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A study to adapt the big five inventory to Turkish

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Abstract

The Big Five Personality Factor Theory evaluates personality according to the five main factors of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. The present study therefore aims to adapt John, Donahue, and Kentle's (1991) the Big Five Inventory into Turkish. Validity and reliability studies concerning the BFI were conducted on 1153 university students. For language equivalency, the English and Turkish forms of the inventory were implemented at different times on the same group of students who were proficient in both of these languages. In order to test the reliability and validity of the inventory, its content validity, language equivalency, and internal consistency were calculated.

Keywords: Big five factor personality; inventory; personality development; reliability and validity.

1. Introduction

In recent years, personality related theories and models have gained popularity. Personality involves an individual's attitudes, talents, interests, physical appearance and interaction with the environment. The kind of person an individual is and how s/he is defined offers important clues about his/her personality. Personality affects people's relationships, job choices, sexual relationships; in short, their entire lives. Identifying personality is important in order to get to know and guide individuals.

It is very difficult to explain personality as one dimension. Theories and experimental studies about personality have shown that there are five basic dimensions of personality (John, Naumann and Soto, 2008; Goldberg, 1981; 1993; Norman, 1963; McCrea and Costa, 1985). Allport's approach of separating personality into its dimensions in the early 1930's was continued by Cattell (1947), Thurstone (1951), Guilford and Thurstone (1953), after which Norman (1963) extended Cattell's model to develop his five factor personality model.

As a result of a study on the five dimensions of personality, Goldberg (1981) coined the concept of the "Big Five". McCrae and Costa's (2003) factor analysis results also confirm Goldberg's (1981) five factor personality model. This model is thought to be important as it enables individuals to understand each other by using the five basic personality traits, independently of personality theories. The Big Five Personality Factor Theory divides personality into five main elements and explains personality according to these five basic personality factors. Initially aimed to identify personality traits, the five factor model afterwards started to be used to explain personality structure and the five factors of the model were defined in detail (McCrae and Costa, 1999).

The Big Five Personality Factor Theory evaluates personality according to the five main factors of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness.

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Extraversion: This factor includes the adjectives excitable, lively, talkative, energetic and humanistic. *Agreeableness*: Covers features such as affection, helpfulness, loving and valuing others, being adaptable and pitiful rather than doubtful and contrary. *Conscientiousness*: Is made of the dimensions of tendency to display self-discipline, acting in a responsible way and being ambitious for success, planning things beforehand and being meticulous. *Neuroticism*: Includes a tendency for negative emotions such as anger, fear, depression or touchiness. Sometimes it is also called emotional instability. *Openness*: Includes being artistic and adventurous, having extraordinary ideas, dreaming, having curiosity and braveness. This feature separates creative people from the ordinary ones.

Personality affects individuals' relationships, the jobs they choose and even their entire lives. If personality is defined, an individual can be better understood and guided. Therefore, evaluating people's personality is a first step in developing effective vocational, educational and personal guidance curricula and counseling approaches. This implies that there is a need for valid and reliable measurement tools to evaluate personality. The inventory to test the Big Five Personality Factor Theory is translated into 10 languages and fueled many academic studies. Variables such as psychopathology, personality traits, human resources, education, risk-taking, cultural diversity, gender, age, and academic achievement have been treated in relation to the Big Five Personality Factor Theory. The adaptation of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) into Turkish has not materialized yet. The present study therefore aims to adapt John, Donahue, and Kentle's (1991) The Big Five Inventory into Turkish. BFI evaluates human personality according to the dimensions mentioned above and offers an extended pattern about personality.

2. Method

The method section of the study includes the adaptation of BFI into Turkish.

2.1. Sample

Validity and reliability studies concerning the BFI were conducted on 1153 university students in 2009. At the same time, 33 senior year students from the English Language Teaching Department of the Faculty of Education were included in the study for language equivalency.

2.2. Measurement Instrument

Developed by John, Donahue & Kentle (1991), the BFI contains five subscales: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness. The inventory is a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "totally agree" to "totally disagree". Certain items in the inventory are reverse scored. The strengths of the BFI are that it is made of 44 brief statements and does not take long to complete. The following are some sample items from the inventory: "I am talkative", "I am open to new, original ideas", "I cause a lot of admiration in others".

2.3. Procedures

In order to ensure content validity when adapting the BFI, it was translated from English to Turkish and then back, and expert opinions were obtained. For language equivalency, the English and Turkish forms of the inventory were implemented at different times on the same group of students who were proficient in both of these languages. In order to test the reliability of the inventory, its internal consistency score was calculated.

3. Findings

This section gives information about the adaptation of the BFI into Turkish, and its validity and reliability studies.

3.1. Validity and Reliability Studies

3.1.1. Content Validity

When adapting the inventory to Turkish, a group was formed consisting of three experts who were proficient in both languages, knew both cultures closely, and had information about the test structure. The items and response

alternatives of the inventory were then translated from English to Turkish. Necessary adjustments were made and the inventory was translated back into English by three different experts for comparisons. The adapted version of the inventory was reanalyzed by the experts and, once again, revisions were made. Equivalency between the two versions was checked with respect to meaning, experimental and conceptual aspects, and terms. As a result of this, items that received the combined confirmation of all referees were included in the Turkish version of the inventory.

3.1.2. Language Equivalency Test

In order to test the BFI's language equivalency, the inventory was implemented on 33 students of an English Language Teaching Department, who were supposed to know English well, twice with a gap of 2 weeks. Then, Pearson moment correlation coefficient was computed, and the correlation between the Turkish and English versions of the inventory was found to be $r = .64$ for the Extraversion subscale, $r = .50$ for the Agreeableness subscale, $r = .72$ for the Conscientiousness subscale, $r = .70$ for the Neuroticism subscale, and $r = .56$ for the Openness subscale. These results indicate moderate consistency, and thus acceptable language equivalency, between the two versions.

3.1.3. Reliability

The Turkish version of the BFI was implemented on 1153 university students for reliability testing. Internal consistency coefficient was calculated for each subscale. The results were $\alpha = .77$ for the Extraversion subscale, $\alpha = .81$ for the Agreeableness subscale, $\alpha = .84$ for the Conscientiousness subscale, $\alpha = .75$ for the Neuroticism subscale, and $\alpha = .86$ for the Openness subscale. The internal consistency coefficients of the subscales of the BFI ranged between .75 and .86, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

4. Conclusion

Data obtained from the adaptation studies of the BFI into Turkish show that the inventory may be used in the Turkish culture to measure the five basic dimensions of personality. Based on the findings of the study, it may be recommended that validity and reliability studies be conducted with group of various ages, and that item analyses and confirmatory factor analyses of the inventory be made.

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