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# The Consciousness Quotient: Construct Development and Content Validity Research

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## Abstract

The aim of this study was to establish the content validity of a list of traits, skills and abilities that describe conscious experience, aggregated under the construct ‘consciousness quotient’ (CQ). The goal was to evaluate the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the content - whether the lists of the traits comprising the CQ adequately cover conscious experience, with no irrelevant content included. After developing the construct, the content validity was evaluated by a panel of 25 experts. As a result, 40 items were excluded and 27 items were re-worded. New terminological clarifications were developed in order to better operationalize the CQ construct.

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## 1. Introduction: preliminary construct development and operationalization of conscious experience

The ‘consciousness quotient’ construct was developed through 14 successive studies between 2003 and 2013 (Brazdau & Opariuc, 2014). The CQ-i beta version was first released in 2008, and between 2003 and 2013 a series of studies refined the concept and the measurement procedures. The main objective of these preliminary studies was to find an adequate assessment framework to measure conscious experience using a psychological assessment methodology. The focus was to find a procedure that complies with all the psychological assessment standards and guidelines as developed by organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the International Test Commission, the Association of Test Publishers and the Buros Institute for Assessment Consultation and Outreach.

The initial perspective defined the CQ as “the level of consciousness (or the level of being conscious) that is experienced in the morning, one hour after waking up and after having a refreshing sleep, without being exposed to any significant stimulus (coffee, TV, radio, music, talking, psychological stress). In other words, the consciousness

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quotient is the general level of being conscious/aware throughout a day, in regular life conditions” (Brazdau, 2009). The initial factor structure of the CQ-i beta version confirmed by the factor analysis (Brazdau, 2008), was composed of the factors presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Initial Factor Structure

Type	Factors
Main factors	Physical, Emotional, Cognitive, Spiritual, Social-Relational and Self-consciousness.
Secondary factors	Internal State Awareness, Self-reflectiveness, Mindfulness, Autonomy, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, Verbal Expression, Openness Towards New Experiences

During the initial items’ development, a series of other psychological assessment instruments were analysed: the Self-consciousness Scale, the Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale, the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory, and Psychological Well-being Scales. Some scales from transpersonal psychology were analysed as well as various recent developments, such as the ‘descriptive experience sampling’ method and the ‘explicitation interview’ (Brazdau & Opariuc, 2014).

Between 2007 and 2013, the specific methodological objectives were: (1) finding an adequate response scale that would serve the purpose of the inventory; (2) framing the conscious traits resulting from operationalization of the concept in such a way that the test applicants could easily understand them and the resulting data would be usable for statistical analyses.

The first version of the CQ-i (2008) had a five-level Likert scale using agreement-disagreement. After consultations with various experts and several studies on a large population (Brazdau, 2011) we decided to change the Likert scale agreement types to frequency types, and to modify it from five levels to six levels. After this modification, the reliability of the CQ-i improved significantly. An important result from these studies was a change in the style of the questions. Behavioural-type items behaved statistically better than other types (e.g., attitudinal-types), and so all the items were designed starting from behaviours that are relevant to conscious experience.

Between 2009 and 2013, a series of consultations with experts were conducted and an extended literature research was undertaken. A qualitative study was developed using the cognitive interviewing approach (Brazdau et al., 2013). A study of the difficulty of the items for adolescents revealed that the structure of the items was easy to understand by adolescents (Brazdau, Sharma, & Ahuja, 2014).

Other exploratory studies were developed during this stage: ‘In search of conscious leadership: a qualitative study of postsecondary educational leadership practices’ (Jones, 2012); ‘Leadership approach in relation to level of consciousness: a correlational analysis’ (Chauhan, Sharma, & Satsangee, 2013); ‘A correlational analysis of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social and self-consciousness’ (Ahuja, 2014); ‘Measuring Consciousness Quotient – a study of its influence on employee’s work performance and organizational outcomes’ (Aggarwal, 2013). The relation between CQ and students’ academic performance was explored (Brazdau & Mihai, 2011).

The main conclusion of these preliminary studies was that conscious experience can be scientifically treated like any other psychological variable, and that it is possible to introduce conscious experience as a variable in psychological assessment (Brazdau & Opariuc, 2014). The psychological assessment framework developed during preliminary development was the foundation for the in-depth construct’s operationalization and the items’ development.

## 2. In-depth construct development: operationalization of conscious experience

After releasing the CQ-i beta v.2013 and using the framework developed during 2003-2013, the operationalization of the CQ was extended in order to find all the relevant descriptors of conscious experience.

During this study, a variety of sources were analysed in order to generate the test content: literature research (consciousness studies, articles, books); mindfulness research; psychometrics research; spiritual wisdom; personal experience of non-dual people, interviews on Conscious TV, and the “Buddha at the gas pump” website; personal experience of witnessing awareness; our team of researchers; experts, friends, psychologists, research partners,

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