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Reliability and validity of the Vietnamese Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales with preschool-age children

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine an adaptation of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale (VABS) [Sparrow, S. S., Balla, D. A., & Cicchetti, D. V. (1984). *The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales*. Circle Pines, MN: America Guidance Service; Sparrow, S. S., Balla, D. A., & Cicchetti, D. V. (2005). *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales Second Edition Survey Forms Manual*. AGS Publishing] and its psychometric properties in Vietnamese culture. The 1984 version of VABS was translated and adapted to form the Vietnamese version of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VVABS). The scale was administered to 120 Vietnamese mothers of non-disabled preschool-age children enrolled in kindergarten programs. It was found that the VVABS has acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability and construct validity, and could discriminate successfully between Vietnamese children with intellectual disabilities from those of typical development. The results that were comparable to the VABS indicate a successful adaptation of the construct and measure of adaptive behavior to a non-western culture.

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1. Introduction

Adaptive behavior is defined as the capacity to satisfy developmental and social demands of one's immediate environment (Grossman, 1983). It measures the practical matter of successful living in

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areas such as self-help, physical development, communication skills, personal and social skills, healthcare, consumer skills, domestic skills, and community orientation (Holman & Bruininks, 1985; Reschly, 1982). A broader categorization of adaptive behavior can be described in four domains: (1) self-maintenance and independent functioning, (2) interpersonal relationships, (3) social responsibility, and (4) cognitive competencies or communication skills (Reschly, 1982). The inclusion of measures of adaptive behavior as part of an intellectual assessment has been a well-established practice in the U.S. in assessing children who may need special education.

Age related expectations and cultural context are central to the concept of adaptive behavior (Grossman, 1983; Reschly, 1982). During the school years and adulthood, complex independent functioning, participation in a variety of social activities outside of the home, and vocationally related activities are important adaptive performances (Grossman, 1983). During early childhood, more basic self-help, communication, socialization, and motor skills are emphasized: behaviors such as self-feeding, following simple verbal instructions, and cooperative play with peers are important aspects of preschool adaptive behavior (Grossman, 1983). Therefore, what is considered socially competent or adaptive is developmental and dependent on the age of the individual (Grossman, 1983; Reschly, 1982). In addition, differences in expectations for age related personal independence exist in various cultures. Therefore, cultural context becomes a crucial dimension of adaptive behavior (Reschly, 1982).

There are a number of available instruments that can measure the adaptive performance of children (Kamphaus, 1987; Keller, 1988) in the U.S./western countries. One of the most popular measures, which include the preschool-age range, is the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS, Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 1984; Sparrow, Balla, & Cicchetti, 2005). There are 4 domains (and 11 sub-domains) of adaptive behavior assessed by the VABS: (1) communication (receptive, expressive, written), (2) daily living skills (personal, domestic, community), (3) socialization (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, coping skills), and (4) motor skills (gross and fine). A composite score is provided by scores obtained in the 4 domains (and 11 sub-domains); Adaptive Behavior index. Maladaptive behaviors are also assessed. A standard score is obtained for the adaptive behavior composite and for each adaptive domain. The scales were revised in 1984 and 2005, respectively, to provide updated valid and reliable norm-referenced data (Sparrow et al., 1984, 2005).

1.1. International use and adaptation in non-western culture

It is stated that VABS data are the result of observable behaviors, which makes it adequate for assessment with various cultural populations (Pearson Education, Inc., n.d.). However, whether the construct of adaptive behavior in a non-western culture can be effectively measured by western instruments is a question that has not yet been researched extensively to date. To examine the research that has been conducted in this area a wide-ranging search was carried out, utilizing numerous databases, including PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, and MEDLINE. It should also be noted that this search was not limited by specifiers of date.

One problem found with these methods of measurement is that psychometric instruments used to determine the range of cognitive disabilities have not been assessed for their adaptability in an international context (Wilder & Obiakor, 2003). Investigations of translated and adapted tests being cross-culturally utilized have focused primarily on the linguistic accuracy of translation (Tombokan-Runtukahu & Nitko, 1991). Research pertaining to the functionality of these altered instruments is lacking. More specifically, the efficacy of approaches used in developed western countries (such as the U.S.) is not necessarily of the same level in developing eastern countries.

The attempts have been made to utilize the VABS and Vineland Social Maturity Scale (VSMS) (Doll, 1935; Doll, 1965) in non-western cultures. Anjum, Khadi, and Phadnis (1990) used an Indian adaptation of the VSMS to study the development of social maturity in rural and suburban infants of 6–12 months in Dharwad City, India. This adaptation by Malin (1968) restricts the age limit from the original VSMS from 25 years to 15 years due to cultural variation. It is highly correlated with the Stanford–Binet test of intelligence and test–retest reliability is around .92. Further, validity is said to be satisfactory (Jayashankarappa, 1986). Goel and Sen (1981) found significant correlations between the Malin's Nagpur adaptation of the VSMS and other intelligence tests among Indian children, 10–19 years of age. The highest correlation was with the Stanford–Binet test, at .55.

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