

Brief Sense of Community Scale

Overview

Below is a measure of sense of community (SOC), the Brief Sense of Community Scale (BSCS), which was published in Peterson, Speer & McMillan (2008). The BSCS was designed to assess the dimensions of needs fulfillment, group membership, influence, and emotional connection as defined in the McMillan and Chavis (1986) theoretical model. This scale was developed to address method bias and other limitations of previous SOC measures, which demonstrated poor reliability and validity or which could not be conveniently and efficiently administered in applied community contexts (see Peterson, Hughey & Speer, 2006, for a review). The BSCS items were designed to reference respondent neighborhood and use a 5-point, Likert-type response option format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The BSCS was found to have strong internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for the overall BSCS was .92. Alphas among the subscales were .86 for needs fulfillment, .94 for group membership, .77 for influence, and .87 for emotional connection. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the first-order and second-order structures of the BSCS, providing evidence for the factorial validity of the measure. Furthermore, in support of the measure's construct validity, the overall BSCS scale and its subscales were also found to be correlated as expected with community participation, psychological empowerment, mental health, and depression.

Participant Instructions

Below are a set of statements about your neighborhood. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with these statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

BSCS Items	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I can get what I need in this neighborhood.					
2. This neighborhood helps me fulfill my needs.					
3. I feel like a member of this neighborhood.					
4. I belong in this neighborhood.					
5. I have a say about what goes on in my neighborhood.					
6. People in this neighborhood are good at influencing each other.					
7. I feel connected to this neighborhood.					
8. I have a good bond with others in this neighborhood.					

References

- McMillan, D.W., & Chavis, D.M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology, 14*, 6–23.
- Peterson, N.A., Speer, P.W., & Hughey, J. (2006). Measuring sense of community: A methodological interpretation of the factor structure debate. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 453–469.
- Peterson, N.A., Speer, P.W. & McMillan, D. (2008). Validation of a brief sense of community scale: Confirmation of the principal theory of sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology, 36*, 61-73.

Scoring

Values: Strongly Agree=5; Somewhat Agree=4; Neutral=3; Somewhat Disagree=2; Strongly Disagree=1.

Reverse coding: No reverse coded items.

Scales: Needs Fulfillment, mean of items 1 & 2; Group Membership, mean of items 3 & 4; Influence, mean of items 5 & 6; Emotional Connection, mean of items 7 & 8.