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Psychopathological symptoms in Italian children and adolescents with Specific Learning Disorder: What do mothers and fathers report about?

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ABSTRACT. Bambini con Disturbo Specifico dell’Apprendimento (DSA) mostrano più frequentemente di bambini a sviluppo tipico (ST) sintomi psicopatologici, quali ansia e depressione. La maggior parte degli studi ha rivolto l’attenzione a bambini alle prese con ortografie opache, quali l’inglese, o trasparenti ma complesse, quali il norvegese. Questi studi sono poco generalizzabili al contesto italiano in cui apprendere a leggere e scrivere appare più facile e in cui gli interventi forniti a bambini con DSA appaiono differenti. Primo obiettivo è quello di confrontare le risposte fornite nelle sottoscale della Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL) dalle madri di 22 bambini con DSA (età media = 12.31, DS = 2.88) con quelle di madri di 29 bambini a ST (età media = 10.96, DS = 2.74). Secondo obiettivo è quello di confrontare le risposte delle madri dei due gruppi con quelle fornite dai padri. Dai test Mann-Whitney emerge nei bambini con DSA un livello significativamente più alto di sintomi internalizzanti ed externalizzanti totali. Si sottolinea l’importanza di individuare precocemente bambini con DSA per contrastare altrettanto precocemente l’insorgere di problemi psicopatologici e la necessità di approfondire l’accordo madre-padre in prove come la CBCL.

SUMMARY. International literature provides evidence that Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) may be associated with multiple dimensions of psychopathology. In contrast, only a small number of studies have focused on emotional and behavioral problems in Italian children and adolescents with SLD. The Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL) is a measure of psychopathological symptoms widely-used in the clinical contexts in Italy. We therefore conducted a preliminary study examining mothers’ and fathers’ reports on all of the eight CBCL syndrome subscales. First aim was to examine the mothers’ ratings on CBCL in a group of 22 Italian children and adolescents with SLD (mean age = 12.31, SD = 2.88) and 29 peers without SLD (mean age = 10.96, SD = 2.74). Second, concordances and differences between mothers and fathers of these children on CBCL were investigated. The children and adolescents with SLD obtained significantly higher Internalizing and Externalizing Total Scores, compared to peers without SLD. We discussed the relevance of early identifying Italian children with SLD to early contrast the risk of emotional and behavioral problems in these children. These findings underscore the need for further examination of the mother-father agreement on measures of psychopathological problems.

Keywords: Specific Learning Disorder, Psychopathological symptoms, Mother-father discrepancy
INTRODUCTION

The main goal of the present study was to obtain more in-depth knowledge of emotional and behavioral features in Italian children and adolescents with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD). SLDs are classified by the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders among the neurodevelopmental disorders that involve difficulties in reading, written expression, and/or mathematics and that are not primarily due to more general learning difficulty, such as intellectual disability or global developmental delay, nor to external factors (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Despite the specific nature of the SLDs, numerous studies have found that these disorders can co-occur with other neurodevelopmental or mental disorders. For example, the most frequent comorbid disorder in groups with reading disability (RD) is the attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and particularly the inattentive and combined subtypes of ADHD that are characterized by significant inattention (e.g., Knivsberg & Andreassen, 2008). Children and adolescents with RD are at higher risk for externalizing disorders, such as oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and conduct disorder (CD), and show rule-breaking behaviors (e.g., Dahle, Knivsberg & Andreassen, 2011; Knivsberg & Andreassen, 2008; Maughan, Rowe, Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loober, 2003; Willcutt & Pennington, 2000). Children and adolescents with dyslexia are also at higher risk for an internalizing, anxious and depressive symptomatology (e.g., Dahle et al., 2011; Knivsberg & Andreassen, 2008; Maughan et al., 2003; for a review, see Mugnaini, Lassi, La Malfa & Albertini, 2009) and for psychosocial problems (Biotteau, Albaret, Lelong & Chaix, 2016).

The most of these studies has focused on children with dyslexia. The few studies on children and adolescents with comorbid learning disorders (e.g., dyslexia associated with math disability) demonstrated the vulnerability of this clinical population to higher rates of externalizing behaviors such as aggressive behaviors, delinquency, and risk-taking behaviors (e.g., McNamara, Verveke & Willoughby, 2008), as well as higher levels of loneliness, stress, anxiety and depression (e.g., Al-Yagon, 2012; Feurer & Andrews, 2009; Nelson & Harwood, 2011; Wilson, Armstrong, Furrie & Walcot, 2009). Willcutt and colleagues (2013) found that the group with RD and math disability (MD) was more impaired than the groups with RD and MD alone on measures of internalizing psychopathology. Overall, the existing international literature provides evidence that SLDs may be associated with multiple dimensions of psychopathology.

In contrast, to date only a small number of studies have focused on the psychopathological symptoms in Italian children and adolescents with SLD. It is known that SLDs are pretty much incident and severe in countries characterized by orthographically deep (e.g., English, French) as opposed to shallow (e.g., Italian, German, Norwegian) languages (Brunswick, McDougall & De Mornay Davies, 2010; Zonno, Scorza, Morlini & Stella, 2016). There are also potential differences between countries like Italy and United States in the type of specialist provision for students with SLD at school. In the light of these considerations, it is hard to generalize results of the existing international literature concerning the psychological problems of SLD students to Italian children and adolescents with SLD (Ghisi, Bottesi, Re, Cerea & Mammarrella, 2016).

To our knowledge, few studies have investigated anxiety and depressive symptoms in Italian children and adolescents with LD. Margari and colleagues (2013) identified differences between children and adolescents with SLD and with learning disorder not otherwise specified (LD NOS), with a higher comorbidity with ADHD and with mood and anxiety disorder, using the Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001), in the former than in the latter. Mammarrella and colleagues (2016), comparing Italian children with nonverbal learning disabilities (NLD), with RD and typically developing children (TD), aged between 8 and 11, found that the NLD children reported more severe anxiety about school and separation than TD, and children with RD had worse depressive symptoms than those with NLD or TD, using the Self-Administered Psychiatric Scales for Children and Adolescents (SAFA; Cianchetti & Fancello, 2001) and the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI; Kovacs, 1982; Italian validation by Camuffo, Cerutti, Lucarelli & Mayer, 1988). Chiappedi and Baschenis (2016) found that children with SLD aged between 8 and 13, compared with TD peers, more often had a clinically significant level of anxiety using SAFA. Bonifacci, Storti, Tobia and Suardi (2016), evaluating the psychological profiles of Italian children with SLD, aged between 9 and 12, found that these children had lower scholastic and interpersonal self-esteem than TD children, using the Self-Esteem Multidimensional Test (TMA; Bracken, 2003); the parents of the SLD group also rated their children as more anxious and depressed, relative to parents of...
Teachers’ sense of responsibility for educational outcomes. A study on the measurement properties of the teacher responsibility scale in Italian primary and secondary school teachers

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ABSTRACT. Lo studio presenta la traduzione italiana della Scala di Responsabilità dell’Insegnante (Teacher Responsibility Scale, TRS) in un campione di insegnanti di scuola primaria e secondaria (N = 506). Lo strumento, basato su un modello multidimensionale di responsabilità dell’insegnante, comprende quattro sottoscale che valutano la responsabilità per la motivazione degli studenti, per i risultati degli studenti, per i rapporti con gli studenti e per l’insegnamento. I risultati delle Analisi Fattoriali Confirmatorie (CFA Confirmatory Factor Analysis) supportano la struttura a quattro fattori della versione tradotta del TRS, con un’adeguata affidabilità per tutte le sottoscale e invarianza metrica del TRS per insegnanti di scuola primaria e media rispetto a insegnanti di scuola superiore. Il TRS italiano risulta quindi essere uno strumento affidabile e valido per valutare la responsabilità personale degli insegnanti per i risultati educativi.

SUMMARY. The study explored the measurement properties of an Italian translation of the Teacher Responsibility Scale (TRS) in a sample of primary and secondary school teachers (N = 506). The instrument, based on a multidimensional model of teacher’s responsibility, includes four subscales assessing responsibility for student motivation, student achievement, relationships with students, and teaching. Results from a series of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) support the hypothesized four-factor structure of the back-translated version of the TRS, with adequate reliability for all subscales, and the metric invariance of the TRS for primary and middle school teachers compared to high school teachers. The Italian TRS appears to be a reliable and valid instrument to assess teachers’ personal responsibility for educational outcomes, both in basic and applied research in teacher evaluation, as well as in the internal school evaluation processes.

Keywords: Teacher responsibility, Validation, Responsibility
An Italian validation of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ): Further evidence for a two-dimensional model of grandiose narcissism

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ABSTRACT. Lo studio si propone di fornire un contributo alla validazione italiana del Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ), uno strumento self-report che consente di operazionalizzare il modello bidimensionale proposto da Back e colleghi (2013). Tale modello differenzia gli aspetti agentici ed assertivi del narcisismo “grandioso” (Admiration), da quelli che hanno origine dalla tendenza all’antagonismo nelle relazioni interpersonali (Rivalry). I risultati dello studio, condotto su 300 partecipanti (età media = 31.20, DS = 11.6, 30% maschi) supportano la validità e l’attendibilità della versione italiana del NARQ.

SUMMARY. The present study aims to validate an Italian version of the Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Questionnaire (NARQ), which operationalizes the two-dimensional model of grandiose narcissism recently proposed by Back et al. (2013). The model differentiates between Admiration and Rivalry, two dimensions that entail the agentic and antagonistic aspects of narcissism, respectively. Three hundred individuals participated in the study (mean age = 31.20, SD = 11.6, 30% males). A confirmatory factor analysis supported the expected two-factor structure. Adequate levels of internal consistency were found for the overall NARQ scores, as well as for the Admiration and Rivalry scale scores. Although Admiration and Rivalry were positively correlated, they showed a distinctive pattern of correlations with the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, and the Big Five Inventory. These results replicate Back et al.’s (2013) original findings and thus provide support for the validity and reliability of the Italian version of the NARQ.

Keywords: Narcissism, Admiration, Rivalry, Assessment
The Italian adaptation of the WOrk-reLated Flow inventory (WOLF) to Sport: The I-WOLFS scale

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ABSTRACT. Il Flow at work, costrutto collocato all’interno della psicologia positiva, risulta rilevante in ambito sportivo in quanto si tratta di uno stato psicologico capace di influenzare la prestazione di un atleta. Questo studio ha l’obiettivo di adattare allo sport la scala italiana di Flow at work (I-WOLF). È stata svolta un’analisi fattoriale esplorativa (N = 132) e in seguito confermativa (N = 161) su un gruppo di atleti professionisti. Le analisi hanno restituito una scala a 12 item che contiene le tre dimensioni del Flow at work (Assorbimento, Piacere lavorativo e Motivazione intrinseca). Lo strumento potrà essere utile per la misurazione del Flow at work tra gli atleti, contribuendo alla psicologia del lavoro e dello sport.

SUMMARY. Flow at work is a state of consciousness characterized by absorption, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation. Optimal experiences are crucial in sport since athletes link performances and achievement to psychological states. This study aims to adapt to sport the Italian version of the WOrk-reLated Flow inventory (I-WOLF). Factorial validity of the adapted scale was assessed by exploratory factor analysis (N = 132) and confirmatory factor analysis (N = 161). Participants are professional athletes. The exploratory factor analysis showed a three-factor structure with one item of intrinsic motivation loading on the enjoyment factor. The confirmatory factor analysis finally deleted this item, resulting in a 12-item structure which preserves the original 3-factor structure: Absorption, Sport Enjoyment and Intrinsic Motivation. The adaptation of the I-WOLF scale to sport resulted in a reliably instrument to measure flow at work among athletes, giving an important empirical contribute to both work and organizational psychology and sport psychology.

Keywords: Flow at work, Flow sport, Optimal experience, Scale adaptation

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology, which particularly focuses on the understanding of positive subjective experiences (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), is more and more capturing the attention of scholars, underlying the importance of understanding human well-being dynamics through the detection and the improvement of social, cultural and personal factors. Positive and optimal experiences are mostly significant in sport, since athletes link performances and achievement to psychological states (Kennedy, Miele & Metcalfe, 2014). Optimal experience refers to positive states of consciousness and such experience is considered optimal since people can control it, have intrinsic motivation and clear goals, thus living the experience in a positive
Psychometric examination of the Psychological Capital (PsyCap) and the Career Decision-Making Process (CDMP) scales

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ABSTRACT. Questo studio contribuisce alla validazione di due scale, potenzialmente utilizzabili in modo congiunto, incentrate sulle quattro componenti del Capitale Psicologico (speranza, resilienza, autoefficacia e ottimismo) e quattro dimensioni del Career Decision-Making Process (ansia verso la scelta, percezione di importanza della scuola, autoefficacia nel processo decisionale, pianificazione del futuro). Basandosi su due campioni di studenti della scuola secondaria di primo grado, l’analisi fattoriale esplorativa e confermativa hanno fornito supporto alla ipotesi che le scale denominate PsyCap e CDMP rappresentino misure di auto-valutazione valide nella rilevazione delle risorse in grado di facilitare il processo decisionale della carriera.

SUMMARY. The current study was aimed to validate two scales, potentially jointly used, focused on the four dimensions of Psychological Capital (i.e., hope, resilience, self-efficacy and optimism) and the four facets of Career Decision-Making Process (i.e., career choice anxiety, perceived instrumentality of education, career decision-making self-efficacy and career planning attitude) among middle school students. In Study 1 the PsyCap and CDMP scales were developed and evaluated through a principal component analysis (N = 602). In Study 2 a confirmatory factor analysis (N = 989) was performed in order to validate the four-dimensional structure of the scales. The obtained results provided evidence for two theoretically grounded 16-item scales composed of four factors each: the PsyCap and the CDMP scales. The PsyCap and the CDMP scales are valid self-report measures assessing the key dimensions of psychological capital and the resources able to ease the career decision-making process.

Keywords: Psychological capital, Career decision-making, Middle school students