Adaptation of Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) for Russian sample.

Veronika Dzukaeva*

Lomonosov Moscow State University, Faculty of Psychology, Department of developmental psychology,
Mokhovaya st., 11/9, Moscow, 125009, Russia

Abstract

Psychological separation from parents is one of the main developmental tasks during late adolescence. In the current study this psychological process among Russian and Ossetian adolescents is described. The aim of this study was to adapt the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) by J. Hoffman (1984) for Russian Sample. Participants were 196 students from Moscow, Vladikavkaz and Alagir, between 17–24 years (M = 19.1, SD = 1.30). The internal consistency of the Russian version of PSI is 0.92. Correlations were performed between PSI, WAS and FACES-III.

Keywords: psychological separation, adolescence, PSI.

1. Introduction

According to many researchers psychological separation from parents is one of the developmental tasks during late adolescence at which one can succeed or fail [1-8]. In the current study we are interested in how this process occurs among Russian adolescence.

Adolescence separation-individuation can be described as a developmental process whereby individuals increase their sense of differentiation and independence from mother and father [9]. Researchers are in general agreement in viewing adolescent separation-individuation as a critical process in adolescent development [1]; [9]; [11]. But they conceptualize the process differently. Adolescence according to Blos [12] is the “second phase of separation-individuation”. The German psychoanalyst suggested that the successful resolution of “both the first and second phases of separation-individuation’” are critical for healthy psychological development. If according
to Blos, separation-individuation means the de-idealization of the parents as necessary for identity development, other theorists have described the separation-individuation process as occurring within the framework of the adolescent-parent relationship [6]; [8]; [13].

2. Different approaches to understanding the psychological separation from parents.

There are traditional and contemporary means of the attainment of psychological separation from parents during late adolescence. According to the first understanding the successful separation from parents is the achievement of personal autonomy within relatedness with parents. For instance, if the level of family cohesion is extremely high (i.e. enmeshed) [14], that the adolescent will not be able to successfully achieve the separation from parents. The need for successful separation-individuation in adolescence, according to the traditional view, is helpful in the healthy development of one’s psychological, mental and relational health [4]; [5]; [10]; [15]. Successful resolution of the separation-individuation process occurs when the adolescent is able to “strike a balance between enmeshment with parental identifications and complete disengagement and isolation” [14]. The context, in which such separation is attained, however, is debatable [13]. According to the contemporary understanding adolescents from families with extremely high levels of cohesion (enmeshment) also successfully solve one of the developmental tasks during late adolescence, i.e. they also successfully achieve psychological separation from parents. The authors describe the psychological separation as the formation of the self in close relationships with family members. It is possible these familial and cultural systems can and do lead to the successful separation in individuals existing within them, even if such separation-individuation is not necessarily valued by such familial or cultural systems [6]; [8]; [13]; [15]; [16]; [17]; [21].

3. Russian and foreign studies of adolescence.

Famous Russian psychotherapist, Varga A. [8], believes that the problems of psychological separation of late adolescence from their parents are more often the problem of separation from mother in Russia. People, who don’t attainment successful separation from mother, suffer in creating a family and parenting [8]; [19]; [20]. The markers of successful separation from parents are emotional independence from parents, achievement of personal autonomy [21]; [22]. Adolescent’s willingness to this process is one of the conditions for successful separation. Another condition is the parent’s willingness (especially mother in Russia) to accept the maturity of their child, willingness to restructure the parent-child relationship [7]; [23].

There have been attempts to link psychological separation with both of attachment [17]; [18], and family systems theory [6]. Russian researcher, Almazova, discussed in her study the sibling relationships in childhood and adulthood and attachment with mother [24]. It should be noted that, according to Kagitsibasi [6], the psychological separation link with warm emotional family relationships (i.e. love, care, respect) [25]. So, justice and care principles which based on family relationships are important for understanding the developmental task during late adolescence. Molchanov [26] described some results of his investigation about the dependence of moral-value development in adolescence from social situation of development.

It should be stressed that there are two cultures are investigated in the current study: Russian and Ossetian. Cross-cultural studies of adolescence are very popular [6]; [27]; [28]. Purpose of the study is to adapt the Psychological Separation Inventory (PSI) [5] for Russian sample.

4. Methods

4.1. Participants

Participants were 196 students (57 male, 139 female) from Russian cities (Moscow, Vladikavkaz and Alagir). They ranged in age from 17-24 years, the mean age was 19.1 (SD = 1.30). In terms of nationality 30.1% (N =59) were identified as Russian, 49.5% (N=97) were identified as Ossetian, and 20.4% (N=40) were identified as a
different culture. Additionally, there were 79.1% (N=155) from complete family, 20.9% (N=41) from single-parent family.

4.2. Measures

Participants were asked to respond to questions contained within a demographics questionnaire which included: their sex, age, nationality, position within their family of origin (e.g., only child, first born), their family structure (e.g., married mother and father, divorced parents).

One hundred and ninety six students were administered the Psychological Separation Inventory. The PSI is a 138-item, designed to assess the functional, conflictual, attitudinal and emotional separation from parents. The instrument was based upon the Blos theory. Some modifications to the questionnaire were introduced in the process of adaptation of the instrument. In the present study 14 items were eliminated, which pertained to students living away from the parental home (i.e., I like to show my friends pictures of my mother/father). This adjustment was necessary, as the scale was designed for American college students who have moved away from the parental home to attend college. In contrast, we are interested in the Russian sample who more often remain in their homes. Additionally, participants were administered the Worthington Autonomy Scale (WAS) [29] and the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES-III) [14]. The WAS consists of 40-item and of four subscales that measure the following constructs of autonomy: 1) family loyalty autonomy, 2) value autonomy, 3) emotional autonomy, and 4) behavioral autonomy. The FACES-III is a 40-items, developed to assess two major dimensions on the circumplex model: adaptation and cohesion of the family. These tests were used for validation of PSI.

5. Results

Hoffman reported that Cronbach alpha coefficients of each scale ranged between .84 to .92. The internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha) of the Russian version of PSI is 0.92. Table 1 presents the comparative analyze of internal consistency of the scales of PSI and Russian version of PSI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>American sample (150 students)</th>
<th>Russian sample (196 students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflictual separation from mother (MCs)</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflictual separation from father (FCs)</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional separation from mother (MEs)</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional separation from father (FEs)</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal separation from mother (MAs)</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudinal separation from father (FAs)</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional separation from mother (MFs)</td>
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<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional separation from father (FFs)</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Descriptive information of Russian version of PSI.
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Means and standard deviations were obtained for the Total sample and for Males and Females separately (Table 2). It must be stressed that Russian adolescences are more independent from their father, than from the mother. The result corresponds with the opinion of well-known Russian psychotherapist Varga A. [8]. Gender differences. There were significant differences: males were more emotionally (0.01), functionally (0.002) and attitudinally (0.000) independent from their mothers, than females. And there were no significant gender differences in independence from father. Cultural differences. There were significant differences between Russian and Ossettian late adolescence. Russian from Moscow were more emotionally (0.01) and functionally (0.03) independent from their mother, than Ossettian from Vladikavkaz. And Ossettian from Vladikavkaz and Ossettian from Alagir were more attitudinal independent (0.03); (0.003) from their mother, than Russian from Moscow. There were no significant differences in relationship with father. Additionally, there were found significant differences (0.000) in separation from both of parents in three types of separation, except Attitudinal Independence. Perhaps, no significant differences in the component Attitudinal Independence can be explained rather high level of consistency of values and beliefs of parents of our subjects. It is known that family values are fundamental to the other components of parenthood and realized in the orientation of the individual parent and the focus of its behavior. Consistency of family values is usually regarded as an indicator of the maturity of the couple.

Item-Total correlation of Russian version of PSI varies from 0.2 to 0.8 (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCs</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCs</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEs</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>1.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEs</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAs</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAs</td>
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<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFs</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFs</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Interscale correlations of Russian version of PSI.
Hoffman’s PSI scale has four components (Conflictual, Emotional, Attitudinal and Functional Independence). Conflictual Independence was not significantly correlated with the other types of Independence (Emotional, Attitudinal and Functional). However Emotional, Attitudinal, Functional Independence were highly correlated with each other. The strongest correlations were found between the scales Emotional and Functional separation from father \((r = 0.802; p = 0.000)\), Conflictual separation from mother and Conflictual separation from father \((r = 0.585; p = 0.000)\).

There were significant correlations between the Russian version of PSI scale and WAS and FACES-III scale \((r= from 0.4 to 0.5, p=0.000)\).

Cluster analysis divided the data into three groups: the first cluster \((N=36\%)\) included participants with the highest level of separation from parents the second cluster \((N=38\%)\) consists of participants with the middle level of separation and the third cluster \((N=25\%)\) consists of participants with the lowest level, i.e. who are more dependent from their parents.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to adapt the Psychological Separation Inventory for Russian sample. Results from the current study demonstrated that the Russian version of PSI can be used for assessing adolescence psychological separation from each parent. As we see from Cronbach’s Alpha and correlations with WAS and FACES-III scales, the Russian version of PSI has shown good reliability and construct validity.

Additionally, results showed that Russian late adolescents emotionally and attitudinally dependent from parents. The problems of psychological separation of late adolescence from parents are mainly the problem of separation from mother in Russia. Gender and cultural differences in separation from parents were found.

References


