

# Development of the Pragmatic Prospersion Scale

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## INTRODUCTION

- Prospection, or future-focused thought<sup>1</sup>, is considered an adaptive process that helps people envision and accomplish goals<sup>2</sup>.
- Understanding of prospection has been hampered by the lack of a measure that assesses prospection as a constructive process distinct from unconstructive future thought (e.g., worry).
- We developed a self-report measure, the Pragmatic Prospection Scale (PPS), based on emerging views of prospection as a two-stage process of imagining desired outcomes and then creating and executing plans to achieve them<sup>3,4</sup>.

## METHOD

- We generated 74 items capturing key aspects of pragmatic prospection.
- We administered the items to two samples:  
**Sample 1 (S1): 402 U.S. employees**  
**Sample 2 (S2): 463 undergraduate students**

## EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

- In each of the two samples, exploratory factor analysis revealed four theoretically meaningful factors that exhibited good simple structure.
- We reduced the item pool into a final 18-item scale (S1  $\alpha = .89$ ; S2  $\alpha = .79$ ) with four subscales:
  1. Imagining Outcomes (S1  $\alpha = .85$ ; S2  $\alpha = .78$ )
  2. Setting Sensible Goals (S1  $\alpha = .82$ ; S2  $\alpha = .80$ )
  3. Making a Plan (S1  $\alpha = .84$ ; S2  $\alpha = .74$ )
  4. Flexible Execution (S1  $\alpha = .84$ ; S2  $\alpha = .78$ )

We developed the first self-report measure of **constructive, future-focused thinking**.



## Stages of Pragmatic Prospection

Stage 1

Stage 2

Imagining Outcomes

Setting Sensible Goals

Making a Plan

Flexible Execution

## CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

- Higher-order CFA showed good fit in both samples ( $\chi^2(131) \leq 311.13$ ,  $CFI \geq .920$ ,  $RMSEA \leq .059$ ). All items loaded highly on the four subfactors which, in turn, all loaded on the overall factor (S1: .60-.79; S2: .26-.78).
- In confirmatory bifactor models, the majority of reliable variance in scores was attributable to the general factor ( $\omega_H = .77$  in S1;  $.57$  in S2), supporting the calculation of a total score.
- At the same time, substantial reliable variance remained in each subscale score after controlling for the general factor ( $\omega_{HS} = .35-.52$  in S1;  $.34-.73$  in S2), supporting the calculation of subscale scores.

## DISCUSSION

- The PPS is a promising new measure of constructive future-focused thinking.
- Clinical scientists could use the PPS to distinguish adaptive forms of future thinking from maladaptive forms like worry or hopelessness.
- Pragmatic prospection seems to be a single construct made up of four facets. Interventions aimed at enhancing prospection could target the individual facets or the general prospection trait.
- Convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity remain to be tested to evaluate the construct validity and clinical utility of the PPS.

## REFERENCES

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