

Reply to ‘Temporal stability in measurements matters only for stable constructs’



We thank Moreau (Moreau, D. Temporal stability in measurements matters only for stable constructs. *Nat. Rev. Psychol.* <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-025-00435-z>; 2025)¹ for his comments on our Perspective (Corneille, O. & Gawronski, B. Self-reports are better measurement instruments than implicit measures. *Nat. Rev. Psychol.* **3**, 835–846; 2024)² and appreciate the opportunity to respond to his comments.

In our article, we argued that six alleged advantages of implicit measures over self-reports were unsubstantiated, and that self-reports had three clear advantages. Importantly, our Perspective focused on a particular category of performance-based tasks commonly referred to as ‘implicit measures’ (for example, the implicit association test)³. Our arguments were not meant to generalize to all performance-based tasks or all instruments that use response times. We recommended caution when interpreting outcomes from implicit measures and called for more sophisticated use of self-reports, using structural-fit procedures⁴ and multinomial modelling⁵. Moreau expressed concerns that our article misrepresents the strengths and limitations of implicit measures and self-reports and that our recommendations might be misguided. Here, we respond to four central points of Moreau’s commentary.

First, Moreau argues that temporal stability matters for measures of trait-like constructs but not for measures of transient states. We agree with this point. We therefore focused our discussion of temporal stability on research that aims to identify cross-temporal relations with other measures (for example, predicting behaviour), a frequent goal in studies that use implicit measures⁶.

Second, Moreau claims that self-reports might be better than implicit measures for

capturing stable, trait-like aspects of constructs but might lack the granularity needed to capture subtle, situational changes. This argument ignores the fact that numerous self-report instruments have been validated to measure states⁷. We are unaware of evidence that supports the claim that implicit measures are superior to self-reports for measuring states.

Third, Moreau acknowledges the higher predictive value of self-reports but deems this comparison unfair because implicit measures are typically used to assess broad and consciously inaccessible constructs. It is not clear to us why or when measuring broader constructs should be considered advantageous. In fact, the opposite might be true⁸. Regarding awareness, we reviewed evidence that implicit measures do not capture unconscious constructs (see also ref. 9), and Moreau does not provide arguments for why this conclusion should be deemed incorrect.

Fourth, Moreau states that combining self-reports with implicit measures might be useful for identifying consistencies and divergences between stable traits and momentary fluctuations. This argument ignores the fact that such comparisons could be achieved by comparing self-report measures of traits versus states⁷ and by using latent state–trait analyses of self-reports¹⁰. This argument also ignores the fact that implicit measures and self-reports differ in numerous ways. These differences make interpretation difficult (if not impossible), which is why we deemed the structural-fit approach superior in our Perspective.

In conclusion, we remain confident in our conclusion that self-reports most often do a better measurement job than implicit measures both methodologically and pragmatically. We are grateful for the opportunity to clarify that our conclusion was meant to apply

specifically to the implicit measures reviewed in our Perspective and for the research questions we discussed.

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Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.