Development and Validation of a Self-Report Measure of Ambivalence Toward Change

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Results (cont’d)

A total decisional balance score (DB) was calculated for each participant using the formula suggested by previous research:

\[ DB = \frac{(\text{Pros} + \text{Cons})}{2} - |\text{Pros} - \text{Cons}| \]

with higher DB scores reflecting greater ambivalence.

- DB scores were significantly higher for the open-ended format than for the closed-ended format, \( t(385) = -16.37, p < .001 \)
- DB correlated positively with NA and negatively with PA.
- These correlations were larger for the closed-ended format than the open-ended format (trend for NA; significant difference for PA).

Method

Participants were a different sample of 390 undergraduates (age range 18-38). Again, each participant was asked to identify a difficult change or decision that he/she was currently trying to make. The following measures were administered:

- Either an open-ended (N = 195) or a closed-ended (N = 195) decisional balance questionnaire
- The emotion scale developed in Study 1
- Five “change-related questions” regarding constructs that have been linked with ambivalence (previous failures to change, mixed feelings, rumination, confidence, and commitment)

For the decisional balance portion, subjects who received the open-ended format generated their own reasons for and against change and rated the strength of each, while subjects who received the closed-ended format rated a list of 40 reasons that had been gathered or constructed for the questionnaire.

Study 1: Development of Emotion Scale

Method

Participants were 99 undergraduate students (age range 18-32). Each participant was asked to identify a difficult change or decision that he or she was currently trying to make, and then to rate how strongly he or she was experiencing each of 60 emotions relating to that change or decision.

Results

- Principal components factor analysis using varimax rotation yielded two strong emotion factors, which accounted for 51.09% of the variance in scores. We characterized these factors as Negative Affect (NA) and Positive Affect (PA).
- This resulted in an 11-item emotion scale with high internal consistency reliability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Affect items</th>
<th>Positive Affect items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nervous</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frustrated</td>
<td>ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cautious</td>
<td>determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>confused</td>
<td>enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worried</td>
<td>hopeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

  Cronbach’s \( \alpha = .813 \)

Study 2: Format Selection and Concurrent Validity

Method

Participants were a different sample of 390 undergraduates (age range 18-38). Again, each participant was asked to identify a difficult change or decision that he/she was currently trying to make. The following measures were administered:

- Either an open-ended (N = 195) or a closed-ended (N = 195) decisional balance questionnaire
- The emotion scale developed in Study 1
- Five “change-related questions” regarding constructs that have been linked with ambivalence (previous failures to change, mixed feelings, rumination, confidence, and commitment)

For the decisional balance portion, subjects who received the open-ended format generated their own reasons for and against change and rated the strength of each, while subjects who received the closed-ended format rated a list of 40 reasons that had been gathered or constructed for the questionnaire.

Conclusions

- The closed-ended decisional balance measure showed high internal consistency and significantly predicted participants’ answers to questions about change.
- The addition of the empirically-derived emotion scale improved its predictive ability.
- Although further research is necessary, these data suggest that we have made a promising start to developing a measure of ambivalence toward change.

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