

Dedication

I dedicate this research to my parents who have supported me throughout my university career. Without their emotional and financial support, none of my academic accolades could have been possible.

Abstract

The trait approach to personality is one of the most influential epistemological frameworks in personality psychology and underlies the development of most objective personality inventories. The Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) is amongst the most widely used operationalisations of the FFM within personality assessment (Costa and McCrae, 1992). However, recent research (Franklin, 2009; Laher, 2010) suggests that the NEO-PI-R is not wholly applicable within the South African context; as there may be inappropriate items contained within the inventory, both linguistically and culturally. Within the United States, McCrae, Costa and Martin (2004) identified the NEO-PI-R as having specific problematic items, and developed the NEO-PI-3 as a revised “more readable” version of the NEO-PI-R. Thirty-seven items were changed from the original 240 items in the NEO-PI-R to create the NEO-PI-3. However, the modifications made to the NEO-PI-3 did not address all the issues pertinent within the NEO-PI-R from a South African perspective as evidenced in Laher’s (2010) and Franklin’s (2009) studies. This study adapted the NEO-PI-3 by changing specific items informed through Franklin (2009) and Laher’s (2010) research, as well as research conducted within this study on two samples of university lectures at the University of the Witwatersrand. Forty-nine items were changed from the original 240 NEO-PI-R items, retaining 30 items changed from the NEO-PI-3, and preferring 3 of the original NEO-PI-R items to the NEO-PI-3 items. These changes were aimed at making the NEO-PI-3 a more appropriate and applicable instrument both culturally and linguistically within the South African context. This modified inventory was then administered to 175 students at the University of the Witwatersrand to test the inventory’s validity and reliability. The reliability of this modified inventory was assessed through conducting an internal consistency analysis generating alpha coefficients indicating that the inventory was indeed reliable. The construct validity of this modified inventory was assessed through an exploratory factor analysis where five factors did emerge from the analysis; concomitant with the theoretical basis of the FFM. Based on feedback from the participants, both quantitatively and qualitatively, recommendations for future research and further problematic items are identified and discussed. In terms of the reliability of the modified version of the NEO-PI-3, internal consistency coefficients produced within the study suggested that the instrument is reliable, producing moderate to good alpha values, as well as producing evidence of good construct validity. Only 17 items emerged as still being potentially problematic within the modified version of the NEO-PI-3.

Key words: bias, culture, Five-Factor Model, language, NEO-PI-R, NEO-PI-3, personality, South Africa

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

G. S. Quay

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