
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Pat Bullen is a Lecturer in the School of Learning Development and Professional Practice. Her main research interests focus on the factors that contribute to thriving during adolescence and emerging adulthood, particularly during times of transition. Central to this work is how research can be applied to enhance the human condition, by informing policy and practice. She is also interested in how culture influences conceptions of well-being.

Christine Rubie-Davies is an Associate Professor and Head of School of Learning Development and Professional Practice. Her primary research interests focus on teacher beliefs particularly teacher expectations. She focuses on class level expectations and effects on student academic and social outcomes. She is also interested in ethnic issues associated with teacher beliefs and the interrelationships between student and teacher beliefs.

One of the key issues researchers face in the measurement of psychological constructs within culturally diverse samples is to understand to what extent differences between groups can be attributed to culture as opposed to some artefact of the measurement instrument. Constructs measured by standardised instruments are often purported to be universal and consequently widely adopted across a variety of contexts. This tends to occur despite an understanding that constructs such as expressions of emotion and motivation are shaped by the cultural context (e.g., Markus and Kitayama, 1991).

Understanding and assessing true cross-cultural variation is becoming increasingly important given growing cultural diversity within societies. In addition, with the advancement of statistical analysis techniques within the social sciences, an important methodological practice is to ensure measurement scales are interpreted in a conceptually similar way by culturally diverse respondents. To this end, we are delighted to include five papers in this special issue of the *International Journal of Quantitative Research in Education* that address the influence culture has on the measurement of psychological and educational constructs. These articles use a variety of statistical approaches, including structural equation modelling and item response theory analysis, to explore cross-cultural differences in a variety of measurement tools across a variety of samples and contexts.

In the first paper, Ni and Li examine the prevalence of systematic cultural biases in teacher evaluations of primary school students' non-academic behavior and characteristics. The authors discuss the influence of teachers' subjective evaluations on student achievement and the importance of culturally sensitive assessments. In addition, they highlight the importance of accounting for potential confounds when making group comparisons based on culture or ethnicity.

Within the context of secondary school classrooms, Denton, Chaplin and Wall address teacher burnout focussing on cultural differences in burnout between Jamaican and New York City teachers. The authors found some differences in the experience of burnout in the different cultural settings and argue that the findings may lead to the identification of factors that will potentially help in preventing burnout among both primary and secondary school teachers.

Among a sample of tertiary students, Peterson, Brown and Hamilton use two studies to assess differences in European and Asian students' conceptions of learning as a duty, addressing important gaps in the research on this topic. In study one the authors explore differences in European and Asian students' response to a self-reported duty scenario. In study two they scrutinise the factor structure of the learning as a duty factor, examine differences in Asian and European students' endorsement of the different factors and test how these relate to academic achievement.

Within the context of the workplace, in a large sample spanning over 30 different countries, Bartram explores between-country differences in the occupational personality questionnaire (OPQ32). The findings replicate and extend earlier results highlighting that depending on the scale, between-country effects account for close to 7% to 8% of the variance in the IPQ32. Further, these results help explain the anomalous between-study differences reported by previous research for certain scales, such as conscientiousness. The author discusses the implications of these findings in relation to the use of national versus international norms when making cross-country comparisons for individuals.

In the final article, Toland and Morales investigate within-group cultural differences in the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) between a community sample of US born and Latino born sexual minority woman living in the USA. The findings further validate the use of use of the SWLS among culturally diverse populations.

This volume of studies shows that although some measures appear valid across a range of cultural contexts, other studies indicate distinct response patterns depending on the cultural group with whom the measure is tested. The studies highlight the importance of attending to confounding variables when assessing true cross-cultural variation. The papers also point to a need for caution when interpreting results using instruments across a range of cultural groups within studies and also when deciding to use a particular measure with a cultural group for which validity testing has not been completed. These studies highlight that to advance our understanding of true cross-cultural variations, researchers must carefully test, validate and interpret results when using measures among populations for whom the instrument was not originally designed and tested.

Reference

- Markus, H.R. and Kitayama, S. (1991) 'Culture and the self: implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation', *Psychological Review*, Vol. 98, No. 2, pp.224–253.