The Sexuality-Related Traits under Measure: Validity Evidence for Seven Scales in Brazil

Jean C. Natividade | Claudio S. Hutz
e-mail: jeannatividade@gmail.com

Laboratory of Measurement
Institute of Psychology

Among many approaches to the study of personality, one has based its search in dictionaries for words capable of describing individual differences (lexical approach, see John, Angleitner, & Ostendorf, 1988). These searches guided research that, currently, comprises the structure of personality based on five big factors. In the process of selecting descriptors that were representative of the characteristics of personality, many terms concerning sexuality were not included as trait markers. Consequently, peculiarities of human sexuality were left out of the explanatory models of personality. However, individual differences in sexuality related characteristics are relevant to the explanation of many phenomena, especially those related to reproductive behaviors and strategies.

A pioneering study conducted in the USA turned to the terms in the dictionaries and found seven dimensions in English language, which explained characteristics of human sexuality (Schmitt & Buss, 2000). More recently in Brazil, the number and content of those dimensions emerged from empirical data with Brazilian Portuguese (Natividade, 2014). The dimensions refer to sexual attractiveness, exclusivity in relationships, gender orientation, sexual restriction, erotic disposition, emotional investment, and sexual orientation. These dimensions in Brazil emerged from exploratory analysis in one study, and in a second study the seven-dimension structure was confirmed. Additionally, the findings showed that the sexuality dimensions constitute independent constructs that are not subsumed to the big five personality factors (Natividade, 2014).

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Goals

The goals of these studies were to elaborate contextualized item measures for each of the seven dimensions concerning sexuality, as found earlier by lexical approach.

Method

Participants

Study 1 - Sexual Attractiveness
758 individuals; 66% were women, mean age 27.4 years (*SD*=8.57);

Study 2 - Relationship Exclusivity
797 individuals; 65% were women, mean age 28.1 years (*SD*=9.40);

Study 3 - Sexual Restriction
802 individuals; 67% were women, mean age 28.0 years (*SD*=9.50);

Study 4 - Erotic Disposition
799 individuals; 66% were women, mean age 27.9 years (*SD*=9.26);

Study 5 - Emotional Investment
769 individuals; 65% were women, mean age 27.2 years (*SD*=8.65);

Study 6 - Gender Orientation
794 individuals; 67% were women, mean age 28.0 years (*SD*=9.63);

Study 7 - Sexual Orientation
793 individuals; 63% were women, mean age 28.1 years (*SD*=9.46).

Results

For each study, initially, we randomly divided the sample in half and we ran exploratory factor analyzes with one half of the sample. These analyzes showed the emergence of two factors for each scale. Then we tested this two-factor structure with the second half of the sample in confirmatory analyzes. In those confirmatory analyzes we performed models that exclude certain items of each scale, based on the results of the exploratory analyzes. For example, items with low loadings on any of the factors and items with very similar charges in two factors. So, we reached the results that can be seen in Table 1.

The confirmatory factor analyzes results of each scale suggest an adequate adjustment of the structure of the instruments. Also, the reliability indexes show satisfactory levels of accuracy for each scale. We also found sex differences according previous studies, and high correlations with correspondent version of each dimension of sexuality by adjective measures (Natividade, 2014).

Table 1
Psychometric Proprieties for Seven Sexuality-Related Scales

	Sexual Attractiveness		Relationship Exclusivity		Sexual Restriction		Erotic Disposition		Emotional Investment		Gender Orientation		Sexual Orientation	
Items	14		11		14		12		16		18		15	
Model	2 factors		2 factors		2 factors		2 factors		2 factors		2 factors		2 factors	
GFI	.94		.94		.93		.94		.93		.94		.92	
CFI	.96		.93		.95		.93		.94		.97		.97	
TLI	.95		.91		.94		.91		.93		.97		.97	
RMSEA	.060		.070		.066		.072		.057		.048		.071	
Factors	Beauty	Seduction	Monogamy	Fidelity	Restriction	Shame	Indecency	Lust	Romance	Affection	Typified	Mixed	Het-Homo	Bisex
Cronbach's Alpha	.87	.89	.80	.84	.91	.78	.79	.80	.85	.84	.92	.88	.95	.95
Temporal correlation, 60 days	**.90****	**.85****	**.84****	**.80****	**.93****	**.73****	**.85****	**.81****	**.83****	**.84****	.65**	**.73****	**.95****	**.90****
Adjective Dimensions	**.83****	.57**	**.75****	**.87****	.58**	.46**	**.89****	.32**	**.70****	**.73****	.68**	.66**	**.88****	**.73****
Social Desirability	-.02	-.23**	.11**	.10**	.21**	-.01	-.13**	-.05	.07	.15**	.19**	-.14**	.16**	-.18**
Cohen's *d* for Sex Difference	0.40	-0.18	0.39	0.39	0.74	0.46	-0.77	-0.99	0.11 ns	0.20	0.09 ns	0.28	0.14ns	0.27

Note. Adjective Dimensions refers to correspondent construct assessed by Sexy Seven Brazil (with adjective descriptors, Natividade, 2014) for each scales. ns – non significant sex differences were found. The minus sign in the Cohen's *d* represent higher mean for Men. Correlation's coefficients higher than .70 are in boldface. ** *p*<.01.

Procedures

We developed seven independent studies, all with identical procedures. Initially, we formulated definitions of constructs for sexuality dimensions, basing on the empirical findings from the lexical approach (Natividade, 2014; Schmitt & Buss, 2000). So, we outlined affirmative-like items that could represent the constructs. Then we sent the items and definitions to five experts, for them to judge their representativeness and adequacy. From the answers of the experts, we made adjustments to the items and submitted the scales to empirical test.

For the empirical tests we collected data via internet with questionnaires that contained the scales and other instruments for convergent and discriminant validity evidences. After 60 days from the data collection, about 100 participants answered again the seven Sexuality Scales.

Conclusion

We performed seven studies to develop instruments to assess: Sexual Attractiveness, Relationship Exclusivity, Sexual Restriction, Erotic Disposition, Emotional Investment, Gender Orientation, and Sexual Orientation. Exploratory and confirmatory analyzes revealed adequate evidence of two-factorial structures with satisfactory reliability for each scale. Correlations with standard measures and discriminatory power reinforced the validity evidence for the seven instruments. Those may possibly represent the first set of successful lexical approach-inspired contextualized item instruments for measuring dimensions of human sexuality.

References

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CONTACT
Jean C. Natividade - e-mail: jeannatividade@gmail.com
Rua Ramiro Barcellos, 2600
Porto Alegre - RS – Brasil

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