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The Estonian Self-Concept Clarity Scale: psychometric properties and personality correlates

Hillar Matto *, Anu Realo

Department of Psychology, University of Tartu, Tiigi 78, 50410, Tartu, Estonia

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Abstract

The goals of this study were twofold: our first aim concerned generalizability of the Self-Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS; Campbell, J. D., Trapnell, P. D., Heine, S. J., Katz, I. M., Lavallee, L. F., & Lehman, D. R. (1996). Self-concept clarity: Measurement, personality correlates, and cultural boundaries. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 141–156) across different languages and cultures. Second, we aimed to give a more explicit picture of the relations between self-concept clarity and other personality constructs (i.e., general self-esteem, Five-Factor Model of personality and self-consciousness) than reported in previous studies (cf. Campbell et al., 1996). To accomplish these two goals, we set off with an adaptation of the SCCS to the Estonian language, which, in general, turned out to be successful. On the one hand, our research provided further evidence of the generalizability of the self-concept clarity construct across different languages and cultures, at least within the boundaries of the Western cultural space. On the other hand, the results reported in this study suggested that although a considerable proportion of the variability of self-concept clarity can be predicted from personality measures, the clarity does not seem to be invariably related simply to a single specific personality trait or to their combination: a pattern of associations between the Estonian version of the SCCS and other personality variables emerging in the correlation and regression analyses was fairly unstable and largely influenced by the intercorrelations of the other measures. © 2000 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Self-concept clarity; Self-esteem; Self-consciousness; Personality traits

1. Introduction

The basic terminology to describe a person's self-concept was established more than 100 years ago. According to James (1890/1950), a person has different kinds of selves that are ranged in a

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +372-7-375902; fax: +372-7-375900.

E-mail address: matto@ut.ee (H. Matto).

hierarchical scale according to their worth. Despite James' pioneering conceptualization of different selves, the structural aspects of self were largely abandoned by psychologists for the majority of decades of this century: self was mostly seen as a monolithic entity and researchers concentrated primarily on a single evaluative aspect of self-self-esteem (cf. Campbell, 1990). Only in the last two decades have researchers begun to emphasize cognitive aspects of self (for reviews see Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1984; Kihlstrom & Cantor, 1984), defining self as a multifaceted, dynamic, and organized entity that is active, forceful, and capable of change and that mediates and regulates most significant intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Oyserman & Markus, 1993).

According to Campbell (1990; Campbell et al., 1996), the contemporary conceptualization of the self enables a distinction between the *contents* and *structural aspects* of the self-concept. The contents, on the one hand, may be further divided into two major components: (a) knowledge — specific beliefs about one's attributes, but also one's roles, values, and personal goals; and (b) evaluative component — a global personal feeling of self-worth and the positivity of the specific self-beliefs. Structural aspects of the self-concept, on the other hand, relate to the way the specific self-beliefs are organized in one's mind. One important structural aspect of the self-concept has been found to be *self-concept clarity* (Campbell, 1990; Campbell & Lavalley, 1993; Campbell et al., 1996), defined as “the extent to which the contents of an individual's self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent, and temporally stable” (Campbell et al., 1996, p. 141). Identity integration, self-concept stability, role variability, and self-consistency are merely a few other personality constructs with which, at least to some extent, self-concept clarity may overlap. Yet, self-concept clarity has been empirically proven to be a distinct and relatively stable trait that can be reliably captured by means of self-reports (cf. Campbell et al., 1996). It has been demonstrated that the structural integrity of one's self-beliefs makes a unique and independent prediction to several vital personality constructs like self-esteem, chronic self-analysis and neuroticism but also to preferences for coping styles and decision-making strategies (see Campbell et al., 1996 for overview).

1.1. *Self-concept clarity scale*

To measure self-concept clarity, Campbell, Katz, Lavalley & Trapnell (1991b) devised a scale on the basis of 40 items covering various topics related to the construct of clarity: the perceived certainty, temporal stability, and internal consistency of self-beliefs; decisiveness; and articulation of goals. As a result, the initial 20-item version of the scale comprised three intercorrelated factors — generalized clarity, goal-directedness, and decisiveness (Campbell et al., 1991b). The scale was later modified — with an aim to focus solely on a single and univocal aspect of self-concept clarity, only the items that loaded significantly on the first generalized clarity factor were retained. As a result, the final unidimensional version of the self-concept clarity scale (SCCS; Campbell et al., 1996) consists of 12 items that measure the perceived internal consistency and temporal stability of self-beliefs.

The SCCS has exhibited high internal consistency with an average item-total correlation of 0.54 and the average Cronbach alpha of 0.86 across various samples as well as excellent temporal

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