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Comparison of the psychometric properties of the alternative use test in South Africa and Venezuela

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Abstract

The Alternative Uses Test (AUT) is a measure for divergent thinking, a cognitive process associated with creativity, by assessing the fluency component of divergent thinking, which refers to the number of new and different ideas created from one stimulus (Guilford et al., 1978; Runco & Acar, 2012). The AUT lacks standardised norms (Hass, 2017; Lewis & Lovatt, 2013), which are needed to obtain accurate assessments as divergent thinking can be vulnerable to age-related changes and educational levels. This study investigated the psychometric properties of the AUT in three different samples: A Venezuelan sample of 358 participants between the ages of 20 and 85, a South African sample of 125 older adults between the ages of 65 and 89, and a South African sample of younger adults between the ages of 18 and 49. The findings of this study included internal consistency coefficients between acceptable and strong for all three samples. The present study did not find any significant associations between gender and fluency. However, it found that age had significant effects on fluency in both the Venezuelan and the South African samples. Years of education had a weak relationship with fluency in the Venezuelan sample, but it had significant effects on fluency in the South African Older Adult sample. The fluency scores were compared between the two countries by age group and found only significant differences between the groups of young adults. Lastly, normative data is provided for the Venezuelan sample, stratified by age, and for the South African Older Adults sample, stratified by educational level.

Keywords: divergent thinking, alternative uses test, sociodemographic variables, South Africa, Venezuela.