

Benchmark Exploring Reliability and Validity Assignment

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I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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Exploring Reliability and Validity

The Values and Motives Questionnaire (VMQ) is an assessment designed to measure an individual's interpersonal, extrinsic, and intrinsic values (Psytech International, n.d.). The VMQ technical manual details several types of reliability and validity, though only specific measurements are utilized.

Types of Reliability and Validity

Internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha), or the consistency across assessment items, was the test used to assess VMQ reliability (Psytech International, n.d.). Cronbach Alpha Coefficients indicate the level of reliability of each sub-scale assessment item with a numerical value. It is noted that reliability was assessed first, as it is often a prerequisite for validity and places an upper limit on validity.

Once reliability was established, construct validity- the degree to which the assessment tool actually measures the psychological concept based on test definition- was used to measure VMQ validity (Psytech International, n.d.). In the case of the VMQ, the degree to which the assessment actually measures the values and motives of the user would be examined. The VMQ technical manual compares the assessment to similar tools such as the Motivational Appraisal Personal Potential (MAPP) and Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF).

Reliability: Cronbach Alpha Coefficients

Cronbach Alpha Coefficients present different levels of reliability based on the numerical value- excellent ($.9 <$), good ($.8-.89$), adequate ($.7-.79$), and may have limited applicability ($.7 >$) (What makes a good test, n.d.). The VMQ purports the following Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the following constructs: affiliative (.74), altruistic (.74), affection

(.79), achievement (.53), finance (.83), security/safety (.79), aesthetics (.83), moral (.68), traditional (.70), independence (.66), and ethical (.70) (Psytech International, n.d.). Based on these reported numbers, finance and aesthetics have the highest rankings and good internal reliability. The affiliative, altruistic, affection, security/safety, and traditional constructs all fall into adequate internal reliability. Achievement, independence, and moral fall below .7 and may have limited applicability. Roughly 73% (8/11) of the constructs have acceptable internal consistency alpha values. About 27% of the constructs (3/11) have problematic internal consistency alpha values.

Sample Size and Nature of the Population

Validity

To assess the inter-correlations of the VMQ scales, a sample of 159 psychology and MBA students was utilized (Psytech International, n.d.). The inter-correlations values indicate that the VMQ the constructs are mostly distinct and independent. The high correlations on the provided matrix are thematically related, which is logical. When compared to the MAPP to further assess construct validity, a group of 59 undergraduate students majoring in psychology volunteered to complete both assessments. The reported validity coefficients had a range from .83 to -.53. When the VMQ was compared to the 16PF, 100 students pursuing a Master of Business Administration completed both assessments. The correlations between the two assessments were reported as modest.

When examining the population used for the VMQ and the populations for the tests used to evaluate the VMQ's validity, they are comparable in the fact that all populations were postsecondary students. The results of each comparison show that there are correlations

between the variables of each assessment and thus showcase internal validity. However, the assessed populations may introduce external validity concerns.

VMQ Norming Population

Because the population assessed for validity was solely college students, it would not be representative of the general population as a whole. If it was intended just for college-aged students, then it could be mildly representative. While there is some data presented about the VMQ and gender, there is no information about cultural representation or demographics. Gender distribution is not equal within the assessment. Within the technical manual, only a group of a few hundred college aged students were assessed, so it wouldn't be sufficient to draw conclusions about college aged students and their traits as a whole. Because the sample population was relatively narrow, the level of generalizability is low. This causes a concern for validity and drawing conclusions.

Opinion of the VMQ

Overall, the psychometric properties in the VMQ technical manual reported by the authors are presented as adequate. However, based on this review, I do not believe that the VMQ's authors sufficiently establish the reliability and validity. When assessing Cronbach Alpha Coefficients, almost 75% of the assessment was either good or below. None had coefficients that rated excellent. Furthermore, while .7 is considered an acceptable level, it is recommended that the reliability coefficient be .80 or above in psychological testing (Loewenthal & Lewis, 2020).

There were some strong measurements of validity, but there were also poor measurements of validity as well. As previously stated, the sample size and makeup of the populations used to norm the VMQ were limited. There was a lack of diversity within the

population, which raises areas of concern. Without generalizability, the use of the tool is limited in practice. I believe that if the VMQ was assessed with a broader norm population, the external validity could increase.

Overall, I do not think the VMQ is the best assessment tool to draw general conclusions from. While there are some clear measurements of reliability and validity, there is not enough data to expand these findings to everyone who takes the assessment. No assessment tool can be perfect, as human error and change is naturally occurring. These measurements could be improved with a larger sample and increased diversity in terms of gender, race, culture, major, age, etc. By specifying these details in the sample population, further assessment into specific traits can be assessed too.

References

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Benchmark Initial Interview Assignment

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Initial Interview**Identifying Information**

Student name: Lucy Dawn	Occupation: part-time barista, student
Address: 67 Lakeland Street Tampa, FL 33611	School: Bayshore Christian School (BCS)
Phone number: (813) 456-7890	Emergency contact: Meghan Dawn (813) 123-6789
Date of birth: April 4 th , 2007 (17 yrs.)	Relationship status: single (minor)
Gender: female	Date of interview: October 29 th , 2024

Reason for Referral

This current referral was requested by Aaron Stewart, the lead young adults pastor at Tampa Bay Christ Community Church. Mr. Stewart presented the following question, “Would the student (Lucy) be a good candidate for participation in a summer mission’s trip in a very challenging environment?”

Current Situation and Functioning

Lucy’s levels of responsibility and functioning are high, as she’s able to successfully complete basic normal activities of daily living such as bathing and grooming. She is also able to successfully complete instrumental activities of daily living such as driving and using her phone. A typical day consists of independently waking up, getting ready and driving to school, going to work or gymnastics, and completing homework.

Lucy is able to successfully manage stress and regulate emotions. She occasionally experiences feelings of anxiety but has found positive ways to cope. These include exercising, journaling, and writing poetry. Lucy has strong problem-solving skills and demonstrates conflict resolution. Lucy stated that she is not afraid to ask for help. She shows signs of empathy and can

relate to others. Lucy perceived her strengths as organization, time management, and teamwork. Her self-perceived weaknesses are assertiveness, STEM subjects, and a tendency towards perfectionism.

A Mental Status Exam (MSE) was conducted, and Lucy was concluded that Lucy exhibited normative behavior, appeared to be well groomed, was appropriately emotionally responsive, and was correctly oriented to the date and time and setting. No concerns were presented. There were no presentations of speech, perceptual, thought, or mood disturbances. Lucy's appeared to be happy and was compliant throughout the interview. Lucy was also assessed for risk using the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). She answered "no" to all the questions asked, which included "Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?" She presented low risk for self-inflicted harm and suicide. There are no concerns regarding aggression, danger to others, trauma, or abuse.

Relevant Medical and Mental Health Treatment History

There is no record of any significant previous or current medical problems. She has endured few minor injuries from gymnastics like spraining her ankle. Lucy is not on any medications, has no documented disabilities, and has never been hospitalized. Lucy has a history of anxiety but does not have a formal diagnosis. She has received private counseling for about 1 year at age 15. There are no reported medical, psychiatric, or substance abuse disorders known in blood relatives.

Family History

Lucy lives with her mother, father, and younger brother (14 yrs.) in a single-family home. Lucy's mother and father have been married for the entirety of her lifetime. She reports positive, meaningful relationships with her family, but notes she is particularly close to her mother. She

reports that her family is close-knit, and she expressed gratitude for them.

Social and Developmental History

Throughout her lifetime, Lucy had overall normative development. Physical and cognitive developmental milestones were all met at or around expected time of attainment. Lucy has stable relationships and strong social supports. In both extracurriculars and academics, she strives for success. She has been gymnast since she was 6 years old. She reports understanding the importance of receiving feedback and teamwork.

Through the lens of Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, Lucy would be considered to be in the adolescent stage, facing the conflict of identity versus role confusion. Up until this point, she has attained the main virtue attached to each of the previous stages through working through the associated basic conflicts. Lucy is currently wrestling with the idea of who she wants to become in the future. This also relates to Kohlberg's Moral Development theory, as Lucy has reached the post-conventional morality stage. More specifically, she has reached the social contract stage and is learning through her experiences that her behavior is not just driven by her desires, but also what is viewed as "right" in the world.

Educational and Occupational History

Lucy attended a public local K-8 School in Tampa before starting at BCS on scholarship. She has always maintained grades of As and Bs, as it was a BCS admission and scholarship requirement. Lucy plans on attending college after high school and is hoping to pursue college gymnastics.

Lucy has worked at a local coffee shop as a barista since she was 16 years old. She also volunteers at the local church in the kid's ministry and outreach programs.

Cultural Influences

Lucy is Caucasian with a Spanish & Italian heritage, and she identifies as a Christian. Mental health was never prioritized within her familial context, but she is supported. She is the first family member to pursue mental health care. When asked more about her cultural identity and influences, Lucy lacked an explanation. When counseling Lucy, potential issues that may arise include Lucy's lack of cultural awareness regarding her own identity as well as a lack of understanding of Lucy's worldviews on the counselor's end. As a counselor as BCS, integrating her faith and beliefs could be beneficial.

Plan of Action

Lucy is a good candidate for participation in a summer mission's trip. Even though Lucy has periodic episodes of anxiety, it is my belief that she would persevere through the challenges she may be faced with on the trip, as she modeled instances of previous resilience.

When working with Lucy, solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) will be utilized because of the focus on future orientation and facility of identifying practical steps for success. For Lucy, it would be beneficial to integrate theoretical practices such as strength identification, additional positive coping skills, as well as success visualization. This way, Lucy can identify present day changes that can positively impact her future and prepare her for the mission trip.

A recommended service is an integration of the miracle question and psychoeducation. The miracle question is a foundational intervention of SFBT. Examples could include "What would the perfect mission trip look like?" or "If a miracle occurred, what uncertainties about the mission trip would have disappeared?" The miracle question can lay the foundation for areas of needed psychoeducation. By integrating information acquisition, such as what to expect in the mission trip setting, Lucy can better and thus create a better future. Possible content can include

personal and international cultural awareness- aimed to build empathy and prepare her mentally/emotionally.

Another service I would recommend is individual counseling sessions focusing on recognizing Lucy's strengths. By focusing on her strengths, encouraging positive coping behaviors, and setting goals, Lucy can learn to combat any possible arising anxiety. SFBT techniques that could be utilized are scaling and exception-based questions. These techniques can help Lucy reframe worry and increase confidence. The goal of this intervention would be to build Lucy up so that she feels motivated to improve her ability to persevere in a difficulty environment, build resilience, and foster positive change in the future.