

A preliminary study for Espero-II: a new items analysis of the Espero questionnaire on the injunctions and counterinjunctions.

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Uno studio preliminare verso l'Espero-II: nuova analisi degli item del questionario Espero sulle ingiunzioni e controingiunzioni

Abstract

The article outlines the results obtained from the items analysis of the Espero, carried out on a sample of subjects, more numerous and heterogeneous than that used in the study of the validity of the questionnaire (Scilligo et al., 1999). The research was conducted in the framework of the project "Espero II" which aims to review the validity and reliability of the Espero questionnaire through a new normative sample with a view to the creation of a revised version of this instrument.

The items analysis showed that 13 items out of 120 (11%) show low correlations with the scale to which they belong. The information which can be obtained from this first analysis of the questionnaire suggests that a review of some scales may be necessary: among those that reveal injunctions, the "Don't" scale and the "Don't be a child" scale, in line with what emerged from the analysis made by Scilligo and colleagues in 1999; among those that reveal counterinjunctions, the "Please (people)" scale and "Be strong" scale.

Further data for a review of the items of the test could emerge from the factorial analysis which is in progress and which will be the subject of a future publication.

Keywords:

Espero, injunctions, counterinjunctions, item analysis.

Introduction

In Transactional Analysis (AT), injunctions and counterinjunctions are two basic concepts, in that they are a central part of the life-script. Various authors have dealt with these concepts and have given different definitions.

The injunctions, according to Gouldings (1983), are restrictive script messages, of a non-verbal nature, sent by the Child of the parents and accepted by the Child of the child.

Focà and others (2005) trace a link between the concepts deriving from attachment theory and the AT injunction construct: at a behavioural level, to obey the injunction means to put into play actions which increase the probability of maintaining a relationship with the

interiorized attachment figure; at the cognitive level, connected declarative memories will be formed, evident in the self-description that people produce by communicating with themselves and others.

According to Gouldings (1983), counterinjunctions are “messages issued from the Parent ego state of the parents, which, if believed, could impede growth and flexibility” (p.45).

Bastianelli, D’Aversa and Scilligo (2004) argue that counterinjunctions are normative strategies of a protective nature, created by the person who has will and is an active subject in creating meaning and direction in his own life’s reality.

Scilligo and colleagues, in 1999, drew up the Espero questionnaire to measure the injunctions and counterinjunctions, using the categories proposed by Gouldings (1983) for the injunctions and those of the five drivers proposals of Kahler (1974) for the counterinjunctions.

The questionnaire is made up of 120 items, self-descriptions of how the person behaves or of how he perceives the situations in which he finds himself in the present or has in the past. The subject evaluates each item on a Likert scale with four choices, shown 1 (being definitely false), 2 (partly false), 3 (fairly true), 4 (very true). The items are composed of 20 scales (15 relating to injunctions and 5 to counterinjunctions). The scales of the injunctions include 12 injunctions described by Gouldings (1983): “Don’t belong”, “Don’t grow up”, “Don’t exist”, “Don’t make it”, “Don’t be important”, “Don’t”, “Don’t be sane”, “Don’t think”, “Don’t feel”, “Don’t be you (the sex you are)”, “Don’t be a child”, “Don’t be close”, which Scilligo has divided into “Don’t be close physically” and “Don’t be close psychologically”; to these he has added “Don’t trust protectively” and “Don’t trust defensively”. The counterinjunctions scales are: “Please (people)”, “Hurry up”, “Be strong”, “Try hard”, and “Be perfect”. Each scale is composed of 6 items, apart from the scale “Don’t” which is composed of 9 items, 6 specific ones and 3 which are each in common with another scale.

The validation of the questionnaire was carried out on a sample of 210 subjects aged between 20 and 30 years, 97 men and 113 women (Scilligo et al., 1999) and, subsequently, a factorial analysis was performed on the test (Scilligo & Bastianelli, 1999), which led to the identification of the second-order factorial dimensions of the injunc-

tions (Existence, Relationship and Creativity). The Espero is one of the most frequently used psychometric instruments in TA practice over the years, and in a recent systematic review evaluating the psychometric quality of instruments developed in Transactional Analysis (Vos & van Rijn, 2021), its good interpretability, factorial structure, and content and criterion validity were highlighted, based on studies of multiple populations. By allowing some of the central constructs of the script to be operationalized, the Espero has finally stimulated various empirical research (Bastianelli & Ceridono, 2013; Crea, 2014): it has been used, for example, in numerous studies (Caizzi et al., 2003; Bastianelli et al., 2004; Bove et al., 2004; D'Aversa et al., 2004; de Nitto et al., 2008; Guglielmotti et al., 2004; Ceridono et al., 2005; Bastianelli et al., 2006; Giacometto et al., 2006; Ceridono et al., 2008; Fava, 2012; Scilligo, 1999) who explored the relationship between injunctions, counterinjunctions and ego-self state profiles, showing a significant relationship between Rebellious and Critical ego-self states, high injunctive levels and excessively high or low counterinjunctive levels.

The article aims to describe the results obtained from the items analysis of Espero, carried out on a sample of subjects more numerous and heterogeneous than that used in the study of the validation of the Questionnaire (Scilligo et al., 1999). The research was conducted in the framework of the “Espero II” project, the aim of which is to review the validity and the reliability of the Espero questionnaire through a new normative sample with a view to the creation of a revised version of this tool⁷.

Methods and measures

Sample

The sample was made up of 970 subjects (391 males and 579 females), aged between 18 and 70, taken from two different sources: the patients (340) of the Clinical Centers attached to the I.F.R.E.P. Specialization Schools in Italy (Rome, Venice and Cagliari) and other subjects (630), students and workers, who were not patients of the Clinical Centres.

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Participation in the study was voluntary and all the subjects gave their written consent to the participation in the research.

Analysis of the data and discussion

Items analysis

The items analysis was done on the entire sample (N=970), calculating the fidelity indexes for each scale (Cronbach's alpha) and the correlation between each item and the total for the scale to which it belonged (Tot. Corr.).

Specifically, for each scale the following information is given: the number of the item in the questionnaire ("Inv" written after the number indicates that for the calculation of the total raw value of the scale, the score should be inverted), the content of the item, the correlation between the item and the whole of the scale (Tot. Corr.), the "alpha if" (or Cronbach's alpha calculated without the item) and, at the foot of the table, the average, standard deviation from the scale and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as a reliability index of the scale.

None of the items are repeated in more than one scale, except for the scale "Don't", as has already been mentioned, which contains items also to be found in other scales (specifically it shares item 59 with the scale "Be perfect", item 104 with the scale "Try hard" and item 49 with the scale "Don't trust defensively").

In general, the values of Cronbach's alpha go from .62 ("Don't be a child") to .89 ("Don't be close physically"). Following the statistical convention by which a scale with a Cronbach's alpha around .70 indicates a good fidelity, all the scales show an adequate index of fidelity.

The scale which comes out as most heterogenous is "Don't be a child", while "Don't be close physically" comes out as the most homogenous.

Hereunder we present the items analysis with the values obtained in each of the 20 scales of the questionnaire.

Don't belong

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
1	Sometimes the others step forward and I am left behind	0,38	0,76
21	I feel lonely and disorientated.	0,62	0,70
41	I am a burden for others.	0,57	0,72
61	People who love me always leave	0,46	0,74
81	Others have a place where they feel at home, I don't	0,48	0,74
101	I believe that others don't accept me.	0,59	0,71

Average of the scale: 9.30. Standard Deviation: 3.20. Cronbach's alpha: .76

The correlations item-total go from .38 to .62, or rather all the items from the scale "Don't belong" have correlations above .30. Following the statistical convention according to which an item is valid when it has a correlation with the total score of the scale $> .30$, this indicates a good validity of the items of the scale. No item, if eliminated (alpha se), has shown itself able to increase the value of the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha (.76).

Compared to the analysis carried out by Scilligo, D'Aversa and Livrerano (1999), no important differences in the indices can be seen.

Don't grow up

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
3	Adults who still have their covers tucked in by their mothers are fortunate.	0,30	0,68
23	Often I would like to be small again	0,47	0,62

43	I would like to be called “my little boy” or “my little girl” again.	0,41	0,64
63	I would like to live in a small, comfortable room	0,40	0,65
83	It would be nice to remain always aged 10	0,54	0,61
103	Other people should look after me	0,37	0,66

Average of the scale: 9,71. Standard Deviation: 3.18. Cronbach’s alpha: .68

The items of the scale “Don’t grow up” show correlations which go from .37 to .54, except for item 3 (“Adults who still have their covers tucked in by their mothers are fortunate”) which has a score at the limit (Tot. Corr.= .30). No item, if eliminated (alpha se), showed itself able to increase the value of the coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha. Compared to the analysis carried out by Scilligo, D’Aversa and Liverano, no significant differences can be seen, apart from the value of the correlation between item 3 and the total score of the scale which passes from .49 to .30.

Don’t be

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr..</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
5	It would have been better if I had not been born.	0,65	0,79
25	Sometimes life seems so hard that it would be better to die.	0,62	0,80
45	It would be best if life could be very short.	0,60	0,80
65	People will realise my worth only after I am dead	0,47	0,83

85	I believe that there is no sense to life.	0,60	0,80
105	I don't know what I am doing in this world	0,71	0,77

Average of the scale: 8.03 Standard Deviation: 3.09 Cronbach's alpha: .83

The items in the scale "Don't be" show correlations which go from .47 to .71, greatly over the limit conventionally acceptable. No item, if eliminated, shows itself able to increase the value of the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha (.83).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, it is interesting to note a general increase in the item-scale correlations and in the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha).

Don't trust (protective)

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
6	For me the phrase "to trust is good, not to trust is better" is valid.	0,62	0,82
26 Inv	Usually, one can trust other people.	0,59	0,83
46	It is dangerous to confide in people.	0,65	0,81
66	I don't trust other people.	0,68	0,81
86	It is dangerous to trust people.	0,73	0,80
106 Inv	It is easy to find people one can trust	0,49	0,84

Average for the scale: 13.05 Standard Deviation: 3.75 Cronbach's alpha: .84

The items of the scale “Don’t trust (protective)” obtain correlations which go from .49 to .73, greatly above the limit acceptable conventionally. No item, if eliminated, shows itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha.

Compared to the analysis carried out by Scilliga, DAversa and Livrano (1999), no significant differences are to be noted.

Don’t trust (defensive)

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
9	People are always ready to deceive you	0,50	0,75
29	People hide important thoughts concerning me.	0,52	0,75
49	It is useless to explain oneself and ask questions, in any case you never know what people think of you.	0,57	0,74
69	People don’t tell me sincerely what they think of me.	0,63	0,72
89	I think everyone is against me.	0,53	0,75
109	It is difficult to know what people think of you.	0,46	0,77

Average for the scale: 10.71 Standard Deviation: 3.22 Cronbach’s alpha: .78

The items of the scale “Don’t trust (defensive)” have correlations which go from .46 to .63, above the limit acceptable conventionally. No item, if eliminated, shows itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha (.78).

Compared to the analysis carried out by Scilligo and colleagues (1999), no significant differences are to be noted.

Don't make it

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
7	I have difficulty learning things	0,48	0,61
27	I find it difficult to finish things I have started.	0,46	0,61
47 Inv	I know how to do well the work I perform.	0,28	0,67
67	The protection of others is essential for me.	0,27	0,69
87	There are many things I give up doing because I feel I would not be able to do them.	0,54	0,58
107	When there are innovations, I feel faint.	0,42	0,63

Average for the scale: 10.89. Standard Deviation: 2.98. Cronbach's alpha: .68

Two items of the scale "Don't make it" obtain unsatisfactory correlations (item 47: Tot. Corr. = .28; item 67: Tot. Corr. = .27). Also in the analysis carried out by Scilligo and colleagues in 1999, item 47 obtained a low correlation ($r=.25$). Eliminating item 67, Cronbach's alpha increases slightly, passing from .68 to .69.

Don't be important

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
8	I can't obtain the things I want.	0,47	0,74
28	I don't ask for the things I want.	0,41	0,76

48	I prefer to remain silent rather than take up a position.	0,42	0,75
68	I am less important than the others.	0,59	0,71
88	I think that whatever I do, it does not have much importance.	0,65	0,69
108	I prefer it when others make decisions for me	0,55	0,72

Average for the scale: 10.85. Standard Deviation: 3.44. Cronbach's alpha: .77

The items of the scale "Don't be important" obtain correlations which go from .41 to .65, definitely above the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated (alpha if), showed itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach's alpha (.77).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, no significant differences are to be noted.

Don't be close Physically

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
10	I feel uncomfortable if people touch me.	0,71	0,87
30	If someone stands close to me, I become rigid.	0,64	0,88
50	When people come very close to me, I want to run away.	0,62	0,88
70	I feel uncomfortable if somebody touches me or if I touch somebody.	0,78	0,85
90	I become rigid if somebody touches me.	0,79	0,85

110	I avoid coming into contact with another person.	0,69	0,87
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Average for the scale: 8.95. Standard Deviation: 3.58. Cronbach's alpha: .89

The items of the scale "Don't be close physically" have correlations which go from .62 to .79, greatly over the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated, has shown itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach's alpha (.89).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Don't be close psychologically

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
14	I hide my feelings.	0,50	0,68
34	Personal things should not be confided to anyone.	0,49	0,69
54	I stop myself from expressing the affection I feel.	0,49	0,69
74 Inv	I like confiding in somebody.	0,47	0,69
94 Inv	I try to find occasions when I can confide in somebody.	0,46	0,69
114	People who confide in other people are imprudent.	0,39	0,71

Average for the scale: 11.10. Standard Deviation: 3.21. Cronbach's alpha: .73

The items of the scale "Don't be close psychologically" have correlations which go from .39 to .50, above the conventionally acceptable

limit. No item, if eliminated, has shown itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach's alpha.

Also with respect to this injunction, comparing the data with that of the analysis conducted in 1999, no significant differences are found.

Don't

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
11	One should not annoy those who love you.	0,34	0,61
31	One should never write on walls.	0,26	0,64
51	One should not make proposals to people one doesn't know.	0,31	0,62
49	It is useless to explain yourself and ask questions, in any case you never know what people think of you.	0,39	0,60
59	One of my good qualities is that I am very precise.	0,11	0,66
71	Beautiful things should not be touched.	0,37	0,61
91	Even as adults one should not disobey one's parents.	0,41	0,60
104	One should never leave a thing half done.	0,41	0,60
111	It is better to clench one's teeth and not feel much.	0,36	0,61

Average for the scale: 20.62. Standard Deviation: 4.10.
Cronbach's alpha: .64

Two items of the scale “Don’t” obtain low correlations (item 31: Tot. Corr.=.26; item 59: Tot. Corr.=.11). Taking out item 59, the alpha is raised, even if by very little (passing from .64 to .66).

In the analysis carried out in 1999, there were a good 7 out of 9 (11, 31, 51, 59, 71, 79, 111) items which obtained low correlations (from .17 to .28.).

Don’t be sane

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
12	When I hear someone say jokingly “you’re crazy” I have a reaction of fear.	0,44	0,73
32	I am worried in case I become ill.	0,44	0,74
52	Sometimes I am afraid of going crazy.	0,61	0,68
72	Some worries almost drive me insane.	0,59	0,69
92	I often talk about illnesses and indispositions.	0,53	0,71
112	Sometimes I think I see things which turn out to be just in my imagination.	0,37	0,75

Average for the scale: 10.10. Standard Deviation: 3.46. Cronbach’s alpha: .75

The items of the scale “Don’t be sane” have correlations which go from .37 to .61, well over the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated, showed itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha (.75).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Don't think

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
15	Sometimes I have the impression that I am not capable of thinking.	0,69	0,85
35	I get confused.	0,59	0,87
55 Inv	I am able to think clearly.	0,58	0,87
75	Often I feel as if I am not able to think.	0,74	0,84
95	Often I tell myself that I don't know how to think.	0,73	0,84
115	I am unable to put my thoughts together.	0,73	0,84

Average for the scale: 9.89. Standard Deviation: 3.46. Cronbach's alpha: .75

The items of the scale "Don't think" have correlations which go from .58 to .74, greatly over the conventionally acceptable limit. The alpha increases in all the cases in which it is eliminated from the calculation one item at a time, arriving at .75 to .87. Probably, this indicates that every item contributes to a good heterogeneity of the scale (considering that, taking it out, the scale would become more homogeneous).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Don't feel

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
17 Inv	I feel many emotions and feelings.	0,49	0,66

37	I find it difficult to feel my emotions completely.	0,33	0,71
57 Inv	If I relax completely, I feel many emotions.	0,49	0,66
77 Inv	When I relax, I feel many emotions flowing through me.	0,52	0,64
97	Sometimes I think I am not capable of feeling emotions.	0,45	0,67
117 Inv	I let myself be carried away by my emotions.	0,41	0,68

Average of the scale: 11.35 Standard Deviation: 3.27. Cronbach's alpha: .72

The items of the scale "Don't feel" have correlations which go from .33 to .52, above the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated, showed itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach's alpha (.72).

It is interesting to note that, compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, the correlations of the following items improve: item 17 (which passes from .19 to .49), item 37 (which passes from .06 to .33) and item 97 (which passes from .17 to .45), correlations which showed up as not good.

Don't be you (the sex you are)

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
20	Maybe I was born with the wrong sex	0,69	0,81
40	I don't like being of the sex I am.	0,68	0,82
60	At times I would like to be in the body of a person of a different sex	0,54	0,85

	from mine.		
80	Often I wish that I was a different sex from the one I am	0,59	0,83
100	Everything considered, for me it would be better not to be the sex I am.	0,69	0,82
120	If I could have chosen, I would have been born a different sex from what I am.	0,72	0,81

Average for the scale: 7.15. Standard Deviation: 2.54. Cronbach's alpha: .85

The items of the scale "Don't be you (the sex you are)" have correlations which go from .54 to .72, very much above the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated, showed itself able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach's alpha (.85.).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Don't be a child

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
13 Inv	I like playing with children as if I were one of them.	0,47	0,53
33 Inv	I would enjoy the activity of building a tent or a little hut just as children do.	0,42	0,55
53 Inv	When I have time I like to revisit or imagine the places where I used to play when I was little.	0,30	0,60
73	I would like to relax, at least in my	0,36	0,58

Inv	imagination, running through the fields and doing somersaults.		
93	I don't like the type of behaviour which is like that of children	0,23	0,63
113	It is ridiculous that adults play like children play.	0,35	0,58

Average for the scale: 13.54. Standard Deviation: 3.50. Cronbach's alpha: .62

The version of this scale (Don't be a child) differs from the original one in the study by Scilligo and colleagues (1999). In fact, Scilligo, after the psychometric limits revealed in that study, substituted the items 33, 53, 73, and 93 with those in the table above (P. Scilligo, personal communication, January 2000).

In the version of the present scale, Cronbach's alpha is .62, while in the version of 1999 it was .52. Two items in the present scale "Don't be a child" obtain low correlations (item 53: Tot. Corr.=.30; item 93: Tot. Corr. =.23. If we take out item 93, Cronbach's alpha increases slightly (passing from .62 to .63). The two items in the version of 1999 which have been kept in the present version (13, 113) both have good correlations (.47, .35). In the analysis carried out in 1999 by Scilligo and colleagues 4 items out of 6 (13, 53, 73, 93) obtained low correlations (from .20 to .30).

Please (people)

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
2 Inv	I can do things well even without the approval of the others.	0,35	0,59
22 Inv	It doesn't matter to me to know from others if I am doing well or not.	0,29	0,61
42 Inv	It doesn't matter if my clothes are	0,22	0,65

	out of date, the important thing is that I like them.		
62	So as not to seem different I follow faithfully what the others say.	0,50	0,55
82	I do things well more to win approval than for pleasure in the work itself.	0,35	0,59
102	Before doing anything I worry about what people will think	0,52	0,52

Average for the scale: 12.43. Standard Deviation: 2.93. Cronbach's alpha: .63.

Two items in the scale "Please (people)" obtain low correlations (item 22: Tot. Corr. = .29; item 42: Tot. Corr. = .22). Taking out item 42, Cronbach's alpha is raised by just a little (from .63 to .65). Also, in the analysis carried out on 1999, one of the two items mentioned above (item 42) obtained a correlation right at the limit (.30).

Hurry up

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot .Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
18	I feel uncomfortable when I do things slowly.	0,38	0,70
38 Inv	When doing things, for me it's true that "slow and steady wins the race".	0,33	0,71
58	I usually do things hurriedly and immediately.	0,48	0,67
78 Inv	I eat slowly and calmly.	0,33	0,72
98	When I am working, I proceed	0,56	0,65

Inv	slowly and calmly.		
118 Inv	I do everything slowly and calmly.	0,67	0,61

Average for the scale: 14.86. Standard Deviation: 3.35. Cronbach's alpha: .72

The items in the scale "Hurry up" have correlations which go from .33 to .67, above the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated, showed itself able to increase the coefficient Cronbach's alpha (.72).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Be strong

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot.Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
16	It is better to choke back your tears than to let them come out.	0,28	0,64
36 Inv	One should let oneself go and be sweet.	0,16	0,67
56 Inv	At difficult moments I let myself be moved.	0,55	0,54
76 Inv	Sometimes I cry if I come across difficulties or troubles.	0,48	0,56
96 Inv	At delicate moments one should also be able to let oneself cry.	0,45	0,58
116	In delicate and painful situations I remain composed and strong.	0,37	0,61

Average for the scale: 11.99. Standard Deviation: 3.12. Cronbach's alpha: .65

Two items in the scale “Be strong” obtain low correlations (item 16: Tot. Corr. = .28; item 36: Tot. Corr. =.16). Taking off this last one, Cronbach’s alpha goes up slightly (passing from.65 to .67).

Also in the analysis carried out in 1999, item 36 obtained a low correlation (.24.)

Try hard.

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot. Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
4	When I am working, I finish whatever I am doing even if it gets late.	0,58	0,68
24	When I come across a difficulty in the work, I double my efforts.	0,42	0,73
44 Inv	If I am tired, I put aside my work even if it isn’t finished.	0,46	0,72
64	If I start working on something, I go right to the end even out of hours.	0,65	0,66
84	When I start an activity there is nothing which can distract me.	0,45	0,72
104	One should never leave a thing half done	0,37	0,74

Average for the scale: 16.65. Standard Deviation: 3.28. Cronbach’s alpha: .75

The items of the scale “Try hard” have correlations which go from .37 to .65, well above the conventionally acceptable limit. No item, if eliminated, showed itself to be able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha (.75).

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Be perfect

<i>Item</i>		<i>Tot.Corr.</i>	<i>Alpha if</i>
19	Things should either be done well or not done at all.	0,34	0,62
39 Inv	I feel comfortable in an untidy room.	0,28	0,65
59	One of my good qualities is that I am precise.	0,56	0,54
79 Inv	I prefer to do things in a slapdash manner rather than carefully.	0,45	0,58
99 Inv	I do things without paying attention to the details.	0,44	0,59
119	When I go out, I take particular care to have my clothes perfectly in order.	0,26	0,65

Average for the scale: 17.82. Standard Deviation: 3.06. Cronbach's alpha: .65.

Lastly, two items of the scale "Be perfect" obtain low correlations (item 39: Tot. Corr. = .28; item 119: Tot. Corr. = .26); however, no item, if eliminated, showed itself to be able to increase the value of the coefficient Cronbach's alpha.

Compared to the analysis carried out in 1999, there are no significant differences.

Conclusions

In general, the analysis of the internal coherence of the test gave good results and confirmed the good psychometric qualities which came out in the study done by Scilligo and colleagues (1999); the values of Cronbach's alpha go from .62 ("Don't be a child") to .89 ("Don't be close physically"). Following the statistical convention by which a scale with a Cronbach's alpha of about .70 indicates a good accuracy, all the scales show an adequate index of accuracy.

The scale which comes out as most heterogeneous is “Don’t be a child”, while “Don’t be close Physically” comes out as the most homogeneous.

From the items analysis subdivided by scale it emerges that on the whole 13 scales out of 20 (“Don’t belong”, “Don’t be”, “Don’t trust protective”, “Don’t trust Defensive”, “Don’t be important”, “Don’t be close physically”, “Don’t be close psychologically”, “Don’t be sane”, “Don’t think”, “Don’t feel”, “Don’t be you”, “Hurry up”, “Try hard”) show themselves to be formed by items with good psychometric properties, or rather which obtain correlations item – total of the scale above .30. In these scales no item, if eliminated, increases the value of the index of accuracy of the scale (Cronbach’s alpha).

The items analysis in these 13 scales does not present any particular differences compared to that carried out by Scilligo, D’Aversa e Liverano in 1999, if one excludes a general increase of the correlations item – scale and of the alpha coefficient for the scale “Don’t be” and the improvement in the correlations of three items (17, 37, 97) of the scale “Don’t feel” which, among other things, in 1999 came out with correlations which were not good. To sum up, for these 13 scales we do not see any necessity to make improvements nor substantial modifications.

Some scales, on the other hand, present one item (“Don’t grow up”) or two (“Don’t make it”, “Don’t”, “Don’t be a child”, “Please (people)”, “Be strong”, “Be perfect”) with low correlations.

In the case of the injunction “Don’t grow up”, item 3 (“Adults who still have their covers tucked in by their mothers are fortunate”) obtains a score at the limit (Tot. Corr. = .30) but, even eliminating this item, the value of the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha would remain the same, and therefore, in a conservative viewpoint, there would not be much sense in changing the scale in an effort to modify the item (we think it might be useful to remember that in the analysis carried out in 1999 by Scilligo, D’Aversa and Liverano, the r tot for item 3 was greatly above (.49) the conventionally accepted limit.)

We can apply the same considerations to the two items of the scale “Don’t succeed” (item 47: “I know how to do well the work I perform” and item 67: “The protection of others is essential for me”) which, since they do not have good correlations with the total of the

scale, could be subject to change: in this case eliminating only item 67, Cronbach's alpha would increase only slightly (from .68 to .69), not improving however in a consistent manner the coherence of the scale which in any case seems good. Scilligo and colleagues (1999) had also obtained a low correlation for item 47.

The scale "Don't", the only one which contains 9 items, came out as a problem in 1999, since as many as 7 of its items (11, 31, 51, 59, 71, 91, 111) had obtained low correlations. In our sample, there are only two items which obtain low correlations (item 31 "One should not ever write on walls" and item 59 "One of my good qualities is that I am precise", in common with the scale "Be perfect"). Since eliminating item 59 Cronbach's alpha rises, even though only slightly (passing from .64 to .66), this item could be taken out of the calculation of the scale (leaving it in the scale "Be perfect", where it shows a good correlation item-total and with which it has a more evident link with the content).

Regarding the scale "Don't be a child", Scilligo and colleagues (1999) had found low correlations in four items out of six (13, 53, 73, 93). Scilligo (in a personal communication) had reformulated four items of this scale to make it more coherent, considering that the coefficient Cronbach's alpha came out fairly low (.52).

In our sample, with the new version of the scale, there are two items which obtain low correlations (item 53: "When I have time I like to revisit or imagine the places where I used to play when I was little" and item 93 "I don't like behaviour which is like that of children"). If we eliminate item 93, Cronbach's alpha would rise slightly (passing from .62 to .63). The fact that the scale still presents problems in spite of the greater number and heterogeneity of the sample and the modification of 4 items makes us reflect on the validity of its content and on the possibility of modifying it substantially. We can see, however, an improvement compared to the original version.

The last three scales in which two items have obtained low item - total correlations are "Please me", "Be strong", and "Be perfect".

In the scale "Please me" the items 22 ("It doesn't matter to me to know from others if I am doing well or not") and 42 ("It doesn't matter if my clothes are out of date, the important thing is that I like them") obtain low correlations and if we eliminate item 42 which, also in the analysis carried out in 1999, obtained a correlation right at

the limit (.30), Cronbach's alpha would be raised from .63 to .65. Probably this is an item whose content could take on a different meaning according to the age of the subject.

In the scale "Be strong" item 16 ("It is better to choke back your tears than to let them come out") and item 36 ("One should let oneself go and become good-natured"), which obtained a low correlation also in 1999 (.24), obtain low correlations. Eliminating item 36, Cronbach's alpha would be raised from .65 to .67.

Lastly, regarding the scale "Be perfect", item 39 ("I feel comfortable in an untidy room") and item 119 ("When I go out I take particular care to have my clothes perfectly in order") obtain low correlations, but Cronbach's alpha does not increase eliminating one or the other of these and comes out as good in any case (.65).

In conclusion, from the items analysis it can be seen that there are in all 13 items (11%)⁸ with low correlations (up to .30) with the scale to which they belong which could be reformulated, modified or eliminated. However, in a conservative type of prospective, only part of these items (4 out of 13)⁹ deserves to be completely revised with a view to an improvement of the psychometric characteristics of the test.

The indications that can be taken from this first analysis of the questionnaire suggest that some scales should be revised: from those which reveal the injunctions, the scale "Don't" and the scale "Don't be a child", in line with what already emerges from the analysis carried out by Scilligo and colleagues in 1999; from those which reveal the counterinjunctions the scales "Please (people)" and "Be strong". Further data for a revision of the items of the test could emerge from the factorial analysis which is in progress and which will be the subject of a future publication.

⁸ The 13 items are as follows: item 3 of the "Don't grow" scale, items 47 and 67 of the "Don't make it" scale, items 31 and 59 of the "Don't" scale, items 53 and 93 of the "Don't be a child" scale, items 22 and 42 of the "Please (people)" scale, items 16 and 36 of the "Be strong" scale, items 39 and 119 of the "Be perfect" scale.

⁹ Item 59 (to be assigned only to the "Be perfect" scale), item 93, item 42, and item 36.

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