Rak Neugebauer¹, Amy M. Briesch²,
Sandra M. Chafouleas¹, Megan E. Welsh¹, T. Chris Riley-Tillman³, & Gregory A. Fabiano⁴

University of Connecticut¹, Northeastern University², University of Missouri³, University at Buffalo⁴



Introduction

Background

With the increased emphasis on data-based decision making in schools, it is important to understand factors that may influence adoption of a particular assessment methodology. The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions of three common behavioral screeners in order to better understand how teachers perceive the relative merits of these assessments. Given the burgeoning of new school-based behavior rating assessments purported to be efficient for use, this information is needed to direct further research related to this new generation of assessments.

Objective

This study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of three school-based behavior assessments and to better understand the myriad factors that influence teachers' adoption of school-based assessments in their classrooms. We used an adapted version of the Usage Rating Profile-Intervention, a self-report instrument developed to understand the factors believed to influence intervention usage, and in the case of the present investigation to understand assessment usage. The URP-IR contains subscales that address factors including: acceptability, understanding, feasibility, home-school collaboration, systems climate, and systems support (Briesch, Chafouleas, Neugebauer, & Riley-Tillman, 2011). We examined the following research questions: 1) Do teachers perceive three behavioral screening assessments as having different usability qualities? 2) Is this adaptation of the URP-IR a reliable measure when used in the contexts of assessment usage?

Method

Participants and Setting

Table 1: Teacher Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	12	9
Female	121	91
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	128	96
African American	3	2
Asian	1	1
Other	1	1
Grade Taught		
First	19	14
Second	24	18
Fourth	27	20
Fifth	31	23
Seventh	14	11
Eighth	14	11
Multi-grade	4	3

- 133 public school teachers of grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8.
- Participating teachers were employed by 20 different schools, including rural, suburban, and urban districts.
- Public school settings were geographically located Connecticut, New York, and Missouri.

Method

Measures

- *Usage Rating Profile- Assessment (URP-A; Chafouleas, Briesch, Neugebauer, & Riley-Tillman, 2011).*
 - The URP-A is a self-report measure for collecting information about the factors influencing use of an assessment methodology. The measure is composed of 29 items, response options include a 6-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree to 6 – strongly agree).
- *Direct Behavior Rating – Single Item Scale (DBR-SIS: www.directbehaviorratings.org)*
 - DBR-SIS ratings reflect teacher's perceptions of the proportion of time a student is observed to be engaged in a target behavior (academic engagement, respectful, disruptive) from 0 (never) to 10 (always). Students were rated twice daily for five days.
- *Social Skills Improvement System - Performance Screening Guide (SSiS; Gresham & Elliott, 1990)*
 - The SSiS Performance Screening Guide can be used to screen social and academic behaviors of all students in a class. This measure is comprised of four scales: Math Skills, Reading Skills, Motivation to Learn, and Prosocial Behavior.
- *Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS; Kamphaus & Reynolds, 2007)*
 - The BESS is a brief rating scale that can be useful in screening for behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses in children and adolescents.

Procedures

- Participants completed the URP-A following a three-week data collection period in the Fall of 2011 in which the three behavior assessments were completed on a random sample of 10 students in their classroom.

Results

Table 2: Reliability Statistics for the URP-A

Subscale	Items	M inter-item r	SD of inter-item r	α
Acceptability	1, 7, 9*, 12, 18, 21, 22, 23	.44	.15	.87
Understanding	4, 6, 25	.52	.06	.76
Home-School	5, 15, 28	.63	.05	.83
Feasibility	3, 8, 13, 17, 19*, 27	.51	.06	.86
System Climate	10, 14, 16, 20, 26	.32	.12	.70
System Support	2, 24, 29	.45	.10	.71

- All subscales evidenced adequate levels of internal consistency (>.70)
- Inter-item correlations were moderate to strong.

Results

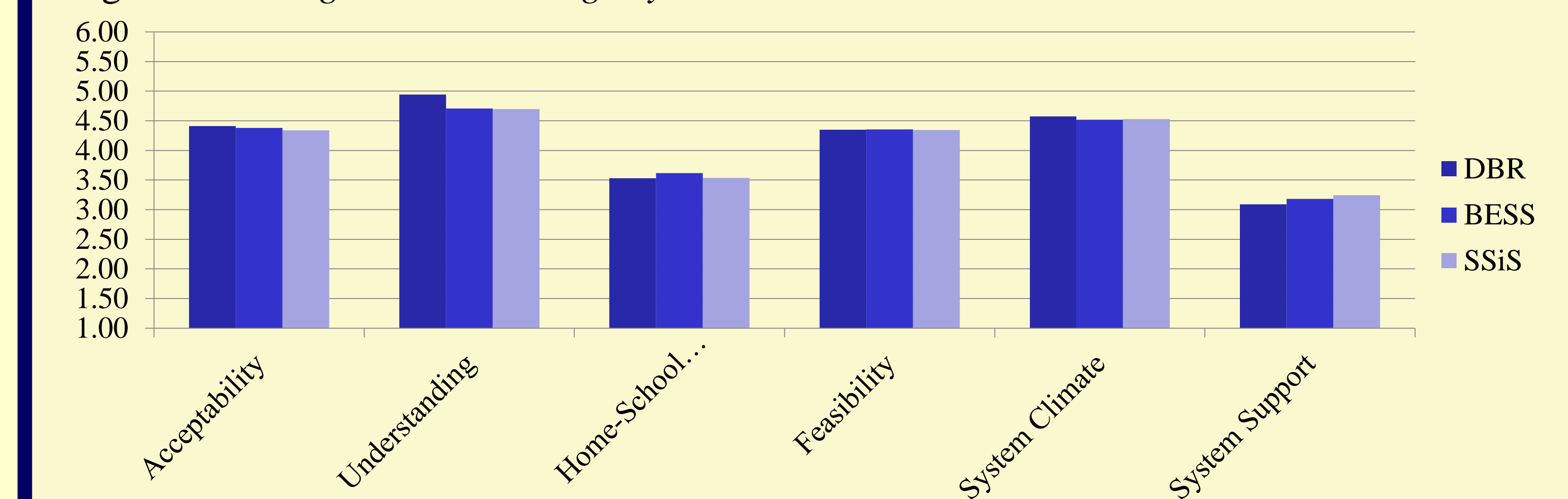
Table 3: Average URP-A Ratings by Assessment

Subscale	DBR-SIS			BESS			SSiS		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
Acceptability	116	4.41	.21	111	4.38	.30	112	4.34	.31
Understanding	127	4.94	.03	123	4.71	.04	123	4.70	.04
Home-School	120	3.53	.08	118	3.62	.10	116	3.53	.14
Feasibility	119	4.35	.27	117	4.35	.19	116	4.35	.21
System Climate	118	4.58	.36	115	4.52	.38	113	4.53	.41
System Support	128	3.09	.37	124	3.18	.37	112	3.25	.31

Note. Lower ratings on the system support factor reflect a greater ability to independently implement the assessment.

- On average, teacher ratings reflected neutral to positive perceptions of the behavioral screening measures.
- Overall, ratings were very similar across assessments.

Figure 1: Average URP-A Ratings by Assessment



- On average, for the Understanding subscale, DBR-SIS was rated significantly higher than both the BESS, $t(121) = 4.49, p = .0001$ and SSiS $t(120) = 4.97, p = .0001$.

Summary and Conclusions

- When adapted to an assessment context, the URP-A ratings evidenced adequate internal consistency within this sample of 133 teachers.
- Overall, teachers rated the three behavioral assessments positively, with perceived greater understanding of DBR-SIS than other measures.
- Because DBR-SIS ratings reflect the percentage of time a student engaged in a target behavior, it is possible that this scale may be more easily interpreted than traditional rating scale formats such as found in the BESS and SSiS.
- Differences in subscale ratings suggest that teachers perceive these assessments as having different usability qualities. Understanding teacher perceptions of behavioral rating scales is important; such assessments can be used to identify barriers to implementation for the purpose of either removing those barriers or for selecting an alternative option with greater likelihood of success.

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