Self-esteem in the Vietnamese adolescent: cross-cultural construction and validation of a tool

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The purpose of the present study was to develop a measure of self-esteem for adolescents. This research is now being carried out in the framework of a sound cooperation project between the psychology faculties of the Hanoi University of Social Sciences and Humanities (Vietnam), the Hanoi Institute of Psychology (Vietnam), and the Universities of Toulouse II and Nîmes (France). It respects the specific cultural aspects and has now set as its priority goal the development of measurement tools firmly anchored in the particularities of Vietnamese culture, while benefiting from the advances made in the west in this area. The creation and validation of the Vietnamese Self-Esteem Scale (EVES – *Échelle Vietnamiennne d’Estime de Soi*) is one of the fruits of this cooperation.

**Method**

A cross-cultural adaptation of ETES (French scale) and thus created a new scale: EVES (Vietnamese Self-Esteem Scale)

A study to validate this new instrument by an analysis of the factorial structure of the scale and of its internal consistency on an initial population of 264 adolescents, and a test-retest on 161 adolescents. The cross-cultural adaptation includes a literal translation in the Vietnamese language as well as a cultural adaptation to the Vietnamese context. The cross-cultural adaptation includes a literal translation in the Vietnamese language as well as a cultural adaptation to the Vietnamese context.  

Upon determining the existence of components, a PCA with varimax rotation was conducted. 15 items selected. 3 components.

**Results**

The internal consistency reliability of the total scale score was .76

Cronbach coefficient alpha for each subscale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>n of items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α (n = 264)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Self</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Scholastic Self</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Self</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to confirm the structure of the scale in 15 items, another "test" study of this new scale was carried out with 161 adolescents aged 14-19 (mean age = 16.29). Confirmatory analyses proves the stability of EVES’ scale with a three-factor structure. We can consider the importance these dimensions take on during this period of life in the evaluation that the subject makes of him/herself and according to her different personal and social living contexts.

**Conclusion**

The Vietnamese Self-Esteem Scale (EVES) is short, simple, and easy to understand for the adolescent study group and is suitable for longitudinal use in adolescent clinical and developmental evaluation or in primary health care programs. Is a instrument to offer to the Vietnamese researcher and the Vietnamese clinician the twofold advantages of being both anchored in Vietnamese culture and of being a facilitator of international scientific exchanges. Its psychometric qualities make it a useful instrument because it evaluates a very important core aspect of the dynamics of the Vietnamese self: the three dimensions (family self, physical self, scholastic self) are indeed acknowledged as being highly important and of very great significance concerning adolescence. This Vietnamese instrument incorporates a richness of perspectives capable of giving an impetus to new studies and investigations that will provide an ever-fertile ground for scientific research.

**Key-Words**

Adolescent self-esteem; Cross-cultural adaptation; Validation; Vietnam

**References**

Traditionally, self-esteem has been seen as a personality trait that is essential for psychological well-being. Over the last two decades it has generated an enormous amount of interest in the profession (psychologists, educators), and in the public on a broader level. This growing interest can be explained by the link that seems to exist between a low level of self-esteem and the great number of difficulties with which the youth of today are confronted, such as educational problems, delinquency, depression, suicide (Harter, 1998). A positive opinion of oneself promotes psychological stability (Harter, 1993; Oubrayrie, Lescarret, & de Léonardis, 1996), adaptation (Kaplan, 1980) and academic success (Pierrehumbert, 1991; Compas, 1991; Perron, 1997; Lescarret & al, 1998). A high level of self-esteem can function as a protective factor by increasing the endurance against the emergence of mental disorders (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1987; Dumont & Provost, 1999). Therefore, for people working with children and adolescents, it is becoming increasingly important to have a better awareness of the subject's self-esteem and to understand the dynamics underlying the formation of this process in a developmental perspective.

Furthermore, Vietnam is currently a developing country and the adolescents in this country – like all those living in countries in the same situation – must face up to numerous trials directly linked to the amazing changes that the economy and social climate are going through. Confronted with new risks, these adolescents are vulnerable and it is essential that we should understand these adolescents' self-esteem if we are to accompany them better. The area of self-esteem is therefore a rapidly expanding research topic in the humanities.