

**The Modified Erikson
Psychosocial
Stage Inventory
(MEPSI)**

Developed by:

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The Modified Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (MEPSI)*

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General Information:

The Modified Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (MEPSI) is designed to measure the strength of psychosocial attributes that arise from progression through Erik Erikson's eight stages of development. It evolved in response to the apparent lack of a valid and reliable, yet easily administered survey instrument to measure psychosocial attributes in the *adult* population within the context of Eriksonian developmental theory.

The MEPSI was developed by modifying the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Rosenthal, Gurney, & Moore, 1981) which assesses Erikson's first six stages of life cycle development. This modified version was administered to a sample of 168 adults, 112 women and 56 men, 19 to 86 years of age. The alpha reliability coefficient for the MEPSI as a global scale was .97. Coefficients for the eight subscales, which correspond to the eight stages of development, were as follows: trust .82, autonomy .84, initiative .78, industry .85, identity .85, intimacy .78, generativity .75, and ego integrity .80. Validity of the new inventory was also supported. See Darling-Fisher and Kline Leidy (1988) for further information.

The MEPSI has been used as an indicator of psychosocial attribute strength in several investigations. Darling-Fisher (1987), in a cross-sectional study of adaptation to parenthood, surveyed 214 women and 211 men 18 to 44 years of age. Reliability levels in this sample (N=428) were .95 for the total scale, with a range of .69 (Generativity) to .83 (Industry, Identity) for the subscales. When the data were stratified by gender, females tended to have slightly higher reliabilities than males on all scales, with the exception of Generativity. Kline's (1988) study of people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease employed the MEPSI as one of several predictors of symptomatic experience in this population. Reliability levels for this older sample (N=109, 58 males and 51 females; mean age=65.21 years, SD=8.46) were high, .94 for the aggregate, with a range of .67 (Generativity, Ego Integrity) to .78 (autonomy) for the subscales. Walsh (1988), in her study of 134 men with hemophilia (mean age=34.9 years, SD=13.7), reported an internal consistency level of .97 for the total scale, with a range of .75 (Intimacy) to .86 (Identity) for the subscales.

Finally, Kline Leidy's (1989) study of psychosocial resources in healthy older adults (N=100, 59 females and 41 males; mean age=72.97 years, SD=7.77) also found high internal consistency for the aggregate measure (alpha=.94), with a range of .54 (Integrity) to .78 (Industry) for the subscales. It is important to note that in the Darling-Fisher, Kline, and Kline Leidy studies, lower reliability levels were associated with the stage of age-related concern, i.e., generativity in the

younger sample and generativity and ego integrity in the older. Because these are times when
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instability might be anticipated, this finding tends to support the validity of the measure. Additional evidence of the measure's construct validity has also been reported (Kline Leidy & Darling-Fisher, 1989).

A review by Morrissey (2004) examined 23 sources using the MEPSI as a measure of psychosocial development. The sources included dissertations, master's theses, abstracts, and clinical research studies. It was used for variety of research topics, including adolescent health, parenting, adult health, chronic disease, surgery, religion, and criminal justice, to name a few. Results of the analysis indicated that the MEPSI demonstrated strong reliability and validity scores when used as a complete scale. Individual scales demonstrated variance in reliability scores. For the whole scale, the MEPSI demonstrated reliability scores ranging from 0.92-0.96. Reliability scores for individual scales continued to be variable, ranging as follows: Trust vs. Mistrust: 0.71-0.89; Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt: 0.69-0.82; Initiative vs. Guilt: 0.66-0.86; Industry vs. Inferiority: 0.74-0.84; Identity vs. Role Confusion: 0.77-0.88; Intimacy vs. Isolation: 0.61-0.88; Generativity vs. Stagnation: 0.52-0.78; Ego Integrity vs. Despair: 0.65-0.90. While additional research is needed to increase the reliability of the MEPSI subscales, it has demonstrated overall to be a reliable measure of psychosocial development.

***When distributed to subjects, the MEPSI is labeled "Personal Attitudes Survey".**

Scoring Procedures:

Five positive and five negative items are used to describe attributes derived from successful resolution and unsuccessful resolution, respectively, of a given stage or crisis. This yields 10 items per subscale, corresponding to the eight stages of development, and 80 items total. Items are assigned to subscales as follows:

<u>Scale</u>	<u>Items (Positive -</u>	<u>Negative)</u>
Trust - Mistrust	24, 34, 36, 53, 67	10, 18, 28, 40, 44
Autonomy - Shame & Doubt	1, 5, 12, 54, 68	37, 49, 57, 66, 78
Initiative - Guilt	7, 32, 59, 71, 75	11, 15, 22, 23, 65
Industry - Inferiority	2, 29, 33, 38, 64	14, 52, 61, 74, 76
Identity - Confusion	8, 13, 16, 17, 41	6, 9, 25, 47, 48
Intimacy - Isolation	4, 26, 45, 62, 77	3, 30, 39, 58, 72
Generativity - Stagnation	21, 42, 50, 70, 80	27, 43, 60, 63, 69
Ego Integrity - Despair	20, 46, 56, 73, 79	19, 31, 35, 51, 55

A subscale score is obtained by reversing the values of negative items and computing a mean for any subject answering a minimum of three of the five positive items and three of the five negative items included in the scale. The aggregate MEPSI score is obtained by computing the mean of the eight subscale scores. A low score (1-2) reflects a predominance of negative attributes, and a high score (4-5) reflects a predominance of positive attributes, i.e., the higher the score the stronger the positive attributes.

If a dichotomy (Low, Hi) is desired, the data should be cut at 4, with scores ≤ 3.9 and considered low and ≥ 4 considered high.

Considerations:

The MEPSI is continually being tested as a valid and reliable measure of Eriksonian attributes in the adult. The authors request the measure be used in its present form, with scoring as indicated above. This will facilitate the use of meta-analysis at a later time. If you feel a change or adaptation is absolutely necessary, please call or write one of the authors. They would be happy to discuss your concerns and provide you with up-to-date information on the instrument. In an effort to maintain the integrity and improve the quality of the MEPSI, the authors request they be kept apprised of its psychometric qualities as well as its utility. A summary of your results, with evidence of reliability and validity of the MEPSI would be greatly appreciated.

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