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A Persian version of the parental bonding instrument: Factor structure and psychometric properties

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ABSTRACT

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) is a widely used self-report measure for quantifying key parenting styles as perceived by the child during its first 16 years. While its development study identified two key parental dimensions, subsequent studies have variably confirmed those two or argued for one or more additional parental constructs. We developed a Persian translation of the PBI and administered it to a sample of 340 high school students. The construct validity of the Persian PBI was examined by Exploratory Factor Analysis while Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to identify the most adequate model. Analyses of the Persian PBI favored a four-factor model for both parental forms. The Persian PBI has a factorial structure consistent with constructs identified in western cultures, as well as high internal consistency and test–retest reliability. Multivariate analyses indicated significant differences between boys and girls across some factors. The PBI appears an acceptable and appropriate measure for quantifying parent–child bonding in Iranian samples.

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1. Introduction

Parenting style is one of the most essential and crucial components of parent–child interaction and is influential to children's emotional and behavioral development. The initial and most important observations emerged from Bowlby's (1969) research findings, and which demonstrated the importance of the social bond between the primary care giver and the child to both normal and disturbed child development (Crockenberg et al., 1993).

Due to the importance of the parent–child relationship to an individual's development, a number of scales have been developed to define and evaluate the impact of the child's perception of the parent–child relationship. The Parent Bonding Instrument ([PBI] Parker et al., 1979) is the most widely used instrument in the international literature to measure parent–child bonding, and is consistent with Bowlby's (1969, 1973) attachment theory. It was designed by Parker and colleagues to produce a two-dimensional model that assesses parenting styles in terms of parental care (e.g., warmth, sensitivity) and overprotection (e.g., control, intrusion) as central to Bowlby's theorizing (Parker, 1983a, 1983b). It allows for any parental contribution to development in the child to be

specified and quantified along those two dimensions. The instrument has been shown to demonstrate high internal consistency (Parker, 1990; Wilhelm and Parker, 1990; Arrindell et al., 1998) as well as long-term test–retest reliability (Wilhelm et al., 2005), and has been validated in a number of studies (Parker, 1983).

The PBI has been translated into numerous languages, including Dutch (Arrindell et al., 1989), Spanish (Gomez-Beneyto et al., 1993), French (Mohr et al., 1999), Greek (Sideridis and Kafetsios, 2008), Portuguese (Terra et al., 2009), Japanese (Kitamura and Suzuki, 1993; Uji et al., 2006; Suzuki and Kitamura, 2011), Urdu (Qadir et al., 2005), Turkish (Kapci and Kucuker, 2006) and Chinese (Liu et al., 2011). As it has been used in a wide range of cultures (as shown in Fig.1) it has high applicability in cross-cultural studies, while also allowing cultural nuances in parenting across cultures to be explored.

In western regions and cross-cultural studies, controversy has emerged as to whether the PBI is best positioned as capturing two, three or four parental dimensions. While a large number of research studies have supported Parker's original two-factor model (Kazarian et al., 1987; Mackinnon et al., 1989; Kitamura and Suzuki, 1993; Kapci and Kucuker, 2006) of 'caring' and 'overprotection', others have favored a three-factor model (Cubis et al., 1989; Gomez-Beneyto et al., 1993; Kendler, 1996; Murphy et al., 1997; Mohr et al., 1999; Cox et al., 2000; Lizardi and Klein, 2002; Terra et al., 2009), wherein 'overprotection' is further portioned into two factor constructs. Heider et al. (2005) tested the PBI three-factor structure found by

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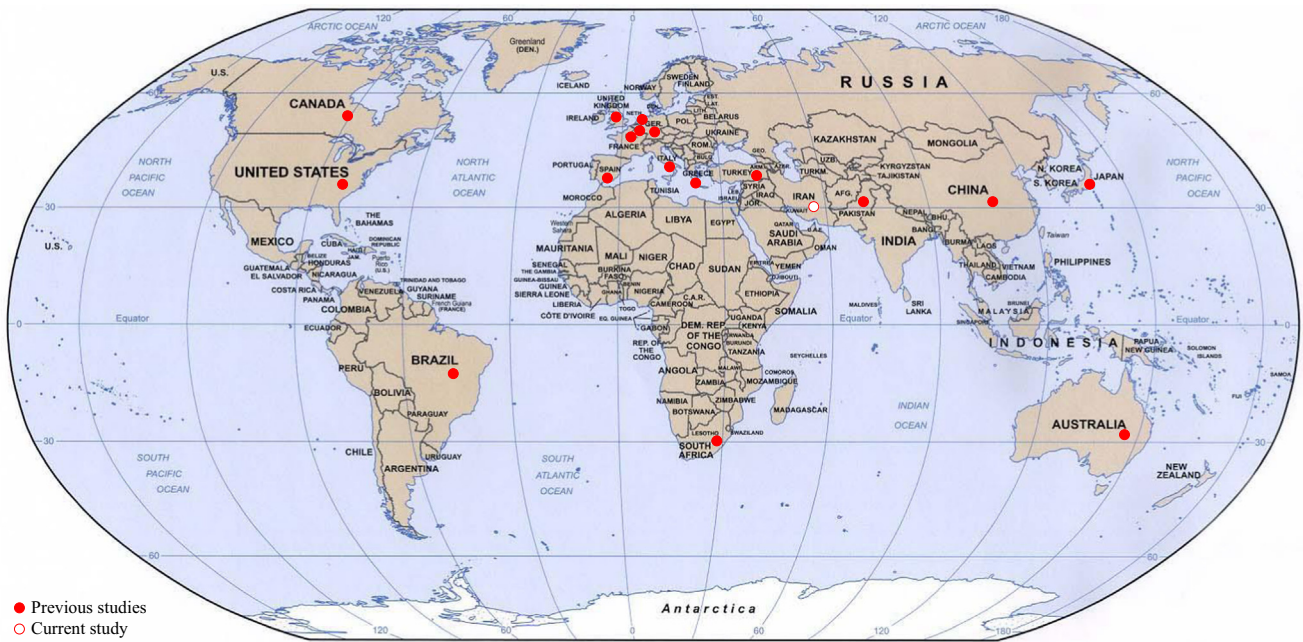


Fig. 1. Regions where the psychometric properties of the PBI have been reported.

Cox et al. (2000) in six European countries – Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, and Spain.

As noted, some researchers have supported a four-factor model (Uji et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2011; Suzuki and Kitamura, 2011). Further, some researchers have found support for more than one model in the same cultural region. For example, Qadir et al. (2005) found support for two-factor and three-factor models in Pakistani women, while Mashegoane et al. (2007) found support for three-factor and four-factor models in South African students.

PBI studies have allowed evaluation of any parental contribution to a range of psychiatric conditions and psychological states, including clinical and normative depression (Parker, 1983; Parker et al., 1997; Uehara et al., 1998; Narita et al., 2000), mood disorders (Heider et al., 2006), anxiety disorders (Arrindell et al., 1998; Chambers et al., 2004; Yoshida et al., 2005), eating disorders (Meyer and Gillings, 2004; Turner et al., 2005; Canetti et al., 2008), personality disorders (Parker et al., 1999; De Panfili et al., 2008), adolescent suicide (Violato and Arato, 2004; Freudenstein et al., 2011), substance abuse (Gerra et al., 2004), obsessive behavior (Cavedo and Parker, 1994), low self-esteem (Parker, 1993), generalized anxiety (Silove et al., 1991), alexithymia (Thorberg et al., 2011), schizophrenia (Byrne et al., 1990; Willinger et al., 2002), and recurrence of psychotic episodes in individuals with schizophrenia (Parker and Mater, 1986; Parker et al., 1988).

To date, no study examining the PBI in any Iranian sample has been undertaken. The events of the past 3 decades in Iran such as economic changes (i.e. economic sanctions, high inflation and low income), trying to reduce the number of children in the family and applying extensive religious policies by the government have impacted on the social structure of Iranian populations, including family dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, measuring parental bonding in this population is of key interest in examining for any impact of such social factors on Iranian people.

In addition to culture, gender of participants can affect the perception of parenting styles. In a research study conducted by Fazeli-Mehrabadi et al. (2012) on Iranian students, girls returned higher paternal care scores. Results indicate that between care and overprotection, paternal care score is higher in girls. The authors claim that this finding demonstrate that the paternal care is more important for girls. It is worth mentioning that the original version of PBI was used in this research. Most PBI studies have quantified significantly higher

parental care scores returned by girls than boys, and generally higher overprotection scores returned by girls than boys. (Richman and Flaherty, 1990; Uji et al., 2006; Fazeli-Mehrabadi et al., 2012).

Furthermore, conceptions of parenting style common in the West do not necessarily have the same meaning among non-Westerners (Chao, 1994, 1995). For such reasons, examining the properties of the PBI in the Iranian context is of some importance. The present study aimed to so evaluate the psychometric properties of the PBI with Iranian adolescents and, in particular, identify the underlying structural model that best fits the Iranian culture.

2. Methods

2.1. Parental bonding instrument (PBI)

As noted, Parker et al. (1979) developed the original 25-item PBI, with each item being rated from 'very' or 'moderately', 'like' or 'unlike' (i.e. allowing four rating options for each item). The original 48 items in that development study generated a four-factor solution, with variances of 27%, 14%, 5% and 3%, indicating the dominance of the first two factors and which encompassed care-indifference/rejection and overprotection/fostering of dependency dimensions. Such weightings led to the culling of a number of low loading items and the imposition of a two-factor solution – which generated 'care' and 'overprotection' scales. The PBI instruction asks respondents to recall how each parent or parent-figure acted towards them during the first 16 years of their life, so generating separate scores for each parent. The scoring instruction of this instrument are as follows, items 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 23 (Very like=3, Moderately like=2, Moderately unlike=1, Very unlike=0) and items 2, 3, 4, 7, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25 (Very unlike=3, Moderately unlike=2, Moderately like=1, Very like=0).

2.2. Instrument translation

A repeated forward-backward translation procedure was adopted for the translation of the PBI into Persian. In total, there were four translators: two qualified academicians, a psychiatrist, and a psychologist. Following the standard translation procedure, two academicians translated the original instrument independently into Persian. After making the required corrections between these two separate translations, a back translation was performed by another qualified academician. The back-translated version was compared to the original version and it was agreed that items were conceptually equal. A group of students were asked to evaluate and subsequently affirmed each item in terms of its understandability.

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