



Beyond Agreeableness: Social–relational personality concepts from an indigenous and cross-cultural perspective



Velichko H. Valchev^{a,b,*}, Fons J.R. van de Vijver^{a,c,d}, Deon Meiring^b, J. Alewyn Nel^c, Carin Hill^e, Sumaya Laher^f, Byron G. Adams^{e,a}

^a Department of Cross-Cultural Psychology, Tilburg University, The Netherlands

^b Department of Human Resource Management, University of Pretoria, South Africa

^c WorkWell Research Unit for Economic and Management Sciences, North-West University, South Africa

^d School of Psychology, University of Queensland, Australia

^e Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

^f Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online 24 October 2013

Keywords:

Big Five

Agreeableness

Interpersonal Relatedness

Social desirability

Prosocialness

Indigenous and cross-cultural research

ABSTRACT

The links of social–relational concepts (SRC) of personality identified in South Africa with the Five Factor Model (FFM), Interpersonal Relatedness (IR), social desirability, and prosocialness were examined. In Study 1 ($N = 1483$), the SRC defined two factors (positive and negative) distinct from the FFM, more strongly linked to relational than to tradition-focused IR aspects and to impression management than to deception. Links to tradition-focused concepts were stronger, and scores on positive SRC higher in Blacks than in Whites. In Study 2 ($N = 325$), SRC explained substantial variance in prosocialness above the FFM. In Study 3 ($N = 1283$), the SRC were replicated in a Dutch multicultural sample. The findings suggest expanding the FFM with respect to social–relational functioning.

© 2013 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The present study addresses the conceptualization of social–relational personality constructs identified in South Africa from an indigenous perspective. This study is part of a larger project aiming at the development of a comprehensive personality inventory for use in the 11 official languages of South Africa (the South African Personality Inventory, SAPI¹). Using free descriptions in a mixed-methods approach, our previous research has identified an implicit personality model shared across the major cultural–linguistic groups in South Africa (Nel et al., 2012; Valchev et al., 2011,

2013). One of the central features of this model is its strong emphasis on the social–relational characteristics of the individual, with a large number of descriptions about functioning in interpersonal relationships and in social context. The present study, building on this qualitative model but using quantitative measures, addresses the question, to what extent the social–relational personality concepts can be accommodated in existing universal personality models— notably as elements of Agreeableness— or represent as yet uncovered salient concepts calling for the expansion of such models.

1.1. Personality structure across cultures

There is general agreement that a set of five personality factors corresponding to the Big Five or Five-Factor Model (FFM) is cross-culturally replicable both when standardized questionnaires are used (e.g., McCrae & Allik, 2002) and when lexica are studied (e.g., Saucier & Goldberg, 2001; see De Raad et al., 2010, for a more conservative view on the replicability of factors in lexical studies). The question of whether more personality factors are needed beyond the Big Five for an exhaustive representation of personality has received much research attention. We refer specifically to three lines of research in this quest.

First, researchers have examined the effects of wider variable selection in psycholexical studies including highly evaluative attributes, physical descriptions, and other characteristics considered

* Corresponding author. Address: Department of Human Resource Management, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

E-mail address: velichko.valchev@gmail.com (V.H. Valchev).

¹ The South African Personality Inventory (SAPI) project aims to develop an indigenous personality measure for all 11 official languages in South Africa. Participants are Byron Adams (University of Johannesburg and Tilburg University, the Netherlands), Carin Hill (University of Johannesburg), Leon Jackson (North-West University), Deon Meiring (University of Pretoria), Alewyn Nel (North-West University), Ian Rothmann (North-West University), Michael Temane (North-West University), Velichko Valchev (Tilburg University, the Netherlands, and University of Pretoria), and Fons van de Vijver (Tilburg University, the Netherlands, North-West University, and University of Queensland, Australia). We would like to thank Fanny Cheung for her permission to use the Interpersonal Relatedness scales of the Cross-Cultural Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI-2) and Nicola Taylor for the permission to use the Basic Traits Inventory (BTI). In Study 3 of this article, use is made of data of the LISS panel administered by CentERdata in the Netherlands.

“external” to the core of personality (Saucier, 2008, p. 30). Research in this line has suggested that the Big Five could be enriched with the addition of positive and negative valence (Benet-Martínez & Waller, 2002) and a number of other dimensions like religiousness, honesty, tradition, and humor (Paunonen & Jackson, 2000; Saucier & Goldberg, 1998; see also Saucier, 2009).

Second, Ashton, Lee, and colleagues (for a review, see Ashton & Lee, 2007) have reanalyzed psycholexical data that formed the basis for the establishment of the Big Five in a number of languages and suggested a new model, the HEXACO, which features a sixth factor, Honesty–Humility. This factor captured variance in the domain of interpersonal traits between the axes of the Big Five’s Agreeableness and Conscientiousness and had an incremental value in the prediction of related personality outcomes (Ashton & Lee, 2007; Saucier, 2008).

Third, the comprehensiveness of the Big Five model in non-Western cultural contexts has been critically examined from the perspective of indigenous personality studies (Church, 2008). Church and colleagues have examined models representing the implicit personality conceptions in Mexico (Ortiz et al., 2007) and the Philippines (Katigbak, Church, & Akamine, 1996; Katigbak, Church, Guanzon-Lapeña, Carlota, & Del Pilar, 2002). Comparing these models with established FFM measures, these researchers have found that most personality concepts in the two cultures could be subsumed within the FFM and suggested that culture-specific aspects could mostly be expected in the expression and salience of specific model components, like the concepts of warmth and affection in Mexico. Another indigenous line of research, in China, identified a personality dimension beyond the Big Five: Interpersonal Relatedness, measured by the Cross-Cultural (Chinese) Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI-2; F.M. Cheung et al., 2001, 2008; S.F. Cheung, Cheung, Howard, & Lim, 2006). Interpersonal Relatedness has a focus on relationships and social functioning in a normative context and is defined by concepts like harmony, discipline, relational orientation, social sensitivity, thrift, and tradition. This dimension has shown incremental value in behavior prediction (Zhang & Bond, 1998) and has been replicated in diverse non-Chinese groups, although it appeared to be less salient in European Americans (S.F. Cheung et al., 2006; Lin & Church, 2004).

What is common to these three distinct lines of research, and perhaps most obvious in indigenous personality research, is that the candidates for expanding the Big Five space most often involve concepts in the area of interpersonal functioning (Church, 2008). In the Big Five model, this area is primarily represented by Agreeableness. It has often been noted in the literature that Agreeableness seems to be at the same time the largest, the most evaluatively laden, and the least well understood personality dimension (Graziano & Tobin, 2002). Arguably these properties mean that Agreeableness is in need for further refinement and possible expansion. Cross-cultural studies including non-Western contexts in which interpersonal functioning is important can inform this debate on expansion.

1.2. Agreeableness and social–relational functioning

The core of Agreeableness refers to motivations, traits, and behaviors aimed at maintaining positive relations with others (Graziano & Eisenberg, 1997). An important notion is the element of effortful control, accounting for the suppression of self-interest and negative affect in interpersonal settings (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001; Jensen-Campbell, Knack, Waldrip, & Campbell, 2007). It could be speculated that the elements of effortful control and self-restraint, shared with Conscientiousness, are represented also in the Honesty–Humility factor in the HEXACO model (Ashton & Lee, 2007).

Another important aspect of Agreeableness is its relation to social desirability (McCrae & Costa, 1983). Agreeableness has been

found to be strongly associated with descriptions of the ought self (Haifdahl, Panter, Gramzow, Sedikides, & Insko, 2000) and moralistic (Paulhus & John, 1998) and communal (Paulhus & Trapnell, 2008) biases in self-perception and presentation. Graziano and Tobin (2002) distinguished between impression-management and self-deception aspects of socially desirable responding and found that Agreeableness was only related to impression management. They found that other personality dimensions were also related to social desirability (cf. Li & Bagger, 2006) and concluded that Agreeableness is not threatened by self-favoring biases. Recent research has suggested that persons from more collectivistic cultures score higher on impression management and lie scales, whereas persons from more individualistic cultures score higher on self-deception (Lalwani, Shavitt, & Johnson, 2006; Van Hemert, Van de Vijver, Poortinga, & Georgas, 2002). So, it is clear that social desirability plays a role in the expression of personality concepts in the interpersonal domain, and its role may differ across cultures.

The most pertinent question regarding Agreeableness from a cross-cultural perspective is to what extent this dimension sufficiently captures the main personality concepts in the area of social–relational functioning, notably in non-Western, collectivistic cultures. Attention to relations and to social context is supposed to be more prominent in collectivistic than in individualistic cultures (Triandis, 1995) and this can be expected to result in higher salience or levels of Agreeableness. A major finding in the opposite direction is that of McCrae, Terracciano, and 79 Members of the Personality Profiles of Cultures Project (2005) who found a positive association between country-level Agreeableness and individualism. A possible interpretation is that there may be an Agreeableness core focusing on general prosocial orientation, which is more salient in an individualistic context, and further concepts of—presumably more norm-regulated—social–relational functioning, more prominent in a collectivistic context. The research by F.M. Cheung et al. (2001) has made the strongest case for expansion of the Big Five model with concepts of social–relational functioning (Church, 2008). Recently, we proposed an indigenous personality model for South Africa which also displays a strong emphasis on social–relational aspects of personality (Nel et al., 2012; Valchev et al., 2011). In the present study, we put this model, developed on the basis of qualitative data, to the test by examining its social–relational concepts using a quantitative approach in a framework defined by established measures of the Big Five model, Interpersonal Relatedness, social desirability, and prosocialness.

1.3. The South African context and social–relational concepts

South Africa is a multicultural society comprising 11 official languages and four distinct ethnic groups: Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and Whites. The dominant approach to personality study and assessment has been to use imported instruments measuring models developed in Western contexts, mostly the UK and the US. These instruments have often been found to have unsatisfactory psychometric properties in South Africa, especially in the Black group (Foxcroft, Paterson, Roux, & Herbst, 2004; Laher, 2008; Meiring, Van de Vijver, Rothmann, & Barrick, 2005). In contrast, Taylor and De Bruin (2005) developed their Basic Traits Inventory (BTI) to measure the Big Five in a culture-informed manner. This instrument has been validated in the major ethnic and linguistic groups of South Africa (Ramsay, Taylor, De Bruin, & Meiring, 2008).

The SAPI project (Cheung, Van de Vijver, & Leong, 2011; Nel et al., 2012; Valchev et al., 2011) is the first to examine the implicit personality conceptions in South Africa’s 11 languages from an indigenous perspective. The first stage of this mixed-methods project identified nine broad personality clusters based on shared content and co-occurrence patterns in free personality descriptions made in the 11 languages. The nine clusters were: Conscientious-

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/951303>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/951303>

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