TRANSLATION AND CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF TRAIT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE-SHORT FORM (TEIQue-SF) INTO SINHALA

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ABSTRACT

Despite emotional intelligence (EI) being recognized as important in all areas of a person's life, measuring the emotional aspects of most Sri Lankans remains challenging due to the lack of suitable psychometric assessments. The current study translated and carried out the cross-cultural adaptation of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale-Short Form into Sinhala. Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale-Short Form has been recognized as a valid and reliable instrument to measure emotional intelligence. The tool was translated by a bilingual, licensed clinical psychologist, incorporating the World Health Organization guidelines for translating and adapting instruments. The translation was evaluated and modified by an expert panel. The second panel rated the translation for content validity. The comprehension test was done with 15 participants who belonged to different educational backgrounds. The back translation was carried out by a professional translator. The adaptation was completed in consultation with the original author of the scale. The majority of the items received a Content Validity Index score of one (01). The comprehension test results indicated that the translated Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale-Short Form was easily understood by Sinhala speakers with an average education. Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale-Short form can be validated for Sinhala speakers of Sri Lanka by future researchers.

KEYWORDS: *EI, trait emotional intelligence, Sri Lanka, adaptation, Sinhala*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Emotional Intelligence

In the recent past, emotional intelligence (EI) has been recognized for its impact on human survival. EI can predict success in many areas of a person's life, including career, relationships, education, etc., as it significantly impacts mental, social, and physical wellbeing (Urquijo et al., 2019; Jardine et al., 2022; Rehman et al., 2022; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). Thus, tools for measuring EI have been increasingly incorporated to investigate individuals' well-being in clinical settings. Although EI is essentially defined as the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, within the current models of EI, this broad definition is further divided into different competencies. Emotional perception, emotional understanding, and emotional regulation are commonly described as EI-related competences. Emotional perception refers to the ability to recognize and analyze emotional cues that indicate one's own and others' emotions. Emotional understanding refers to the ability to analyze emotions in a more retrospective manner. Likewise, emotional regulation refers to analyzing and rethinking emotional responses (Rubio et al., 2022). Better emotional intelligence is seen as a factor that improves general health and better adaptation to challenging situations (Andrei et al., 2022).

1.2 Trait Emotional Intelligence

Current scientific literature refers to more stable patterns of skills related to emotional intelligence as trait emotional intelligence (Trait EI). Trait EI is recognized as a personality trait with predictable long-term outcomes for the individual. The construct of trait EI is seen as the summation of the affective aspects of an individual. Some researchers define it as a stable set of "emotion-related self-perceptions and adaptive emotional dispositions" (O'Connor et al., 2017). Trait EI has a strong positive correlation with mental health and wellbeing. Further, high trait EI results in better adaptation to stress. When there is excessive stress, high trait EI is believed to act as a protective factor. Studies have shown its protective ability during the

COVID-19 pandemic as well (Andrei et al., 2022). Further, trait EI demonstrates a correlation with quality of life in patients with chronic illnesses. Specifically, research has demonstrated that receiving training in traits related to EI could improve the quality of life in patients with breast cancer (Chen et al., 2021). Trait EI has also been implied as an important variable that predicts substance abuse and addiction in young populations (Yubero et al., 2021). In addition, trait EI has also shown a substantial impact on happiness levels (Badri et al., 2021). Considering the impact of EI on human existence, having appropriate tools to measure this important construct will be highly useful.

1.3 Barriers to Measuring Emotional Intelligence in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan culture differs from western cultures in terms of expressing emotions. Nevertheless, clinical experience shows that emotional aspects of individuals have the same effect on people as more western perspectives have recognized. Interestingly, when people attend psychotherapy and counseling, doctors spend a lot of time trying to understand their feelings and emotions due to the lack of emphasis on and recognition of these in their cultural contexts. In addition, there is a lack of validated psychometric assessments in Sri Lanka for measuring the emotional aspects of a person. To our knowledge, the only validated tool available to measure EI in Sri Lankans is specifically designed to be used among adolescents (Lankashini et al., 2017), making it unsuitable for assessing EI in adults. Therefore, it is important to identify, translate, and validate instruments for screening EI among the adult population of Sri Lanka.

1.4 Trait Emotional Intelligence Scale—Short Form (TEIQue-SF)

TEIQue-SF is a 30-item self-report measure of trait EI that was developed in 2009 (Petrides, 2009). It is especially recommended when a rapid assessment of the affective aspects of a person is required. TEIQue-SF has shown good psychometric properties with discrimination parameters (Cooper & Petrides, 2010). It has been tested for validity in different settings and has been translated and adapted into more than 15

languages (London Psychometric Laboratory, 2022). TEIQue-SF is a psychometric tool that has been well researched and has demonstrated validity across populations. Therefore, the cross-cultural adaptation of this tool to Sinhala is useful as an initiative to observe emotional aspects among Sinhala speakers in Sri Lanka. After validation of the tool, clinicians can use it in clinical settings to obtain valid measurements of the emotional aspects of individuals.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Translation

The TEIQue-SF was translated into Sinhala by the principal investigator, who is bilingual and fluent in both Sinhala and English, using the WHO guidelines for translating and adapting instruments (*WHO Guidelines on Translation and Adaptation of Instruments*, n.d.). The translator is a licensed clinical psychologist with an MPhil in clinical psychology and over a decade of experience working in clinical settings.

The tool was freely available on the TEIQue official website, with permission to be translated and adapted. Though special permission was not required for the adaptation, the author of the scale was duly informed about the intended study, and the permission was obtained. Linguistic and cultural factors were considered throughout the translation process, aiming to make language understandable for any person with an average level of literacy. Special efforts were made to ensure that the meanings behind the original items were preserved in the translation.

2.2 Expert Panel Evaluation

An expert panel of three, consisting of two clinical psychologists and a counseling psychologist, was asked to rate the translation in comparison to the original items on a Likert scale for clarity and relevance. The ratings ranged from least relevant to most relevant and least clear to very clear. A score of one was attached to a rating of least clear and least relevant, and a maximum score of five was attached to a rating of most relevant and very clear. Content validity index (CVI) values were calculated based on these ratings (Yusoff, 2019).

In addition to the ratings, the response form had a section for their comments and suggestions regarding each item. When items received low scores, the experts' comments were taken into consideration to verify the cross-cultural relevance of the items. Further discussions were held with the expert panel as well as language experts outside the expert panel, and the items were modified until the desired scores were obtained.

2.3 Comprehension Test

Since the efficacy of an instrument may differ between populations and in various cultures, the evaluation of the tool should be carried out in the population in which it will be used. Thus, a comprehension test was conducted to determine whether the translated scale was Comprehensible and acceptable. The validated scale is expected to be understood by individuals with average literacy for it to be feasible to use in research and by other professionals. Thus, fifteen adults who belonged to different educational backgrounds were recruited through convenient sampling to test the modified scale. The participants were residents of different areas of the Colombo district, and the majority of them were female. The age group of the participants was 22-60. Out of this sample, 05 participants were undergraduates, 04 were graduates, 02 were master's degree holders, 02 had completed the General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (G.C.E. Advanced Level), and 02 had the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (G.C.E. Ordinary Level) qualification. The expected average number of years of schooling in Sri Lanka, according to the Human Development Index (HDI), is 10 years. The G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination is conducted in the 11th year. The two individuals with G.C.E Ordinary Level Examination qualifications were recruited to represent this average literacy level (United Nations, n.d.).

After the participants were informed of the purpose of the study and the adaptation process, written informed consent was obtained from each participant for the comprehension test.

A Likert-scale questionnaire, which included the title, instructions, response choices, and items of the TEIQue-SF Sinhala translation, was distributed among

the respondents. The respondents were instructed to rate each statement on a Likert scale of 1–5 on the ease of comprehension. The lowest level of comprehension was indicated by 01 (I did not understand anything), while level 5 (I completely understood) was the highest level of comprehension.

2.4 Back Translation

The services of a licensed translation company (We Translate PVT Ltd.) were obtained for the back translation. The researcher did not have any personal contact or discussion with the translator. A copy of the back translation was sent to the original author, requesting feedback.

2.5 Materials

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the relevant institutional ethics committee. All study participants have granted their consent as per the institutional review protocols. At all stages of the adaptation, free Google forms were created to obtain ratings. Recruits who agreed to participate were sent the Google form link after obtaining informed consent. Whenever meetings were required, they were conducted online via Zoom. These measures were employed as the study was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Translation and Expert Panel Evaluation

There were no changes applied to the TEIQue-SF original English format; only the content was translated without modifying the original English version.

When the translated draft was presented, modifications were proposed for six (06) items by the expert panel. In consultation with the expert panel, modifications were made to items without changing their semantic value. For example, the dictionary-translated Sinhala term for 'perspective' was formal and not in common usage. Thus, it was decided to explain the meaning of this formal term in semi-formal language within brackets after the formal term. The final decisions on the phrases and terms were made by consulting a professor of

Sinhalese from a state university, along with the panel of experts. In addition to this, there was an active discussion over several rounds about the equivalent Sinhala phrase for "trait emotional intelligence." After presenting the translated version to the expert panel, CVI scores were calculated. The S-CVI score was 0.88. There was one item that received an ICVI of 0.3, while two items received an ICVI value of 0.5. Another seven items had received an ICVI value of 0.6. All other items received an ICVI value of 01. Items that received less than one were modified with expert suggestions.

3.2 Comprehension Test Results

All items had received a score of three or above on their level of comprehension. When the back translation was presented to the original author for feedback, the original author suggested no modifications.

During the adaptation process, the researchers faced a few challenges. TEIQue-SF is a model of emotion based on the Western cultural context. Western and Eastern cultural contexts appear to differ in terms of how they conceptualize and identify emotions. It was challenging to translate the English words denoting emotions into Sinhala. It was speculated that this may be because emotions are not very frequently discussed in the Sinhala cultural context. During the discussions held with the expert panel in deciding upon the final terms denoting emotions, the most frequent observation was that a single term may have multiple meanings and may be understood in different ways. Specifically, more than one Sinhala word was necessary to convey the emotions denoted by a single English word.

In addition, certain translated versions of the terms were too formal and were not in common usage. Therefore, careful consideration was required for the choice of words. Accordingly, the researchers had to make a special effort to find suitable Sinhala phrases and terms to generate the meaning provided on the original scale while achieving cultural relevance. It was difficult to select the appropriate words in Sinhala, as written Sinhala is different from spoken Sinhala. The suggestion of the expert panel on this matter was to incorporate a semi-formal language format. That way, it was expected to convey the meanings in a simple, well-understood written format of the language. It was

apparent from the comprehension test outcomes that the terms were well understood. It indicates that the process of adaptation, where choice of the words was considered with careful discussion and analysis, has yielded positive results.

3.3 Strengths and Limitations

The present study is an initiative to provide a tool that can be used to observe the emotional aspects of Sinhala speakers in Sri Lanka. Since the tool was not validated, its reliability and validity are limited. Future studies should focus on a complete validation of the tool to understand more refined psychometric properties of the TEIQue-SF Sinhala version.

The present study followed WHO guidelines for translating and culturally adapting instruments, which strengthens the results. However, despite the sample size for the pre-test being appropriate as per the guidelines, the small sample size should be acknowledged as a limitation since it limits the generalizability of the results. Future research should seek a larger sample size to increase the credibility of the results. Likewise, it needs to be acknowledged that all the participants were residents of the Colombo district. With respect to the cultural nuances of the Sinhala language, future studies could benefit from the inclusion of individuals from different regions of the country to apply the results to a broader context.

Practical Implications

Although emotional intelligence plays an important role in all areas of an individual's life, affecting their overall functionality and productivity, to the best of our knowledge, there is no standard tool to measure the emotional intelligence of adult Sri Lankans with an average literacy level. The translated TEIQue-SF showed high content validity and the comprehension test results indicated that the translated TEIQue-SF was easily understood by Sinhala speakers with an average education. Thus, the present study provides an easily understood psychometric tool, for obtaining measures related to the trait of emotional intelligence among Sinhala speakers. Upon validation of the tool, clinicians and other interested professionals could use it to obtain

valid measurements of the emotional aspects of individuals.

The current study describes the process of translation and cross-cultural adaptation of TEIQue-SF into Sinhala. It can be concluded that the Sinhala adaptation of the TEIQue-SF is appropriate to be administered to the Sinhala-speaking population with an average level of literacy. In the case of non-literate Sinhala-speaking populations, this can be interviewer-administered.

Ethics Statement

Source(s) of support

Conflict of interests

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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