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Construct-Validity of the Engagement with Challenge Measure for Adolescents: Structural- and Criterion-Validity Evidence

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ABSTRACT

or adolescents, *engaging with challenge* is a key developmental task, hypothesized to support development of adult-like competencies (e.g., agency and self-direction; Larson, 2000). This study aimed to assess the construct-validity (structural- and concurrent-validity) of a new self-report measure assessing adolescents' engagement with challenge to help researchers understand how different settings and the conditions in these settings support adolescents' development. The sample consisted of 337 adolescents in 10 FFA programs along with the adult advisors in each program. Adolescents completed a questionnaire, which included the Engagement with Challenge measure and the following criterion variables: number of contests completed, participation frequency, and leadership roles. In addition to the self-reported criterion variables, the adult advisor evaluated Engagement with Challenge for each FFA student member in that program using a single item. The findings of this study provided strong evidence for the structural-validity of the engagement with challenge construct measured by the new scale, including having passed confirmatory factor analysis configural, weak, and strong invariance tests across four grade groupings. The findings also provided further evidence of construct-validity, as Engagement with Challenge correlated in the *a priori* hypothesized direction and magnitude. Suggestions for analysis with the new measure and for future research are presented.

KEYWORDS

Adolescent; Engagement; Challenge; Cognitive Development; Out-of-School Time

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