

## VALIDATION OF SENSE OF COHERENCE (SOC) 13-ITEM SCALE IN A PERUVIAN SAMPLE

### VALIDACIÓN DE LA ESCALA SENTIDO DE COHERENCIA (SOC) 13-ITEM EN UNA MUESTRA PERUANA

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#### Abstract

This study assessed the psychometric properties of the SOC-13 scale in a sample of 448 Peruvian college students aged 18-29 years old. Internal consistency reliability was estimated; criterion validity and factor structure analysis were also analyzed. Cronbach's alpha for the full scale was .80. The dimensional structure of the SOC was evaluated by means of Multidimensional Scaling and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The former assessed goodness of fit of two proposed structure models namely a one factor solution against a three factor solution. An acceptable model fit was found for the three-factor solution ( $RMSEA = 0.06$ ,  $CFI = .92$ ). SOC Correlations with Mental and Physical Health were  $r = .59$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$  respectively. The SOC-13 scale showed appropriate psychometric properties regarding internal consistency, criterion validity and factor structure when tested in this Peruvian sample. Limitations were due to strong homogeneity within the sample, age range and non-representative sample size for all Peruvian population. Future studies should focus on further analyzing the SOC-13 structure and the ability of all items to properly measure Sense of Coherence in Peruvian young adults.

*Keywords:* Sense of Coherence, reliability, factor structure, criterion validity, peruvian young adults.

## Resumen

El propósito del estudio fue evaluar las propiedades psicométricas de la escala SOC-13 en una muestra de 448 universitarios peruanos con edades entre 18-29 años. La confiabilidad se calculó con el coeficiente de alfa de cronbach, y se encontró un .80 para toda la escala. La estructura interna del instrumento se evaluó mediante análisis de escalamiento multidimensional y análisis factorial confirmatorio. El análisis factorial confirmatorio se estimó comparando el ajuste de dos modelos propuestos, uno uni-factorial frente a uno de primer orden con tres factores. Se encontró un buen ajuste para la solución de tres factores ( $RMSEA = 0.06$ ,  $CFI = .92$ ). Correlaciones entre SOC y salud mental y física fueron  $r = .59$ ,  $p < .001$  y  $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$  respectivamente. El SOC-13 mostró propiedades psicométricas adecuadas con respecto a confiabilidad, validez de criterio y estructura factorial en esta muestra. Limitaciones se debieron a la homogeneidad en la muestra, edad y poca representatividad de la población Peruana. Estudios posteriores deberían enfocarse en analizar la estructura factorial del SOC-13 y la habilidad de cada ítem para medir adecuadamente Sentido de Coherencia en jóvenes peruanos.

*Palabras clave:* Sentido de Coherencia, confiabilidad, estructura factorial, validez de criterio, jóvenes peruanos.

## Introduction

Many years have passed since the American-Israeli medical sociologist Aaron Antonovsky introduced his Salutogenetic model by using a river metaphor to explain health and illness in the life course (Antonovsky, 1988). This model appears to be logical and has been used in a variety of health related disciplines including psychology, sociology, psychiatry, medicine, epidemiology, nursing and community health (Horsburgh & Ferguson, 2011). As proven by systematic reviews throughout the years, many studies have used the main concept of the Salutogenesis model, Sense of Coherence (SOC) (Antonovsky, 1993; Eriksson & Lindstrom, 2005).

Antonovsky, (1988) defined Sense of coherence as follows:

A global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that: (a) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (b) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (c) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement. (p. 19)

Therefore, as described before the SOC concept is composed of three important components (a) Comprehensibility, (b) Manageability and (c) Meaningfulness, which are related to each other.

These three components are within the person's Sense of Coherence (Antonovsky, 1988).

Comprehensibility is the ability to classify the information from the atmosphere and give a cognitive meaning to stimulus, which derives out of internal and external sources. Manageability describes how capable and what resources these people have to cope with a difficult situation. Meaningfulness is the ability to give emotional meaning to the situation. This helps people to be motivated and consider highly stressful situations as interesting and challenging. The third component is expected to be the most important, because without a motivational component and meaning, the ability to predict and cope with the environment becomes temporary (Antonovsky, 1990). However, this does not apply to all cases; in patients with primary myocardial infarction, Comprehensibility is more important than Meaningfulness for a greater Sense of Coherence (Bergman, Malm, Ljungquist, Bertero & Karlsson, 2012). For a strong SOC to progress, General Resistance Resources (GRR) should develop. These are individual, group or environmental characteristics that can facilitate effective tension or stress management (Antonovsky, 1979).

Systematic reviews have shown that SOC has proved to be a protective factor for mental health and for the development of a positive subjective state of both physical and mental health. In

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