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Metacognitive self and its theoretical assumptions vs. real-life constructs

SUMMARY

The metacognitive Self is an ability to recognize biases in one's own behavior. It is a Brycz's model (2012) that is based on theoretical assumptions that were verified by competent judges. It became a strong foundation of the presented construct provided by its author, what enabled further analyses of the metacognitive Self. However, an accuracy of the model has never been verified by comparing the MS directly with adaptable human features of functioning, which constitute aforementioned theoretical basis. On this account, the real purpose of the study is to compare the theoretical assumptions of the selection of deviations from rationality for the metacognitive Self construct (selected by judging) with an actual assessment of the intensity of positive correlations between MJ and other adaptive human characteristics, such as self-distance or the ability to postpone gratification. In other words, the main goal is to verify the positive association between the metacognitive Self and self-knowledge, self-regulation, self-distance, morality, and delaying gratification. In addition, the possible role of gender for the above-mentioned variables will be analyzed, as well as the correlation between MJ and other features, such as agency, unmitigated agency, unmitigated communion, styles of humor, and various strategies for coping with stress. Therefore, the purpose of my study is to enlarge the knowledge about the metacognitive Self, and to consider the theoretical consistency of the obtained results related to the model.

An online questionnaire study was conducted. $N = 1016$ people took part in and they were diversified taking under consideration such demographic characteristics like gender, age, education level and living location. Following test methods were used: MCSQ-24 (H. Brycz, R. Konarski, 2016), ISK Scale (N. Ghorbani, P.J. Watson, M.B. Hargis; Polish adaptation: A. Pilarska, 2016), Mini-COPE – Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced questionnaire

(C.S. Carver; Polish adaptation: Z. Juczyński, N. Ogińska-Bulik, 2009), Humor Styles Questionnaire (R. Martin, P. Puhlik-Doris, G. Larsen, J. Gray, K. Weir; Polish adaptation: E. Hornowska, J. Charytonik, 2011), Agency and Communion Scales (B. Wojciszke, M.A. Szlendak, 2010), Unmitigated Agency and Unmitigated Communion Scales (B. Wojciszke, M.A. Szlendak, 2010) and Delaying Gratification Inventory (DGI-10) (M. Hoerger, S.W. Quirk, N.C. Weed; Polish adaptation: A. Dymek, P. Jurek, 2018 – adapting this method to the Polish reality was an initial and important step of my PhD).

The Pearson correlation confirmed statistically significant associations between metacognitive Self and other main variables, excluding self-distance (self-enhancing humor). The strongest, although moderate, correlation is between the MS and morality (communion), also between the MS and self-regulation (use of social support). The associations between meta-knowledge of the Self and rest of the model-related variables are low correlations. Women got higher scores than men in metacognitive Self, self-regulation (active coping and use of social support) and delay of gratification scales. On the other hand, men have the edge over women in self-distance. Self-knowledge and morality are not affected by gender.

The relationship of meta-knowledge of the Self and delaying of gratification was further explored, taking Hoerger, Quirk and Weed's (2011) five-domain model into account. Positive and statistically significant correlations were obtained in a case of social, physical and achievements domains, although last two are low.

The correlation between agency and metacognitive Self is low, however statistically significant. The stronger association is between unmitigated communion and the meta-knowledge of the Self. The unmitigated agency does not significantly correlate with the MS.

The associations between metacognitive Self and all styles of humor are low, however statistically significant, excluding aforementioned self-enhancing humor. In addition, correlation between an aggressive humor and the MS turned out to be negative.

After an extensive exploratory analysis, it is worth to mention that correlation between the metacognitive Self and less positive coping strategies, i.e. avoidance behaviors and helplessness, is positive and statistically significant. The religious coping, acceptance, and humor (in the form of a coping strategy) do not significantly correlate with the MS.

Finally, two mediation models with communion as a mediator were verified for the following associations: MJ - seeking support and MJ - aggressive humor. Both models turned out to be statistically significant, and communion for the first relation turned out to be a partial mediator, and for the second one, a total mediator.

Considering some limitations of the conducted study and a relatively low level of significant correlations, one can still be tempted to conclude that the results show the social nature of the metacognitive Self. Therefore, in this context, the adaptive nature of this model was confirmed. Most likely this is the reason why correlation results with main variables are not equally high, as, in fact, apart from morality (communion) and self-regulation – use of social support, the rest of the main features are more self-oriented. Therefore, these results on the one hand seem to contradict the assumptions of the Brycz's model, but on the other hand confirm them, by proving that social aspect is essential in that context. Taking into consideration pro-social orientation of the metacognitive Self, the above-mentioned features, which are more related to the Self, probably still should benefit other people. However, this deduction needs to be verified. Finally, further analysis confirms previous outcomes that are related to the Brycz's model. The correlations between the MS and socially oriented constructs are statistically significant, what supports the previously drawn conclusion from the results.

Key words: metacognitive Self, self-knowledge, self-regulation, morality, self-distance, delay of gratification