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Assertive Skills Questionnaire: The Internal Structure and Psychometric Properties

Abstract: This study aimed to develop a measure of assertiveness, the Assertive Skills Questionnaire (ASQ). Assertiveness is a complex ability that allows one to express one's opinion, emotions, and thoughts honestly and openly while respecting another person's rights. Assertiveness serves to increase self-satisfaction and good relationships with those around you. Three studies were conducted to develop the ASQ. In Study 1., we generated an item pool for the ASQ and established its internal structure using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). In Study 2., we confirmed the internal structure of the ASQ using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Study 3 examined the validity of the ASQ. We discussed the psychometric properties of the ASQ and its potential utility.

Keywords: *assertiveness, assertive skills, scale development*

Assertiveness is a complex skill that allows one to express one's opinion, emotions, and thoughts honestly and openly while respecting another person's rights. Assertive people can clearly say what they wish, empathize, respect others, and say "no" (Gultekin et al., 2018).

Since the middle of the last century, the topic of assertiveness has appeared in psychology in the context of clinical practice (e.g., Speed et al., 2018). Researchers believed low assertive skills could contribute to mental problems (e.g., Wolpe, 1990; Salter, 2002). Training programs, mainly behavioral, used in the treatment were designed to help people develop assertive skills. Interest in assertiveness increased in the 1970s, mainly under the influence of the civil rights movement. Since then, it has begun to emphasize that assertiveness is a way of protecting one's rights without violating the fundamental rights of others (Jakubowski-Spector, 1973). Alberti and Emmons (2017) developed the first assertiveness training designed not so much for clinical practice but to strengthen human potential, based on the idea that everyone has equal rights regardless of social status. In the 1980s and 1990s, assertiveness was seen as a method of self-actualization and self-awareness. Kapponii and Novak (1996) defined

assertiveness as a behavioral technique in which individuals know what they want to achieve and can do so without fear, uncertainty, or tension. Bishop (2010) defined assertiveness as a complete philosophy of life, including positive thinking, feelings and attitudes toward oneself and others, and a positive self-image. The concept of assertiveness has also been framed within interactional psychology as "a set of skills of a personal competence nature, determining behavior in interpersonal situations, the purpose of which is the realization of valued personal and non-personal values, the development and defense of a positive self-image and self-acceptance" (Beisert et al., 1991, p. 52). These competencies include a wide range of task-oriented (e.g., realizing one's rights), communicative (e.g., ability to communicate with others), and expressive (e.g., presentation of self) competencies. Viewing assertiveness in the paradigm of interactional psychology made it possible to search for the determinants of assertiveness in personality traits, especially temperamental and cognitive factors, as well as situational factors that create situations or force particular reactions. Nor does it overlook the importance of the interaction between these two factors.



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A few instruments to measure assertiveness have been developed for research and clinical purposes. The most commonly employed include Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS, Rathus, 1973), Adaptive and Aggressive Assertiveness Scales (AAA-S, Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011), and Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS, Mitamura, 2018). Although these instruments have been effectively used, they have shortcomings. The RAS was designed for use with college students, and its items were generated more than 25 years ago; thus, some of them need to be updated. The discriminant validity of this instrument is also of concern. Over one-third of the RAS's items are significantly positively associated with aggressiveness – 13 out of 30 items significantly positively (from .24, $p < .05$ to .53**, $p < .01$) correlated with aggressiveness as measured by the semantic differential scale (Rathus, 1973). The AAA-S addressed a limitation of the discriminant validity of the RAS scale in that it discriminates between assertiveness and aggressiveness. However, it only measures two direct forms of assertiveness—adaptive and aggressive. The range of assertive behavior in which people pursue their needs is much broader. The authors pointed out this as the main reason for the marginal fit of the two-factor model of the AAA-S (Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011). Finally, the FAS measures functional assertiveness, derived from a socio-linguistic perspective, defined as interpersonal communication, occurring when the speaker faces interpersonal issues that should be solved (objective effectiveness) or has goals that should be met (pragmatic politeness). The speaker's communication is seen as relevant by the listener (Mitamura, 2018). FAS only covers the assertive behavior of a communicative character.

A few other instruments measure assertive skills, such as the Adult Self-Expression Scale (Gay et al., 1975), the Conflict Resolution Scale (McFall & Lillesand, 1971), or the relatively extensive Assertion Inventory (Gambrell & Richey, 1975). The latter measures (1) turning down requests, (2) expressing personal limitations, (3) initiating social contacts, (4) expressing positive feelings, (5) handling criticism, (6) differing with others, (7) assertion in service situations, and (8) giving negative feedback. Two Polish questionnaires were developed to measure assertive skills. The Questionnaire to Study Assertiveness (Beisert et al., 1990) consisted of two lists. The first contained seven brief descriptions of situations, and the second contained nine possible ways of reacting. The potential reactions were described in such a way as to express assertive skills. A 5-point response scale accompanied each reaction. The other method, The Scale for the Study of Assertive Behavior "I and Others" (Majewicz, 1998), consisted of 17 items, which respondents rated on a 5-point scale. Both questionnaires were based on the definition of assertiveness by Sęk (1988), and their items expressed task, interpersonal, and expressive competencies. The Assertiveness subscale of the Social Competence Questionnaire (SCQ, Matczak, 2008) was also used to study assertiveness as a social skill. Finally, the Polish adaptation of the Children's Assertive Behavior Scale (CABS, Michelson et al., 1988) was used to study children (Oleś, 1998).

More than three decades have passed since the construction of those tools, so we decided to develop a new scale. This will allow us to adequately update the content of the item to the current social and situational context. Another argument favoring this is the continuing interest in assertiveness training in Poland. Assertiveness training peaked in Poland at the turn of the 20th and 21st century. Nowadays, training is a standard offer of many psycho-educational centers. Although the training portfolio is rich, its effectiveness has not been studied yet. Having a psychometric tool can benefit this research. When developing the new instrument, we were guided by the following definition:

Assertive self-expression is direct, firm, positive, and, when necessary, persistent action intended to promote equality in person-to-person relationships. Assertiveness enables us to act in our own best interests, stand up for ourselves without undue anxiety, exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others, and express our feelings and needs (affection, love, friendship, disappointment, annoyance, anger, regret, sorrow) honestly and comfortably (Alberti & Emmons, 2017, p. 56).

This definition draws on Fensterheim and Baer's (1975) claim that assertive people have an active approach to life, are in control of themselves, relate to themselves and others with respect, can communicate with others in an open, direct, sincere, and spontaneous manner, and are capable of self-disclosure, by which one can say "This is me. This is what I feel, think and want" (p. 20). Thus, assertiveness is a complex phenomenon that depends on the persons involved, their skills in self-disclosure, formulating requests, expressing feelings and opinions, social exposure, etc., and the particular situation (Alberti & Emmons, 2017). This study aimed to develop the Assertive Skills Questionnaire (ASQ), a new instrument that measures adults' assertive skills. We present data from four adult samples to examine the ASQ internal structure, reliability, and validity.

GENERATING AND REFINING ITEMS

The starting point for constructing a new instrument to measure assertive skills was a set of statements generated by the INTRA Centre for Psychological Assistance and Education in Warsaw (Poland), which was used for pre-screening individuals registering for assertiveness training. This set of statements was intended to help participants reflect on their feelings, opinions, and behaviors arising in various social situations requiring assertiveness. The psychological literature on assertiveness supports this way of generating items (De Groot & Walburg, 1977, as cited in Arrindell & van der Ende, 1985; Arrindell & van der Ende, 1985; Alberti & Emmons, 2017). Social situations are a stimulus that can trigger assertive behavior. Our screening set contained 44 scenarios describing everyday interpersonal situations in which one might behave assertively. These behaviors fall into nine categories: (1) initiative and social contacts (e.g., *I can start a conversation with a stranger*);

(2) contacts with authority (e.g., *If I have a different opinion from the person who is an authority for me, I openly express my position*); (3) defend your rights (e.g., *If someone is talking loudly during a movie, play or concert, I am able to ask them not to be disturbed*); (4) expressing requests and expectations (e.g., *I can ask a stranger for the help I need*); (5) expressing and responding to criticism and praise (e.g., *Often on my own initiative I find myself praising my acquaintances, friends, family members*); (6) expressing opinions (e.g., *It often happens that I have trouble defending my opinion when others attack me*); (7) expressing negative feelings (e.g., *I have a habit of using shouting as a way to get others to do what I want*); (8) expressing positive feelings (e.g., *I can openly and sincerely express warmth, affection and commitment to others*); and (9) public speaking (e.g., *I am not able to make a public appearance in front of a larger group of people*). These categories certainly do not exhaust the full range of assertive behavior but provide a representative range. Each item had a dichotomous response format (Yes/No). Respondents rated whether or not they behave this way. The inventory was not a standardized psychological test. Its psychometric properties were not tested, and its internal structure was not established. The set itself was pretty long. The dichotomous response format allowed only stating the presence of a given competence; it did not enable capturing its intensity. Finally, the scenarios were developed in the 1990s, and some items needed to be updated.

Between 2020 and 2022, the research team at INTRA¹ revised the content of the scenarios, removed the outdated ones, and replaced them with ones relevant to contemporary situations. As a result, 44 scenarios describing various forms of assertive behavior were obtained (for the Polish version of the items, see Table S1 in Supplemental Material). The scenario-based format was retained since other authors noted its benefits in assertiveness research (Mitamura, 2018; Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011). Each item was given a 5-point response format from 1 (*definitely no*) to 5 (*definitely yes*). These items were the starting point for the construction of the ASQ. We aimed to establish its internal structure, psychometric properties, reliability, and validity.

STUDY 1. EXPLORATION OF THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE ASQ

In Study 1., we explored the internal structure of the 44-item instrument using principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation.

Methods

Participants and procedure

The sample size for the analyses was determined considering the most common recommendations, i.e., minimum numbers of participants between 100 and 300, and the ratio of participants to items should be at least 5:1

(Kyriazos, 2018). Individuals were recruited using a nationwide online research platform in Poland (ARIAD-NA). Three hundred ninety-four participants (50.8% women), aged between 18 and 60 ($M = 39.47$, $SD = 12.44$) were recruited. Most reported living in urban areas (75.1%) and having at least secondary education (85.6%). The data were collected through a web survey. Non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used. Participants completed the scale in Polish. The procedure was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology at the authors' university. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, and the informed consent of the participants was implied through survey completion. We used IBM SPSS Statistics v.28 software to carry out the PCA.

Measure

Assertiveness. The 44 scenarios were used to measure assertiveness. The response options were from 1 (*definitely no*) to 5 (*definitely yes*).

Results

All items showed a non-normal distribution ($p < .001$). The skewness coefficients were around one (from 0.79 to 0.31), which was not strong enough to require further attention (George & Mallery, 2010). A series of component number analyses were conducted to determine the number of subscales in the ASQ. Based on the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalue > 1), PCA established eight factors explaining 59.56% of the variance. Table 1 shows the factor loadings of the ASQ items for the 8-factor solution. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .92, which is considered to be a good value (Hair et al., 2010), and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(946) = 8648.06$, $p < .001$).

Then, we selected items with the highest factor loadings to include in each factor. We employed two additional criteria while selecting items: (1) items load onto their primary factor $> .40$ (Howard, 2016), and (2) items demonstrate at least a difference of .20 between their primary and alternative factor loadings (Hinkin, 1998). After applying the above criteria, the number of items per factor was sixteen for F1 (loadings from .75 to .50), six for F2 (loadings from .77 to .55), five for F3 (loadings from .73 to .55), two for F4 (loadings from .62 to .61). The other four factors were very poorly represented. Three (F5, F6, F8) contained one item with a factor loading higher than .70. These factors also included items that went into the other factors. The most robust item in factor F5 had a .71 loading, and the second most robust item had a .56 loading but also entered factor F1. The most potent item in the F6 factor had a .73 loading, and the second most robust item had a .39 loading, but it also went into the F3 and F7 factors. Two items with loads of .48 and .46 entered F7, along with several other items that also entered other factors. Finally, an item with a .74 loading and several other items forming other factors with loads lower than .42 entered F8. According to the recommendations in the literature (Harvey et al., 1985), the number of

¹ Removed due to anonymized peer-review.

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis Showing Factor Loadings of ASQ Items for an Eight-Factor Solution (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation; n = 394)

Id	Items	Factor loadings								M	SD
		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8		
36 (1)	When dealing with a person who is an authority figure for me, I often give up my own interests and preferences in favor of that person's interests and preferences	.75	.02	-.16	-.13	-.05	-.01	.05	.04	2.92	0.91
43 (5)	If I recognize someone as an authority, I try to avoid behavior that that person might not like, even if there is nothing reprehensible about it	.75	.03	-.14	-.01	.03	.01	.11	-.17	2.98	0.94
26 (9)	I often avoid expressing my true opinion on a topic so as not to give my interlocutor an unfavorable impression	.74	.05	-.25	.09	.02	.07	.01	-.05	3.03	0.96
20 (12)	I don't know how to behave when someone criticizes me, even when it's the right thing to do	.71	-.19	-.08	.22	.01	.04	-.20	.11	2.84	1.05
19 (15)	I often have trouble defending my opinion when others attack me	.70	-.13	-.11	.20	-.02	-.01	-.34	.09	2.87	1.09
42	I find it difficult to receive expressions of positive feelings from others, so I try to avoid such situations	.70	-.26	.16	.26	.12	.03	.05	-.08	2.95	1.01
33	I often find myself doing something I don't feel like doing simply because I can't defy my surroundings	.69	-.05	-.15	.07	.23	-.06	-.08	.10	2.89	1.05
39	In a relationship with a person who is an authority figure for me, I try to do more often what she might like than what I really feel like doing	.68	.06	-.10	-.09	.23	.01	.10	-.07	3.05	0.92
8	If someone behaves toward me in an unfair or hurtful way, I can't bring it to their attention	.67	-.11	-.09	.10	-.16	-.01	-.29	.12	2.72	1.07
44	I find it difficult to receive physical gestures of affection from other people, so I try to avoid such situations	.64	-.26	.05	.20	.10	.15	.10	-.17	2.94	1.09
18	I have difficulty openly expressing criticism to my acquaintances, friends, family members	.61	-.03	.03	.23	-.11	-.12	-.39	-.17	3.02	1.01
22	I sometimes hide my displeasure, anger, or rage by pretending to the person I'm angry with that everything is fine	.59	-.01	.09	.10	.06	-.29	.14	.13	3.24	0.98
34	I can't maintain eye contact with the person I'm talking to	.57	-.27	-.03	.17	.10	.20	.10	.21	2.65	1.16
35	I often use lies to deny someone's request in a way that is easier to accept	.55	-.09	-.25	-.01	.36	.25	-.01	.17	2.86	1.07
6	I often refrain from sharing my thoughts in even a small group forum because I feel apprehensive about speaking up	.51	-.08	-.13	.48	.25	-.07	-.24	-.01	3.11	1.14
30	I have a habit of using shouting as a way to get others to do what I want	.51	-.16	.15	-.22	.46	.18	-.20	.08	2.61	1.11
10	Often, when someone praises me, I deny the praise or give information about my flaws for balance	.50	-.04	.11	.13	.23	-.30	.04	.26	3.16	0.99
38 (2)	I can express in appropriate words my positive feelings towards other people	-.09	.77	.18	-.05	-.06	.09	.10	.03	3.78	0.79

Table 1 cont.

Id	Items	Factor loadings								<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8		
1 (6)	I can openly and honestly express warmth, affection, and commitment to others	-.05	.72	.13	-.12	-.06	.02	-.10	.10	3.96	0.88
40 (10)	I can express my positive feelings towards other people with appropriate gestures	-.12	.72	.27	.04	.03	-.06	.11	-.02	3.72	0.81
16 (13)	I often find myself praising my acquaintances, friends, and family members on my own initiative	-.10	.65	.23	.05	.11	-.11	.19	.21	3.76	0.86
29 (16)	I often tell my loved ones how much I love/like them, what I appreciate them for, what I like about them	.07	.62	.19	-.21	-.09	-.10	.10	.24	3.48	1.01
4	I can start a conversation with a stranger	-.05	.59	.28	-.40	.18	-.01	.04	-.04	3.78	1.03
27	People close to me know my real face; I do not hide from them what I am, what I think, and what I feel	-.20	.55	.21	.10	-.03	.12	-.08	.06	3.87	0.91
28	I can defend myself against unjustified criticism without aggressively attacking the other person	-.13	.51	.46	.06	-.16	-.17	.28	-.03	3.68	0.81
2	I can give instructions to other people when I am authorized to do so	-.13	.47	.32	-.27	.18	.24	.05	-.04	3.85	0.9
15 (3)	If I have a different opinion from the person who has an authority over me, I openly express my position	-.19	.21	.74	-.01	.09	.10	.09	.08	3.59	0.82
14 (7)	If someone is talking loudly during a movie, play, or concert, I am able to ask them not to be disturbed	-.01	.25	.69	-.26	-.02	-.02	.08	.10	3.46	1.02
11 (11)	If, when talking to someone, I realize that I have a different opinion, I usually decide to express my view	-.19	.28	.65	.07	.12	.18	-.03	.06	3.64	0.81
37 (14)	During the discussion after a lecture or presentation, I am able to ask a question of interest to me freely	-.05	.38	.56	-.33	.01	.05	.07	-.14	3.43	0.97
9 (17)	I can express dissatisfaction, annoyance, and anger in a way that is sincere and open while not aimed at hurting the other person	-.09	.33	.55	.01	-.07	-.03	-.13	.29	3.59	0.84
23	If, in the queue, someone who came after me is unfairly served before me, I am able to point this out loudly	-.04	.16	.54	-.11	.08	.06	.47	.09	3.46	0.98
31	I can formulate my expectations even firmly to other people; I have no problem expressing them	-.05	.38	.52	-.20	.05	.17	.26	.06	3.44	0.88
5	If I don't want to do something that others expect me to do, I can resist and refuse to do it	-.21	.35	.51	.05	.22	.28	-.11	-.18	3.73	0.86
41 (4)	With the prospect of any public performance, I get nervous about it long beforehand, anticipating that something is bound to go wrong	.37	.15	-.15	.62	.23	.01	.14	-.01	3.42	1.05
17 (8)	I am not able to make a public appearance in front of a larger group of people	.41	-.09	-.09	.61	.10	.07	-.16	-.06	3.07	1.25
25	I freely attend a social gathering where I know no one but the hosts	-.02	.34	.50	-.53	.04	-.14	-.04	.07	3.21	1.07

Table 1 cont.

Id	Items	Factor loadings								M	SD
		F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8		
7	I often can't sustain a social conversation	.49	-.23	.02	.50	-.01	.14	-.06	.04	2.89	1.09
3	I sometimes punish with silence or cool detachment the person I am angry with	.12	.11	.10	.19	.70	-.17	.11	-.01	3.65	0.96
24	When I get angry, I have a habit of using hurtful remarks or triggers, uncensored words and instructions	.31	-.09	.14	.04	.56	.27	-.05	.04	2.94	1.08
12	If someone asks me for a favor that (I feel) involves me incurring undue hardship or inconvenience, I refuse to comply with their request	.11	-.01	.22	.11	.05	.73	.09	.02	3.29	0.91
32	If someone has borrowed money (or an item) from me and has been delaying paying it back for a long time, I remind them of this	-.06	.29	.33	.03	-.06	.39	.46	.02	3.78	0.90
21	I happen to ask my acquaintances, friends, family members for a favor or help	.06	.32	.14	-.02	.03	-.01	.04	.74	3.48	0.93
13	I can ask a stranger for the help I need	.12	.30	.37	-.38	.09	.11	.02	.42	3.25	1.06
Eigenvalue		11.29	6.37	2.13	1.85	1.26	1.20	1.06	1.05		
% of variance		25.67	14.49	4.83	4.21	2.86	2.72	2.41	2.38		

Note. Items for each factor are listed in descending order based on loadings. The item numbers in the original 44-item scale and the item numbers (in brackets) in the obtained 17-item ASQ are indicated. The boldfaced text indicates items assigned to each factor. F1 – Submissiveness (S), F2 – Self-Expression (SE), F3 – Defending One's Rights (DR), F4 – Social Uncertainty (SU). For the Polish version of the items, see Table S1 in Supplemental Material.

items and the values of their factor loadings were too low to create meaningful factors and reliable subscales.

The Kaiser criterion has several limitations; for example, it tends to overestimate the number of components and is viewed as arbitrary (Hayton et al., 2004). We applied two other criteria to evaluate the number of ASQ components—Cattell's Scree Plot and Parallel Analysis.

Both Cattell's Scree Plot (Figure 1) and Parallel Analysis indicated that four components should be distinguished in the ASQ.

Thus, we identified four factors (F1-F4) in the ASQ: Submissiveness (S, Factor 1), Self-Expression (SE, Factor 2), Defending One's Rights (DR, Factor 3), and Social Uncertainty (SU, Factor 4). Next, according to the criteria

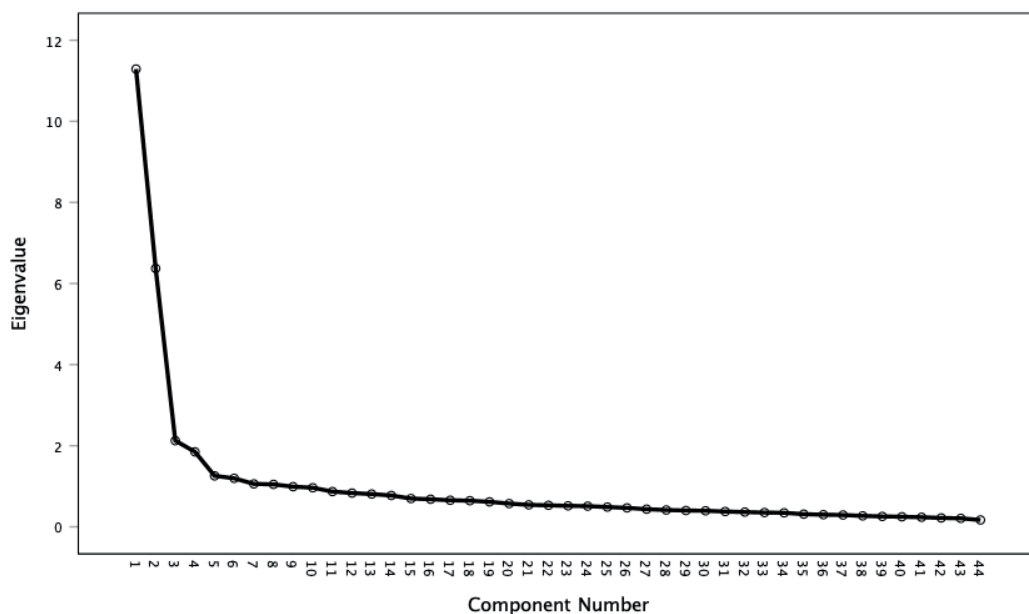


Figure 1. Scree Plot for the ASQ data

we adopted, we identified the items with the highest loadings for each factor that also meet the additional criteria listed above (Harvey et al., 1985; Hinkin, 1998; Howard, 2016). Five items were selected for the first three factors (S, SE, DR). Only two items were chosen for the fourth factor (SU), as the other two items did not meet the criteria. Table 1 indicates items assigned to each factor. We have put the items that finally entered the factors in bold font. We received a 17-item ASQ containing four factors. We assessed the reliability of the factors using Cronbach's and McDonald's omega. Guttman's Lambda was used for Factor 4 (SU), which contained only two items. The internal consistency was as follows: Submissiveness $\alpha = .85$ ($\omega = .84$), Self-Expression $\alpha = .83$ ($\omega = .83$), Defending One's Rights $\alpha = .81$ ($\omega = .80$), and Social Uncertainty $\alpha = .73$ ($\lambda_2 = .73$).

Conclusion

Based on the results of Study 1, we concluded that the AQS has four factors: Submissiveness, Self-Expression, Defending One's Rights, and Social Uncertainty.

STUDY 2. CONFIRMATION OF THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE ASQ

In Study 2., confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to analyze the internal structure of the ASQ further.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

To carry out the CFA, we recruited a convenience sample of 390 people (51.3% women) aged between 18 and 60 ($M = 39.48$, $SD = 12.54$). Most reported living in urban areas (75.4%) and having at least secondary education (85.6%). The sample size suggested for CFA is 5–20 individuals for each parameter estimate (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996); there were 57 parameters to be estimated, so the sample size of this study was appropriate for analysis. Participation followed the same procedures as in Study 1.

Measures

Assertiveness. The 17-item ASQ was used to measure assertiveness skills.

Data Analytic Strategy

We used AMOS (Arbuckle, 2016) to conduct CFA with maximum likelihood estimation. To evaluate the fit of the model, we applied the following indices: χ^2 divided by

degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the normed fit index (NFI), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) with the 90% confidence interval (CI).

Results

Using CFA, we estimated the fit of 17 items to four models: (1) a four-factor model obtained with PCA; (2) a hierarchical model with the general second-order factor explaining four first-order factors (submissiveness, self-expression, defending one's rights, social uncertainty), (3) a bifactor model, and (4) one general factor model. Table 2 contains the fit indices of the models we tested.

Among the models tested, the four-factor model of the ASQ indicated the best fit (Table 2). Figure 2 presents a graphical representation of the 17-item factor structure model. In the four-factor model, the χ^2 test indicated insufficient fit (χ^2 (113, $N = 390$) = 265.63, $p < .001$). However, it is known to be too restrictive, as it nearly always rejects the model when large samples are used (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). The normalized $\chi^2/df = 2.35$ was acceptable (< 5 ; Wheaton et al., 1977). RMSEA (.06, 90% CI [.05, .07] and SRMR (.05) demonstrated a satisfactory fit. The CFI (.93) and TLI (.92) were $> .90$. The NFI (.89) was marginally below the required value of at least .90. According to the strategy of presenting goodness-of-fit indices introduced by Hu and Bentler (1999), if RMSEA is not higher than .06 and SRMR is not higher than .09, the fit of the model should be accepted.

Next, we tested gender measurement invariance (MI) for the four-factor model. We followed Meredith's procedure (1993). In the analysis, we included the criteria recommended by Cheung and Rensvold (2002), Meredith (1993), and Chen (2007), i.e., a difference in CFI ($< .01$), RMSEA ($< .03$), and SRMR ($< .03$) when moving from configural to metric and $< .01$ when moving from metric to scalar invariance model) with increasingly restricted models (Table 3). However, we did not analyze $\Delta\chi^2$ due to its sensitivity to large samples (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

We adopted multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA) to test configural, metric, and scalar invariance (Table 3). Initially, we tested if the structure of the model was comparable in female and male groups (configural invariance). This model fits the data well (RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06). Next, we tested the model with all factor

Table 2. Summary of Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the Assertive Skills Questionnaire

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	TLI	CFI	NFI	SRMR	RMSEA-A	LLCI	ULCI
Four-Factor Model	265.63	113	2.35	.92	.93	.89	.05	.06	.05	.07
Hierarchical Model	390.48	115	3.39	.86	.88	.84	.11	.08	.07	.09
Bifactor Model	408.24	106	3.85	.83	.87	.83	.10	.09	.07	.09
One-Factor Model	1295.32	122	10.61	.42	.48	.46	.15	.18	.15	.16

Note. LLCI = Lower limit confidence interval of the RMSEA; ULCI = Upper limit confidence interval of the RMSEA. Fit indices of best model fit are shown in bold.

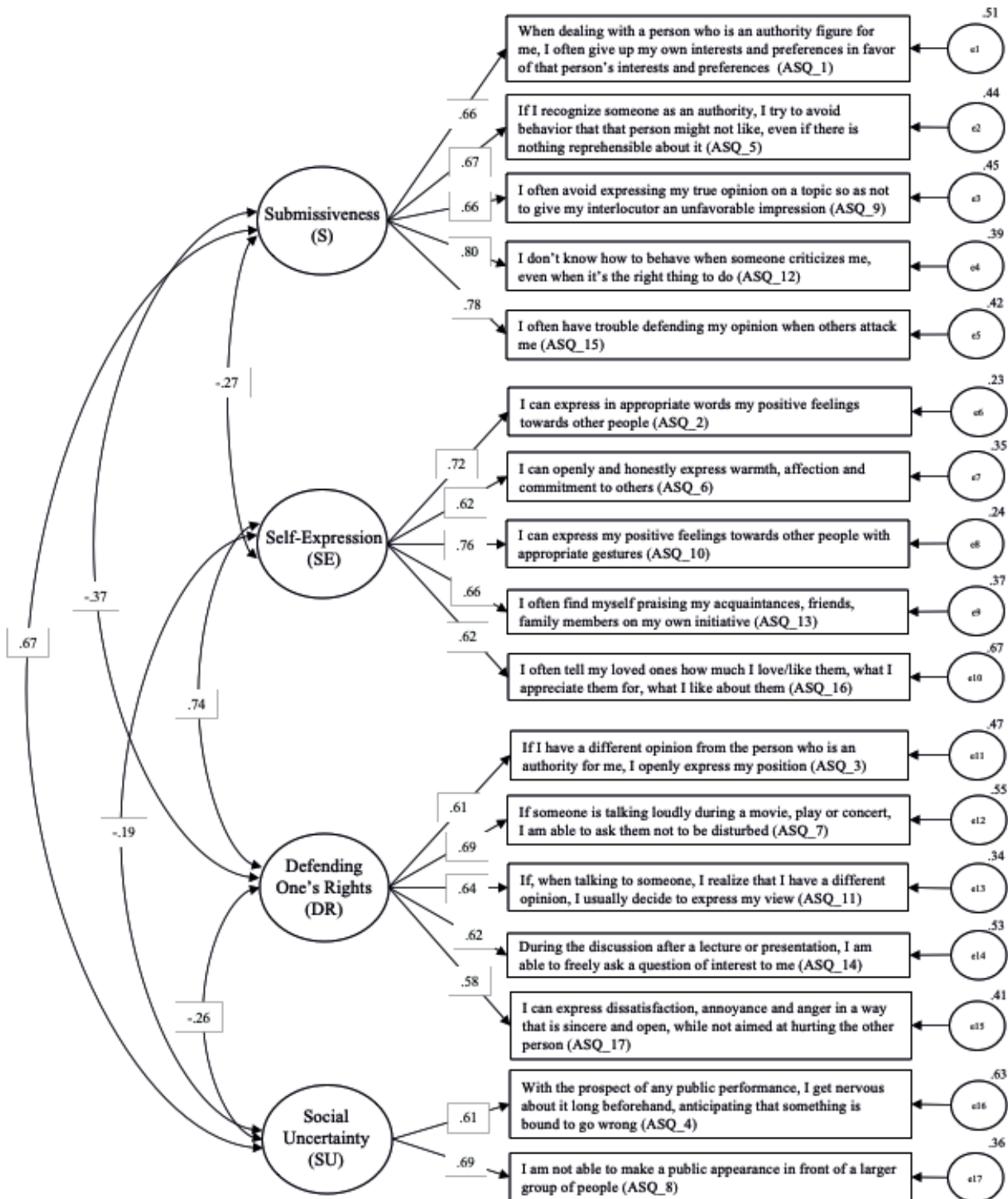


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Four-Factor Model for the Assertive Skills Questionnaire (ASQ).

loadings constrained to be equal across both subgroups (metric invariance). The metric invariance model also demonstrated good fit (RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06) and acceptable changes between RMSEA, SRMR, and CFI. Finally, we checked if all intercepts were constrained across both subgroups (scalar invariance). The scalar invariance model also fit the data well (RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .07), and changes between RMSEA, SRMR, and CFI were also acceptable.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the ASQ has four subscales, which are interpreted as follows. The Submissiveness subscale includes five items indicating avoidance of expressing opinions, giving up one's preferences to people in authority, and difficulty defending one's beliefs in the face of criticism. Thus, the Submissiveness subscale measures the tendency to give up one's preferences in favor of conforming to the tastes and expectations of

Table 3. Gender Measurement Invariance of the Assertive Skills Questionnaire

Models	χ^2	df	<i>p</i>	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	Δ RMSEA	Δ SRMR	Δ CFI
Configural	439.95	226	.001	.05	.06	.91			
Metric	462.08	239	.001	.05	.06	.91	.00	.00	.00
Scalar	520.78	256	.001	.05	.07	.90	.00	.01	.01

others. A high score in the S subscale is an indicator of low assertiveness. The Self-Expression subscale includes five items that measure the expression of positive feelings, praise, and appreciation to close ones and strangers. Thus, the SE measures the ability to express one's feelings and opinions. A high score in the SE subscale is an indicator of high assertiveness. The Defending One's Rights subscale includes items that measure the willingness to defend one's beliefs, opinions, and rights when confronted with the differing views of others or when threatened. Thus, the DR subscale measures readiness to defend one's rights when there is a risk of their violation. A high score in the DR subscale is an indicator of high assertiveness. Finally, the Self-Uncertainty subscale includes items measuring a propensity to become nervous in situations of social exposure, both when this situation is anticipated and when the person is already involved in it. The SU measures feelings of uncertainty related to social exposure. A high score in the SU subscale is an indicator of low assertiveness. A total score can also be calculated as a measure of assertiveness, the level of assertive skills. The total score is achieved by summing the scores on the SE and DR and the reverse scores on the S and SU subscales. The ASQ demonstrated gender measurement equivalence and is suitable for measuring cross-gender differences accurately. The internal consistency in this sample was as follows: Submissiveness $\alpha = .84$ ($\omega = .84$), Self-Expression $\alpha = .80$ ($\omega = .80$), Defending One's Rights $\alpha = .76$ ($\omega = .79$), and Social Uncertainty $\alpha = .70$ ($\lambda_2 = .69$).

STUDY 3. VALIDITY OF THE ASQ

Study 3. aimed to assess the validity of a new instrument, the Assertive Skills Questionnaire. We examined the validity of the ASQ by (1) correlating scores on the ASQ with scores on scales measuring assertiveness (SCQ; Matczak, 2008), locus of control, trait anxiety, and aggression and (2) double-testing with the ASQ subscales of people participating in assertiveness training.

We expected that the validity of the ASQ would be confirmed by an intercorrelation pattern, in which the subscales measuring self-expression and defending one's rights would be positively associated with assertiveness (SCQ) and internal LOC. Submissiveness and social uncertainty would be associated negatively with assertiveness (SCQ) and internal LOC (see Cooley & Nowicki, 1984; Kammrath et al., 2015). Previous studies have shown varied links between aggression and different types of assertiveness, particularly negative links between

aggression and adaptive assertiveness and positive ones with aggressive assertiveness (Gay et al., 1975; Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011). As evidence of the validity of the ASQ, we expected negative correlations between submissiveness, social uncertainty, and aggression. We also expected reports of self-expression and defending one's right to be negatively associated with aggressiveness. Next, since assertiveness has been recognized as related to psychological distress (Rushton et al., 1989), we expected anxiety to be positively associated with submission and social uncertainty and inversely related to self-expression and defending one's rights. Lastly, we expected internal LOC, a sense of personal control over the outcome of events in people's lives, to be positively related to self-expression and defending one's rights and inversely related to submissiveness and social uncertainty. We expected the external LOC, the belief that control over the outcome of events lies in external factors, to be positively related to submissiveness and social uncertainty and negatively to self-expression and defending one's rights.

Assertiveness training builds assertive skills and teaches related behaviors. Behavioral learning includes the ability to say no, express requests and expectations, accept and express criticism, express positive and negative feelings, defend one's beliefs, and positively present oneself. Participation in training should increase the level of assertive skills. We expected that the validity of the ASQ would be confirmed when the subscale scores obtained after assertiveness training were significantly higher than those obtained in the pre-training measurement.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

To establish correlations between scores on the ASQ subscales and other methods measuring assertiveness or similar constructs, we invited 287 adults (51.9% women) aged 18 to 60 ($M = 38.87$, $SD = 12.34$). Most reported living in urban areas (72.9%) and having at least secondary education (86.1%). Participation was anonymous, voluntary, and followed the same procedures as in Study 1. We calculated the sample size required to obtain significant Pearson correlation effects at a significance level of $p = .05$ and with an expected test power of .95 (Bujang & Baharum, 2016) based on the previous research findings (e.g., Cooley & Nowicki, 1984; Gay et al., 1975; Kammrath et al., 2015; Thompson & Berenbaum, 2011). The analyses indicated that the sample $n > 250$ would sufficiently produce significant and reliable Pearson

correlation effects. Post hoc power analyses also confirmed that the sample $n = 287$ was sufficient for the study. The mean test power of the obtained correlation effects was .96. The calculations were conducted using the G*Power software.

Adult assertiveness training participants were recruited at the INTRA Psychological Assistance and Education Center in Warsaw, Poland. Assertiveness training is included in the INTRA's educational offerings. It lasts four days and is divided into two two-day sections. The course is held in groups of up to 14 people. Three groups were invited for the study, with 42 participants (8 men and 34 women). They filled out the ASQ twice, the first time before the training, and the follow-up measurement was done after training. We excluded four people because they did not complete the questionnaire in the follow-up survey. The mean age of the sample was 38.05 years ($SD = 6.63$). Most reported living in urban areas (88.3%) and having at least secondary education (96.7%). Participants completed the ASQ in Polish using the paper-pencil method. In the first and follow-up study, the instructions were the same. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the means in the ASQ subscales obtained in the first and second measurements. We used IBM SPSS Statistics v.28 software to carry out ANOVA.

Measures

The following instruments were administered to participants. Participants completed the instruments, answering all items in Polish. Table 4 shows descriptive statistics and internal consistencies of all instruments.

Assertiveness. We used the 17-item ASQ to measure self-expression, defending one's rights, submissiveness, and social uncertainty. We also used the 17-item Assertive Competence subscale of the Social Competence Questionnaire (SCQ) by Matczak (2008)). The subscale measures the level of competencies determining the ability to effectively operate in situations that require taking actions following one's interests without unnecessary fear and, at the same time, without violating the rights of others (e.g., *How well would you do if you had to refuse religious or political agitators or door-to-door salesmen*). The response options were from 1 (*strongly positive*) to 4 (*strongly negative*).

Locus of Control. We used 24-item Levenson's (1973) Internal (e.g., *When I get what I want, it's usually because I worked hard for it*), Powerful Others (e.g., *I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people*), and Chance Scales (e.g., *To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings*) to measure locus of control. The response option was from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*).

Anxiety. We used the Trait-Anxiety subscale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Spielberger et al., 1983) to measure the relatively stable predisposition of an individual to be anxious. The subscale contains 20 items, assessing the frequency of feelings "in general" (e.g., *I worry too much about some things, but they don't*

matter). Each item has a 4-point Likert-type response format ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much so*).

Aggression. The 29-item Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ, Buss & Perry, 1992) was used (e.g., *If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will*). Each item on the BPAQ employs a five-point Likert rating scale from 1 (*extremely uncharacteristic of me*) to 5 (*extremely characteristic of me*).

Results

Table 4 shows the Pearson correlations between the ASQ subscales and constructs similar to or different from assertiveness. The total score of the ASQ correlated positively with assertiveness (SCQ) and Internal LOC and negatively with anxiety, aggression, and external LOC (Powerful Others). The strongest correlation was for assertiveness as measured by the ASQ and SCQ. This pattern of correlation supports the validity of the ASQ. The correlation patterns between the ASQ subscales and the other constructs were as follows. Submissiveness and social uncertainty correlated negatively, whereas defending one's rights and self-expression correlated positively with assertiveness as measured by the SCQ. Internal LOC positively correlated with self-expression and defending one's rights and negatively correlated with submissiveness and social uncertainty. The trait anxiety correlated positively with submissiveness and social uncertainty and negatively with defending one's rights and self-expression. Aggression correlated positively with submissiveness and social uncertainty but was unrelated to self-expression and defending one's rights. External LOC (chance and powerful others) correlated positively with submissiveness but were unrelated to the other subscales of the ASQ.

Table 5 shows the results of a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). The effect of assertiveness training was observed for the total score of ASQ ($F_{(1,39)} = 13.23, p < .001, \eta^2 = .25$), self-expression ($F_{(1,39)} = 4.17, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$), defending one's rights ($F_{(1,39)} = 8.84, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$), and social uncertainty ($F_{(1,39)} = 19.15, p < .001, \eta^2 = .33$). The effect of training on submissiveness was insignificant. Post-hoc pairwise comparisons with a Bonferroni adjustment indicated that assertiveness ($M = 3.19$) and its dimensions, i.e., self-expression ($M = 3.24$) and defending one's rights ($M = 3.62$) were higher after training than before ($M = 3.05, p < .001$; $M = 3.12, p < .05$; $M = 3.44, p < .01$, respectively). The feeling of social uncertainty was lower after training ($M = 2.42$ after, $p < .001$) than before ($M = 2.83$).

In Figure 3, we graphically illustrated the means obtained in the ASQ before and after participation in the training.

Conclusion

In summary, the correlation pattern between ASQ subscales and measures of assertiveness, locus of control, anxiety, and aggression confirmed the ASQ validity. A comparison of scores on the ASQ before and after

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Among the ASQ, SCQ, LOC, STAI, and BPAQ Subscales

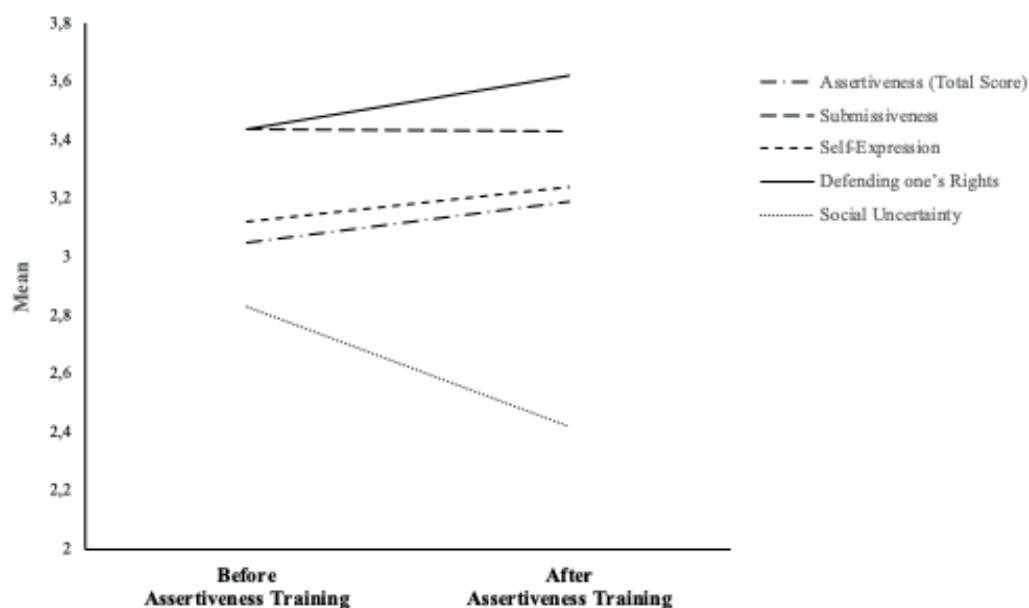
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Assertiveness (Total)†	—										
2 Submissiveness	-.73***	—									
3 Self-Expression	.73***	-.21***	—								
4 Defending one's Rights	.81***	-.38***	.61***	—							
5 Social Uncertainty	-.64***	.53***	-.25***	-.31***	—						
6 Assertiveness (SCQ)	.62***	-.33***	.48***	.62***	-.38***	—					
7 Internal LOC	.30***	-.13*	.33***	.29***	-.12*	.28***	—				
8 External LOC (Chance)	-.08	.26***	.08	.09	.16*	.11	.19***	—			
9 External LOC (Powerful Others)	-.12*	.25***	-.02	.06	.15***	.14*	.21***	.67***	—		
10 Anxiety	-.43***	.37***	-.26***	-.31***	.34***	-.35***	-.17**	.23***	.31***	—	
11 Aggression	-.18**	.33***	-.09	.06	.15**	.09	-.07	.27***	.37***	.47***	—
<i>M</i>	3.34	2.95	3.69	3.50	3.15	2.65	4.20	3.78	3.64	2.28	2.75
<i>SD</i>	0.52	0.70	0.64	0.65	1.01	0.50	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.48	0.60
<i>ω</i>	.82	.79	.80	.81	.70	.88	.83	.75	.78	.99	.94
<i>a</i>	.86	.77	.78	.77	.70	.89	.78	.73	.78	.91	.92

Note. †The total score was calculated after reversing the scores of the Submissiveness and Social Uncertainty subscales.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5. Comparison of the ASQ Subscales Before and After Assertiveness Training

	Before training <i>M (SD)</i>	After training <i>M (SD)</i>	Significance
Assertiveness (Total)	3.05 (0.26)	3.19 (0.24)	$p < .001, \eta^2 = .25$
Submissiveness	3.44 (0.49)	3.43 (0.46)	n.s.
Self-Expression	3.12 (0.38)	3.24 (0.38)	$p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$
Defending One's Rights	3.44 (0.43)	3.62 (0.34)	$p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$
Social Uncertainty	2.83 (0.97)	2.42 (0.85)	$p < .001, \eta^2 = .33$

**Figure 3.** Mean Scores on ASQ Subscales Before and After Assertiveness Training

participation in assertiveness training also confirmed that the ASQ accurately measures assertive skills. These results support the use of the ASQ to measure assertiveness.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research aimed to develop a measure for assertive skills and establish its internal structure and psychometric properties. We aimed to provide Polish psychology with a tool to measure assertiveness, whose items would be up to date with the contemporary context and whose subscales would allow the measurement of various assertive skills of adults. We also wished to make the method suitable for assessing the effectiveness of assertiveness training, one of the standard proposals of many psycho-educational centers. As a result, we developed an instrument to measure four aspects of assertiveness: submissiveness (S), self-expression (SE), defending one's rights (DR), and social uncertainty (SU). High scores in the SE and DR subscales indicate high assertive skills in self-expression and defending one's rights. In contrast, high scores in the S and SU indicate low assertive skills in relationships with authority and in situations of social exposure. When calculating the total score, the S and SU subscales scores must be reversed.

Analysis of the scale's internal structure showed that although the ASQ scale items were generated based on social situations, the scale structure did not reflect those categories. Arrindell and van der Ende (1985) obtained a similar result when constructing the Interpersonal Behavior Scale to measure assertiveness. These authors generated items based on eight social situations. Still, factor analysis revealed four factors: displaying negative feelings, expressing and dealing with personal limitations, initiating assertiveness, and positive assertion. So, we think behaviors with assertiveness characteristics are not situation-specific, but assertiveness is rather a mental quality, a disposition that manifests itself in various social situations.

Interestingly, two subscales were obtained that indicated the presence of assertiveness—self-expression and defending one's right, and two that indicated rather non-assertiveness—submissiveness and social uncertainty. This can be referred to by Kammrath and colleagues' (2015) claim that there is more than one ability for assertiveness. The first is about acting assertively when the high assertion is called for, and the other is about acting unassertively when the low assertion is called for. Also, Gambril and Richey (1975), when developing the Scale for Interpersonal Behavior, indicated types of information regarding assertive behavior: the probability of response (performance) and the degree of discomfort (distress) (Arrindell & van der Ende, 1985). A noteworthy result is a low representation (only an item) of negative feelings in the SE subscale, while three items represent positive feelings. Assertiveness is more associated with resolving difficult situations and expressing difficult content than with appreciation, sympathy, and touching. Further research should examine the structure of ASQ, especially

within specific samples. It would be worthwhile in the future to check the validity of the obtained dimensions to measures of the ASQ in relation to the Circumplex Scale of Interpersonal Efficacy (CSIE; Locke & Sadler, 2007), measuring the ability to be assertive and the ability to be unassertive.

Our research indicated that ASQ scores have good psychometric properties. Scores from four subscales have satisfactory internal consistency. A good model fit in CFA confirmed the four dimensions separated in PCA. The validity of the ASQ was also confirmed. The ASQ total score (Assertiveness) correlated positively with assertiveness (SCQ) and internal LOC and negatively with external LOC (Powerful Others), anxiety, and aggression. The correlation of ASQ with SCQ is the strongest compared to the correlations with the other variables. The correlations between the SCQ and the ASQ subscales also align with expectations. Submissiveness and social uncertainty correlated negatively, whereas defending one's rights and self-expression correlated positively with SCQ. These results confirm the validity of the construct measured by ASQ.

Similarly, the expected correlation pattern between the ASQ subscales and anxiety was observed. Anxiety correlated positively with submissiveness and social uncertainty and negatively with self-expression and defending one's rights. Internal LOC positively correlates with self-expression and defending one's rights but negatively correlates with social uncertainty. Internal LOC did not correlate with submissiveness. Aggression and external LOC (Chance and Powerful Others) correlated positively with submissiveness and social uncertainty but were unrelated to self-expression and defending one's rights. Participation in assertiveness training differentiated scores on ASQ subscales. Individuals had significantly higher scores after training, which also supports the validity of the ASQ. ASQ can be applied in clinical and broader social and professional functioning areas. It can help assess the effectiveness of assertiveness training, which has a pretty wide portfolio, but its effectiveness still needs to be sufficiently examined (Speed et al., 2018).

Our study has limitations. First, the 44 items we included in the study referred to social situations requiring assertive skills. The ASQ captured the mental processes and dispositions that determine behavior in various situations. Therefore, the ASQ measures a limited range of assertive skills. In further research, looking not so much for situations but for the different mental processes and dispositions that describe assertive skills might be worthwhile. Second, the validity of the scale needs further attention. The scores on the ASQ in people with low and high assertiveness should be compared, e.g., people who attend assertiveness training and a control group. Divergent validity must also be established with constructs different from assertiveness, e.g., egoism, humility, or quiet ego. Third, we used self-report measures; thus, response biases could not be ruled out. Fourth, we used convenience samples in our three studies rather than specific ones, such as clinical or developmental ones. In

the future, it would be worth extending the study to observe how the ASQ assesses assertiveness in various specific samples. Finally, our research found two dimensions that may indicate high and low assertiveness. These may suggest the direction discussed by Kammrath et al. (2015) that assertiveness may manifest in the ability to act assertively when high assertiveness is required and non-assertively when low assertiveness is required. This direction seems particularly interesting and deserving of further research.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The research was positively evaluated by the Research Ethics Committee of the Authors University (Decision number: KEBN_10/2023).

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Supplemental Material

Table S1. The Complete List of Items from the Assertiveness Map and Assertiveness Skills Questionnaire

Id of MA	Id of ASQ	Items
1	6	Potrafię otwarcie i szczerze wyrażać ciepło, sympatię i zaangażowanie wobec innych osób [I can openly and honestly express warmth, affection and commitment to others]
2		Potrafię wydawać polecenia innym osobom, gdy jestem do tego upoważniony [I can give instructions to other people when I am authorized to do so]
3		Zdarza mi się karać milczeniem lub chłodnym dystansem osobę, na którą się gniewam [I sometimes punish with silence or cool detachment the person I am angry with]
4		Potrafię rozpocząć rozmowę z obcą osobą [I can start a conversation with a stranger]
5		Jeśli nie chcę zrobić czegoś, czego inni ode mnie oczekują, potrafię przeciwstawić się i odmówić [If I don't want to do something that others expect me to do, I can resist and refuse to do it]
6		Często rezygnuję z podzielenia się swoimi myślami na forum nawet niewielkiej grupy, ponieważ odczuwam obawę przed zabieraniem głosu [I often refrain from sharing my thoughts in even a small group forum because I feel apprehensive about speaking up]
7		Często nie potrafię podtrzymać rozmowy towarzyskiej [I often can't sustain a social conversation]
8		Jeśli ktoś zachowuje się wobec mnie w sposób niesprawiedliwy lub krzywdzący, nie potrafię mu zwrócić na to uwagi [If someone behaves toward me in an unfair or hurtful way, I can't bring it to their attention]
9	17	Potrafię wyrażać niezadowolenie, irytację i złość w sposób, który jest szczerzy i otwarty, a jednocześnie nie nastawiony na zranienie drugiej osoby [I can express dissatisfaction, annoyance and anger in a way that is sincere and open, while not aimed at hurting the other person]
10		Często, gdy ktoś mnie chwali, zaprzeczam pochwałąm albo dla równowagi podaję informacje o moich wadach [Often, when someone praises me, I deny the praise or give information about my flaws for balance]
11	11	Jeżeli rozmawiając z kimś uświadamiam sobie, że mam odmienne zdanie, zwykle decyduję się wyrazić swój pogląd [If, when talking to someone, I realize that I have a different opinion, I usually decide to express my view]
12		Jeśli ktoś prosi mnie o przysługę, która (w moim odczuciu) wiąże się z poniesieniem przez mnie nadmiernego trudu lub niewygody, odmawiam spełnienia jego prośby [If someone asks me for a favor that (I feel) involves me incurring undue hardship or inconvenience, I refuse to comply with their request]
13		Potrafię zwrócić się do nieznaomej osoby o potrzebną mi pomoc [I can ask a stranger for the help I need]
14	7	Jeżeli ktoś rozmawia głośno podczas filmu, sztuki teatralnej lub koncertu, potrafię poprosić go, aby nie przeszkadzał [If someone is talking loudly during a movie, play or concert, I am able to ask them not to be disturbed]
15	3	Jeśli mam odmienne zdanie niż osoba, która jest dla mnie autorytetem, otwarcie wyrażam swoje stanowisko [If I have a different opinion from the person who is an authority for me, I openly express my position]
16	13	Często z własnej inicjatywy zdarza mi się chwalić moich znajomych, przyjaciół, członków rodziny [I often find myself praising my acquaintances, friends, family members on my own initiative]
17	8	Nie jestem w stanie wystąpić publicznie przed większą grupą osób [I am not able to make a public appearance in front of a larger group of people]
18		Mam trudności w otwartym wyrażaniu krytyki wobec moich znajomych, przyjaciół, członków rodziny [I have difficulty openly expressing criticism to my acquaintances, friends, family members]
19	15	Często zdarza się, że mam kłopot z obroną mojego zdania, gdy inni mnie atakują [I often have trouble defending my opinion when others attack me]
20	12	Nie wiem, jak się zachować, gdy ktoś mnie krytykuje, nawet, gdy jest to słuszne [I don't know how to behave when someone criticizes me, even when it's the right thing to do]

Id of MA	Id of ASQ	Items
21		Zdarza mi się zwracać do moich znajomych, przyjaciół, członków rodziny z prośbą o przysługę lub pomoc [I happen to ask my acquaintances, friends, family members for a favor or help]
22		Zdarza mi się ukrywać swoje niezadowolenie, złość czy wściekłość, udając przed osobą, na którą się rozgniewałem, że wszystko jest w porządku [I sometimes hide my displeasure, anger or rage by pretending to the person I'm angry with that everything is fine]
23		Jeżeli w kolejce, ktoś kto przyszedł po mnie jest niesłusznie obsługiwany przede mną, potrafię zwrócić głośno uwagę na to [If, in the queue, someone who came after me is unfairly served before me, I am able to point this out loudly]
24		Gdy się złościę mam zwyczaj używania raniących uwag lub wyzwisk, niecenzuralnych wyrazów i pouczeń [When I get angry I have a habit of using hurtful remarks or triggers, uncensored words and instructions]
25		Swobodnie uczestniczę w spotkaniu towarzyskim, na którym nie znam nikogo oprócz gospodarzy [I freely attend a social gathering where I know no one but the hosts]
26	9	Często unikam wyrażania mojej prawdziwej opinii na jakiś temat, aby nie zrobić na moim rozmówcy niekorzystnego wrażenia [I often avoid expressing my true opinion on a topic so as not to give my interlocutor an unfavorable impression]
27		Bliscy mi ludzie znają moją prawdziwą twarz, nie ukrywam przed nimi, jaki jestem, co myślę i co czuję [People close to me know my real face, I do not hide from them what I am, what I think and what I feel]
28		Potrafię obronić się przed nieuzasadnioną krytyką, bez agresywnego atakowania drugiej osoby [I can defend myself against unjustified criticism without aggressively attacking the other person]
29	16	Często mówię moim bliskim, jak bardzo ich kocham/lubię, za co ich cenię, co mi się w nich podoba [I often tell my loved ones how much I love/like them, what I appreciate them for, what I like about them]
30		Mam zwyczaj używania krzyku jako sposobu skłaniania innych do zrobienia tego, czego chcę [I have a habit of using shouting as a way to get others to do what I want]
31		Umiem formułować moje oczekiwania nawet stanowczo wobec innych osób, nie mam problemu z wyrażaniem ich [I can formulate my expectations even firmly to other people, I have no problem expressing them]
32		Jeśli ktoś pożyczył ode mnie pieniądze (lub jakąś rzecz) i od dłuższego czasu zwleka z oddaniem, przypominam mu o tym [If someone has borrowed money (or an item) from me and has been delaying paying it back for a long time, I remind them of this]
33		Często zdarza mi się robić coś, na co nie mam ochoty tylko dlatego, że nie potrafię przeciwstawić się otoczeniu [I often find myself doing something I don't feel like doing simply because I can't defy my surroundings]
34		Nie potrafię podtrzymać kontaktu wzrokowego z osobą, z którą rozmawiam [I can't maintain eye contact with the person I'm talking to]
35		Często posługuję się kłamstwem, aby odmówić czyjejs prośbie w sposób łatwiejszy do przyjęcia [I often use lies to deny someone's request in a way that is easier to accept]
36	1	W kontaktach z osobą, która jest dla mnie autorytetem, często rezygnuję z własnych interesów i preferencji, na rzecz interesów i preferencji tej osoby [When dealing with a person who is an authority figure for me, I often give up my own interests and preferences in favor of that person's interests and preferences]
37	14	Podczas dyskusji po wykładzie czy prezentacji potrafię swobodnie zadać interesujące mnie pytanie [During the discussion after a lecture or presentation, I am able to freely ask a question of interest to me]
38	2	Potrafię wyrażać odpowiednimi słowami moje pozytywne uczucia wobec innych osób [I can express in appropriate words my positive feelings towards other people]
39		W relacji z osobą, która jest dla mnie autorytetem, staram się częściej robić to, co jej się może podobać niż to, na co ja naprawdę mam ochotę [In a relationship with a person who is an authority figure for me, I try to do more often what she might like than what I really feel like doing]
40	10	Potrafię wyrażać odpowiednimi gestami moje pozytywne uczucia wobec innych osób [I can express my positive feelings towards other people with appropriate gestures]
41	4	Mając w perspektywie jakiegokolwiek występ publiczny denerwuję się tym na długo przedtem, przewidując, że na pewno coś pójdzie nie tak [With the prospect of any public performance I get nervous about it long beforehand, anticipating that something is bound to go wrong]

Id of MA	Id of ASQ	Items
42		Trudno mi jest przyjmować wyrazy pozytywnych uczuć ze strony innych, dlatego staram się unikać takich sytuacji [I find it difficult to receive expressions of positive feelings from others, so I try to avoid such situations]
43	5	Jeśli uznaję kogoś za autorytet staram się unikać zachowań, które mogłyby się tej osobie nie spodobać, nawet jeśli nie ma w tym nic nagannego [If I recognize someone as an authority, I try to avoid behavior that that person might not like, even if there is nothing reprehensible about it]
44		Trudno mi przyjmować fizyczne gesty sympatii ze strony innych osób, dlatego staram się unikać takich sytuacji [I find it difficult to receive physical gestures of affection from other people, so I try to avoid such situations]

Note. MA - Assertiveness Map, ASQ - Assertiveness Skills Questionnaire.