ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Experiential Approach Scale: Development and Preliminary Psychometric Properties

monkey who has inserted his hand into the narrow opening of a hallowed gourd remains trapped by it as long as he continues to tightly grasp the bait inside.

To summarize, by now the significant relationship between experiential avoidance, as assessed by the AAQ-II as well as context-specific variants of it, and diverse forms of human suffering is well documented. How the two putative forms of experiential control may be related to each other, and the degree to which experiential approach may uniquely contribute to human suffering, are empirical questions that can begin to be addressed by developing a psychometrically sound measure of experiential approach. Insofar as we are unaware of any existing means of assessing experiential approach, the overall purpose of this article is to present our efforts to develop the Experiential Approach Scale (EAS) as such an instrument. We initially opted to focus on the sustaining or clinging dimension of experiential approach. It appears to us

following each factor extraction and decrease until all common variance has been extracted and then begin increasing. At this juncture, factor extraction is terminated and the number before the increase is used.

The revised MAP test (Velicer, Eaton, & Fava, 2000) revealed two factors with eigenvalues of 8.1 and 3.5 that accounted for 61.4 % of the variance. We chose an oblique (i.e., Promax with a Kaiser normalization) rather than orthogonal rotation of the two factors because we had no a priori reason to expect that they would be unrelated to each other. Each of the 19 items (see Table 1) except item 15 exhibited loadings salient for inclusion (≥.32; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) on a single factor and were consequently retained. Of the remaining 18 items, 11 loaded on Factor 1 that we designated Anxious Clinging. This dimension appears to encompass fear and worry of losing happiness and other desired emotional states. Factor 2, on which the remaining seven items loaded, seems to more closely reflect our original intent to develop a measure of attachment to positive affective experiences. We have accordingly termed it Experience Prolonging. Because the two factors were only modestly

kurtosis (.06). The mean ratings for individual items on the 7-point Likert-type scale showed minimal variability and ranged from 2.4 (Items 3 and 17) to 3.6 (Items 5 and 13).

Scores on the 7-item Experience Prolonging subscale ranged from 7 to 49, with a mean of 34.7 (SD = 7.8). The distribution displayed minimal skewness (−.35) and kurtosis (−.03). The mean ratings for individual items showed minimal variability, ranging from 4.4 (Item 11) to 5.2 (Items 4, 6, 9), and were, on average, significantly higher (M = 5.0, SD = 0.3), $t(340) = 24.7$, $p < .001$, than those on the Anxious Clinging subscale (M = 3.0, SD = 0.4).

Scores did not differ by gender or race/ethnicity in comparing Whites versus all others for either subscale. Scores also did not vary by age for the Anxious Clinging subscale, but did so for the Experience Prolonging subscale ($r = -.14$, $p = .01$). The correlation between subscales was statistically significant, but weak, $r = .28$, $p < .001$.

Study 2: Confirmatory Factor Analyses

The overall findings of Study 1 suggested that the EAS yields two-factor derived subscales of experiential approach that do not vary substantially by demographic variables. In Study 2 we further evaluated the factor structure of the EAS by conducting confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) with two additional samples. A CFA has the benefit of accounting for measurement error and any other unknown variables that are not associated with the two factors (Kline, 2005). Certain sources of these measurement errors include redundancy in the items, demand

with the two previous samples. Corrected item-total correlations for the Anxious Clinging subscale ranged from .61 (Item 5) to .83 (Item 7) with a mean of .75, while those for the Experience Prolonging subscale ranged from .41 (Item 6) to .83 (Item 9) with a mean of .61.

Results and Discussion

We first conducted a CFA with Sample 2 that took into account shared error variance between heavily correlated items, and then attempted to replicate the findings with Sample 3.

Sample 2 To help inform the CFA, we initially conducted a MAP and EFA. Two factors were revealed with eigenvalues of 8.4 and 3.6 that accounted for a slightly lower proportion of variance (59.3 %) than with Sample 1. The correlation between factors was comparable to Sample 1, r = .24. In conducting the CFA, we used the structural equation modeling software program Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 5.0; Arbuckle, 2003). In order to maximize fit, the errors between three pairs of Anxious Clinging items (7 & 19, 17 & 19, and 1 & 2) and one pair of Experience Prolonging items (6 & 9) were allowed to covary, reflecting similar wording shared by those item pairs.

To assess the goodness of fit we evaluated three measures: (a) the normed chi-square (NC), (b) the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996), and (c) the goodness-of-fit index (GFI; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Because of its sensitivity to sample size, the chi-square statistic (χ^2

factor ($r = .16$ and $r = .12$, respectively). The model for Sample 1 was replicated as all of the fit indices were again

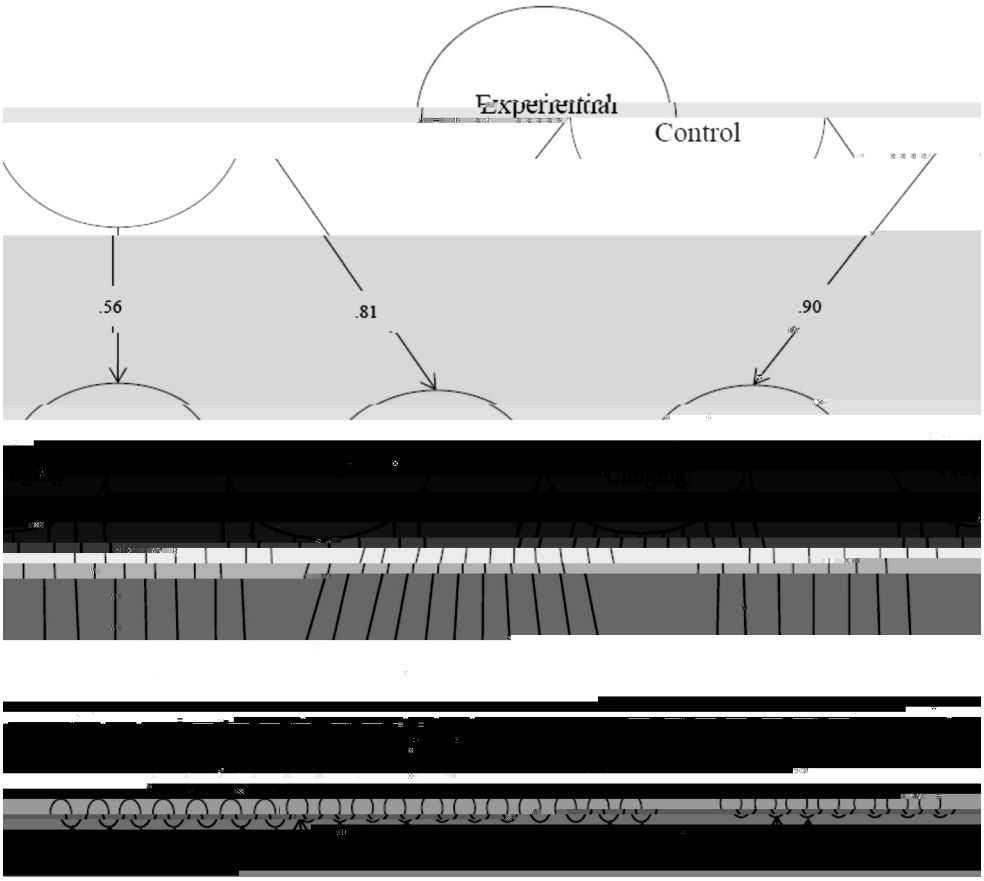

Fig. 2 Measurement model for EAS subscales and AAQ-II for Sample 2. See Table 1 for content of EAS subscale items

samples at both measurement occasions. The correlation between subscales was weak at T1 (r = .22, p = .008) and insignificant at T2 (r = .06, p = .49). Scores on the Anxious Clinging scale at T1 ranged from 11 to 64 with a mean of 29.7 (SD = 12), and at T2 ranged from 11 to 71 with a mean of 30.7 (SD = 13). The variability in individual items at T1 (2.0–3.6) and T2 (2.1–3.5) was also similar to previous samples. In addition, skewness (T1 = .58., T2 = .57) as well as kurtosis (T1 = −.15, T2 = −.09) paralleled that from the earlier samples. Corrected item-total correlations for the 11 items ranged from .46 (Item 13) to .76 (Items 1 and 19) at T1 and from .55 (Item 13) to .82 (Item 2) at T2.

Scores on the Experience Prolonging scale at T1 ranged from 7 to 49, with a mean of 34.6 (SD = 8.1), and at T2 ranged from 7 to 50, with a mean of 35.1 (SD = 8.2). Individual item variability at T1 (4.3–5.3) and T2 (4.4–5.5) were similar to previous samples. Skewness (T1 = −.76, T2 = −.51) and kurtosis (T1 = 1.0, T2 = .56) were somewhat higher than in the earlier samples, but not to a problematic level. Corrected item-total correlations for the seven items ranged from .34 (Item 18) to .77 (Item 10) at T1, and from .36 (Item 18) to .83 (Item 10) at T2.

The internal reliability of Anxious Clinging (T1 α = .90, T2 α = .93) as well as Experience Prolonging (T1 α = .82, T2 α = .85) were acceptably high and comparable to levels noted in the previous samples. As seen in Table 2, the same can be said about the split-half reliability coefficients for both subscales.

Results and Discussion

Differences between T1 and T2 means were nonsignificant for both subscales (Anxious Clinging, t = −.83, p = .41; Experience Prolonging, t = −1.45, p = .15), suggesting acceptable levels of temporal stability. Intraclass correlation coefficients for both subscales (Anxious Clinging, r = .87, p < .001; Experience Prolonging, r = .76, p < .001) also were acceptably high. With sufficient evidence for both the internal as well as temporal stability of the EAS, we accordingly turned next to an investigation of the convergent and divergent validity of its subscales.

Study 5: Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Because the two subscales of the EAS appear to be both conceptually and statistically distinct, our general expectation was that they would be differentially related to an array of relevant criterion variables. More specifically, because of worry reflected in the Anxious Clinging subscale, we anticipated that it would be more strongly positively associated with measures of psychological distress and dysfunction, but inversely

related to positively valenced criterion variables to a greater degree than the Experience Prolonging subscale.

Method

Participants

College students within each of first three samples already described (i.e., Samples 1–3) also completed a number of measures relevant for evaluating the validity of the EAS during its administration.

Measures

Each of the following measures was administered to only one

(e.g., sadness) rated for level of severity/intensity with a 4-point Likert-type scale such that higher scores reflect increased levels of depression (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996). The sound psychometric properties of the scale are well-documented, and the internal reliability obtained with Sample 1 was also high ($\alpha = .92$).

Results

Correlation coefficients between the two EAS subscales and criterion measures considered in evaluating their convergent

Our overall findings that were perhaps the most surprising involved differential relationships displayed between the two EAS subscales with criterion variables. As seen in Table 3, the relationship of Anxious Clinging with all of the measures

"butterfly garden metaphor." A reconsideration of this metaphor seems useful in underscoring the apparent distinction between the two EAS subscales. At least two choices are possible when the butterfly of happiness lands in our open hand. We may opt to simply savor every joyful moment, how-

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