

THE REVISED INFANT TEMPERAMENT QUESTIONNAIRE: TRANSLATION AND PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING FOR USE IN A THAI POPULATION

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Abstract

Aims: To assess the applicability of the Revised Infant Temperament Questionnaire to a Thai population.

Methods: The Revised Infant Temperament Questionnaire was back-translated into Thai. The questionnaire was used for psychometric testing for 530 Thai mothers and their 4- to 11-month-old infants.

Results: Alpha coefficients for the 9 traits ranged from 0.20 to 0.52, and test-retest reliabilities ranged from 0.37 to 0.71. All reliabilities were compared to those reported in the original study from the USA and those from other countries. The reliabilities compared with previous studies were modest. Multicollinearity among temperament traits was also found in the present and previous studies.

Conclusions: Due to its psychometric weaknesses, the Revised Infant Temperament Questionnaire was not suitable for use in the Thai population. Development of new temperament scale for Thai infants is encouraged.

Key words: Infant, Instrumentation, Temperament

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Introduction

Temperament research initiated by Thomas et al in their pioneering New York Longitudinal Study (NYLS)¹ has formed the basis of the current understanding that child temperament, the intrinsic behavioural characteristics of a child, makes significant contributions to the parent-child relationship and later development. A number of measures of child temperament have been developed with various forms including an observational checklist, interview questionnaire, and self-administered questionnaire.

Despite the variety of instruments available to assess temperament in infancy and childhood, most studies using these instruments have restricted normative samples for size and representativeness, and few empirical findings relevant to validity are currently available.² One of the most widely used temperament scales is the Revised Infant Temperament Questionnaire (RITQ) developed by Carey and McDevitt.³ In the

original study of the validity of the RITQ performed among middle-class white Americans, each of 9 traits had modest internal consistency reliability ranging from 0.49 to 0.71, and its validity was not empirically grounded.³ However, this scale has been used in many cultural settings, including Taiwan,⁴ Australia,⁵ Denmark,⁶ Japan,⁷ and several populations in the Nordic countries.^{8,9} The reliabilities reported in these studies are varied.

Translation of the instrument and assurance of its psychometric properties for use in a culturally different group of respondents is challenging. The ultimate goal of translating instruments into multiple languages is to permit international comparison. The RITQ was first translated into Thai by Tratormpisudhikul using a 1-way translation method.¹⁰ However, only 6 of the 9 traits of the RITQ were translated for a specific purpose. The reliabilities of each temperament trait of the translated version were modest.^{10,11} In addition, due to the 1-way system of translation, the meanings of several items were awkward. Thus, the purpose of this study was to translate the RITQ into Thai using the back-translation method to determine the psychometric properties of the Thai translation of the RITQ, and to describe Thai infants' temperament using the RITQ.

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