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Original article

Cross-cultural validity of the Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire: Adaptation and validation in a French-speaking sample

Validité transculturelle du Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire : adaptation et validation auprès d'un échantillon francophone

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 October 2010

Received in revised form 11 February 2011

Accepted 14 February 2011

Keywords:

Mindfulness

FFMQ

Validation

French-speaking sample

Self-report assessment

Confirmatory factor analysis

Mots-clés :

Pleine conscience

FFMQ

Validation

Échantillon francophone

Questionnaire

Analyse factorielle confirmatoire

ABSTRACT

Introduction. – Recent research has revealed that mindfulness training improves mental health and psychological functioning. Although several questionnaires have been developed to measure mindfulness, the Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), [Baer et al., 2006]. Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. Assessment, 13, 27–45] is currently one of the most empirically-based scale assessing mindfulness.

Objective. – The present study was designed to: (1) test the psychometric properties and (2) explore the structural validation of the French version of the FFMQ.

Method. – Two hundred and fourteen participants were tested using the French version of the FFMQ.

Results. – Using confirmatory factor analysis, the results showed the French version of the FFMQ has good psychometric properties and a structural validity similar to the initial version.

Conclusion. – This adaptation constituted a validated mindfulness measure for French-speaking clinicians as well as researchers.

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R É S U M É

Des recherches récentes indiquent que l'apprentissage de la pleine conscience améliore la santé mentale et le fonctionnement psychologique. Une série de questionnaires a été développée en vue de mesurer ce construit. Parmi eux, le Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Baer et al., 2006) est actuellement l'un des instruments empiriquement validés le plus utilisés pour mesurer la pleine conscience. La présente étude a alors été élaborée en vue : (1) de déterminer les propriétés psychométriques et (2) d'explorer la validité structurelle d'une adaptation francophone du FFMQ. Deux cent quatorze participants ont complété l'adaptation francophone du FFMQ. Au moyen d'analyses factorielles confirmatoires, les résultats indiquent que la version francophone du FFMQ présente de bonnes propriétés psychométriques et une validité structurelle similaire à la version initiale. La présente adaptation constitue ainsi une mesure valide d'évaluation de la pleine conscience utilisable tant pour le clinicien que le chercheur francophone.

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Mindfulness training is a psychological intervention that trains participants to maintain their attention on their present experience, without judging or analytically processing it (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Several studies have observed that mindfulness training

improves cognitive processing (e.g., Heeren et al., 2009) and mental health (for a review see Grossman et al., 2004).

Until recently, however, methods for assessing mindfulness have received little empirical attention. Several questionnaires, however, have been proposed for assessing mindfulness skills. They include the Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI; Buchheld et al., 2001), the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS; Baer et al., 2004), the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale

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(CAMS; Feldman et al., 2004), the Mindfulness Questionnaire (MQ; Chadwick et al., 2005), the Toronto Mindfulness Questionnaire (TMQ; Lau et al., 2006), or the Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS, Cardaciotto et al., 2008).

As argued by Baer et al. (2008), although all of these self-report measures assess a general tendency to be mindful in daily life, showed potentially good psychometric properties, and are significantly correlated with each other, differences in their content and structural construct clearly indicate a lack of consensus about the conceptualization of mindfulness. For example, the MAAS and the CAMS are unidimensional instruments, supporting the notion that mindfulness consists of a single factor. To the opposite, the KIMS and the PHLMS are multidimensional and suggest that mindfulness should be conceptualized as a multifaceted construct. To overcome this limitation, Baer et al. (2006) integrated items from different questionnaires (i.e., FMI, KIMS, MAAS, MQ, CAMS) into structural factors, providing an empirical integration of previous independent attempts to operationalize mindfulness. This procedure resulted in a 39-item questionnaire, called the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, which contains items rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*never or very rarely true*) to 5 (*very often or always true*). The resulting instrument is structured by five factors labeled: Observing, Describing, Acting with awareness, Nonjudgement of inner experience, and Nonreactivity to inner experience.

For each subscale, good internal consistencies, with alpha coefficients ranging from .75 to .91, were observed. The *Observing* factor includes items related to “attending to internal and external experiences, such as sensations, cognitions, emotions, sights, sounds, and smells”. The *Describing* factor consists of items related to “labeling internal experiences with words”. The *Acting with awareness* factor incorporates items referring to “attending to one’s present activities, in contrast to the notion of automatic pilot (i.e., behaving automatically and mechanically while attention is focused elsewhere)”. The *Nonjudgement of inner experience* factor is related to items referring to “the tendency to take a nonevaluative stance toward thoughts and feelings”. Finally, the *Nonreactivity to inner experience* factor consists of items related to the tendency to “allow thoughts and feelings to come and go, without getting caught up in, or carried away by them”.

In a second nonmeditating sample, confirmatory factor analysis corroborated the five-factors solution. Further, hierarchical confirmatory factor analysis suggested that four of the facets are clear indicators of an overarching mindfulness construct. The observing facet did not fit this model. More recently, Baer et al. (2008) have reported that the lack of fit for the observing facet interacted with the type of sample used. Their confirmatory factor analysis, conducted on a sample of individuals who had already practiced mindfulness, clearly supported a model in which all five factors are indicators of an overarching mindfulness construct, while the observing factor did not fit among a nonmeditating sample.

However, such assessment appears as relevant for several reasons. First, although increased mindfulness scores in practicing mindfulness have been seen with other questionnaires (i.e., the MAAS and TMS), the FFMQ was the first questionnaire demonstrating that changes in mindfulness effectively mediate the effects of mindfulness training on psychological health. Second, recent research in which the FFMQ was administered suggest the global score and the facets are helpful in understanding, not only the changes that occur with the long-term practice of mindfulness, but how these are related to symptom reduction and improved psychological functioning.

To our knowledge, no French adaptation and validation of the FFMQ has been published. The present study was designed to translate and validate the FFMQ into French. Our particular interest was the question of whether the factor structure found by Baer et al. (2006) could be replicated in a nonmeditating French-speaking

sample. Furthermore, we hypothesized that, as observed by Baer et al. (2006), a hierarchical confirmatory factor analysis should support that four of the factors would be clear indicators of an overarching mindfulness construct while the observing factor would be less related to this overarching mindfulness construct.

1. Overview

The scale was first translated into French. Next, the structural validity of the French version of the FFMQ was tested with confirmatory factor analyses. Subsequently, we assessed its incremental validity examining its relation with depression and anxiety. Finally, we examined the test-retest reliability of the French FFMQ.

2. French adaptation of the scale

We followed the steps for the transcultural validation of psychometric instruments detailed by Hambleton et al. (2004) for test adaptation. Items were first translated into French and then back-translated into English. Three fully bilingual experts translated the original English scale into French using a committee approach. The French version was then translated back into English and re-evaluated by two other bilingual experts. The first author supervised the whole translation/back-translation process. Experts were instructed to verify the conformity of the retranslated English version with the original version and the precision of the French items. Items with problematic back-translation were thoroughly discussed and appropriately amended. Most discrepancies were minor, involving the choice between two synonyms. Regarding the use of an appropriated format for the items, four participants were then instructed to comment on the overall presentation of the instrument and the precision of the items. No remarks were made. The French adaptation of the FFMQ is shown in Appendix I.

3. Structural validation

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

Two hundred and fourteen French speaking volunteers (131 women), who had never practiced mindfulness or meditation training, were administered the French version of the FFMQ. They were recruited among the Université catholique de Louvain community (Belgium), the Université Lille Nord de France community (France), and the acquaintance of the authors. All participants had at least a secondary school degree and were predominantly university graduates. Their ages ranged from 18 to 81 years old ($M = 35.39$, $SD = 13.55$).

3.1.2. Measures and procedure

Participants filled in the questionnaires individually and in a quiet room, either at home or in a university laboratory. They were administered the French version of the FFMQ. They also completed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger et al., 1983) and the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck et al., 1998), which assess the level of anxious and depressive symptoms, respectively.

3.2. Data analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis, using AMOS 16 software (Arbuckle, 2007) was used to test the factorial validity of the FFMQ. Before performing the analysis, we examined the skewness and kurtosis of the data of the measurement model. All parameters were between -1 and 1 , indicating that the data are univariately normally distributed.

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