Development and psychometric properties of a new measure for memory phenomenology: The Autobiographical Memory Characteristics Questionnaire

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The purpose of this study is to develop a valid and reliable measure for the phenomenology of autobiographical memories. The psychometric properties of the Autobiographical Memory Characteristics Questionnaire (AMCQ) were tested in three studies: the factor structure of the AMCQ was examined for childhood memories in Study 1 (N = 305); for autobiographical memories related to romantic relationships in Study 2 (N = 197); and for self-defining memories in Study 3 (N = 262). The explanatory factor analyses performed for each memory type demonstrated the consistency of the AMCQ factor structure across all memory types; while a confirmatory factor analysis on the data garnered from all three studies supported the constructs for the autobiographical memory characteristics defined by the researchers. The AMCQ consists of 63 items and 14 factors, and the internal consistency values of all 14 scales were ranged between .66 and .97. The relationships between the AMCQ scales related to gender and individual emotions, as well as the intercorrelations among the scales, were consistent with both theoretical expectations and previous findings. The results of all the three studies indicated that this new instrument is a reliable and robust measure for memory phenomenology.

Keywords: Autobiographical memory; Phenomenology; Scale development; Validity; Reliability.

Autobiographical memory refers to recollection of personal experiences from an individual's own life (Conway & Rubin, 1994; Robinson, 1989). Over the past 20 years, the purely cognitive views of memory in research on autobiographical memory have been supplemented by the role of social, emotional and motivational aspects (Bluck & Habermas, 2000). The characteristics of autobiographical memories play an important role in this new line of research, providing the basic concepts required by studies of the individual differences of memory experiences. However, existing measures of memory phenomenology have not been well developed, and their psychometric properties have to date not been tested adequately, meaning that many measurement issues have yet to be fully addressed. The present study aims to make both a conceptual and a methodological contribution to the field by recognising the dimensions of memory phenomenology.

Phenomenology has long been a focus of research and can be traced back to Husserl (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003), and later to William Wundt, who advocated introspectionism as a way of investigating psychological processes (Sutin & Robins, 2007). In a broad sense, phenomenology...