Factor Structure of the Portuguese Version of MITA

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YAGISSP
Young Adults in Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain and Portugal

ABSTRACT

The current poster presents the Portuguese translation and adaptation of The Munich Individuation Test of Adolescence (MITA) (Walper, Schwarz & Jurasic, 1996), which allows the assessment of different aspects of individuation in relation to mother and father separately. This study is part of the YAGISSP research project (Young Adults in Germany, Italy, Sweden, Spain and Portugal) that deals with the situation of emerging adults in Europe in a cross-cultural perspective. Based on data from 463 Portuguese university students, 167 male and 296 female, mean aged 21.09 (SD = 2.63), confirmatory factor analyses have been performed (EQS 6.1). The analyses made separately for father and mother versions, support the existence of the six original dimensions (nurturance seeking, denial of attachment needs, engulfment anxiety, fear of love withdrawal, ambivalence and successfully individuation) and one second-order factor that related three of them. This structure is similar to the German original structure.

AIM

The main objective of the YAGISSP research project is not only to study and explore the specific situation of being an emerging adult in each of the countries, but also to compare and discuss findings across Europe. For this purpose it is necessary to test the measures for the invariance of their factor structure. More specifically we intend to:

☐ Translate and adapt MITA to Portuguese
☐ Use confirmatory procedures to test whether the MITA German original factor structure (mother and father versions separately) fits the data of the Portuguese emerging adults sample.

Table 1
Original scales and sample items from the MITA for German adolescents (Kruse & Walper, 2008; Guglhör-Rudan et al., 2007a)

Scale	Definition and sample item	Nº of items	α Mother	α Father
Nurturance Seeking	Expresses a strong desire for physical and emotional closeness and support (e.g. "When she is near me, I have the feeling that nothing bad can happen to me.")	6	.73	.76
Denial of Attachment Needs	Measures the degree to which the need for closeness and support is negated (e.g. "I get along well without her affection.")	6	.78	.78
Engulfment Anxiety	Perceiving parents' closeness as a threat to one's autonomy and regarding him/her as intrusive (e.g. "It drives me crazy if she questions me about my personal matters.")	7	.84	.79
Fear of Love Withdrawal	Indicating a fear of losing emotional contact and a lack of security about the others' affection (e.g. "If I have disappointed my mother I am anxious that she does not like me any more ")	5	.68	.61
Ambivalence	Assessing an asymmetrical relationship due to adolescents' striving for closeness although the parent is perceived as indifferent. (e.g. "I would like to do more things with her, but I am anxious not to be a nuisance.")	5	.65	.65
Successful Individuation	Balance between autonomy and closeness in significant relationships (e.g. "Even if I don't like everything my mother does, I try to understand her.")	5	.73	.81

MEASURE

The Munich Individuation Test of Adolescence (MITA) is a revised version of the Separation-Individuation Test of Adolescence (SITA) (Levine, Green & Millon, 1986) developed by Walper, Schwarz and Jurasic (1996). Different from the SITA, MITA is more concerned with the evaluation of the normative aspects of individuation, assessing key dimensions of successful individuation as well as specific problems in this developmental process. MITA also allows assessment of individuation in relation to mother and father separately, with identical scales for each of these relationships (Table 1).
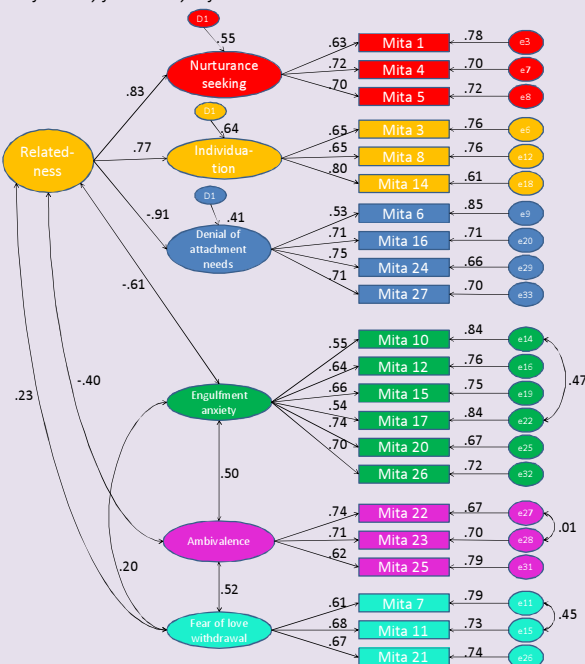
PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

463 Portuguese emerging adults (age 18 – 30 years), mean aged 21.09 (SD = 2.63):
☐ 167 male and 296 female
☐ 94% (n = 435) are university students
☐ 97% are single
☐ 81% live with one or both parents
☐ 53% have a stable relationship with a romantic partner with a mean length of 35.50 months (SD = 25.75; Md = 32.00; Mo = 12, 24; Min = 1; Max = 132).

Data was collected in university setting during class periods; all questionnaires were filled out voluntary; all were informed of the nature, purpose and confidentiality of the study.

RESULTS

Figure 1.
Confirmatory factor analysis for mother

Figure 2.
Confirmatory factor analysis for father

ADJUSTMENT INDICES:

Mother:
Chi²/df = 2.8; CFI = .90; GFI = .89; SRMR = .72; RMSEA = .06.

Father:
Chi²/df = 2.5; CFI = .90; GFI = .89; SRMR = .08; RMSEA = .06.

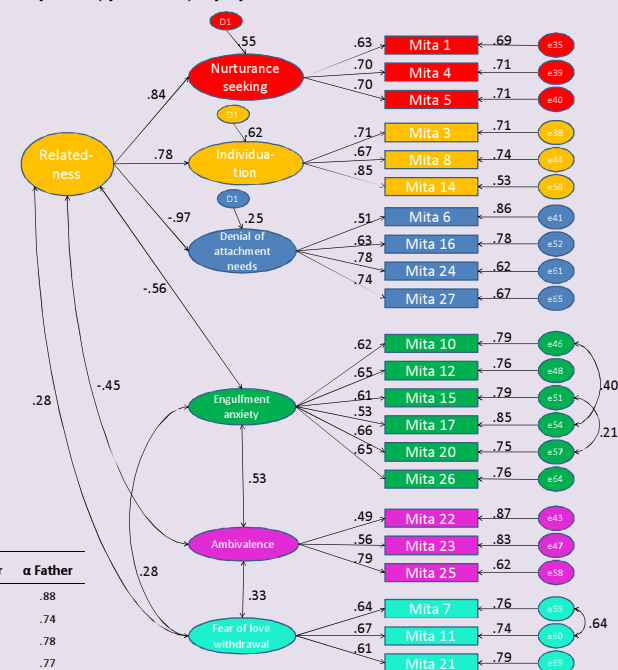In the German version items 2 and 13 were already deleted.

Items 9, 18 and 19 were deleted because they presented low loadings and did not contribute to the adjustment of the scale.

Contrary to German version, item 6 was maintained.

Table 2.
Cronbach alpha for each dimension.

Scale	Nº of items	α Mother	α Father
Relatedness	10	.85	.88
Nurturance Seeking	3	.73	.74
Individuation	3	.71	.78
Denial of attachment needs	4	.77	.77
Engulfment anxiety	6	.82	.81
Ambivalence	3	.73	.67
Fear of love withdrawal	3	.76	.75

DISCUSSION

☐ The results of the present study provide initial empirical support for the factor validity of the MITA to a Portuguese population. Confirmatory Factor-Analysis showed that the German MITA Model fits the data from a Portuguese sample of university students. In line with previous research, the CFA conducted in this study confirmed the six-factor structure. The examination of the latent variables correlations indicated that all variables were correlated in the expected direction.

☐ According to the structure established by Guglhör-Rudan, Thoennissen, Walper and Scabini (2007b), a latent second order variable was introduced into the theoretical model and presented adequate adjustment. The three dimensions *nurturance seeking, individuation and denial of attachment* needs (negative loaded) represent one factor together designed *relatedness* expressing the desire to reach autonomy and individuation, and simultaneously maintain the emotional closeness to parents. Thus we identified a four-factor model: *relatedness, fear of love withdrawal, ambivalence and engulfment anxiety*.

☐ This structure is slightly different from German structure. Items 9 and 19 were deleted and item 6 was maintained. In the Italian structure a new dimension emerged designed *lack of self-disclosure* with both these items plus items 10 and 17.

☐ This study has some limitations. Participants were predominantly from a university student population. Findings can not be generalized to others emerging adults, with different trajectories, social class and family economic status. Further research is needed to replicate these findings for a broader population of emerging adults. In addition, it will be useful to conduct further tests to compare this model with other countries.

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