

Title: Psychometric properties of the work environment impact scale: a cross-cultural study

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Major Finding: The Work Environment Impact Scale (WEIS) is a valid measure the construct of work environment impact and effectively discriminates different levels of work environment impact.

Participants:

- 11 American participants:
 - Age range: 24-53 years, mean age 38.2 years; 7 females, 4 males
 - 7 diagnosed with major depression, 2 with bipolar disorder, 2 with schizoaffective disorder
 - 3 involved in competitive employment, 5 in supported employment, 2 in volunteer work
- 10 Swedish participants:
 - Age range: 27-63 years, mean age 40.3 years; 4 females, 6 males
 - 5 being treated for hand injuries, 1 with fibromyalgia, 2 with anxiety disorders, 1 with depression and 1 with bipolar disorder
 - All participants were either working or recently had worked.
- 13 American occupational therapist (OT) raters and 4 Swedish OT raters (2 were OT students)

Method: Interviews of 11 American participants were videotaped and rated by American and Swedish OTs. Swedish OT raters interviewed and rated a total of 10 Swedish participants.

Analysis: Rasch analysis using the computer program FACETS.

Findings:

- All WEIS items but one (Interaction with Others) worked together to measure the construct of work environment impact.
- The order of item difficulty was logical, meaning that items that were anticipated to be more stressful or challenging were most difficult.
- Both the English and Swedish versions of the WEIS can be used to measure work environment impact.
- The WEIS is effective in discriminating different levels of work environment impact among participants.
- Raters were consistent and interchangeable, indicating that no formal training is necessary to use the WEIS beyond reading the manual and understanding MOHO concepts.

Conclusion: The WEIS is a theoretically grounded evaluation with evidence of internal validity and good measurement properties. The tool is relevant to workers with mental health and/or physical disabilities and appears to be culture free.

Implications for future research: Further research needs to be done to establish whether the WEIS calibrations remain stable, particularly when assessing different populations (physical versus mental health disabilities).

Evidence-based practice implications:

- **The WEIS is a valid and reliable tool to use when evaluating the impact of work environment on individuals with physical and/or mental health disabilities.**
- **The WEIS yields both quantitative and qualitative data which are useful when providing work related services and identifying needed work accommodations.**

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