The State Self-Conscious Emotions Scale (SSCES): Towards a Reliable Measure of Guilt, Regret & Shame

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The Scale: Long form (*Short form)

• Reliability statistics (Cronbach’s α)

Guilt = .85-.89 (85)

1. I feel guilty (Guilty)*
2. I feel remorse (Remorse)*
3. I think that my actions were unjust. (App)*
4. I think my actions were morally wrong (App)*
5. I want to make amends for what I have done. (Act)
6. I want to apologize for what I have done. (Act)
7. I want to restore myself in the eyes of other people. (Act)

Regret = .78-.83 (.84)

1. I feel regretful (Regretful)*
2. I am angry about the course of events for which I am not to blame. (Self-anger)*
3. I think that things would have gone better if I were a different person. (App)*
4. I wish I had been more careful (App)*
5. I want to go back and undo the actions I made. (Act)

Shame = .80-.90 (.79)

1. I am ashamed (Ashamed)*
2. I feel exposed (Exposed)*
3. I think that I am a morally bad person. (App)*
4. I think that things would have gone better if I were a different person. (App)*
5. I think I am an inferior person in relation to others. (App)*
6. I think that other people might see me as a morally bad person. (App)
7. I want to disappear. (Act)
8. I want to hide myself (Act)

Pride = .67-.83

1. I feel proud (Proud)*
2. I am proud of my actions (App)

External Attributions = .70-.73 (.73)

CFA Model

χ² = 1076.21
df = 312
RMSEA = .09
CFI = .81

References:

Study 1: Development (N = 278)

• 43 likert items were randomly generated, encompassing 3 characteristics of emotions: (1) feelings, (2) appraisals, and (3) action tendencies
• External Attributions subscale was devised to distinguish SCEs from basic emotions such as sadness and anger (see Tracy & Robins, 2004)
• Principal components analysis was used to reduce items
• Harm scenarios adapted from Zeelenberg and Breugelmans (2008)

Study 2 (N = 75; short form)

• Harm scenarios adapted from Van Vugt and Samuelson (1999)

Study 3 (N = 74; short form)

• Repeated resource dilemmas w/ negative feedback

Study 4 (N = 54; long form)

• Resource dilemma w/ neg. feedback, followed by dictator game

Preliminary Conclusions

• The SSCES subscales were internally reliable and fairly discriminant
• SSCES Guilt was consistently and exclusively discriminated by self vs. other harm (more guilt due to other harm), and predicted empathy (Study 3) and reparations (Study 4)
• Future CFA assessments are needed with larger sample