Reviewer’s report

Title: The School Anxiety Scale-Teacher Report (SAS-TR): translation and psychometric properties of the Iranian version

Version: 2 Date: 18 July 2011

Reviewer: Heidi Lyneham

Reviewer’s report:

This paper reports on psychometric properties of the School Anxiety Scale - Teacher Report, Iranian Version. While the fundamentals of the data have been collected the paper requires some additional information and re-analysis of data to be satisfactory.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Background: The background provides a brief overview of the area and need for a translated assessment tool.

1) A brief (1 paragraph) summary of the findings of the original SAS-TR should be included, this should highlight existing psychometric evidence and findings on age and gender. This could be incorporated with the second paragraph.

2) Comment on the possible causes of gender differences should be omitted as they are not relevant to the final discussion.

Methods: 1) The initial description of the SAS-TR would be best placed in the background material due to it being the topic of interest. The scoring and description of psychometric properties of the original measure can remain in the methods section.

2) The data collection section should be labeled procedure and should include detail on the procedures for the test-retest, how teachers completed the questionnaire (paper and pencil or online), and what procedures were used to gain permission from students and parents.

3) Given that this study is a translation of an existing measure, it would be more appropriate if a confirmatory factor analysis had been used to establish if the same factors existed in the new translation. The factor analysis (whether exploratory or confirmatory) is not evidence for construct validity (and therefore this paper does not examine construct validity at all).

Results:

1) The description of participants should be moved to the method section and a description of the characteristics of the teachers should be added. It would be important to know how many students were rated by each teacher as this should technically be a property that is accounted for in data analytic strategies.

2) See note above regarding need to use confirmatory factor analysis.
Discussion:

1) In the second paragraph application of the clinical cut-offs designed to identify the top 20% of anxious children in the Australian data have successfully identified the same proportion of anxious children in the Iranian sample. This is important to point out and would be more relevant than the references provided which focus solely on the pre-school group.

2) In the third paragraph, 4th sentence the wording should provide a descriptive indication of whether boys scored higher or lower than girls (rather than in favor).

3) Also in the 3rd paragraph, while all points provided may be relevant it should also be noted that the measure was designed for school age children not preschool children and that perhaps differences in educational systems may also account for differences in findings.

4) In the 4th it would be good to highlight if any items loaded differently to the original questionnaire (this will not be relevant if the advice above is taken).

5) You will need to acknowledge as a limitation that construct validity was also not examined.

Overall this is a good piece of work that is useful to the profession, it just needs some reworking to improve the quality of the materials.

Minor Essential Revisions

The paper would benefit from review by a native English speaker who is familiar with psychology publishing conventions. The authors should consider collaborating with another author to achieve the needed changes to language and style who may also be able to assist with the major revision needed.

Discretionary Revisions

Nil

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'