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The Czech Validation of the Self-Regulation Questionnaire

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Abstract

The authors report on the validation of the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ), originally developed by Brown et al. (1999). The SRQ was administered to a sample of 360 university students in the Czech Republic. The factor analysis yielded a four-factor model with factors Impulse Control, Goal Orientation, Self-direction and Decision Making. In this version, SRQ has 27 items with a reliability of .88. The total explained variance was 43%. The findings supported the claim that SRQ does not follow the sequence of steps in self-regulation as described by Miller and Brown (1991).

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1. Introduction

One of the most significant human qualities is the ability to self-regulate one's behavior, attention, will and emotion. Self-regulation has become a relatively well-researched area in the field of psychology, pedagogy, social cognitive theory and adjacent disciplines. The ability to develop, implement, and flexibly maintain planned behaviour in order to achieve one's goals (Brown, Miller & Lawendowski, 1999) is an important potential enabling one to live in today's world. Understanding how self-regulated behaviour develops, functions and how is organized is the main aim of many studies in this area.

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Self-regulation has been a part of research activity across all continents for the last fifty years. The diversity in general theories, models, domain specific applications of the self-regulation theory and research is wide (cf. Boekaerts, Pintrich & Zeidner, 2005).[†] From the social cognitive point of view, that we prefer, self-regulation is seen as an interaction of a triad of personal, behavioural, and environmental processes (Bandura, 1986). In this regard we can claim that self-regulation includes not only behavioural skills (behavioural self-regulation) in managing environmental contingencies (environmental self-regulation) but it also includes a sense of personal agency to enact these skills in relevant contexts. Further, self-regulation includes inner thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned, monitored and cyclically adapted according to acquired feedback and goals.

When referring to the self-regulation processes, it is important to distinguish their phases or stages. There is, however, no consensus on the exact number and the character of such phases. Carver and Scheier (1982) and Kanfer (1970) have proposed a three-phase theory of self-regulation that includes self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and self-reinforcement. Miller and Brown (1991) elaborated on Kanfer's model and expanded the number of processes involved in self-regulation to seven. They clarified the multiple processes that are involved in successful behavioural change including informational input, self-evaluation, instigation to change, search, planning, implementation, and plan evaluation. Carey, Neal and Collins (2004) provided a single-dimension solution, which was an invariant across gender and semester. Based on a follow-up investigation, Neal and Carey (2005) proposed two self-regulation phases (dimensions). The idea implicit in all conceptualizations is that deficits in any one stage may result in self-regulation difficulties.

That is why we intend to find out if one of the presented concepts of phases in self-regulation (Miller, Brown, 1991) is valid even for university students in the Czech Republic. We believe that only empirical testing can examine: (1) whether there are any phases or stages of self-regulation; (2) what these phases are and how many there are; (3) if these phases are universal for individuals in various circumstances and contexts. Therefore, we continue in deductive-nomological testing of theories because on its basis it is possible to verify or reformulate scientific theories as C. G. Hempel (1965) and K. R. Popper (2002) point out.

The focus on Czech students is relevant to the given issue because, as opposed to previous research (Aubrey, Brown, & Miller, 1994; Carey, Neal & Collins 2004; Neal & Carey 2005), it will deal with students outside the Anglo-Saxon countries. Therefore, this study also contributes to gain a better insight into cultural differences of self-regulation.

In order to be able to implement the presented research, it is necessary to validate a research tool for this concept. In this regard, the main objective of the study is to validate the research tool for the research on self-regulation. This research tool is then used to determine the individual phases of self-regulation among Czech students, the second objective of our paper. We believe that, because of the two objectives, we are able to create a tool for further research in self-regulation in the Czech Republic and also to contribute to the studies of foreign researchers (see Aubrey, Brown, & Miller, 1994; Carey, Neal, & Collins 2004; Neal & Carey 2005).

2. Research methodology

Since no reliable and valid instrument existed for measuring self-regulation of behaviour in the Czech educational environment, and instead of constructing a new one, we decided to adopt an already existing instrument. We chose the instrument that fits both the academic and non-academic environments, i.e. it measures the general area of self-regulation of human behaviour rather than self-regulated learning. The instrument chosen for adaptation was The Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) developed by Brown, Miller and Lawendowski (1999). Its authors define self-regulation as the ability to act according to an internal plan with no external support or reward. More specifically, they perceive self-regulation as an ability to implement planned actions and pursue them for achieving

[†] Theory and research of self-regulation is, for example, developed in the field of alcohol abuse (Carey, Carey, Carnrike & Meisler, 1990; Chassin & De Lucia, 1996; Wills, Sandy & Yaeger, 2002), drug use (Baumeister & Heatherton, 2009), procrastination (Eerde, 2000; Senécal & Vallerand, 1995; Motiea, Heidaria & Sadeghic, 2012), students' high rates of drop-out and truancy (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Tinga & O rmel, 2010).

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