Abstract
The concept of self-perceived mate value measured by The Mate Value Inventory (MVI) created by Kirsner et al., (2003) may help us understand important qualities when anticipating different relationship outcomes (Brase & Guy, 2003; Fisher et al., 2008) and the dynamics of culture and relationships (Goodwin et al., 2012). The existence of cross-culturally adapted, valid and reliable measures in research and clinical practice is highly recommended. Our main goal was to analyze the psychometric properties of the MVI adapted for Hungarian Romanian sample. The results indicate good psychometric criteria for the MVI, taking in account that further research is needed.

Keywords: self-perceived mate value, MVI, construct validity, internal consistency

1. INTRODUCTION

The great majority of the research on self-perceived mate value was conducted in Western cultures, however the influence of individuals environmental and cultural aspects on accurate evaluation of the self as potential mate and those of social respectively sexual partners is also obvious (Eastwick et al., 2006; Campbell & Wilbur, 2009; Goodwin et al., 2012).

Kirsner et al. (2003) purposed an economic-evolutionary perspective, which assume that the socially or sexually desired traits are bartered between partners in the social exchange context (Cosmides & Tooby, 1992). Thus, the overall perceived value of exchanged resources by partners must be approximately equivalent to be equitable for both to stay in the relationship (Kirsner et al., 2009). Since the mate value of a partner is influenced by the fitness of the self as a potential sexual partner (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000), knowing one’s mate worth or bargaining power in the mating marketplace has several implication at the level of social relationships (Back, Penke, Schmukle & Asendorpf, 2011).

Though one’s mate value can be estimated accurately based on relevant and observable characteristics (Miller, 2000, 2001) it requires reasonably high level cognitive processes (Cosmides & Tooby, 1992). Moreover, as Kirsner et al. (2003) found, negativity bias regarding the self, others and the future (Beck, 1967) in depressed individuals is associated with lower estimates of one’s own mate value (Kirsner et al, 2009).

Both social structural and evolutionary perspective emphasize the role of environmental factors (like economic pressure) in rating of the key attributes for attracting, finding and retaining a partner (Goodwin et al. 2012). Since mate value also varies across culture and may interact with individual’s sex, this suggests the great importance of valid and reliable measure of concept of interest on the target population (Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2010).

Since an adapted instrument for measuring self-perceived mate value (MV) doesn’t exist in this cultural context, we conducted a validation study of the Mate Value Inventory-7(Kirsner et al., 2003) with a Transylvanian Hungarian sample (N=278).
2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

Two hundred and seventy-eight Transylvanian individuals participated in this study, from a diversified background, with everyone having high school education or greater. The sample was composed of 224 female (80.6%) and 54 male (19.4%) respondents, with age between 18 and 67, mean participant age was 29.42 (SD=9.63). Considering marital status, 25.5% of the respondents were single, 46.8% were in a committed relationship, 24.5% were married and one person was widowed. The majority of them originated from urban area (77.7%) and the rest from rural area (22.3%). All the respondents were volunteers, who met the criteria of speaking Hungarian and being adult. They were from seven Romanian counties, 94.6% of them reported to be heterosexual. All of them gave informed consent of their participation after the presentation of brief information related to the study’s general objective.

2.2. Measures

The Mate Value Inventory-MVI-7 is a multidimensional self-report instrument created by Kirsner et al., (2003), for assessing mate value through different facets: from the perspective of Self, Friend and Partner. Originally, the MVI was elaborated for analyzing relations among depressive symptoms (Beck, 1996) and mate value. Beside the estimation of Personal Mate Value, participants rates accurately as possible their Best and Ideal Friend, respectively consider the qualities of a best partner they think they realistically can attract for a brief (Attainable Short-Term Partner) and long-term relationship (Attainable Long-Term Partner), respectively describe the characteristics of an Ideal Short-Term and Long-Term Partner.

Each participant rate how well the given attributes apply currently to the person in question compared to the participant’s peers with a scale of -3 (extremely low on this trait) to +3 (extremely high on this trait). These characteristics were: ambitious, attractive face, attractive body, desires children, emotionally stable, enthusiastic about sex, faithful to partner, financially secure, generous, good sense of humor, healthy, independent, intelligent, kind and understanding, loyal, responsible, sociable, shares my value and shares my interest. MVI shows good internal consistency for all forms, with Cronbach’s alpha values between .86 and .93 (Kirsner et al., 2003).

2.3. Procedures

The purpose of this study was to establish the aspect validity and analyze the reliability and construct validity of this measure. After we obtain the author permission to use MVI on the target population, as a first step we perform the translation of the instrument and applied the final version via online format. Participants received information regarded the correct use of MVI and gave their consent to participate in this survey. We guarantee the confidentiality of their personal data and the anonymity of the responses. In the end, we obtain 278 correctly completed questionnaires, followed by testing the psychometric properties of the instrument, evaluating internal consistency, descriptive analysis and empirical testing of construct’s fit to theoretical model.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Aspect validity

We established the aspect validity of the instrument through rigorous methodological steps (Borsa et al., 2012). The translation of the measure was performed by two independent bilingual translators, which are familiar in social science. After the comparison of the two translations, we obtain the first synthesized version. Conceptual, semantic and idiomatic equivalence were discussed and evaluated by two expert psychologists. We verify whether the items and instructions were comprehensible for the target population. After the back-translation of the instrument, further contextual and linguistic ambiguities were clarified. The pre-final version was tested in a pilot study, composed from a small group of college students. Considering the ideas got from the interviews conducted with expert and students, we conclude that the instrument is ready to be used.
3.2. Descriptive analysis and Reliability

In our study, we purpose to carry out an adaptation process on the Transylvanian Hungarian sample to evaluate the psychometrical properties of the MVI-7, contributing hereby to a broader validation. At first, descriptive analysis was performed to determine the mean, minimum and maximum values, standard deviations for the different forms of the MVI, which is presented in Table 1. As we can observe, the mean of the seven versions of the instrument was between M= 1.46, SD= .88 (Attainable STP) and M= 2.12, SD= .53 (Attainable LTP).

Table 3. Correlations among the MVI versions. Female correlations above the diagonal and male correlations below the diagonal

Table 2. presents Cronbach\'s alphas of all version of MVI-7. We obtained good internal consistancy for the forms of the inventory, indicated by Cronbach\'s alpha values ranged from .76 to .91, concerning negligible differences between male and female participants.

Further statistical analysis indicates that the internal consistency value won\'t increase even if certain items were to be deleted. Correlations got from the split-half method also confirms the reliability of all the seven MVI forms (coefficients between r= .58 and r= .87).

Table 2. Minimum, Maximum, Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach\'s alpha values of the MVI versions

3.3. Construct validity

Correlation among each of the seven MVI versions is displayed in Table 3, disaggregated by sex of the respondents indicate that the correlation between Ideal and Attainable LTP \(r= .78, p < .01\) for male, \(r= .72, p < .01\) for female), and similar for both the sexes, whereas females shows higher correlations regarded relation between RF and IF estimates \(r= .43, p < .01\).

Table 3. Correlations among the MVI versions. Female correlations above the diagonal and male correlations below the diagonal
.015), with higher means for female respondents. Considering these result we must take in account the disproportion of gender ratio.

The results indicated slightly negative correlation (r = - .13, p < .05) between Ideal LTP ratings and age of the respondents; respectively a positive relation regarding Ideal STP and age (r = .11, p < .05).

We perform One-way Anova analysis and post-hoc comparisons to test the differences between MVI means at the level of marital status. We found that married respondents report significant higher scores regarding Attainable (F = 3.748(3), p = .012) and Ideal STP (F = 4.109(3), p = .007) compared to participants committed in a relationship or single. Also those who are married or in a relationship shows significant higher means in Ideal LTP estimates than divorced persons (F = 4.733(3), p = .003). We found no statistically significant differences on MVI scores and educational level of the participants.

4. DISCUSSION

Considering the important moderator role of mate value across several research areas (Edlund & Sagarin, 2014) and that the majority of investigations are conducted in the Western countries, the purpose of our study was to adapt the Mate Value Inventory among Transylvanian Hungarian population.

All the inventory versions presents good internal consistency values (Cronbach’s alpha values between .76 and .91), with means between M = 1.46, SD = .88 and M = 2.12, SD = .53. In conclusion the means are lower than in the original validation study sample.

The results are consistent with the original model: we had the highest scores on the Long-Term Partner MV versions, followed by Personal Mate Value, while ratings regarded Short-Term Partner MV had the lowest score. The Cronbach’s alpha for internal consistency were the lowest in Self-perceived MV and Friend versions and highest in Attainable and Ideal Short-Term Partner MV just as in the model presented by Kirsner et al., (2003).

Considering some cultural specificity, our study confirmed that MVI is a valid measure of mate value, indicated good psychometric qualities with comparable 2-tailed r correlations between all forms among both female and male participants. Because self-perceived mate value is a multi-composit construct that may fluctuate with context and over the lifespan, further studies are needed to identify the underlying factors.

5. REFERENCES


