

Cross-cultural validation of research instruments: Preliminary validation of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire in Sri Lanka

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An often overlooked but an essential aspect of conducting comparative cross cultural research involves that the concepts of interest and the instruments used to measure them are equivalent in the cultures it is used on. When using western originated instruments in non-western countries, it is essential that these western instruments be validated to the culture it is being used in. Then only can legitimate cross-cultural comparison of phenomenon be made across cultural and ethnic boundaries.

The Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) is an instrument that has been developed in the United States of America and has been used primarily on Caucasian populations to assess 7 personality dimensions. It contains 42 items that are categorized in to 7 sub scales/ dimensions. The PAQ could be used with children and youth. Content and consensual validation was conducted on the PAQ in Sri Lanka. Firstly, the PAQ was back translated to Sinhala. In order to conduct the validation process, a panel of 6 professional judges conversant in child mental health and cross-cultural aspects was appointed. The judges, using the Delphi technique, rated each of the 42 items in the PAQ on two aspects of content validity and three aspects of consensual validity. Based on the Delphi technique recommendations, the results indicated that all 42 items in the PAQ have adequate content and consensual validity in Sri Lanka. Though there was adequate validity, it was decided to further simplify the wording of the Sinhala translation in order to make it more user friendly. This was done in consultation with a Sinhala scholar who is also proficient in English. Subsequent to this process, the PAQ was pre-tested twice with a convenience sample of 12-year old Sinhala speaking school children in order to deduce any difficulties in its administration. No such difficulties were encountered. The PAQ has shown adequate content and consensual validity in Sri Lanka. In order to validate it further, construct and criterion validation would be conducted in the future.