

The Questionnaire on Self-Transcendence (QUEST)

A Measure of Self-Transcendence Informed by Relational Frame Theory

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A downloadable .pdf of the scale and further information is available at joelfishbein.com/quest
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Self-transcendence (ST) -

receding of normally perceived boundaries of self with 3 three facets:

1. Distancing between content of experience and observer of experience

RFT: distinction framing

2. Observing Self (OS): stable, safe perspective from which we perceive experiences

RFT: deictic, hierarchical framing

3. Inter-transcendence (IT): innate connection ('oneness') with others

RFT: coordination of "my" observing self with "yours"

Project aims:

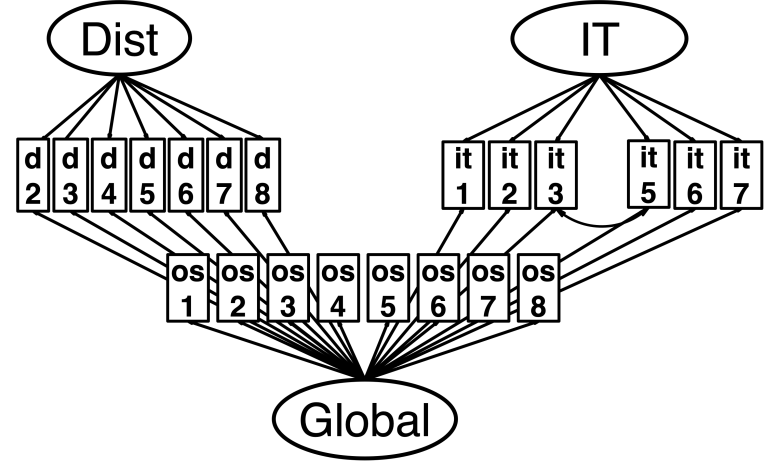
- a) test theoretical model
- b) develop questionnaire

Methods:

- Combine expert-validated novel scales with related existing scales: SACS-11 ([Gird 2013](#)), SEQ ([Yu et al 2017](#)), RISP ([Jeffcoat 2015](#))
- Factor analyses of item pool across multiple samples, find representative items
- Construct validity analyses with conceptually related measures

Exploratory Factor and Structural Equation Models

- 5 samples (2 undergrad, 2 community adult, 1 experienced meditator, *Ns* 213-348)
- Support for 3-factor model and global self-transcendence factor
- In SEMs, OS Items loaded most strongly to global factor, no specific factor



Pearson's rs with Related Process & Outcome Measures

All $p < .05$ except as noted; N/A = measure not administered

| Subscale | Sample | Decentering (EQ) | Mindfulness (FFMQ Total) | Experiential Acceptance (MEAQ / BEAQ) | Satisfaction with life (SWLS) | Sense of life meaning (MLQ) |
|----------|------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| OS | Undergrads | .58 | .50 | -.15 | 0.33 | 0.37 |
| | Adults | .56 | .58 | -.44 | 0.37 | 0.40 |
| | Meditators | .47 | .46 | N/A | 0.19 | N/A |
| IT | Undergrads | .40 | .21 | Nonsig. | 0.14 | 0.20 |
| | Adults | .26 | .34 | -.24 | 0.28 | 0.35 |
| | Meditators | .58 | .51 | N/A | 0.35 | N/A |
| Dist. | Undergrads | .77 | .56 | -.30 | 0.44 | 0.41 |
| | Adults | .68 | .65 | -.41 | 0.50 | 0.51 |
| | Meditators | .79 | .65 | N/A | 0.47 | N/A |

Range of inter-factor r 's

| | OS | IT | Dist |
|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| OS | - | - | - |
| IT | .48-56 | - | - |
| Dist. | .53-73 | .39-65 | - |
| Total | .87-90 | .73-84 | .82-86 |

Conclusions

- New comprehensive scale (QUEST) available; use of subscales and total scale warranted
- Support for 3-factor structure
- Observing self items may best represent more global construct
- Subscales tap unique constructs from existing measure
- Further validation warranted in experimental & clinical studies

QUEST item wording (source) – Response Anchors 1 Never True --- 7 Always True

| Distancing Subscale | Observing Self Subscale | Inter-transcendence Subscale |
|--|---|---|
| I am able to separate myself from my thoughts and feelings (SEQ) | It seems like part of me is always the same, no matter where I am (novel) | I feel connected even to people I don't know (novel) |
| I am able to step back from my emotions and observe them from a separate point of view (SEQ) | I have a basic sense of myself that doesn't change even though my thoughts and feelings do (SACS) | I feel connected to people who speak a different language than me (novel) |
| When I feel distressed I can notice what is happening without being overwhelmed (SEQ) | Even though there have been many changes in my life, I'm aware of a part of me that has witnessed it all (SACS) | I feel connected to all living beings, including plants and animals (novel) |
| I allow my emotions to come and go without struggling with them (SACS) | As I look back on my life, I am aware of a basic part of me that remains unchanged (RISP) | It seems like all living beings on Earth are related (novel) |
| I am able to notice my changing thoughts without getting caught up in them (SACS) | Though I have had many roles in my life, I have a sense of self that is stable and enduring (SACS) | I empathize with people who I haven't met (novel) |
| I can observe experiences in my body and mind as events that come and go (SEQ) | I see a connection between who I was in the past and who I am today (novel) | I feel compassion for people who have harmed me (novel) |
| I experience my self as more than my thoughts and feelings (SEQ) | I see a connection between who I am at all places and times (novel) | |
| | It seems like part of me holds all the experiences I have (novel) | |