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Differential Item Functioning in the Croatian-Swedish study of the Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire

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Abstract

Probably thousands of psychological questionnaires and tests are distributed every day. Responses are recorded and subgroups are compared. In such comparisons it is of course important that subgroups have interpreted the questions and items in the same way, and have understood the scales of the instrument in a similar fashion. Especially crucial are comparisons when respondents from different countries participate. In those cases problems of equivalence can arise due to differences in language, and or differences in culture. The main part of the present talk will be directed to these latter problems, that is, item bias of the type that is called Differential Item Functioning (DIF). It exists if an item is more difficult, discriminating, or easily guessed for one group of participants than for another. When translating items into other languages a DIF analysis is especially valuable for evaluating the agreement among items translated into different languages. The talk will be about procedures and problems that one is likely to meet if involved in a cross-cultural validation of a psychological instrument, and we will review some different approaches to measure DIF. In the latter part of the talk we will present some preliminary results on the relationship between DIF analyses on the Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire. In the present context special focus is directed to problems related to translation of the instrument from Croatian to Swedish. The self-rating instrument *Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire* is developed by Vladimir Takšić (1998). The questionnaire consists of 45 items and three scales named Perceive and Understand, Express and Label, and Manage and Regulate. Responses are given in accordance with a 5-point Likert scale. The Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire has been distributed to a number of countries in Europe and other parts of the world, that is, China, Japan, North- and South America.

Keywords: Differential item functioning (DIF), Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire (ESQ), cross-cultural differences