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Validity and reliability of the "Self-Perception Profile for Adults" in the educational field

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Abstract

The objective of the present study was to examine the content validity and the reliability of the Spanish translation of the "*Self-perception profile for adults*" scale. The translation of the instrument was carried out with the back-translation process, with experts in both languages (Spanish-English). The content validity index was adequate (CVR = 0.99). Regarding reliability, the final version was applied to a sample of 180 adults (average age = 19.6 ± 3.1 years); it was found an adequate temporal consistency for the different domains (R = 0.557 - 0.855) and internal stability (α = 0.878). It is concluded that the translation provided a valid and reliable instrument, which can be used as a valuable tool for self-perception in areas such as education, health, sports and psychology, among others, in adult populations.

Keywords: Education, perception; psychometrics and health.

Introduction

Self-perception is the ability of the human being to collect information from the internal environment (e.g., thoughts, feelings) and/or the external one (e.g., relationship with parents, relationship with colleagues), to integrate and to interpret them, in order to produce, as a response, a representation of oneself in a specific domain. It is a dynamic concept that is in constant adjustment, and that changes according to the experiences and the interpretation that is made of them (Fu et al., 2013, Gabbard, 2012). In addition, it is considered as a multidimensional construct, composed of several domains, among which we can mention: social acceptance, physical appearance, academic performance, social relations, perceived competence in sport skills and perceived competence in physical abilities, among others (Fox and Corbin, 1989, Harter, 1988, Messer and Harter, 2012).

Several studies have found that self-perception influences social and personal development, physical and mental health, and human behavior (Fox and Corbin, 1989, Molina, Raimundi, López, Cataldi and Bugallo, 2011). Likewise, a positive self-perception is considered as a protective factor of health (Molina et al., 2011), since it is associated with acceptable social behavior, less aggressive behaviors, low levels of anxiety and depression, less teasing towards peers, better personality development, better academic performance, and greater well-being in general. On the contrary, a negative self-perception is associated with mental and physical health problems (Fu et al., 2013; Haugen, Ommundsen, & Seiler, 2013; Molina et al., 2011). It has also been found that self-perception, specifically the perceived competence (motor and/or physical), is positively related to the level of physical activity, the performance of motor tasks, and some physical capacities related to health (Altintas et al., 2013, Morano, Colella, Robazza, Bortoli, and Capranica, 2011, Piek, Baynam, and Barrett, 2006, Poulsen et al., 2011, Robinson, 2010, Stein, Fisher, Berkey and Colditz, 2007).

For the evaluation of self-perception, several scales have been constructed that focus on various populations and domains (Fox and Corbin, 1989, Goñi, Ruiz de Azúa and Liberal, 2004, Harter, 1982, 1988, Harter and Pike, 1984, Marsh, Relich and Smith, 1983, Marsh, Richards, Johnson and Roche, 1994, Messer and Harter, 2012). Some of these focus solely on the evaluation of the self-perception of physical competition (Fox and Corbin, 1989, Goñi, Ruiz de Azúa and Liberal, 2004, Marsh et al., 1994). The Fox and Corbin scale (1989) evaluates physical competence, perceived by means of five subscales (physical condition, sports competition, physical attractiveness, strength and the global physical self-concept). On the other hand, Goñi, Ruiz de Azúa and Liberal (2004) evaluates it by means of the following subscales: physical ability, physical condition, physical attractiveness, strength, general physical self-concept and general self-concept.

Other scales were constructed with the objective of evaluating several domains in the same questionnaire (Harter and Pike, 1984, Marsh et al., 1983, Messer and Harter, 2012). These evaluate different domains of self-perception according to the population to which they are directed. Marsh et al. (1983) developed a scale called Self-Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ), composed by domains

related to the academic, social and physical areas. Harter and Pike (1984), in their questionnaire focused on the child population, evaluate four domains of self-perception (social acceptance, maternal acceptance, physical competence and cognitive competence). On the other hand, Messer and Harter (2012) evaluate twelve domains in the adult population (social competence, work competence, taking care of others, competence in sport skills, physical appearance, adequate provider, moral, household tasks management, emotional relationships, intelligence and sense of humor, and global self-perception).

It should be noted that, of the aforementioned scales, all are in English, except for the one designed by Goñi et al (2004). That is why there has arisen the need to translate and validate some of these scales in different languages, in order to be used according to the linguistic characteristics of the populations (Atienza, Balaguer and Moreno, 2002, Atienza, Balaguer, Moreno and Fox, 2004, Broc, 2014, Dimmitt, 1995, Hau, Sung, Yu, Marsh and Lau, 2005, Meleddu, Scalas and Guicciardi, 2002, Molina et al., 2011). For example, *The Physical self-perception Profile* instrument (Fox and Corbin, 1989) was translated and validated into the Dutch language (Van de Vliet et al., 2002). *The Physical Self-description Questionnaire* (Marsh et al., 1994) has been translated and validated into Italian (Meleddu, Scalas and Guicciardi 2002), Chinese (Hau et al., 2005), Turkish and Spanish (Marsh, Marco and Apçý, 2002). In addition, the scale for the child population developed by Harter (1982) was translated and validated into Spanish by Atienza et al. (2002), Molina et al. (2011) and Broc (2014).

In the particular case of the scale *Self-perception profile for adults* developed by Messer and Harter in 1986, the translation into Spanish was done by Dimmitt in 1995. However, this questionnaire has a revised version by Messer and Harte in 2012, which has not been translated into Spanish. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to establish the validity by expert judgment and the reliability of the Spanish translation of the *Self-perception profile for adults* (Messer and Harter, 2012) in a group of university students in Costa Rica.

Materials and methods

Design

The present investigation is of a descriptive type; it establishes the psychometric properties of an evaluation scale translated into Spanish.

Participants

The study population is the students of a university in Costa Rica. The sample consisted of a total of 180 university students (114 men and 66 women), aged between 18 and 28 years. The participants were recruited in various compulsory courses, which were randomly selected, in a university in Costa Rica. Participation in the study was voluntary and informed consent was signed.

Measuring instrument

The *Self-perception profile for adults* was built by Messer and Harter in 1986, and revised in 2012 (Messer and Harter, 2012), in order to assess the self-perception of adults from a multidimensional approach. This scale has 11 specific domains: social, work competence, taking care of others, perceived competence of sport skills, physical appearance, adequate provider, moral, household tasks management, emotional relationships, intelligence and sense of humor, and a global self-perception domain, for a total of 12 domains~~,~~ ~~for~~ and a total of 40 items (table 1). Each domain is evaluated by means of four items and in the case of global self-perception, it consists of six items. All the items present an evaluation frame in a range of 1 to 4 points.

Procedures

The procedures of the present study were organized in three stages: (1) translation of the instrument into Spanish, and validation of content; (2) data collection; (3) reliability analysis. Procedures adhered to the Helsinki declaration.

Stage 1: Translation and content validation. The translation of the instrument from English to Spanish was carried out following the back-translation procedures, through expert judgment (Balaguer, Tomás, Castillo and Duda, 2009, Sánchez and Echeverry, 2004). The content validity was given by expert judgment and the content validity index (CVR) was calculated with the objective of quantifying the agreement among experts (Lawshe, 1975; Wilson, Pan, and

Schumsky, 2012). First, the instrument was translated from English to Spanish (I-1). This translation was reviewed by four university professors, who have proficiency in Spanish and English. There were analyzed the corrections and suggestions presented by these professionals, which were incorporated, thus obtaining a second instrument (I-2). A professional translator with good command of English and Spanish reviewed the I-2. After incorporating her suggestions, a third instrument was obtained on I-3. This was sent again to the professors of the first stage, and they were asked to indicate if they agreed with the translation or not, for each item; in case of disapproval, they had to add a comment for its correction. In this stage, a CVR of 0.99 was obtained for all the items, which indicates a unanimous agreement among the four evaluators, so there were no changes to the instrument. Subsequently, an English professor translated the I-3 back into the English language (back-translation process).

Both versions were analyzed and no differences were found, so the I-3 instrument was the final version. This process facilitated the comprehensibility of the final version of the instrument in Spanish for the Costa Rican population, while maintaining the (original) meaning of the English version. The above was done for the 50 items and the instructions of the instrument. It should be noted that the mother tongue of the people involved in the translation is Spanish, and that they had sufficient command of the English language.

Table 1. Description of the domains of the self-perception scale

Domain	**Items**	Description
Social	2, 14, 27, 39	It takes into account the behavior of people in the presence of others
Competence at work	3, 15, 28, 40	It evaluates if the persons feel productive in their main occupation
Taking care of others	4, 16, 29, 42	It rates the person's feeling at taking care of other people.
Sport skills	5, 18, 30, 43	This domain considers the skills related to sports.
Physical appearance	6, 19, 31, 44	It refers to what the person looks like physically.
Proper provider	7, 20, 32, 45	It focuses on the person's ability to provide for themselves and the people who are important for them
Moral	8, 21, 34, 46	It evaluates the behavior of the person based on behavior standards
Household tasks management	10, 22, 35, 47	It refers to the management that presents the person in relation to home tasks
Emotional relationships	11, 23, 36, 48	It takes into account the interaction of people with their partners or special friends
Intelligence	12, 24, 37, 49	This domain focuses on evaluating the ability that persons present for learning, and their cognitive ability.
Sense of humor	13, 26, 38, 50	It evaluates the ability of people to see the ironic and fun side of life
Global self-perception	1, 9, 17, 25,33, 41	It is independent of the previous domains; it evaluates the perception and general satisfaction of persons

Source: self-made, based on Messer and Harter, 2012

Stage 2: Data collection. We visited five general studies courses of a university in Costa Rica, attended by students of different levels and careers. With the approval of the professor in charge of the group, the students were asked to complete the I-3 instrument before starting the class. It took them approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A week later, the instrument was applied on a second occasion to 60% of them.

Stage 3: Reliability. The reliability of the instrument in Spanish was evaluated through the internal consistency of the instrument and the temporal stability. The first one was calculated using Cronbach's alpha (1951), using the information from the first application (n = 180). The temporal stability analysis was carried out by means of the intra-class correlation coefficient (R), using the "*test, re-test* method" (Sánchez and Echeverry, 2004), using the applications of the first

measurement, and the second measurement of 60% of the sample (n = 107).

Statistical analysis

For the description of the sample, there were obtained the average (M) and the standard deviation (± SD) of the examined characteristics. In the internal consistency analysis, values of alpha> 0.70 are considered acceptable; while values less than 0.69 are considered poor. For the analysis of temporal stability, a low reliability is considered when R is less than 0.4; it is interpreted as a good reliability when R ranges between 0.4 and 0.75; and when R is greater than 0.75, it is considered an excellent reliability (Prieto, Lamarca and Married, 1998). These analyses were performed with the statistical program IBM-SPSS version 23 (IBM Corporation, New York, USA).

Results

Stage 1: Translation and content validity

The back-translation process resulted in an instrument in Spanish, which has a content validity index of 0.99. This is considered as an acceptable content validity value.

Stage 2: Data collection

The descriptive information indicates that the participants had a greater self-perception in the domains of intelligence and sense of humor; while the lowest value was found in the domain of sport skills (see table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the self-perception scale of the participants

Domain	Male		Female		Total	
	M	*DE*	*M*	*DE*	*M*	*DE*
Social	2,77	0,63	2,78	0,61	2,77	0,62
Work competence	2,96	0,62	2,9	0,6	2,94	0,61
Taking care of others	2,88	0,54	2,89	0,7	2,88	0,6
Sport skills	2,3	0,75	1,96	0,7	2,17	0,75
Physical appearance	2,68	0,72	2,33	0,77	2,55	0,75
Adequate provider	2,74	0,6	2,67	0,6	2,72	0,6
Moral	2,76	0,6	2,95	0,71	2,83	0,65
Household tasks management	2,56	0,72	2,53	0,73	2,55	0,72
Emotional relationships	2,83	0,62	2,78	0,7	2,81	0,65
Intelligence	3,16	0,6	2,93	0,67	3,07	0,64
Sense of humor	2,99	0,6	2,99	0,73	2,99	0,65
Global self-perception	2,92	0,73	2,8	0,77	2,88	0,75

M = arithmetic mean; DE = standard deviation (n = 180). Source: self-made.

Stage 3: Reliability

The internal stability of the full scale resulted in Cronbach's α = 0.878. In addition, it was revised the corrected correlation coefficient between the total and the elements; and it was examined if alpha increased when eliminating some item. The values of Cronbach when eliminating some item oscillated between 0.86 and 0.88, which does not represent an improvement in the value (that was) obtained for alpha; therefore, it was decided to keep all the original items of the instrument (Sánchez and Echeverry, 2004).

The intra-class correlation analysis (that was) performed to determine the temporal stability of the instrument, a week apart (the *test, re-test* method), shows a range of acceptable intra-class coefficients (Prieto, Lamarca and Casado, 1998). Table 3 shows the coefficients for each domain. The lowest was found in the moral domain and the highest in physical appearance. Five domains (care for others,

sport skills, physical appearance, household tasks management, and global self-perception) presented excellent reliability, while seven domains (social, work competency, adequate provider, moral, emotional relationships, intelligence and humor) presented a good reliability.

Table 3. Intra-class correlation coefficient of the instrument for each domain

Domain	*R*
Social	0,653
Work competence	0,67
Taking care of others	0,779
Sport skills	0,814
Physical appearance	0,855
Adequate provider	0,719
Moral	0,557
Household tasks management	0,817
Emotional relationships	0,665
Intelligence	0,698
Sense of humor	0,683
Global self-perception	0,848

Note: (n = 107). Source: self-made.

Discussion

The objective of the present study was to establish the validity of the content and the reliability of the Spanish translation of the "*Self-perception profile for adults*" scale. The obtained results indicate that the version translated into Spanish is an instrument that presents an acceptable validity and reliability for the evaluation of self-perception in this population.

The content validity given by the expert judgment presented an index with acceptable values of the translation into Spanish of the instrument. In addition, an acceptable internal consistency was obtained, being similar to that obtained in its original version. Messer and Harter (2012) obtained the reliability of their instrument in two different samples. The first sample consisted of 141 men and women aged between 30 and 50 years, while the second sample consisted of 215 women with an average age of 26 years. The reliability established by Cronbach's α showed values between 0.63 and 0.92. Broc (2014), when translating Harter's scale for children, found values of Cronbach's alpha by domain from low to moderate (.48 - .85), similar to those found in the present study.

On the other hand, with respect to the results of temporal stability as another reliability criterion, it has been considered $R \geq 0.40$ as a regular or acceptable value (Prieto, Lamarca and Casado, 1998). Under this criterion, in this study, all domains have acceptable reliability coefficients. Dimmitt (1995) reported results with low coefficients, similar to the present study but in different domains, after obtaining the reliability after two weeks with the *test, re-test* method. In that study, the domain with the lowest coefficient was *taking care of others* (r = 0.34), while the domains of *adequate provider* and *intelligence*, presented values close to r = 0.59; and the rest of the domains presented coefficients superior to r = 0.60. A possible explanation to the differences (that were) found between the study of Dimmitt and the present investigation is the population in which the instrument was applied, since Dimmitt (1995) worked only with women from marginal areas, whereas in the present study, we worked with university students -men and women.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that when it is evaluated reliability through stability over time, self-perception is expected to remain stable after applying the instrument with a time period of just a week (Dimmitt, 1995). However, as mentioned, the perceived competition is a dynamic process that is constantly changing due to the experiences of the environment; therefore, a change could generated from one measurement to the other, which results in low coefficients.

A valid and reliable instrument is important to obtain a datum of a variable (that be) apt to make a legitimate conclusion. Rejecting or not a proposed hypothesis is the main objective of every researcher, but this process cannot be carried out efficiently if the collection of data is inefficient. The measurement and adequate evaluation of the variables under study is a relevant factor in the scientific research process, which includes using a valid and reliable instrument for data collection. For this reason, it is necessary to use valid and reliable instruments, since it gives research a solid support for data collection and conclusion of the study (Kerlinger and Lee, 2002). Given the validity and reliability of the translation of this instrument, it is considered to be a useful tool for its use in

the context under which it was translated, or in similar contexts; because the results of this study present evidence that suggests that the instrument is appropriate for the culture and age group for which it was translated.

The instruments developed by Harter and collaborators (Harter and Pike, 1984; Messer and Harter, 2012) have been used to investigate self-perception in diverse populations (Fu et al., 2013; Levy and Ebbeck, 2005; Robinson, 2010; Spessato, Gabbard, Robinson and Valentini, 2012, Stein, Fisher, Berkey and Colditz, 2007, Vedul-Kjelsås, Sigmundsson, Stensdotter and Haga, 2011). Likewise, they have been used in the area of education for: the prediction and association of behavioral problems (Cheng, Griffin, Claes, Petocz, Steinbeck, Rooney and O'Connor, 2014, Novak and Furman, 2016); early identification and current perception (Andrade, 2016, Mastro, Zimmer-Gembeck, Webb, Farrell and Waters, 2016); physical education and sports (Qasim, Ravenscroft and Sproule, 2014). As well as in the areas of health (Furman and Collibee, 2014; Golden, Furman, and Collibee, 2016; Oñate, Resett, Menghi and Church, 2016) and vocational behavior (Waters, Briscoe, Hall and Wang, 2014).

Therefore, the translation of this instrument can contribute to the increase of research in these areas of study, and even as a basis for studies in different Spanish-speaking countries. In addition, the authors indicate a characteristic of the original instrument is that there can be applied the items related to a specific domain, if one wishes to evaluate only one of the domains (Messer and Harter, 2012). In this way, there can be applied at will the complete instrument, or only the items of a specific domain.

Finally, the translation of the instrument is valid for expert judgment and acceptable reliability, but it is important to consider aspects to improve its reliability; for example, to expand the sample in the age range. In conclusion, the values obtained after carrying out the translation of this scale suggest a valid and reliable instrument for use in studies in adults with characteristics similar to those of the present investigation.

Conclusions

This study provides preliminary evidence, which concludes that the psychometric properties of this questionnaire demonstrate that it is valid and reliable for the adult population. This scale is useful for evaluating different domains of self-perception, among them the social domain, competence at work, being an adequate provider, morality, emotional relationships, intelligence and sense of humor, and a global domain. The values of validity and reliability of the translation are similar to the (ones in the) original scale, which confirms to be a valid and reliable instrument. These results provide the educational community with a relevant instrument in the study of self-perception for the Spanish-speaking culture.

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