

# **A Scale to Measure the Lived Experience of Enlightenment: A Preliminary Research from the Perspectives of Religion and Psychology.**

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Background: Spiritual Enlightenment is a common topic in most religious traditions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, Taoism and Christianity as well as transpersonal psychology and study of spirituality. However, there is not much empirical research about the construct and measurement of this concept. The purpose of this study was to develop a scale mainly based on Buddhism discussion of spiritual Enlightenment to measure the lived experience of spiritual enlightenment and test its psychometric properties.

Method: The 41 items in this scale come from previous qualitative interviews about spiritual enlightenment experience and relevant religious research and studies. This is an ongoing research and up till now, there are 40 advanced meditators participated in this study. The estimated sample size will be 400 to conduct the Exploratory Factor Analysis and 100 to conduct the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Meanwhile, around 6 experts in the field of psychology, Buddhism, mindfulness practice, and quantitative research were consulted to increase the face validity of the scale.

Results: Preliminary results shows that there are three factors of the scale, including mystical experience, inspiring experience and insights. Cronbach's alpha was around 0.96 which shows high reliability of this scale. In addition, the scale was significantly related with several other mental health measurements. With more sample gathered in this study, more patterns will be revealed.

Conclusions: This research can reveal the construct of the concept of spiritual enlightenment and offer a cross-religion and trans-religion measurement to investigate people's enlightenment experience. This research may help researchers in the field of mindfulness study understand the experience of advanced meditators and offer tools for researchers to measure the practice levels of meditators.