



Major psychological dimensions of cross-cultural differences: Nastiness, Social Awareness/Morality, Religiosity and broad Conservatism/Liberalism

Lazar Stankov

Institute for Positive Psychology and Education, Australian Catholic University, Strathfield, NSW 2135, Australia



ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 June 2015

Received in revised form 24 January 2016

Accepted 3 June 2016

Keywords:

Cross-cultural differences

Nastiness

Religiosity

Morality

Conservatism/Liberalism

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings from a study based on 8883 participants from 33 countries. The Big Six measures of personality, and factor scores from studies of social attitudes, social axioms and social norms were analyzed in order to arrive at the main dimensions of cross-cultural differences. In the outcome, three factors captured the major proportion of variance at the pancultural level of analysis: Nastiness/Social Dominance, Social Awareness/Morality and Religiosity. At the between-countries' level, a broad Conservatism/Liberalism factor was identified. The largest cross-cultural differences were found on the Religiosity dimension. Cross-cultural differences on Social Awareness/Morality were negligible, and Nastiness/Social Dominance were in the middle. Overall, South Asian, South East Asian and African regions scored high on Religiosity and Nastiness/Social Dominance dimensions while Western and Eastern Europe and Anglo regions scored low. Three regions - Latin America, Middle East/North Africa and East Asia - were in the middle.

© 2016 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Many different measures of a variety of constructs deemed important for cross-cultural comparisons have been developed and used over the years. This paper addresses the need to have a closer look at the relationship between the well-established constructs and measures from different domains, and examine overlaps and commonalities among these. A similar situation existed within the area of individual differences both in the domain of human cognitive abilities during the 1950s–1960s, and in personality somewhat later when it was realized that an unwieldy number of different cognitive tests and personality scales were in use. In these two domains of cognition and personality, carefully designed empirical research and the use of data reduction techniques did lead to the formulation of psychometrically-based theories like the theory of fluid and crystallized intelligence (Horn, 1968), and the Big Five personality theory (Digman, 1990) that are held in high regard to this day.

We shall limit ourselves to four domains that have attracted a lot of attention and our aims are to a.) Find out whether the well-known measures of these constructs can be reduced to a smaller number of meaningful latent dimensions; b.) Order measures and dimensions of cross-cultural differences in terms of the effect sizes; and c) Examine the standing of different countries on these measures.

The four domains of social psychology considered in this paper are: a.) Personality; b.) Social Attitudes (and Values); c.) Social Axioms; and d.) Social Norms. Our approach is more comprehensive than typical approaches since many large-scale cross-cultural studies designed to examine the relationship between the domains consider only two out of the four, or rarely three domains – e.g., personality and GLOBE measures of social norms (McCrae et al., 2013).

In the following paragraphs we briefly consider the four domains and mention some of the cross-cultural findings. Additional information about the measures used for the assessment of constructs within each domain is available in the [Method section](#). Subsequently, we summarize the findings from a study that contained measures from four domains and specify the hypotheses related to the structural issues and mean differences between the countries and the world regions.

2. Non-cognitive constructs employed in cross-cultural comparisons

2.1. Personality: the Big Six model

In our work, personality refers to a collection of emotions, thoughts, and behavior patterns unique to a person. These patterns are captured by statements that describe the way we 'think, feel, or act' (McCrae & Costa, 2003, p. 25). The use of a lexical approach that was launched several decades ago was based on the rationale that the most important distinctions between people will be encoded in the natural languages (Cattell, 1943; see also Saucier, Georgiades, Tsaousis, & Goldberg,

E-mail addresses: lazondi@rocketmail.com, Lazar.Stankov@acu.edu.au.

2005). The procedure adopted in lexical studies is transferable to diverse languages. The Big Five model rose to prominence when studies in English, German, and Dutch converged (see [Saucier & Goldberg, 1996](#)). Subsequent work indicated that a Big Six model may be more valid (see [Ashton et al., 2004](#)). Five of the Questionnaire Big Six (QB6) scales ([Thalmayer & Saucier, 2014](#)), including Conscientiousness, Agreeableness (Kindness & Even Temper), Resiliency versus Internalizing Negative Emotionality, Extraversion (Gregariousness and Positive Emotionality), and Originality/Talent, are highly comparable to the Big Five dimensions. The addition of the sixth factor – Honesty/Propriety – that covers content related to personal integrity versus taking advantage of others, updates the model to better match empirical results from a larger group of diverse lexical studies. Personality data in the present study are based on the QB6 scale (see [Thalmayer & Saucier, 2014](#)).

2.2. Social Attitudes (and Values): Morality, Nastiness and Religiosity

In our work, Social Attitudes refer to states of mind and feelings towards a specific object or social interaction. They are captured by statements that can elicit the expression of beliefs about what is true, real, or good in social situations. The three dimensions of Social Attitudes are derived from 20 different scales measuring morality, values and both Pro- and Anti-Social Attitudes from diverse sources ([Stankov and Lee, 2016](#)). The list includes [Saucier's \(2000\)](#) isms (Alpha ism: Traditional Religiousness, Beta ism: Unmitigated Self-interest; Gamma ism: Communal Rationalism; Delta ism: Subjective Spirituality; and Epsilon ism: Egalitarianism), as well as scales selected from different sources (Machiavellianism, Ethnonationalism, Grudge, Provivence, Proneness to Aggression, Duke Religiosity Index, Moral Foundations, Tight/Loose Society, Individualism/Collectivism, Family Values, Amoral Social Attitudes, Moral Social Attitudes, Materialism). In addition, a shortened version of Schwartz' Value Survey was also employed in [Stankov and Lee \(2016\)](#) study. Both EFAs and CFAs converged on three factors: a.) Morality. The factor represents something "positive" in the sense that the measures which load on it emphasize principles that encourage members in a given society to accept acculturated values and morals that lead to a minimization of friction with other members of the group, i.e., they are pro-social; b.) Nastiness. Substantively, this factor captures a class of anti-Social Attitudes characterized by the acceptance of the use of violence to resolve social problems and the use of dubious means to achieve selfish and materialistic goals which, in turn, are seen as being the most important. Life in this world is seen as being full of injustices and unfairness, and revenge is accepted as a means of getting even; c.) Religiosity. Two scales have high loading on this factor: Duke Religiosity Index captures both behavior and personal spiritual feelings. In the Alphaism (traditional religiosity) scale of [Saucier \(2000\)](#) the statements capture one's beliefs and attitudes towards the role of religion in society.

2.3. Social Axioms

Social Axioms are beliefs about the world and may be regarded as worldviews – i.e., beliefs about people, social institutions or phenomena from within the physical, spiritual or social world. They differ from the Big-Five personality traits which reflect beliefs about oneself and therefore represent self-views. The relationship between Social Attitudes and Social Axioms is poorly understood at present and will be addressed in the present study. It is expected that at least some Social Attitudes – e.g., Religiosity – will correlate with the Social Axioms of Religiosity and Fate Control. The work of Bond and Leung (see [Leung et al., 2012](#)) has identified the following five main dimensions of social axioms: a.) Social Complexity, this is a belief that people's behavior may vary across situations and that problems have multiple solutions. b.) Religiosity, Religiosity beliefs refer to the acceptance of the existence of a supernatural being and to the beneficial functions of religious practice. c.) Reward for Application, this is a belief that people's use of effort, knowledge, careful planning, and other resources will lead to positive outcomes. d.) Social

Cynicism, this involves the individual's assessment of whether engagement with the social world leads to beneficial or harmful outcomes to the actors involved. Can other people and the system itself be trusted to provide beneficial outcomes for those concerned? e.) Fate Control, this refers to a belief that life events are pre-determined by fatalistic forces, but that people may be able to predict and alter the degree of fate by various means. [Stankov and Saucier \(2015\)](#) and [Bou Malham and Saucier \(2014\)](#) provide further details about the structure of Social Axioms for the data employed in the present study. All work on Social Axioms has been cross-cultural in nature.

2.4. Social Norms: four GLOBE dimensions

In our work, Social Norms represent a set of beliefs (or perceptions) about the expected standards of behavior that are sanctioned and enforced, sometimes implicitly, by the society. The focus of this paper is on the GLOBE "as is" (i.e., current practices) survey that uses statements that begin with "In this society, [...]" (see [House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004](#)). The answers are assumed to provide information about one's perception of his/her culture, not about one's personal feelings or beliefs. [House et al. \(2004\)](#) identified nine GLOBE dimensions of cross-cultural differences. [Stankov \(2015\)](#) was able to replicate the following four: a.) Humane Orientation, the statements that define this dimension indicate people's perception that their societies encourage and reward individuals for being friendly, soft-hearted, generous and sensitive towards others. Those endorsing these statements are also of the opinion that members of their societies are tolerant of mistakes and are not aggressive. b.) Uncertainty Avoidance/Future Orientation, this dimension is defined by statements that cover two factors in [House et al.'s \(2004\)](#) study. The majority indicate people's perception that members of their society strive to avoid uncertainty by relying on established social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices. However, three statements that load on this factor refer to the perception that individuals in their society engage in future-oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying individual or collective gratification. c.) Power Distance, the majority of statements that define this dimension indicate participants' perception that people in their society expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels of an organization or government. d.) Gender (Non)Egalitarianism, [House et al. \(2004\)](#) label this dimension 'Gender Egalitarianism', implying participants' perception that their society minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality. However, five out six statements used in [Stankov's \(2015\)](#) study are formulated in a way that higher scores indicate agreement with gender non-egalitarian positions – e.g., "In this society, boys are encouraged more than girls to attain a higher education." – and "(Non)" was added to the title to acknowledge this directionality of scoring in our work.

3. The big picture: commonalities among the four domains and arithmetic mean differences on common factors

It is important to keep in mind that the analyses reported in this paper follow from detailed studies of each of the four domains listed above. We shall use factor scores from the analyses of Social Attitudes ([Stankov and Lee, 2016](#)), Social Axioms ([Stankov & Saucier, 2015](#)) and Social Norms ([Stankov, 2015](#)) and scale scores for the Big Six personality ([Thalmayer & Saucier, 2014](#)) to examine relationships between the measures of these diverse constructs. Overall, this choice of the four domains covers the gamut of psychological processes ranging from private personality constructs to social norms that represent one's perception of the way the society impinges on our lives. The survey contained over 300 items and, after examination of each of the four domains, we are left with 19 subscales/factors from the four domains. What are the latent dimensions (broad factors) that underlie the correlations among these subscales? To arrive at plausible options, it is worth considering

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6844717>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6844717>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)