



Convergent and Known-Groups Validity of the Self-as-Context Scale

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Introduction

- The Self-as-Context Scale (SACS) was developed as a brief self-report measure that purportedly contributes to psychological flexibility.
- It is a 10-item measure containing two moderately correlated subscales:

Centering	Transcending
Appears to capture one’s ability to calmly notice psychological experiences	Appears to relate to the type of invariant perspective-taking that characterizes the observing self

Methods

- Two studies were conducted to further assess the validity of the SACS.
- Study 1 ($N = 360$ college students) evaluated the convergent validity of the SACS by examining its relationship with another contextual self measure, Self Expressions Questionnaire (SEQ; Yu et al., 2016), which is comprised of two subscales: Self-as-distinction and Self-as-observer.
- Study 2 ($N = 54$ psychiatric outpatients) examined the known-groups validity of the SACS by also administering it to clinical sample.

Results

Study 1: Convergent Validity

- The strong correlation between the SACS and SEQ ($r = .68$) and high HTMT ratio (.89), as an index of poor discriminant validity, suggested overlap in what each assesses.
- An EFA of items from both measures was conducted to better understand this convergence and revealed three factors accounting for approximately 50% of the variability.
- One item failed to load on any of these factors, while another loaded on two.
- The remaining 23 items loaded on to one factor (see table).
- 4 of the Self-as-distinction and 2 of the Self-as-observer items from the SEQ, as well as 4 of the Centering items from the SACS loaded on the first factor.
- 3 Self-as-distinction items and 4 Self-as-observer items from the SEQ loaded on the second factor; while all 6 of the SACS-Transcending items alone loaded on the third factor.

Study 2: Known-Groups Validity

- Consistent with expectations, a group of psychiatric outpatients endorsed each of the SACS items to a significantly lesser degree than did our Study 1 college student sample.

SACS and SEQ Factor Loadings

Factor 1

- D1 – Although I can get caught up with my own thoughts, emotions and sensations, I can also separate myself from them (.646)
- D2 - I am able to step back from my emotions and observe them from a separate point of view (.647)
- D3 - I am able to separate myself from my thoughts and feelings (.703)
- D4 – I have thoughts and feelings but am not defined as just my thoughts and feelings (.334)
- O2 - When I feel distressed I can notice what is happening without being overwhelmed (.741)
- O3 - I can notice what I am thinking and feeling without getting too caught up in these experiences (.773)
- C1 - When I am upset, I am able to find a place of calm within myself (.609)*
- C2 - I have a perspective on life that allows me to deal with life’s disappointments without getting overwhelmed with them (.747)*
- C3 - I allow my emotions to come and go without struggling with them (.750)*
- C4 - I am able to notice my changing thoughts without getting caught up in them (.677)*

Factor 2

- D5 – I can experience a distinction between my experiences and the “I” who notices these experiences (.660)
- D6 - I can actually see that I am not my thoughts (.669)
- D7 - I experience my self as more than my thoughts and feelings (.568)
- O4 - Above all my experiences, there is a sense of my self who is noticing them (.481)
- O5 - I can notice that my mind is thinking from moment to moment (.609)
- O6 - I can observe experiences in my body and mind as events that come and go (.709)
- O7 - I am able to remain aware of my experiences from moment to moment (.676)

Factor 3

- T1 - Despite the many changes in my life, there is a basic part of who I am that remains unchanged (.563)*
- T2 - As I look back upon my life so far, I have a sense that part of me has been there for all of it (.735)*
- T3 - There is a basic sense I have of myself that doesn’t change even though my thoughts and feelings do (.479)*
- T4 - Even though there have been many changes in my life, I’m aware of a part of me that has witnessed it all (.732)*
- T5 - I am able to access a perspective from which I can notice my thoughts, feelings, and emotions (.425)*
- T6 - When I think back to when I was younger, I recognize that a part of me that was there then is still here now (.794)*

D = SEQ Self-as-Distinction, O = SEQ Self-as-Observer, C = SACS Centering, T = SACS Transcending
Loadings $\geq .32$ for inclusion
SACS items are italicized

General Discussion

- All 6 of the SACS-Transcending items loading on the third factor suggests that this subscale reflects a dimension of the contextual self not captured by the SEQ or SACS-Centering.
- Findings of our two studies can be collectively viewed as providing limited preliminary support of the SACS’ construct validity. Combined with research on the SEQ, efforts to date in assessing self-as-context suggest the utility of viewing it as a multidimensional process with a distinct facet that may be uniquely reflected by SACS-Transcending. Further research particularly with clinical samples will be necessary to more fully explicate this matter.