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Exploring the utility of the CPAI-2 in a South African sample: Implications for the FFM ☆

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ABSTRACT

The Cross-Cultural Personality Assessment Inventory-2 (CPAI-2) was developed as an alternative instrument to measure personality in Asian cultures based on the argument that available instruments are largely based on the Five Factor Model of personality and may not adequately assess personality in Asian cultures. Research on the CPAI-2 was extended to non-Asian particularly Western cultures but not to African cultures. In this study a sample of 425 South African university students completed both the CPAI-2 and the NEO-PI-R to consider the utility of the CPAI-2 and the four factor model in which the instrument is located in an African context. The results were did not provide conclusive support for the four factor model as conceptualised in the CPAI-2. Support for the five factors of the FFM was evident but the results from both the four and five factor models indicated empirical support for a social relational aspect of personality. Based on these results, this paper argues for the necessity of incorporating social relational elements into the existing FFM and reflects on work done in the South African context which can inform this direction.

1. Introduction

South Africa is located at the tip of Africa and has a population of approximately 52 million people of diverse origins, cultures, languages, and religions (Census, 2011). The country has 11 official languages which belong to two language families: the Germanic languages (Afrikaans and English) and the Bantu languages which are further subdivided into the Sotho-Tswana group of languages (Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, and Tswana), the Nguni group of languages (Ndebele, Swati, Xhosa and Zulu), Venda and Tsonga. According to the 2011 Census, the four most spoken first languages are Zulu (22.7%), Xhosa (16.0%), Afrikaans (13.5%) and English (9.6%). English is the language used for commerce and science even though it is not the first language for majority of the country. A legacy of South Africa's apartheid past is the classification of the population into a Black (of African descent; 79.2%), White (of European descent; 8.9%), Coloured (of mixed race; 8.9%) or Indian/Asian group (of Asian descent; 2.5%). Apartheid's policy of separate development ensured that these groups were not given much opportunity to mix in social and occupational spheres. This has resulted in a split in the population with Black individuals demonstrating more collectivistic orientations and White people more individualistic orientations with Indian and Coloured people being somewhere in the middle (Allik & McCrae, 2004; Valchev et al., 2014). This linguistic and ethnic diversity provides an interesting space within which to explore personality more so since the psychic unity and universal applicability of the Five Factor Model is often debated in African and Asian contexts (see Cheung et al., 2008; Imperio, Church, Katigbak, & Reyes, 2008; Laher, 2013; McCrae, Terracciano, & 79 members of the Personality Profiles of Cultures Project, 2005; Valchev et al., 2014).

African research on the FFM is also limited as evidenced in the studies by McCrae et al. (2005). Laher (2013) argues that the FFM has not achieved much replicability in African contexts. McCrae et al. (2005) argue that this may be due to the lack of research in African countries, the poorer data quality and issues of translation but they equally acknowledge that this could be attributed to different ways of perceiving the world. Using this rationale as a starting point, this study investigated the utility of the CPAI-2, an instrument with a different but similar model to the FFM, in a South African sample. It also conducted a joint factor analysis between CPAI-2 and NEO-PI-R responses to comment further on the utility of the FFM. Furthermore, no studies have been conducted using the CPAI-2 in its entirety in an African context.

1.1. Contextualising the CPAI-2

Cheung et al. (2001) argued that while the FFM was recoverable using the NEO-PI-R in a Chinese setting, it did not provide a

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comprehensive description of personality. Most notably what was lacking were the interdependent aspects of Chinese culture and by extension Chinese personality. Chinese personality is viewed in the context of the cultural-ecological model and is characterised by collectivist orientation, other orientation, relationship orientation and authoritarian orientation (Cheung et al., 2001). Thus Cheung and colleagues began work on developing an indigenous personality inventory, the culmination of which is the current Cross-cultural Personality Assessment Inventory-2 (CPAI-2).

The CPAI-2 is based on a four factor model (Social Potency, Dependability, Accommodation and Interpersonal Relatedness) and represents an alternate model of assessing personality that is congruent with the dominant FFM but adds to the FFM by including a more relational dimension to the assessment of personality. Cheung et al. (2008) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients of .86, .86, .76 and .70 were reported for the factor scales of Social Potency, Dependability, Accommodation and Interpersonal Relatedness in the Chinese normative sample. Subscale coefficients ranged from .51 to .80 as evidenced in Table 1. Congruence coefficients ranged between .94 and .98 for the four factor solution across the seven regions.

Born and Jooren (2009 cited in Cheung, Cheung, & Fan, 2013) used a Dutch translation of the CPAI-2 with a sample of 363 Dutch college students and found support for a five factor solution. The four factor structure was not replicated with the CPAI-2 but Interpersonal Relatedness remained as a separate factor. Iliescu and Ion (2009) found a 6 factor solution with a Romanian version of the CPAI-2 with 500 adult participants. Iliescu and Ion (2009 cited in Cheung et al., 2013) reported that some of the original CPAI-2 factors were realigned but a separate Interpersonal Relatedness factor was clearly defined. Cheung, Van de Vijver, and Leong (2011) reported that the congruence of the four factor structure was generally confirmed in cross-cultural samples but more so amongst Asian and Asian American samples.

1.2. Interpersonal Relatedness in the South African context

Studies in South Africa over the last five years or so have consistently provided evidence for the social relational aspect of personality (see Valchev, Van de Vijver, Nel, Rothmann, & Meiring, 2013). Of particular note are the findings of Valchev et al. (2012) who conducted semi-structured interviews with 1216 participants from the 11 official language groups in South Africa. Analysis revealed 9 broad personality clusters, namely, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Facilitating, Integrity, Intellect, Openness, Relationship Harmony and Soft-Heartedness. Valchev et al. (2013) analysed these responses further and found that Black individuals were more likely to use less traits and more contextualization in their responses which is consistent with individuals from collectivist cultures and White individuals were more likely to use more traits and less contextualization – a pattern that is more consistent with individualist cultures. This group of researchers used these descriptions and are in the process of developing the South African Personality Inventory (SAPI; Valchev et al., 2014).

Nel et al. (2012) identified a social relational cluster within the 9 SAPI clusters made up of the Facilitating, Integrity, Relationship Harmony and Soft-Heartedness clusters. Branco e Silva and Laher (2012) explored the CPAI-2 Interpersonal Relatedness factor in relation to the SAPI social relational cluster in a sample of 489 South African students using a joint factor analysis. Results revealed 4 factors. The first factor had loadings on the Integrity, and Relationship Harmony clusters of the SAPI and Social Sensitivity from the CPAI-2 Interpersonal Relatedness factor. Factor 2 had loadings from the Harmony cluster of the SAPI and the Harmony

Table 1
Descriptive statistics and internal reliability coefficients for the CPAI-2.

Scale	No. of items	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max	Skewness	α^*	α
Social Potency	80	55.39	11.36	20	77	−.44	.86	.90
Novelty	10	7.37	2.19	0	10	−.98	.69	.72
Diversity	10	8.54	1.59	2	10	−1.39	.68	.60
Divergent Thinking	10	7.89	1.82	2	10	−.80	.62	.58
Leadership	10	6.46	2.29	0	10	−.45	.72	.68
Logical vs Affective Orientation	10	7.06	1.79	1	10	−.76	.58	.41
Aesthetics	10	6.13	2.36	0	10	−.25	.65	.68
Extraversion vs Introversion	10	6.56	2.69	0	10	−.66	.70	.79
Enterprise	10	5.82	2.42	0	10	−.14	.60	.68
Dependability	101	49.90	6.64	25	66	−.34	.86	.75
Responsibility	10	5.15	2.41	0	10	−.12	.70	.70
Emotionality	10	4.58	2.11	0	10	.31	.64	.69
Inferiority vs Self-Acceptance	18	4.55	3.89	0	16	.75	.80	.83
Practical Mindedness	12	7.25	1.91	2	11	−.17	.51	.37
Optimism vs Pessimism	10	5.39	2.41	0	10	−.24	.62	.68
Meticulousness	10	5.78	2.37	0	10	−.17	.60	.66
Face	11	5.34	2.28	0	11	−.00	.59	.57
Internal vs External LOC	10	7.11	1.81	0	10	−.67	.62	.54
Family Orientation	10	5.15	2.19	0	10	−.15	.66	.62
Accommodation	50	29.40	4.18	7	40	−.74	.76	.76
Defensiveness	10	2.45	2.11	0	9	.88	.69	.69
Graciousness vs Meanness	10	6.29	2.12	0	10	−.40	.66	.62
Interpersonal Tolerance	10	8.43	1.86	1	10	−1.57	.66	.74
Self vs Social Orientation	10	5.63	1.88	1	10	−.05	.60	.52
Veraciousness vs Slickness	10	6.77	2.21	0	10	−.68	.69	.66
Interpersonal Relatedness	67	41.26	7.41	9	61	−.28	.70	.74
Traditionalism vs Modernity	15	4.92	2.74	0	14	.44	.65	.69
Relationship Orientation	12	7.95	1.82	3	12	−.25	.52	.39
Social Sensitivity	10	8.31	1.68	3	11	−.57	.62	.45
Discipline	10	5.41	2.35	0	10	.04	.59	.60
Harmony	12	10.36	2.12	3	14	−.70	.51	.56
Thrift vs Extravagance	8	5.22	1.82	0	10	−.16	.57	.37

α^* Cronbach Alpha coefficients from Cheung et al. (2008).