



MEASURING EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY, PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND AGGRESSION IN PRE-ADOLESCENTS: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY

Concetta Pastorelli,¹ Claudio Barbaranelli,² Ivo Cermak,³ Sandor Rozsa⁴ and Gian Vittorio Caprara^{2*}

¹Universita' degli Studi di Palermo, Dipartimento di Psicologia, Palermo, Italy, ²Universita' degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza', Dipartimento di Psicologia, Via dei Marsi 78, 00185, Rome, Italy, ³Academy of Sciences Brno, The Czech Republic Institute of Psychology, Brno, Czech Republic and ⁴Eotvos Lorand University of Budapest, Department of Personality, Budapest, Hungary

(Received 2 July 1996; received for publication 10 April 1997)

Summary—Three scales measuring emotional instability, prosocial behavior and aggression were analyzed in a new study involving subjects between the ages of 11 and 15 from three different countries: Italy, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Principal component analysis (PCA), simultaneous component analysis (SCA) and congruence coefficients were used to evaluate and compare the factorial structure of the scales in the three different countries. Results clearly show a substantial equivalence of the components in the three countries, attesting to the generalizability of these measures in different cultural contexts. Country comparisons on the mean level of the scales show that Italian boys and girls score significantly higher on emotional instability and the prosocial behavior scale than Hungarian and Czech boys and girls. In the case of aggression only for self report, Italian boys score significantly higher than Hungarian and Czech boys. Construct validity was also explored for the three countries through the multitrait-multimethod analysis (D. T. Campbell & D. W. Fiske, 1959, *Psychological Bulletin*, 56, 81–101). For the Italian and the Hungarian sample, although results clearly support the convergent validity of the three scales in different informants, some problems arise regarding discriminant validity between emotional instability and aggression. In the case of the Czech Republic sample, results generally show lower convergent and discriminant validity. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd

INTRODUCTION

Several studies were conducted with the aim of identifying early precursors of children's social development and adjustment (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993a; Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Farrington, 1989; Loeber, 1985; Magnusson, 1988; Rutter, 1988). Most of these studies identified aggressive behavior and emotional instability as important risk factors and prosocial behavior as a protective factor in the development of individual psychosocial adjustment.

Though aggression is critical because of its long-term negative effects and because of its stability (Olweus, 1979), lack of emotional stability and prosocial behavior seem to be equally critical because both have negative effects in particular circumstances and periods of child development (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Incatasciato, Pastorelli & Rabasca, 1997).

Regarding the links between emotional stability and aggressive disposition, it has been established that early motor restlessness contributes to later impulsiveness and, in association with aggression, enhances the risk of subsequent deviant outcomes (af Klinteberg & Magnusson, 1989; af Klinteberg, Schalling & Magnusson, 1990).

Regarding the links between aggression and prosocial behavior, though some studies have shown the inverse relationship between these two dimensions (Eron & Huesmann, 1984; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988), others have shown that degree of covariation varies according to age and informants on the child's behavior (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993a). We believe it is important to use a multiple informant/method research strategy to highlight the nature of the relations between aggression and other constructs related to adjustment and maladjustment and to specify their links.

Three scales measuring emotional instability, prosocial behavior and aggression were developed

*To whom all correspondence should be addressed.

and validated with Italian boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 10 (Caprara & Laeng, 1988; Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993a) in the form of self-report, teacher and mother ratings and peer nomination. In the preliminary phase of scale construction a set of over 120 items was produced, based on four underlying constructs: aggression, emotional instability, prosocial behavior and violation of norms and rules. Results of factor analysis on all items produced three factors in which high loadings on emotional instability, prosocial behavior and aggression were obtained. The violation of norms and rules scale did not produce an equivocally unique factor and most items had low loadings on the other three factors. In line with the theoretical assumption which sustains the importance of developing more specific constructs related to different aspects of human functioning in the study of individual differences (see Caprara & Pastorelli, 1989 for a discussion) monofactorial scales were developed. Several procedures were used to establish the monofactoriality of the three scales, including the scree test, second-order factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1989; Caprara, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli & Vallone, 1991; Pastorelli, 1991). Subsequent studies conducted on different Italian samples (north, south and central part of Italy), substantially replicated the internal consistency of each scale and all proved reliable using Cronbach's Alpha (coefficient varying from 0.78 to 0.90) (Pastorelli, 1991). The process of construct validation was then continued in other studies. Convergent and discriminant validity of the three measures of emotional instability, prosocial behavior, and aggression was established according to a multitrait-multimethod design (Barbaranelli, Pastorelli & Caprara, submitted; Caprara *et al.*, 1991; Pastorelli, 1991).

Another study (Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993a) proved the concurrent validity of the three scales with indicators of sociometric status and the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983, 1986). On the one hand, emotional instability and aggression were significantly and positively correlated with peer measures of rejection and with the total problem behavior score from the Child Behavior Checklist (teacher form); on the other hand, prosocial behavior was significantly and positively correlated with peer measures of popularity, and with both children's school performance and adaptive characteristics, as measured by the Teacher Report Form from the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1986).

Predictive validity was established in a longitudinal study aimed at identifying the best predictors of children's personal and social adjustment (Caprara *et al.*, 1997; Caprara & Pastorelli, 1993b). In particular, children's prosocial behavior and emotional instability, as rated by peers at age 7, were the strongest predictors of school adjustment and school failure, at age 12. Children's prosocial behavior and aggression, as rated by peers, were the most important predictors of peer social relations as measured by popularity and rejection.

Furthermore, while emotional instability and aggression were predictive of later personality dispositions respectively linked to emotional susceptibility and irritability, prosocial behavior was a strong predictor, with a negative sign, of all personality traits related to proneness to aggression and violence (Pastorelli, Incatasciato & Rabasca, 1994).

In the present study, we set out to investigate the replicability and generalizability of the three scales measuring emotional instability (EI), prosocial behavior (PB) and aggression (A), using different informants (self, peer and mother) in three different countries (Italy, Hungary and the Czech Republic) with three different languages. Thus the aims were two-fold: (a) to establish the cross-national validity of the three scales; (b) to examine the construct validity of the three scales in each country.

METHOD

Subjects and procedure

Table 1 reports numbers and ages of *Ss* from the three countries.

In Italy we obtained the largest sample, especially for students' self-report and peer nomination. Parent participation was requested of a limited number of *Ss*. In Hungary and in the Czech Republic the number of *Ss* was generally similar across all informants. The three scales in the different forms were translated from Italian into the two foreign languages: Hungarian and Czech. The final version was also back-translated into Italian by three individuals who were natives of the three respective

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات