Reviewer’s report

Title: Cognitive predictors of treatment outcome for exposure therapy: Do changes in self-efficacy, self-focused attention, and estimated social costs predict symptom improvement in social anxiety disorder?

Version: 1 Date: 20 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Amanda Morrison

Reviewer’s report:

The authors were thorough and attentive to their edits and I believe the paper is much improved. However, I have one significant reservation which is based on the revealed internal consistency statistics for the predictor variables. For the SESS, there was questionable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .69) and for the SCQ there was poor internal consistency (Cronbach's alphas = .56 and .51). Given that reliability for difference scores is typically worse than for the component scores (e.g., Edwards, 2001), I have significant concerns about the reliability of these two change scores, particularly given that the most powerful predictor of treatment outcome was change in SCQ. I have two sub-questions/comments:

1) Given that internal consistency was questionable to poor for these scales, I believe readers would be interested to know the internal consistency coefficients for the Time 2 assessment points (I assume the reported coefficients are for the pre-treatment assessment point). If Time 2 internal reliability is similarly questionable to poor, my concerns about the reliability of these difference scores remain.

2) I am also a little confused as to why the authors calculated two alphas for SCQ but used only one SCQ score. It seems the two alphas correspond with 10 items each for the performance and nonperformance items of the 20-item SCQ, but the authors state that they used a "mean score of performance and nonperformance items" for this measure. Therefore, it seems that instead of calculating separate alphas for items that fall into these two categories, the authors should just report a single alpha of all items pooled.

Reference


Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
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Yes

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I am able to assess the statistics

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